Connecting With Stakeholders in the Digital Era: UNESA's Brand and Culture Transformation to PTN-BH

Sugeng Harianto[1], Hafid Kholidi Hadi[2*], Mas Suryanto[3], Farid Pribadi[1], Muhammad Fajar Wahyudi Rahman[2]

[1]Sociology, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia
[2]Digital Business, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia
[3]Civil Engineering, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia
hafidhadi@unesa.ac.id

Abstract. This research empirically analyzes the role of social media branding strategies in strengthening institutional image, using the case of Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia. The study takes a quantitative approach using partial least squares structural equation modeling with Smart-PLS 3 software to estimate model parameters. A survey of 212 UNESA academic communities reveals that brand awareness and brand image positively influence brand loyalty and brand equity. These results indicate that a strategic social media approach focusing on brand identity, audience engagement, and measuring metrics can aid universities in maintaining competitiveness. The customizable framework provides actionable insights for educational institutions striving towards effective adoption of information and communication technologies amidst growing market pressures.

Keywords: Indonesia, Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty, Brand Equity

1. Introduction

Social media offer distinct advantages over traditional media by enhancing the connection between businesses and consumers, fostering relationship-building, and empowering users to actively participate in these dynamics (Pham & Gammoh, 2015). Users on social media platforms are equipped with tools to engage with companies and fellow users. Laroche et al. (2012) highlighted the significance of engaging in, creating, and becoming part of communities to satisfy human needs for a sense of belonging, social connection, acknowledgment, or simply relishing interactions with individuals who share similar interests. Nevertheless, the collaborative storytelling of brands by both owners and consumers diminishes the absolute control that brand owners once had (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). The shaping of brands is currently impacted not solely by brand proprietors but also by individuals and consumer groups spanning various social media platforms. The outcomes of these engagements have a substantial influence on the overall effectiveness of marketing and, more precisely, on the realm of branding. Therefore, marketers need to be vigilant in their strategies for social media marketing and the discussions related to their brands (Pham & Gammoh, 2015).

In light of these transformations, the majority of researchers have focused their investigations on examining issues pertaining to social media and branding from the consumer perspective, whether on an individual or group scale. This encompasses exploring areas such as the adoption and practices of social media (Gangadharbatla, 2008), the dynamics of brand communities and interactions (De Valck et al., 2009), and online consumer behaviors. However, limited attention has been given to investigating the influence of social media activities by higher education institutions, specifically in relation to their branding strategy through social media, and how these activities contribute to the establishment and management of brand equity at the institutional level. There exists a conspicuous gap in comprehending the essential level and type of social media branding strategy activities required to assist higher education institutions in developing customer-based brand equity and attaining competitive advantages.

Integral components of business strategy encompass brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty, and brand equity, providing organizations with enduring competitive advantages (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016). Brand equity, as a concept, is closely tied to consumers exhibiting heightened trust in a specific brand compared to rival brands, fostering increased loyalty and a willingness to pay a premium price for the brand (Sasmita & Suki, 2015). Essentially, enterprises with substantial brand equity gain a heightened competitive edge, enabling successful expansions, resilience against promotional pressures from competitors, and the establishment of formidable barriers to entry into the market (Severi & Ling, 2013).

The collective elements of brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty, and brand equity play vital roles in upholding the company's value. These elements contribute significantly to establishing a competitive edge and attracting the attention and allegiance of customers (Eslami, 2020). Brand loyalty, characterized by the unwavering commitment of customers to consistently choose a brand for future purchases, remains resilient despite situational influences and marketing initiatives that may attempt to alter consumer behavior (Eslami, 2020). Various research studies emphasize brand loyalty as a crucial factor influencing brand equity, highlighting its direct impact on the overall value of a brand (Im et al., 2012).

In fortifying allegiance to the equity of a brand, the pivotal role of brand awareness is underscored, as highlighted by Altaf et al. (2017). The degree of consciousness significantly influences individuals' perceptions and attitudes, impacting their selection of a brand and effectively strengthening brand loyalty, as elucidated by Eslami (2020). Similarly, brand image emerges as another essential factor shaping brand loyalty, as per Altaf et al. (2017). Customers holding a favorable perception of a brand demonstrate a consistently positive evaluation, creating a halo effect, as discussed by Eslami (2020). Consequently, cultivating a positive corporate image contributes to the enhancement of loyalty toward the service provider, as observed by Hapsari et al. (2017).

Previous noteworthy research published in reputable journals regarding brand equity in Indonesia

focused on various outcomes related to products (e.g., Sasmita & Suki, 2015) and non-educational services (e.g., Samosir et al., 2023; Yulianto et al., 2022; Kusumaningrum, 2021). To date, there has been no exploration of how brand awareness and brand image impact brand equity through brand loyalty as a mechanism for branding strategy via social media in higher education institutions. Understanding these elements is essential for formulating effective social media branding strategies for any higher education institution. Consequently, the increasing recognition of the importance of devising sustainable brand strategies is observed among higher education institutions and universities (Pinar et al., 2011). As a result, branding has evolved into a strategic focal point for universities and other post-compulsory educational entities aiming to construct distinct and meaningful brands to convey their strengths (Jevons, 2006). In this context, an interesting research question arises:

- What is the relationship between brand awareness and brand image on brand equity?
- What is the relationship between brand awareness and brand image on brand loyalty?
- What is the relationship between brand loyalty on brand equity?
- Does brand loyalty mediate the relationship between brand awareness and brand image on brand equity?

The study will concentrate on the concepts related to recognition of the brand, perception of the brand, allegiance to the brand, and the overall value of the brand in the context of a higher education institution, specifically Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) in Surabaya, Indonesia. As a public university, UNESA has been consistently evolving and has gained growing confidence from both the public and the government. The institution's reputation has increased, resulting in intensified competition among students vying for admission to UNESA, placing it in competition with other state universities. Notably, UNESA underwent a transformative process in October 2022, transitioning from State Higher Education Public Service Agency (PTN-BLU) status to State Universities-Legal Agency (PTN-BH). The official acknowledgment of UNESA's PTN-BH status was granted through the approval of Government Regulation Number 37 of 2022, addressing State Universities as Legal Entities, with a specific focus on Universitas Negeri Surabaya.

In the university environment, it is crucial to undergo organizational and institutional changes to ensure adaptability and responsiveness to the evolving needs of customers and students. Within this transformative process, the establishment and nurturing of recognition, perception, loyalty, and value associated with the institution emerge as crucial components. These elements play a vital role in shaping how the university is perceived and in enhancing its credibility among the public and potential students. The particular significance of the university's perceived image is highlighted in influencing attitudes towards the institution and the higher education sector, as indicated by Pinar et al. (2011). In the exploration of university image, Paramewaran & Glowacka (1995) propose that higher education institutions need to establish and sustain a unique image to attain a competitive advantage in the progressively competitive global market. This distinct image is anticipated to influence a student's choice to apply to the institution, underscoring the significance of instilling these perceptions in the minds of stakeholders (Ivy, 2001). Despite the increasing significance of this matter, Hemsley-Brown & Goonawardana (2007) highlight the scarcity of explicit empirical research pertaining to the branding of higher education.

In the context of a university brand, it pertains to a student's willingness to commit to higher tuition fees for their education without the university heavily depending on extensive discounts through financial aid. it is asserted that a robust brand garners substantial acknowledgment and allegiance from consumers, thereby laying the groundwork for the establishment of robust and lucrative customer relations (Keller, 2008). A proficient brand ecosystem possesses the capability not only to distinctly distinguish the customer's experience with a product or service but also to generate substantial brand equity for the entity offering the product or service (Pinar et al., 2011).

This research aims to examine the influence of brand awareness and brand image on brand equity through brand loyalty as a branding strategy mechanism through social media in higher education

institutions. The distinctive contribution of this research lies in amalgamating the impact of these elements on brand equity, enriching the study by incorporating supplementary details to address existing research gaps. This research introduces a novel empirical contribution, offering valuable insights by validating the proposed theoretical framework specifically tailored for higher education institutions in Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

2.1. UNESA BLU Transformation to PTN-BH

UNESA, being a state university, actively undergoes development to enhance its reputation within the community and government circles. There is a growing public interest in gaining admission to UNESA, leading to increased competition among students seeking entry compared to other state universities. The government's trust in UNESA has been reinforced, resulting in its transformation in 2005 into a university with PTN-BLU status. UNESA follows financial governance in line with the BLU financial model, as outlined in Government Regulation No. 23 of 2005 on the Financial Management of Public Service Agencies. Subsequent revisions, reflected in Minister of Finance Regulation No. 57/PMK.05/2007 and further adjusted by Minister of Finance Regulation No. 5/PMK.05/2010, underscore the management of accounts related to state ministries, institutions, offices, and performance units. The most recent modification occurred through Government Regulation No. 74 of 2012.

UNESA is a thriving university, progressing alongside other state institutions, and takes pride in introducing unique UNESA-specific terminology, showcasing its forward-thinking approach. The university's national achievements have significantly advanced, currently holding the 19th position nationally. Notably, UNESA has earned accreditation as an outstanding institution and attained the top position in the BLU league for 2022. It also received the top national public relations award in 2022, the second-best national cooperation award in the same year, and secured first place in IKU-2 in 2022. Furthermore, UNESA accomplished the second-best budget performance in 2023. The university has also represented Indonesian academia on the global stage, such as participating in a robotics competition in Turkey. Impressively, UNESA leads among public universities in East Java with the highest number of new student enrollees, totaling approximately 32,000 enthusiastic learners. This remarkable track record solidifies UNESA's recognition, perception, allegiance, and value in the educational landscape.

Starting from October 2022, UNESA underwent an institutional transformation, moving from PTN-BLU status to PTN-BH. The government officially granted UNESA's PTN-BH status through Government Regulation Number 37 of 2022, which specifically deals with the legal entities of state universities in Universitas Negeri Surabaya.

2.2. Branding Strategy Objectives

The primary goal of all strategies related to branding is to establish a strong foundation for brand equity, aligning with the central objective of a brand ecosystem. This is because brand equity, which serves as a crucial measure of a brand's overall health (Keller, 1993; Kim & Kim, 2004), is shaped through effective brand management. Operating as a multifaceted parameter, brand equity represents the inherent value linked to a well-recognized brand name (Keller, 1993, 2008; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Essentially, value is perceived by consumers through a brand's outstanding quality, the societal esteem it provides, consumer trust in the brand, and personal resonance with the brand (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007)

Brand equity refers to the favorable impact that brand awareness has on consumer responses to a product or service, as explained by Keller (1993). An indicator of brand equity includes customers' willingness to pay a premium for that brand, as highlighted by Aaker (1996) and reiterated by Keller

(1993, 2008). In the context of a university brand, it is demonstrated by a student's preparedness to pay higher tuition fees for their education, without the university heavily depending on discounts through financial aid. A strong brand is distinguished by heightened consumer awareness and loyalty, forming the basis for cultivating strong and profitable customer relationships (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993, 2008). The effectiveness of a brand ecosystem not only distinguishes a product or service experience for the customer but also has the potential to establish significant brand equity for the producer.

2.3. Factors Affecting of Brand Equity

Since its emergence in the 1980s, the concept of brand equity has been a central focus in marketing research (Sasmita & Suki, 2015). According to Lassar et al. (1995), brand equity is defined as the "enhancement in the perceived usefulness and desirability that a brand name imparts to a product." In contrast, Keller (1998) characterizes it as the "distinctive impact of brand knowledge on consumer reactions to the marketing of the brand." Additionally, Chirstodoulides & Chernatony (2010) articulate brand equity as "a collection of perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors exhibited by consumers, leading to increased usefulness and enabling a brand to achieve greater market share or higher profit margins than it could without the brand." It is evident that customer-based brand equity encompasses various facets. Keller (1993) model hones in on brand knowledge, emphasizing its constituents—awareness and image. Conversely, Aaker (1991) proposes that brand equity consists of five dimensions: loyalty, awareness, association, perceived quality, and other exclusive brand assets. Similarly, Ruževičiūtė & Ruževičius (2010) concentrate on five dimensions of brand image, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, and price.

3. Hypotheses Development

3.1. Brand Awareness on Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty

The concept of brand awareness relates to the manner in which consumers establish an association between a brand and the specific product they intend to acquire.Establishing a top-of-the-mind awareness is essential for effective communication in this process (Sasmita & Suki, 2015). Consumers acquire brand awareness through influential marketing communication channels such as television, mobile phones, and online advertising. This builds confidence in the quality and credibility of the product, ultimately minimizing the risk during the evaluation and selection of the product when making a purchase (Sasmita & Suki, 2015)

The recognition of a brand significantly impacts consumer decision-making, serving as a decision heuristic that contributes to the management of brand equity based on customers (Sasmita & Suki, 2015). The significance of brand awareness on brand equity is underscored by Pouromid & Iranzadeh (2012). Amelia (2018) posits that brand awareness contributes to the enhancement of brand equity through four mechanisms: establishing a brand node in the consumer's memory, fostering familiarity, serving as a trust signal, and providing a compelling reason for the brand's inclusion in the consumer's consideration set. Asif et al. (2015) contend that brand awareness exerts a positive impact on brand equity, indicating that consumer awareness of specific brands positively influences brand equity. This assertion aligns with the findings of Torres et al. (2015), where brand awareness demonstrates a significant effect on brand equity. In summary, brand awareness is considered a pivotal component of brand equity (Azad et al., 2013).

The recognition of a brand has an effect on the attitudes of customers regarding their loyalty to the brand (Alkhawaldeh, 2017). Building brand loyalty for an extended period can be achieved by promoting brand awareness through continuous publicity and advertising initiatives, as suggested by Keller (2003). Additional research conducted by Alkhawaldeh et al. (2017), Alkhawaldeh & Eneizan

(2018), Kim & Petrick (2018), and Tran et al. (2019) also corroborate that the positive impact of brand awareness extends to brand loyalty. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H1 : Brand awareness will be positively related to brand equity

H2 : Brand awareness will be positively related to brand loyalty

3.2. Brand Image on Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty

The idea of brand image is linked to how consumers employ a brand to communicate symbolic meaning in their consumption decisions and self-expression (Lau & Phau, 2007). Lee et al. (2011) determined from their study that elevating the brand image of a company can result in an enhancement of brand equity. Rubio et al. (2014) confirmed the beneficial influence of brand image on brand equity, a conclusion also upheld by Serveri & Ling (2013) in their research, underscoring the positive impact of brand image on brand equity.

According to Keller (2003), the basis of building brand equity lies in cultivating brand knowledge and establishing positive connections with the brand. Both explanations share the idea that brand equity boosts the value of products or services and contributes to the progress of businesses. Therefore, businesses should devise strategies to promote the growth of brand equity and gain a deeper comprehension of the elements that enhance customers' perceptions of quality and favorable associations with their brands, acting as sources of brand equity (Chen & Myagmarsuren, 2011). Faircloth et al. (2001) also propose that brand equity can be generated either directly or indirectly through the development of brand image and brand attitude. It was observed that brand image positively influences brand equity (Alhaddad, 2014). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H3 : Brand image will be positively related to brand equity

H4 : Brand image will be positively related to brand loyalty

3.3. Brand Loyalty and Brand Equity

Brand loyalty is the repeated purchasing behavior exhibited by users over time, characterized by a positively biased emotional, evaluative, and/or behavioral inclination toward a specifically branded, labeled, or graded alternative or product choice (Sasmita & Suki, 2015). According to Loureiro et al. (2017), brand equity encompasses the cumulative assets linked to the brand name, including awareness, loyalty, perceived quality, and other proprietary assets. The cultivation of brand loyalty among consumers yields a positive outcome in terms of brand equity, cultivating a preference for a particular brand over competitors (Sasmita & Suki, 2015). Brand loyalty stands as a crucial component of brand equity, reflecting consumers' favorable attitudes toward a specific brand in comparison to other alternatives (Sucahyo, 2017). The higher the consumer loyalty to the brand, the more substantial the resulting increase in brand equity (Yoo et al., 2000). Torres et al. (2015) additionally establishes a robust connection between brand loyalty and its impact on brand equity. This research emphasizes the importance of prioritizing brand loyalty to enhance brand equity, aligning with the findings of Rios & Riquelme (2008), which assert that brand loyalty directly contributes to the establishment of brand equity. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H5 : Brand loyalty will be positively related to brand equity

H6 : The relationship between brand awareness and brand equity will be mediated by brand loyalty

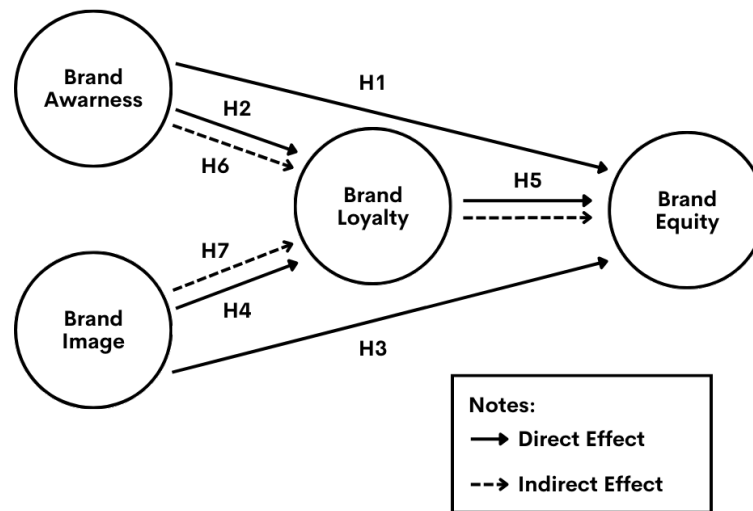H7 : The relationship between brand image and brand equity will be mediated by brand loyalty

Fig. 1 : Conceptual Framework

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Design and Data Collection

This study employs a quantitative methodology, utilizing online-based questionnaires as the primary means of data collection. The survey instrument was generated using Google Forms and disseminated through various online social media platforms, including email, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The research encompasses the UNESA academic community, comprising individuals with affiliations such as students, lecturers, education staff, alumni, parents of students, and others. The investigation spanned a duration of six months, from May to October 2023, and was conducted at UNESA in Surabaya, Indonesia. This specific timeframe and location were selected due to the extensive nature of the target data, aiming to yield representative and reliable outcomes.

In employing the sampling methodology, a non-probability approach, specifically purposive sampling, was utilized. As delineated by Sekaran & Bougie (2016), the commencement of the purposive sampling procedure occurs when the researcher delineates the research problem and identifies the target entity from which pertinent information will be obtained. The rationale behind opting for purposive sampling, as opposed to a probability sampling technique, is attributed to its simplicity, procedural guidelines, and cost considerations, which distinguish it from probability sampling techniques (Rahman et al., 2022).

In general, it is customary to ensure a minimum sample size that is at least five times the number of variables to be analyzed (Hair et al., 2014). In this study, a total of 250 online questionnaires were distributed, with 230 subsequently returned. Out of these, 212 questionnaires (85%) were deemed usable and served as the foundation for subsequent analysis. Adhering to the recommendation by Hair et al. (2014) advocating for a sample size of 200 to establish a robust foundation for estimation, the sample size of 212 in this study was considered sufficient for employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in testing the proposed hypotheses.

4.2. Measurement

In this research, a total of 25 statement items were presented for examination. Brand awareness was assessed using a 6-item scale developed in-house, drawing inspiration from two indicators adapted from Sasivongpakdi & Wang (2014). The scale comprises (1) recognition of the brand (2 items), (2) characterization of the brand (1 item), brand consideration adapted from Bilgin (2018) (1 item), and

two indicators derived from Gunawardane (2015) encompassing (1) brand knowledge (1 item) and (2) recall of competitive brands (1 item). Brand image was gauged using a 6-item scale (product quality measured with 2 items, brand influence measured with 1 item) developed by Kim & Chao (2019), along with three additional indicators from Bilgin (2018) (customer-centered brand, 1 item; fond memories brand; leader brand, 1 item). Brand loyalty was evaluated through a 7-item scale (brand satisfaction on social media, 2 items; first-choice brand, 1 item) adapted from Bilgin (2018), including motivation indicators for the brand (3 items) and a level of use (1 item) developed by Gunawardane (2015). Brand equity was measured using a 7-item scale, encompassing 3 items for brand knowledge, 2 items for a positive brand image, 1 item for good brand quality, and 1 item for brand loyalty, as proposed by Schivinski & Dabrowski (2014). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

4.3. Data analysis

The data analysis for this study employed partial least squares - structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Smart-PLS 3 software was utilized to estimate model parameters. Recent guidelines advocating for the use of PLS-SEM have demonstrated its superiority in conducting mediation analyses. Due to the prediction-oriented and complex nature of the model, PLS-SEM was the preferred analytical approach. PLS-SEM exhibits a higher level of statistical power compared to CB-SEM, enhancing its capability to identify significant relationships within the population. The author chose PLS-SEM for this research, aligning with recent studies published in reputable journals (Hair et al., 2019). The analysis involved two steps using SmartPLS: the measurement model and the structural model (Rahman et al., 2022).

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Measurement model assessment

In the initial phase, the measurement model was executed using Smart-PLS 3 to validate the correct correlation of the proposed variances with the constructs. Consequently, an evaluation of convergent and discriminant validity was conducted to appraise the measurement model within the context of this study. The examination of factor loadings for each item constituted the preliminary step to gauge convergent validity. As advocated by Rahman et al. (2022), it was imperative for the loadings to be equal to or greater than 0.50. Notably, all items exhibited external loadings surpassing the 0.50 threshold, as delineated in Table 1. To ascertain internal consistency in this study, Composite Reliability (CR) was scrutinized. Following the recommendation by Hair et al. (2020) of a CR cutoff value of 0.70, the CR for all items in this study ranged from 0.864 to 0.934, surpassing the prescribed threshold of 0.7.

Table 1. Measurement model

Variabel	Outer Loading	CR	CA	AVE
Brand Awarness		0,864	0,811	0,519
BA.1	0,824			
BA.2	0,729			
BA.3	0,620			
BA.4	0,765			
BA.5	0,777			
BA.6	0,574			
Brand Image		0,933	0,914	0,700
BI.1	0,832			
BI.2	0,855			
BI.3	0,864			

Variabel	*Outer Loading*	CR	CA	AVE
Brand Awarness		0,864	0,811	0,519
BI.4	0,825			
BI.5	0,848			
BI.6	0,794			
Brand Loyalty		0,934	0,918	0,671
BL.1	0,775			
BL.2	0,882			
BL.3	0,832			
BL.4	0,729			
BL.5	0,854			
BL.6	0,856			
BL.7	0,798			
Brand Equity		0,908	0,877	0,625
BE.1	0,593			
BE.2	0,850			
BE.3	0,802			
BE.4	0,825			
BE.5	0,837			
BE.6	0,806			

Moreover, the incorporation of Cronbach's Alpha (CA) serves to enhance the reliability assessment of the CR results, essentially functioning as a tool for evaluating internal consistency. The calculated CA values in this investigation ranged from 0.811 to 0.918, all surpassing the threshold of 0.70. Subsequently, to establish convergent validity, the study turned to the examination of Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As per Hair et al. (2014), AVE signifies the average squared loadings of indicators associated with the research construct. An AVE value of 0.50 indicates that 50% of the items adequately contribute to explaining the construct (Hair et al., 2020). In this particular study, the AVE values for all constructs fell within the range of 0.519 to 0.700, surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.5. The convergent validity of all constructs, as confirmed in this study, is presented in Table 1.

5.2. Measurement model assessment

The adequacy of alternative models can be assessed through various computations, such as the model's coefficient of determination (R-Square). The model's coefficient of determination is computed by incorporating all R-Square values within the model. The findings reveal that the R-Square value for the Brand Equity variable is 0.772. This value signifies that 77.2% of the variance in brand equity is accounted for by brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty, while the remaining variance is explained by other variables. Likewise, the R-Square value for the brand loyalty variable is 0.775, indicating that 77.5% of the variability in brand loyalty is explicated by brand awareness and brand image, while the remainder is elucidated by other variables.

Moreover, it has been suggested that structural models should include the reporting of path coefficients, p-values, and t-statistics for the assessment of hypothesis significance (Hair et al., 2019). The evaluation of the structural model involves scrutinizing the significance values via the bootstrap procedure to ascertain the influence between variables.

Table 2. Hypothesis testing of direct and indirect relationships

Relationships	Original Sample	t-statistics	p-values	Information
Brand Awareness → Brand Equity	0,225	2,958	0,003	H1 accepted
Brand Awareness → Brand Loyalty	0,037	0,452	0,651	H2 rejected

Brand Image → Brand Equity	0,507	4,658	0,000	H3 accepted
Brand Image → Brand Loyalty	0,850	12,410	0,000	H4 accepted
Brand Loyalty → Brand Equity	0,199	2,244	0,025	H5 accepted
Brand Awareness → Brand Equity → Brand Loyalty	0,007	0,380	0,704	H6 rejected
Brand Image → Brand Equity → Brand Loyalty	0,169	2,325	0,020	H7 accepted

Table 2 presents the findings from hypothesis testing concerning the association between direct and indirect influence. The coefficient of brand awareness on brand equity demonstrates a positive value. The computed results reveal a path coefficient of 0.225, accompanied by a t-statistics of 2.958 ($p = 0.003$). This implies that brand awareness exerts a positive influence on brand equity. Consequently, it can be deduced that elevated levels of brand awareness substantiate an augmented impact on brand equity.

It can be stated that the association between brand awareness and brand loyalty is characterized by a positively valued coefficient. The computed results reveal a path coefficient of 0.037, accompanied by a t-statistics of 0.452 ($p= 0.651$). It is discerned from these findings that brand awareness does not exert a significant influence on brand loyalty. Such outcomes may be construed to signify that irrespective of whether brand awareness is high or low, it has been empirically demonstrated not to have a consequential impact on brand loyalty.

In the realm of brand equity, the brand image demonstrates a positively oriented coefficient, as evidenced by the path coefficient of 0.507 with a corresponding t-statistics of 4.658 ($p=0.000$). This implies that there exists a constructive influence of brand image on brand equity. The outcome signifies that a heightened level of brand image is empirically substantiated to yield a corresponding augmentation in brand equity.

It can be articulated that there exists a positively-valued coefficient between brand image and brand loyalty. The computed results reveal a path coefficient of 0.850, accompanied by a t-statistics of 12.410 ($p= 0.000$). This signifies that brand image exerts a positive influence on brand loyalty. The implications of these findings can be construed as follows: a heightened level of brand image is empirically demonstrated to correlate with an augmented impact on brand loyalty.

In the realm of brand equity, the association between brand loyalty and brand equity manifests through a positively oriented coefficient. The computed value of the path coefficient stands at 0.507, accompanied by a t-statistic of 4.658 ($p= 0.000$). This outcome suggests that the constructive influence of brand image on brand equity is substantiated. Consequently, it can be construed that heightened levels of brand loyalty unequivocally contribute to the augmentation of brand equity.

The positive coefficient value observed in the relationship between brand awareness and brand equity via brand loyalty is noteworthy. The computed path coefficient stands at 0.007, accompanied by a t-statistic of 0.380 ($p = 0.704$). The implication drawn from these results is that brand awareness does not exert a significant influence on brand equity through the mediating factor of brand loyalty. This outcome suggests that variations in the levels of brand awareness, whether high or low, do not contribute substantially to the enhancement of brand equity within the framework of brand loyalty.

The positive association between brand image and brand equity mediated by brand loyalty is evident. The computed coefficient, signifying the strength of this relationship, is 0.169, with a corresponding t-statistic of 2.325 ($p = 0.020$). This implies that an enhancement in brand image positively influences brand equity through the conduit of brand loyalty. Consequently, a heightened level of brand image is indicative of a more pronounced impact on brand equity, particularly when considered in conjunction with brand loyalty.

5.3. Discussion

The implementation of branding strategies through social media emerges as a viable approach for fortifying organizations and institutions, augmenting brand visibility, and extending audience outreach. The correlation between brand awareness and brand loyalty manifests a constructive impact. This is corroborated by the findings of Pouromid & Iranzadeh (2012) research, which establishes a positive and statistically significant relationship between the brand awareness variable and brand equity. Consistent with these results, studies conducted by Asif et al. (2015) and Torres et al. (2015) also affirm the positive and significant influence of the brand awareness variable on brand equity. This underscores the proposition that brand awareness serves as a foundational consideration for institutions in cultivating brand loyalty for UNESA. Elevated levels of brand awareness contribute to a more favorable public perception, heightened public recognition, and an increase in brand loyalty.

It is asserted that brand awareness does not exert a discernible impact on brand loyalty. Such outcomes may be construed to signify that irrespective of whether brand awareness is high or low, it has been empirically demonstrated not to have a consequential impact on brand loyalty. Although brand awareness holds significant relevance in facilitating brand identification, fostering trust, and disseminating brand-related information, particularly within the confines of UNESA PTNBH, the empirical findings of this study do not substantiate a correlation between brand awareness and brand loyalty.

There is a positive influence of brand image on brand equity. These results are in line with the results of research conducted by Lee et al. (2011) and Serveri & Ling (2013) which shows that brand image has a positive and significant influence on brand equity. A good, strong, attractive image of UNESA PTNBH will make UNESA's brand image in the memory of the subject. With this image, people will easily recognize UNESA as a university that is included in the ranks of PTNBH, in addition to 20 other state universities. A good brand image can increase brand equity, while a bad brand image can damage brand equity.

There is a positive influence of brand image on brand loyalty. These results are in line with the results of research conducted by Chen & Myagmarsuren, (2011) and Alhaddad (2014) who found that brand image has a positive and significant influence on brand loyalty. A strong brand will inspire consumer trust thereby stimulating brand loyalty (Faircloth et al., 2001). Without a sustainable brand image, brand loyalty will decrease. Almost all individuals and organizations must be trying to improve their brand image, just like UNESA is trying to introduce its new identity as PTNBH. Therefore, as the results of this study show that brand image has a positive effect on brand loyalty with the hope that loyalty to UNESA will increase.

There is a positive influence of brand loyalty on brand equity. These results align with the research conducted by Sasmita & Suki, (2015) which show that the brand loyalty variable has a positive and significant effect on brand equity. Consumers who are loyal to a particular brand tend to have positive perceptions about that brand, which can increase brand equity (Torres et al., 2015). One strategy to increase brand loyalty is providing facilities and appreciation to internal and external parties to create a distinctive identity and manage UNESA's reputation as PTNBH.

The relationship of brand awareness to brand equity through brand loyalty has a coefficient with a positive value. The better UNESA PTNBH is known and becomes top of mind in people's minds will make the expansion of UNESA's good name also better known and UNESA PTNBH will be higher in its brand equity. People who know the brand well tend to have a positive perception of the brand, which can increase brand loyalty. Strong brand loyalty can help increase brand equity. Therefore, building strong brand awareness and maintaining high brand loyalty can help increase brand equity.

The relationship of brand image to brand equity through brand loyalty has a coefficient with a positive value. This shows that brand image plays an important role in influencing brand equity and brand loyalty. As in this study, it was found that UNESA PTNBH's brand image has a positive effect on brand equity, especially after being mediated by brand loyalty from individuals/groups who have

loyalty to UNESA. In this context, brand image can be a factor that influences brand loyalty, which in turn can contribute to brand equity. Therefore, it is important for UNESA to build and maintain a positive brand image to increase UNESA's brand loyalty and brand equity as PTNBH.

In addition to improving the image and reputation of the university in the eyes of the public and prospective students, branding also has significant benefits for the internal university. Some of the benefits of branding for internal universities include increase pride and loyalty. By having a strong brand and institutional identity, universities can increase the sense of pride and loyalty of staff, faculty, and students. This can help boost morale and engagement from all university members, as well as help in building a positive organizational culture.

Increase efficiency and effectiveness. In an increasingly competitive environment, universities need to ensure that they can manage their resources efficiently and effectively. By having a strong brand and institutional identity, universities can reinforce their values and goals, and help focus their efforts on achieving those goals. This can help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all university members.

Increase attractiveness as a workplace. Strong branding can help increase a university's attractiveness as a workplace for staff and faculty. This can help in recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce, as well as increasing morale and engagement from all university members.

Increase unity and coordination. In a large organization like a university, branding can help in strengthening unity and coordination between different units and departments. By having a strong brand and institutional identity, the university can strengthen the sense of unity and unity among all university members, and help facilitate coordination and cooperation between various units and departments.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study offers valuable insights for leveraging social media branding strategies to bolster institutional reputation in higher education. The proposed recommendations guided by the business model canvas can help universities balance technological innovations with organizational transformation to stay relevant. By empirically highlighting the connections between brand awareness, loyalty, equity, and image metrics, this research addresses a pertinent issue faced by universities competing for global resources, talent, and rankings. While generalization has limitations considering the situational dynamics, the instruments, and nuanced findings contribute to theory building and practice in the domain. Future studies can build on this platform to continually evolve branding approaches, harness emergent technologies, and sustain university student-centric growth.

References

Aaker, D.A. (1991), Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of Brand Name, The Free Press, New York, NY.

Aaker, D.A. (1996), Building Strong Brands, The Free Press, New York, NY.

Alhaddad, A. (2014). The effect of brand image and brand loyalty on brand equity. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, *3*(5), 28-32.

Alkhawaldeh, A., Al-Salaymeh, M., Alshare, F., & Eneizan, B. M. (2017). The effect of brand awareness on brand loyalty: Mediating role of brand commitment. *European Journal of Business and Management*, *9*(36), 38-47.

Alkhawaldeh, A., & Eneizan, B. M. (2018). Factors influencing brand loyalty in durable goods market. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *8*(1), 326-339.

Altaf, M., Iqbal, N., Mohd. Mokhtar, S. S., & Sial, M. H. (2017). Managing consumer-based brand equity through brand experience in Islamic banking. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, *8*(2), 218-242.

Asif, M., Abbas, K., Kashif, M., Hussain, S., & Hussain, I. (2015). Impact of brand awareness and loyalty on brand equity. *Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research*, *12*(1), 67-72.

Azad, A. K., Al Muzahid, M., & Kamal, A. (2013). Intermediating Role of Brand Knowledge over Brand Equity: A Case Study of Export Import Bank of Bangladesh Ltd. Proceedings of 9th Asian Business Research Conference 20-21 December, BIAM Foundation, Dhaka, Bangladesh ISBN: 978-1-922069-39-9.

Bilgin, Y. (2018). The effect of social media marketing activities on brand awareness, brand image and brand loyalty. *Business & Management Studies: an International Journal*, *6*(1), 128-148.

Chatzipanagiotou, K., Veloutsou, C., & Christodoulides, G. (2016). Decoding the complexity of the consumer-based brand equity process. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*(11), 5479-5486.

Chen, C. F., & Myagmarsuren, O. (2011). Brand equity, relationship quality, relationship value, and customer loyalty: Evidence from the telecommunications services. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *22*(9), 957-974.

De Valck, K., Van Bruggen, G. H., & Wierenga, B. (2009). Virtual communities: A marketing perspective. *Decision Support Systems*, *47*(3), 185-203.

Eslami, S. (2020). The effect of brand experience on brand equity and brand loyalty through the mediating role of brand awareness, brand image and perceived quality. *Archives of Pharmacy Practice*, *11*(1), 98-104.

Faircloth, J. B., Capella, L. M., & Alford, B. L. (2001). The effect of brand attitude and brand image on brand equity. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *9*(3), 61-75.

Gangadharbatla, H. (2008). Facebook me: Collective self-esteem, need to belong, and internet self-efficacy as predictors of the iGeneration's attitudes toward social networking sites. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, *8*(2), 5-15.

Gunawardane, N. R. (2015). Impact of brand equity towards purchasing desition: a situation on mobile telecommunication services of Sri Lanka. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *3*(1), 100-117.

Hair Jr., J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2014). Multivariate data analysis (7th ed). Pearson Education Limited.

Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, *31*(1), 2-24.

Hair Jr, J. F., Howard, M. C., & Nitzl, C. (2020). Assessing measurement model quality in PLS-SEM using confirmatory composite analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, *109*, 101-110.

Hapsari, R., Clemes, M. D., & Dean, D. (2017). The impact of service quality, customer engagement and selected marketing constructs on airline passenger loyalty. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, *9*(1), 21-40.

Hemsley-Brown, J., & Goonawardana, S. (2007). Brand harmonization in the international higher education market. *Journal of Business Research*, *60*(9), 942-948.

Hennig-Thurau, T., Malthouse, E. C., Friege, C., Gensler, S., Lobschat, L., Rangaswamy, A., & Skiera, B. (2010). The impact of new media on customer relationships. *Journal of Service Research*, *13*(3), 311-330.

Im, H. H., Kim, S. S., Elliot, S., & Han, H. (2012). Conceptualizing destination brand equity dimensions from a consumer-based brand equity perspective. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *29*(4), 385-403.

Ivy, J. (2001). Higher education institution image: acorrespondence analysis approach. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *15*(6), 276-282.

Jevons, C. (2006). Universities: a prime example of branding going wrong. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, *15*(7), 466-467.

Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, *57*(1), 1-22.

Keller, K. L. (2003). Brand synthesis: The multidimensionality of brand knowledge. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *29*(4), 595-600.

Keller, K.L. (2008), Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity, 3rd ed., Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Kim, R. B., & Chao, Y. (2019). Effects of brand experience, brand image and brand trust on brand building process: The case of Chinese millennial generation consumers. *Journal of International Studies*, *12*(3), 9-21.

Kim, W. G., & Kim, H. B. (2004). Measuring customer-based restaurant brand equity. *Cornell hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, *45*(2), 115-131.

Kim, S. S., Choe, J. Y. J., & Petrick, J. F. (2018). The effect of celebrity on brand awareness, perceived quality, brand image, brand loyalty, and destination attachment to a literary festival. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *9*(2018), 320-329.

Kusumaningrum, S. D. (2021). Destination brand equity: a perspective of generation Z on A world heritage site in Indonesia. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, *8*(2), 1071-1078.

Laroche, M., Habibi, M. R., Richard, M. O., & Sankaranarayanan, R. (2012). The effects of social media based brand communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, brand trust and brand loyalty. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *28*(5), 1755-1767.

Lassar, W., Mittal, B., & Sharma, A. (1995). Measuring customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *12*(4), 11-19.

Lau, K. C., & Phau, I. (2007). Extending symbolic brands using their personality: Examining antecedents and implications towards brand image fit and brand dilution. *Psychology & Marketing*, *24*(5), 421-444.

Lee, H. M., Lee, C. C., & Wu, C. C. (2011). Brand image strategy affects brand equity after M&A. *European Journal of Marketing*, *45*(7/8), 1091-1111.

Loureiro, S. M. C., & Kaufmann, H. R. (2017). Advertising and country-of-origin images as sources of brand equity and the moderating role of brand typicality. *Baltic Journal of Management*, *12*(2), 153-170.

Parameswaran, R., & Glowacka, A. E. (1995). University image: An information processing perspective. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, *6*(2), 41-56.

Pham, P. H., & Gammoh, B. S. (2015). Characteristics of social-media marketing strategy and customer-based brand equity outcomes: a conceptual model. *International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising*, *9*(4), 321-337.

Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T., & Boyt, T. E. (2011). Utilizing the brand ecosystem framework in designing branding strategies for higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *25*(7), 724-739.

Pouromid, B., & Iranzadeh, S. (2012). The evaluation of the factors affects on the brand equity of Pars Khazar household appliances based on the vision of female consumer. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, *12*(8), 1050-1055.

Rahman, M. F. W., Kistyanto, A., & Surjanti, J. (2022). Does cyberloafing and person-organization fit affect employee performance? The mediating role of innovative work behavior. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, *41*(5), 44-64.

Rios, R. E., & Riquelme, H. E. (2008). Brand equity for online companies. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, *26*(7), 719-742.

Rubio, N., Oubiña, J., & Villaseñor, N. (2014). Brand awareness–Brand quality inference and consumer's risk perception in store brands of food products. *Food Quality and Preference*, *32*(2014), 289-298.

Ruževičiūtė, R., & Ruževičius, J. (2010). Brand equity integrated evaluation model: consumer-based approach. *Ekonomika Ir Vadyba*, *1*(15), 719-725.

Sasivongpakdi, K., & Wang, Y. (2014). Measuring and Evaluating Brand Equity: A research on beverage brand AloeVera Drycken on Swedish market.

Samosir, J., Purba, O., Ricardianto, P., Dinda, M., Rafi, S., Sinta, A.K., Wardhana, A., Anggara, D.C., Trisanto, F., & Endri, E. (2023). The role of social media marketing and brand equity on e-WOM: Evidence from Indonesia. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, *7*(2), 609-626.

Sasmita, J., & Suki, N. M. (2015). Young consumers' insights on brand equity: Effects of brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, *43*(3), 276-292.

Schiffman, L.G. and Kanuk, L.L. (2007), Consumer Behavior, 9th ed., Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Schivinski, B., & Dabrowski, D. (2014). *The consumer-based brand equity inventory: scale construct and validation* (No. 4/2014 (22)). GUT FME Working Paper Series A.

Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2016). Research methods for business: A skill-building approach (7th ed). John Wiley & Sons.

Severi, E., & Ling, K. C. (2013). The mediating effects of brand association, brand loyalty, brand image and perceived quality on brand equity. *Asian Social Science*, *9*(3), 125-134.

Sucahyo, Y. A. (2017). Pengaruh brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness, dan brand image terhadap brand equity pada brand happy baby. *Jurnal Performa: Jurnal Manajemen dan Start-Up Bisnis*, *2*(5), 603-612.

Tran, V. T., Nguyen, N. P., Tran, P. T. K., Tran, T. N., & Huynh, T. T. P. (2019). Brand equity in a tourism destination: a case study of domestic tourists in Hoi An city, Vietnam. *Tourism Review*, *74*(3), 704-720.

Torres, P. M., Augusto, M. G., & Lisboa, J. V. (2015). Determining the causal relationships that affect consumer-based brand equity: The mediating effect of brand loyalty. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, *33*(6), 944-956.

Yoo, B., Donthu, N., & Lee, S. (2000). An examination of selected marketing mix elements and brand equity. *Journal of The Academy of Marketing Science*, *28*(2), 195-211.

Yulianto, H., Sutomo, Y., Palupiningtyas, D., & Nugraheni, K. S. (2022). Investigating the role of interactive social media and halal brand equity on purchase decision-making: direct and indirect effects. *Measuring Business Excellence*, *26*(4), 524-540.