Corporate and Brand Images and Customer Loyalty

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate three relationships. The first is between company image and customer loyalty (CL). The second is between brand image and CL. The final decision is between a company and the brand image. Moreover, to meet this goal, readers of the West Java Tribun Daily Newspaper in Bandung are employed as the sample. Unfortunately, this study only gathered data from 75 people using the convenience sampling technique. Moreover, it analyzed their responses statistically using confirmatory factor and reliability analyses, as well as assessment model criteria and t-statistics, to examine the shaped hypotheses using a partial least squares-based structural equation model. As a result, three positive tendencies occur: (1) Consumers with a stronger brand image will have better loyalty, (2) the higher their brand image, the higher their loyalty, and (3) the customers with a better company image will have a better brand image. Based on these facts, this study recommends that West Java Tribun News in Bandung pay attention to the digital media content background, such as YouTube and social media. Additionally, its assigned staff members should interact with the readers by replying to their comments on these media.

Keywords: Brand Image, Corporate Image, Consumer Loyalty, West Java Tribun

INTRODUCTION

Before the Revolution Era 4.0, newspapers became the global favorite media for disseminating information (Permana & Abdullah, 2020). Besides providing information, newspapers also serve other roles, such as entertainment and education (Grady et al., 2021). Entertainment is reflected in comic strips, caricatures, and short and serial stories. Meanwhile, education is reflected through the scientific knowledge content (Mogot-Prahoro, 2021).

During the Revolution Era 4.0, newspapers adopted digital media to perform these functions, leveraging internet connections and smartphones (Permana & Abdullah, 2020). Although newspaper publishers continue to use both digital and print media, some print media outlets are closing due to their ineffectiveness, primarily because of the high costs associated with raw materials, printing, and distribution. In addition to the internal factors of the publisher, the decrease in consumer purchasing power for printed media presents another disadvantage (Ikhwan, 2020).

In the Revolution Era 4.0, the rivalry among digital newspapers remains close-fitting. Therefore, every publisher must arrange a strategy for news (Mariyam et al., 2024; Nasution et al., 2022). The strategy is varied, including multi-angle approaches, social media utilization, and picture-based text (Nasution et al., 2022), leveraging the relative news advantage, utilizing a website with numerous news articles and interactive comments, optimizing news search on Google.com, and aligning with the guidance principles (Mariyam et al., 2024). Ultimately, the primary goal of each publisher is to maintain a loyal public audience for their associated media (Wenzel & Nelson, 2020).

One of the media with digital platforms is the West Java Tribun (WJT), affiliated with the Tribun network and part of the Kompas Gramedia Group, which was established in 2005. With true-life news supported by 20 representatives in West Java, this media can reach a large number of readers (Anugrah et al., 2023). Moreover, this media received the Bronze Winner award in the headline category of the Indonesian Print Media Award 2022, presented by the Press Company Union Center at the Yogyakarta National Museum (Giri, 2022). Although receiving this award, the WJT continues to strive to retain loyal readers (Imtiyaaz, 2023).

Based on the research evidence, customer loyalty (CL) is positively determined by corporate image (CI) as exhibited by Tjokroaminoto and Kunto (2014), Rungsrisawat et al. (2019), Alam and Noor (2020), Jayawarsa et al. (2021), Zaid et al. (2021), Pahmi et al. (2023), Ningrum et al. (2024), and Safirda and Salim (2024). Regrettably, Marcellinus and Ruslim (2019), Widyastuti and Nigrum (2021), and Zakiah and Umiyati (2023) find an insignificant tendency of CI on CL.

The contradictory signs also exist when scholars inspect the relationship between brand image and customer loyalty. A positive tendency exists, as demonstrated by Nova (2022), Sallam et al. (2023), Mostafavipour et al. (2023), Affifatusholihah and Sari (2024), Khan et al. (2024), and Permadhi et al. (2024). Unfortunately, Tjokroaminoto and Kunto (2014), Afyani et al. (2023), and Haryadi and Syahruddin (2023) exhibit a meaningless propensity of BI toward CL.

The paradoxical evidence arises when scholars investigate the relationship between company and brand image. A positive inclination of company image toward brand image happens, as illustrated by Lee and Lee (2018) and Fan (2019). Inopportunely, the inverse direction occurs, as demonstrated by Tjokroaminoto and Kunto (2014), showing a positive impact of brand image on company image.

Based on these three inconsistent effects, this research intends to prove and analyze the impact of corporate and brand image on reader loyalty, as well as the influence of corporate image on brand image. Utilizing the readers of news media as the costumers differs this research from others learning about the retailers of male grooming goods (Tjokroaminoto & Kunto, 2014) and consumers of airlines (Rungsrisawat et al., 2019), superstores (Alam & Noor, 2020), banks (Jayawarsa et al., 2021; Pahmi et al., 2023; Widyastuti & Nigrum, 2021; Zakiah & Umiyati, 2023), coffee shop (Afyani et al., 2023), packet delivery (Zaid et al., 2021), technology companies (Affifatusholihah & Sari, 2024), restaurants (Khan et al., 2024; Permadhi et al., 2024), fashion goods (Lee & Lee, 2018), telecommunication cellular service providers (Marcellinus & Ruslim, 2019), hotels (Ningrum et al., 2024), electricity company (Safirda & Salim, 2024), telecommunication firm (Sallam et al., 2023), Chinese branded goods (Fan, 2019), online transportation (Haryadi & Syharuddin, 2023; Nova, 2022), and football fans (Mostafavipour et al., 2023).

METHOD

This study is classified quantitatively. It adopts positivism, where everything will be meaningful if it can be observed and verified. Therefore, the hypothesis needs to be formulated and examined using the data collected (Rasyid, 2022). In this investigation, three hypotheses exist. The first is a positive impact of corporate image (CI) on consumer loyalty (CL), supported by Tjokroaminoto and Kunto (2014), Rungsrisawat et al. (2019), Alam and Noor (2020), Jayawarsa et al. (2021), Zaid et al. (2021), Pahmi et al. (2023), Ningrum et al. (2024), and Safirda

and Salim (2024). The second is a positive influence of brand image (BI) on CL, reinforced by Nova (2022), Sallam et al. (2023), Mostafavipour et al. (2023), Affifatusholihah and Sari (2024), Khan et al. (2024), and Permadhi et al. (2024). The third is a positive impact of BI on CI, strengthened by Lee and Lee (2018) and Fan (2019). Therefore, the research model is illustrated in Figure 1.
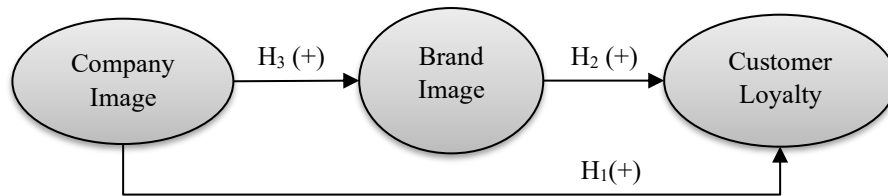

Figure 1. Research Model

Following Ghozali (2017), this investigation utilizes the oval to reflect the company and brand image, as well as customer loyalty, which serve as the latent variables. According to Ghozali (2017), latent constructs are directly unobservable; therefore, they must be measured through their indicators.

In this study, company and brand images function as the exogenous and first endogenous factors, as mentioned by Fan (2019)**.** Secondly, customer loyalty is the second endogenous factor, and its indicators are as described by Alam and Noor (2020). Moreover, the related content of their indicators is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Definition of Research Variables		
Construct	**Indicator**	**Source**
Company Image	A West Java Tribun is a locally famous business (CI1)	Modified from Fan (2019)
	A West Java Tribun contributes to society by delivering credible news (CI2).	
	A West Java Tribun is a trustworthy media (CI3).	
Brand Image	The news I read from Tribun has the best quality (BI1).	Modified from Fan (2019)
	The West Java Tribun delivers precise and responsible news (BI2).	
	News from Tribun is the best based on the money paid (BI3).	
	News from Tribun is accessible at an affordable price (BI4).	
Customer Loyalty	I speak positively about the West Java Tribun to others (CL1).	Modified from Alam and Noor (2020)
	I motivate my friends and relatives to read the news from the West Java Tribun (CL2).	
	I prioritize reading news from the West Java Tribun compared to other media (CL3).	
	I follow the West Java Tribun-related social media platforms to stay informed (CL4).	

The population is a generalization area consisting of objects with specific qualities and a feature set defined by scholars to facilitate learning and concluding. Meanwhile, the samples are the parts and features of the total population (Sugiyono, 2022). In this investigation, the population and samples consist of readers who become customers of West Java Tribun Newspapers in Bandung. Moreover, this research employs a convenience sampling technique, which is based on the ease of access, as Andrade (2021) explains. With this method, the study was able to collect only 75 respondents after distributing the questionnaire. Due to the questionnaire distribution, this study employs the survey method to collect responses, which are quantified using a five-point Likert scale ranging from one to five to express disagreement to agreement, as explained by Sugiyono (2022).

Because of the responses below 100, the variance-based structural equation model is applicable. By mentioning Figure 1, the model is seen in Equations 1 and 2.

$$CL = \gamma_1 CI + \beta_1 BI + \xi_1 \text{ (Equation 1)}$$
$$BI = \gamma_2 CI + \xi_2 \qquad \text{(Equation 2)}$$

These responses to each indicator are crucial for accuracy and reliability. Therefore, confirmatory factor analysis comparing the loading factor (LF) and the average variance extracted (AVE) with 0.7 and 0.5 test validity: They are valid if LF and AVE are more than 0.7 and 0.5. Additionally, comparing composite reliability (CR) with a value of 0.7 is necessary to verify reliability: They are considered reliable if CR is greater than 0.7 (Sholihin & Ratmono, 2020). The model assessment is based on standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) (Cangur & Ercan, 2015), R-square, and Q-square (Ghozali, 2021):

a. If SRMR is below 0.10, the model remains acceptable in terms of its fitness with empirical data (Cangur & Ercan, 2015).
b. Related to R-squared, the cut-off values for classifying contributions as enormous, middle, and tiny are 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19, respectively (Ghozali, 2021).
c. The model will have predictive relevance if the Q-square exceeds 0 (Ghozali, 2021).

After that, hypothesis testing is essential by comparing the probability of the t-statistic of the path coefficient to 5%. If this value is less than 5%, the research hypothesis is acceptable, and vice versa (Ghozali, 2021)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Consumer Profiles

Based on the survey conducted from October to December 2024, this study received 75 responses from readers of West Java Tribun News in Bandung. Then, seventy-five customers are classified based on gender, age, level of education, occupation, and duration as clients of this media (see Table 2).

a. The leading customers are male (60%), aged over 40 (57.33%), hold undergraduate academic degrees (66.67%), work as private employees (53.33%), and have been clients for over four years (44%).
b. The slightest consumers are female (40%), aged from 20 to 30 (13.33%), have last education in senior high school (8%), occupation as a teacher (1.33%), notary (1.33%), driver (1.33%), therapist (1.33%), and unskilled labor (1.33%), and duration to be the client below one year (10.67%).

Table 2. The customer profiles of West Java Tribun News Bandung participating in the survey from October to December 2024

Profile	Description	Total	Portion (%)
Gender	Male	45	60.00
	Female	30	40.00
Age	From 20 to 30	10	13.33
	From 31 to 40	22	29.33
	Beyond 40	43	57.33
Education	Senior high school	6	8.00
	Vocational higher educational degree	7	9.33
	Academic undergraduate degree	50	66.67
	Graduate degree	12	16.00
Occupation	Civil servants	3	4.00
	Teachers	1	1.33
	Housewife	6	8.00
	Private employee	40	53.33
	Notary	1	1.33
	Entrepreneur	15	20.00
	Driver	1	1.33
	Therapist	1	1.33
	Retired persons	6	8.00
	Unskilled labor	1	1.33
Duration to be the client of this media	Below 1 year	8	10.67
	From 1 year to 3 years	22	29.33
	From 4 to 6 years	12	16.00

Profile	Description	Total	Portion (%)
	Beyond 6 years	33	44.00

Instrumental Testing Results

In the first phase of confirmatory factor analysis, the loading factor (LF) of BI3 is lower than 0.7: 0.655. Therefore, BI3 is removed. Then, this analysis is repeated, and Table 3 presents the results. In Table 3, all loading factors are above 0.7: 0.782 and 0.805. 0.778. 0.900, 0.927, 0.930. 0.844. 0.912, 0.894, and 0.877 for BI1, BI2, BI4, CI1, CI2, CI3, CL1, CL2, CL3, and CL4. Hence, accurate responses exist. AVE supports this condition for BI, CI, and CL higher than 0.5: 0.622, 0.845, and 0.778. Moreover, a reliable answer exists, as shown by composite reliability above 0.7 for BI, CI, and CL: 0.832, 0.942, and 0.933, respectively.

Table 3. Loading factor, AVE, and composite reliability for brand image, company image, and customer loyalty

Construct	Indicator	LF	AVE	Composite Reliability
Brand Image	BI1	0.782	0.622	0.832
	BI2	0.805		
	BI4	0.778		
Company Image	CI1	0.900	0.845	0.942
	CI2	0.927		
	CI3	0.930		
Customer Loyalty	CL1	0.844	0.778	0.933
	CL2	0.912		
	CL3	0.894		
	CL4	0.877		

Tabulation report of the valid and reliable indicators

Table 4 presents the responses that fulfill the validity and reliability testing. Furthermore, the average item scores are 4.387, 4.213, 4.267, 3.933, 4.187, 4.080, 4.227, 3.893, 3.733, and 3.960 for CI1, CI2, CI3, BI1, BI2, BI4, CL1, CL2, CL3, and CL4, respectively. For CI1, CI2, CI3, BI1, BI2, BI4, CL1, CL2, CL3, and CL4, the lowest response range is between one (totally disagree) and two (disagree). On the contrary, their highest response is five (totally agree). The detailed reactions, categorized as disagree, neutral, and agree, to each indicator, based on the total percentage of consumers, are provided below.

a.   For CI1, 2.67%, 6.67%, and 90.67% of consumers disagree, respond neutrally, and agree.
b.   For CI2, 2.67%, 12%, and 85.33% of consumers disagree, respond neutrally, and agree.
c.   For CI3, 2.67%, 5.33%, and 92% of consumers disagree, respond neutrally, and agree.
d.   For BI1, 2.67%, 17.33%, and 80% of consumers disagree, react neutrally, and agree.
e.   For BI2, 1.33%, 9.33%, and 89.33% of consumers disagree, react neutrally, and agree.
f.   For BI4, 2.67%, 18.67%, and 78.67% of consumers disagree, react neutrally, and agree.
g.   For CL1, 1.33%, 9.33%, and 88% of consumers disagree, reply neutrally, and agree.
h.   For CL2, 5.33%, 22.67%, and 73.33% of consumers disagree, reply neutrally, and agree.
i.   For CL3, 8%, 28%, and 64% of consumers disagree, reply neutrally, and agree.
j.   For CL4, 8%, 18.67%, and 73.33% of consumers disagree, reply neutrally, and agree.

Table 4. The responses of valid and reliable indicators (N = 75)

Construct	Indicator	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Customers responding disagree (1 and 2)		Customers with a neutral response (3)		Customers responding agree (4 and 5)	
					Total	Portion	Total	Portion	Total	Portion
Company Image	CI1	4.387	2	5	2	2.67%	5	6.67%	68	90.67%

Construct	Item	Mean	Min	Max	n	%	n	%	n	%
	CI2	4.213	1	5	2	2.67%	9	12.00%	64	85.33%
	CI3	4.267	1	5	2	2.67%	4	5.33%	69	92.00%
Brand Image	BI1	3.933	1	5	2	2.67%	13	17.33%	60	80.00%
	BI2	4.187	2	5	1	1.33%	7	9.33%	67	89.33%
	BI4	4.080	2	5	2	2.67%	14	18.67%	59	78.67%
Customer Loyalty	CL1	4.227	1	5	1	1.33%	7	9.33%	66	88.00%
	CL2	3.893	1	5	4	5.33%	17	22.67%	55	73.33%
	CL3	3.733	1	5	6	8.00%	21	28.00%	48	64.00%
	CL4	3.960	2	5	6	8.00%	14	18.67%	55	73.33%

The model estimation result

Table 5 presents the model assessment results: SRMSR = 0.082, R-squared and Q-squared for CL = f(CI, BI) of 0.702 and 0.520, and BI = f(CI) of 0.659 and 0.390. By citing Cangur and Ercan (2015), this SRMR is accepted as a suitable model for empirical data because it remains below 0.1. According to Ghozali (2021), a significant contribution exists for the model CL = f(CI, BI) because the R-squared value is higher than 0.67. Meanwhile, the middle contribution occurs for model BI = f(CI) because the R-squared is between 0.33 and 0.67. Additionally, Table 5 presents the probability of t-statistics of 0.000, 0.002, and 0.000, all with a positive sign, to assess the impact of CI and BI on CL and the influence of CI on BI. Because the probability is below 5%, the first, second, and third hypotheses are tolerable.

Table 5. The model estimation result

Hypothesis	Association	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	t-statistic	Probability	R-square	Q-square
H_1	CI → CL	0.375	0.123	3.044	0.002	0.702	0.520
H_2	BI → CL	0.504	0.121	4.161	0.000		
H_3	CI → BI	0.812	0.046	17.755	0.000	0.659	0.390
Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)					0.082		

Discussion

The results of this study support the acceptance of the first hypothesis: Company image has a positive influence on consumer loyalty. Corporate image is the psychological representation of the company to its stakeholders. This image will appear in their mind when they hear its name or see its emblem. Indeed, it happens after the company communicates its identity to its stakeholders (Gray & Balmer, 1998), including its customers (Gray & Balmer, 1998; Wheelen et al., 2023). In this research context, the public readers are the targeted customers of the West Java Tribun. Therefore, this positive trend indicates that the popularity of the West Java Tribun, supported by accurate news and trustworthy media, can attract dedicated readers. Additionally, this finding aligns with Tjokoroaminoto and Kunto (2014), Rungsrisawat et al. (2019), and Alam and Noor (2020), who used samples of 75 retailers of male grooming goods, 287 airline passengers, and 325 shoppers from a superstore. Besides, this propensity confirms Jayawarsa et al. (2021), Zaid et al. (2021), Pahmi et al. (2023), Ningrum et al. (2024), and Safirda and Salim (2024) after surveying 40, 126, 30, 150, and 120 customers of the rural bank, package

delivery services, the Shariah commercial banks, a five-star hotel, and the national electricity company, respectively.

Secondly, this study accepts the second hypothesis: Brand image has a positive effect on customer loyalty. For firms, the brand image represents a symbol of commodities (Fan, 2019), as well as customer perceptions and beliefs, which are stored in their memory (Kotler et al., 2022). In this research context, the public readers are the related clients of the West Java Tribun. Hence, the positive relationship between brand image and customer loyalty indicates that qualified news from the West Java Tribun, reinforced by the correct price decision, makes the readers devoted. They perceive that news is worthy of access based on the cost of money. Hence, this inclination is confirmed by Nova (2022), Sallam et al. (2023), and Mostafavipour et al. (2023), based on a sample of 214 and 602 customers who use online transportation and telecommunication services, as well as 258 football fans. Additionally, this positive fact aligns with Affifatusholihah and Sari (2024) and Khan et al. (2024), who applied to 220 and 317 consumers of technology firms and fast-food restaurants, respectively. It also aligns with Permadhi et al. (2024), after studying the perspective of 100 visitors in a Padang restaurant as their sample.

Lastly, this study confirms the third hypothesis: a positive relationship exists between the company and brand image, indicating that the Tribun, as a corporation, can effectively influence readers by using a strong preference for the name. Therefore, this study confirms the findings of Lee and Lee (2018), who declare that company image is a positive antecedent of brand image, based on an investigation of 222 buyers of a fashion company with multiple brands. This finding is supported by Fan (2019), who studied South Korean citizens who purchased Chinese products.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate and analyze the influence of corporate and brand images on customer loyalty, with a focus on readers of the West Java Tribun. After checking the hypothesis through their responses based on the partial least squares-based structural equation model, this investigation concludes that company and brand image are the key drivers in making readers loyal. Additionally, it effectively demonstrates a positive correlation between a company and brand image. Despite the significant trends, this study still has limitations, including a small sample size and the identification of determinants of customer loyalty (CL) and brand image (BI). Associated with the first one, other scholars should add the samples until at least 200 to verify the previous research evidence. Then, related to the second one, they should use service quality, consumer engagement, customer orientation, and social media marketing as the exogenous variables in their research model to connect with CL and BI. As a practical suggestion, West Java Tribun News in Bandung should pay attention to the content background on YouTube and social media, such as video quality, graphic design, animation, and music, to strengthen its public brand position and attract loyal readers. Moreover, staff members need to respond to their comments in a cooperative manner.

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