ASIAN JOURNAL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Asian Journal of Media and Communication
E-ISSN: 2579-6119, P-ISSN: 2579-6100
Volume 6, Number 1, 2022

Polymedia Model on the Information-Seeking of Young Urban Indonesian on Fashion and Their Perception on Japanese and Indonesian Brands.

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Abstract. In the digital era, urban youth face various media – including conventional media – to seek information related to fashion. Fashion items are one of the top three things Indonesian people buy, and Japanese fashion is one of the foreign brands they can mention. The media and information exposure affect their reaction and response toward the information. This study explored and compared Indonesian urban youth's information-seeking behavior about fashion and their perceptions of Japanese and Indonesian fashion brands. Data were collected through paper and pencil questionnaires administered to 291 students at four educational institutions in two major cities, with a diversity of age, gender, place of residence, religion, and education level. This study suggested that (1) young people used various media (polymedia), both conventional and new media. Digging up information directly to fashion brand outlets was a crucial choice, (2) information-seeking behavior was related to fashion brand perceptions. Perceptions of Japanese brands were better than their Indonesian counterparts, although it varied on different demographic characteristics and diversity of information-seeking patterns. This research has several implications: (1) fashion information must be conveyed to consumers as a unique person rather than as a collective person; (2) fashion information must be delivered either through conventional media – including direct shop visits, as well as new media, (3) Need to build a product as a global brand image

Keywords: polymedia, information seeking, young urban, perception, fashion brand

Article Info
Article History
Received:
17 March 2022

Revised:
5 April 2022

Accepted:
13 August 2022

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Introduction

The Indonesian people's perception of Japan in various aspects, including fashion, has shown a positive tendency. Many studies showed that : (1) international brands or global brands were generally identified with better quality than local brands. Meanwhile, local brands were identified at low prices and occupy a position as a second-class product (Kussudyarsana, 2016); (2) Indonesian consumers tended to justify that global brands were more attractive than local brands (Rediswara, 2016); and (3) International brands originating from Japan were well perceived by consumers. This was because as a country of origin, Japan was perceived as a country that produces products with high quality (Prakosa, 2017).

On the other hand, a survey conducted in late February revealed that 42.4 percent of the respondents bought products with brands originating from Japan in recent months and that 31.6 percent named some specific brands and products (The Japan Times, 2018). On global consumers, Nielsen claimed that fashion was the most purchased item, and 61% was bought online (Hasibuan, 2018; Herlinda, 2017). Fashion is an element of pop culture and an important issue in the cultural diplomacy between Japan and Indonesia (Harsianti, 2017) alongside culinary items, manga, and anime. Botkin (2014) said that new media had become a channel for fashion information-seeking lately, showing that new media served as a valuable fashion information source for potential consumers.

One of the international fashion brands sold in Indonesia is Uniqlo. It was a fact that one in 3 Indonesian consumers choose Japanese products, ranging from technology products to consumer goods, such as Sony and Uniqlo, a brand of fashion (The Jakarta Post, 2018; The Japan Times, 2015). However, Uniqlo was not an aspirational brand (The Japan Times, 2015). Research conducted by JTB Research and Consulting Co showed that Japanese consumers tended to look to western countries such as North America, Northern Europe, France, and also to one Asian country, South Korea, in that order. Post-Millennials looked to South Korea the most, even over North America. The new generation of Japanese people wanted to be looked at internationally (JTB Tourism Research and Consulting Co., 2017). It showed that people tend to look at 'outside international brands' more positively than local brands.

The Indonesian fashion products and retail stores brand were part of the Delamibrands group. In Indonesia, some fashion retail stores were initially from the country, one of which was "The Executive." The Executive started its brand in 1984 as a career brand. It had 60 free-standing stores and 100 counters in leading department stores

(https://theexecutive.co.id/company-profile). Even though they were not officially competitors, they were competing for young Indonesian consumers' brand awareness.

Some research showed that perception, including brand perception, was influenced by individual characteristics. Consumers with different demographic characteristics perceived a brand differently (Alguacil et al., 2020; Ezeuduji et al., 2016; Popa & Pelau, 2016). Unquestionably, the consumers' information about the brand was another factor influencing brand perception, particularly the information from social media (Helal et al., 2018).

Other research studies showed a connection between the information-seeking behavior of particular brands and brand perception (Abeza et al., 2017; Li et al., 2012; Liu & Du, 2019; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Ratriyana (2018); Vásquez and Vera-Martínez (2020) mentioned in their research that the quality of the information on new media, including web stores, led to brand perception. It means that the type of information and how individuals got information about fashion constituted factors that influenced their perception. It means the information that was consumed by the audience influenced their perception and, in turn, their decision to make purchasing (Augusta et al., 2019; Awdziej & Tkaczyk, 2018; Bnu et al., 2018; Chang & Wildt, 1994; Jones & Kang, 2020; Sadeghi & Tabrizi, 2011). Brand perception was also influenced by the Country of Origin (COO) of the brand. When consumers had positive perceptions of the COO, they would perceive better of the brands (Koubaa, 2008). Japan is one country which has been perceived positively by Indonesian consumers.

Brand perception represents the overall perception and it is formed because of some factors such as the information and also the knowledge of the brand. The overall perception includes several dimensions: (1) perceived quality, (2) value, (3) visual, (4) senses, (5) personality, (6) reputation and legacy, and (7) status and culture (Spacey, 2017) and also perceived price and perceived value (Chang & Wildt, 1994). This research was emphasized only on how the quality of the store's brand and how the products were perceived by the consumers.

Young people, especially in urban areas and college students, are usually concerned with physical appearance and fashion. As mentioned by He (2018, p. 90), college students were the main body of fashion culture practice because they were active in thinking. Because of this, the students enhanced their awareness in fashion which eventually became a part of their lifestyle. As a lifestyle, information about fashion was the part that young people are looking for. Modern media such as social media and commercial websites were information

channels that were very close to urban youth in finding information about fashion. On the other hand, several studies showed that almost all over the world, urban youth utilized and integrated all forms and media to communicate, especially in distant interpersonal communication. The phenomenon of using various media in the context of (interpersonal) communication is known as polymedia. The research argues that this polymedia model is also applied by urban youth to seek information about fashion. In this regard, there has been a shift in the motives for choosing media, from economic motives to social and emotional motives (Madianou & Miller, 2013).

This research applied the information-seeking behavior formulated by Case (2007); Lambert and Loiselle (2007, p. 103). Lambert defined that the information-seeking emphasizes some characteristics of how consumers seek information, particularly in terms of type and amount. The type refers to what content consumers seek and the diversity of how consumers search the information. The amount refers to how much data (details) about a given topic one seeks, underlining the depth of the investigation and the discretionary actions of individual users to obtain information and sources of information used. Discrete information-seeking activities or strategies include direct and indirect questioning, asking for clarifications, discussing and exchanging information with others, reading, observing, using a third party, browsing, and listening.

Case (2007) defined information seeking as an effort which is done by people consciously to get information in response to a need or gap in mind of people. It encompasses information seeking and the totality of other unintentional or passive behavior, as well as purposive behavior that does not involve seeking, such as actively avoiding information. It is "the purposive seeking of information due to a need to satisfy some goals". The research applied this definition and it focused on the information on fashion. It was categorized into two types: (1) heavy; and (2) light information seekers. The first type was characterized by high intensity, including in-depth and breadth of information seeking and involved high effort in information processing. In contrast, the second type was light information seekers indicated by low intensity and faster satisfaction to the initial information they got. Based on the two definitions, information-seeking behavior can be defined as a conscious effort to get or not to get some information that involves intensity and diversity.

Research conducted in the Middle East and the United States about information-seeking behavior indicated that the younger students were going to be more likely to use visual platforms, such as Instagram private messaging applications, to get news. In contrast,

information verification activities were becoming more frequently practiced by older people who usually used social media such as Facebook, Twitter (Nee, 2019), and Youtube as the primary media for young people (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). The studies also suggested that individual characteristics, such as economic status, gender, and race, influenced information seeking. Becker (2019); Herosmyth (2018) mentioned that each generation has information-seeking preferences, behaviors, and backgrounds. The mentioned generations are the Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials. Nel said other influential factors for information seeking, namely the discipline, time, awareness and knowledge of service and sources, search skills, information source, including its location, the format of the information delivery system (print versus electronic), and the ease of access of the source (Makinde et al., 2019).

In fashion, the urban youth turns to digital media, such as fashion blogs or social media, to seek information. The reasons are its search autonomy, virtual storage, instant gratification, visual inspiration, gratuitous information, and authenticity (Jones & Kang, 2020). Data showed that almost 68 percent of respondents said they shopped at e-commerce sites more frequently than the previous year, while about 36.4 percent of respondents bought things at shopping malls more often (The Jakarta Post, 2018).

This research explored the fashion information-seeking model deeply by emphasizing the young urban Indonesian as the audience and the consumers and comparing their polymedia usage and their perception of fashion between Japanese and Indonesian brands.

Methods

We designed and conducted a cross-sectional survey by collecting quantitative data through questionnaires that were directly distributed and filled, face to face, to students of four classes for each school and two courses for each university. Cross sectional survey is the one of two models of survey, which involves a sample or cross section of the population that are made at one point in time. Another model is longitudinal survey which needs a series of data collecting and analysis (Babbie, 2010). As a sample, 291 students aged 15 to 35 years (age of students/Millennial Generation) in Yogyakarta and Jakarta were enrolled in this research. The selection of this range of age was adjusted to Uniqlo's and The Executive's target markets. The areas (Jakarta and Yogyakarta) were selected randomly from several cities where Uniqlo and The Executive were available.

Data were analyzed by using compare means (t-test, ANOVA), multiple correlation, and regression analysis techniques. The multiple correlation is the quantitative analysis

technique that involves two or more than two independent variables. The equation describing such a relationship is the multiple regression equation. The regression analysis is a technique of determining the specific function relating X to Y. This technique is used to test the effect of one independent variable on the other dependent variable. There are several forms of regression analysis depending on the complexity of the relationship being studied: linear regression analysis, multiple regression analysis, curvilinear regression analysis, and partial regression analysis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). The researchers used t-test and Anova, multiple regression and partial regression analysis to know: (1) the effect of media usage to the brand perception, and comparing this effect on the local and global brands of fashion, and (2) the contribution of demographic variables to the relation between media usage and the brand perception.

The result was described in a quantitative-descriptive and explanatory approach. The same research subjects were asked about three variables—information-seeking behavior, fashion brand perception, and individual demographic characteristics—concerning two brands. The Executive, representing local brands, and Uniqlo, representing international brands. We also conducted interviews with The Executives officer responsible for marketing or corporate communication to collect data about the communication activities to raise brand awareness and product knowledge and the description of the consumers/target market. Whereas to find data about Uniqlo, we observed the secondary data from official media and social media.

Results and Discussion

Fashion-related Information Seeking

Information seeking behavior in this research is defined as two aspects (1) media usage, (2) information they seek; and (3) the intensity of fashion information seeking. The research showed that almost all the respondents accessed various media, both conventional and new media. Radio and landline phones were the most rarely used communication devices by respondents at home. More than fifty percent of the respondents rarely used television, even more than sixty percent rarely used radio and newspaper. More than seventy percent of the respondents claimed they used internet-based media in high intensity.

Table 1. Media Usage – High Frequency (n= 291)

Media	Percentage
A. Conventional media	
Newspaper	21.3
Radio	17.2
Television	51.9
Landline phone	10.2
B. New Media	
Line-based computer	78.6
Gadget (internet-based media)	97.6
• YouTube	91.7
• Instagram	90.1

It proved that the Indonesian urban youth did not ignore or leave the conventional media and focused only on the internet-based media. Conventional media such as electronic media was still considered as an alternative in information seeking, even though internet-based media was used more frequently by more respondents. YouTube and Instagram showed the highest usages, compared to Facebook and LINE. Table 1 shows that the urban youth of Indonesia applied polymedia.

Table 2. Information sought by Millennial (N=291)

Information	Percent
Studying/task accomplishmen	86.2
Hobbies	78.7
Consumers goods/fashion	73.9
Social Politics	
Information about Fashion	
Internet-based media	84.2
Directly visit the store	71.9

Based on Table 2, information about fashion was not as important as other information. The urban youth sought information about fashion from new media and conventional face-to-face communication by visiting the store directly. Referring to the data, in order to seek information about fashion, the respondents used the internet and instantly saw the outlets in business centers. In this case, the outlets of fashion brands (Uniqlo and Executive) were placed in big shopping malls. Regarding fashion information, urban youth tended to emphasize only the features of the product and its price rather than the quality of the materials, brand, and store. In the case of seeking through new media, respondents found more on the features of the product and the reviews from other consumers. It can be concluded that millennials were not heavy information-seekers. They use both conventional

face-to-face methods in an offline store and internet-based media to get information about fashion even though it was only a few aspects of the brand and store.

This study also found that individual characteristics influenced fashion-related information seeking. There was a significantly different mean value of fashion-related information seeking between male and female respondents (t. -2.751, sig.006). The intensity of information seeking of female respondents was higher than that of male respondents. Besides sex, religion became a distinguished variable related to information-seeking behavior. Muslim respondents had a higher score for the intensity of the information-seeking than non-Muslim respondents (t 3.939, sig .000). The intensity of information seeking of the higher education students was higher than that of senior high school students (t – 3.476, sig .000). However, there was no correlation between age and the intensity of information seeking (r. .022, sig .707) and between the place of residence and the information-seeking (t -.062, sig .951). The result is displayed in table 2 as follow:

Table 3. The difference of information seeking

Individual characteristics	Information seeking intensity	
	Higher	Lower
Sex	Female	Male
Religion	Moslem	Non Moslem
Level of education	Higher educated	Lower educated
Age	Not different	
Residence	Not different	

Notes:
The age of the respondents was spreading in the range of 17 – 35 years old. This age could be categorized as Indonesian youth, and the respondents' residence was categorized into Jakarta and Yogyakarta. Both cities are urban areas.

Brand Perception and Individual Characteristics

Brand perception has two dimensions: (1) perception of the product and (2) perception of the store's brand. Perception is categorized as high-level perception when the score is higher than six and categorized as low-level perception when the score is six or lower. Table 3 describes eight elements of perception on the store and the product, which obtained a score higher than six.

Table 4. Perception of the Brand of the Store and the Product (n=291)

No	Perception	Score > 6 (in percentage)	
		Uniqlo	The Executive
A	**Store**		
1	Color	82.4	73.5
2	Layout	85.5	72.7
3	Interior design	89.5	79.0
4	Hospitality	85.1	80.0
5	Speed of service delivery	84.7	80.5
6	Complaint handling	83.1	75.2
7	Communication skill	86.8	79.1
8	Product knowledge	86.6	83.5
B	**Product**		
1	Product durability	93.2	89.2
2	Product availability	92.7	87.9
3	Product convenience	95.5	89.3
4	Product neatness	94.3	90.3
5	Up-to-date design/feature	94.7	85.8
6	Feature's diversity	93.1	85.0
7	Competitive price	86.9	86.5
8	High-risk usage	43.6	43.8
9	Design attractiveness	93.5	78.7
10	Color attractiveness	91.4	77.8
11	Updated product	93.5	84.9
12	Size availability	94.3	87.3
13	Color availability	94.7	82.0

Table 4 shows that the score of the perceived quality of the store and product of Uniqlo was higher than that of The Executive. However, the score of perception of the products of both brands was higher than that of the perception of their stores. The mean value of the perception of Uniqlo was 114, whereas that of The Executive was 104. It means that the perception of international brands is higher than the perception of local brands. Factors that influenced the perception included individual factors, i.e., age, religion, and education level, except sex and place of residence.

Both for Japanese and Indonesian fashion brands, the perception depended on the different characteristics of respondents. It means that the demographic factors influence the perception. This research showed that perception varied by age (F 1.955, sig .031), education level (t 3.864, sig .000), and religion (t 3.512, sig .001). Older, non-Muslim, and higher education student respondents created a more positive perception of international brands than local brands. There was no difference in the mean of perception between females and males (t - 591 sig .555) and between places of origin (t -1.214, sig .238). It can be interpreted that fashion was usual for people, irrespective of sex and residence. Beyond the variety of

perceptions, it is undeniable that international brands were more valuable for Indonesian youth in urban areas.

There were interesting findings when data were analyzed with only Uniqlo as a global brand. It was found that perception varied based on (1) different ages (F 1.955, sig .031), (2) different education levels (t 3.864, sig .000), and (3) different religions (t 3.512, sig .001). Meanwhile, there was no difference in mean values of perception of female and male respondents (t - 591 sig .555), and there was no difference in mean values of the original residence (t -1.214, sig .238). It means that older respondents, non-Moslem respondents, and those studying in higher education institutions create a more positive perception than others who are younger, Muslim, and have a lower level of education. Meanwhile, as a local brand, The Executive obtained a higher perception among respondents who have a higher level of education (F= 17.977, sig. 000), older (F =2.946, sig. . 003), and among Muslim respondents (F= 4.071, sig .032). It describes more simply in table 5.

Table 5. The different influent factors of a higher score of perception

Perception	Uniqlo (Japanese brand)	The Executive (Indonesian brand)
Age	Older	Older
Education	Higher Educated	Higher educated
Religion	Non Moslem	Moslem
Sex	--	--
Residence	--	--

Only one factor of the respondent influenced the perception between Japanese and Indonesian brands, which was religion. Muslims perceived more positively than Non-Muslims only for the Indonesian fashion brand. As we know, the majority of the Indonesian population is Muslim. In fashion, Indonesian people wear the 'hijab' as a symbol of religion. The Executive as a local brand provides hijab, whereas Uniqlo does not. This was why The Executive was perceived by the Muslims more positively than non-Muslims.

The Impact of Information Seeking on Fashion Brand Perception

Media have a significant role for people to create reality. Information about fashion establishes the existence of the two brands, Uniqlo and The Executive. Regardless of local or global brands, there was a correlation between the intensity of fashion-related information seeking and perception toward fashion, particularly towards a brand of store and product (r .229, sig .002). The correlation between information seeking and brand perception was

different if specified by the type of the brands (local and global brands), the type of media (face-to-face communication and new media), and individual characteristics.

Good perception of a brand was mostly influenced by fashion-related information gained from face-to-face communication channels (R .235, R2 .005, F 10.394, sig .002). Information from other media, including new media, was excluded. Face-to-face communication in this research means visiting the shopping mall directly and sharing word of mouth. Face-to-face communication became the most important predictor for brand perception. Respondents who sought information by visiting the store tended to create a more positive perception of a brand than those who sought information from old and new media.

The correlation between information-seeking behavior and brand perception was also different if individual characteristics specified it. By using partial correlation analysis and split differential methods, the research found that:

1. among female respondents, perception of the brand was influenced by information-seeking behavior (r .287, sig .003). There was a correlation between brand perception and information-seeking behavior, but it was not significant (r .143, sig .220).
2. The correlation between information-seeking behavior and brand perception was also different in senior high school students and higher education students. The two variables were significantly correlated (r. 270, sig .008), but among higher education students, the two variables were insignificantly correlated (r. 116, sig .295). It means that among senior high school students, perception toward the brand was influenced by information seeking.
3. When it was specified by age, the correlation between the intensity of information-seeking behavior and brand perception in older students was stronger (r .249, sig .001). The older the respondents were, the higher the relation between the information seeking and brand perception. It means that age strengthens the impact of fashion-related information seeking on the perception of a brand.
4. The strength of the correlation between information-seeking behavior and brand perception was influenced by religion. Among non-Muslim respondents, the correlation between those variables was significant (r .202. sig .021) and higher than the correlation coefficient between the two variables among Muslim respondents.
5. The residence of students also influenced the relationship between the two variables. The perception of respondents who stayed in Jakarta was affected by information seeking via face-to-face communication (r .349. sig .000).

In conclusion, the young urban Indonesians tend to create a more positive perception for the international brand than local. The perception is influenced by the intensity of information seeking and communication channels. Face-to-face communication is the one communication channel that most influences perception. It means that directly and physically

visiting and seeking information from the outlet or store will determine the brand's perception. There is no different perception of the respondents who use other media.

The research showed that the perception was also influenced by the different demographic characteristics and the brand itself. The findings are in line with other previous research revealing that the demographic characteristics of individuals are distinguishing factors for brand perception (Alguacil et al., 2020; Ezeuduji et al., 2016; Helal et al., 2018; Popa & Pelau, 2016; Ratriyana, 2018). Based on the findings, the brand's perception is affected by internal and external factors. Internal factors mean the individual characteristics, and external factors are the brand itself, whether local or foreign.

The impacts of information-seeking towards brand perception, as shown in this research, is also in line with the other previous findings (Abeza et al., 2017; Li et al., 2012; Liu & Du, 2019; Ratriyana, 2018; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016; Vásquez & Vera-Martínez, 2020). Based on these data, the authors conclude that the role of media is more significant for creating perception. The research also showed that communication form, as part of information-seeking behavior, is crucial for influencing perception. There are three forms of communication in seeking information about fashion, i.e., communication by using conventional mass media, face-to-face communication, and communication by using new media (including eWOM at social media). Surprisingly, the research showed only face-to-face communication significantly influences perception. Directly visiting an outlet or store and word of mouth are predictors for brand perception. New media that offer direct communication and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) could not replace traditional face-to-face communication. It can be understood when we believe that eighty percent of symbols we use to communicate are nonverbal. It is also more credible for conveying real thinking or feeling.

Conclusion

The theoretical conclusions are that (1) the role of new media, as well as conventional face-to-face communication, is vital for constructing the meaning of the brand, (2) brand perception is various, depending on the characteristics of the individual and the characteristics of the brand. It means that the perception is contributed by several factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include demographic characteristics and the information seeking behavior, and the external factors include: the country where the brand is made in and media or channels used. Brands from foreign countries are perceived better than

from local countries. Polymedia theory has emphasized integrating various media used by people based on emotional and social functions. Madianou (2012) said that smartphones used by young urban people are polymedia. However, this research showed that face-to-face communication is the most important channel for urban youth to create a perception about fashion.

The findings imply creating the marketing communication strategy, particularly in creating positive brand perception. Companies need (1) to understand that the audiences as potential consumers must be approached individually rather than collectively, even though they are a similar generation; and carefully consider the type of brands, local or foreign ones; and (2) to use various media, including face to face communication through the stores or outlet, to share information about products and brands.

Notes on contributor

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