Research Article

Strategy and Perception of Tomoro Blimbing Coffee Brand Equity

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the brand equity strategy and perception of Tomoro Coffee Blimbing based on four main di-mensions: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. A descriptive qualitative approach was used through in-depth interviews with management, baristas, and customers. The data were then analyzed thematically through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that Tomoro Coffee's brand awareness is strongly formed through store expansion, social media activities, and a memorable slogan. Brand associations are perceived as modern, aesthetic, and closely related to youth lifestyles, although there is still a conflict between premium and economical images. Regarding quality perceptions, customers value consistent coffee taste and service, but perceived value is still influenced by promotions. Customer loyalty varies, with some indicating repeat visits due to quality, while others rely on promotions and situational needs. This study concludes that Tomoro Coffee's brand equity is quite strong, but needs to be strengthened with perceived value and fostering emotional loyalty. The implications of these findings can inform the development of marketing strategies and brand management in the increasingly competitive coffee shop industry.

Keywords: Brand Association; Brand Awareness; Brand Equity; Brand Loyalty; Perceived Quality.

1. Introduction

The Indonesian coffee shop industry has shown significant growth in recent decades, driving competition between local and global brands to attract and retain customers. This transformation is increasingly evident with the proliferation of coffee shops in both large and small cities (Wildan et al., 2025) . In this context, brand equity becomes a crucial strategic element because it is an indicator of brand strength in the minds of consumers and can impact customer loyalty and purchasing decisions. With strong brand equity, a company's appeal in the eyes of consumers increases, which in turn improves consumer purchasing decisions (Ronaldi et al., 2021) .

Brand equity is typically built from several key dimensions, such as brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Aaker (1991) introduced this model, which has since been widely used in academic research, including in the coffee shop sector. For example, in a study in Surabaya, Widjaja et al. (2007) found that these four di-mensions effectively measured consumers' assessments of brand equity in several well-known coffee shops.

Furthermore, quantitative research by Yuni (2021) shows that brand equity has a sig-nificant influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty at Starbucks Coffee Surabaya. This study also highlights the importance of engaging digital promotions through social media, reinforced by brand equity, in creating an emotional bond between Starbucks and con-sumers, thereby increasing customer loyalty.

In the local coffee shop sector, research on Kopilogi by Sutrisna et al. (2019) shows that despite high brand awareness, the brand loyalty dimension is still weak, indicating that

Kopilogi's brand equity has not yet been fully established in consumer perception. This finding emphasizes that building brand equity is not only about recognition, but also about how consumers perceive quality and associate themselves with the brand.

Furthermore, within the framework of marketing strategy, Soesilo et al. (2024) analyzed the factors influencing brand equity in local coffee shops in Bandar Lampung. They found that price, product quality, and country of origin significantly influenced customer satisfaction. Country of origin was considered the most influential factor because consumers highly value coffee flavors that reflect the characteristics of the region of origin.

Given these trends and findings, it is highly relevant to qualitatively examine Tomoro Coffee Blimbing's brand strategy and brand equity perceptions. A qualitative study conducted through interviews with customers and management will provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how these brand equity elements are formed and perceived in practice. This approach can also uncover unique aspects of local brands that may not be captured through quantitative methods alone.

Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to academic research by adding contextual insights into brand equity in local Indonesian coffee shops, as well as providing practical strategic recommendations for Tomoro Coffee Blimbing to strengthen its brand position and increase customer loyalty.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Brand Equity

Brand equity is an important concept in marketing that refers to the added value a brand provides to a product or service. Keller (2019) defines brand equity as the added value given to a product through the thoughts, words, and actions of customers. Meanwhile, Aaker (1991) Aaker defines brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities associated with a brand name and symbol that can enhance or diminish the value a product provides to a company and its customers. The assets Aaker refers to are brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations, and perceived quality. Strong brand equity provides several benefits to a company. Strong brand equity strengthens consumer purchase intentions because strong brands tend to be more trusted and memorable to consumers.

2.2 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a crucial element for companies because it can directly impact brand equity. Brand awareness can refer to consumers' ability to recognize or recall a brand as belonging to a particular product category (Keller, 1993) . The more familiar and recognized a brand is to consumers, the stronger the brand awareness of that product. Efforts to achieve brand awareness, both at the recognition and reuse levels, involve two activities: building a brand identity and associating it with a particular product class. Brand awareness can be built through various communication strategies such as advertising, digital marketing, and the use of influencers. With brand awareness, it will increase the desire or interest to purchase a product (Jaya & Suci, 2025).

2.3 Brand Association

Brand association is the degree of recognition of a product or service brand in a related product or service category by consumers. (Virutamasen et al., 2015) . According to Kapferer (2008) , brand associations can come from various sources, such as consumer experience, marketing communications, visual identity, product quality, and the symbolic value attached to the brand. Brand associations can influence how consumers assess the functional and emotional benefits offered by a product. Strong, positive, and unique brand associations will play an important role in differentiating a product from its competitors and can increase brand equity value.

2.4 Recommended Quality

According to Mensah, perceived quality is a consumer's subjective evaluation of a product's quality and also emphasizes that perceived quality differs from actual product quality (Agustin et al., 2023) . Perceived quality describes a consumer's assessment of the superiority of a product or service compared to other alternatives. Zeithaml et al. emphasize that perceived quality is influenced by various factors, including marketing communications, user experience, company reputation, and comparisons with competing brands. (Putri, 2024) Indirectly, perceived quality plays a crucial role in building consumer trust and preference, so companies need to ensure good quality, build effective communication with customers, and create positive customer experiences.

2.5 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty can be defined as a form of consumer loyalty to a particular brand that encourages consumers to continue to make repeated purchases of that brand's products and tends not to easily switch to other brands. (Keller, 2019) also defines brand loyalty as the degree to which consumers show a strong preference for a brand based on satisfaction, positive experiences, and trust in the brand's quality. Brand loyalty reflects a strong bond between consumers and a brand, which leads consumers to choose that brand even though there are alternatives in the market. According to Oliver (2015) , brand loyalty develops through four stages: cognitive loyalty (based on knowledge), affective loyalty (based on feelings), conative loyalty (intention to repurchase), and action loyalty (repeat purchasing actions). These stages show that loyalty is built through a gradual process involving perceived quality, customer satisfaction, brand experience, and emotional connection.

3. Proposed Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the brand strategy and perception of brand equity of Tomoro Coffee Blimbing. According to Mukhtar (2013) , descriptive qualitative research is an approach used to gain insight into the research subject at a specific point in time. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with managers, baristas, and customers selected using purposive sampling, namely selecting informants who are considered to best understand their experiences and interactions with the brand. Purposive sampling is a technique that uses certain criteria to determine the sample (Sugiyono, 2022) . All interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Researchers selected key information, grouped findings by theme, and then interpreted emerging patterns. To maintain data validity, source triangulation was performed by comparing information from three groups of informants, and member checking was conducted by confirming several findings with the informants. This method ensures that the research results reflect actual conditions and perceptions at Tomoro Coffee Blimbing.

4. Results and Discussion

This study yielded four key findings that illustrate how Tomoro Coffee Blimbing's management strategy is implemented and how customers and employees perceive brand equity. These findings are outlined based on Aaker's (1991) brand equity dimensions.

4.1 . Brand Awareness

Interviews with management revealed that Tomoro Coffee is building brand awareness through rapid physical store expansion, a consistent brand identity, and the use of social media as a primary communication channel. This strategy aims to reach a digitally active younger generation aged 18–35. Furthermore, the visual campaign and slogan "See You Tomoro" are key elements in strengthening consumer brand retention.

On the operational side, baristas strengthen brand awareness through direct interactions with customers. Baristas promote Tomoro Coffee as a modern coffee shop with a grab-and-go concept, creating a simple yet memorable first experience for customers. Employees' understanding of the brand's vision and values demonstrates internal alignment in building the brand's image. From a customer perspective, the majority learned about Tomoro Coffee through social media, friends, and the strategic location of the outlets. The 24-hour presence of the outlets is also a differentiating factor that makes Tomoro Coffee memorable. Several customers stated that they were initially attracted to the app because of its promotional features and aesthetic design, demonstrating that digital and visual strategies can influence initial visit decisions.

These findings indicate that Tomoro Coffee has successfully built brand awareness through the integration of digital strategies and offline experiences. The two-pronged approach of social media as an initial impression and in-store experience as a reinforcement of perception creates awareness that is not only broad but also deep. Social media is also an effective tool for increasing brand awareness in the digital era (Koesdiana & Kristiawan, 2025) . This is in line with the literature stating that brand awareness increases when consumers are consistently exposed through various brand touchpoints. The more often consumers see visual elements such as colors, logos, or slogans consistently, the stronger the brand equity is formed in their memory. The logo must also be easily identified and remembered so that it remains in the minds of consumers (Ishak & Ghani, 2016) .

The role of employees in strengthening brand awareness is also crucial. While often considered part of the operational process, baristas act as the front line, building customers' initial memories and experiences. Their friendly demeanor, product explanations, and store atmosphere reinforce the brand's strength in consumers' minds. However, despite high brand awareness, some customers still perceive prices as relatively high without promotions. This suggests that brand awareness is not entirely related to strong value perceptions. Therefore, for brand awareness to translate into brand preference, Tomoro Coffee needs to ensure a consistent experience that makes customers feel the brand's value is worth the price.

4.2 Brand Association

Tomoro Coffee's management aims to create a modern and positive brand image that aligns with the lifestyles of young people. Through the slogan "See You Tomoro," the brand aims to convey an optimistic and cheerful impression. The minimalist design, aesthetic packaging, and store atmosphere support this image. Tomoro Coffee also strives to build the "TommUnity" community to instill the idea that coffee is part of a lifestyle, not just a coffee-drinking activity. Baristas observe that customers generally perceive Tomoro as a fast-paced, modern brand with consistent coffee flavors.

Their strongest characteristics are consistent taste and friendly service, which they say makes customers feel comfortable. Several baristas also emphasized that the shop's minimalist atmosphere helps reinforce the brand's simple yet elegant identity. Customers expressed a variety of associations. Many considered Tomoro a modern, comfortable and affordable coffee shop. Others noted that Tomoro offers delicious coffee, a varied menu, and fast service. The most impressive factor for customers is its 24-hour operating hours, as it provides convenience for those who need a place to work or relax at any time.

Tomoro Coffee's brand associations appear to be heavily based on modernity, accessibility, and convenience. This demonstrates the success of a consistent branding strategy involving visual identity, customer experience, and digital communications. These associations are crucial for attracting consumers and can serve as a reminder when seeing a brand's logo or visuals. Strong brands are more readily recognized as having added value than weak brands (Da et al., 2024) . These strong associations add value to the brand, especially amidst increasingly fierce competition in coffee shops and the emphasis on lifestyle differentiation.

The alignment between the image management seeks to build and the experiences of employees and customers reflects brand alignment. This is crucial because inconsistent brand associations can undermine consumer trust. Tomoro Coffee appears to have successfully maintained this balance, as evidenced by the shared perception of modern style and quality service among management, baristas, and customers. However, some associations are not entirely positive, such as the perception of "high prices without promotions" by some customers. These negative associations can impact the overall experience and need to be managed. Tomoro Coffee needs to ensure its premium image is balanced with a commensurate perception of value to maintain strong and consistent brand associations.

4.3 Perceived Quality

Tomoro Coffee management emphasizes that quality is a key pillar supporting brand equity. Using 100% Arabica coffee beans, regular barista training, strict operational standards, and managing their own roastery are all factors designed to maintain consistent taste across all outlets. Customer experience details, such as cleanliness, speed of service, and design, also receive special attention.

From a barista perspective , quality is maintained through the implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs), from measuring and temperature to serving aesthetics. They also undergo regular training to understand the service and presentation standards that align with Tomoro Coffee's character. This ensures consistent and reliable product and service quality. Customers generally rate Tomoro Coffee's coffee taste and service as good and consistent. Many highlight the delicious coffee, friendly service, and comfortable atmosphere as reasons for their return. However, some customers feel that without promotions, the prices don't seem to reflect the quality offered.

Perceived quality at Tomoro Coffee reflects a balance between product quality, service, and store atmosphere. Consistent coffee flavor is a key driver of perceived quality, aligning with management objectives. In the coffee shop industry, consistent quality is crucial for customer retention and building trust. Fast and friendly service also reinforces perceived quality. Customers evaluate not only the taste but also the interaction they experience. The

barista's friendly demeanor is a crucial element in shaping positive perceptions of service quality. A pleasant and memorable customer experience with a brand can strengthen consumer perceptions of its quality. A pleasant and memorable customer experience with a brand can strengthen consumer perceptions of its quality. The more unique and engaging the experience, the greater the consumer's perception of the brand's superiority and quality (Xixiang et al., 2016) .

However, the gap between perceived quality and price points to the need for a value-enhancing strategy. If the perception of "a bit expensive without promotions" persists, it could damage the long-term image of quality. Tomoro Coffee could consider menu differentiation or offering more price options to strengthen the perception of balanced value.

4.4 Brand Loyalty

Tomoro Coffee's primary strategy for building loyalty is maintaining consistent taste and providing excellent service. The Tomoro Coffee app's membership program, which rewards customers with points and discounts, also serves as an incentive to increase repeat visits. Baristas foster loyalty through personal interactions such as greeting customers, providing warm service, and making an effort to remember their regular customers' orders. This simple approach creates an emotional bond between customers and the brand.

Customers exhibit varying levels of loyalty. Some frequent customers due to the coffee's flavor, promotions, and comfortable atmosphere. Others visit only occasionally, especially during promotions or when they need a place to work. This suggests that Tomoro Coffee's customer loyalty is still influenced by situational factors. Tomoro Coffee's brand loyalty can be categorized as a hybrid: some customers come for quality and convenience, while others rely on promotions. Loyalty programs help increase repeat visits, but they don't necessarily create strong emotional loyalty.

Barista interactions play a crucial role in building customer rapport. Personalized approaches, such as remembering customers' orders, can foster long-term loyalty. This aligns with literature showing that emotional bonds are crucial in fostering brand loyalty. However, the fact that some customers only visit during promotions suggests that loyalty remains pragmatic. Tomoro Coffee needs to strengthen its flavor differentiation, experience, and brand identity to encourage customers to come not just for promotions but also for brand engagement. Tomoro Coffee can implement a Membership Card offering numerous promotions to entice customers to return. This membership card can increase the likelihood of repeat visits.

This program not only provides benefits in the form of points or discounts but also creates a more personalized experience for customers. As shown in a study conducted by (Azzahra & Hidayat, 2023) , membership cards significantly increase customer satisfaction and loyalty to coffee shops. Furthermore, Pudjianingrum et al. (2022) emphasized that the use of membership cards and reward points is effective in increasing customer loyalty.

5. Conclusion

This research shows that Tomoro Coffee Blimbing's brand equity is built through a combination of management strategy, operational quality, and consistent customer experience. In terms of brand awareness, Tomoro Coffee has successfully created strong brand awareness through aggressive store expansion, social media usage, and a consistent visual identity. The in-store experience and interactions with baristas strengthen customers' first impressions and enhance brand recognition. However, some customers still consider price, so brand awareness is not yet fully reflected in brand preference.

's brand association has successfully established an image as a modern and optimistic coffee shop that aligns with the lifestyle of young people. This association is reinforced by the minimalist store design, friendly service, and brand communication through the slogan "See You Tomoro." The consistency between management's desired image and customer perceptions indicates that the brand association strategy is effective. However, some perceptions regarding relatively high prices without promotions remain a concern, which may impact the strength of the long-term association.

In terms of perceived quality, customers consider Tomoro Coffee's coffee flavor, service, and store atmosphere to be key strengths. Management's commitment to maintaining operational standards, barista training, and the use of quality ingredients contribute to positive perceptions of product quality. However, some customers still believe price doesn't always equate to quality, necessitating adjustments to foster a more balanced perception of value.

Regarding brand loyalty, the study found that Tomoro Coffee's customer loyalty varies. Some customers demonstrate loyalty due to consistent coffee taste, fast service, and a comfortable atmosphere. However, others rely on promotions or visit solely for specific purposes, such as completing assignments. While membership programs help encourage repeat visits, emotional loyalty is not yet fully established and is not evenly distributed across all customer segments.

Overall, this study concludes that Tomoro Coffee Blimbing has strong brand equity, particularly in terms of image, quality, and brand awareness. However, increasing perceived value and strengthening emotional customer loyalty are still needed to maintain its competitive position amidst increasingly fierce coffee shop competition. A strategic approach that emphasizes brand differentiation and immersive customer experience can help Tomoro Coffee strengthen its brand equity in the future.

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