

The Influence of Brand Image, Social Environment and Cult Brand on Behavioral Intention of Smartphone Users

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ABSTRACT

Entering the current digital and globalization era, people socialize using communication technology in all their activities. This makes the technology and communication industry develop very rapidly, one of which is the smartphone. This study aims to determine the effect of brand image on behavioral intention, the influence of social environment on behavioral intention, and the influence of brand cult on behavioral intention. This research was conducted by distributing questionnaires online to research samples domiciled in Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi) and have used the same smartphone for three years. A total of 233 respondents were collected using a purposive sampling technique. This study was analyzed using the PLS-SEM method. The results of this study indicate that brand image and brand cult have a positive and significant effect on behavioral intention. In contrast, the social environment has a positive but insignificant effect on behavioral intention. This shows that brand image and cult have a big impact on the smartphone industry and are determining factors that attract consumers to repurchase smartphone products. Based on the research results, the company is expected to be able to express its activities through marketing that consumers can realize and can also build a product that can meet the needs and desires of consumers. Companies must also have a differentiator from other brands outside of product, delivery, messaging, or marketing strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the digital era and globalization, people socialize using communication technology in all their activities (Prasetio, 2019). This has made the technology and communication industries grow rapidly, including smartphones. Smartphones are essential and become a standard to measure a person's economic level based on their brand. Along with the development of technology, people become more careful in selecting a product or service that will be consumed in the long term (Sukmono & Supardi, 2021). This is proven by the smartphone market competition in Indonesia, where products can provide added value tailored to consumer needs and differentiate one product from another (Prasetio, 2019). Based on data from the National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas), it is said that in 2019, around 63.5% of the Indonesian population had a smartphone. Compared to 2010, this figure has approximately doubled, which at that time was still around 38% of the Indonesian population (BPS, 2019).

There are various smartphone brands competing to create innovations that support community activities (Prasetio, 2019). This has made many smartphone brands have their own characteristics. Smartphone brands also need to pay attention to their brand image because a good brand image will affect the purchasing decision, so that the purchasing decision will increase. Therefore, a good company brand image is one of the driving forces for people to use the smartphones offered. Smartphones that have a high and strong brand image will be able to dominate the market and compete competitively (Damayanti & Wahyono, 2015). By seeing a good brand image and a social environment with a good brand usage experience, consumers will be interested in using the product and intend to repurchase the same brand (Damayanti & Ismiyati, 2020; Joshi, 2016). Kamajaya and Seminari (2016) stated that the role of the social environment has a positive effect on consumer repurchase intentions towards a brand. For those who have used products from the brand, it can increase the intention to repurchase. In addition, repurchase intentions can also be influenced by a very high sense of loyalty or what is known as a cult brand. A high level of brand cult and the spread of positive information can influence a person's intention to make a repurchase decision (LaMorte, 2022).

Based on studies that have been conducted (Chao, 2019; Hwang et al., 2021; C. W. Lin et al., 2021; C. Y. Lin et al., 2017; Terzis et al., 2012), many factors can influence behavioral intentions in repurchasing smartphones, such as perceived ease of use, perceived excitement, perceived usefulness, satisfaction, and attitude towards use. However, there is scope to consider other more diverse variables, such as social environment and cult brands, which are rarely studied and have limited sources. To consider the underlying determinants of smartphone repurchase, Goh et al. (2016) found that information and usage experience can be seen directly in the social environment and can remove a person's hesitation to make a repurchase. Then, according to studies conducted by Constantin and Stoenescu (2014) and Agnihotri (2013), consumers with cult brands are reluctant to move to other brands and remain loyal to the brand. Therefore, the social environment and cult brand are important factors affecting behavioral intentions. Therefore, this study examines the influence of brand image, social environment, and brand cult in increasing behavioral intentions in smartphone purchases.

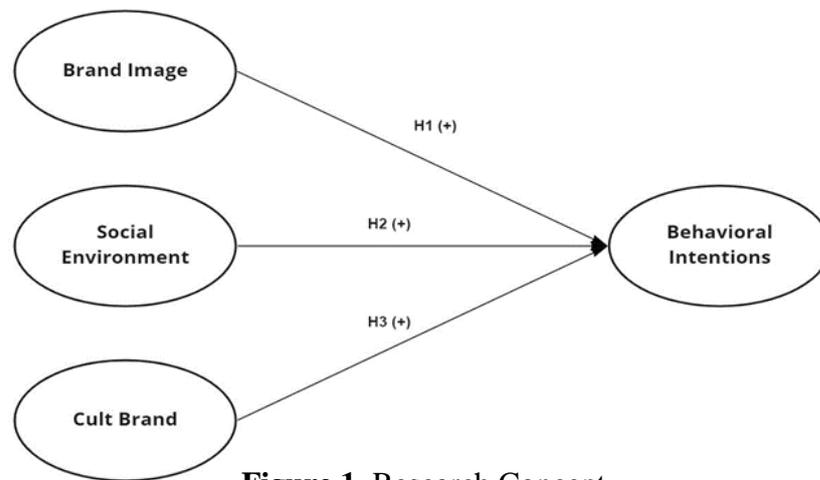


Figure 1. Research Concept

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2022, Jakarta

Listyawati (2016) stated that a brand that is well-known by the public will generate someone's intention or interest in buying a good or service. Several factors that can affect brand image include packaging, labels, advertisements, logos or symbols, quality, and other factors. The impact of a logo or symbol on a product will give a deep meaning to someone in making a purchase decision because logos or symbols are very important in marketing and affect behavioral intentions (Ramadhayanti, 2019). Research conducted (Marion, 2015; Harjanti, 2021; Permana & Haryanto, 2014) states that brand image has a significant effect on behavioral intention. Therefore, this study draws the following hypothesis:

H1: Brand image has a positive and significant influence on behavioral intention

According to Firmansyah & Mahardika (2018), the social environment encourages consumers to use a product or service based on other consumers who have used it. Someone feels influenced to buy a product from a brand based on relatives who have a good usage experience (Firmansyah & Mahardika, 2018). With a good social environment and usage experience, a person can spread positive information to others about a product they use (Cahyono, 2016). As supported by Purwianti and Tio (2017), behavioral intention refers to someone who can share positive information about a product or brand with others and intends to repurchase with high loyalty to a product or brand. In this context, researchers assume that a social environment with a positive usage experience makes someone in the environment feel influenced and convinced to repurchase a product with the same brand. The social environment has a considerable impact on influencing a person's behavioral intentions. The social environment is also important in determining a person's behavior (Afnis, 2018). Therefore, this study draws the following hypothesis:

H2: Social environment has a positive and significant influence on behavioural intention

Building a brand into a cult brand is very important for companies because cult brands can generate extremely loyal consumers (Prónay & Hetesi, 2016). With these consumers, companies can get a lot of benefits, including consumers who are very loyal will share positive information about the brand and maintain the continuity of the brand's existence (Yunaida, 2017). Cult branding is very effective in increasing repurchasing interest in a product a brand based on feelings of love and connection to the brand (Aruman, 2017). It is called a cult brand

if people can spread the word, recommend, and defend it (Aruman, 2017). This is the reason why popular brands become one of the brands that have consumers with the strongest loyalty and have a high repurchase rate (Indirasari, 2013). Therefore, this study draws the following hypothesis:

H3: Cult Brand has a significant positive influence on behavioural intention

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Measurement Instruments. Respondents were asked to respond to several questions using a Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire in this study contained 35 question items adopted and modified from previous research, including 5 brand image items from Purwianti and Tio (2017), 5 social environment items from Saekok et al. (2020), and 21 cult brand items adopted from Indirasari (2013) with 7 dimensions, and each dimension has 3 items. Lastly, 4 behavioral intention items were adopted from Chopdar and Sivakumar (2019) and modified according to the research context.

Data Collection. The sample of this study was taken from every smartphone user who lives in Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi) and has experience using the same smartphone brand in the last three years. Therefore, this study uses a purposive sampling method with the criteria that respondents live in Jabodetabek and have the same smartphone for 3 years. A questionnaire was used to obtain the data, divided into three sections: variable measurement, respondent profile, and screening. Nevertheless, 233 respondents, or 75.40% of the total, meet the sample criteria.

Measurement Model. The statistical technique used in this study is confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which consists of convergent validity evaluated by factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR). According to research by (Hair et al., 2019), the factor loading of each indicator item must be more than 0.7 to be considered valid. The AVE value must be at least 0.5 or more to be considered valid (Hair et al., 2019). Meanwhile, to measure the reliability of each variable, the CR value must be more than 0.7.

Data analysis method. This research uses a Partial Least Square (PLS) based on the Structural Equation Model (SEM) supported by SmartPLS 3 software to analyze and validate the data and verify the proposed hypotheses. This study used PLS because this research is exploratory and expands on existing structural theories. The other reason is that this research was developed to investigate phenomena that previous researchers have not studied or explained in detail (Hair et al., 2019).

3. DISCUSSION & RESULT

The questionnaire, which was distributed to only 233 respondents, was usable. Respondents are described by presenting characteristics seen from the demographic profile, including gender, age, highest level of education, occupation, average income per month, current smartphone brand, and period of smartphone use. It can be concluded that female respondents aged 18-25 years with the last education of high school have an average monthly income of less than IDR

2,000,000, and the majority use the iPhone brand with a length of use of 3-5 years. The detailed respondent profile can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Respondent Characteristic	Frequency	%
Gender		
Woman	176	76
Man	57	24
Age		
18 - 25 years old	215	92
26 - 30 years old	11	5
>30 years old	7	3
Highest Level of Education		
High School	126	54
D3 (Diploma)	8	3
S1 (Bachelor's Degree)	92	40
S2 (Master's Degree)	7	3
Occupation		
Student	190	82
Employee	35	15
Entrepreneur	3	1
Etc.	5	2
Avg. Income Per Month		
< Rp 2.000.000	130	56
Rp 2.000.000 - Rp 4.000.000	52	22
Rp 4.000.001 - Rp 6.000.000	26	11
Rp 6.000.001 - Rp 8.000.000	11	5
> Rp 8.000.000	14	6
Current Smartphone Brand		
iPhone	86	37
Samsung	76	33
Oppo	24	10
Xiaomi	26	11
Huawei	3	1
Vivo	13	6
Others	5	2
Period of Smartphone Usage		
3 - 5 Year	173	74
> 5 Year	60	26

Source: Data processed by researchers (2022)

Model measurement results. Data analysis using PLS requires confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to verify the validity of the measurement model in this research. Based on data processing results, convergent validity is evaluated by factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR).

Table 2 shows that the 3 items from the brand image (BI) variable are invalid because they have a factor loading value <0.7. These items are BI1, BI2 and BI4. In the social environment (SE) variable, 1 item is invalid because it has a factor loading value <0.7, which is item SE1.

Meanwhile, in the cult brand variable, 3 items are invalid because they have a factor loading <0.7 , namely BD1 in a different dimension, DE3 in the determination dimension, and IN1 in the inclusive dimension. Thus, 7 invalid items were deleted to increase the validity value (AVE) and were not included in hypothesis testing. Additionally, Table 2 shows that the composite reliability (CR) findings have a value greater than 0.7 (Hair et al.), which is considered reliable. If the AVE value is 0.5, the variable is considered valid (Hair et al. 2019). Overall, all the variables are deemed valid.

Table 2. Convergent Validity

Variable	Dimensions	Indicator	Mean	Factor Loadings	CR	AVE
<i>Brand image</i>	-	BI3	4.197	0.870	0.866	0.763
		BI5	4.429	0.877		
<i>Social environment</i>	-	SE2	3.227	0.813	0.890	0.671
		SE3	3.137	0.845		
		SE4	3.082	0.845		
		SE5	3.622	0.770		
<i>Cult brand</i>	<i>Be different</i>	BD2	3.936	0.892	0.894	0.686
		BD3	3.863	0.906		
	<i>Determination</i>	DE1	4.206	0.896	0.895	0.811
		DE2	4.245	0.905		
	<i>Evangelist</i>	EV1	4.206	0.816	0.879	0.708
		EV2	4.159	0.873		
		EV3	4.146	0.834		
	<i>Communities</i>	CO1	3.180	0.911	0.945	0.850
		CO2	2.897	0.940		
		CO3	3.137	0.915		
	<i>Inclusive</i>	IN2	4.330	0.767	0.826	0.703
		IN3	4.339	0.753		
	<i>Lifestyle</i>	LS2	4.172	0.843	0.831	0.622
		LS2	4.292	0.767		
		LS3	4.352	0.753		
<i>Freedom</i>	FD1	4.249	0.880	0.907	0.764	
	FD2	4.249	0.857			
	FD3	4.163	0.886			
<i>Behavioral Intention</i>	-	BE1	4.322	0.865	0.897	0.686
		BE2	4.283	0.847		
		BE3	4.094	0.858		
		BE4	4.442	0.737		

Note: BI: Brand image; SE: Social environment; BD: Be different; DE: Determination; EV: Evangelist; CO: Communities; IN: Inclusive; LS: Lifestyle; FD: Freedom; BE: Behavioral intention
Source: Data processed by researchers (2022)

Discriminant validity calculates the level of correlation between low and different constructs. This study verifies discriminant validity by comparing the square root of the AVE with the correlation coefficient between two different constructs. Table 3 shows that the square root of the AVE is bigger than the correlation coefficient between two independent constructs.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

<i>Construct</i>	BD	BE	BI	CO	DE	EV	FD	IN	LS	SE
BD	0.899									
BE	0.598	0.829								
BI	0.646	0.598	0.874							
CO	0.481	0.389	0.616	0.922						
DE	0.625	0.649	0.253	0.346	0.900					
EV	0.502	0.546	0.468	0.467	0.445	0.842				
FD	0.521	0.501	0.428	0.401	0.496	0.456	0.874			
IN	0.304	0.347	0.229	0.247	0.237	0.243	0.401	0.839		
LS	0.631	0.671	0.564	0.365	0.632	0.551	0.655	0.374	0.789	
SE	0.427	0.310	0.265	0.652	0.509	0.425	0.329	0.179	0.353	0.819

Note: BI: Brand image; SE: Social environment; BD: Be different; DE: Determination; EV: Evangelist; CO: Communities; IN: Inclusive; LS: Lifestyle; FD: Freedom; BE: Behavioral intention

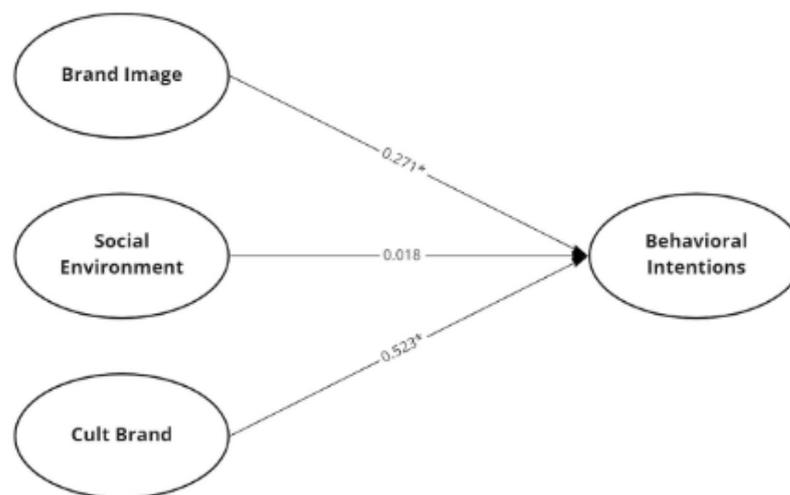
Source: Data processed by researchers (2022)

The results of data processing with a significance level of 5% (0.05) or t-stat > 1.96 show that two hypotheses are accepted, and one rejected. H1 is accepted because the brand image positive and significantly influences behavioural intention (t-stat = 3.858; coeff = 0.271; p-value = 0.000). H2 was rejected because the social environment had an insignificant positive influence on behavioural intention (t-stat = 0.364; coeff = 0.018; p-value = 0.716). H3 is accepted because cult brands positively and significantly influence behavioural intention (t-stat = 7.309; coeff = 0.532; p-value = 0.000).

Table 4. The Result of the Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Coefficient	T-stat (>1.96)	P-Value (<0.05)	Conclusion
H1	Brand image	Behavioral intention	0.271	3.858	0.000	Accepted
H2	Social environment	Behavioral intention	0.018	0.364	0.716	Rejected
H3	Cult brand	Behavioral intention	0.532	7.309	0.000	Accepted

Source: Data processed by researchers (2022)



Note: * $p < 0.05$

Figure 2. Path Model Analysis

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2022, Jakarta

Based on the results of hypothesis testing (H1), brand image has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intention. A smartphone brand with a positive brand image can increase behavioral intention, especially for smartphone users of that brand. This is in line with previous research (Harjanti, 2021; Marion, 2015; Permana & Haryanto, 2014) regarding brand image, which states that brand image has a significant effect on behavioral intention. Therefore, the image of a smartphone brand is an important factor to consider in making purchasing decisions and the main factor influencing the high repurchase intention of consumers. Pradana et al. (2017) contend that utilizing items with a trusted brand image increases a sense of security and comfort. Currently, product purchases are influenced by the positive image of a brand, especially when consumers have difficulty differentiating between one smartphone product and another. Therefore, a good and strong brand image not only increases product differentiation

among competitors but also strengthens customer trust, has a positive impact on customer behavior, minimizes the risk perceived by customers, and has high product quality from the customer's point of view (Purwianti & Tio, 2017; Septaria & Rizal, 2022).

Based on hypothesis testing (H2) results, the social environment does not affect behavioral intentions. This shows that the influence of social status and social environments, such as family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and organizations, cannot strengthen behavioral intentions. These results contradict research conducted by Putra and Mandala (2018), which states that the social environment role reinforces a person's ability to make repeat purchases. When someone repurchases a smartphone, they must have had a positive experience in using smartphone products. They can meet consumer needs, so the main factor in reinforcing repurchase intentions is not the social environment's influence but how the product can meet user needs in supporting daily activities. This is supported by research (Fuad, 2021) and (Fajri et al., 2020), which state that a customer intends to repurchase a smartphone product based on a positive user experience and the needs of each individual. The results of Herjanto & Amin (2020) also state that social status does not affect repurchase intentions, but products that meet expectations and services that help generate trust, good communication, and consumer satisfaction with brands as measured by positive and negative emotions (Nofianti, 2014). This emotional impulse is often used in sales strategies to maximize consumer trust.

Based on the results of hypothesis testing (H3), cult brands have a positive and significant influence on behavioural intention. A company needs to build a brand into a cult brand because cult branding is very effective in increasing interest in repurchasing a product from a particular brand (Aruman, 2017). The cult brand has 7 dimensions: being different, determination, evangelism, community, inclusion, lifestyle, and freedom. The item with the highest factor loading value in the 7 dimensions is CO2: "I participate in community activities related to smartphone xyz". This is supported by research (Hutabarat, 2016; Supardi et al., 2013), which stated that communities are formed by the structure of social relationships between fans of a particular brand, which directly or indirectly will form a group that can influence a person's behaviour. The existence of this community will become a forum for users of certain brands to share and get information about products. The community will also create a functional and emotional bond with the product so that consumers will become loyal customers and recommend the company's products to other consumers. Based on the respondent's profile, most respondents have used the same smartphone brand for 3-5 years, so that this customer can be categorized as someone with high loyalty. The results from demographics also show that those aged 18 years and over already have a brand cult for smartphone products. This aligns with research from Hayes (2013) and Indirasari (2013), which states that someone with a cult base or high loyalty to a smartphone brand will usually be long-term and reluctant to switch to another brand. Good products, services, and quality can be supporting factors that make customers have a positive usage experience. Feelings of threat from within consumers also drive this volunteerism, so it will cause consumers to feel left behind if they do not support and follow developments (Haryono et al., 2022). Therefore, this encouragement will influence consumers to purchase a product, often called threat emotion (Pratama et al., 2014). Iqbal et al.

(2018) also support this, saying that this can reinforce the behavioural intention of customers who will repurchase a product from the same brand.

Based on the research results, behavioural intention is influenced by two factors: brand image and brand cult. With high-quality services and products, smartphone users are less likely to change their brand to another one, influencing a person's repurchase intentions (Ramesh et al., 2019). This demonstrates that brand image significantly impacts the smartphone market and can influence consumers to make recurrent purchases of smartphone products (Setiadi & Ekawati, 2019). Apart from brand image, cult brands also encourage consumers to have repurchase behaviour. This happens when someone has a high enough cult attitude toward a smartphone brand, giving the user a sense of pride (Khomsiyah & Sanaji, 2021). This can increase a person's intention to repurchase a smartphone product with the same brand (Pranata & Pramudana, 2018).

Meanwhile, the social environment, which was initially assumed to influence behavioural intention, had no influence. This happens because respondents feel that the social environment does not greatly influence a person's behavioural intentions in repurchasing smartphone products. Information from the social environment will still be considered. However, someone will be more motivated to have the intention to repurchase a smartphone of the same brand if they have a positive usage experience regarding the product.

4. CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

This research examines the influence of brand image, social environment, and brand cult on behavioural intention among smartphone users. Based on the test results of the three hypotheses, two hypotheses are accepted, and one hypothesis is rejected. Brand image and brand cult have a positive influence on behavioural intention. Meanwhile, no influence was found on behavioural intention in the social environment.

Several interesting things have yet to be discussed in this research due to time constraints and phenomena that have yet to be discovered. First, the variables used in this research are only limited to brand image, social environment, and brand cult variables as independent variables. In future research, we can expand this research by adding variables from within consumers to increase their intention to repurchase smartphone products, such as threat emotions. Consumers are anxious, afraid, worried, and threatened with missing out on information if they do not use the smartphone brand trending at the time. Another feeling is also followed by feeling uncomfortable if they do not access the internet for daily use, with the smartphone brand being discussed in society.

This research was also only conducted on consumers who live in Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi), so there is a possibility that the discussion of this research could be expanded, such as areas whose population is interested in luxury brands and has high incomes. The industry discussed in this research is related to the smartphone industry, so it is possible to expand its discussion to other industries, such as vehicles, fashion, and beauty. The

distribution of samples from this research can be further specified based on occupation, average monthly income, and type of smartphone brand used.

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