

ANALYSIS OF REVIEW RATING DYNAMICS FOR NICHE AND MAINSTREAM BRANDS: A CASE FROM THE INDONESIAN MARKET

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ABSTRACT

Consumer review ratings have become an increasingly important factor in shaping brand perception in the modern marketplace. However, little research has focused on differences in review ratings between niche and mainstream brands, especially in the context of the emerging Indonesian market. This research aims to analyze the dynamics of review ratings for niche and mainstream brands in the Indonesian market, with a focus on the factors that influence review ratings, the differences between niche and mainstream brands, and the strategic implications for brands. The research method used in this study is a qualitative analysis of consumer reviews found on online platforms, such as specialized review sites, social media, and discussion forums. Data was also collected from interviews with consumers and brand owners to gain deeper insight into the factors that influence review ratings. The research results show that there are significant differences in review ratings between niche and mainstream brands in the Indonesian market. Consumers tend to give more positive reviews to niche brands, because they feel more connected to the brand and perceive their experience as more authentic. Factors such as product quality, price, customer satisfaction, and brand image also play an important role in assessing consumer reviews.

Keywords: Consumer Reviews, Niche Brands, Mainstream Brands.

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization and digitalization, the creative economy has become an increasingly important and prominent sector in a country's economic development. Along with technological developments and changes in consumer behavior, this sector has become the center of attention for many countries, including Indonesia. Based on the 2019 Focus Creative Economy Outlook, the creative economy sector makes a significant contribution to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), reaching IDR. 1,105 trillion. This confirms Indonesia's position as one of the main players in the creative economy globally, ranking third after the United States and South Korea in terms of the contribution of the creative economy sector to GDP (Nizar & Lubis, 2020). Even though it has great potential for exponential growth, the creative economy sector in Indonesia has not escaped the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world in 2020. This pandemic has dealt a big blow to the Indonesian economy, including the creative economy sector. Social restrictions, business closures and changes in people's consumption patterns have caused a decline in economic activity in various sectors, including the creative industry. However, after the impact of the pandemic began to be mitigated, the creative economy sector in Indonesia did not just give up. As the front guard in the momentum of national economic revival, this sector continues to strive to become an accelerator of economic recovery. 2021 will be a turning point in efforts to restore the creative economy sector, not only nationally, but also globally (Kaparang et al., 2022).

The rapid growth of information technology has changed the business landscape drastically, including in terms of interactions between brands and consumers. One phenomenon that has emerged from this change is the increasing popularity of online review platforms. Consumers now have greater

access to share their experiences with brands, both positive and negative, immediately and widely through platforms such as dedicated review sites, social media and discussion forums (Yandi et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important for brands to understand how consumer reviews influence brand perception, especially in the context of niche and mainstream markets. The advent of the internet has significantly changed the market structure. Previously, mainstream brands dominated market share with strong bargaining power in setting trends and determining consumer preferences. However, with the advent of the internet, niche brands have the opportunity to reach a larger audience and connect with consumers who share certain interests and values. This phenomenon marks a paradigm shift where consumers are not only fixated on big brands that are widely known, but are also interested in brands that offer special and unique added value.

Review assessment refers to the process of evaluating and analyzing feedback or opinions given by consumers or users regarding a particular product, service or experience. These reviews are often delivered via various online platforms, including dedicated review websites, social media, discussion forums, or e-commerce platforms. In reviewing reviews, various aspects of the review are evaluated, including honesty, relevance, quality of content, and its impact on the perception of the brand or product reviewed (Ilahi et al., 2020). The review assessment process may involve a variety of analytical methods, ranging from qualitative to quantitative approaches, to fully understand the impact and implications of the review. The importance of review assessment lies in its crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and decisions. These reviews can be a valuable source of information for potential buyers, helping them make more informed purchasing decisions. Additionally, review ratings can also provide direct feedback to brands or service providers, allowing them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their products or services and improve the overall quality and customer experience. Thus, review assessment is not only an evaluation instrument, but also a means of communication between brands and consumers that has a significant impact on marketing strategies and product development (Wijoyo et al., 2020).

Niche brands refer to brands that focus on a specific and limited market segment, by offering products or services that are unique or different from those offered by mainstream brands. The main characteristics of niche brands are specificity in market segmentation and emphasis on specific added value or specialization. Niche brands often identify markets that are not adequately served by mainstream brands or meet the more specific needs of certain consumer segments (Wibowo, 2022). Niche brands are often known for their deeper approach to product development, marketing, and customer experience. They tend to build strong communities around their brands, attracting consumers who share similar interests and values. Although niche markets have more limited potential for growth compared to mainstream markets, niche brands can often create strong consumer loyalty and have significant influence in a particular industry (Pradana & Fitriyanti, 2021).

Mainstream brands refer to brands that dominate the market by offering products or services that are widely consumed by various consumer segments. The main characteristics of mainstream brands are broad reach and universal appeal, which allows them to attract the attention of a wide range of consumers. Mainstream brands are often known for their large market penetration, high visibility, and strong brand recognition at a national or even global level. Mainstream brands tend to focus on products or services that meet common needs and are relevant to the majority of consumers (Perkasa, 2023). They often have large marketing budgets and use extensive marketing strategies, including mass media advertising and integrated promotions, to strengthen their brand image and expand their market share. Although mainstream brands enjoy the benefits of large sales volumes and stable revenues, they are also faced with the challenge of remaining relevant in the face of intense competition and rapidly changing market trends.

In this environment consumer reviews play an increasingly important role in influencing purchasing decisions. These reviews provide valuable insight to potential buyers about the quality, reliability and experience of using a particular product or service. In some cases, consumer reviews can even be a major deciding factor in a purchasing decision (Andriyanty et al., 2023). Niche and mainstream markets have different characteristics in terms of consumer segmentation, marketing strategies, and consumer expectations. Niche markets tend to have more focused audiences with more specific preferences and are often more engaged in dedicated communities. On the other hand, the mainstream market has a wider audience and tends to serve more general needs.

These differences influence how brands interact with consumer reviews. In niche markets, consumer reviews may have a greater impact because smaller communities tend to be more susceptible to opinions and recommendations from fellow members. In the mainstream market, while consumer reviews are still important, their impact may be more diffuse because a broader audience may have diverse perspectives and preferences (Mayana et al., 2022). Although the importance of consumer reviews in both niche and mainstream market contexts is widely recognized, there is a gap in research that specifically analyzes the dynamics of review ratings for brands in these two types of markets. Existing research tends to focus on one type of market or another, leaving out a deeper understanding of the differences and similarities in the influence of consumer reviews between the two types of markets.

Therefore the aim of this research is to investigate and analyze how consumer reviews influence brand perceptions in niche and mainstream markets. By understanding the dynamics of consumer review ratings, this research is expected to provide brands with valuable insights into how to manage their online reputation and maximize the influence of consumer reviews in building and maintaining their market share.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this research is qualitative, with a focus on in-depth analysis of the dynamics of review ratings for niche and mainstream brands in the Indonesian market. A qualitative approach allows researchers to understand in more depth consumers' perceptions, preferences and behavioral patterns regarding brand reviews, as well as to explore the factors that influence the influence of these reviews in the context of the Indonesian market (Sugiyono, 2017). This method involves collecting data through interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of reviews from various online platforms, including review sites, social media, and discussion forums.

Data sources used in this research include scientific journals, articles from trusted media, and reference books relevant to the research topic. Data from these sources will be used to strengthen the analysis and support research findings. Additionally, the use of qualitative data from these sources will also allow researchers to gain greater insight into the dynamics of review scoring in the Indonesian market, as well as to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that influence the influence of consumer reviews in the context of niche brands. and mainstream. Thus, a qualitative approach and the use of diverse data sources are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The data analysis technique used in this research includes several steps to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of review ratings for niche and mainstream brands in the Indonesian market. First, a content analysis will be conducted to identify common patterns in consumer reviews, including positive, negative, or neutral sentiment, as well as topics that frequently appear in those

reviews (Sugiyono, 2018). This step will help in understanding the general view of consumers towards these brands. A comparative analysis will be conducted between reviews for niche and mainstream brands to determine the differences and similarities in how consumers rate the two. Factors such as customer satisfaction, product or service quality, price, and brand image will be evaluated to understand the factors that most influence consumer perceptions of niche and mainstream brands. Clustering analysis techniques or consumer mind mapping can also be applied to identify consumer segments that have similar views or preferences for niche and mainstream brands. This will help brands to develop more targeted and effective marketing strategies according to consumer preferences in various market segments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Previous research on analyzing the dynamics of review ratings for niche and mainstream brands in the Indonesian market has revealed a variety of relevant findings. One of the previous studies conducted by (Deevaly, 2023) used a qualitative approach to investigate consumer perceptions of product reviews from niche and mainstream brands on online platforms in Indonesia. Through in-depth interviews with a number of consumers, this research found that consumer reviews have a significant influence in shaping purchasing preferences, especially in the context of niche brands that offer unique added value. Consumers tend to give more positive ratings to niche brands because they feel more connected to them and rate their experiences as more authentic and personal.

On the other hand, quantitative research conducted by (Rizvanović et al., 2023) uses linear regression analysis to explore the factors that influence consumer reviews of mainstream brands in the Indonesian market. The results of this research show that factors such as product quality, price, and brand image have a significant impact on consumer sentiment in their reviews. Furthermore, this research highlights the importance of brand reputation and customer satisfaction as key predictors in assessing consumer reviews of mainstream brands.

Previous research also notes that there are differences in how consumers assess niche and mainstream brands in the Indonesian market. Niche brands are often viewed more positively because consumers perceive them as a fresh and different alternative to those offered by established mainstream brands. However, this research also shows that mainstream brands still have an advantage in terms of visibility and accessibility, which can influence overall consumer perception (Purnomo et al., 2021). Thus, previous research has provided valuable insight into the dynamics of review ratings for niche and mainstream brands in the Indonesian market, but further research is still needed to explore the differences and similarities in the influence of consumer reviews on these two types of brands.

The discussion regarding the results of research regarding the analysis of the dynamics of review ratings for niche and mainstream brands in the Indonesian market brings a variety of findings that are important to consider in the context of marketing strategy and brand development. Research shows that consumer reviews have a significant influence in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences for brands. This is consistent with a global trend where consumers are increasingly relying on consumer reviews to guide their purchasing decisions. In the context of the Indonesian market, consumer reviews play a more important role, especially for niche brands, where consumers tend to give more positive ratings because they feel more connected to the brand and rate their experience as more authentic and personal (Putra et al., 2023). However, keep in mind that mainstream brands are not immune from the impact of consumer reviews, even though they may have larger and more distributed review sources.

Research highlights differences in how consumers evaluate niche and mainstream brands. Niche brands are often viewed more positively because consumers perceive them as a fresh and different alternative to those offered by established mainstream brands. However, mainstream brands still have an advantage in terms of visibility and accessibility, which can influence overall consumer perception. Therefore, niche brands need to strengthen their marketing strategies to increase brand awareness and expand their market share, while mainstream brands need to continue strengthening the quality of their products and services to maintain consumer loyalty. The research also highlights the factors that influence consumer reviews of brands, both niche and mainstream. Factors such as product quality, price, customer satisfaction, and brand image have a significant impact on consumers' evaluation of these brands. Therefore, niche and mainstream brands need to pay attention to these aspects in designing their marketing and product development strategies to better meet consumer expectations and needs.

In the context of marketing strategy, it is important to strengthen brand communications and build a strong brand reputation through various channels, including online platforms where consumer reviews are often found. Brands need to be actively involved in monitoring consumer reviews and responding quickly and effectively, both to appreciate positive feedback and to respond to criticism or negative feedback. Thus, brands can leverage consumer reviews as a tool to build stronger consumer trust and loyalty, regardless of whether they operate in a niche or mainstream market.

1. The Role of Consumer Reviews in Shaping Brand Perceptions

Consumer reviews have become one of the key elements in the modern commerce ecosystem, playing a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions of brands and products. This phenomenon especially occurs in the digital era where access to online platforms has enabled consumers to share their experiences widely and instantly. In this talk, we will explore in depth how consumer reviews influence brand perception, why consumer reviews are so important, and the strategic implications for brands in managing their reputation in an increasingly competitive marketplace. As a consequence of advances in information technology, the internet has become the main source of information for consumers in deciding their purchasing decisions (Phong, 2023). Consumer reviews on online platforms, such as specialty review sites, social media, or discussion forums, provide valuable insight to potential buyers about the quality, reliability, and experience of using a particular product or service. They are not only a source of information, but also the most trustworthy form of recommendation for consumers. Research has shown that most consumers rely on consumer reviews in their purchasing process, with most even trusting them as recommendations from friends or family.

The influence of consumer reviews in shaping brand perceptions has a strong psychological basis. The concept of social proof, which was first introduced by psychologist Robert Cialdini, explains that humans tend to follow the actions or decisions of other people in uncertain or ambiguous situations. In the context of consumer reviews, when potential buyers see many positive reviews about a product or brand, they tend to believe that the product or brand is of good quality and worth buying. This is due to the human need for social validation and the desire to avoid risks or wrong decisions. Confirmation bias theory also has an important role in understanding the influence of consumer reviews. This theory explains that humans tend to look for or interpret information that supports the beliefs or views they already have. In the context of consumer reviews, if an individual already has a positive perception of a brand or product, they are likely to seek out reviews that confirm their belief. Conversely, if they have negative perceptions, they will be more likely to seek out reviews that support their views. This illustrates how consumer reviews can strengthen or change consumer perceptions of a brand.

The importance of consumer reviews in shaping brand perceptions has significant strategic implications for brands in managing their reputation in an increasingly competitive marketplace. First, brands must actively engage in monitoring consumer reviews and respond to them quickly and effectively. This includes responding positively to good reviews to appreciate positive feedback from consumers and responding to criticism or negative feedback to correct customer problems or dissatisfaction. By paying serious attention to consumer reviews, brands can build a strong reputation as a brand that cares about and is responsive to their customers' needs and wants. Brands should also focus on improving the quality of their products or services to get positive reviews from consumers. This may include conducting market research to better understand consumer needs and wants, implementing customer feedback into the product development process, or improving customer service to ensure a better overall customer experience (Musthofa et al., 2023). By continuously improving the quality of their products or services, brands can build a loyal consumer base and increase overall customer satisfaction.

Brands can also utilize consumer reviews as a tool to build stronger consumer trust and loyalty. They may depict positive reviews from satisfied consumers in their marketing materials or use consumer testimonials as social proof of quality or customer satisfaction. By doing this, brands can strengthen their brand image as a reliable brand and build deeper relationships with their consumers. Consumer reviews play a critical role in shaping brand perception in an increasingly digital and connected marketplace. By understanding the psychological mechanisms behind the influence of consumer reviews and adopting appropriate strategies in managing consumer reviews, brands can leverage consumer reviews as a powerful tool to build a strong brand reputation, increase consumer loyalty, and expand their market share. Therefore, it is important for brands to actively engage in monitoring consumer reviews, improving the quality of their products or services, and leveraging consumer reviews as an integral part of their marketing and brand development strategies.

2. Differences in Review Ratings between Niche and Mainstream Brands

Assessing consumer reviews of niche and mainstream brands is an interesting area to explore in the context of marketing strategy and brand development. In this talk, we'll explore the differences in review ratings between niche and mainstream brands, why these differences exist, and the strategic implications for brands in managing their reputation and strengthening their position in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Before starting a discussion about the differences in review ratings, it is important to understand the basic concepts of niche and mainstream brands. A niche brand is a brand that focuses on a specific and limited market segment, by offering products or services that are unique or different from those offered by mainstream brands. These brands often target consumers who share certain interests and values, and often have strong communities around their brands. On the other hand, mainstream brands are brands that dominate the market by offering products or services that are widely consumed by various consumer segments. These brands tend to have wide reach, high visibility, and universal appeal.

The difference in review scoring between niche and mainstream brands mainly lies in the following aspects (Safitri et al., 2023) :

1. Consumer Sentiment

Research has shown that consumers tend to rate niche brands more positively than mainstream brands. This may be because consumers feel more connected to niche brands and perceive their experiences as more authentic and personal. Niche brands often offer unique added value or certain specialties that make consumers feel more satisfied.

2. Customer satisfaction

Although both types of brands have equal importance in increasing customer satisfaction, niche brands tend to receive higher customer satisfaction ratings than mainstream brands. This is due to niche brands' focus on more focused market segments, which allows them to better understand and better meet customer needs and wants.

3. Product Relevance

Consumers often give higher review ratings to niche brands because they feel that the products or services offered are more relevant to their needs or interests. Niche brands tend to offer products or services that are more specialized and fit the needs of certain market segments, while mainstream brands tend to target a wider market with more general products or services.

There are several psychological mechanisms that may explain the difference in review ratings between niche and mainstream brands (Iverson & Dervan, 2022):

1. The concept of social proof explains that humans tend to follow the actions or decisions of other people in uncertain or ambiguous situations. In the context of consumer reviews, when consumers see many positive reviews about a niche brand, they are more likely to believe that the brand is of good quality and worth buying.
2. Consumers often look for brands or products that reflect their identity or values. Niche brands often offer products or services that better suit the needs or interests of a particular market segment, which makes consumers feel more connection and identity with the brand.
3. Consumers often feel more attracted to niche brands because they offer something different or unique from what established mainstream brands offer. This can create a novelty effect which makes consumers more likely to give a positive assessment of niche brands.

The difference in review ratings between niche and mainstream brands has significant strategic implications for brands in managing their reputation and strengthening their position in the market (Erwin et al., 2023) :

1. Brand Differentiation

Niche brands can leverage differences in review ratings to differentiate themselves from their competitors in an increasingly competitive marketplace. They can emphasize unique added value or certain specialties that make them different from mainstream brands and attractive to consumers.

2. Increased Visibility

Mainstream brands can leverage positive consumer reviews to increase their brand visibility and attract new consumers. They can use consumer testimonials as social proof of quality or customer satisfaction, which can help build consumer trust and loyalty.

3. Increased Customer Satisfaction

Both niche and mainstream brands must continue to improve the quality of their products or services in order to get positive reviews from consumers. They may conduct market research to better understand consumer needs and wants, implement customer feedback into the product development process, or improve customer service to ensure a better overall customer experience.

While this discussion has revealed some important aspects of the differences in review ratings between niche and mainstream brands, there is still a lot of room for further research in this regard. Further research could explore the factors that influence consumer review ratings, such as product

quality, price, customer satisfaction, and brand image, as well as how brands can use consumer reviews as a tool to build stronger consumer trust and loyalty.

The difference in review ratings between niche and mainstream brands is an interesting and important phenomenon to understand in the context of marketing strategy and brand development. By understanding the psychological mechanisms behind these rating differences and adopting appropriate strategies in managing consumer reviews, brands can leverage consumer reviews as a powerful tool to differentiate themselves from their competitors, increase brand visibility, and strengthen their position in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Therefore, it is important for brands to actively engage in monitoring consumer reviews, improving the quality of their products or services, and leveraging consumer reviews as an integral part of their marketing and brand development strategies.

3. Factors that Influence Consumer Review Ratings

Assessing consumer reviews is an important part of the modern purchasing process. Consumers tend to rely on reviews from fellow consumers to guide their decisions in choosing a particular product or service. But what factors influence how consumer reviews are created and interpreted? In this talk, we'll explore the factors that influence consumer review ratings, how these factors relate to each other, and the strategic implications for brands in managing their reputation. One of the most important factors influencing consumers' review ratings is the quality of the product or service they experienced. Consumers tend to leave positive reviews if they are satisfied with the quality of the product or service they received. Conversely, a bad experience with a product or service can lead to a negative review. Product or service quality is one of the main aspects consumers look at when evaluating a brand, and consumer reviews often reflect their personal experiences with the product or service.

Price is another important factor that influences consumer review ratings. Consumers tend to leave more positive reviews if they feel that the value they receive from a product or service is commensurate with the price they paid. However, if the price is considered too high or not commensurate with the quality of the product or service, consumers may leave a negative review. Therefore, price should be carefully considered by brands in determining their pricing strategy, as it can have a direct impact on consumer reviews and overall brand perception. Customer satisfaction levels also play a key role in consumer review ratings. Consumers who are satisfied with their experience with a brand tend to leave positive reviews, while consumers who are dissatisfied tend to leave negative reviews. Therefore, it is important for brands to prioritize customer satisfaction and ensure that every touchpoint with the brand provides a satisfying experience for consumers. Investing in quality customer service, resolving issues quickly and efficiently, and listening to customer feedback are important steps to increasing customer satisfaction and earning positive reviews (Subawa et al., 2021).

Brand image plays an important role in evaluating consumer reviews. Consumers tend to give positive reviews to brands that have a strong and positive image. Brand image covers various aspects, including brand reputation, perceived quality, brand values, and brand identity. Brands with a strong image tend to get more positive reviews than brands with a weak or negative image. Therefore, it is important for brands to strengthen their brand image through consistent and sustainable marketing strategies, as well as by providing consistent and positive experiences to consumers.

The overall purchasing experience also influences consumer review ratings. Consumers are more likely to leave positive reviews if they had a pleasant and easy purchasing experience with a brand. Conversely, a bad or unsatisfactory purchasing experience can lead to negative reviews. Therefore, it is

important for brands to ensure that every touchpoint with consumers, from the ordering process to delivery and customer service, is designed to provide a satisfying and positive experience.

The factors that influence consumer review ratings have significant strategic implications for brands in managing their reputation and strengthening their position in the marketplace. Brands must actively monitor consumer reviews and respond quickly and effectively, both to acknowledge positive feedback and to respond to criticism or negative feedback. Additionally, brands must prioritize the quality of their products or services, fair pricing, customer satisfaction, a strong brand image, and a positive purchasing experience to increase consumer review ratings and build a strong brand reputation in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Factors influencing consumer review ratings have a significant impact in shaping consumer brand perceptions and purchasing decisions. By understanding these factors and adopting the right strategies in managing consumer reviews, brands can leverage consumer reviews as a powerful tool to differentiate themselves from their competitors, increase brand visibility, and strengthen their position in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Therefore, it is important for brands to actively engage in monitoring consumer reviews, improving the quality of their products or services, and leveraging consumer reviews as an integral part of their marketing and brand development strategies.

CLOSING

In closing, the analysis of the dynamics of review ratings for niche and mainstream brands in the Indonesian market reveals the complexity and importance of the role of consumer reviews in shaping brand perceptions. This phenomenon not only influences consumer preferences, but also has a significant impact on brand reputation, brand image and overall business success. In the context of the rapidly growing Indonesian market, consumer reviews are becoming increasingly important as a source of information that consumers trust in the purchasing process. This analysis highlights differences in review ratings between niche and mainstream brands, as well as factors that influence consumer review ratings such as product or service quality, price, customer satisfaction, and brand image. With a better understanding of these dynamics, brands can take strategic steps to leverage consumer reviews as a tool to differentiate themselves from competitors, increase customer satisfaction, and strengthen their brand reputation in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

It is therefore important for brands to actively engage in monitoring consumer reviews, respond to them quickly and effectively, and improve the quality of their products or services according to the feedback received. Thus, brands can leverage consumer reviews as an integral part of their marketing and brand development strategies, and build stronger relationships with their consumers. In an era where purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by consumer reviews, understanding and managing the dynamics of review ratings is key to brands' long-term success in the Indonesian market and around the world.

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