# THE APPLICATION OF BRAND AUTHENTICITY IN INCREASING BRAND TRUST IN CRAFTING BRAND

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## ABSTRACT

*Brand authenticity has emerged as an important concept in branding and marketing research, representing the perception that a brand is genuine, reliable, and in line with its core values and identity, which can influence consumer purchasing decisions. This study aims to examine the application of brand authenticity in enhancing brand trust in the context of business brand crafting. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative which allows an in-depth understanding of the role of brand authenticity on brand trust of one of the crafting businesses in Bandung, named Gift.in with direct interviews with business owners. the results show that the gift.in brand has not optimally implemented four important factors in building brand authenticity. These factors include consistency, transparency, value congruence and emotional connection.*

*Keywords: brand authenticity, brand trust, crafting brand.*

## INTRODUCTION

*In the era of increasingly fierce business competition, building brand trust is one of the keys to success in the business industry, including in the crafting business industry. Brand trust is very important because it is the basis for creating consumer loyalty to brands. The higher brand trust a brand has, the greater the chances of consumers continuing to use the brand's products or services* (Akbar & Wymer, 2017)*. However, building brand trust in the crafting business industry is not easy. The phenomenon that occurs in the field shows that the level of consumer trust in brands in the crafting industry tends to be low* (Morhart et al., 2013)*. Many consumers are skeptical and uncertain about the quality,*

*uniqueness, and authenticity of crafting products on the market. Previous studies have identified several factors that can influence brand trust, one of which is brand authenticity (Napoli et al., 2016). Brand authenticity is considered an important element that can add value to consumers and strengthen their trust in a brand. Based on previous research conducted by (Kim et al., 2021) shows that brand authenticity has a positive influence on increasing brand trust in the Food and Baverage industry. Then research conducted by (Tanaka, 2022) produced similar findings that brand authenticity has an effect on increasing brand trust in the fashion industry. However, from the various literature that has been identified, research with similar discussions specific to the creative or crafting industry was not found.*

*However, there is still a research gap regarding the role of brand authenticity in increasing brand trust in the context of the crafting business industry. Based on this phenomenon and research gap, this study aims to analyze the effect of brand authenticity on brand trust in crafting business brands. The results of this study are expected to make theoretical and practical contributions to the development of effective branding strategies to increase consumer trust in the crafting business industry.*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Brand authenticity

*Brand authenticity refers to the extent to which a brand or brands are perceived as authentic, honest, and consistent in the representation of the brand's values, identity, and communication to consumers (Eggers et al., 2013). The concept of brand authenticity is important in marketing because consumers tend to seek deeper relationships with brands that are considered authentic and consistent with the values that brands convey (Södergren, 2021). Brand authenticity is measured by four dimensions, including:*

a. *Consistency: Brand consistency refers to the brand's ability to maintain congruence between the values it conveys and the brand's overall behavior and communication. Consistent brands are considered more trustworthy by consumers, because they demonstrate integrity and commitment to the values they espouse.*

b. *Transparency: Transparency of brand communication is an important element in brand authenticity. Brands that are transparent in conveying information about their products, production processes, and values are considered more trustworthy by consumers. Transparency allows consumers to understand more about the brand and build stronger trust.*

c. *Value Congruence: Value congruence refers to a brand's ability to fulfill the promises it makes to consumers. Brands that are able to maintain congruence between the value promised and the value delivered are considered more authentic and can build stronger trust among consumers.*

d. *Emotional Connection: Brand authenticity is also related to the brand's ability to build strong emotional relationships with consumers. Brands that are able to form more personal and emotional relationships are considered more authentic, as they are able to build deeper bonds with consumers. By paying attention to these aspects, brands can build an authentic image that can influence consumer perceptions and build stronger trust. Brand authenticity is key in building deeper relationships between brands and consumers, and can influence consumer loyalty to the brand. It is important to note that brand authenticity is not something that can be built instantly, but requires a long-term commitment from the brand to maintain consistency, transparency, and value congruence in all aspects of brand communication and behavior* (Bruhn et al., 2012). *By paying attention to the concept of brand authenticity, brands can strengthen relationships with consumers and win trust in the market* (Portal et al., 2019).

2. **Brand trust**

   *Brand trust can be defined as a consumer's willingness to rely on a brand's ability to perform its stated function* (Margana et al., 2019). *In other words, brand trust is consumer confidence in the brand's ability to fulfill its promises and meet consumer needs* (Chang et al., 2013). *There are several dimensions that can be used to measure brand trust, including:*

   a. *Reliability: This dimension measures the extent to which consumers can rely on the brand to fulfill its promises and provide consistent and reliable products/services.*

   b. *Integrity: This dimension measures consumer perceptions of the honesty and sincerity of the brand in conducting its business. Consumers believe that the brand acts with high integrity.*

   c. *Competence: This dimension measures consumers' perceptions of the brand's ability to fulfill its promises and provide satisfactory performance. Consumers believe that the brand has the ability to meet their needs.*

   d. *Benevolence: This dimension measures consumers' perceptions that the brand has good intentions and cares about the well-being of consumers, not just being profit-oriented.*

   *By fulfilling these dimensions, brands can build strong brand trust in the eyes of consumers. High brand trust will encourage consumers to be loyal, give positive recommendations, and be willing to pay premium prices for the brand.*

## RESEARCH METHOD

*This study applies a qualitative, descriptive methodology. For this study, the qualitative approach was selected in order to organically investigate the topic being* (Bougie, 2016).

*This study provides a more thorough explanation of the research findings based on data collected on the spot in the field. Through the use of various scientific research methods and verbal and linguistic descriptions within a specific scientific context, qualitative research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation, such as behavior, perception, motivation, or action* (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). *To gather the required data for this study, researchers employed a number of techniques, such as interviews gift.in business owners as well as observation. In order collect data that is real and true to the circumstances, it was done naturally and without outside assistance.*

*Three steps comprise the data analysis procedure in this study: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. In this study, data reduction is used to find and pick data that is pertinent to the goals of the investigation, as well as to highlight and filter significant information while removing unnecessary data* (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). *Presenting the data is the following phase when the data collected in the field is categorized to help researchers describe an event or incident. The researcher then draws findings from the data analysis that was completed. Triangulation techniques were used by the researchers to guarantee the authenticity of the data in this study. According to Moelong, triangulation is a strategy for confirming the authenticity of data by using techniques or sources other than the data as a means of comparison or validation* (Gunawan I, 2013). *Two methods were used to carry out triangulation in this investigation. The first goal of source triangulation is to confirm that the information gathered from informants is consistent across time in order to increase trust in the data. Technical triangulation was also used to supplement and validate the information gathered through various data-gathering techniques.*

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

*In today's intensely competitive business world, building brand trust among consumers is an important key to the success of a business, especially in the crafting business. Authentic brand crafting can be an effective strategy to build strong and long-lasting brand trust. Brand authenticity refers to the extent to which consumers perceive a brand as "genuine" and consistent with its values and identity. Research shows that consumers are increasingly demanding authentic products and services, which reflect the uniqueness, integrity and sincerity of a brand. In the crafting industry, brand authenticity is becoming increasingly important as consumers are often looking for unique, high- quality products that reflect a dedicated manufacturing process and values.*

*One of the businesses in the crafting field is the gift.in brand in Bandung, this business was established in December 2023 with a focus on producing craft goods and services to meet market demand for crafts and custom gift products. Building brand trust for a young business is certainly an urgency in the company's strategy, this aims to maintain*

*business continuity, increase opportunities to get consumers and keep customers who have bought gift.in products, one way is to use and develop brand authenticity.*

*Based on the results obtained by interviewing the owner of the gift.in business, it is found that building brand authenticity is important for the sustainability of the gift.in business, which can help consumers remember and trust the brand in meeting their needs, which in turn can increase brand trust in the business.*

*High product quality is the main reason for consumers to choose products, this can certainly reflect the authentic value of the business. With a good image of the products produced, it can make the buyer's experience more positive towards the business. Starting from quality materials, skills in crafting, availability of product stock and highlighting the value of brand originality are the main factors that reflect authencity in terms of product quality that is always consistent.*

*Relationship with consumers, various literature illustrates that building and maintaining emotional relationships with consumers is an important aspect in the sustainability of the business. This is certainly done by including the authentic value of the brand and also the product as a value that is highlighted in the minds of consumers by creating a two-way relationship with consumers through social media activities such as posting videos, channels, interesting quizzes, educational content, entertainment, replying to messages or comments, and other efforts to stay connected with consumers by continuing to include brand values, consistent relationships with consumers and building emotional relationships with consumers. However, in the gift.in business this has not been applied optimally because it only has two social media in building relationships with consumers, namely WhatsApp and Instagram, with content that has not been consistently created.*

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

*In the highly competitive business landscape, building brand trust among consumers is a critical factor for success, especially in the crafting industry. The study on the gift.in brand in Bandung highlights the importance of authentic brand crafting as an effective strategy to establish strong and long-lasting brand trust. Brand authenticity, which refers to the extent to which consumers perceive a brand as "genuine" and consistent with its values and identity, has become increasingly important as consumers demand products and services that reflect the uniqueness, integrity, and sincerity of a brand.*

*The findings from the interview with the gift.in business owner suggest that building brand authenticity is crucial for the sustainability of the business, as it helps consumers remember and trust the brand in meeting their needs, ultimately increasing brand trust. The key factors that contribute to the perception of brand authenticity include high product quality, reflecting the authentic values of the business, such as quality materials, skilled craftsmanship, product availability, and highlighting brand originality. However, the gift.in business has not optimally utilized social media to build and maintain emotional*

*relationships with consumers, limiting its ability to effectively communicate the authentic brand values and foster strong connections with its target audience.*

*Suggestions: The gift.in brand should continue to prioritize product quality and consistency as the foundation of its brand authenticity, ensuring that the brand's values are consistently reflected in its offerings. To further strengthen brand authenticity and build trust, the gift.in business should invest in developing a comprehensive social media strategy that allows for deeper and more personalized interactions with consumers. This can include features like responding to comments, hosting live Q&As, and creating exclusive content for loyal customers, enabling the brand to effectively communicate its authentic values and foster emotional connections with its target audience..*

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