Analyzing the Impact of Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty (Case Study: Yas Arghavani Co.)

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to analyze the impact of brand trust on brand loyalty in Yas Arghavani Co. In doing so, a main hypothesis and nine secondary hypotheses are posited. The secondary hypotheses concern the impact of various brand trust dimensions, including consumer satisfaction of the brand, brand reputation, company reputation, consumer trust, consumer brand experience, company honesty, brand predictability, brand identity, brand competence, on brand loyalty. This paper presents the results of a descriptive corelational survey. The theoretical framework is developed through desk research while a field study is conducted to collect the required data. The statistical population includes all of the company's customers, of which a stratified multistage random sample of 381 is drawn. Data were gathered using a questionnaire developed by the authors. A group of experts confirmed the validity of the instrument while reliability was demonstrated by calculating Cronbach's alpha, yielding an acceptable value of 0.77. For analysis purposes, structural equations modeling and confirmatory factor analysis were performed via the SPSS and LISREL statistical software environments. Descriptive results indicate that attitude toward brand loyalty as well as brand trust and its dimensions in Yas Arghavani Co. are significantly greater than average. According to the results, for a confidence interval of 99 percent, brand trust and its dimensions including consumer satisfaction, brand reputation, company reputation, consumer trust, consumer brand experience, company honesty, brand predictability, brand identity, and brand competence, significantly impact brand loyalty among customers.

Keywords: Brand trust, Customer brand loyalty, Customer brand satisfaction, Company honesty, Yas Arghavani Co.

Introduction

Today, all successful organizations and companies strive to focus on their customers. These organizations strive to focus on their costumers and being customer-centered is their highest priority. In the modern world of competition, only creativity and innovation geared toward satisfying customer needs and expectations guarantee an organization's survival. This is reflected in the increasingly fierce competition between companies to attract loyal customers. A critical issue for managers is to better understand how the concepts of brand and customer loyalty relate to each other. Marketing management literature has identified a host of factors which may influence customer

loyalty (Leong and Michael et al., 2001).

Brand loyalty is the result of performance which exceeds customer expectations such that the customer feels delighted and surprised by the provided value. Loyal customers substantially contribute to the firm's long-term profits. A brand, as a representation or symbol of the company, serves as a communication platform between the customers and the company and plays a key role in the formation and continuity of the relationships between the two parties. Brand identity refers to a set of elements that together make up its identity and lead to identification and recognition of the brand in consumers' minds (Ebrahimi et al., 2012).

Brand identity determines how a company wants to be perceived in the market. In today's world, manufacturers are moving away from production-based and price-based strategies and toward those based on brands. Advantages of brands for firms include higher customer loyalty, increased profitability, preventing the entry of new competitors, reduced vulnerability to competition, and lower advertisement costs (Azizi et al., 2011).

Contemporary organizations ensure continued survival by satisfying customer needs and expectations, instead of relying on capital. Achieving organizational goals, attaining success, and creating a strong brand are among the primary goals of any organization or institution. Therefore, it is essential to study the factors that contribute to improving performance and expediting goal attainment. The significance of the matter manifests in the increasingly fierce competition to attract customers, on whom the long-term success of the company depends. However, one-time customers are much less important compared to their loyal counterparts. Creating loyalty is a long-term endeavor which requires communication with the customer. As a representation and symbol of the company, a brand embodies a means of communication between the consumer and the company; thus, to create loyalty and gain the associated benefits, customer trust must be gained. In other words, trust is an antecedent of loyalty. Therefore, in order to develop loyalty and gain the associated benefits, customers must come to trust the brand. A number of factors including business globalization, advances in technology, rapid changes in competitive markets, and higher costumer expectations have resulted in the ever-increasing significance of brand loyalty in achieving goals as well as carrying out tasks and missions. Quite a few variables can impact brand loyalty; to the best of our knowledge, no study considers a total of ten variables simultaneously. Furthermore, the gap in Iranian literature also justifies the need for this study. Although the topic of brand has been extensively studied, only a few papers explore the impact of brand trust on customers' brand loyalty. The majority of studies on the factors that influence brand loyalty have been performed in the tourism industry. The issue assumes even greater significance due to the fact that a deep investigation into the relationship between brand trust and brand loyalty in Iran is lacking. Thus, this paper can assist organizations in achieving their goals and ultimately bridge the gap in extant literature.

The activities of Yas Arghavani Co. are focused around information technology in financial and market systems the performance of which is affected by extremely important factors. Indeed, in this study, we seek to answer the following question: Does brand trust impact brand loyalty among customers of Yas Arghavani Co?

Theoretical Background

Brand personality

Customers tend to attribute human characteristics to brands; such perceptions are often created or enhanced by marketers through positioning. Brands are believed to be among the most valuable assets of a company or organization which ultimately add value to the product. Today, customer loyalty is regarded as the key to business success. An understanding of the market creates long-term benefits for business through careful planning and appropriate strategies that generate or enhance customer loyalty (Kryystallis, and …, 2014). Brand personality is known as the core and the closest variable in customer decision-making (Nasiripour et al., 2010). Wysong et al. (2002) state that the attribution of human characteristics to brands attracted considerable research attention in the 1980s and 1990s. The authors believed that brands and products have personalities that may be constructed or destroyed in the market. Thus, it is easy to see that brands can possess human-like characteristics. This is why branding literature relates human characteristics to brands. Companies with strategic brand positioning are able to have a much greater impact on consumer perceptions compared to more stable and gradual methods.

Brand value

Brand value is a "name, phrase, design, symbol, or a combination of these elements which determines the identity of a service organization and distinguishes it from its competitors". The value is judged by one's intelligence, logic, feelings, and emotions. Furthermore, creating a sense of comfort and ease is the role of a planned brand since the brand is correlated with the customers' personality, lifestyle, ideals, and behaviors. A brand determines the origins of a product and/or service provider; assigns responsibilities to manufacturers, reduces search costs, and increases product quality (Jalalzadeh, 2009). In his book "Building Strong Brands", David Aaker argues that recognition is the basis of a strong brand. According to Aaker, brand recognition is a set of associations that the brand strategist aims to create and maintain (Kazemi Rad, 2009).

Aaker distinguishes between four perspectives of brands:

Brand as Product: consists of attributes, quality, and scope of a brand's products. Other dimensions include being in the right place at the right time to take advantage of opportunities; consumers who determine the positioning of the brand; and brand relationships with the originating country which lead to higher credibility.

Brand as Organization: primarily focuses on organizational characteristics and includes innovation and customer-centeredness. This perspective includes both global and local aspects; the company needs to decide whether to pursue local or global markets. A local strategy through customer relationships can lead to a better understanding of customer needs whereas a global strategy considers long-term brand sustainability and guarantees its future.

Brand as Person: consists of the brand's personality, referring to a set of human-like attributes related to a brand. These may include gender, age, interests, and attention.

Brand as Symbol: according to Aaker, a strong symbol can act as the basis for brand personality and recognition, resulting in greater brand recognition and recall among customers. Aaker argues that visual techniques such as the use of imagery can serve as the most effective ways of creating symbols for a brand (Kazemirad, 2009).

Brand Perception

Brand perception refers to the overall evaluation of a brand by the customer (Lam & Shankar, 2014). General perceptions of a brand reflect how it is perceived and its overall position and image. High levels of brand awareness lead to positive brand perceptions. Firms often develop their brands to introduce new products, which is an extremely high-risk activity that may damage the brand perception (Doaei and Hasanzadeh, 2010). Brand development has been shown to impact brand perception. Furthermore, brand positivism impacts customer evaluations of a brand, thus influencing its development and the subsequent success (Elaverta et al., 2009).

Brand Loyalty

Loyalty is an important strategic focus which forms the basis for developing competitive advantage (Dos, 2015). Keller (2003) introduces brand loyalty under the new concept of resonance which represents the nature of customer-centered relationships as well as the extent to which customers are in harmony with the brand. Through brand resonance, customers become highly loyal, actively engage with the brand and share their experiences with each other. These definitions of brand loyalty show a direct relationship between the concept and brand equity.

The main reason for distinguishing between various definitions of loyalty lies in the fact that its type and the relevant strategy used to develop loyalty among customers must be determined. Clearly, customers with revealed loyalty can become committed to a brand via appropriate and simple strategies. However, a more complicated strategy is required for those with expressed loyalty. Strong brands evolve and achieve excellence by changing customer needs and wants (Doyle, 2013). According to Dalton (2003) three factors drive customer loyalty: value, trust, and going the extra mile. The author goes on to argue that customers remain loyal to those that help solve their problems, and even go beyond what is expected of them.

Hiscock (2001) defines a loyal customer as one who purchases from the same brand, encourages others to buy the brand, or tries to buy more of that brand.

Perceived Quality

It is defined as the customer's overall perception of quality or excellence of a product/service based on its purpose and compared to other products/services in the market. Perceived quality is necessary for competition with many companies now using it as a strategic tool. Customer satisfaction is achieved by continuously fulfilling customer quality requirements. Kotler explores the inner relationship between product/service quality, customer satisfaction, and company profitability (Krystallis and Chrysochou, 2014).

Brand Awareness

Brands are different in terms of their strength and value in the market: some brands are unknown for most customers while customers are highly aware of others. Aaker defines brand awareness as the ability of the customer to recognize and recall that a brand belongs to a particular group of products. Brand equity is attained once customers are highly aware of the brand and several unique and desirable associations remind the customer of the brand. Those who once buy a brand are not loyal to the brand; however, five or more purchases of a brand lead to stronger recall of the brand (Magda, 2013).

Brand association

Brand associations concern brand-related connections in one's memory. They may be seen in the form of product-related attributes or aspects that are independent from the product. Associations form a basis for customer purchases and loyalty; moreover, they create value for both the company and its customers. Brand associations have been identified as critical elements in creating and managing brand equity. Thus, a strong brand equity is indicative of positive associations in the customers' minds (Seyed Javadeyn and Shams, 2007).

Relationships between consumer personality and brand personality

Consumers often attribute human-like characteristics to brands. These are often exploited by marketers to create or enhance brand positioning. Brand personality results in emotional or symbolic values that help brand preferences and are more durable than functional characteristics. In order to successfully position a brand personality, one needs measurement models capable of distinguishing between the unique traits of the brand and those shared by all brands in a product category. Consumers come to form perceptions of brands by generalizing human personality traits to brands. As a result, brand personality dimensions are defined as generalizations of human personality traits(Krystallis and Chrysochou. P., 2014).

Brand trust

Hiscock (2001) suggests that the ultimate goal of marketing is to create strong relationships between consumers and brands, which requires trust as its main antecedent. Considering brand trust as an expectation, the feeling of trust is formed by the fact that the brand enjoys certain qualities such as stability, competence, honesty, and responsibility. This is consistent with recent studies on trust. It plays a major role in establishing long-term relationships with customers (Lee et al, 2015). Trust is defined as expectation of reliability. Thus, brand trust has two components that reflect two differing perspectives. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2015) define brand trust as a consumer's tendency to rely on the ability of the brand to fulfill its promises. Furthermore, in an environment where customers are vulnerable, trust reduces uncertainty. Developing and extending a better understanding of the relationship between factors such as brand trust and performance is a major concern for brand managers. A large number of factors that affect brand performance have been identified in branding literature (Nayebzadeh and Shahbazi, 2013).

Brand trust model

Moorman and Zaltman (1992) define trust as an overall expectation of how likely a person is to perform differently in the future. Brand satisfaction, competence, reputation, company honesty, consumer trust and the fit between consumer self-concept and experiences deeply impact brand trust and subsequently lead to trust between the buyer and the seller. Therefore, brand satisfaction competence, reputation, company honesty, consumer trust and the fit between consumer self-concept and experiences significantly impact trust by increasing confidence in the fulfillment of promises (Krystallis and Chrysochou, 2014).

Brand predictability refers to the ability to predict behavior which allows consumers to rationally predict the behavior of the product (Shamoushaki, 2006).

Brand competence is the ability of a brand to solve the customers' problem and satisfy their needs. It has also been defined as the extent to which a consumer believes that the company possesses sufficient experience and expertise to perform its duties efficiently and effectively (Lam & Shankar, 2014).

Brand reputation is based on the extent to which a brand is deemed good or reliable (Shamoushaki, 2006). For instance, the relationship between brand reputation and purchase decisions, attitudes toward the product at the time of purchase, perceived quality, and preventing competitor entry are among such relationships.

Brand identity involves the visual elements of a brand (e.g. colors, designs, logos, symbols, and names) all of which help in recognition and identification of the brand in the consumers' mind (Embrahimi et al., 2012).

Consumer satisfaction with the brand is defined as the result of the consumer's evaluation regarding the extent to which his/her expectations have been met (Lam and Shankar, 2014).

Company reputation is deemed as a strategic resource which can be defined as the sum of customer evaluations of the company's activities which explain its ability to provide value and benefits to its multiple stakeholders (Owing, 2010).

Consumer trust of the company represents promising and positive expectations of the dealing side in risky situations (Shamoushaki, 2006).

Consumer experience refers to the experiences consumers have with the brand (Shamoushaki, 2006).

Company honesty consists of the consumer perceptions of the company being true to principles of ethics and integrity. Honesty includes a level of confidence which the consumer has in the intimacy of the business implying that the other party lives up to his promises (Shamoushaki, 2006).

Previous Works

Table 1 summarizes previous works on the topic of this paper.

Table 1. A summary of previous studies

Author(s)	Year	Findings
Motaharinezahd et al.	2014	Consumer satisfaction and trust have a significant positive impact on brand love and loyalty.
Soltani et al.	2013	Brand experience, trust, and loyalty significantly influence brand equity while being significantly related to each other.

Aghazadeh et al.	2013	The three dimensions of brand personality (i.e. competence, honesty, and emotions) positively influence custo mer loyalty. Moreover, brand personality and customer loyalty impact customer repurchase intentions, with the latter having a stronger influence.
Shahverdi and Chitaei	2013	Perceived quality is not sufficient to achieve satisfaction. Emotional commitment has a strong impact on customer loyalty. Furthermore, continued commitment has a significant effect on loyalty and ultimately customer repurchase intentions.
Akbarpour	2012	Respondents were found to en joy boldface and italic type on billboard ads. Warm colors were more successful in attracting attention and circular logos had the highest success among other logo shapes such as square and triangle.
Heydarzadeh et al.	2011	Brand reputation and credibility were found to directly affect loyalty, continued commitment, satisfaction, and brand trust.
Vazifedoust et al.	2010	Brand trust and customer loyalty are directly related.
Ahmadi et al.	2009	Brand identity results in increased brand trust.
Lee et al.	2015	Brand loyalty indirectly influences satisfaction and trust.
Lam and Shankar	2014	Old receivers emphasize perceived quality whereas younger ones focus on brand satisfaction and loyalty. Developing brand loyalty in the new
Albert and Merunka	2013	Consumer brand experience is related to trust.
Sahin et al.	2011	Consumer trust is directly associated with brand loyalty.
Akhtar el al.	2010	Appropriate ways of employee customer interaction and company reputation were identified as the most critical components of customer loyalty and brand trust.
Wong Wong and Yahya Seyed	2008	Among a number of factors such as name, model, quality, price, advertising, services, and store environment, quality was found to be the most important indicator of brand loyalty in sports apparel in Malaysia

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are postulated in this paper:

H1: Consumer satisfaction influences brand loyalty.

H2: Brand reputation influences brand loyalty.

H3: Company reputation influences brand loyalty.

H4: Consumer trust of the company influences brand loyalty.

H5: Consumer brand experience influences brand loyalty.

H6: Company honesty influences brand loyalty.

H7: Brand competence influences brand loyalty.

H8: Consumer predictability influences brand loyalty.

H9: A fit between the costumer's self-concept and brand personality influences brand loyalty.
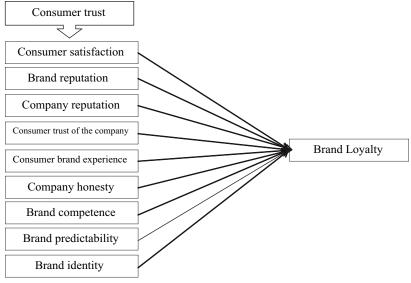
The conceptual model of the study is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study (Motaharinezhad et al., 2014)

Methods

This paper presents the results of a correlational descriptive survey. The conceptual framework builds upon extant literature while a field study is carried out for data collection purposes. The statistical population includes all of Yas Arghavani Co. customers, of which a stratified random sample of 381 individuals is drawn. A questionnaire developed by the authors is used as the data collection instrument. Cronbach's alpha is calculated to demonstrate the reliability of the instrument, yielding 0.77. Furthermore, its validity is confirmed by experts. The questionnaire is composed of two sections on demographics and the study variables. Answers are given on a five-point Likert scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Descriptive analyses involve frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. With respect to inferential statistics, structural equations and Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) are applied using the SPSS and LISREL software packages.

Findings

Descriptive Findings

Of the 381 participants, 79 percent were male and 21 percent were female. The majority (i.e. 42.2 percent) were between 31 to 40 years of age, while only 7.9 percent were 20 to 30 years old. Most customers (53 percent) had been referred to the company as opposed to the mere 10 percent who found Yas Arghavani Co. through market research. Over half of the participants (52 percent) reported using the company's services 21 to 30 times each day. Nearly 5 percent of the respondents had a daily usage of fewer than 10 times.

Descriptive analysis of the loyalty dimension revealed that all of the items corresponding to consumer loyalty had averages of greater than 3 on the Likert scale, indicating positive attitudes toward consumer brand loyalty. The items having the highest and lowest averages are as follows, respectively: "I am excited to consider this brand superior to others" and "While shopping, I only consider this brand". The averages for the preceding items are 4.04 and 3.06, respectively. In a similar vein, descriptive analysis of the brand trust dimension revealed that all of the items had averages of greater than 3 on the Likert scale, indicating positive attitudes toward consumer trust. The items having the highest and lowest averages are as follows, respectively: "While shopping, I choose this brand because of its reputation" and "This product is superior to other products in the market". The averages for the preceding items are 3.97 and 3.01, respectively.

Inferential Findings

Means

As shown in Table 2, compared to the Likert value of 3, all t-values are smaller than 0.05 (or even 0.01); thus, the equality hypothesis is rejected. Given the fact that all of the means are greater than 3, attitudes of respondents toward brand loyalty and brand trust consisting of consumer brand satisfaction, brand reputation, company reputation, consumer trust of the company, consumer brand experience, company honesty, brand predictability, brand identity, and brand competence are greater than average.

Table 2. Variable means and t -values

Variable	Mean	St. Dev	t	Significance level (p)
Brand loyalty	3.75	0.55	18.07	0.000
Brand trust	3.38	0.57	14.21	0.000
Marketing knowledge management	3.60	0.49	16.03	0.000
Consumer brand satisfaction	3.68	0.68	17.04	0.000
Brand reputation	3.2	0.80	5.02	0.000
Company reputation	3.23	0.46	5.78	0.000
Consumer trust of the company	3.23	0.43	5.79	0.000
Consumer brand experience	3.41	0.40	15.89	0.000
Company honesty	3.33	0.68	12.68	0.000
Brand competence	3.66	0.49	16.88	0.000
Brand predictability	3.09	0.64	3.80	0.000
Brand identity	3.75	0.61	17.95	0.000

Confirmatory factor analysis

Prior to testing the model and the hypotheses, the measurement capability of the items was examined via CFA. Model fit results (LISREL output) are shown in Table 3. As

evident, RMSEA equals 0.062 which is a small value (smaller than 0.08), indicating a small error. Furthermore, RMR equals 0.028 which is also a small value and indicates adequate fit. Therefore, the items measure the variables with sufficient accuracy (Ghasemi, 2013).

Table 3. Model fit

Indicators	Desirable value	Reported value
Chi-square	Between 2 and 3	2.64`
RMSEA	<0.08	0.062
RMR	<0.05	0.028
GFI	>0.9	0.91
AGFI	>0.9	0.82
NFI	>0.9	0.91
CFI	>0.9	0.92
IFI	>0.9	0.92

It should be noted that all t-variables corresponding to factor loadings exceed 1.96 indicating that all factor loadings (coefficients) are significant at a confidence level of 0.05. The large values of factor loadings corresponding to the items of the questionnaire in the CFA confirm the measurement ability of considered dimensions. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the Structural Equations Model (SEM) based on standard coefficients and t-values, respectively.
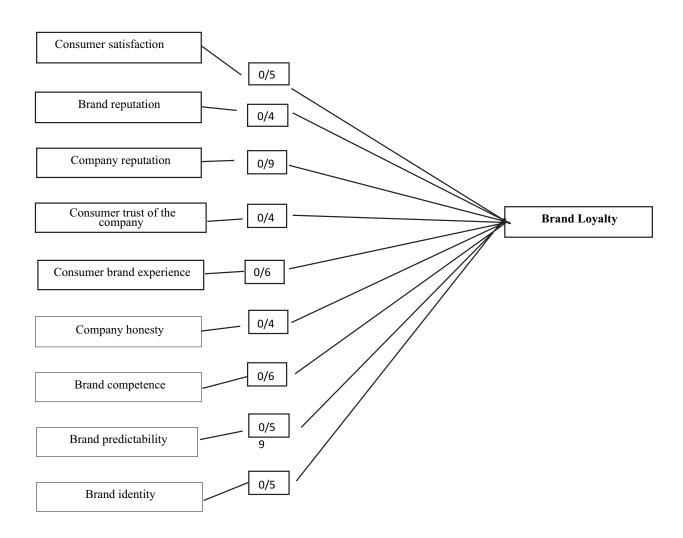

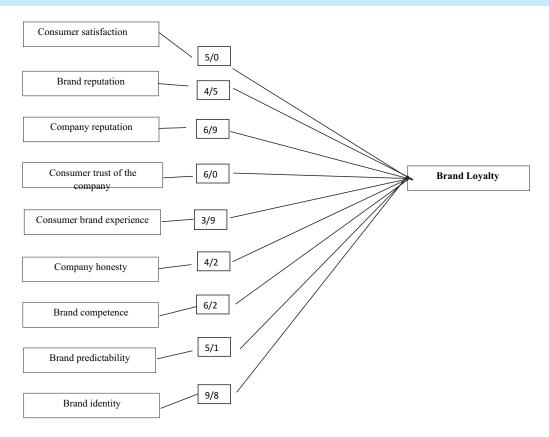Figure 2. SEM based on standard coefficients

Figure 3. SEM equations model based on t-values

Hypotheses test, discussion, and conclusion

In testing the hypotheses, the structural model is created based on path analysis using brand loyalty and dimensions of brand trust. Each path in the model represents a hypothesis. The proposed model is shown in Figures 2 and 3. All standard coefficients and t-values are large (exceeding 0.4 and 1.96 respectively). Also, all paths in the SEM are greater than 95 percent. In the following, the results are presented.

H1: Consumer satisfaction influences brand loyalty.

As shown in Table 4, path analysis and SEM reveal that consumer brand satisfaction has a significant positive impact on consumer loyalty with a coefficient of 0.55. Thus, H1 is supported. This is consistent with Ahmadi et al. (2009) and Motahari et al. (2014). It is argued that brand satisfaction forms brand trust and thus influences brand loyalty. In order to increase loyalty among its customers, Yas Arghavani Co. needs to improve the quality of information pertaining to product attributes and provide more technical information compared to its competitors.

Table 4. H1 test findings.

From	To	Standard coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Sig	Outcome
Consumer brand satisfaction	Consumer brand loyalty	0.55	0.035	5.08	P<0.01	Supported

H2: Brand reputation influences brand loyalty.

Path analysis and SEM results shown in Table 5 suggest that brand reputation has a significant positive impact on consumer brand loyalty with a standard coefficient of 0.40. Therefore, H2 is supported. Our findings are consistent with those of Heydarzadeh et al. (2009) who reported that brand name directly impacts brand mental image and trust.

Furthermore, brand reputation has been found to directly influence costumer trust (Ahmadi et al., 2009) while brand reputation and credibility influence loyalty, continued commitment, satisfaction, and brand trust (Heydarzadeh et al., 2011). These findings are also in line with those of this paper. In order to enhance loyalty among its customers, Yas Arghavani Co. must strive to fulfill the needs of its customers and assure them of the brand's quality.

Table 5. H2 test findings.

From	To	Standard coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Sig	Outcome
Brand reputation	Consumer brand loyalty	0.40	0.085	4.55	P < 0.01	Supported

H3: Company reputation influences brand loyalty.

As evident in Table 6, company reputation has a significant positive impact on consumer brand loyalty with a coefficient of 0.91, implying adequate support of H3. This is consistent with Akhtar et al. (2010) who identify appropriate ways of employee communication with the customer and company reputation as the most important factors of consumer brand loyalty. Similar findings are reported by Kim and Tadisina (2007) who distinguish between four factors of creating trust: trust tendency, third-party support, company profile, and quality of services. The company under study must focus on improving its customer-centeredness and fairness in order to gain consumer loyalty.

Table 6. H3 test findings.

From	To	Standard coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Sig	Outcome
Company reputation	Consumer brand loyalty	0.91	0.110	6.99	P < 0.01	Supported

H4: Consumer trust of the company influences brand loyalty.

Path analysis and SEM results, shown in Table 7, demonstrate that consumer trust of the company has a significant positive impact on consumer brand loyalty, with a standard coefficient of 0.44. Shamoushaki (2006) reported a link between consumer trust of the company and consumer brand trust. This is consistent with our findings. In order to improve its consumer brand loyalty, Yas Arghavani Co. needs to focus on improving its customer-centeredness and fairness in order to gain consumer loyalty.

Table 7. H4 test findings

From	To	Standard coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Sig	Outcome
Consumer trust of the company	Consumer brand trust	0.44	0.039	6.09	P < 0.01	Supported

H5: Consumer brand experience influences brand loyalty.

Path analysis and SEM results shown in Table 8 suggest that consumer brand experience is positively associated with consumer brand loyalty, with a coefficient of 0.69. Thus, H5 is supported. In line with our findings, Motaharinezhad et al. (2014) concluded that consumer brand experience is directly related to brand trust. Sahin et al. (2011) also found a direct relationship between consumer brand experience and brand trust. A similar association is reported by Albert and Merunka (2013). Timely and high-quality after-sales services as well as fast complaint handling and precision can contribute to increasing consumer loyalty in Yas Arghavani Co.

Table 8. H5 test findings.

From	To	Standard coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Sig	Outcome
Consumer brand experience	Consumer brand loyalty	0.69	0.044	3.99	P < 0.01	Supported

H6: Company honesty influences brand loyalty.

As demonstrated in Table 9, path analysis and SEM results demonstrate a significant positive relationship between company honesty and consumer brand loyalty, with a standard coefficient of 0.42. Thus, H6 is supported which is consistent with Connolly and Bannister (2007). The authors found a direct link between competence, perceived honesty, and brand trust. Similarly, Keller (2003) suggested that a direct relationship exists between company honesty and consumer trust. Therefore, we recommend that Yas Arghani Co. present real prices in its advertisements and highlight quality in both advertisements and after-sales services to enhance consumer loyalty

Table 9. H6 test findings.

From	To	Standard coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Sig	Outcome
Company honesty	Consumer brand loyalty	0.42	0.060	4.21	P < 0.01	Supported

H7: Brand competence influences brand loyalty.

According to path analysis and SEM, brand competence is positively related to consumer brand loyalty, with a standard coefficient of 0.61. The results can be seen in Table 10. Thus H7 is supported. Consistent with our findings, perceived value and competence have been shown to directly relate to brand trust (Sirdeshmukh, 2002). Moreover, Connolly and Bannister (2007) found a direct association between perceived competence and honesty with brand trust. In order to increase consumer loyalty, Yas Arghavani Co. must focus on responding to customer needs and achieving competencies over similar products in the market.

Table 10. H7 test findings.

From	To	Standard coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Sig	Outcome
Brand Competence	Consumer brand loyalty	0.61	0.046	6.20	P < 0.01	Supported

H8: Consumer predictability influences brand loyalty.

Path analysis and SEM results shown in Table 11 indicate that brand predictability is significantly associated with consumer brand loyalty, with a standard coefficient of 0.59. Thus, H8 is supported. This is in line with Shamoushaki (2006) who reported a significant positive relationship between brand predictability and consumer brand trust. Considering the findings of this study, as well as those of previous works, Yas Arghavni Co. should inform customers of the increasing quality of its products so that they can become hopeful of the company's timely after-sales services.

Table 11. H8 test findings.

From	To	Standard coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Sig	Outcome
Brand predictability	Consumer brand loyalty	0.59	0.094	5.13	P < 0.01	Supported

H9: A fit between the costumer's self-concept and brand personality influences brand loyalty.

As demonstrated in Table 12, path analysis and SEM results reveal a significant positive relationship between brand identity and consumer brand loyalty, with a standard coefficient of 0.54. Therefore, H9 is supported. In line with this, Ahmadi et al. (2009) reported that higher levels of brand identity increase customer trust. Furthermore, Shamoushaki (2006) highlighted a positive relationship between consumer brand trust and brand identity. In order to attain higher brand loyalty, Yas Arghavani Co. must consider brand associations in the consumers' minds and position their brand in a manner which represents the company's activities.

Table 12. H9 test findings.

From	To	Standard coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Sig	Outcome
Brand identity	Consumer brand loyalty	0.54	0.071	9.81	P < 0.01	Supported

Recommendations

Given the findings of this study, the following practical recommendations are provided to help the managers at the company under study achieve higher brand loyalty:

1. Creating high-quality products with outstanding after-sales services to obtained customer satisfaction.

2. Establishing high-quality to satisfy customer needs and giving customers the confidence to trust Yas Arghavani Co. as a respected brand.

3. Informing the customers of the company's efforts to become a fair and customer-centered company.

4. Building on the company's reputation of fairness to achieve a higher degree of loyalty.

5. Creating a good experience in using and interacting with the company's products in order to leave a good impression in the minds of the consumers.

6. Being completely honest with its customers to achieve a higher degree of trust.

7. Yas Arghavani Co. should offer products that fully satisfy customer needs so that customer trust is fully established.

8. Necessary measures must be taken in order to predict customer behavior and attempt to improve their trust by doing so.

9. By choosing appropriate colors, logos, and names, Yas Arghavani Co. needs to increase customer loyalty.

10. Customers in different societies may have differing expectations and this must be taken into consideration.

Limitation

The most significant limitation of this paper was the application of a questionnaire because some answers may be exaggerated. Another limitation was the lack of access to similar studies conducted in foreign countries.

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