



How Brand Community Contribute To WOM And Loyalty : Evidence From Railfans Community

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Abstract

Today's brand community is not only a marketing medium for companies, but also a long-term business strategy to maintain the existence of a brand. Brand community strategies tend to be found in products owned by consumers directly such as ownership of motorized vehicles, automotive, mobile phones, and electronic devices. However, there are also service companies that implement brand community strategies, one of which is PT. Indonesian Railroad (Persero). This study aims to analyze the influence of the brand community on word of mouth and loyalty to the Railfans community of PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) in the Central Java Region. This research is a type of quantitative research using a survey method using a questionnaire given to Railfans members in the Central Java region. Sampling was determined using the purposive sampling method, with a total of 130 Railfans members. The data obtained were analyzed using the AMOS Structural Equation Model (AMOS SEM). The results showed that community identification did not have a positive effect on participation. The satisfaction of community members has a positive influence on participation. Community-brand member relationships have a positive influence on participation. Participation has a positive influence on word of mouth. Participation has a positive influence on loyalty.

Keywords : community identification, satisfaction, community member-brand relationship, participation, word of mouth, loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

In order for the organization to remain competitive in the face of rising market competition, companies must continue to make additional efforts to better comprehend the requirements of their customers and provide superior assistance. There are a variety of things that businesses may do, one of which is to reach out to customers, in order to improve their relationships with customers and foster a sense of ownership on the part of both customers and businesses. Utilizing a brand community is an alternative strategy for building and maintaining consumer-brand relationships (Utari and Warmika, 2015). Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) explained that the brand community is defined as a specialized community, not limited by geographical boundaries, and is formed of various structured social relationships among fans of a product or service of a brand. This community is formed because there is a common interest in certain products or brands so community members have similar commitments and thoughts regarding these products or brands.

Today's brand community is not only a marketing medium for companies, but also a long-term business strategy to maintain the existence of a brand (Fournier, 2009). Brand community strategies tend to be found in products owned by consumers directly, such as ownership of motor vehicles, automobiles, mobile phones, and electronic devices. Examples of successful brand communities include the Harley Davidson Owners Group (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006), Volkswagen Cars (Algesheimer et al., 2005), and Apple Macintosh computers (Muniz and O'Guinn,



2001). The company provides a place for consumers to interact with each other to share experiences and information, as well as to bind them to make repeat purchases.

Railfans is a community whose members consist of people who are interested in railways and rail transportation (<https://ppid.kai.id/>). Railfans Community in Indonesia, managed by PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero). The beginning of the formation of Railfans was initiated by a group of fan trains fire its members are student, students, and employees in something companies that don't There is a bond relationship and ownership to therapy. They are user service or service train fire, which then often combine interest to train with another hobby _ like videography, photography, participating in effort preservation train, and studying history train fire.

Based on data collected from the Information Management and Documentation Officer of PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) via the <https://ppid.kai.id/> page, Railfans can be found in every working area of the Operational Area (DAOP) and Regional Division (Divre) with a total of 50 (fifty) communities. In the Central Java Region, there are 3 (three) active Railfans communities, namely Railfans in DAOP 4 and 5 with the following list:

Table 1. List of Central Java Region Railfans

No	Community	DAOP	City
1.	Komunitas Railfans Daop Empat (KRDE)	DAOP 4	Semarang
2.	IRPS Korwil Semarang	DAOP 4	Semarang
3.	Spoorlimo - Railfans Daop 5 Purwokerto	DAOP 5	Purwokerto

Source: PT. KAI

According to the findings of the interview conducted with the Public Relations department of PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) DAOP 5, a sufficient number of railfans actively arrange a variety of activities. Members of the railfan community who like photography and videography as hobbies frequently document images of trains, the atmosphere of stations, and railroad tracks in their work. The material that they create is frequently used as publication material by PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero), which manages by the company's media outlets. Railfans can also be spotted in the area surrounding the railway station on holidays when postal services are being provided, such as on New Year's Day, Christmas Day, and Eid. They take on the identity of volunteers whose duty it is to offer passengers using train services with the information they require. Railfans take part in a variety of activities with the goal of gaining knowledge, spreading important safety messages, and gaining favorable feedback regarding the railways. Some of these events include the introduction of new trains, the socialization of traffic safety, and the publication of railway timetables. Railfans also have access to many online communication channels, such as websites and social media, that are controlled specifically for the purpose of sharing information regarding railways.

According to the results of interviews conducted with members of the Railfans community, this group has a varying number of members in each region, with a generally consistent age range of anywhere between 15 and 30 years old. Although there are hundreds of members of Railfans in DAOP 4 and 5, not all of those members take part in each and every activity that is arranged by the community. If represented as a percentage, it may be argued that exclusively about half of Railfans' members are still actively engaged in the organization's activities at this time. According to observations made inside the Railfans community as well as theories such as Social Identity Theory and Psychological Sense of Community, the participation of community members is one of the most important factors in determining the level of success that can be achieved when attempting to develop a community around a brand (Casalo et al., 2007). Consumers will be able to communicate with one another and share information about various brands and items if they participate.



This study was conducted on the brand community known as Railfans, which is managed by the transportation service provider PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero). The community members who are members of it do not have any connections with rail transportation nor do they own any rail transportation, but they share the same interest and enthusiasm in railroads. According to this theory, the variables of community identity, the level of satisfaction felt by community members, and the interactions community members have with brands are used as predictors of community engagement in this study. This research also chose word-of-mouth and loyalty as factors to test inside the Railfans community as a result of member participation.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Psychological Sense Of Community (PSOC)

This study using Social Identity Theory and Psychological Sense Of Community (PSOC) as base for analyzing connection in community. Here et al, 2011 stated that social identity is part of the individual self-concept based on knowledge related to membership to a group social accompanied by emotions and values tied to membership. According to him, a person not only has a personal identity but also a social identity that includes a prominent group classification. Basic process formation identity social distinguished become three ie social identification, social categorization, and social comparison (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Sarason (1976) defines a sense of community as feeling psychologically someone to be part of something group certain. For each other shares not quite enough answers and purpose, where somebody can contribute and depend on the group.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) suggested that the psychological sense of community consists of four element base namely (1) Membership, ie feeling an individual who stated that he has become a member of something community. (2) Shared emotional connection, ie connection formed emotion from interaction positive mutual, share experiences and stories together. (3) Integration and fulfillment of needs, ie feeling that need members will fulfill from the source of the power you have in the group community. (4) Influence, ie strength somebody. To use affect other members to strengthen community to use affect member in the group.

Effect of Community Identification on Participation

According to Bhattacharya et al. (1995), community identification can be defined as an individual's perception of being a part of a group based on the findings of his or her identification with the group. Turner (1987) contends that the result of an individual classifying themselves as a member of a brand community is a positive difference in the values, standards, and behavior demonstrated towards his community in comparison to those who are not a part of the community. In their research on consumer participation, Shih, Hu, and Farn (2010) found that consumer identification with their community was particularly essential factor. An emotional sense of participation with a group that is marked by kinship among its members is implied by the word "identification." This involvement demonstrates that members are interested in providing assistance to other members as well as taking part in activities that are organized by the community. Findings from studies conducted by Woisetschlager et al. (2008), Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006), and Algesheimer et al. (2005) indicate that there is a positive correlation between a member's sense of identification with their community and their level of participation in community activities. The greater the degree to which a community identifies with a certain brand, the greater the likelihood that someone will act in accordance with that identification.

H₁: Community identification has a positive effect on participation



The Effect of Community Member Satisfaction on Participation

In the context of the community, satisfaction is the outcome of an individual's impression that the benefits obtained from participation in a group are equal to or higher than the benefits that were desired (Casalo, 2010). According to the findings of a study that was carried out by Casalo, Flavian, and Guinaliu (2007), the level of satisfaction felt by members of brand communities has an effect on the amount of involvement they demonstrate in those communities. This comes as a result of studies that were conducted by Nambisan and Baron (2007) as well as Lin (2006), both of which discovered that there is an influence between customer happiness and engagement in community-based activities. According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), a person who experiences a sense of belonging in a community believes that the resources the community provides for its members are sufficient to meet their requirements. Both Woisetschlager et al. (2008) and Alagoz et al. (2011) found similar outcomes in their research, which demonstrates that community satisfaction has a beneficial influence on engagement. When the expectations of the members are met, the members experience a sense of contentment and are driven to participate actively in the community (Casalo, 2010).

H₂ : Satisfaction of Community Members has a positive effect on Participation

The Influence of Community-Brand Member Relationships on Participation

A gathering of people who use a particular brand in common might be considered the beginning of the community that exists around that brand. For instance, research on the Jeep car community was conducted by Mc Alexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002). According to the findings, in order for businesses to improve their level of community participation, they need to be able to form relationships with customers. One way would be through a gathering that was planned and put on by the firm. Algesheimer et al. (2005) provided an explanation for the same concept, stating that the interactions that take place between customers and brands will strengthen the emotional connection that exists between the two parties. This developing connection will eventually have an effect on a greater level of participation from customers in relation to the brand. According to Stokburger Sauer (2010), brand communities can help businesses recruit individual consumers, enhance relationships with existing customers, and ultimately build long-term relationships.

H₃ : Relationship Member Community-Brand has a positive effect to Participation

The Influence of Participation on *Word Of Mouth*

Algesheimer et al (2005) in their research stated that stronger participation in the brand community will lead to a recommendation or word of mouth that is also stronger. Members who participate actively have stronger bonds with fellow community members. This strong bond within the brand community gives community members the possibility to become spokespersons for others. According to Silverman (2001), references from people who have used the brand are a powerful promotional tool to influence potential consumers. Utari and Warmika (2015) conducted research on the Android mobile community, and the results showed that member participation in the brand community can encourage word of mouth actions. This result is also proven by the research of Woisetschlager et al. (2008) and Alagoz (2011) that consumer participation has a positive and significant influence on word of mouth. It can be said that customers who actively participate in the community have more information, thus there is a tendency to spread word of mouth more easily

H₄ : Participation has a positive effect to Word Of Mouth

The Influence of Participation on Loyalty

Members of a brand community that actively participate in brand-related activities have been shown to be more loyal to the brand that originated by the community (Algesheimer et al.,

2005; Andersen, 2005; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). According to the findings of research conducted by McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002), customers' brand loyalty to the Jeep brand is increased when they take part in community events hosted by the brand. As stated by Oliver (2010), loyalty can be defined as an overall attachment or a profound devotion to a product, service, brand, or organization. Solomon (2009) did a study at an event called Brandfest and explained that brand loyalty can be created when persons who participate in community activities feel all pleasant and positive things about a product or brand. According to Algesheimer et al. (2005), the most important aspect of engagement in the community is the acquisition and utilization of sustainable brand goods and services.

H₅: Participation has a positive effect to loyalty

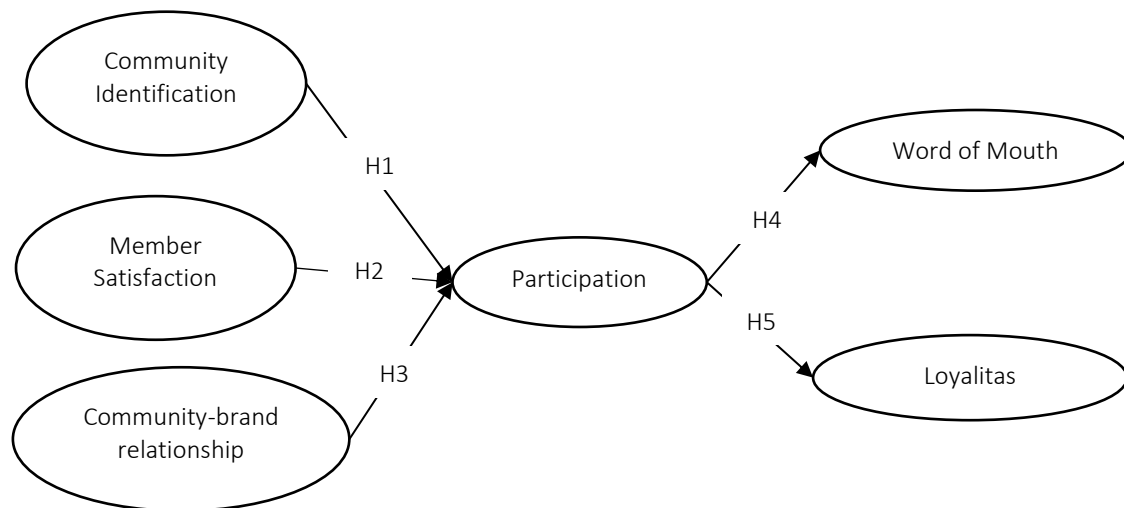


Figure 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHOD

Quantitative research techniques, such as survey methodologies, are utilized in this particular field of study. The participants in this study are members of the Railfans community that is located in the Central Java Region of PT. Indonesian Railroad (Persero). The recommended estimation for the sample size is five to ten times the total number of parameters. This can be used to estimate the size of the sample. Because there are 18 indicators and 8 path coefficients in this study, the sample size that should be employed can be calculated using the following formula (Hair et al, 2006):

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Sample} &= 5 \times (\Sigma \text{ indicator} + \Sigma \text{ path coefficient}) \\
 &= 5 \times (18 + 8) \\
 &= 130 \quad \dots\dots\dots (1)
 \end{aligned}$$

The sampling technique that was utilized was a non-probability sampling methodology combined with a purposive sampling method. The requirements for respondents were that they needed to be over the age of 15 and they needed to have engaged in Railfans community events. Questionnaires, which were sent out online using Google form, served as the instrument of



choice for carrying out the method of data collection. According to S. Suliyanto (2011), a Likert scale was used to measure the variables in this study because of its ease of implementation and relative straightforwardness. The AMOS Structural Equation Model (SEM) was the analytical tool that was utilized to put the hypothesis through its paces during the testing process. According to E. T. Suliyanto's research from 2011, the Structural Equation Model (SEM) is an efficient tool for addressing complicated research models. This is why it is used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondents Overview

The responses to the questionnaire allowed for the compilation of a summary of the people who participated in the research, which is shown in Table 2. The majority of members identify themselves as male and range in age from 15 to 23. There is a special explanation behind why there are less women actively participating in this particular group. As is common knowledge, much like cars, trains have a larger fanbase among males than among females. Based on the results of the study, the vast majority of members employed the community as a medium for information, networking, and enjoyment purposes related to their activity.

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Answer	Amount	Percentage
Sex	Male	115	89
	Female	15	11
Age	15 - 23	76	58
	24-35	40	31
	36-65	14	11
Occupation	Student	64	49
	Civil Servants	2	2
	Employee (state owned enterprise)	6	5
	Employee (private enterprise)	43	33
	Self-employed	15	11
Income/Month	< IDR 3,000,000	89	68
	IDR 3,000,000 – IDR 5,000,000	25	19
	IDR 6,000,000 – IDR 8,000,000	6	5
	> IDR 8,000,000	10	8
Highest Education	Middle School / Equivalent	7	5
	High School / Equivalent	78	60
	S1	41	32
	S2	4	3
Railfans Membership	Spoorlimo - DAOP 5 Purwokerto	69	53
	IRPS Korwil Semarang - DAOP 4 Semarang	20	15
	KRDE - DAOP 4 Semarang	41	32
Since when did you become a member of Railfans	< 1 year	52	40
	1 – 3 Years	21	16
	> 3 Years	57	44
Activities Followed As Railfans Members	Activity Photography	17	13
	Activity Videography	3	3



Characteristics	Answer	Amount	Percentage
Reason Become Railfans member	Railway Socialization (Safety/Policy)	21	16
	Post Volunteer PT. KAI	7	6
	Everything	82	62
	Hobbies / Interests	20	15
	Information source	3	3
	Networking	5	4
	Entertainment	2	2
	All of the above	100	76
Total		130	100

Source : Primary data

Results

It can be seen that the results model evaluation is favorable, which indicates that the model is regarded to be fit based on the results of the goodness of fit test.

Table 3. Testing *Goodness of fit*

<i>Goodness of fit</i>	Results	<i>cut of value</i>	Model evaluation
Chi square	148,598	(0.05, 120) = 146,567 (0.01,120)= 158,950	Expected small Fulfilled
probability	0.039	< 0.05	Bad
CMIN/DF	1.238	< 2	Good
AGFI	0.851	> 0.90	marginal
GFI	0.895	> 0.90	marginal
TLI	0.972	> 0.95	Good
CFI	0.978	> 0.95	Good
RMSEA	0.043	< 0.08	Good

Source: Primary data

The results of the analysis of the construct reliability are presented in Table 4, where it can be observed that the overall construct reliability is greater than 0.7, which indicates that all variables have been stated to be reliable.

Table 4. *Construct Reliability*

Variable	Results
Identification Community	0.818
Satisfaction Member Community	0.813
Connection Member Community-Brand	0.844
Participation	0.769
Word of Mouth	0.909
Loyalty	0.819

Source: Primary data

The observation that the variance extract in Table 5 is greater than 0.5 demonstrates that all of the variables that were said to be reliable. These results are based on the analysis of the variance extract, which can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. *Variance Extracts*

Variable	Results
Identification Community	0.608
Satisfaction Member Community	0.592
Connection Member Community-Brand	0.645
Participation	0.527
Word of Mouth	0.769
Loyalty	0.602

Source: Primary data

Hypothesis Testing

The structural model with the results as shown in Figure 4.2 below:

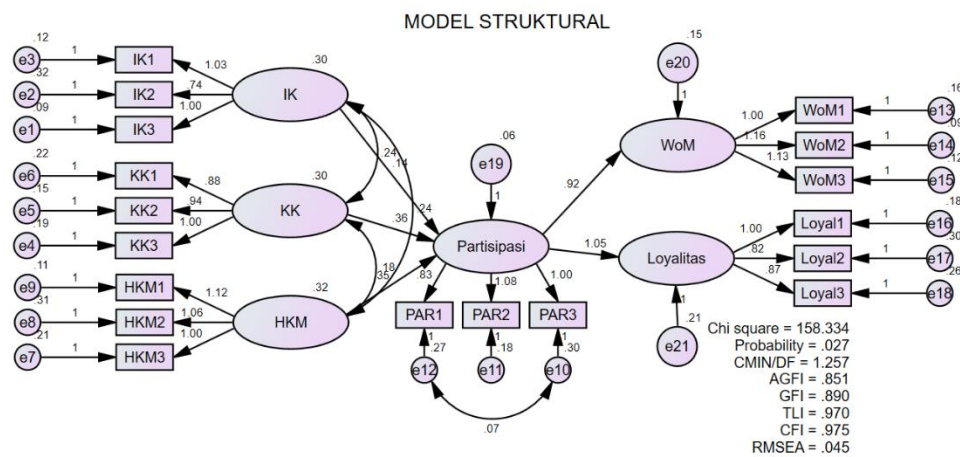


Figure 2. Structural Model

Based on the structural model, the results of hypothesis testing are shown in table 3 below:

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

Endogenous Variables	Variable exogenous	Estimates	SE	CR	P	Results
Identification Community	Participation	0.136	0.159	0.855	0.392	Rejected
Satisfaction Community	Participation	0.356	0.13	2,734	0.006	Accepted
Connection Community-Brand	Participation	0.35	0.112	3.124	0.002	Accepted
Participation	Word Of Mouth	0.918	0.149	6.174	***	Accepted
Participation	Loyalty	1,049	0.168	6.23	***	Accepted

Source: Primary data



The data presented in Table 3 demonstrates that community satisfaction and relationships between community members and brands have a positive effect on participation. In addition, community identification has no impact on level of participation. Lastly, participation is an important driver in word-of-mouth marketing and customer loyalty.

DISCUSSION

Effect of Community Identification on Participation

The research results show that community identification does not affect participation. In this case, even though someone feels that the Railfans community is very identical to themselves and feels right to be in that community, that does not determine whether someone will participate in the Railfans community. To create member participation, in addition to identification, support is also needed from the community itself. Community support or concern for members can also create stronger bonds among fellow members. For example, a member likes trains and feels the right to join as a member of Railfans, but if the Railfans community does not create a joint program or activity that is relevant to the community, and does not involve members in its activities, then members will not show their participation in the Railfans community.

Research conducted by Woisetschlager et al (2008) and Shih, Hu, and Farn (2010) produced a positive relationship between community identification and consumer participation. This research provides different results from previous studies, in that community identification does not have a direct effect on member participation. This is because Railfans are a community formed with a background of interest in something they don't have. No Railfans member owns a train. However, the members have certain hobbies and interests associated with trains. So to increase member participation in Railfans activities, support from Railfans is needed which synergizes with PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) to create programs that are relevant to members' interests.

The Effect of Community Member Satisfaction on Participation

The findings of this study indicate that the level of satisfaction experienced by community members has a beneficial effect on their level of engagement. When the Railfans community has a good performance and is able to meet the needs and expectations of its members, the members of the community will feel satisfied to be a part of the community. As a result of this, members will be encouraged to take an active role in the activities that are planned by the community. Because there are advantages to being a part of the Railfans community for its members.

The findings of this research are consistent with the findings of a study that was carried out by Casalo, Flavian, and Guinaliu (2007). That study found that in brand communities, community satisfaction influences involvement in the community. The findings of this study support those findings. Both Woisetschlager et al. (2008) and Alagoz et al. (2011) came to the same conclusion, stating that community satisfaction had a favorable effect on participation, and their findings were consistent with one another.

The Influence of Community-Brand Member Relationships on Participation

The results of the study show that the community-brand member relationship has a positive influence on participation. Interactions that have been well established between PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) with Railfans, makes community members put their trust in the company. PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) is considered to have provided support for the existence of the Railfans community, such as supporting activities organized by the community, as well as providing experience to Railfans members related to trains. Railfans community members feel they have a strong bond with PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) through interactions built closely by the company.



If the relationship between members of the community brand can be maintained well, then the emotional bond between the two will also increase. This will encourage community members to contribute more and be involved in community activities related to rail. The results of this study support previous research by Stokburger Sauer (2010), Gouldner (1960), and Sahlin (1972) which stated that the higher the interaction between a brand company and the community, the stronger participation would be encouraged.

Influence Participation to *Word of Mouth*

Research results show that participation has an influence positive to word of mouth. Participation or participation in a manner an active member of the community causes more Lots information and insight held by members _ about train fire. The more Lots known information, the Railfans members have _ the potency To recommend and invite others to participate use of service train fire. They can share this information through social media or with the closest people in their environment.

Participation of community members can be in the form of participating in socialization and sharing about trains, gatherings to take photos or videos of trains at certain moments, volunteering at post-holidays, and being involved in other activities held by the company. The results of this study are in line with the research of Woisetschlager et al (2018) and Alagoz (2011) which state that consumer participation in brand communities has a positive and significant influence on word of mouth. That is, consumers who participate actively have more information so they tend to do word of mouth more easily.

Effect of Participation on Loyalty

The results showed that participation has a positive effect on loyalty. Similar to word of mouth, member participation is an important indicator that has consequences for loyalty. Participation is realized by the participation of members in community and company activities related to railroads. Through close interaction between the company and the community, it will build closeness and strong emotional ties between the two.

Participation of members in the community can also cause these members to obtain more information and positive experiences about trains. This can increase the love of members for PT. Indonesian Railroad (Persero). The results of this study support the research of McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002) on the Jeep community, which found that the participation of community members supports consumer loyalty to the Jeep brand. The same results were also conveyed in research by Algesheimer et al (2005), Andersen (2005), and Muniz & O'Guinn (2001) that participation in activities carried out within the brand community can foster consumer loyalty to the brand.

CONCLUSION

The results of the data analysis that has been carried out show that community identification does not have a positive effect on participation. While community member satisfaction and community-brand member relationships have a positive influence on participation. The higher the community's ability to meet the satisfaction of its members and the stronger the relationship between community members and brands in the community, the higher the level of member participation. Participation has an influence positive to word of mouth and loyalty. The more tall-level participation member in the community, then will the taller the behavior word of mouth, and rate loyalty member community. Based on the explanation above, then obtained conclusion of the problem study is that is participation influenced by satisfaction member community, and relationship member community-brand, whereas participation influences word of mouth and loyalty.



This research is based on the theory of Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Psychological Sense Of Community (PSOC) which states that member participation is one of the keys to success in brand communities. Where the brand community is utilized by the company as a marketing strategy in increasing word of mouth and consumer loyalty. This study proves both of these theories, where the level of participation from community members can increase the possibility of spreading positive information through word of mouth and increase consumer loyalty. This research is also an extension of previous research by examining variables that have not been studied before, namely the relationship between community-brand members as an antecedent of word-of-mouth participation and consumer loyalty in brand communities in different types of industries, namely the service company PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero).

Temporary for increased word of mouth and loyalty through a community strategy Railfans brand, PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) must be able to increase the participation of its community members first. As an effort to increase participation, 2 things need attention, namely increasing satisfaction and the relationship between community-brand members. Where according to the results of the study, the relationship between community-brand members is the most influential factor in member participation. Some limitation that the author found during the research is it is difficult to meet the number of respondents according to predetermined criteria. In future research, it is suggested to distribute questionnaires involving the management of PT. Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) in each region to get fast and precise samples. In addition, future research also needs to verify the findings by increasing the sample size by involving Railfans in all regions of Indonesia. In future research, it can also be considered to examine the degree of influence of fellow members in the brand community on the level of participation of community members (Woisetschlager et al, 2018).

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