

The Power of Emotional Branding: How Brand Awareness, Characteristics, and Self-Brand Congruity Drive Purchasing Decisions

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Abstract

Recognising the psychological and emotive factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions is indispensable for brand success in the competitive market. This study investigates the impact of brand awareness, brand attributes, and brand congruence on purchasing decisions, with emotional branding as a mediating variable. The employed approach is quantitative. The participants in this study were coffee customers from various renowned coffee establishments in Jakarta. Utilising an accidental sample method, specifically engaging customers who coincidentally encountered the author, yielded 201 respondents. The data analysis employed the Structural Equation Model with SmartPLS. The findings indicated that brand awareness and congruence substantially affected purchasing decisions directly and via emotional branding. Brand features did not dramatically affect buying decisions, suggesting that other elements, such as consumer-brand emotional connections, significantly influenced purchasing behaviour. Furthermore, emotional branding was validated as the primary mediating variable, enhancing the correlation between brand-related characteristics and consumer decision-making. These findings underscore the significance of establishing robust emotional connections with consumers, rather than depending exclusively on brand features, to stimulate buying intentions. Brands should enhance their emotional engagement tactics to foster customer loyalty and successfully affect consumer behaviour.

Keywords: *brand awareness; brand characteristics; self-brand congruity; emotional branding; purchasing decision*

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Introduction

Speak about coffee shops, Indonesian coffee shops, or coffee shops; each shop has no escape from its concepts and brands. The existence of Coffee Shops in Indonesia has spread widely, and several areas have small ones even though they already have at least 1 or 2 Coffee Shops with their own Variants, different brands, and themes for interesting Customers. Culture drinks this coffee left from Constantinople, serving unfiltered coffee with a bitter taste, which can also be found at a roadside coffee shop. As time goes on, the emergence of innovative coffee serving begins. A mix of sugar, milk, creamer, and other ingredients is being developed in Europe. This is also the origin. There is a coffee shop in the area, and at that time, that coffee shop is the place for business people to enjoy coffee and chat about business. Coffee shops are also considered a luxury in their time because only businesspeople can enjoy coffee at the coffee shop.

Even though history shows that the development of existence varies from the method of enjoying coffee to the beverage being a favorite among all ages, this is not easy. Because coffee is originally only consumed by older adults over 30 years, it tastes bitter and sour cause coffee is not so favored by the public, children, and young. However, children and even young people act like coffee drinkers during the walk. Young kids became consumers of many coffee variants thanks to the existing developments from various coffee

shops. Not a few of those who own their favorite coffee brands. One of the factors that determines consumers is their brand or logo. Many young children now choose coffee from well-known brands for a specific reason: strong brands produce good products, too. That's one of the factors in a consumer's decision to purchase coffee.

A buying decision is A decision consumers make after various backup selections and attitudes evaluate the behavior of two or more to choose one of them. (Tonce&rangga, 2017). The decision to purchase can also be interpreted by approaching consumers to determine choice A, the product that will be purchased. (Yu et al., 2018) There are several factors in the decision to purchase, including brand awareness, brand characteristics, and self-brand congruity. Having involvement psychologically (in terms of strong emotions) with a brand called Emotional Branding (Malär et al., 2011) This means if a consumer feels a brand on the product in a way that makes him emotionally connected to the product, he can make an existing decision to purchase the product. Because of its existence, a feeling of being bound in a way that makes him emotionally connected to the brand is formed between the consumer and the brand.

Brand awareness is seen from a much higher level of understanding and potential consumers of the product.(Gustafon & Chabot, 2007) Existence awareness, as well as potential consumers of a product, will produce a decision to purchase. The stronger the brand in a product and the more aware the consumers are, the more likely the decision to buy will occur. The results of the study(Victoria,. Utama, 2022) Show the existing influence between brand awareness and purchase decision. As well as Ghealita and Setyorini (2016) His research concludes that a significant influence of 46.2% of Brand Awareness on decision purchase exists. And also followed by the results of the study by Wilujeng and Edward (2021) State similar things.

Brand characteristics can be interpreted as elements essential to trusting consumers in a brand product. (Lau & Lee, 1999) Brand characteristics also play an essential role in determining consumer purchases. They can be interpreted as one of the components that factor into a consumer's decision to purchase a product through the brand.(Muthiah & Setiawan, 2019) Disclose the existence of a positive influence of brand characteristics on purchase.

In truth, harmony will happen when existence already creates a sense of satisfaction or belief in a relationship that is being lived by somebody with an individual and also with A brand product. Harmony can also be interpreted as existing harmony in the relationship. The same thing applies to brands and products; they need harmony for the product that still has a place in the hearts of consumers. Self-brand congruity, which is also called harmony, is a self-brand meaning consumers will buy A product if the product's harmony. The theory of harmony brand also becomes key for a researcher in identifying constraints in the brand's failure. (S. Y. Lee & Shen, 2009). In conclusion, a harmonious self-brand consumer will influence consumers' purchases, as a study previously stated. Positive self-brand congruity influences purchasing decisions. (Rivita Nadiatul Islamiyah & Nur Ajizah, 2023).

Inadequate grasp of how emotional branding, brand awareness, brand traits, and self-brand congruity influence consumer purchasing decisions. While prior research has examined these components individually, there are constraints in understanding their interconnected interactions within a more comprehensive framework. Aaker (2011) This study shows that brand knowledge is a crucial factor in purchasing decisions; nevertheless, it fails to incorporate emotional dimensions or the alignment between the brand and customer identity (self-brand congruity). Prior research has identified brand attributes (including quality, uniqueness, and credibility) as significant factors influencing purchase decisions; however, it has not connected these attributes to emotional mechanisms or the linkages between brand and consumer identity. (Keller, 2001).

This study uniquely examines how brand awareness, attributes, and self-brand congruity influence purchase decisions, using modern factors like digital technology, data-driven personalisation, and visual and sensory emotional branding. Culture, generation,

and brand sustainability ideals affect consumer emotional attachment, which this study can help explain. Innovative methodological tools, such as qualitative combinations with neurobranding or digital and physical experience-based assessments, provide new insights into the effectiveness of emotional branding in the age of the emotional economy. This study seeks to fill this vacuum by examining the significance of emotional branding as a crucial factor in consumer decision-making, particularly when brand attributes do not markedly affect purchasing behaviour.

Brand Awareness Theory

Brand awareness is defined as the ability of a buyer to identify the brand with enough detail to decide to purchase (Rossiter, 2014). Brand awareness is the realization of the existence of a product and the relationships between similar products. (Boksberger et al., 2011). Whereas, according to Aaker & Shocker (1993) Brand Awareness is the consumer's ability to recognize and think of the brand in different situations. In addition, brand awareness helps consumers form a perception of price and quality. Increasingly, consumers know that brands are famous and will not see alternative brands offered on other products. (Oh, 2000). The level of Brand Awareness is Recall, Recognition, Purchase, and Consumption. (Shocker & Aaker, 1993) (Shocker & Aaker, 1993). Emotional Branding gives birth to strong and special emotions between consumers and the brand. Also, it can develop close relationships with consumers emotionally. (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Emotional branding can also be defined as a marketing strategy to stimulate conditioned affective consumers and make them purchase. Emotional branding is believed to be one factor influencing consumer purchase decisions. Because of the existence of a warm relationship between the consumer and the brand product (Kim & Sullivan, 2019) The purchasing decision is a process in which the consumer has experience learning, using, and managing a product. (P. Kotler, 2008). Study results from Muthiah and Setiawan (2019) The influence of brand awareness on purchase.

Brand Characteristic Theory

Brand Characteristics play a vital role in identifying consumers for a product that will be bought. This is the same as if individuals judge others before their relationship (friendship). It is necessary to characterize a brand in A product to trigger the decision to purchase from consumers. (Lau & Lee, 1999). Brand Characteristics also have a model that indicates Brand reputation, predictability, and competence. (Lau & Lee, 1999). Emotional Branding is a process for forming significant and long-term relationships between a brand product and its Consumers. Relationship: This will appear when the brand product can communicate what can be connected between the emotions of consumers and the brand product. (Thompson et al., 2006). Decision process for purchase with a method to dig information to find the best offer that fits the needs of consumers (Pedraja, 2013) The description can assume that brand characteristics influence consumers' decisions to purchase.

Self-Brand Congruity Theory

Self-brand congruity is a process and a result psychologically, where consumers compare their perception of the brand with the concept of self, they (for example, actual self, ideal self, and social self) (Sirgy et al., 1997). Comparison of Psychological. This can be categorized as a harmonious brand with high or low self-esteem. Dimensions in Self Brand Congruity, such as actual self-image, ideal self-image, social self-image, and ideal social self-image, these four self-concepts will produce self-congruity, the need for self-consistency, the need for self-esteem, and social consistency. (Sirgy, 2018).

Emotional branding is A phenomenon where the formation of emotions in every individual will give birth to other characteristics. Emotions This is activated in a way that is not on purpose: to brand a product specific to the experience of purchasing a product.

(Keltner & Morris, 2000). According to Vasile and Mirela (2008), Decision purchase is a consumer process that involves choosing from several product options and choosing one of them. I feel more satisfied if I buy a product from the brand. The more in harmony the brand is with consumers, the higher the value of the Purchase Decision Level (Yang et al., 2020). The explanation above assumes that existence influences self-brand congruity in purchasing decisions.

Emotional Branding Theory

Emotional branding is a strategy that focuses on consumers. It involves building a brand's performance on a product so that it can touch consumers' hearts emotionally. (Jamwal & Soodan, 2014). According to Gobe (2005) Emotional branding is essential to distinguish success from many ambiguous brands. Emotional branding is based on trust. Unique, built together with the audience. It also increases sales to fulfill the needs of the desired customers. When consumers have already developed emotions about a brand, not being aware of it will reduce the price sensitivity and also the likelihood of buying the same product in a continuous way (Zhang et al., 2022). The following points, including relationships, sensory experience, imagination, and vision, can be used as indicators in emotional branding. (Gobe, 2005). Buying decisions will happen if there is an emotional connection between the consumer and the brand. Supported by previous research that produced evidence of the influence of emotional branding on purchase (Ramadaniati et al., 2022).

Buying decision

A buying decision is a stage of consumer evaluation that forms preferences based on the brands that are chosen as the most liked products. (Kotler, Philip, Armstrong, 2008). The stages of the decision-purchase process are problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and postpurchase behavior. (P. Kotler, 2008). Based on what has been explained, review the above library and previous research, which can assemble a framework for thinking in the study. This is depicted below:

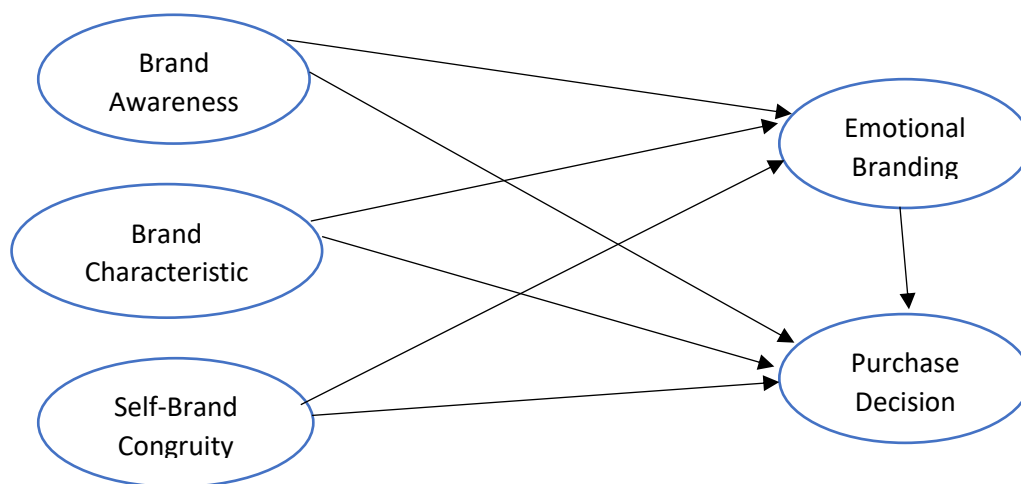


Figure 1: Framework of think

Analysis Method

This study employs a quantitative descriptive method, specifically data-driven survey research, by delivering questionnaires to respondents. The questionnaires were distributed in the Jakarta region, and 201 respondents participated in this investigation. This survey was done in December 2024. In this study, the researcher employed accidental sampling by administering questionnaires to customers who encountered them in person (Sugiyono,

2019). The data in this study were analysed using SmartPLS software through a structural equation model. Exogenous variables are equivalent to independent variables, namely those that can affect another variable within the model. Which variables in the study are exogenous? Specifically, Brand Awareness (X1), Brand Characteristics (X2), and Self-Brand Congruity (X3). The term "endogenous variable" is synonymous with "dependent variable." Endogenous variables can also refer to variables that are affected by exogenous factors in the model, either directly or indirectly. The variables encompass all intermediate and dependent variables. The endogenous variables in the research are Emotional Branding (Y1) and Purchasing Decisions (Y2). A 5-point Likert scale consisting of the following: 1 - severely disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 - neutral, 4 - agree, and 5 - strongly agree. The initial action involved assessing the model's validity and reliability, followed by tests for discriminant validity, multicollinearity, F-test, R-test (R-squared), Q² test, and concluding with hypothesis testing, wherein each variable was examined for a t-value exceeding 1.96 and a probability value below 0.05, indicating a significant influence.

Results and Discussion

Results

The respondents' descriptions determine the characteristics of the respondents who filled out the questionnaire in this study.

Table 1. Respondent Description

Demographics	Frequency	n	%
Gender	Men	96	47,8
	Women	105	52,2
Age (Years)	< 17 years	4	2,0
	17 – 26 years	91	45,3
	27 – 45 years	92	45,8
	> 45 years	14	7,0
Education Level	High School	40	19,9
	DIPLOMA	42	20,9
	S1	107	53,2
	S2	12	6,0
	S3	-	-
In the last 5 months, how many times have you visited or purchased coffee?	2 – 3 Times	46	22,9
	4 – 5 Times	57	28,4
	More than 5 Times	98	48,8
Where do you buy coffee?	East Jakarta	68	33,8
	West Jakarta	22	10,9
	Central Jakarta	61	30,3
	South Jakarta	36	17,9
	North Jakarta	14	7,0

Source: Google Form 2024

The respondents in this study were primarily female, 105 people (52.5%). Based on age, the majority were between 17 and 26 years old, 91 people (45.3%), and between 27 and 45 years old, 92 people (54.8%). Based on educational background, most graduates had bachelor's degrees, 107 people (53.2%). In the last 5 months, the majority of respondents who bought coffee more than 5 times were 98 respondents (48.8%). Based on domicile, the

most respondents came from East Jakarta, 68 respondents (33.8%).

Table 2. Measurement Model

Variable	Code	Indicator	Major Reference	Loading Factor	Realizability	AVE
Brand Awareness	X1.1	Recall	(Shocker & Aaker, 1993)	0,830	0,928	0,721
	X1.2	Purchase		0,861		
	X1.6	Consumption		0,857		
	X1.8			0,874		
	X1.9			0,823		
Brand Characteristic	X2.1	Reputation	(L. Lee, 1999)	0,778	0,878	0,590
	X2.2	Brand predictability		0,741		
	X2.3	Brand Competence		0,767		
	X2.5			0,763		
	X2.6			0,791		
Self-Brand Congruity	X3.1	Actual Self-Image	(Sirgy, 2018)	0,856	0,939	0,755
	X3.2	Ideal Self-Image		0,842		
	X3.3	Social Self-Image		0,903		
	X3.4			0,870		
	X3.5			0,871		
Emotional Branding	Y1.1	Relationship	(Gobe, 2005)	0,713	0,888	0,531
	Y1.2	Sensory		0,717		
	Y1.3	Experience		0,704		
	Y1.4	Imagination		0,724		
	Y1.6			0,708		
	Y1.7			0,787		
	Y1.8			0,742		
Purchase decision	Y2.1	Problem recognition	(Kotler, Philip, Armstrong, 2008)	0,800	0,917	0,689
	Y2.3	Evaluation of alternatives		0,883		
	Y2.4	Purchase decision		0,892		
	Y2.5	Post-purchase decision		0,750		
	Y2.6			0,819		

Source: Data processed 2024

In this study, Brand Awareness (X1), Brand Characteristics (X2), and Self-Brand Congruity (X3) are exogenous variables, while endogenous variables are Emotional Branding and Purchasing Decisions. An indicator can be its validity or convergent validity. If the loading factor is external, it is more than 0.5. It can be concluded from the Figure 2 structural model that all variables can be used for the study that will be conducted.

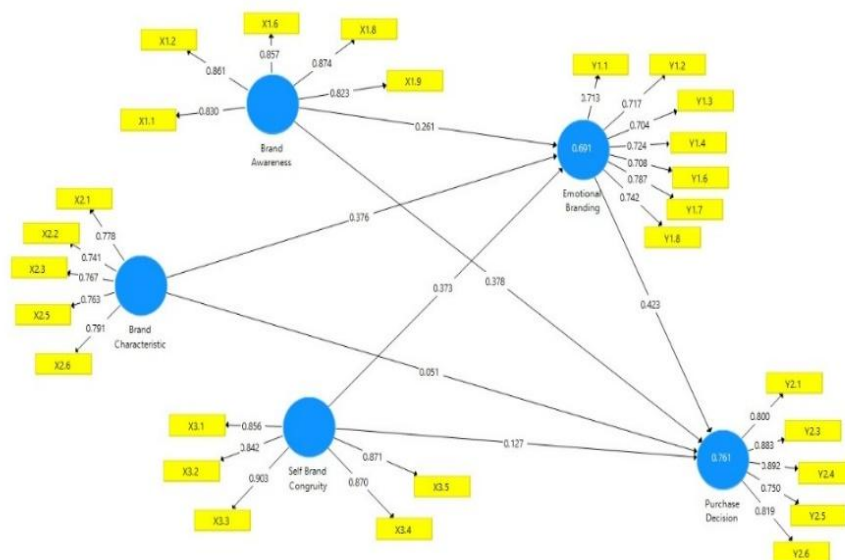


Figure 2: Structural Model

Referring to Table 2, the average value of the extracted variable (AVE) must be more than 0.5 to produce a feasible model. Each indicator's average variable extraction (AVE) value can also be used as a determination mark for the validity criterion. The results of Table 2 (AVE) show that Brand Awareness, Brand Characteristics, Self-Brand Congruity, Emotional Branding, and Purchase Decisions are more than 0.5. Which means each variable has a strong discriminant.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variable	Brand Awareness	Brand Characteristic	Emotional Branding	Purchase Decision	Self-Brand Congruity
Brand Awareness	0,849				
Brand Characteristic	0,435	0,768			
Emotional Branding	0,700	0,641	0,729		
Purchase Decision	0,789	0,538	0,811	0,830	
Self-Brand Congruity	0,738	0,405	0,718	0,730	0,869

Source: Data processed 2024

Table 3 shows that every statement on the indicator has the maximum loading value of the latent components. In the data, the values obtained were Brand Awareness (0.849), Brand Characteristic (0.768), Self-Brand Congruity (0.869), Emotional Branding (0.729), and Purchasing Decision (0.830).

Table 4. R-Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Emotional Branding	0,691	0,687
Purchase Decision	0,761	0,756

Source: Data processed 2024

The R-squared value measures how exogenous variables affect the dependent variable (R²). Referring to Table 4, the R² value for emotional branding is 0.691, and the Purchase Decision is 0.761, meaning Brand awareness, brand characteristics, and self-brand congruity influence 76.1% of the Purchase Decision variable. Meanwhile, 69.1% of the influence on emotional branding is related to Brand awareness, brand characteristics, and self-brand congruity.

Table 5. F Square Data

	Brand Awareness	Brand Characteristic	Emotional Branding	Purchase Decision	Self-Brand Congruity
Brand Awareness			0.096	0.236	
Brand Characteristic			0.365	0.006	
Emotional Branding				0.231	
Purchase Decision					
Self-Brand Congruity			0.201	0.025	

Source: Data processed 2024

The F-squared test can be carried out as described in Table 5 to determine the strength of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. According to measurement standards, an F-squared value of more than 0.02 indicates a small size, an F value higher than 0.15 indicates a medium size, and an F value of more than 0.35 indicates a large size. A value of less than 0.02 is suggested to have no effect. (Sarstedt & Christian M. Ringle, 2017) . As seen in Table 4, there is an indication of the influence of the emotional branding variable on purchasing decisions, with F square = 0.691. In the emotional branding variable, the brand awareness variable has the smallest size (0.096), the brand characteristic variable, with a value of 0.365, is included in the large size, and the self-brand congruity variable is medium (0.201). In the purchase decision variable, brand awareness is included in the medium size, with the results obtained of 0.236. The one that has no influence and gets the smallest value is in the brand characteristic variable (0.006), self-brand congruity 0.025 has an impact, but in a small size. Emotional branding in purchasing decision (0.231) medium size.

As Table 6 shows, the Q² value can be used to assess the accuracy of the prediction. A model is considered to have strong prediction accuracy if the Q² value is greater than 0; if the Q² value is less than 0, it is supposed to have weak prediction accuracy. Table 6 demonstrates that Emotional branding and purchase decisions are variables with Q² greater than 0.000.

Table 7 hypothesis results can be accepted if the p-value is less than 0.05 and the t-table path coefficient is greater than 1.96. The hypothesis on brand awareness towards emotional branding is accepted because the t-statistic value is 4.480 (> 1.96) and the p-value is 0.000. The results of the hypothesis of brand awareness toward purchase decision have a t-statistic value of 6.255 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05), concluding that the hypothesis is accepted. Furthermore, the hypothesis of brand characteristics towards emotional branding is also accepted with a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05) and a t-statistic value of 7.055 (> 1.96). The brand characteristics towards purchase decision hypothesis are rejected, p-value 0.253 (> 0.05), t-statistic 1.143 (> 1.96). Self-brand congruity towards emotional branding produces a t-statistic value of 6.270 (>1.96) while the p-value is 0.000

(<0.05), which means the hypothesis is accepted. It is stated that the hypothesis is accepted, self-brand congruity towards purchase decision p-value 0.014 (<0.05), t-statistic 2.464 (>1.96). The emotional branding towards the purchase decision hypothesis is accepted, achieving a t-statistic value of 6.212 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05).

Table 6. Prediction accuracy test (Q2)

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Brand Awareness	1005,000	1005,000	
Brand Characteristic	1005,000	1005,000	
Emotional Branding	1407,000	908,757	0,354
Purchase Decision	1005,000	492,094	0,510
Self-Brand Congruity	1005,000	1005,000	

Source: Data processed 2024

Table 7. Path Coefficient

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Results
Brand Awareness → Emotional Branding	0.261	4,480	0,000	Accepted
Brand Awareness → Purchase Decision	0.378	6,255	0,000	Accepted
Brand Characteristics → Emotional Branding	0.376	7,055	0,000	Accepted
Brand Characteristics → Purchase Decision	0.051	1,143	0.253	Not Accepted
Emotional Branding → Purchase Decision	0.423	6,212	0,000	Accepted
Self-Brand Congruity → Emotional Branding	0.373	6,270	0,000	Accepted
Self-Brand Congruity → Purchase Decision	0.127	2,464	0.014	Accepted

Source: Data processed 2024

Discussion

Brand awareness can also be called memory in brand recognition, which refers to the sensitivity category. This means that brand awareness is memory-sensitive to products or institutions. (Ye & Van Raaij, 2004), which means that consumers of the brand have a memory of the product that was previously "invisible" to "visible" because of the activation of consumer memory sensitivity. When consumers have activated the memory, they will quickly respond to the brand product and take action to make a purchase decision. Apart from brand awareness of the product, emotional involvement of the brand in the product can also influence purchasing decisions. The stage is when consumers are already aware of the product brand and feel a psychological connection with it; then they will make a purchase decision. According to Gustafon and Chabot (2007) Consumers with a high awareness of a product brand will decide. This is also one factor that determines a purchase decision on a product brand.

Brand characteristics describe an identity owned by a brand on a product and are intended to convey the brand's meaning to consumers. (Kay, 2006). Characteristics are attributes that exist in a brand, which can include predictions that will come to a brand, the reputation it owns, and the core values of the brand. If a brand has met some of the points I have conveyed, then the brand has strong characteristics, and consumers will make purchasing decisions quickly. However, in this study, no influence of brand characteristics

on purchasing decisions was found. This can be experienced because of the competition with other increasingly competent products with better functional values or reputations, so consumers have different options for purchasing decisions. Although the brand's characteristics do not influence purchasing decisions, in this study, the relationship between brand characteristics and emotional branding produces significant values. It can be interpreted that characteristics are continuous with consumer emotions.

Nowadays, people consume or buy products not only for economic needs but also to fulfill the psychological needs of consumers. (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). Consumers will choose a product brand that is in harmony with themselves, just like people who have friends on Facebook who are psychologically in harmony with or the same as themselves. (Youyou, 2017). Similar to a brand, a brand must also have harmony with consumers to reach a purchasing decision. Harmony itself can also be called commensurate, appropriate, or harmonious; Consumers choose products or institutions that are in harmony with themselves. As discussed by Youyou (2017) In the sentence above, it is only natural that people choose anything in harmony with themselves. Just imagine if we choose a coffee product that is not under our control, there must be a sense of rejection, and the product's function will not be optimal. When consumers think there is harmony between the brand's product and themselves, they will take action to make a purchasing decision. If the brand's self-alignment has been fulfilled, then emotionally it will also affect the purchasing decision. These two things are very continuous because they are related to the psychological feelings of consumers. Based on this study, emotional branding and purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by self-brand congruity.

The core of emotional branding is where consumers have a sense of commitment to a product or institution, which creates a sense of pride when receiving a gift from a brand they like (Gobe, 2005) For example, Walmart has an emotional brand that shows how well it serves its consumers. Its culture builds unforgettable emotions in consumers that are associated with their character. Consumers already have a sense of commitment that will prompt a quick purchasing decision. As explained above, humans will always choose a product when they are emotionally connected and have a sense of commitment to it. In this study, emotional branding has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study show that brand awareness, brand attributes, and self-brand congruence all improve emotional branding. Furthermore, there is no substantial relationship between brand attributes and purchasing decisions, though brand traits and emotional branding have a positive influence. Thus, not all consumers will acquire a product brand solely based on its attributes. This indicates that most consumers are more inclined to buy a product influenced by brand awareness and self-brand congruence with a specific brand. The data suggest that not all consumers are influenced by brand attributes. Brands can employ market segmentation to identify consumers who exhibit greater responsiveness to particular characteristics, such as product quality, than to emotional branding. Additional research may be conducted in industries beyond coffee.

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