

Customers' First Impression of a Brand and Its Relation to Their Shopping Experiences

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Abstract—This research discusses about how an impression of a mall can be formed from an individual shopping experience. As does the visitor of SKA Mall in Pekanbaru who do shopping can feel the experience with some impression as a result. First impression of a consumer will affect their perception of the next judgment in terms of choosing and determining the reason for their purchase, looking for something different, price considerations, interest in an item, and trust in a brand. Through these values of impression can help the brand to improve their brand awareness. The problem was the tenants are more recognized by the consumer than the mall itself. This research uses descriptive qualitative method by aligning the AIDA brand awareness marketing model and the relevance factor of the consumer behaviour process. The result was impression can be form by the motivation, perception, attitude formation and integration from the consumer and it will build the brand equity including satisfaction and loyalty that is unconsciously formed in the mind of the consumer. The improvement of brand awareness of mall SKA will be more effective if they do some adjustment to their physical evidence, situation/ambience, lights, and other supporting facilities. These adjustments are necessary to keep the consumer from their competitor.

Keywords: *impression, shopping, experience, brand, awareness*

I. INTRODUCTION

Shopping is always associated with the lifestyle of consumerism since it especially takes place at luxury shopping centres that offer brands with famous items, like in a shopping mall. One of the reasons for the public in general to shop at a mall is due to the fact that shopping malls are core shopping centres consisting of large department stores as an attraction, small retails and restaurants with building typologies such as shops facing the main corridors of malls or pedestrians that become the main elements of a shopping mall functioning as a communal space for the interaction between visitors and traders [1].

In fact, a company in this case shopping malls also experience the process and efforts to build a brand, because the brand is a future investment that needs to be built based on perception factors and requires a long time [2]. This is in line with what was done by one of the largest malls and became a pioneer in the city of Pekanbaru, SKA mall, which is a mall founded in 2004. Sentra Komersial Arengka or known as SKA

is in the Arengka region with the facilities of 4 floors and have a variety of brand tenants, both local, national and international, making SKA mall one of the local brands that is never empty of visitors.

This is inseparable from the visitors who always shop and follow the SKA mall journey from its beginning to its present day. The visitors of course have their own impressions and experiences when shopping at SKA mall. The impression is formed from how the shopping experience of each individual visitor. The initial process of how an impression can be formed, namely from an individual's shopping experience that seems to "play a role" as someone who initially becomes a potential customer then shifts as a consumer and ultimately a loyal customer through several stages. Through shopping patterns in searching for an item, an individual then determines which items to buy. This phase is called the motive for shopping where one sees the tendency of aspects of needs or desires in making a purchase while shopping.

Of course, this makes an individual's first impression as a consumer to influence the continuation of his perception in terms of choosing and determining the reason for the purchase, looking for something different, price considerations, interest in an item, and trust in a brand. In the long term, comparing with previous experience in shopping makes the consumers increasingly aware of the existence of a brand, both those that support the Mall itself and the tenants or stores in the mall.

In line with this, SKA mall that has been running for more than 10 years needs to strengthen and increase brand awareness with various efforts and strategies, since the SKA mall is a mall carrying local elements. The presence of a number of malls in Pekanbaru is also enlivened by shopping malls from the national level such as the Transmart group mall from Trans Corp and the Living World mall from the Kawan Lama group. The presence of the Living World mall of course can be a threat to the SKA mall. Besides being located directly opposite the SKA mall, the Living World mall is the first branch outside of Java established by Kawan Lama.

Brands, in this case the SKA mall, play an important role in marketing strategies. The best brands will always exist and always try to do well and right so that the brand's reputation is maintained. But more than that, the brand is growing, developing, and getting better as time goes by. Branding is not

an act of communication that is designed to deceive others or imaging that is camouflage so that from the outside it looks good while inside it turns out to be chaotic. Branding is likened to a series of actions that come out of honesty, sincerity, truth, and the nature of always maintaining the mandate that becomes daily behaviour. The accumulation of the good that we always do will produce benefits for others. A strong brand can also be the foundation for a brand extension strategy. With their appropriate expansion strategy, the SKA mall can strengthen the brand's position and increase not only awareness but also the brand's value [3].

Therefore, branding is a key element of the company's marketing strategy. A strong brand helps corporate identity in the market, and develops solid customer franchises [4-6]. Having a brand that is in the number one or two positions, in certain product categories, is the most powerful strategy for mastering the minds of consumers, in this case SKA mall visitors [3].

When a brand wants to be able to last a long time and can be stored either in the hearts or minds of the people, a product, both goods and services such as a shopping mall, should make an effort to give a positive impression and a pleasant experience so that visitors' awareness increase when remembering the brand of a mall.

Brand awareness means the ability of consumers to recognize and remember a brand in different situations [4]. Furthermore, brand awareness consists of brand recall and brand recognition. Brand recall means that when consumers see product categories, they can remember brand names precisely, and brand recognition means that consumers have the ability to identify brands when there are brand cues [7].

It means that consumers can tell the brand correctly if they have seen or heard it. In addition, Hoeffler & Keller argued that brand awareness can be distinguished from depth and width [8]. Depth means how to make consumers to remember or identify brands easily, and width means that when consumers buy a product, brand names will immediately appear in their minds (top of mind) [7].

If a product has brand depth and width at the same time, consumers will think of a particular brand when they want to buy a product. It means that the product has higher brand awareness. In addition, brand names are the most important element in brand awareness [9]. As a consequence, brand awareness will influence purchasing decisions through brand associations, and when a product has a positive brand image, it will help in marketing activities [10].

A brand name offers a symbol that can help consumers to identify service providers and to predict service results [11-13]. Brand awareness plays an important role in purchasing intentions because consumers tend to buy products that are known and famous [10,14]. Moreover, it can help consumers to recognize product categories from brands and make purchasing decisions [15]. It also has a major influence on choices and can be the basis for prior consideration in product categories [16].

Brand awareness also plays an important factor in consumer purchase intentions, and certain brands will enter consumers' minds to influence consumer purchasing decisions.

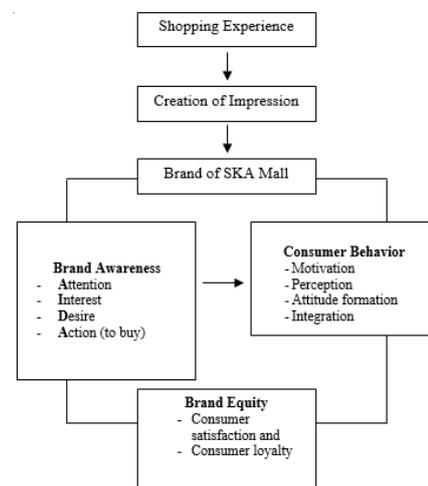
A product with a high level of brand awareness will receive higher consumer preferences because it has a higher market share and quality evaluation [17,18].

The most basic goal and foundation of a company is to be able to build a strong brand, which not only affects short-term revenue, but also benefits in the long-term influence. For this reason, good brand management is to form a successful brand for several decades and can add more value and products [19,20].

The most basic level of brand knowledge of brand awareness is to involve at least the identification of brand names or structures that have been developed based on detailed information. The fundamental and most important limitation in any search for brand awareness is the ability of consumers to recognize and remember a brand in different situations. Brand awareness influences consumer decision making about a product. When a consumer will buy something, he considers a brand. If consumers know their brand well, they will certainly have more opportunities to buy and will always make wise buying decisions.

This is the basis of urgency in this study. In addition, this study also aims to find an increase in brand awareness that is formed through the impression and shopping experience of loyal visitors from the SKA mall. This can create new strategies for the SKA mall to be more innovative and creative in attracting visitors to shop, gain experience, as well as forming a positive impression in communicating a key value to customers, then implementing it in the minds of customers so that customers become satisfied and loyal. This element needs to be explored further with consumer behaviour in the perception of the brand image of the SKA mall.

In the framework of thinking, shopping experience is a factor that becomes the initial analysis for forming an impression of the SKA mall brand image, then the right step in increasing brand awareness starting from awareness, interest, desire, action (buying) is to study the characteristics of visitors through consumer behaviour.



Source: Processed by researcher

Fig. 1. Thinking framework.

There is something fundamental in the concept of brand awareness using the AIDA model, namely by identifying the cognitive stages that a person goes through during the purchase process for a product or service. This is a funnel in purchasing activities. It is a place where shoppers go through the shopping experience and give an impression at each stage, to support their decision to make a final purchase.

The steps proposed by the AIDA model are as follows:

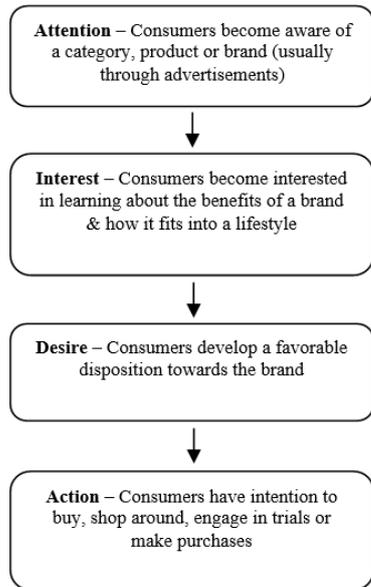


Fig. 2. AIDA marketing model [21].

In addition, to support the AIDA marketing model in an effort to build and increase brand awareness of the SKA mall, it is necessary to understand consumer behaviour by examining factors that affect the relevance of the decision-making process in buying, namely:

- Motivation is an impulse that exists in humans to achieve certain goals.
- Perception is the result of a person's interpretation of the stimulus or event he received based on information and his experience of the stimulus.
- Attitude formation is an assessment in someone who reflects the attitude of what someone likes/dislikes about a thing.
- Integration is a union between attitude and action. Integration is a response to the attitude taken. Feeling of like will encourage someone to buy and feeling of dislike will make a person's determination not to buy the product [22].

II. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to the shopping experience and the impression of visitors to the SKA mall to increase their awareness and understanding of the brand of the SKA mall. The initial step of the study was to collect data, initial observations about the

SKA mall and visitors. The sources of the data used in this study are the results of researchers' observations as well as the results of in-depth interviews to several visitors and brand observer representatives [23].

In this study, the analysis carried out was to use data analysis in the opinion of Bogdan and Biklen based on qualitative data. Classification of data begins with organizing data, sorting, searching, synthesizing and finding patterns, and then finding some important aspects to be studied, and ending with explaining what can be shared with others in the form of research report writing [24].

III. RESULTS

As known that brand cannot be separated from a name, symbol and design, or a combination of all. Every aspect used is certainly to identify something good, products, places, people, companies, countries, organizations and so on. The existence of each brand should be uniquely present and have one difference from one another. Of course brands come because they are intentionally created with messages, images, and certain goals to meet the needs of the audience. This brand presence process is called branding. Branding is not only talking about market share, but also talking about mind and heart share.

This is also what is expected from the strategic efforts of the SKA mall in increasing brand awareness that they have formed through the impression of visitors at every opportunity of the shopping experience. This element cannot be separated from the bitter and sweet shopping experience. Since the beginning of the establishment, the SKA mall would surely receive both positive and negative impressions.

Based on observations and interviews that have been conducted, there are several aspects that can be analysed relating to the shopping experience and impression formation, including:

A. Complete

By having various kinds of tenants provided by SKA mall, from a variety of products offered by SKA mall such as fashion products (department stores), restaurants and/or food, retail supermarkets, entertainment (children's games, ice skating, cinema) equipped with brands from local, national and international.

B. Innovative and Up-to-Date

The challenges that came from the entry of several national-scale malls around the Arengka area which incidentally around the SKA mall, demanded the SKA mall think creatively in order to retain loyal visitors to be more satisfied with product tenants who can answer the needs. As always adding some new products with sufficient space when the addition is done by the SKA mall management, this is what makes the SKA mall have the impression of a mall that can meet all the needs of visitors with all variant products making SKA mall a one stop shopping centre by adjusting each visitor segment starting from low-mid-high. And mall visitors who often visit the SKA mall are not only from the city of

Pekanbaru, but also from the areas such as Bangkinang, West Sumatra, as well as several districts around the city of Pekanbaru.

C. Strategic

The geographical position of the SKA mall, in the middle of the city of Pekanbaru, is located in the Arengka road area. SKA Mall is also side by side around several national franchise malls such as the Living World mall and the Transmart mall. This makes SKA mall one of the choices because of its strategic position and easy access to reach the people of Pekanbaru in particular.

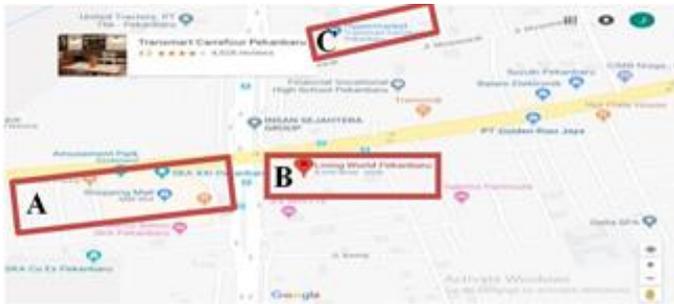


Fig. 3. Geographical Position of SKA Mall a) SKA Mall, b) Living World, c) Transmart

D. Past Habits and Experiences

Pekanbaru city community incidentally witnessed the establishment of the long history of the shopping mall industry. SKA Mall has been around for more than 15 years in the midst of the people of Pekanbaru. Shopping habits that have always been repeated, with shopping patterns that are formed from time to time make the motives of Pekanbaru society in positioning the SKA mall in the hearts and minds of the people personally.

E. Facility Availability

There are several aspects and more value that SKA malls have compared to several similar malls that are competitors of SKA malls in Pekanbaru. SKA Mall has product differentiation and supporting facilities especially the service aspect of the availability of a large parking area, which can accommodate two-wheeled vehicles, to the diareal parking area/mall centre. In addition, the SKA mall is adjoining and cooperating with the Swiss Bellinn Hotel which has the SKA Convention & Exhibition Centre. The product differentiation only owned by the SKA mall in Pekanbaru a place for ice skating entertainment. Moreover, product classification that is always developing and innovative and shows newness is becoming increasingly awaited and excellence to be able to survive the competition.

F. Promotion Strategy

Both online and offline, the instrument in terms of promotions carried out by SKA malls is inseparable from the big names of the selected tenants and cooperates with SKA malls. The marketing communication strategies using buy one get one free tactics, get cash back points for using fintech

payments such as go-pay, ovo, or funds, and are supported by influencers and information providers in Pekanbaru, such as @brosispku become an element in building and increasing brand awareness for the SKA mall going forward. In addition, the midnight sale strategy is part of a new buying culture carried out by the citizens of the city of Pekanbaru, which then becomes the attraction of visitors to the SKA mall.

IV. DISCUSSION

After observations and interviews, some of the points that have been analysed relating to shopping experiences and the formation of impressions of the SKA mall can be integrated with the framework of thinking through elements or AIDA brand awareness models and consumer behaviour factors that influence the relevance of the decision-making process in buying, namely:

A. Attention

At this stage visitors or not even consumers have started to have an interest in the SKA mall. In addition to its strategic location, SKA mall has a wide variety of product variants. Through this prospective, consumers know and build awareness of a category, both from products or brands, in this case advertising that always arises from existing tenants, raises the value of motivation to SKA mall visitors to stimulate the needs and desires to achieve the purpose of buying and placing the long-term SKA mall brand in the minds of each individual visitor.

B. Interest

At this level or stage, visitors become interested in supporting elements, in this case returning new tenants, fresh and differentiation offered to make visitors always benefit the brand and how the brand can be useful by adjusting the lifestyle. Through this aspect, perception arises which is the result of the visitor's meaning of the stimulus carried out, starting from each event received based on information and experience (good and bad) of these stimuli.

C. Desire

In this part, the visitor enters the preference stage, which means that the prospective customer has reached the point of preferring a product or tenant at the SKA mall for several reasons, related to the personal experience that has been formed. Through these elements, it can be determined that attitude formation is part of the assessment of individual SKA mall visitors and determines the likes or dislikes about a brand of product to be purchased or recommended to other potential customers.

D. Action

The value of this element of action is when a prospective visitor who acts as a consumer has formed an intention to make a purchase, then in the end actually does it, by making a purchase of goods which then this can always be integrated (integration) into the value of one entity between the attitude that is determined and the actions taken in the purchase. This value element is entered into the value of an individual visitor

no longer compares the advantages of each shopping mall's product because it has an excess value and a deficiency value of each shopping centre. When the elements of needs and desires arise and are present in the midst of consumers, the top value of mind (the element of trust and awareness) is highest in brand management.

The impression of trust and loyalty that is formed through the shopping experience of visitor's raises a response to the attitude taken. Feelings like, comfortable, and satisfied will encourage someone to keep buying at the next purchase. However, feelings of dislike, discomfort, and dissatisfaction will make a person's determination not to buy the product, and provide recommendations or bad information to other visitors. Surely, it can slowly eliminate customer satisfaction and loyalty through word of mouth.

V. CONCLUSION

The impression that was formed at the Pekanbaru SKA mall can be formed with the story of previous experiences, since SKA mall is still the first largest mall in Pekanbaru at that time. Then the experience of shopping over time according to the products always offered by SKA to its customers is always up-to-date and innovative which makes SKA still a choice for shopping and window shopping.

SKA Mall still gives a good impression and is a choice in shopping for Pekanbaru residents. Moreover, SKA always makes improvements and innovations from time to time. This shopping experience makes the people of Pekanbaru always remember the mall which becomes the people's choice although various kinds of competitors have arrived from the city centre around the SKA mall area.

However, if SKA mall does not make improvements to adjust to current developments, both in terms of physical (display or physical evidence), situation/ambience, lights, and other supporting facilities, loyal visitors will slowly move to other competitors. They will go to the malls which provide comfort to visitors to enjoy the convenience of being in the mall for a long time, even though the visitors are only doing window shopping, relaxing or conducting business meetings with colleagues.

From the results of the discussion and analysis above, the shopping experience of a consumer can form a positive or negative impression on a brand. The experience of shopping informants, in this case SKA mall consumers who always follow the history of SKA mall development to date, produces brand equity elements, namely in terms of satisfaction in shopping with the presence of various kinds of varied tenants so as to create elements of novelty and innovation. This is the one which slowly forms and increases the awareness of SKA mall visitors to be more loyal to the mall with the original local brand Pekanbaru, with the long name of Sentra Komersial Arengka.

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