

Influence of Brand Image, Brand Reputation, Brand Credibility, and Brand Identification on Customer Satisfaction

JINFENG DU

South China University of Technology, China

HAMEDI MOHD ADNAN

UCSI University, Malaysia

GUANGXI ZHANG

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Brands are core intangible assets for businesses, while marketing strategies prioritize customer satisfaction as a core source of competitive advantage. This study selects MR. DIY as a case to investigate how brand building affects customer satisfaction in the Southeast Asian retail context. Specifically, it examines four brand dimensions, including brand image, brand reputation, brand credibility and brand identification. Data were collected from 298 respondents through online and offline questionnaires, and processed via SPSS software. The findings show that brand image, brand credibility and brand identification have strong positive impacts on customer satisfaction. However, the relationship between brand reputation and customer satisfaction is not significant. This may be attributed to gaps between customers' expectations and actual experiences, alongside other factors like product quality and customer service. Additionally, exploratory moderation analyses indicate that these brand-to-satisfaction dynamics remain remarkably stable across different consumer demographic segments, including gender, age, and nationality. This unexpected reputation result challenges traditional views and provides new perspectives for understanding the drivers of customer satisfaction. Moreover, the study offers valuable practical references for retail brand managers, technology service teams and human resources departments. These insights can guide strategic decision-making, enabling organizations to enhance brand equity and strengthen customer relationships in a competitive marketplace.

Keywords: *Brand image, brand reputation, brand credibility, brand identification, customer satisfaction.*

INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction has become a strategic priority in the modern business environment, and is recognized as a key player in growing business performance (Hassan et al., 2013). Its importance has been studied from diverse fields, such as hotel service (Kwinda & Wakelin-Theron, 2025), tourism (Fatawu et al., 2025; Della, et al., 2015), and AI chatbots (Jiang et al., 2022; Ruan & Mezei, 2022). However, the home improvement retailer, despite its fundamental role in day-to-day life and huge customer base, has not received equivalent scholarly attention. MR. DIY, a renowned home improvement retailer brand in the ASEAN region, offers affordable household necessities and serves millions of customers annually (Manalu & Changreani, 2024). As a low-cost, functional-focused retailer with regional

*Corresponding author: dujinfeng0329@qq.com

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presence, MR. DIY provides a unique context to study how brand mechanisms drive customer satisfaction in emerging markets.

Previous studies have primarily examined customer satisfaction through frameworks such as Relationship Marketing Theory (Elshaer et al., 2025; Santouridis & Veraki, 2017), Service Quality Theory (Chou et al., 2025; Albayrak et al., 2024), and Expectation–Confirmation Theory (Jyoti et al., 2024; Srivastava & Kaul, 2014). These models centre on service interactions, relational trust, or the consistency between expectation and perceived performance. Many other studies have treated satisfaction as a dependent variable to examine its impact on company performance (Sun & Kim, 2013; Williams & Naumann, 2011), customer loyalty (Helgesen, 2006; Shankar et al., 2003) and retention (Rust & Zahorik, 1993). Although prior research has identified major antecedents and consequences of satisfaction, it rarely explores how brand-based mechanisms jointly shape satisfaction. In the retail industry, where services are largely homogeneous and brand perception greatly guides purchase decisions, this omission creates an important research gap.

To address this limitation, this study is grounded in Brand Management Theory. The theory holds that a brand's market strength depends on consistent value communication and the ability to build, maintain, and leverage brand-based relationships (Keller, 1993; Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli, 2015). Within this theoretical framework, brand image, brand reputation, brand credibility, and brand identification interact to influence consumer evaluations. Brand image captures the mental representation of the brand; brand reputation reflects long-term social evaluation; brand credibility relates to perceived trustworthiness; and brand identification expresses the consistency between customer's self-concept and brand. This theory is highly applicable to MR. DIY because it simultaneously considers both functional and symbolic brand value, which together drive satisfaction in price-sensitive, emerging-market retail contexts.

Accordingly, this study aims to address the following research question: How do brand image, brand reputation, brand credibility, and brand identification of MR. DIY individually influence customer satisfaction? By doing so, it not only bridges the existing theoretical gap regarding the relationships between these variables, but also adds new empirical evidence based on a non-Western market setting. The results will enrich branding research by presenting a holistic view of how retailers can actively manage consumer brand perceptions to lift customer satisfaction and long-term brand loyalty.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction was first introduced into marketing research by Cardozo (1965), who examined its relevance to purchase decisions. Since then, scholars have regarded customer satisfaction as a core objective of marketing strategy amid fierce market competition (Jamal & Naser, 2002). Oliver (1980) further conceptualized customer satisfaction as a psychological evaluation resulting from the comparison between expectations and actual performance. Similarly, Johnson et al. (1996) emphasized that individual satisfaction largely depends on whether real-life product or service experiences align with initial consumer expectations. Building on these foundational insights, this study defines customer satisfaction as consumers' subjective judgment of whether a brand meets or surpasses their personal expectations and needs.

In recent years, a growing body of research has examined customer satisfaction from a brand-based perspective (Ren et al., 2023; Schepers & Nijssen, 2018; Dam & Dam, 2021), suggesting that consumers' experiences are increasingly shaped by their cognitive and emotional perceptions of brand-related signals. Drawing on brand management theory (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993; Powell, 2018), this study adopts four core brand constructs that represent a complete psychological pathway in consumer–brand evaluations. Brand image captures consumers' initial cognitive associations with a brand, while brand reputation reflects the broader, collective evaluative beliefs. Brand credibility represents the internal, trust-based mechanism. Brand Identification focuses on the deep, identity-based connection. These constructs jointly capture cognitive, evaluative, trust-based, and identity-based mechanisms, offering a holistic explanatory model for customer satisfaction without conceptual redundancy.

Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction

Brand image encompasses the overall perceptions, beliefs and associations consumers develop toward a brand, formed through direct and indirect interactions (Keller, 1993). As a cognitive brand component, it shapes consumers' pre-purchase expectations of product quality, value, and consumption experience. A positive brand image effectively elevates perceived brand value and lowers consumers' cognitive doubts. When actual product or service performance matches these positive pre-existing expectations, customers are more likely to feel satisfied (Tong, 2022). In short, brand image is a crucial component of brand value, and a favourable brand image improves customer satisfaction.

Empirical studies support this view. For instance, Yoo and Donthu (2001) confirmed that favourable brand perceptions significantly improve customer satisfaction within the consumer goods industry. Similarly, Chen and Shen (2015) revealed that a favourable brand image contributes to higher levels of customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry. These findings underscore the importance of a strong brand image in fostering positive customer perceptions and experiences. Therefore, the first hypothesis can be formulated:

H1: Brand image significantly influences customer satisfaction.

Brand Reputation and Customer Satisfaction

Brand reputation represents stakeholders' long-term collective evaluation of a brand's reliability, quality, and operational conduct (Selnes, 1998). It encompasses a series of perceptions, beliefs, and affective attitudes formed by continuous stakeholder interactions with a brand's products, services, messages, and behaviours (Vivek et al., 2012). A robust brand reputation is cultivated through the consistent delivery of high-quality products and services, well-structured marketing and communication strategies, ethical business practices, positive customer experiences, and a distinctive brand image (Papasolomou & Vrontis, 2006). Fundamentally, it embodies the goodwill, credibility, and trust that a brand has accumulated among customers and the general public. As a critical determinant of brand success and long-term sustainability, brand reputation exerts profound influences on consumer purchase intentions, brand loyalty, investor trust, employee engagement, and interfirm partnership relationships (Singh et al., 2012). Empirically, a favourable brand reputation can effectively enhance customer loyalty, expand market share and improve corporate profitability, whereas a negative brand reputation may lead to declined sales, customer churn, damaged cooperative relationships and diminished brand value (Prasad & Dev, 2000).

Compared with brand image, which resides at the individual cognitive level, brand reputation reflects broader social consensus and accumulated credibility. When a brand possesses a strong reputation, consumers develop higher expectations; satisfaction occurs when these expectations are confirmed (Krishnamurthy & Kumar, 2018). However, when consumers perceive the product or service used to be different from the expectations created by the brand's reputation, then disappointment will set in. Presenting the second hypothesis:
H2: Brand reputation significantly influences customer satisfaction.

Brand Credibility and Customer Satisfaction

Brand credibility refers to consumers' perceptions of a brand as trustworthy, dependable, and capable of delivering on its promises. It encompasses honesty, reliability, professionalism, and attractiveness in a brand's case justification and content dissemination. Brand credibility is critical for a brand's customer base and market share (Rather et al., 2022). It shows a responsible attitude toward consumers from the external image to the internal quality of the brand. Distinct from brand reputation—an externally accumulated evaluation — brand credibility reflects consumers' internal beliefs about whether the brand can fulfil its value propositions (Kim et al., 2022). There exists a strong correlation between the credibility of a brand and the satisfaction of its customers. If consumers have faith in a brand, they are more inclined to buy its products or avail its services. When consumers are content with a brand, they are more likely to make repeat purchases or continue using its offerings. This increase in satisfaction can enhance the brand's reputation and loyalty, thereby attracting more customers. Accordingly, we present a third hypothesis:

H3: Brand credibility significantly influences customer satisfaction.

Brand Identification and Customer Satisfaction

Brand identification is characterized as a kind of conformity in the minds of consumers, regarding their self-image and the brand impression (Stokburger-Sauer, et al., 2012; Dalman et al., 2019). It means that the higher this conformity, the stronger the brand identification. When choosing products and brands, consumers are not only looking for their pragmatic value, but also for their token meaning. Brands have a profound significance in building consumers' identities (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Consumers will use brands to express identity and show their self-identity to others (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Brand identification, essentially creates a sense of group identity, causing a person to subconsciously adopt the characteristics of the group.

Moreover, brand identification provides a sense of prestige to consumers and fulfills their desire for uniqueness and self-enhancement (Chun & Davies, 2006), and therefore improves their satisfaction. Furthermore, brand identification contributes to customer satisfaction by creating a sense of belongingness. According to social identity theory, consumers often identify themselves with brands that align with their personal beliefs and values (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). This leads to a heightened sense of satisfaction as customers feel they are part of a community or group with shared values. Additionally, customers who identify with a brand can form an emotional connection that enhances satisfaction. The emotional bond encourages repeated purchases and fosters customer loyalty (Park et al., 2006). Consistently meeting or exceeding customers' expectations can help establish a sense of reliability and trust in the brand. This perceived trustworthiness can significantly increase customer satisfaction. Therefore, we present a fourth hypothesis:

H4: Brand identification significantly influences customer satisfaction.

Additionally, prior research indicates that demographic characteristics shape consumer–brand relationships by influencing perception, emotional responses, and behavioural outcomes. Age differences affect the influence of brand involvement on behavioural outcomes (Manyanga et al., 2022), and gender have been found to moderate brand loyalty relationships (Sohaib et al., 2025). Nationality reflects cultural and experiential diversity that shapes cognitive and evaluative processes in consumption (Badari et al., 2025), suggesting that cross-national differences may moderate brand perceptions' effects on satisfaction. Based on prior literature, this study further explores whether demographic characteristics—specifically age, gender, and nationality—moderate the relationships between brand image, brand reputation, brand credibility, brand identification, and customer satisfaction.

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed research framework, in which the four brand-related variables independently influence customer satisfaction. The model maintains parsimony while allowing the comparative assessment of the strength of each predictor. The four hypotheses (H1, H2, H3 and H4) together test how cognitive, evaluative, trust-based, and identity-based mechanisms jointly shape customer satisfaction. Specifically, brand image, brand reputation, brand credibility, and brand identification are independent variables, while customer satisfaction is the dependent variable. In addition, gender, age, and nationality are incorporated as demographic moderators.

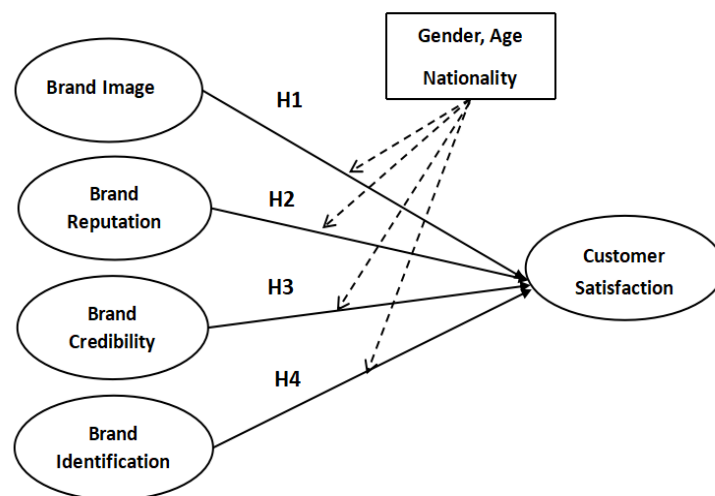


Figure 1: Schematic diagram of the hypothesis framework

METHODOLOGY

Measurement Development

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first part encompassed demographic information like age and gender, which provided valuable contextual information about the respondents. The second one consisted of five targeted questions aimed at measuring specific factors. To ensure content validity, all measurement items were adapted from previous studies. Table 1 lists the items that were used. Specifically, brand image was measured through four items based on the work of Chen (2010). Brand reputation and brand credibility were measured by four and three items respectively based on Gul (2014). Brand identification items were adapted from Susanty and Kenny (2015), and the last scale of customer satisfaction was measured from Dam and Dam (2021) and Taylor and Baker (1994).

To simplify the evaluation process for participants, the questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The middle scale points reflect subtle attitudinal differences, covering all levels of agreement and disagreement. Before formal data collection, a pilot test with 18 respondents was conducted to verify the questionnaire’s effectiveness and clarity. This process helped identify ambiguous wording and structural problems. In addition, industry professionals provided valuable feedback to adjust and polish the survey structure.

During the final stage, further adjustments were made to improve the questionnaire’s accessibility for multi-cultural respondents. The final survey was developed in four languages: English, Thai, Malay and Chinese. This multilingual setup allows participants from diverse linguistic backgrounds to complete the survey accurately and comfortably. It also improves sample diversity, which strengthens the reliability and generalizability of the research findings.

Table 1: Items development

Construct	Measurement Items	Source
Brand Image (BIM)	BIM1: MR. DIY offers products that match my practical needs. BIM2: MR. DIY has a clear and recognizable brand image. BIM3: MR. DIY provides a shopping experience that is consistent with my expectations. BIM4: I have positive associations when I think of MR.DIY as a brand. BIM5: Overall, MR. DIY represents a brand with a good image in my mind.	Chen (2010)
Brand Reputation (BR)	BR1: MR. DIY is widely recognized as a reputable brand. BR2: MR. DIY is the leading brand of household products. BR3: People generally speak positively about MR.DIY. BR4: MR. DIY is perceived as a credible and stable company in the industry. BR5: The long-term performance of MR. DIY enhances its reputation.	Gul (2014)
Brand Credibility (BC)	BC1: It is reliable about MR. DIY advertising. BC2: MR. DIY is a brand that can ensure product quality. BC3: MR. DIY delivers products that perform as promises. BC4: MR. DIY is a trustworthy brand. BC5: MR.DIY keeps its commitments to customers.	Gul (2014)
Brand Identification (BID)	BID1: I feel a sense of belonging with MR. DIY. BID2: When someone praises MR.DIY, I feel pleased. BID3: I would defend MR. DIY when others criticize it. BID4: I feel personally connected to MR. DIY as a brand. BID5: MR. DIY reflects something about who I am.	Susanty & Kenny (2015)
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	CS1: Compared with competitors, MR. DIY provides better value. CS2: I am satisfied with my overall experience at MR. DIY. CS3: MR. DIY stores can meet my expectations. CS4: I feel confident choosing MR. DIY when purchasing household items. CS5: I am happy with the services provided by MR. DIY.	Dam & Dam (2021); Taylor & Baker (1994)

Sample and Data Collection

The target population of this study was consumers who had previously visited MR. DIY or intended to make future purchases. To ensure respondents fit this criterion, screening

questions were incorporated at the beginning of the questionnaire. Only participants who confirmed prior store visits and future purchase intentions were retained.

The study used purposive sampling, since MR. DIY customers constitute a specific behavioural group aligned with the research model. According to Hair et al. (2019), purposive sampling is appropriate when the research requires participants who possess specific experience with the focal brand or product category. Since the theoretical model focuses on psychological factors related to branding, only customers with real experience of MR. DIY could provide credible assessments. Thus, purposive sampling ensured conceptual relevance and respondent qualification rather than convenience alone.

Data collection combined online and offline methods. Online questionnaires were administered using a professional survey platform operated by PowerCX Systems Survey Company, which provides access to a diverse consumer database across Southeast Asia (Leung et al., 2023). Meanwhile, offline data collection took place at MY. DIY stores across Malaysia. This combined approach improved the diversity of responses and reduced over-reliance on a single recruitment channel. Importantly, the sample consisted of Malaysian nationals and foreign residents living in Malaysia. Data collection was conducted between June and October 2023. Among the 318 returned questionnaires, 298 were valid after screening out invalid entries, corresponding to a 94% valid response rate. The sample size also met and exceeded the basic requirement for structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2010), which guaranteed reliable results for hypothesis testing.

Table 2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants in detail. In terms of gender distribution, the study presented a relatively balanced demographic with 53% males and 47% females. The age distribution was also diverse, with 36.3% of the respondents aged between 20-30 years, 37.2% between 30-40 years, and 26.5% in the 40-50 years bracket. Nationality distribution included Malaysian nationals (40.3%), Indonesian nationals (22.1%), Chinese nationals (18.8%), Thai nationals (11.7%), and Singaporean nationals (7.1%). Given that demographic differences may influence perceptions of brand-related constructs, age, gender, and nationality were treated as control variables during the data analysis stage.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of participants (N=298)

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	158	53
	Female	140	47
Age	20-30 years	108	36.3
	30-40 years	111	37.2
	40-50 years	79	26.5
Nationality	Malaysian nationals	120	40.3
	Singaporean nationals	21	7.1
	Thai nationals	35	11.7
	Indonesian nationals	66	22.1
	Chinese nationals	56	18.8

RESULTS

Reliability, Content Validity and Construct Validity

Firstly, Cronbach's alpha is a widely accepted measure of internal consistency. It indicates how well the items within each construct are measuring the same underlying concept in a reliable way (Nunnally, 1978). The reliability of the constructs was further supported by

conducting SPSS reliability analysis. The results showed that the Cronbach’s alpha values for brand image, brand reputation, brand credibility, brand identification, and customer satisfaction were 0.879, 0.885, 0.891, 0.893, and 0.899, respectively (see Table 3). All of these values exceeded the threshold of 0.8, indicating excellent reliability. These findings affirm the consistent and dependable measurement of the constructs within the study.

Secondly, consistent with Nunnally’s (1978) suggestion, content validity was a critical consideration. Questionnaire items were carefully adapted from previous studies (cf. Chen, 2010; Gul, 2014, Susanty & Kenny, 2015, Dam & Dam, 2021; Taylor & Baker, 1994). The process of adaptation enabled us to incorporate items that are well-established and validated. Consequently, this process has significantly contributed to enhancing the content validity of the questionnaire.

Thirdly, in terms of construct validity, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was calculated, which resulted in a value of 0.890. This value is well above the recommended threshold of 0.8, indicating that the data demonstrated strong construct validity, supporting the resilience of the measurement model.

After assessing the potential multicollinearity issues among the predictor variables using variance inflation factor (VIF), it was found that all VIF values were below 10, indicating no significant concerns. This finding confirms that the predictor variables included in the analysis were not highly correlated, thereby ensuring the validity of the statistical outcomes. Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson statistic was employed to assess the independence of residuals in regression analysis. The computed value of 1.968 falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, indicating no substantial issues with autocorrelation in the model.

To enhance rigor, additional diagnostic tests were performed. A residual Q–Q plot and Shapiro–Wilk test suggested acceptable normality of residuals. No influential outliers were detected based on Cook’s distance (< 1). Furthermore, a 70–30 split-sample cross-validation produced consistent coefficient directions and significance levels, indicating robustness of the main regression model.

Table 3: Reliability Test

	Brand image	Brand reputation	Brand credibility	Brand identification	Customer satisfaction
Cronbach's Alpha	0.879	0.885	0.891	0.893	0.899
Mean	3.95	3.89	3.94	3.86	3.95
SD	0.704	0.750	0.744	0.848	0.714
N of Items	4	4	3	4	3

Hypothesis Testing

This study conducted multiple regression analysis following Hair et al. (2010). Brand image, reputation, credibility, and identification were considered as independent variables, with customer satisfaction set as the dependent variable. The regression model accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in customer satisfaction (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.53$), indicating that the four brand constructs together provide meaningful explanatory power. Figure 2 summarises all hypothesis testing results. To clarify the notation: * $p < 0.01$ implies significance, ** $p < 0.001$ implies high significance, and ns means the result is not statistically significant.

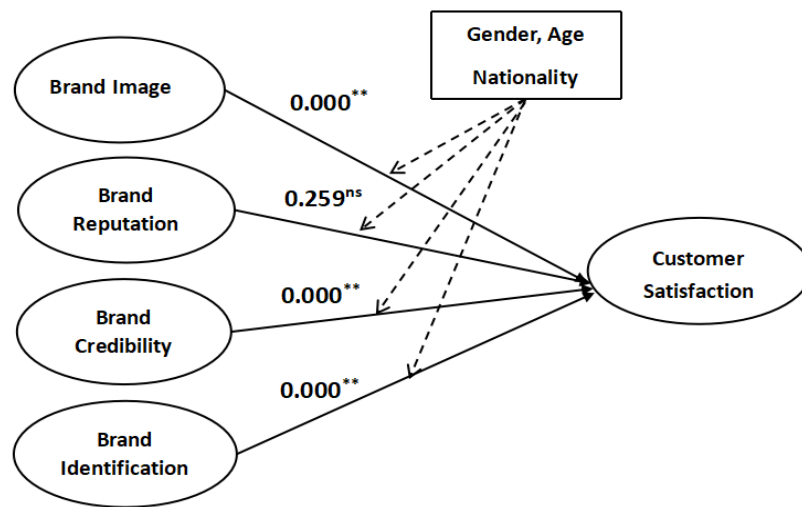


Figure 2: Hypothesis testing

Table 4 presents the key regression findings. The data supported hypotheses H1, H3 and H4, indicating that brand image ($\beta=0.260$, $p<0.001$), brand credibility ($\beta=0.267$, $p<0.001$), and brand identification ($\beta=0.223$, $p<0.001$) had strong effects on the dependent variable. However, brand reputation did not significantly predict customer satisfaction ($\beta=0.077$, ns), leading to the rejection of H2.

Table 4: Results of regression analysis

Variable	β	<i>t-value</i>	Tolerance	VIF	Relationship to customer satisfaction
Brand image	0.260**	3.637	0.327	3.061	Supported
Brand reputation	0.077 ^{ns}	1.131	0.357	2.802	Rejected
Brand credibility	0.267**	4.307	0.435	2.299	Supported
Brand identification	0.223**	3.541	0.424	2.357	Supported

Beyond the main regression, exploratory moderation analyses were conducted to assess whether demographic characteristics (age, gender, and nationality) moderated the relationships between the four brand constructs and customer satisfaction. For these exploratory tests, demographic variables were treated as potential moderators rather than control variables, and separate moderation models were estimated to avoid interpretational confounding. Interaction terms (predictor \times moderator) were created after mean-centering continuous variables to reduce multicollinearity. Because some nationality subgroups had small sample sizes, nationalities were grouped into broader regional categories (e.g., Malaysia vs. non-Malaysia) to ensure sufficient statistical power for multi-group comparisons. The results showed that none of the demographic variables produced significant interaction effects (all $p > 0.05$), indicating that the relationships between the brand constructs and customer satisfaction were stable across demographic groups.

DISCUSSION

Through regression analyses, it was discovered that brand image, brand credibility and brand identification showed a strong correlation with customer satisfaction, but brand reputation was not strongly correlated with customer satisfaction.

First of all, the finding of H1 means that when consumers perceive a better brand image, customer satisfaction will be higher. For example, the higher the rating of the brand logo and product packaging and the greater the sense of being valued during shopping, the higher the satisfaction. This is because consumers associate brands with materials and their own past experiences of enjoying services. Yet this finding also extends current theory by illustrating how brand image functions within a high-volume, low-price retail environment. Previous studies often conceptualize brand image through symbolic attributes, aesthetic consistency, and aspirational cues (Halkias, 2015). It affects the customer's attitude towards a product or service. Satisfaction naturally increases when consumers' actual experience during the shopping process matches the expectation they have constructed about the brand image. This is because satisfaction often stems from the congruence between expectations and actual experience (Chien-Hsiung, 2011). For example, MR. DIY's stores are located in the busy commercial centres of major cities. This geographic distribution strategy not only increases brand awareness, but also creates positive memories and experiences of the brand among consumers. Meanwhile, MR. DIY empowers its service staff with the knowledge and skills to provide customers with professional advice and guidance, empowering them to put their creative ideas into practice. This level of involvement not only provides customers with a more personalized shopping experience, but also gives them a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that goes beyond simply purchasing a product, further increasing their satisfaction with the brand.

Secondly, the insignificant relationship between brand reputation and customer satisfaction (H2) diverges from much of the existing literature (Gul, 2014). However, the results of H2 showed that correlation between the two variables was not significant. We hypothesize that this could be attributed to the following two reasons. On the one hand, the gap between customer expectations and their actual experiences. Brand reputation can potentially elevate customers' expectations to a certain degree. If the actual quality of products or services fails to meet these expectations, it could impact customer satisfaction negatively. In some situations, companies with a strong reputation may face higher customer expectations, and failure to meet them could result in decreased satisfaction. This might be a factor contributing to the weak correlation between MR. DIY's brand reputation and customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction could be based on other factors. Although brand reputation could influence customer purchase decisions, product quality, price, customer service, and convenience are likely to play a larger role in determining customer satisfaction. (Al-Tit, 2015; Tam, 2004). These factors could potentially weaken the correlation between brand reputation and customer satisfaction to a certain degree. For instance, if MR. DIY offers reasonably priced, high-quality products, it could achieve high levels of customer satisfaction, even if its brand reputation is not particularly high.

Thirdly, the finding of H3 means that the better brand credibility consumers perceive, the higher customer satisfaction will be. Brand credibility is used by consumers to conclude product quality and reliability (Esmaeilpour et al., 2017; Othman et al., 2017). In other words, reputation signals quality and trustworthiness in a market with asymmetric information between buyers and sellers, and consumers can rely on brand credibility to make purchase decisions. Sweeney and Swait (2008) argued that in relationship service industries (e.g., retail banking, telecommunications), a brand's reputation can significantly increase positive word-of-mouth from customers and reduce their likelihood to switch to a competitor, thus playing a defensive role in the sales process. Therefore, a good credibility can meet or exceed the quality expectations set and contribute to the growth of customer satisfaction. Additionally,

building a strong brand credibility can help foster a sense of emotional connection and trust between the brand and its customers (Han et al., 2015). Trust is an essential element of customer satisfaction because it reduces the risk of purchase. When consumers perceive a brand as reputable, they are more inclined to trust that the brand will fulfill its promises and deliver value. For example, MR. DIY utilizes the power of social media for promotional purposes, where customers can leave reviews, make inquiries and complaints. Moreover, MR. DIY values their feedback and is willing to take action to resolve any issues that may arise. This open and transparent approach to customer communication is what drives customer satisfaction.

Lastly, the result of H4 is supported. Brand identification can highly influence customer satisfaction. Therefore, the more consumers identify with a brand, the higher their satisfaction will be. Brand identification occurs when consumers perceive the values, personality and attributes of a brand to be consistent with their own (Stokburger-Sauer, et al., 2012; Dalman et al., 2019). This situation promotes a sense of psychological ownership and personal connection to the brand, as well as increasing the emotional value derived from their interactions with the brand. In turn, increased emotional investment typically increases satisfaction, as consumers perceive their interactions with brands as more meaningful and fulfilling. Importantly, consumers tend to selectively engage with communication content that shares their values and beliefs. By identifying with this brand content, consumers affirm their membership in an ideal social group. The feeling of being part of a group satisfies the social needs of the consumers. Moreover, it instils a sense of pride and self-worth, ultimately leading to increased satisfaction. Kumar and Kaushik (2020) suggested that brand identification contributes greatly to the brand experience across product and service brands. In the context of this study, through its joint efforts in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), such as the “Asian Medical Students Association Helping the Deaf Community” project and the “Myanmar Refugee Community Learning Center (MRCLC)” project, MR. DIY engenders positive emotions in consumers and increases their overall satisfaction with the brand.

CONCLUSION

Theoretical Implications

Looking at MR. DIY operating in Southeast Asian retail, this paper contributes to branding and satisfaction studies by offering a region-specific viewpoint, which is rarely seen in past research based on Western markets. While brand image, credibility, and identification were found to strongly influence customer satisfaction, the non-significant effect of brand reputation challenges conventional assumptions. This suggests that in value-oriented, high-frequency retail environments, reputation may operate indirectly, influencing trust or perceived risk rather than directly driving satisfaction. Future research may therefore develop contextualized, dual-path models, integrating cognitive and relational mechanisms to better explain satisfaction in emerging-market retail.

Furthermore, the results extend traditional satisfaction models that centre largely on tangible factors such as product quality, price, and service. By highlighting the role of brand-related psychological elements, this study underscores the need to incorporate brand identity, trust, and emotional engagement as central determinants of consumer satisfaction. The evidence supports a more sophisticated theoretical framework where both functional and symbolic brand dimensions jointly shape consumer evaluations.

Realistic Implications

The findings bring actionable guidance to retail industry professionals. To start with, brand image and credibility prove to be powerful drivers of satisfaction. For MR. DIY and similar retailers, it is essential to refine brand visuals, unify brand messages and effectively communicate core value. Managers can craft memorable brand features via store layout, colour schemes and signage, and build perceived reliability by keeping prices open and fair, guaranteeing product quality and maintaining consistent service. Next, brand identification shows great importance, so retailers ought to adopt strategies to foster emotional bonds with consumers. Options include creating interactive customer communities, running loyalty programmes for regular shoppers, and carrying out CSR projects that echo local values and public needs. Across Southeast Asia, MR. DIY can deepen consumers' sense of connection by sticking to its positioning as an affordable, family-oriented and community-focused brand.

Besides, the surprising result regarding brand reputation offers a key lesson: in budget-conscious retail businesses, a good public name does not directly translate into higher satisfaction. Retailers should not overspend on broad reputation-building campaigns alone. It is more effective to combine such work with tangible improvements to credibility and brand engagement at every customer touchpoint. Finally, regular staff training cannot be overlooked. Frontline teams need solid professional knowledge, as well as the skills to share brand ideas and communicate with customers honestly and empathetically. Customer relationship management platforms and AI service tools can also help tailor interactions for each shopper, further improving satisfaction.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite its meaningful findings, this study has several notable limitations. First, this study focuses mainly on the retail sector, using MY. DIY as a case study. While the findings offer targeted insights, they may not be fully generalized to other industries or brands with different market positioning or customer segments. Second, since the data were collected within a limited geographical scope, the findings may not fully reflect global consumer behaviour or cultural variations in brand evaluation and satisfaction. Third, the study relies on quantitative regression analyses; qualitative methods (e.g., interviews or focus groups) are somewhat neglected when understanding the motivations behind consumer satisfaction or brand perceptions.

Based on these limitations, future research could expand and intensify in several directions. Expanding different industries would help determine whether the effects of brand image, reputation, credibility, and identification vary by sector. Cross-national comparative studies would further clarify how cultural contexts influence brand perceptions and satisfaction outcomes, offering broader implications for global brand management. Additionally, integrating qualitative methods would enrich the quantitative findings by uncovering the motivations, expectations, and experiential factors that drive consumer evaluations.

BIODATA

Jinfeng Du currently works as a postdoctoral researcher at South China University of Technology, China. She obtained her PhD from the Department of Media and Communication Studies, University of Malaya, Malaysia. Her research focuses on digital and AI communication, new media, and international communication. Email: dujinfeng0329@qq.com

Hamed Mohd Adnan is an honorary professor at the Department of Media and Communication Studies, University of Malaya and the Faculty of Social Sciences, UCSI University. His research focuses on communication, information science and social sciences. Email: hamed@ucsiuniversity.edu.my

Guangxi Zhang holds a Master of Business Administration from the Graduate School of Business, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia. He works as a Brand Marketing Specialist at Fettes College Guangzhou. Email: guangxizhang1207@gmail.com

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