

Persona Branding in Building Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) at Gibly Themed Cafe Giyanti Coffee Roastery Menteng

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Received on 10 September 2025	Revised on 29 September 2025	Accepted on 30 September 2025
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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to analyze the role of persona branding in building brand experience and consumer loyalty at Giyanti Thematic Cafe, which carries the concept of Studio Ghibli anime. Amidst increasingly fierce competition among cafes and changes in consumer behavior that emphasize emotional experiences, branding is seen as an important factor in shaping customer perceptions and engagement to create competitive advantage.

Research method: This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach through direct observation, social media observation, and SWOT analysis. Data analysis refers to the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) theory, which covers four dimensions: brand awareness, brand meaning, brand response, and brand resonance.

Results and Discussion: The study shows that Kafe Giyanti successfully presents a unique and imaginative thematic atmosphere, thereby forming brand meaning through nostalgia and atmospheric differentiation. However, weaknesses were found in limited brand awareness, service consistency, and community engagement. In addition, sustainable marketing strategies and efforts to build customer loyalty have not been optimally utilized.

Implication: The study recommends strengthening storytelling through digital campaigns, improving customer service quality through staff training, developing loyalty programs and active communities, and collaborating with anime, vintage, and local creator communities. By implementing these strategies, Kafe Giyanti can strengthen brand resonance, create deeper emotional connections with customers, and transform from a mere themed cafe into a space for identity and sustainable community interaction in a dynamic market.

Keywords: persona branding, CBBE, experience branding, Gibli Cafe, customer loyalty

INTRODUCTION

Presenting a thematic cafe in an increasingly competitive cafe business is one of the interesting differentiation strategies to create a unique brand experience and build emotional attachment with consumers. One approach used is to build a branding persona, which is to display the character and values of the brand consistently so as to create a deep perception and emotional connection between the brand and the customer. According to Haroen (2014), by doing personal branding, a person will be recognized for their quality and value so that they get a positive emotional response from others (Soewandi & Wijanarko, 2021).

This thematic strategy is seen in the implementation of branding at Kafe Giyanti, a cafe that carries the concept of the world of animation, especially the Ghibli theme which is known for its fantasy atmosphere, nostalgic feel, and immersive atmosphere (Strnadova et al., n.d.). Studio Ghibli is a Japanese animation film studio founded in 1985 by Hayao Miyazaki, Takahata Isao, and Toshio Suzuki. The name "Ghibli" was chosen by Miyazaki himself, referring to the Italian Caproni Ca.309 Ghibli aircraft used during World War II. The term

'Ghibli' itself comes from Arabic, meaning 'desert wind'. The choice of name not only reflects Miyazaki's childhood fascination with aviation, but also represents the studio as a 'strong and unstoppable breath of fresh air' in the animation (Greenberg, 2018, p. 110). Thus providing a deep emotional connection for consumers who come.

As revealed by (Kumar & Kaushik, 2020) In his research, he found that consumers interact with hundreds of brands every day, making it impossible to build meaningful relationships with all of them. Therefore, brand managers need to focus their strategies on key elements that can strengthen consumer relationships with specific brands. Previous research confirms that success in developing and maintaining consumer-brand relationships is determined not only by functional aspects, but also by key marketing variables such as brand attachment, which plays a role in creating emotional bonds, influencing preferences, and increasing consumer loyalty.

Giyanti Cafe is designed not only as a place to enjoy coffee or food, but also as an exciting and imaginative escape room, a place where consumers feel as if they are in an anime world. The visual atmosphere with interior elements, background music, and characters create an overall experience that emotionally reinforces brand perception. This phenomenon shows that consumers are no longer simply buying products, but rather pursuing the experience and brand identity offered. Maklan and Klaus (2011) describe the consumer experience as a cognitive and affective assessment of all direct and indirect encounters with companies related to their purchasing behavior. J. Bhatt and Patel (2020) also say that consumer experience concentrates on the perception of interactions between companies and consumers that cause reactions (Friska Mastarida, 2023).

However, maintaining consistent traffic at a thematic café like Giyanti is no easy task. The premium prices of food and beverages, as well as the high level of competition between cafes in big cities, pose a challenge. Based on the researcher's observations, although the atmosphere is very strong and has a striking differentiation compared to other cafes, the number of repeat visits is still limited, and most visitors come only because of virality from social media. This suggests that community-based Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) has not been optimized.

(Langga et al., 2021) The results of the study indicate that brands with good quality tend to be supported by effective distribution channels. High distribution intensity has been proven to have a positive effect on brand equity, as wide product availability allows consumers to make purchases anytime and anywhere. Consumers assess the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) of PT SBM NTT to be strong, which is reflected in the company's positive image among customers, the public, and stakeholders. The high CBBE also has an impact on good repurchase intentions from customers, although the company still has opportunities for improvement in several aspects.

The findings of this study indicate that the application of the green marketing mix contributes positively to the formation of green customer-based brand equity. In addition, this study also identifies causal relationships among the dimensions of green brand equity in the Vietnamese context. In practical terms, these results are in line with the findings of Davari and Strutton (2014) and Sohail (2017), which

confirm that environmentally friendly products have a positive influence on CBBE (Nguyen-Viet, 2023).

In (E. J. Kim et al., 2021) revealed that their testing of three well-known hotel brands found inconsistencies with the literature, presumably related to perceptions of economy hotels that offer limited services and affordable prices, thus being less able to maximize the branding effect. This indicates that initial assessments and brand equity dimensions need to exceed a certain threshold to produce a significant impact. Customer behavior is influenced by price and perceived value, so hotel brand equity needs to exceed a certain threshold to have a positive impact.

According to (Falahati et al., 2025) found that The findings reveal that at the foundational level, brand visual characteristics and geographic positioning serve as the primary elements shaping customer experience. At the second level, customer-centric values, including service value, social and ethical value, purchasing motivations, and product value, are identified as intermediary factors influencing higher-level constructs. At the third level, key brand attributes such as brand clarity, brand exclusivity, and personal brand experience emerge as essential components, significantly shaping customers' emotional and perceptual connections with the brand. At the fourth level, product and service quality, customer-brand relationship, and service quality are recognized as the primary determinants of customer experience. Finally, at the fifth and highest level, after-sales services are identified as the central element in the model, playing a pivotal role in reinforcing customer loyalty and enhancing brand perception.

(Park & Namkung, 2022) This study shows that Instagram marketing activities through interaction, entertainment, customization, and trends influence brand equity, which includes awareness, image, and perceived quality. This brand equity then drives attitudinal loyalty in the form of brand love and behavioral loyalty in the form of repurchase intent. These findings confirm the important role of Instagram marketing activities in building customer-based brand equity and helping product brands predict future customer purchasing behavior.

Consumer-based brand equity positively influences brand loyalty through customer satisfaction, with perceived quality and lifestyle fit being the main factors that strengthen this relationship (Kurnianingsih & Riorini, 2021). Polat & Cetinsoz (2021) shows that his research findings on strategies aligned with the CBBE dimension can strengthen bonds with target audiences and increase brand loyalty, which in turn helps service companies maintain market share and improve competitiveness and profitability on a sustainable basis.

Research findings (S. H. Kim et al., 2021) confirm that providing detailed information about product quality, strengthening brand heritage perceptions, and maintaining consistent commitment to quality can increase consumer trust and emotional connection with a coffee brand. These factors contribute to the formation of brand affection and loyalty, which ultimately provide a competitive advantage and foster long-term relationships between consumers and brands.

Interestingly, the results also show that consumers are willing to pay more when they feel part of something special and meaningful, in this case a community of anime lovers. Therefore, strategies such as loyalty programs, strong storytelling on social media, and collaboration with communities have great potential to create long-term connections and increase visit frequency.

Researchers see great potential in the Ghibli concept offered by Kafe Giyanti. With the strengthening of strategic persona branding, and more focused community management, Giyanti has the opportunity to develop beyond a viral place into a vibrant and relevant space for various communities, both as a place for discussion, meetings, and emotional relaxation.

This study analyzes the role of branding persona in building brand experience and consumer loyalty, where brand experience is understood as the process of organizations creating experiences through sensory stimulation, emotions, thoughts, actions, and interactions with brands, which requires comprehensive coordination to create consumer satisfaction. (Kumar & Kaushik, 2020). By emphasizing the importance of emotional approach, community, and message consistency in shaping the sustainability of a thematic cafe.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this research is to review literature findings related to the Persona Branding Approach in Building Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) where according to Keller (2020) there are four dimensions in CBBE, namely: brand identity, which describes the ability of a brand to convey its identity well until it is embedded in the minds of consumers. Brand meaning, describes the brand image created from associations related to the brand and based on consumer experience with the brand. Brand responses, describe consumer responses about what they feel and think about a brand and its marketing activities, and brand relationships, namely the relationship between the brand and its consumers which is characterized by a feeling of harmony resulting in a strong psychological bond between consumers and the brand(Wang et al., 2022) at Gibli Giyanti Coffee Roastery Thematic Cafe located at. Jl. Surabaya No. 20, Menteng, Central Jakarta. With Qualitative methods According to Creswell (1998), Qualitative research is generally conducted by researchers who are willing to commit to long-term fieldwork, engage in complex data analysis processes by filtering large amounts of information to formulate more focused themes and categories, and produce in-depth writings supported by adequate evidence and diverse perspectives(Jelahut, 2022).

The data collection technique is done by direct observation and observation from social media uploaded by consumers as well as articles and theories from journals on the website. The data collected will be analyzed using SWOT according to(Yulianti et al., 2024) data collection techniques are carried out through a link form which will later be analyzed using SWOT to find points of Strength (S), Weakness (W), Opportunity (O) and Threat (T). Which can be analyzed and drawn conclusions to be utilized and applied to other docks, where the final point obtained can contribute to the owner of the Thematic Cafe or other cafes that want to develop and get better turnover.

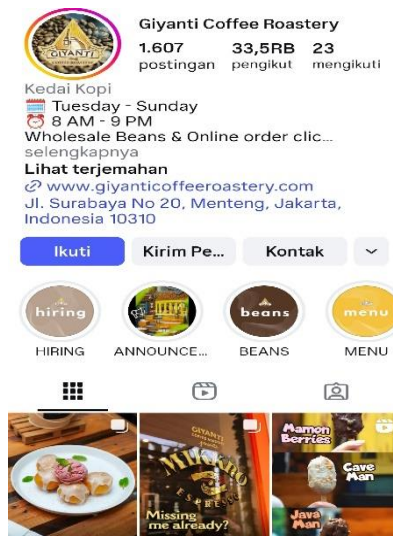


Figure 1. Instagram social Media Image of Giyanti Cafe and its address
 [Source: Screenshot from Cafe Giyanti's Instagram]

Tabel 1: MATRIX IFAS-EFAS

IFAS	EFAS
<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Unique thematic concept (Studio Ghibli) that sets it apart from other cafes b) Immersive visual atmosphere and decor, creating an emotional experience c) Differentiation through nostalgic storytelling and fantasy atmosphere d) Strategic location in Menteng, central Jakarta 	<p>Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consumers are seeking unique experiences, not just coffee b) Potential for collaboration with anime, vintage, and local creator communities c) Social media (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube) is effective for storytelling and promotion d) Growing trend of community-based loyalty and membership programs
<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Brand awareness is still low, only popular due to a momentary viral trend b) Service consistency is lacking, staff are sometimes unfriendly c) Prices are relatively expensive compared to competitors d) There is no loyalty program or active community yet 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Fierce competition in the Jakarta coffee shop industry b) Dependence on viral trends that quickly fade away c) Changes in consumer behavior due to premium prices d) Economic instability affecting consumer purchasing power

[Source: Researcher's observations]

Tabel 2: SWOT MATRIX STRATEGY

IFAS \ EFAS	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Optimize the unique Ghibli concept with digital storytelling on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. b. Create thematic events (anime movie screenings, cosplay days, illustration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase brand awareness through creative promotions, UGC (user-generated content), and challenges on social media.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> workshops) to attract the community. c. Developing an exclusive loyalty program (anime-themed membership cards, points redeemable for merchandise). d. Collaborating with influencers, food bloggers, and anime/vintage communities to expand awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Train staff to improve service in line with the premium cafe image. c. Offer bundled prices (coffee + snacks/merchandise) to counteract the impression of being “expensive.” d. Form a customer community (Giyanti Club) to increase repeat visits.
THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maintain thematic differentiation so that competitors cannot easily imitate it. b. Emphasize value experience over price, so that consumers feel it is worth it even if it is more expensive. c. Run nostalgia campaigns so as not to rely solely on short-lived viral trends. d. Offer seasonal menus (e.g., “Autumn Ghibli Latte”) to keep consumers curious. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create service operational standards to address the issue of unfriendly staff. b. Diversify income by selling Ghibli/vintage merchandise so as not to rely solely on food and beverages. c. Maintain operational efficiency so as not to be overly affected by economic fluctuations. d. Run regular promotions with membership programs to maintain loyalty despite new competitors.

[Source: Researcher’s observations]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the initial stage in building strong brand equity. Although Kafe Giyanti has an interesting thematic concept and strong visuals, observations show that brand awareness is still low. Many visitors know this cafe from social media or momentary recommendations, but do not have a deep attachment to the brand.

The implication is that the café management needs to conduct consistent, creative and relevant promotional campaigns, especially through digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. A content strategy that showcases the uniqueness of the atmosphere, customer testimonials, behind-the-scenes of product creation, as well as community activities will expand audience reach while shaping a more consistent positive perception. Optimizing collaborations with food bloggers, influencers, and anime community media will also help increase market exposure and awareness.

2. Brand Meaning

Brand meaning is formed from two main elements: brand performance (what the cafe provides) and brand image (emotional and symbolic associations). Giyanti already has a strong visual performance with its Ghibli-themed interior design, flexible seating options, and immersive nostalgic atmosphere.

However, the brand meaning has not been fully reinforced emotionally. The researcher found that there are no specific programs that associate the café with the anime community or nostalgic identity values. Therefore, the café needs to add consistent storytelling elements, both in social media and in on-site activities, to deepen brand associations. Examples include themed events (Valentine ala Ghibli, 80s Nostalgia, Nobar Film Anime), thematic merchandise, anime-designed loyalty cards, or regular screenings of Ghibli film music.

These efforts will shape a stronger brand meaning as a place with an identity, not just an ordinary coffee shop.



Figure 2. Cafe Room Decoration
[Source: Researcher-2025]

3. Brand Response

Brand response reflects how consumers assess and respond to brands, both cognitively (product and service quality) and affectively (feelings towards the brand). Based on observations in the field, despite fast service and a comfortable atmosphere, the customer experience can be disrupted by unfriendly staff attitudes and product prices that are relatively high compared to competitors.

To improve brand response, customer service standards need to be improved with regular staff training on hospitality and brand values. In addition, adaptive pricing strategies can be implemented through special promos, membership benefits, or product bundling so that consumers feel a higher perceived value. Participation of baristas in competitions can also increase the perception of brand quality in the eyes of consumers.

4. Brand Resonance

Brand resonance is the highest level in CBBE, consumers are not only loyal, but also have active involvement such as recommending, participating in the community, or integrating the brand into their identity.

This resonance is still a major challenge for Kafe Giyanti, the majority of visitors come out of curiosity and only a few become regular customers. To build brand resonance, the cafe should develop a loyal community by creating participatory spaces for customers. Examples include anime lovers clubs, Ghibli movie discussions, Japanese-themed illustration workshops, referral programs, or point-based loyalty rewards that can be redeemed for exclusive gifts or access to certain events.

Consumers who feel part of a community tend to have closer relationships, return more often, and are more willing to pay a premium because they feel that the brand has emotional and social value.

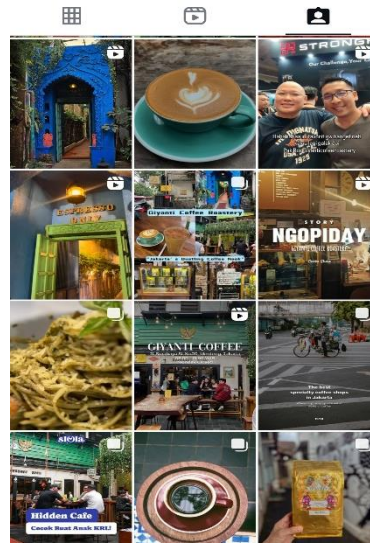


Figure 3. Consumer Recommendation Image and Video
[Source: Screen Shot from Giyanti's Instagram]

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model, it is revealed that although brand meaning has been formed through visual atmosphere and thematic concepts, the dimensions of brand awareness, brand response, and brand resonance still need to be improved. Customer visits are still dominated by momentary viral effects, but the formation of a loyal community, as well as inconsistencies in service quality are real challenges that must be overcome.

Strengthening overall brand equity requires an integrated approach that not only focuses on visuals and ambience, but also includes service consistency, community engagement, and structured marketing campaigns. Today's consumers are not just looking for a place to drink coffee, but for a space of meaning, identity, and togetherness, which can only be built through authentic and sustainable emotional connections.

Implication: Based on the analysis of CBBE dimensions, Kafe Giyanti can improve the effectiveness of its brand persona by: a). Strengthening scheduled digital campaigns and consistent storytelling to build awareness and meaning. b). Improving customer service quality through staff training and monitoring operational standards. c). Creating loyalty programs and active communities to strengthen brand resonance. d). Establishing collaborations with thematic communities, such as anime, vintage, or local creator communities, so that the brand has an influential social network. Thus, Kafe Giyanti is not only present as a momentary thematic cafe, but as a space of emotion, consumer identity and community interaction that has long-term durability in the midst of a dynamic market.

Suggestions: for future researchers A more in-depth study of the role of digital communities and user-generated content in strengthening brand awareness and engagement can also be a new direction of research.

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