
Factors Influencing Core Brand Attitude and Consumer Perceptual Fit in the Pandemic Era and Their Implications for Purchase Intention Toward Extended Product

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Abstract

Challenges faced by people in today's pandemic conditions are the dependence on the internet and communication tools because all the processes of work from home or school from home activities are done online. In addition to the stable and strong internet connection, the use of reliable communication equipment tools became a must and people were looking for a brand that suited this need. However, it turns out that a strong brand in the electronics industry has not guaranteed success when doing brand extension in the category of communication tools. This is experienced by Sharp, a leading electronics manufacturer from Japan.

This research aims to find out whether core brand image, core brand attitude, brand association, product connection, use experience, and consumer perceptual fit, have an influence on purchase intention toward extended product in the case of Brand Sharp on its communication device product, the Sharp Aquos Zero 2 Smartphone. Quantitative research methods have been conducted using online questionnaires to respondents who are over 17 years old and know sharp electronic products, have owned their products and have seen sharp Aquos Zero 2 reviews but have never bought the product. The structural equation model (SEM) method was used to analyze these 6 research hypotheses.

The result was a positive relationship between core brand image, core brand attitude, brand association, product connection, use experience, and consumer perceptual fit on purchase intention toward extended product smartphone. However, on the other hand, the core brand image and use experience variables have no influence on core brand attitude.

Keywords: core brand image, core brand attitude, brand association, purchase intention, extended product.

I. INTRODUCTION

The current pandemic in Indonesia has resulted in major changes in the implementation of education and the business activities. The teaching and learning process must be done online

and the Work From Home (WFH) has become a must for business activities in order to reduce the spread of the covid-19 virus. To support this activity, the Ministry of Education and Culture, even provides internet data quota packages for students and teachers that can be used to access learning applications [1]. In the business world, processes rely on video conferencing with various applications. This change in pattern has an impact on the increasing need for smartphones.

People in Indonesia between the ages of 20 and 29 have the greatest smartphone penetration rate or 75.95 percent and the percentage of ownership in all age groups has risen to more over 50% of the whole community. This situation demonstrates that cellphones are popular not just with youngsters and teens, but also with the elderly [2].

The number of active smartphone users in Indonesia encourages various international smartphone brands to enter Indonesia, such as Samsung from South Korea, Apple from the US, Oppo, Xiaomi, Vivo, Realme, Huawei from China, and Sharp, Toshiba, Panasonic from Japan. However, the smartphone market share in Indonesia is dominated by brands from Korea, China, and the United States [3].

Sharp Corporation, founded on October 15, 1912 in Osaka, Japan, is a firm that designs and manufactures electronic equipment. Sharp is currently present in over 55 countries throughout the world, including Indonesia [4]. PT Sharp Electronics Indonesia has been operating in Indonesia for 50 years and has a market share of 25% in all of its major product categories, including LED lighting, washing machines, and refrigerators [5]. Sharp household appliances had a 155 percent gain in sales in April 2020, setting a new record for refrigerator sales of 20 million units [6].

The Sharp Aquos Zero 2, was launched on June 25, 2020, as a the result of PT SEID's brand extension strategy. The Sharp Aquos Zero 2 smartphone price was also nearly comparable to the Samsung Galaxy Note 10 series, Rp 13,999,000 and Rp 12,227,000 for the Sharp Aquos Zero 2 [7]. Moreover, this smartphone was the world's lightest smartphone due to its 141-gram weight. The ability to display 1 billion colors on the screen was also important for selling preposition, eventhough it was not the most important feature.

Sharp's entry into the smartphone market was a brand extension strategy, used by companies to develop new products with the goal of capitalizing on existing market expertise and brand image. This brand extension helped businesses create a valuable asset, notably the brand name itself.

Sharp, on the other hand, had a significant problem because, according to data from 2018, Sharp smartphones had a market share of less than 1% in Indonesia [8], while having the second greatest market share in Japan [9]. As a result, the researcher would like to know what kind of

characteristics that help brand expansions succeed and attract customers to acquire Sharp Aquos Zero 2 products.

Based on the description of the phenomenon that occurred and has been outlined above, the need for research on the brand extension is the Sharp Aquos Zero 2 Smartphone. Therefore, researchers compiled a series of questions or research problems:

1. Does core brand image have a positive influence on core brand attitude?
2. Does use experience have a positive influence on core brand attitude?
3. Does core brand attitude have a positive influence on consumer purchase intention of extended product?
4. Does the brand association have a positive influence on consumer perceptual fit?
5. Does product connection have a positive influence on consumer perceptual fit?
6. Does consumer perceptual fit have a positive influence on consumer purchase intention of extended product?

There are six variables that will be used in the research; core brand image, use experience, core brand attitude, brand association, product connection, consumer perceptual fit, and purchase intention towards extended product. Respondents from the study were men and women aged 17 to 45 who had purchased or used electronic products from Sharp, but had never purchased a Sharp smartphone product. The reason for the selection of respondents aged 17 to 45 years is because Sharp Aquos Zero 2 is segmented for teenagers and focuses on gamers and content creators. In addition, the maximum age limit of respondents was 45 years since Sharp initially had segmentation that targeted mothers and fathers.

The study used SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 26 to conduct a validity and reliability test. The study used Lisrel version 8.8 software to test the validity, reliability, match of the model, and the research hypothesis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand extension is a brand development strategy by using an already successful brand name to launch new products in different categories [10]. The use of this strategy aims to minimize failure in issuing new products [11].

Brand image as a way for consumers to recognize a product including its quality and understand the risks of buying the product to meet consumer satisfaction. Companies try to convey the advantages of their products because they aim to build a positive image in the minds of consumers [12]. Positive awareness from consumers of a product will motivate consumers to form a positive brand image [13]. Meanwhile, according to [14], stated that products that have a positive brand image will be more likely to be chosen by consumers because they can minimize the risks.

According to [15] **use experience** is defined as the experience of consumers in enjoying a product and can form positive feelings of value and usefulness of a product. Use experience is divided into two paradigms, namely brand experience and consumption experience. According to [16], brand experience is something related to brands such as brand design, identity, packaging, communication, or the environment. Brand experience relates to the consumer's experience of the quality of the brand in a product that forms the emotions, and positive feelings of consumers on the experience.

According to [17] **brand attitude** is a factor that shows emotion and also consumer intention towards a brand where consumers will be loyal if they feel comfortable with the brand, so the core brand attitude is the emotion and intentions shown by consumers to the core brand. Meanwhile, according to [18] brand attitude refers to the willingness of consumers to continue to respond and show desired or unwanted reactions to a brand. Brand attitude is a belief about product attributes and benefits, consistent with perceived quality [19].

Brand association is defined as the strength of benefits offered by the brand [20]. Brand association would help consumers search and deal with information [21].

According to [22] **product connection** is defined as a relationship or similarity that is used to measure how well the product extension fits the core brand. According to [23] the similarity between the extension product and the core brand will create consumer perceptions that the extension product is fit with the core brand.

Consumer perceptual fit is an important factor to achieve purchase intention of extended product [24]. According to [11] the higher the consumer perceptual fit between the core brand and its extensions, it can have a good impact on the brand, because consumers will be interested in trying the extension product. The high level of compatibility received by consumers will have a positive impact on consumers' desire to make purchases [25].

According to [26], **purchase intention** is a process where consumers make plans to buy a product or service. Purchase intention is the possibility that consumers are planning or willing to buy a product [27].

Based on previous research by [28] which states that brand image has a positive influence on brand attitude, research by [11] also supports that a better brand image in the eyes of consumers will form a stronger core brand attitude. According to [29] states that a consumer's perception of a brand can facilitate a good consumer attitude. Based on this description, the proposed research hypotheses are as follows:

H1 : Core Brand Image has a positive influence on Core Brand Attitude

Previous research also stated that brand attitude can be formed by consumers through the information obtained about the brand [30]. When consumers have a good use experience for a

brand, it will make the core brand attitude stronger [11]. Based on this description, the proposed research hypotheses are as follows:

H2: Use Experience has a positive influence on Core Brand Attitude

Previous research by [31] said that attitude towards a core brand is an important factor for consumers in determining purchase intention toward extended products. Research from [32] also supports this statement, that attitude toward a brand has a positive influence on purchase intention. Based on this description, the proposed research hypotheses are as follows:

*H3 : Core Brand Attitude has a positive influence on
Purchase Intention Toward Extended Product.*

According to a previous study by [33], the Consumer Perceptual Fit refers to the consistency and similarity that consumers perceive between the original product and the extended product. When the brand association is stronger related to a product with a core brand, it will create a better consumer perceptual fit [23]. Based on this description, the proposed research hypotheses are as follows:

H4: Brand Association has a positive influence on Consumer Perceptual Fit.

Previous research by [34] supports that the high similarity between extension products and core brands will make consumers' assessments of the fit brand extensions better. Product connection has a positive effect on consumer perceptual fit [11]. Based on this description, the proposed research hypotheses are as follows:

H5: Product Connection has a positive influence on Consumer Perceptual Fit.

Research by [35] also supports that the match between the core brand and the brand extension will shape consumer attitudes and direct consumers to purchase the product extension. The higher the consumer perceptual fit perceived by the consumer, the higher the consumer's desire to buy the extended product [36]. Based on this description, the proposed research hypotheses are as follows:

*H6: Consumer Perceptual Fit has a positive effect on
Purchase Intention Toward Extended Products*

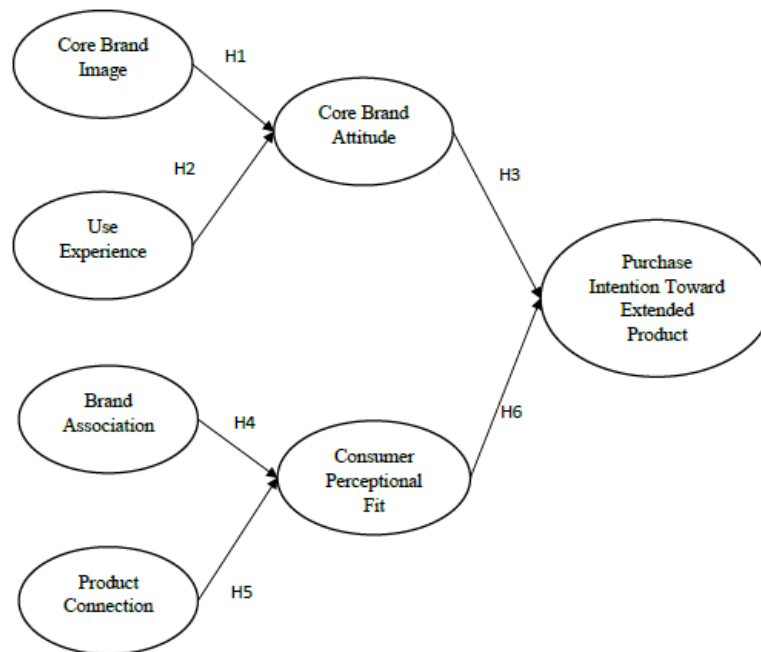


Figure 1. Research Model on Factors Influencing Core Brand Attitude and Consumer Perceptual Fit in the Pandemic Era and Their Implications for Purchase Intention Toward Extended Product.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The research design is conclusive with descriptive research and cross sectional design focus on single cross sectional. The objective is to test the hypothesis of whether there is an inter-hypothetical relationship of a phenomenon that occurs and uses non-probability sampling methods with convenience sampling techniques. The data that has been collected is entered into the SPSS version 26 program to test validity and reliability and then process the data with SEM. This research uses LISREL 8.8 software for data processing with Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) techniques to show the causal relationships between variables.

Sampling elements are age 17 – 45 years, ever had an electronic product from Sharp, knowing Sharp Aquos Zero 2, have seen Sharp Aquos Zero 2 review, never bought Sharp Aquos Zero 2. This study has 7 variables with a total of 22 question indicators and a total of 195 respondents.

Table 1. Respondents Profile by Age

Number of Respondent	Age	Percentage
143	17 - 23	73%
44	24-30	23%
5	31-37	2.6%
1	38-44	0.5%
3	>44	1.5%

Table 2. Respondents Profile by Occupation

Number of Respondent	Occupation	Percentage
131	College Students	67.2%
39	Private Employees	20%
9	Government Employees	4.6%
14	Entrepreneurs	7.2%
2	Students	1%

Majority of respondents by age in the interval of 17-23-year old (73%) and Respondents by age are College Students (67.2%).

Table 3. Validity Test Results on the Measurement Model

Latent Variable	Indicator Code	Standardized Loading Factors (SLF) ≥ 0.50	T-Value ≥ 1.96	Conclusion
<i>Core Brand Image</i>	CBI1	0.76	9.97	Valid
	CBI2	0.84	11.03	
	CBI3	0.57	7.26	
<i>Use Experience</i>	UE1	0.69	8.28	Valid
	UE2	0.63	7.56	
	UE3	0.68	8.21	
<i>Core Brand Attitude</i>	CBA1	0.50	5.83	Valid
	CBA2	0.71	7.55	
<i>Brand Association</i>	BA1	0.80	11.20	Valid
	BA2	0.51	6.44	
	BA3	0.76	10.54	
<i>Product Connection</i>	PC1	0.52	6.89	Valid
	PC2	0.56	7.45	
	PC3	0.86	13.34	
	PC4	0.73	10.52	
	PC5	0.84	12.70	
<i>Consumer Perceptual Fit</i>	CPF1	0.62	6.77	Valid
	CPF2	0.83	8.15	
<i>Purchase Intention toward Extended Product</i>	PITEP1	0.82	12.68	Valid
	PITEP2	0.82	12.68	
	PITEP3	0.88	14.06	
	PITEP4	0.84	13.18	

All indicators of each variable have qualified values, namely Standardized Loading Factors (SLF) ≥ 0.50 , T-Value ≥ 1.96 . Therefore it can be concluded that every indicator of the variables used in this study is declared valid.

Table 4. Realibility Analysis

Variable	CR \geq 0.70	AVE \geq 0.50	Conclusion
<i>Core Brand Image</i>	0,770	0,534	Reliable
<i>Use Experience</i>	0,705	0,502	Reliable
<i>Core Brand Attitude</i>	0,788	0,528	Reliable
<i>Brand Association</i>	0,738	0,501	Reliable
<i>Product Connection</i>	0,836	0,514	Reliable
<i>Consumer Perceptonal Fit</i>	0,705	0,542	Reliable
<i>Purchase Intention toward Extended Product</i>	0,893	0,677	Reliable

It can be seen that all variables obtain an AVE value 0.5 and CR 0.70. Therefore, it can be concluded that each variable in this study can be declared reliable.

Tabel 5. Model Fit Indices for The Overall Model

Goodness of Fit Measurement	Value	Hasil Uji
Absolute Fit Measure		
RMSEA	0.066	<i>Acceptable Fit</i>
Incremental Fit Measure		
CFI	0.95	<i>Acceptable Fit</i>
Persimony Fit Index		
PNFI	0.76	<i>Acceptable Fit</i>

The results of the analysis of 3 measurements, namely RMSEA, CFI, and PNFI have met the test criteria and can be said to be an acceptable fit. This shows that the goodness of fit test in this study is overall good and can be continued.

IV. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Tabel 6. Results of Structural Model Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	Estimation	T-value	T-table	Conclusion
H1	Core Brand Image -> Core Brand Attitude	-0.09	0.69	1.65	Data does not support H1
H2	Use Experience -> Core Brand Attitude	0.55	2.73	1.65	Data supports H2
H3	Brand Association -> Consumer Perceptual Fit	0.68	3.90	1.65	Data supports H3
H4	Product Connection -> Consumer Perceptual Fit	0.37	2.91	1.65	Data supports H4
H5	Core Brand Attitude -> Purchase Intention Toward Extended Product	0.26	2.74	1.65	Data supports H5
H6	Consumer Perceptual Fit -> Purchase Intention Toward Extended Product	0.69	4.12	1.65	Data supports H6

1. Core brand image does not have a positive effect on core brand attitude with t-value -0.69 which is below the minimum standard t-table, namely 1.65. In this case, Sharp does not have a good reputation, do not have quality electronic products, and cannot meet demand for electronic products. This can happen because of the poor perception from consumers towards the Sharp brand, also supported by research earlier by Nanda (2005) who claims that a positive consumer attitude can be facilitated by a positive consumer view of a brand.

H1. The t-value of 0.69 is smaller than the t-table value of 1.65.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the core brand image variable has no positive effect towards core brand attitude.

2. Use experience has a positive influence on core brand attitude with a t-value 2.73 where the number is above the minimum standard t-table, which is 1.65. So from that it can be interpreted that the consumer experience in using the product Sharp electronics influence the formation of consumer attitudes. This is backed up by earlier research Grace & O'Cass (2004), said that the experience felt by consumers towards a brand has a positive effect to create satisfaction with the core brand.

H2. The t-value of 2.73 is greater than the t-table value of 1.65.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the use experience variable has a positive effect on core brand attitude.

3. Core brand attitude has a positive influence on purchase intention toward extended product with a t-value of 2.74 which is above the standard minimum t-table is 1.65. It can be interpreted that Sharp is a brand for electronic products that consumers like, and become their choice when they want electronic products.

H3. The t-value of 3.90 is greater than the t-table value of 1.65.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the brand association variable has a positive effect on consumer perceptual fit.

4. Brand association has a positive influence on consumer perceptual fit with a t-value of 3.90 which is above the minimum standard t-table, which is 1.65. Therefore, it means that consumers consider the Sharp Aquos Zero 2 to be connected with other Sharp electronic products, or vice versa.

H4. The t-value of 2.91 is greater than the t-table value of 1.65.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the product connection variable has a positive effect on consumer perceptual fit.

5. Product connection has a positive effect on consumer perceptual fit with a t-value of 2.91 which is above the minimum standard t-table ie 1.65. What this means is that consumers perceive Sharp's electronic products and the Aquos Zero 2 smartphone as having a good impression, and are still in line with the concept. In addition, consumers also consider that the Sharp Aquos Zero 2 has the same main basic components and that smartphone products and other Sharp electronic products are both suitable for purchase.

H5. The t-value of 2.74 is greater than the t-table value of 1.65.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the core brand attitude variable has a positive effect on purchase intention toward extended product.

6. Consumer perceptual fit has a positive influence on purchase intention toward the extended product with a t-value of 4.12, where the figure above is the minimum standard t-table is 1.65. Therefore, it can be concluded that consumers judged that Sharp was suitable for developing these smartphone products and could fully connected with other Sharp electronic products.

H6. The t-value of 4.12 is greater than the t-table value of 1.65.
Therefore, it can be concluded that consumer perceptual fit variable
has a positive effect on purchase intention toward extended product.

V. DISCUSSION

Researchers provide suggestions for Sharp to add a review section or reviews on Sharp's website. By adding this section to the Sharp website, it will increase the core brand attitude, especially through reviews of the good experiences of users who frequently use and are satisfied with Sharp's electronic products. In addition, the existence of these good reviews can help consumers to make decisions and evaluations that can shape consumer behavior towards the Sharp brand.

Encouraging consumers to purchase Sharp Aquos Zero 2 smartphone product, it is suggested to add the word "Be Original" which is the slogan of Sharp's core brand in the promotions carried out. By displaying the slogan of Sharp's core brand will create a connection between core brand and the extended product that is seen by consumers and convince them to make a purchase.

"Sharp electronic products can be connected functionally to Sharp Aquos Zero 2" indicates that both Sharp Aquos Zero 2 products and other Sharp electronics products were technology connected to each other. Sharp can further improve both factors by creating a campaign as "connect simple with Sharp Aquos Zero 2" in the social media form such as Instagram where Sharp displays a Sharp TV with Sharp Aquos Zero 2. This posts convey that the two products can be linked to each other. Another thing that can be done is to create a program for bundling the two products.

To increase the view of young consumers as the target market for this product, it is recommended that they also become sponsors of activities that are favored by the target market such as e-sports and other youth sports including the automotive world because these activities are identical with the target market.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study explains that use experience is proven to have a positive influence on core brand attitudes, core brand attitudes have a positive influence on purchase intentions toward extended products and brand associations have a positive influence on consumer perceptual fit. Product connection has a positive effect on consumer perceptual fit. Consumer perceptual fit has a positive influence on purchase intention toward the extended product.

The limitation of this research is that there are more respondents from students, in the future it is necessary to consider focusing more on entrepreneurs and office workers because it may produce different things because in that segment not only function but the prestige of a brand also determines. In addition, if it is possible to add a repurchase intention variable in the study to

examine whether consumers who have used the smartphone are willing to make a purchase again.

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