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UNRAVELING BRAND COOLNESS EFFECTS ON BRAND LOVE AND BRAND EQUITY: INSIGHT FROM BALI, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the relationships between brand coolness, brand love, and brand equity in the context of a tourist destination. Questionnaires were used as the primary instrument to collect data from the 300 domestic tourists who traveled to Bali, Indonesia. Path analysis was utilized in the analysis of the data. The findings of the research showed that brand coolness has an influence on brand love. Additionally, there are both direct and indirect effects of brand coolness on brand equity. Specifically, the indirect effect is mediated by brand love. It is expected that this research will contribute new knowledge to the growing body of literature on tourism marketing and city branding. In addition, the findings of this study can also be utilized to enhance the brand strategies of tourism destinations.

Keywords: brand coolness, brand equity, brand love, destination marketing, city branding

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1. INTRODUCTION

Branding is a tool used to create loyal, long-term relationships with consumers (Kim et al., 2016; Tournois and Rollero, 2019). In the field of tourism studies, this phenomenon has been a hot topic, especially for destinations (Boo et al., 2009; Chan and Marafa, 2018). As a marketing approach, branding has contributed to the success of several well-known tourist destinations (Morgan et al., 2011).

Nowadays, vacationers adore "cool" towns and have a strong desire to visit them, and one possible reason for this desire is that visits to "cool" places look good on social media accounts. Therefore, having a reputation for being cool might be a distinct advantage for a city or even a country. A previous study showed that a city's coolness is linked to tourists' plans, actual visits, intention to recommend the city, and willingness to pay more to go there (Kock, 2021). The idea of brand love has recently been increasingly central in marketing studies (Gumparthy and Patra, 2020; Roy et al., 2013). Affective feelings of satisfied customers are represented by "brand love", which is described as "emotional and passionate feelings for a brand that could lead to commitment and loyalty" (Roy et al., 2013). When evaluating the success of destination branding and the ability of a destination brand to generate value for consumers, brand equity is the metric that is utilized (Tran et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020).

Bali serves as a "barometer" for Indonesia's overall progress in the tourism industry (Diposumarto et al., 2015). Bali, with all of the one-of-a-kind aspects of its culture and people, along with the harmony of the exoticism of the natural environment and the inventiveness of the people, has the potential to be the fundamental capital for the growth of tourism that has an advantage over other destinations. However, even with all the allure of its tourist attractions up to this point, Bali still has a significant amount of untapped tourism potential that can be enhanced further to attract more visitors (Arianto et al., 2022). Therefore, this research aims to study further brand coolness, brand love, and brand equity using Bali as a case.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Brand Coolness

Brand coolness can be described as the degree to which it provides consumers with a cool (or uncool) experience (Gurrieri, 2009). Coolness is neither a property of an object nor a quality of a person; rather, it is a perception connected to an impression that calls for the validation of others (Belk et al., 2010; Warren et al., 2019). Cool cities are desirable destinations for all people. In a similar vein, cities that are not considered cool are often perceived to be dull, and as a result, they struggle to attract tourists. Cities that are considered cool are ones that are seen as being genuine, rebellious, original, and energetic (Kock, 2021).

2.2. Brand Love

The term "destination brand love" refers to the positive feelings tourists and visitors have for a particular brand when visiting a particular travel destination. Tourists may have a positive sense of a memorable travel experience for a particular destination, which may result in their repeated travels to the same destination in order to recall pleasant recollections of the destination experience (Aro et al., 2018; Swanson, 2017). A previous study suggested three dimensions of destination brand love based on the concept of brand love. These three dimensions include passionate love, emotional attachment, and self-brand integration. All three of these dimensions can boost and sustain destination loyalty (Tsai, 2014).

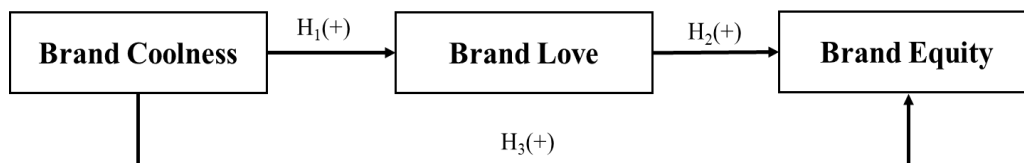
2.3. Brand Equity

Brand equity is a value that is added to a product when it is associated with a particular brand. Simply, "actual and/or perceived assets and liabilities that are connected with a place and that distinguish it from others" is what is meant to be encompassed by the phrase "destination brand equity" when discussing tourist destinations (Papadopoulos, 2004). Studies on tourism have defined and applied four components to study destination brand equity, which is as follows: destination brand awareness; destination brand image; destination perceived quality; and destination brand loyalty (Boo et al., 2009; Pike and Bianchi, 2016; Tran et al., 2019).

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

The research hypotheses, the conceptual framework of the study, and an illustration of the relationship between brand coolness, brand love, and brand equity, are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A conceptual framework and hypotheses



Three research hypotheses are tested in this research, including H1: Brand coolness is positively associated with brand love, H2: Brand love is positively associated with brand equity, and H3: Brand coolness is positively associated with brand equity.

4. METHODOLOGY

The survey questionnaires were utilized in the research project. A Likert scale of seven points was used, with one end representing "strongly disagree" and seven points representing "strongly agree." This research collected data from a comprehensive survey of 300 domestic tourists who visited Bali. Participants were asked to complete a 50-item questionnaire comprising general tourist information and measures of brand coolness, brand love, and brand equity. The process of data collection was done at various tourist attractions in Bali, Indonesia. The date range for

collecting data using the questionnaire was from October 15 to November 15, 2022. The assumption is that sample selection targeting appropriate audiences by research aims is sufficient and dependable for a representative sample (Kline, 2016).

The questionnaire was divided into 4 main sections, which are as follows: 1) general tourist information; 2) brand coolness; 3) brand love; and 4) brand equity. The brand coolness component was taken from Kock (2021) and consisted of 12 questions. The brand love component was taken from Tsai (2014) and consisted of 12 questions. Finally, the brand equity component was taken from Tran et al. (2020) and consisted of 14 questions. For this measurement, a 7-point Likert scale was employed. Path analysis was the primary method that was conducted to examine the data.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. Furthermore, the framework and hypotheses were mainly evaluated using path analysis. The statistical programs IBM SPSS v.28 and AMOS v.28 were used to analyze the data.

5.1. Preliminary Data Analysis

Females made up 56.3% of the respondent population, while males made up 43.7%. Moreover, 58.7% of respondents were unmarried and the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 29 with a total of 61%. 51.7% of respondents had a bachelor's degree for the educational level. Furthermore, 35.3% of them worked as business employees, and about 52.7% and 28.7% of the respondents had monthly incomes less than Rp. 5.000.000 and Rp. 5.000.001 - Rp. 10.000.000, respectively. In this study, hotels were the most common type of lodging with 54%. In terms of the origin of the domestic tourists, 52.7%, 28.3%, and 19.0% of respondents came from the western, eastern, and middle parts of Indonesia, respectively. 43.7% of them stayed in Bali for two to three nights, followed by 32.3% of the tourists who stayed for four to five nights. 27.7% traveled with their organization's tour group, 26.3% with family, and 18.0% with friends. In addition, 41.3% of the respondents were first-time travelers to Bali and about 40.3% had visited Bali two to five times.

Table 1. The results of Cronbach's Alpha

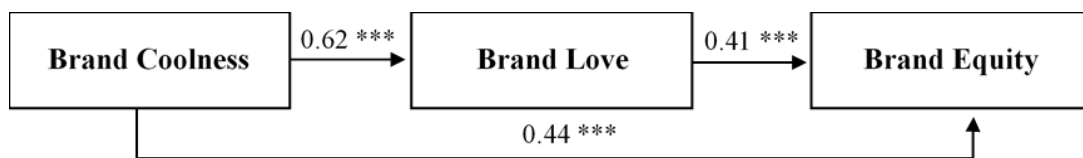
Construct	No. of items	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Coolness (BC)	12	6.09	0.53	0.86
Brand Love (BL)	12	5.92	0.59	0.85
Brand Equity (BE)	14	6.05	0.55	0.88

Cronbach's Alpha values for the measurement ranged from 0.85 to 0.88 and are greater than 0.70. As a result, the measurements utilized in this investigation fall within the parameters of what is considered to be an acceptable level (Hair et al., 2019). The mean values of the questionnaire items ranged within the range of 5.92 to 6.09, while the values of the standard deviation were between 0.53 and 0.59 in Table 1. The skewness and kurtosis values ranged from -0.69 to -0.46 and 0.39 to 0.91, respectively. All of the item's values fell within the range of -2 to 2. Thus, the obtained data for the investigation were normally distributed (Tabachnik and Fidell, 2019). The tests of the correlation matrix ranged from 0.62 to 0.69, VIF ranged from 2.035 to 2.389, and tolerance ranged from 0.42 to 0.49, revealing the absence of a multicollinearity problem (Stevens, 2009).

5.2. Path Analysis

To study the relationship between brand coolness, brand love, and brand equity, the researcher analyzes these variables' direct and indirect effects using path analysis.

Figure 2. The results of path analysis on brand coolness, brand love, and brand equity



Path analysis yielded results consistent with empirical evidence regarding the relationship between brand experience, brand coolness, and brand equity. Brand coolness influences brand love and brand equity positively. Additionally, brand love is positively associated with brand equity (Figure 2).

Table 2. Summary of the findings of the study

No.	Hypothesis	β	t-value	Result
H1	Brand coolness is positively associated with brand love.	0.62	13.745 ***	Supported
H2	Brand love is positively associated with brand equity.	0.41	8.598 ***	Supported
H3	Brand coolness is positively associated with brand equity.	0.44	9.114 ***	Supported

$R^2_{BL} = 0.39, R^2_{BE} = 0.58$

*P < .05, **P < .01, ***P < .001

The results of Table 2 provide evidence that supports hypotheses H1, H2, and H3. The standardized estimates for each of these hypotheses are statistically significant ($\beta = .62, P < .001, \beta = .41, P < .001, \text{ and } \beta = .44, P < .001$, respectively). All of the study's hypotheses were supported by the findings, which accounted for 39% of the variance in brand love and 58% of the variance in brand equity.

Brand coolness is a relatively new concept in terms of tourism marketing (Kock, 2021). Therefore, the concept of brand coolness in the term of tourism destinations provides ample opportunities for researchers interested in the field of tourism. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first investigation to study the relationship between brand coolness, brand love, and brand equity in tourism marketing and branding using the city of Bali as a data source. Previously, many researchers studied those variables, but they focused on fashion, technology, luxury brand products, and others (Gómez and Pérez, 2018; Khamwon and Kularbkaew, 2021; Tiwari et al., 2021; Verma, 2021). Consistent with earlier findings, the result reveals a positive relationship between brand coolness and brand love (Dwikananda, 2021; Tiwari et al., 2021; Warren et al., 2019). Following that, brand coolness has a direct influence on brand equity as well as an indirect influence through brand love. These results are supported by several previous research findings from Cho and Hwang (2020), Khamwon and Kularbkaew (2021), and Verma (2021).

6. CONCLUSION

This study extends our knowledge of the internal mechanism by which brand coolness influences brand equity. According to the study's findings, there is a positive relationship between brand coolness and brand love. Moreover, brand coolness has a direct effect on brand equity as well as an indirect effect through brand love. The findings of this study add to the formation of theory in the body of literature on tourism branding and marketing. The results of this research can also be applied to enhance the brand strategies of the city.

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