

Brand Building and Marketing Communication Perception in Building Wardah's Brand Personality in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS

brand building;
marketing
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consumer perception;
brand personality;
Wardah.

This study aims to analyze the role of marketing communication perceptions in the brand building process and the formation of brand personality of Wardah, a halal cosmetic brand in Indonesia. Increasing competition in the cosmetic industry requires brands to deliver not only functional benefits but also symbolic identity and emotional engagement with consumers. This study adopts a conceptual approach through a literature review and theoretical analysis of brand personality, marketing communication perception, and integrated marketing communication (IMC). The theoretical framework is based on Aaker's brand personality concept, focusing on the dimensions of sincerity and competence, which align with Wardah's positioning as a local halal cosmetic brand. The analysis indicates that consistent and integrated marketing communication aligned with religious and local cultural values shapes positive consumer perceptions. These perceptions contribute significantly to the formation of Wardah's brand personality as a sincere, trustworthy, and competent brand. This study emphasizes that brand building is a long-term relational process that extends beyond promotional activities toward the creation of meaning, identity, and emotional attachment between brands and consumers. Theoretically, this research expands brand personality studies within the context of local halal cosmetic brands in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

The cosmetics industry in Indonesia has experienced significant growth in the past decade. This growth is influenced by various factors, including increasing public awareness of self-care, changes in urban lifestyles, and increasingly massive digital media penetration. Cosmetics are no longer seen as just a functional product to support appearance, but have become part of lifestyle, self-identity, and symbols of social and cultural values (Riswandi et al., 2022; Shahid et al., 2023). This condition causes competition in the cosmetics industry to become increasingly complex and competitive.

The competition of the cosmetics industry in Indonesia not only involves local brands, but also global brands that have large marketing resources and a mature branding strategy. In such a situation, product quality excellence alone is no longer enough to win the competition. Brands are required to be able to build a strong, meaningful, and emotionally relevant identity for consumers (Veloutsou & Guzmán, 2017). One of the important strategies in building such an identity is through *the brand building process*, which is a systematic effort to build an image, meaning, and long-term relationship between the brand and consumers.

In modern marketing studies, brands are understood not only as names or visual symbols, but as a construction of meaning formed through the continuous interaction between a company and its consumers. Consumers not only buy products, but also buy the values, stories, and personalities inherent in the brand. Therefore, the concept of *brand personality* has become very relevant in understanding how brands are perceived by consumers. Brand personality

refers to a set of human characteristics associated with a brand, such as honesty, warmth, professionalism, or trust (Mollà et al., 2023).

Brand personality has a strategic role because it is able to create emotional closeness between consumers and brands. When consumers feel that the brand's personality matches their values and identity, a stronger psychological connection will be formed. This relationship has the potential to increase consumer loyalty, trust, and preference in the long run (Kristianti & Margarita, 2021). However, brand personality is not formed automatically. Brand personality is built through a consistent and targeted communication process.

In this context, marketing communication plays an important role. Every message conveyed through advertising, promotions, public relations, social media, and endorsement activities, shapes consumer perception of the brand (Rehman et al., 2022). Consumer perception of marketing communication becomes a bridge between the message conveyed by the company and the meaning formed in the minds of consumers. Therefore, the perception of marketing communication is a key variable in the process of forming brand personality.

One of the local cosmetic brands that has succeeded in building a strong brand personality in Indonesia is Wardah. Wardah is known as a pioneer of halal cosmetics that integrates religious values, modernity, and women's empowerment. Wardah's success is not only determined by product innovation, but also by a marketing communication strategy that is consistent and relevant to Indonesia's socio-cultural context (Nurfitriana et al., 2020). Wardah's messages consistently emphasize the value of halal, safety, and natural beauty, which are in line with the needs and aspirations of Indonesian women.

Studies on the relationship between marketing communication and brand personality have been widely conducted, especially in the context of events and sports. One of the relevant studies is a journal entitled "*Brand building and relationships between marketing communication perceptions and brand personality of the Bangsaen 42 Chonburi Marathon running event*". The study shows that audience perception of marketing communication activities has a significant influence on the formation of an event's brand personality. However, similar studies in the context of local cosmetic brands based on religious values in Indonesia are still relatively limited. Therefore, this study seeks to adapt the conceptual approach of the study into the context of the Wardah brand as a case study in Indonesia.

This study uses a conceptual approach with literature study methods and theoretical analysis. The focus of the research is directed at the study of the relationship between the perception of marketing communication, brand building, and brand personality formation through the synthesis of theories and previous research results. This approach is used to expand conceptual understanding in the context of local halal cosmetic brands in Indonesia.

Most previous research on brand personality and marketing communication has focused on global brands or *international events* that have different market characteristics and marketing resources than local brands. Research in the context of local brands, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia, is still relatively limited. This condition leads to a lack of a comprehensive understanding of how brand personality is formed in local brands operating in different social, cultural, and economic environments. Lack of Studies on Local Halal Cosmetic Brands.

Research that specifically examines the relationship between the perception of marketing communication and *brand personality* formation in local halal cosmetic brands is still rare. In

fact, the cosmetics market in Indonesia has unique characteristics that are influenced by religious values, social norms, and cultural preferences. Halal value not only serves as a functional attribute of the product, but also as a symbol of trust and identity, which has the potential to form a brand personality differently than non-halal cosmetic brands or global brands (Khan et al., 2021).

Most conceptual approaches that link the perception of marketing communication to brand personality, such as in the Bangsaen 42 Chonburi Marathon study, were developed in the context of a sporting event. This approach has not been widely adapted to the context of consumer goods brands, especially cosmetic products. In fact, both events and products function as brand entities that build an emotional connection with the audience through an integrated series of marketing communication activities.

Previous research generally still places brand personality within the framework of universal values or Western culture. The integration of local cultural and religious values as a factor in shaping brand personality has not been explored in depth (Šerić et al., 2020). This opens up a research space to examine how these values affect consumers' perception of marketing communication and brand character, especially in the context of Indonesia's multicultural and religious society.

The main novelty of this research lies in the effort to adapt the event-based brand building conceptual approach, as used in the Bangsaen 42 Chonburi Marathon research, into the context of consumer product brands, especially cosmetics. Previous research has generally positioned events as brand entities that build personality through communication experiences. This paper expands on that approach by showing that cosmetics brands can also be analyzed using the same framework, as they both build an emotional connection with the audience through structured and ongoing marketing communication.

The study of brand personality was first developed systematically by Aaker (1997), who defined brand personality as a set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Aaker stated the five main dimensions of brand personality, namely sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. This conceptual framework then becomes an important foundation in various marketing studies to understand how consumers shape emotional and symbolic perceptions of brands (Mollà et al., 2023).

A number of further studies show that marketing communication has a strategic role in shaping brand personality. Consistent, credible, and emotionally relevant communication is capable of creating certain personality associations in the brand (Šerić et al., 2020). Marketing messages not only function as a means of conveying product information, but also as a medium for forming meaning, value, and brand identity in the minds of consumers.

In the context of sports events, the study *"Brand building and relationships between marketing communication perceptions and brand personality of the Bangsaen 42 Chonburi Marathon running event"* shows that participants' perception of event marketing communication activities has a significant influence on the formation of the event's brand personality. Sporting events are perceived as a brand with certain characteristics, such as dynamic, professional, and friendly, which are formed through communication experiences before, during, and after the event.

Meanwhile, in the cosmetics sector, a number of international studies have shown that marketing communication that emphasizes emotional aspects, self-identity, and symbolic value

is able to strengthen the relationship between consumers and brands (Bazi et al., 2023). Cosmetic brands are judged not only by the quality of the product, but also by the values communicated, such as confidence, natural beauty, and lifestyle representation. However, most of the research focuses on global brands and is conducted in the context of Western culture.

Based on the background that has been described, the formulation of the problem in this paper is as follows:

1. What is the consumer perception of Wardah's marketing communication in Indonesia?
2. How is Wardah's brand personality formed in the minds of Indonesian consumers?
3. What is the relationship between the perception of marketing communication and the formation of Wardah's brand personality?
4. What is a relevant theoretical approach to analyzing Wardah's brand building process?

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a conceptual approach aimed at analyzing the relationship between marketing communication perception and brand personality formation in the context of the Wardah cosmetic brand. The research type is non-empirical, focusing on theory development and conceptual synthesis rather than hypothesis testing using primary data. The population of this study consists of scientific knowledge sources related to marketing communication, brand building, and brand personality, while the sample includes selected peer-reviewed journal articles, textbooks, and relevant scientific publications obtained through purposive sampling techniques based on relevance, credibility, and recency. The research instrument used is a documentation guideline in the form of literature mapping sheets and conceptual matrices to organize and synthesize theoretical constructs. Validity is ensured through source triangulation and critical evaluation of literature, while reliability is maintained by consistent categorization and systematic review procedures.

Data collection techniques are conducted through an extensive literature review by identifying, selecting, and analyzing secondary data sources such as indexed journal articles (Scopus and Google Scholar), academic books, and reputable reports. The procedure begins with determining keywords, followed by database searching, screening abstracts, and selecting full-text articles that meet inclusion criteria. The selected literature is then classified based on themes such as marketing communication, consumer perception, integrated marketing communication (IMC), and brand personality dimensions as proposed by Aaker. All collected data are documented and organized using reference management software such as Mendeley to ensure systematic storage and easy retrieval of sources.

The data analysis technique used in this study is qualitative content analysis combined with a conceptual synthesis approach. The analysis process involves coding key concepts, comparing theoretical perspectives, and integrating findings into a coherent framework that explains how marketing communication perception influences brand personality formation. The analysis is conducted iteratively through stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To support the analytical process, qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo is utilized to assist in coding and categorizing themes. The final output of the analysis is a comprehensive conceptual model that provides theoretical insights and contributes to the development of marketing communication and branding literature, particularly in the context of local halal cosmetic brands in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Conceptual Analysis of Wardah Brand Building

1. The Role of Marketing Communication in Wardah Brand Building

Wardah's marketing communication plays a key role in the brand building process. Through various communication channels, such as television advertisements, social media, endorsements of public figures, and digital campaigns, Wardah conveys messages that emphasize the value of halal, product safety, and beauty that are in harmony with local religious and cultural values (Bryła et al., 2022). The consistency of the message helps create a clear and uniform understanding of brand identity in the minds of consumers.

2. Consumer Perception of Wardah Marketing Communication

Consumer perception of Wardah's marketing communication is formed through the process of selection, interpretation, and evaluation of messages. Personal experience factors, religious values, and sociocultural contexts influence how consumers interpret brand messages (Shahid et al., 2023). Positive perception of Wardah's marketing communications strengthens consumer trust and creates credible and relevant brand associations.

3. Brand Personality Wardah Formation

Based on this consumer perception, a strong Wardah brand personality was formed. In the framework of Aaker's brand personality, the dimensions of *sincerity* and *competence* are the main characters of the Wardah brand. Wardah is perceived as a brand that is sincere, trustworthy, professional, and safe to use. This brand personality not only distinguishes Wardah from competitors, but also strengthens emotional closeness to consumers.

4. Brand Building as a Long-Term Relational Process

Wardah's brand building is not instant, but rather a long-term relational process. The repetitive interaction between marketing communication and consumer experience creates an ongoing emotional connection. The consistency of cross-channel communication strengthens the brand's image and personality, so that Wardah is not only known as a cosmetic product, but also as a symbol of the identity of modern Muslim women.

5. Conceptual Implications for Strengthening Wardah's Brand Image

Conceptually, Wardah's brand building shows that integrated marketing communication is able to shape consumer perception and consistently strengthen brand personality. This implies that the success of a local brand is not only determined by the quality of the product, but also by the ability to build meaning and emotional connection through the right marketing communication strategy.

CONCLUSION

Consumer perception of Wardah's marketing communication has an important role in shaping the meaning and image of the brand. Marketing messages that are consistent, relevant, and aligned with cultural and religious values influence the way consumers interpret brand identity. Positive perceptions of marketing communication contribute to strengthening Wardah's brand personality, especially in the dimensions of *sincerity* and *competence*. Wardah is perceived as a sincere, trustworthy, and professional brand, in accordance with its positioning as a trusted halal cosmetic. Wardah's brand building process is long-term and relational, where marketing communication serves as the main means in building an emotional relationship between the brand and consumers, not just a product promotion activity. By adapting the conceptual approach of the Bangsaen Marathon research, this paper expands the application of the study of marketing communication perception and brand personality to the context of local halal cosmetic brands in Indonesia.

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