

Building brand loyalty through community

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ABSTRACT

Background: Brand loyalty may be more fluid in the digital era. Consumers can easily switch to another brand if they find a product with better reviews or a more attractive offer. Brand loyalty can be built or maintained through online brand communities with a social capital approach. **Purpose:** The study aimed to describe brand loyalty building through communities. **Methods:** It used a descriptive qualitative approach to gain deeper insights. Data were collected from relevant academic journals, scientific magazines, previous research results, books, industry magazines, and various newspapers. The data analysis consisted of three streams of activities: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification to ensure accuracy. **Results:** The study results illustrated that brand loyalty can be effectively built, maintained, and improved through well-established brand communities that meet the essential elements of shared language, shared vision, reciprocity, and social trust, fostering deeper connections among members. **Conclusion:** A credible brand community will encourage consumers and potential consumers to constantly build and improve long-term relationships to interact so that the brand community can transfer brand knowledge to them. **Implications:** A credible brand community can be built after fulfilling the elements of shared language, shared vision, reciprocity, and social trust – critical factors in increasing brand loyalty behavior.

Keywords: Brand loyalty; brand community; consumer; social capital; social media

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INTRODUCTION

Brand loyalty is essential for companies because it significantly impacts long-term success (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022; Khan et al., 2022). For companies, brand loyalty can help stabilize revenue because consumers tend to make repeated purchases of the same brand. Brand loyalty may also benefit the business if effectively managed. According to Durianto et al. (2001), a corporation can benefit from brand loyalty in several ways, including lower marketing expenses. Retaining existing customers is less expensive than acquiring new ones. Therefore, if brand loyalty rises, marketing expenses will decrease. Strong brand loyalty can also boost sales and trust of marketing intermediaries. Based on their past purchasing patterns, the consumers purchase a brand.

Brand loyalty is crucial for attracting new customers to a business. When customers are satisfied and committed to a brand, they often become its advocates, fostering trust among potential clients. This is especially vital in industries where transactions carry significant risks because endorsements from loyal customers can help reassure new clients about a brand's quality and reliability. Furthermore, satisfied customers are likely to spread the word about their positive experiences, creating a

natural form of marketing that can significantly improve the brand's reputation and attract new clients influenced by these recommendations.

In addition to bringing in new customers, Brand loyalty not only helps businesses attract new customers but also provides an advantage for competing businesses and facing the threat of competitors. Customers who have been categorised as loyal customers are usually not easily tempted even though new products have the advantages issued by competitors. In this case, business people have time to see market shifts that occur, make observations of competitors' movements, and finally provide product upgrades according to the needs that are in demand in the market. Therefore, brand loyalty is a business helper that protects customers from running to competitors so that the brand's existence in the market remains solid. In addition, brands that have many loyal customers tend to have a much better market reputation than brands with fewer loyal customers. This is because the trust in the brand held by loyal consumers is usually passed on to relatives or friends in their environment; a practice like this is one of the reasons consumer loyalty can boost a brand's reputation. Departing from this, this loyalty certainly does not appear by itself; it needs to be built step by step by the brand, starting from good product quality, consistent customer service, and good customer

experience to good interactions between consumers and customers, for example, in interactions on social media. Brands' social media interactions with their consumers can strengthen loyalty relationships and encourage consumers to feel emotionally attached to the brand. When consumers invest emotionally, their loyalty to the brand will increase, and they will ignore other alternatives and competitors. Ultimately, fostering brand loyalty is a strategic investment that can yield long-term success and sustainability in an ever-evolving market landscape.

Consumer behavior in the digital era is significantly different from that in the previous era (Oktaviani & Rustandi, 2018). In the digital era, consumers can instantly access large amounts of information through the internet (Leeflang et al., 2014). They can search for reviews, price comparisons, and opinions of other consumers before deciding on a purchase. Information transparency is higher, and consumers are more empowered, unlike the conventional media era, where consumers get limited product information through advertisements in traditional media (T.V., radio, newspapers, magazines) or from the recommendations of people nearby. Brands and companies highly control access to information. It causes one-way interaction between consumers and brands through advertisements, catalogs, or brochures.

Brands control communication, and consumers rarely provide direct feedback (Cambier & Poncin, 2020). The digital era promotes two-way interactions between consumers and brands. Consumers can interact with brands through social media, email, and other platforms (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). They can provide direct and open feedback and influence brand reputation through reviews or public comments.

Customers now use social media to connect, search, and exchange brand and company information, thoughts, and experiences. Adeola et al., (2019) state that "social media platforms offer opportunities for customers to interact with other consumers, so companies are no longer the only source of brand communication. This phenomenon has reduced marketers' control over brand management. Product and company profiles and information on social media networks are assumed to be reliable and credible sources, more reliable and feasible than traditional types of marketing". Consumers will tell seven to ten people about a product in traditional marketing; on the other hand, social media marketing allows consumers to share experiences directly with millions of social media users quickly. Social media plays a vital role in brand building. Therefore, it is crucial to understand that customers' perception of brands is influenced by what the company

communicates and what customers say about a particular brand. The viral spread of information among social media users is much stronger than traditional media such as T.V., radio, and print advertising.

In the digital age, consumers are heavily influenced by influencers, other users' reviews, and the wider online community. Social media plays a massive role in shaping public opinion (Hendrayani et al., 2022), and social influence can come from various global sources. Consumers in the digital age are much more critical, connected, and empowered compared to the previous eras, where they were more dependent on brands for information and choice (Rachmad, 2024; Wang & Huang, 2023).

Shifts in consumer behavior in the digital age reflect a profound transformation in how people buy products and interact with brands. These changes are fueled by advances in information and communication technologies that enable more accessible access to information, global interactions, and enhanced shopping experiences. Several factors have shaped this change, including the internet, social media and mobile phones. In this digital age, unlimited access to information has changed how people search for and obtain a particular product or service. Search engines such as Google and Bing, or even AIs such as Gemini and ChatGPT, are the primary guides for people

to find answers with just one click. Nowadays, people can check, read reviews and compare prices quickly and efficiently without spending more energy. This is one of the factors driving consumers to be more selective in receiving information so that sometimes information from producers and sellers is only considered as complementary information; the rest, they will find the truth of the data themselves. This forces businesses to be more transparent and provide clear added value to attract and retain consumers. This shifting phenomenon also favors thriving online consumer communities, where consumers can share experiences, give advice, and influence product decisions through feedback. Forums, social media groups, and review platforms create global communities.

Consumer communities are social capital. Social capital is created by the structure of relationships between people in a social environment that creates collective productivity (Meek et al., 2019).

With this in mind, brand communities can be advantageous as they bring together customers from different demographics and allow them to get brand information from various sources. In addition, customers can help managers make decisions in a company (Reppel, 2022). In addition, customers of a particular brand can be a reliable source of creative ideas and are usually responsible for

a series of actions that can lead to product or brand changes. Therefore, the concept of brand community becomes related or connected to media with the rise of social media technology. Indeed, brands and media have transcended geographical boundaries. In addition, customers of a particular brand tend to be a reliable source of innovative ideas and provide information regarding actions that may lead to changes in the brand or product. Therefore, with the advent of social media technology, the concept of brand community becomes connected or intertwined with the media.

On the bright side, consumer communities allow brands to understand consumers' preferences, needs, and concerns more deeply. As such, brands can provide more relevant and personalized content, products, or services, which drives more robust engagement. Furthermore, online communities allow brands to get direct feedback from loyal consumers regarding products or services. By involving consumers in the innovation process, they feel valued and engaged, strengthening their loyalty to the brand.

Several researchers have discussed the relationships between consumer loyalty, brands, and online communities. It shows that the major change in how consumers interact with brands based on technological developments is an interesting phenomenon to research. In fact, in

this digital era, consumers are more connected to each other, which results in a more critical and empowered nature. Consumers within their communities can provide direct feedback, unlike in the past, which tended to be one-way, where consumers only received information from companies. Some previous studies that support this research are conducted by: first, Safira & Aryansyah (2023), which suggested that the Online Brand Community construct has a positive effect on User-Brand Relationships, the Social Media Platforms construct has a positive effect on Consumer Brand Engagement, and both User-Brand Relationships and Consumer Brand Engagement have a positive effect on Consumer Brand Loyalty. These results imply that marketers and brand managers should concentrate more on registering and utilizing internet platforms for marketing and advertising, even though this was not part of the original hypothesis.

A study conducted by Damayanti et al. (2023) highlighted that the influence of the online brand community shows positive and significant results in partially shaping brand trust. This study explains that brand trust can be formed through the dimensions of viability, reliability and intentionality, such as providing mutual satisfaction between the company and customers to maximise the profit obtained. This research underlines that matters relating

to trust and loyalty are key to simultaneously maintaining efforts in shaping brand trust and brand loyalty. The fundamental thing that can create trust and loyalty is to build closer customer engagement through social media by getting to know each community member's characteristics. Inevitably, many customers will quickly switch if they do not get what they want and need (Damayanti et al., 2023).

In a related study, Futuwah (2022) explored This study provides empirical evidence regarding the role of group chat in brand communities related to the perceived benefits of each community member. Some of these Perceived benefits affect members' commitment to the brand community and brand loyalty. The research provides insights into what happens in brand community groups that can provide learning and evaluation for communities that use social media chat groups in the future. This is also an opportunity for future research that shows that online-based brand communities will continue to grow as the behaviour and users of the internet and social media post-COVID-19 increase (Futuwah, 2022). Together, these studies underscore the critical role of online communities in building trust, engagement, and loyalty in the digital age.

Previous research has shown that brand online communities are important in shaping brand loyalty. Safira dan Aryansyah (2023)

safira found that consumers' involvement in social media can help strengthen their loyalty. In this case, they also explained that social media interactions can build user relationships that create a sense of community and belonging among consumers, thus increasing interest in the brand. The same thing was also discussed by Damayanti et al. (2023), who highlighted that trust in brands can be formed through active participation in online communities. The existence of online communities helps brands to know the advantages and disadvantages of the products they release, which in turn has a significant influence on their loyalty. Then Futuwah (2022) also conveyed the same thing: Perceived benefits that a person gets in the brand's online community chat group affect members' commitment to the brand community and brand loyalty. However, there are still things that have not been discussed in the previous studies, such as how to form the brand community, especially in more relaxed communities such as chat groups or small forums.

This research aims to thoroughly examine the operation of brand online communities in the modern digital environment. This study investigates the impact of online communities on consumer loyalty to a firm, including the dynamics of interactions occurring on the platform. The study seeks to clarify the

establishment of emotional bonds between consumers and brands, providing theoretical insights and practical suggestions for business advancement. This research highlights the need for consumer involvement on digital platforms to maintain the relationship between brand and consumer loyalty.

RESEARCH METHOD

A descriptive qualitative method was used in this research. The descriptive technique explains, characterizes, or depicts the object under investigation in its current state (Sugiyono, 2017). Descriptive research can also be defined as a type of study that aims to describe current phenomena, both natural and man-made. Activity, traits, alterations, connections, parallels, and discrepancies between phenomena can all be considered phenomena. According to Hennink et al. (2020) and Mohajan (2018), descriptive research characterizes and understands things, such as circumstances and conditions with preexisting relationships, evolving perspectives, repercussions or effects, etc. A qualitative approach is “a research work mechanism guided by non-statistical or nonmathematical subjective assessments, where the measure of value used is not score numbers but rather categorization of value or quality” (Moloeng,

2015). A qualitative approach to research is also defined as a process that attempts to understand better the complexities involved in human interactions. The keywords in qualitative research are process, understanding, complexity, interaction, and humans (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Researchers conducting qualitative research need to understand the problem from within the context of the problem to be studied. This research was conducted at Universitas Padjadjaran. Its Object is a brand community formed through social media. It focused on the interaction between consumers and brands in the online community. Meanwhile, the subject is the active involvement of consumers in the online community to build brand loyalty.

The study began by collecting data from official reports on the research topic. Researchers collected as much literature or reading material as possible in journals, scientific magazines, previous research results, books, magazines, and newspapers related to this research. To collect data from reading materials, the researchers considered two essential aspects: the relevance of the reading material to the research topic and its validity. The data collected from various perspectives were then analyzed qualitatively to find the systematic impact and prospects of the digital broadcast implementation policy.

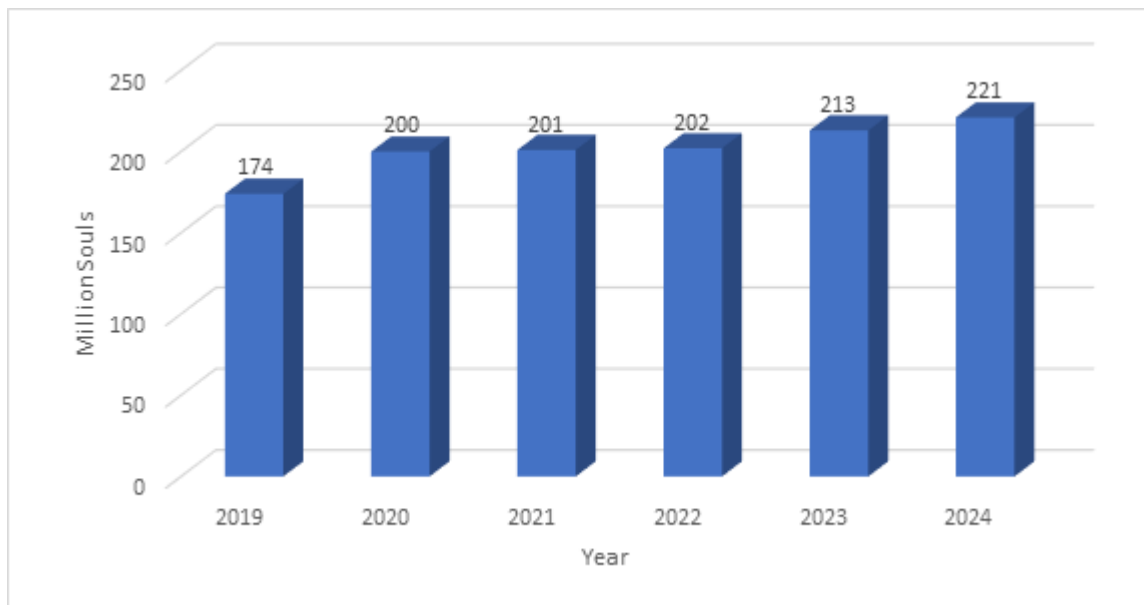
According to Moloeng, qualitative data analysis is “an effort made by working with data,

organizing data, selecting it into manageable units, synthesizing it, looking for and finding patterns, finding what is essential and what is learned, and deciding what can be told to others” (Moloeng., 2015). According to Milles and Huberman (2014), the stages of data analysis are described as follows: 1) Data collection: In this instance, the researcher uses reading materials from the library to gather research data. 2) Data reduction entails summarizing, picking out the most important information, concentrating on what matters, and searching for trends and themes. The process of choosing, streamlining, abstracting, and altering “rough” data from written field notes is known as data reduction. Data reduction is ongoing throughout the qualitative study until the report is finished. 3) Data Presentation: This is the most crucial step in the data analysis. Data presentation is a collection of structured information that enables inference and decision-making. 4) Verification or conclusion: The process of searching, testing, rechecking, or comprehending the meaning, regularity, patterns, explanations, flow, cause and effect, or prepositions is known as data verification. Meanwhile, conclusions can be in the form of a description of an object so that it becomes clear. It can be a causal or interactive relationship, hypothesis, or theory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information and communication technologies are driving globalization at a rapid pace. On the positive side, globalization has resulted in cultural exchange and significant economic benefits. Conversely, globalization brings challenges related to environmental impacts, social change and values, and social inequality. Surya and Taibe (2022) mentioned that globalization brings changes to local communities caused by the opening of international markets, the exchange of cultural knowledge, social inequality, and the waning spirit of cooperation. The current globalization is directly related to the widespread use of the internet in all elements of human life.

The Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (A.P.J.I.I.) announced that the number of Indonesian Internet users in 2024 will reach 221,563,479 out of a total population of 278,696,200 Indonesians in 2023 (Figure 1). From the results of the Indonesia 2024 internet penetration survey released by A.P.J.I.I., Indonesia’s internet penetration rate touched 79.5%. Compared to the previous period, there was an increase of 1.4%. As of 2018, Indonesia’s internet penetration reached 64.8%. Then sequentially, 73.7% in 2020, 77.01% in 2022, and 78.19% in 2023. This growth certainly has both positive and negative



Source: Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association, 2024

Figure 1 Number of Internet Users in Indonesia in the Last 6 Years

impacts. Connectivity between citizens has become more widespread, but even though connectivity is more excellent with easier access to information, social isolation occurs because individuals do not interact directly; they interact more through electronic devices. Moreover, the isolation caused by information globalization can trigger excessive consumerism triggered by the ease of making transactions on various digital platforms that are easily accessible anytime and anywhere.

Technological advancements and internet penetration have profoundly transformed how consumers shop and interact with products and services. This change is not just an evolution but a revolution that is changing the foundation of consumer behavior. Consumer behavior has five stages: identification of needs, information

search, information evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase (Adha, 2022). However, in today's digital era, convenient services are the leading choice. The convenience is in the online market, also known as e-commerce and marketplace. Transactions in the marketplace make it easier for consumers to choose, order, and pay, and consumers can wait for the goods to be delivered without leaving their homes or visiting stores, which can save time. The transaction process is more efficient (Syahadiyanti & Subriadi, 2018).

The ability to transmit information quickly and internationally is one of the most notable effects of technology and the internet. Nowadays, consumers have access to a vast array of global product and service information. Consumers may now easily access reviews,

pricing comparisons, and user feedback to help them make well-informed decisions about what to buy. Online knowledge has made people more astute and critical consumers. They look for unbiased opinions from other users and rely on information from the seller or manufacturer. Because every customer's choice and experience can quickly become public knowledge in the digital era, businesses must focus on the quality of their goods and services.

Consumers are confident in the quality of products in the marketplace because reviews from previous consumers are available. After looking at the product description, they typically decide whether to proceed with a transaction or purchase based on reviews from previous buyers. In addition, they no longer limit their comparisons to brand alone. They have higher standards when comparing product quality, service quality, and overall satisfaction. However, reviews from buyers (consumers) are not always positive even if the product quality matches the description. In such cases, they tend to exhibit a low tolerance for product quality in the marketplace. Even a slight shortcoming may result in a bad review. Consumer pressure on product quality and service quality is enormous. Product quality and service quality that does not meet consumer expectations are often subject to complaints, not only in the product review column but also in social media.

The digital era provides various e-commerce platforms or marketplaces so that consumers have a lot of choices, even if only in one marketplace. With extensive connectivity and access to information, consumers can quickly obtain information about a product, brand, etc. All the information required is at the fingertips of consumers. The digital era is the era of consumer sovereignty. Social media has become a key platform for customer engagement in the digital age. They use these platforms to share experiences, seek support, and provide direct feedback. Brands should be active on social media and respond quickly to questions or issues. Understanding the dynamics of social media includes providing quick responses and understanding the language and needs of customers on these platforms. Effective engagement on social media can build closer relationships with customers, create positive impressions among online communities, and strengthen brand image.

Dialogue between consumers in the review column of a brand or product can determine whether consumers make a purchase or discourage buying. Dialog between consumers can destroy a brand. Conventionally, opinions or reviews from consumers who buy or use a brand or product become a reference for potential consumers. This action is typically called word of mouth. Meanwhile, word of

mouth in the digital era is even broader because reviews or testimonials of a product brand come from various circles. Thus, the digital era makes it difficult for businesses to maintain consumer loyalty. Therefore, it is essential to implement the right strategy to foster brand loyalty in the long run.

Brand loyalty occurs when consumers consistently buy products from a brand rather than looking for alternatives from other brands. Brand loyalty in the digital era can be built through a consistent presence across various online platforms, such as websites and social media, which are called touchpoints. Through these touchpoints, a brand's message content is personalized based on experience, aligned with interests and needs to create an emotional connection with consumers. Consistent presence at the touchpoints can help create familiarity with customers and build customer trust, from which brand loyalty increases (More, 2023).

However, in the digital age, consumer tastes often change rapidly. Brands might struggle unless they focus on their strengths. Therefore, brand producers must embrace various elements in the market to produce an added value proposition, such as by embracing the community (Soehadi & Ardianto, 2013). Meanwhile, positive word of mouth is the king that determines brand loyalty. Through WoM, potential consumers know and recognize a

brand from previous consumers (Triani & Dewi, 2023). Loyal consumers will recommend it to friends or anyone through their social media. On the other hand, potential consumers will trust recommendations from people they know or who have credibility. Individuals or communities can do word of mouth.

A collection of consumers, fans, or users who communicate with one another directly or via brand-related digital channels is known as a brand community. A type of human association in the context of consumption, brand communities are thought to be diverse. A shared interest unites members with different origins and poor brand ties. Albert M. Muniz Jr. and Thomas C. O'Guinn introduced the idea of a "brand community" in 2001. They defined it as a specialized, geographically dispersed group built on a structured network of social relationships among brand enthusiasts. This indicates that a brand community is a specific type of community with linkages based on social relationship structures among brand enthusiasts rather than geographic ties. According to Schouten (2024), a brand community is a distinct hand-picked social group because of a shared affinity for a specific brand, product category, and consumer behavior. However, since the business developed the idea of a brand community and managed to be a powerful word-of-mouth marketing tool, it is more than just

a club containing brand users. The concept's ability to build brand trust is what determines how effective it is. Therefore, a brand community is organized according to the social structure of the community rather than geography, and it is based on proximity to a product or brand with similar beliefs and commitments regarding a specific brand. Building relationships with each member who is a user or interested in the brand is the first step in the brand community, which begins with the company itself.

Consumers want to join a brand community not merely because they share a love for the same brand but also because there are goals for each consumer to participate in the community. Holland & Baker state that the main objectives of participation in a brand community are divided into functional and hedonic goals. Functional goals refer to a person's desire to exchange information about a brand with other community members. Meanwhile, hedonic goals refer to the personal enjoyment of interactions with other community members (Ikramuddin et al., 2017).

Online communities of brands usually have a penchant for the same things, which strengthens the connection between members. These communities usually have their language and vision, which helps them build a sense of community and belonging. In addition, community members are usually well-connected,

increasing their social trust and encouraging other members to participate actively. These emerging social interactions then seed the growth of the role in significantly spreading information about the brand, especially among fellow brand communities. This is undoubtedly important because it can influence consumer behaviour, increase brand loyalty, and help products adapt to the community's needs (Meek et al., 2019).

Brands often use brand communities to build stronger relationships with consumers. This is done because brand communities are where consumers interact actively, from reviews and sharing comments to questions and answers. Such interactions usually provide important insights for brands to improve the quality of their products so that community members feel more connected to the brand. Through open communication and good collaboration, brands can build trust, strengthen emotional connections, and form a loyal customer base. Thus, this kind of collaboration ultimately becomes a win-win solution for consumers who want products according to their needs and brands that need consumer loyalty to keep buying the products they produce.

Communities can be a powerful medium for marketing strategies as community marketing develops, and brands utilize communities as a form of marketing, which is increasingly

important in the digital age. Marketing through communities is a strategy that involves customers actively and without the impression of coercion, creating a flow of conversations and information beneficial to the company, consumers, and the market. A brand community is one instrument that strengthens consumer relationships with brands. Now, tearing the digital era with internet technology, mobility, and networking will significantly support all activities and interactions in a community so that the members can have more opportunities and convenience in creating, managing, and utilizing a community as a marketing strategy to increase customer loyalty (Kitchen & Proctor, 2015; Rane et al., 2023). The critical values of the brand community are: a) being an essential source of market information for innovation and co-creation so that it reduces research and development costs, b) being considered as a different market segment (prospect customer database) related to specific marketing initiatives (developing company sales and opportunities for cross-border and vertical sales), c) generating customer loyalty and advocacy which in turn can reduce promotional costs (Wardhana, 2016).

Brand communities can emerge both organically and structurally. Organic brand communities arise spontaneously from the initiatives and enthusiasm of consumers without

any direct influence or encouragement from the brand owners or corporations. This community can grow rapidly because the products they use suit their needs; in other words, they feel that the brand is concerned with the needs of consumers in the community. This creates an emotional connection between brands and consumers. An example is the forum of product lovers issued by Apple. It is an organic forum formed because it has the same tendency to use products issued by Apple.

These communities are formed because of the users' common vision. Community members usually share their experiences using the product and then give objective reviews about the quality without any advertising or promotion. This makes community members have more trust in the information conveyed by other community members than marketing from brands. From this, a strong community bond is formed, making them more loyal to the brand.

Consumers' communication process and attitudes due to involvement with the brand community align with the Theory of Planned Behavior proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1977). This theory explains that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (P.B.C.) shape consumer behavior, which forms intentions. Intention then affects how a person behaves. This theory postulates attitudes, subjective norms, and P.B.C. form intentions and

behavior. The three intention-forming variables in TPB are explained respectively: 1) Attitude, a person's positive or negative evaluation of a behavior. The concept is the degree to which the behavior is rated positively or negatively. 2) Subjective norms are one's perception of certain behaviors, which is influenced by the judgments of people around considered influential, which is the brand community itself. 3) Perceived behavioral control (P.B.C.) is the perceived ease or difficulty of performing certain behaviors. P.B.C. is determined by factors that can facilitate or hinder one's ability to perform these behaviors. For example, in a brand community, sharing experiences about a particular brand makes someone able to buy or even not give the brand. P.B.C. is conceptually related to self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) developed it in social cognitive theory.

Organic brand communities are increasingly advantageous for brand producers as they foster customer loyalty and involvement. Nevertheless, a notable disadvantage is that these producers lack direct oversight of the discussions that occur over their products. The absence of oversight may result in difficulties, particularly when faced with criticism or unfavourable assessments. Such adverse feedback can substantially affect the brand's reputation and overall image. The productive dialogues within these networks may not

consistently portray the brand favourably, necessitating vigilant sentiment monitoring by manufacturers. Companies frequently must interact with consumers beyond these online forums to rectify and alleviate harm to their brand reputation. By doing so, they can offer clarifications, amplify positive storylines, and reclaim authority over their brand's reputation in the marketplace. Engaging in broader dialogues is crucial for sustaining a positive brand reputation during organic discussions.

Meanwhile, structural brand communities are formed by producers or brand owners to create a relationship between brands and consumers. They establish brand communities as part of a marketing strategy to build interactions between brands and consumers so that they can engage more deeply with the brand and create brand loyalty. Brand manufacturers facilitate the medium, the communication forum, and the rules for brand reviews or discussions. Examples of structural brand communities are LEGO Ideas and the Starbucks Rewards Program.

LEGO builds brand communities by providing tools or media for consumers to submit design ideas. LEGO officially produces the designs that receive the most support from consumers and potential consumers, which can create an emotional connection between consumers and the brand. Meanwhile, Starbucks

provides a space for consumers to participate in events and receive consumer opinions and promotions to increase consumer engagement with the brand.

Structured brand communities can direct discussions and interactions to correspond with particular brand values. This control, however, may lead to a diminished genuine emotional connection between consumers and the brand. If these communities are not efficiently managed, they risk generating a disconnect, potentially estranging customers instead of cultivating a sense of belonging. Moreover, creating and maintaining a structured brand community requires considerable investment from the brand in time, effort, and financial resources. This dedication necessitates a systematic approach to maintain the community's vibrancy and engagement while emphasizing the brand's fundamental theme. Inadequate oversight may compromise the intended advantages of cultivating a unified community, resulting in lost possibilities for authentic interaction. The primary difficulty is to balance control with authenticity to cultivate a vibrant community that connects with consumers profoundly.

Organic and cultural brand communities have advantages and disadvantages in building brand loyalty. Technically, both can be combined to minimize shortcomings. Meek et al. (2019) suggested that shared language,

vision, reciprocity, and social trust within the brand community can build a sense of belonging and increase consumer participatory behavior.

Therefore, for the brand community to run according to brand values, brand community members must be actively involved. For organic brand communities, shared language, shared vision, reciprocity, and social trust are created automatically. It is different from structural brand communities established by brand owners. Brand owners must construct a shared language by considering demographic and behavioral factors to create a language consumers readily understand because each individual comes from a different social and cultural background. Once the shared language is created, they need to encourage the community to have a shared vision that aligns with the brand values.

Shared language is an integral element in developing a sense of belonging to the brand. In addition, it can influence the development of network ties among brand community members. It opens up opportunities for open communication between community members to share and accept one another, which can create social trust within the brand community. A solid brand community will try to fulfill the information needs of community members and visitors (Kamboj & Rahman, 2017).

A credible brand community encourages consumers and potential consumers to build and

enhance long-term relationships for continuous interaction, allowing the brand community to transfer brand knowledge to them. Mahrous and Abdelmaaboud (2017) state that the interaction between brand communities and consumers and potential consumers will generate data that can be used to guide the development of marketing strategies for brand owners, especially a brand's marketing team.

Shared language, shared vision, reciprocity, and social trust within brand communities are critical factors in enhancing brand loyalty behavior (Loureiro et al., 2017). Therefore, brand owners should customize brand attributes and values that represent the brand in a common language and develop a culture based on social trust and reciprocity to guarantee the sustainability of brand loyalty. In addition, the company must continuously innovate and use social media platforms to build better and more responsive communication so that consumers feel involved. Technological developments require companies to quickly adapt and use brand communities as part of their marketing strategy. In addition to providing a competitive advantage, this can also boost brand sales.

CONCLUSION

The massive development of digital affects people's habits, including consumer behaviour,

from buying and selling to interaction with brands. All of this is influenced by the development of technology without borders, today's technology allows humans to be connected globally without any restrictions like the days before massive technology. In terms of consumer behaviour, for example, through technology, people can get product information at lightning speed and compare the price of one product with another with just one click to see other customer reviews that make the shopping experience much more enjoyable. Along with this, brands need to think of concrete strategies to provide a good customer experience to retain their customers, add value to attract new customers and build customer trust to create loyal consumers. In addition, the fast-paced and intelligent behaviour of digital consumers requires brands to be able to prioritise consumer needs and continue to innovate. Companies must be able to adapt and take advantage of existing digital opportunities to continue to exist in the market.

One way to increase consumer loyalty is to create a brand community. This community is a group of people with the same inclination towards a particular product or brand, in which there is interaction between one customer and another. Through this community, customers are used to sharing their experiences with a particular product, providing reviews, and

comparing the advantages and disadvantages of one product with another. The interaction between one consumer and another causes an emotional bond between community members, making this brand community stronger than imagined. Thanks to this emotional bond, the brand community can build loyalty to the brand and influence the brand's reputation in the market. Once consumers feel an attachment to other consumers within the same brand, there is an emotional connection between the brand and the consumer. The formation of this emotional connection between the brand and the community makes their loyalty to the brand high, leading to repeat purchases and improving the brand's reputation in the market. In view of this, this study concludes that online brand communities are important for building long-term relationships between brands and consumers and helping brands grow sustainably.

However, this research has limitations, especially regarding time and resources. Therefore, the recommendation for future research is that there will be research that explores how platforms such as social media can affect interactions in brand communities; this needs to be done considering that one platform and another have significant differences. Then, further research can also be carried out through quantitative research that explores the comparison between before and after a person

joins an online brand community on his loyalty to the brand; this is done to be able to see the extent to which the brand community can affect a person's loyalty level. Furthermore, examining the reactions of various demographic groups to brand communities may reveal the complexities of consumer behaviour and preferences. These recommendations improve our understanding of consumer-brand interactions and offer actionable insights for brands seeking to strengthen customer relationships through effective community-building initiatives. By leveraging this information, firms may develop tailored tactics to foster a sense of belonging among their clients, enhancing loyalty and ongoing engagement.

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