The influence of brand experience on brand equity: A study in the airline service industry in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine how brand experience can influence brand equity in the Indonesian airline service sector. Brand experience is a crucial strategy for building positive perceptions and engagement with consumers in an increasingly competitive market. The study used a quantitative approach with a online survey and collected data using a questionnaire from 249 respondents who had flown with one of Indonesia's national airlines. The independent variable examined in this study was brand experience, measure through its sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural dimensions. Meanwhile, the dependent variable was brand equity, measured through brand associations, brand loyalty, and perceived quality. With the help ofsoftware Using SPSS, the analysis was conducted using simple linear regression. The results showed that brand experience had a positive and significant effect on brand equity. This finding highlights the important role of implementing a strategic approach experimental marketing in an effort to establish emotional connections with customers, stregthen brand value, and build a competitive advantage in the service industry.

Keywords: *Brand Experience; Brand Equity; Experiential Marketing; Airlines; SPSS*

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INTRODUCTION

According to data from the Central Statistics Agency, air transportation has become the mode of transport with the highest growth in Indonesia, with a percentage of 79% for national tourist trips as of June 2024 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025). This indicates that air transportation has the highest interest and potential among other modes of transport. In addition, airline passengers are currently becoming more selective and have high expectations for airline services (Alharithi et al., 2025).

Passengers also tend to choose airlines with low prices for certain routes in price-sensitive markets (Banerji et al., 2023). Moreover, airlines that solely rely on transportation services will find it difficult to make a profit (Zhou et al., 2020). Thus, airline companies need to differentiate themselves and understand the factors that influence customer purchasing decisions.

In addition to service-related aspects, factors such as emotional bonds, loyalty, and previous customer experiences also play a crucial role in making customers willing to pay more and retaining them (Ragab et al., 2024). One of Indonesia's national airlines is a full-service carrier that provides comprehensive services such as free baggage, free meals, and in-flight entertainment during flights.

Building a strong brand is one of the efforts to survive for the airline industry (Sarker et al., 2021). In the service industry, branding can create customer trust (Mahadin et al., 2023). Branding communication is one part of branding, which involves how to build brand awareness, shape consumer purchase decision-making behavior, trigger brand equity, and set standards to strengthen market position (Raza et al., 2023).

Brand equity is widely acknowledged in the marketing literature by researchers because it contributes a management decision-making and helps company build a competitive advantage (Sheikh & Asemani, 2024). Good brand equity is a company's advantage because brand equity is a high-value legal asset as it can influence consumer behavior, be traded, and provide guaranteed sustainable income for its owners in the future (Ren et al., 2023).

Within the airline sector, strong brand equity is associated with consumer preferences that can encourage purchases (Thakshak, 2018). Recent evidence also shows that experience plays a key role in shaping customer preferences towards a brand, pointing to a potential direct relationship between brand experience and brand equity formation (Beig & Nika, 2022).

To grasp the concept of experience, the experiental marketing theory developed by Schmitt (1999) provides a theoretical foundation for conceptualizing brand experience through experience-based strategies (Pabla & Soch, 2023). Brand experience is regarded as a comprehensive construct because its scope extends beyond the experience of products and services (Beig & Nika, 2022). Furthermore, Brakus et al. (2009) in Pabla & Soch (2023) encourage further research on experiences in services that occur over a specific period, such as on airline flights.

Brand experience is shaped by cumulative interactions between consumers and the brand throughout the service process (Jiang et al., 2018; Prentice et al., 2019). Quality service in airlines plays a role in determining passenger happiness (Alharithi et al., 2025). Quality service in every interaction can also enhance the customer's experience with the brand, subsequently forming emotional attachment and encouraging customer engagement (Prentice et al., 2019). A pleasant brand experience tends to be remembered longer by consumers compared to the product's benefits themselves (Singh et al., 2021).

However, whether experiences can truly shape positive consumer perceptions and strengthen brand equity still needs to be studied in depth. With the existence of this

phenomenon, this research aims to investigate how brand experience affects brand equity. The main focus is to explore the direct impact of brand experience on brand equity in one of Indonesia's national airlines.

Studies on consumer-based brand equity in the airline sector is still limited (Santos de Oliveira & Caetano, 2019). Previous studies mostly examined the influence of brand experience on brand equity in the fashion retail industry (Amer et al., 2023; Ferreira et al., 2022), marketplace (Beig & Nika, 2022b), beverage (Pina & Dias, 2021), and banking (Akın & Gürbüz, 2024; Hafez, 2022; Karim et al., 2024). However, research on customer brand experience in the airline industry in Indonesia has still received little attention. Based on the research gap that has been explained, the context of this study focuses on the airline industry with a renowned state-owned airline company in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study will assess how brand experience affects brand equity in Garuda Indonesia, Indonesia's well-known national airline. The findings of this research are anticipated to give managers in the Indonesian airline sector insight into the significance of passanger brand experience and brand equity, enabling them to develop strategies that must be put into practice, enhanced, and maintained in order to provide passengers with engaging and fulfilling experiences that can impact and improve the airline's brand equity.

LITERATURE REVIEW, RESEARCH FRAMEWORK, AND HYPOTHESES

Brand Experience

Brand experience has been defined by several experts in various studies, and each has a fairly similar understanding. Brand experience is explained through internal customer responses subjectively, including sensations, feelings, and cognition, as well as attitude responses caused by triggers related to the brand as part of identity, design, packaging, communication, and environment (Brakus et al., 2009; Rodrigues et al., 2023). Another definition explains that brand experience refers to "consumer perceptions in every interaction they have with the brand, whether through the brand image displayed in advertisements, during their first direct interaction, or the quality of service they receive in personal interactions" (Alloza, 2008; Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021).

Previous research defines brand experience as the relationship between behavioral, cognitive, and real-world responses with experience (David, 2012; Safeer et al., 2021). Cited from other studies, brand experience is the consumer response that arises from interaction with the brand, characterized as subjective and intrinsic, encompassing sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2024). Yin et al. (2022) define brand experience as a subjective internal response and both direct and indirect interactions that result in consumer behavior through brand-related triggers such as design, logo, packaging, character, or background.

A brand that provides a positive experience can create consumer identity, enhance consumer confidence, and strengthen the relationship between consumers and the brand (Saari et al., 2020). Brand experience occurs when consumers search for, purchase, or use products and services related to a brand (Yin et al., 2022). Specifically, brand experience can be felt through sensations, emotions, cognitive processes, and action responses generated by stimuli associated with the brand (Paramita et al., 2021). Stimuli associated with the brand activate brand experience, which is then stored in the consumer's long-term memory (Brakus et al., 2009; Dandis, Al Haj Eid, et al., 2023).

The research by Brakus et al., (2009) has been recognized and cited by other studies addressing the topic of brand experience, such as the research by Amer et al.

(2023), Beig & Nika (2022b), and Ferreira et al. (2022) regarding the role of brand experience on brand equity. Then, the research by Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2024) on brand experience and brand authenticity. Other studies on the relationship between brand experience and brand love by Rodrigues et al. (2023). Additionally, Yin et al. (2022) also examined the role of brand experience in consumer purchasing behavior. Therefore, this research will refer to the brand experience definition concept proposed by Brakus et al., (2009), which defines brand experience as a subjective internal response of customers encompassing sensations, affections, cognition, and attitudes triggered by the brand's identity, design, packaging, communication, and environment.

Based on several previous studies that serve as references for this research, the dimensions to be used are adopted from the study by Brakus et al. (2009). The dimensions in that study consist of four (4) dimensions, each with three (3) indicators within them. This is based on the fact that it can meet the needs of this research to be used as a reference in the study. The dimensions to be used consist of sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral experiences.

The sensory experience dimension refers to how consumers are attracted to or engaged with a brand through the five senses, such as sight, touch, smell, and others (Brakus et al., 2009). Then, the affective experience refers to the emotional responses and positive feelings of consumers, such as joy or satisfaction due to a brand (Brakus et al., 2009). Additionally, the intellectual experience is the cognitive experience of consumers that involves curiosity through interaction with a brand (Brakus et al., 2009). The behavioral experience dimension influences consumer actions and habits, whether in physical activities or lifestyle patterns through engagement with a brand (Brakus et al., 2009).

Brand Equity

Brand equity can be understood as the extra value attached to a brand or benefit resulting from the influence of a brand name perceived by consumers (Dominici et al., 2025). Meanwhile, according to Vredenburg et al. In Hyun et al. (2024), brand equity is defined as the positive perception of consumers created by various marketing activities. Another opinion defines brand equity as the value created in the minds of consumers based on the name and symbols of a brand, and formed through consumer experiences and knowledge based on the senses possessed by consumers (Akın & Gürbüz, 2024).

Brand equity can also be described as a collection of assets and liabilities associated with a brand that directly affects the overall brand value (Piriyakul et al., 2024). Additionally, brand equity is explained as a key factor in the relationship between a brand and consumers, influencing consumer purchase decisions (Sheikh & Asemani, 2024). Brand equity is the added value or increased profit due to the distinctive brand identity on a product or service (Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Montazeri, 2024).

Several models of brand equity have been developed in recent years, such as the idea that brand strength comes from the experiences, learning, and feelings perceived by consumers, thus it can be said that brand equity is a consumer-centric concept with various important dimensions (Ferreira et al., 2022). Following the reviewed literature, this study adopts the concept of brand equity from Akın & Gürbüz (2024), originally derived from previous research by Keller et al. (2008). Accordingly, brand equity is understood as a value that emerges in the consumer's mind in response to the brand name and symbol, and that is acquired, experienced, and observed based on consumers' perception and knowledge, which in turn rely on their senses.

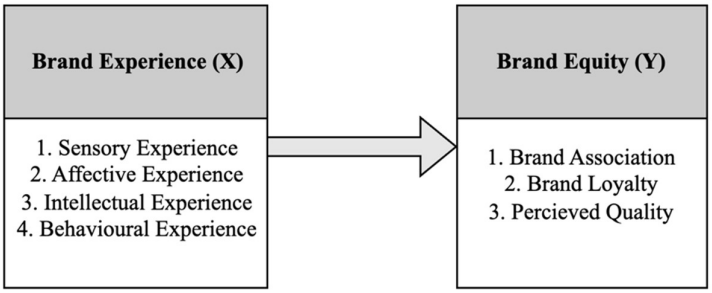
That definition indicates that brand equity is an additional advantage or benefit generated by the uniqueness of the product or service perceived by consumers. This perceived distinctiveness aligns with the focus of this study, namely brand experience, which can generate added value. Accordingly, this research defines brand equity as the customer's perception of a brand that creates added value for both consumers and the company.

Based on the review of several previous studies, this research will use three (3) dimensions for the brand equity variable. This research will adopt and modify the dimensions from the journal by Akın & Gürbüz (2024) due to the relevance of the discussed topic. The dimensions that will be used consist of brand association, brand loyalty, and perceived quality.

The brand association dimension refers to elements embedded in the minds of consumers regarding a brand and plays a role in consumer purchasing behavior (Keller, 1993). Brand loyalty reflects the commitment of consumers to continue choosing a particular brand (Yoo et al., 2000). Meanwhile, perceived quality refers to customers' assessment of the general standard of quality or excellence of an offering when benchmarked against alternative products or services (Akın & Gürbüz, 2024).

Research Framework

The conceptual framework underlying this study is depicted in Figure 1.



Source : Constructed by authors for this study, 2025

Figure 1
Research Framework

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study is :

H1 : There is an influence of brand experience on brand equity among airline passengers.

METHOD

Quantitative research is a technique that attempts to measure data numerically and applies statistical analysis (Malhotra et al., 2020, p.144). A quantitative approach is used because it allows empirical testing of hypotheses based on measurable data. There are 249 respondents in this survey. Total sampling was utilised, which means that respondents were drawn from the entire population. Based on the data acquired, analysis was undertaken by assessing the characteristics of respondents, performing univariate analysis, and conducting additional statistical tests.

This study employs various statistical tests using IBM SPSS version 30 software to identify and measure the extent to which brand experience variable affects brand equity variable. The statistical tests in this study begin with prerequisite tests, including the

normality test to assess whether the data from the questionnaire distribution is normally distributed, the linearity test to ascertain whether a linear relationship exists between the variables, and the heteroscedasticity test to identify any inconsistencies in the variance of residuals.

Assuming a linear parameter relationship, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is determined using a straightforward linear regression analysis after the prerequisite tests. To determine whether the suggested hypothesis can be accepted or rejected, a significance test is then carried out. Lastly, the degree to which the independent variable (brand experience) influences the dependent variable (brand equity) is determined by calculating the coefficient of determination (R^2). The author also examines respondents' views of brand experience in relation to brand equity in order to bolster the research findings. Descriptive analysis is used to discuss these perceptions based on the gathered and processed data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The influence of on independent variable on the dependent variable is tested through simple linear regression. The data must be valid, dependable, and pass the basic or classical assumption tests before simple linear regression may be performed.

The direction and strength of the independent variable's influence on the dependent variable are ascertained by analysing the simple linear regression equation. The results of the regression analysis are used to formulate the equation.

Table 1 reports the outcomes of the simple linear regression analysis used to determine the influence of brand experience (independent variable) on brand equity (dependent variable).

Table 1
Simple Linear Regression Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
		B	Std. Error	Beta
1	(Constant)	7,089	1,609	
	Brand Experience (X)	0,778	0,032	0,843

Source: Data Analyzed, 2025

Based on the output, the regression equation is:

$$Y = 7.089 + 0.778X + e$$

Where:

- Y = Brand Equity
- X = Brand Experience
- 7.089 = Constant (intercept)
- 0.778 = Regression coefficient for brand experience
- e = Error term

According to this formula, the expected brand equity score is 7.089 when there is no brand experience (X = 0). Furthermore, it is anticipated that the brand equity score will rise by 0.778 units for every unit increase in brand experience. Regression analysis concludes that brand equity and brand experience have a positive

linear relationship. Stronger brand experiences will probably lead consumers to value the brand more, increasing its equity.

Using n - 2 degrees of freedom (df), the t-statistic is applied to test the null hypothesis (H0), which asserts that variables X and Y do not have a linear relationship. The decision criteria for the t-test are as follows, if the calculated t-value > table t-value, then H0 is rejected, which means the independent variable (X) has a significant effect on the dependent variable (Y). Conversely, H0 is accepted if the calculated t-value is lower than the table t-value, which indicates that there is no significant relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y).

The significance test results, comprising the standardized coefficient (Beta), t-value, and significance level, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Significance Test

Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		4,406	<.001
	Brand Experience (X)	0,843	24,581	<.001

Source: Data Analyzed, 2025

Based on table 2, the computed t-value of 24.581, which is higher than the critical t-table value of 1.970, further suggests that the t-test analysis results show a significant effect. This result lends credence to the hypothesis' acceptance. A significant effect suggests that there was a deliberate relationship between the variables and that the statistical power is sufficient to generalize the findings to a broader passenger base. Therefore, the results of this study are considered reliable and not limited to the selected sample, but also representative of passengers of one of the national airlines in general.

The degree to which the independent variable may explain the dependent variable is determined by analysing the coefficient of determination. R Square in the output of a basic linear regression model with SPSS indicates this value.

The results of the determination test, including the R, R Square, and Adjusted R Square values, are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Determination Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0,843[a]	0,710	0,709	<.001

Source: Data Analyzed, 2025

Table 3 shows that a R Square value of 0.710 was achieved, meaning that brand experience, the independent variable, accounts for 71% of the variation in brand equity. Other variables not included in this model have an impact on the remaining 29%. Furthermore, a strong correlation between brand experience and brand equity is indicated by a R value of 0.843. As a result, the correlations between the variables in the research can be tested using this straightforward linear regression model, which is thought to be fairly good.

Practically speaking, this finding demonstrates that elements of the brand experience service concept in one of the national airlines under study, such as sensory experiences, include the aesthetically pleasing design of the aircraft cabin, which represents a high-end, spotless, and well-organised brand identity. Additionally, travellers have a unique sense of satisfaction from the comfort of the auditory entertainment quality they perceive as well as the flavour of the traditional Indonesian cuisine they enjoy. Additionally, the emotive experience, which includes emotions of joy, exclusivity, and peace, promotes passenger loyalty, causing people to often fly with this national airline and opt for it over other airlines.

The intellectual experience, on the other hand, broadens passengers' comprehension through the experiences and services offered during the flight, which promotes the development of favourable brand associations, such as the airline's reputation for providing high-quality service awards, friendly cabin crew, and punctuality. The active participation of passengers in taking advantage of the different amenities and services offered by the airline is indicative of the behavioural experience. Passengers feel more actively involved during the trip when they may select their preferred in-flight entertainment or meal options, for instance. Furthermore, it enhances brand loyalty by increasing customers' propensity to suggest the service and their willingness to pay more than they would for competing airlines.

The results of a number of earlier investigations, including those by Beig & Nika (2022b), Amer et al. (2023), Pina & Dias (2021), and Akın & Gürbüz (2024), are consistent with this. Consequently, it can be said that the results of this study yields credence to the definitions and ideas of brand experience established by Brakus et al. (2009) and Schmitt (1999). Additionally, companies that can provide exceptional customer service will boost favourable consumer behaviour and fortify crucial connections like brand equity, loyalty, and trust.

This supports the notion that experiences that engage passengers' emotions and touch a variety of sensory areas enhance overall brand equity in the service sector, particularly in the airline business. Therefore, experiential marketing strategies, such as those implemented by this national airline, have proven effective in building strong brand equity amidst competitive competition.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The study comes to the conclusion that brand equity is significantly impacted by brand experience, especially when it comes to full-service airlines. A passenger's overall impression and brand loyalty are greatly influenced by their views of sensory, affective, and behavioural experiences, such as the calibre of in-flight entertainment, the ambiance of the cabin, and the friendliness of flight attendants. High levels of pleasure and trust are a result of the deep emotional and cognitive bonds created by these encounters, which strengthen the airline's standing as a top option. The growth of brand equity is further supported by timely performance, consistent service quality, and a favourable brand image.

In light of the results, it is advised that future studies investigate brand experience from a wider and potentially comparative perspective, looking at variations among airlines or service providers. Deeper understanding of passengers' subjective perceptions might potentially be possible with the use of qualitative methodologies.

Airlines should keep improving the quality of the brand experience at all touchpoints, especially by increasing emotional engagement, personalisation, and consistency. To guarantee a more unified and unforgettable brand experience, particular

attention should also be paid to areas where customers can still perceive gaps or inconsistencies in service, such as the range of offerings, the feeling of exclusivity, or service dependability.

The final results indicate that both customer satisfaction and brand trust are influenced by brand experience, which may help to understand how brand experience creates brand equity. Accordingly, it is recommended that future studies incorporate both factors as mediating variables. Brand attachment and customer engagement variables are also important to test since the emotional engagement and personalisation found in this study could improve the long-term relationship between passengers and airlines. In addition, future studies may examine passenger characteristics, namely flight frequency and trip purpose, as moderators to determine whether the influence of brand experience on brand equity differs across passenger segments. A longitudinal design could also be employed to capture changes in brand experience and brand equity over time.

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