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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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BUILDING BRAND LOVE IN THE RETAIL SECTOR: A STUDY OF AMBASSADOR PERSONAL BRANDING AND CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS AT AL-IKHSAN, MALAYSIA

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I. INTRODUCTION

This study explores the impact of ambassadors' personal branding on brand love within the context of Al-Ikhsan Simpang Renggam. By focusing on non-athlete ambassadors as it seeks to address a gap in understanding the relationship between personal branding attributes and consumer emotional attachment to the brand [1].

II. METHODS

This study employed a survey method using questionnaires to evaluate ambassadors' personal branding attributes. The questionnaire is adapted from Zhou (2020) which is for Ambassadors' Personal Brand and Brand Love. [1]. The level of brand love among Al-Ikhsan consumers was assessed using mean scores while the relationship between the two variables was assessed using the Pearson correlation coefficient. A total of 202 participants were surveyed and the details of the customer participated in this study representing the target demographic of Al-Ikhsan consumers by using convenience sampling.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Ambassador Personal Brand

TABLE I
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR AMBASSADORS' PERSONAL BRAND

Variables	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Rank
Attractiveness	5.57	0.86	3
Expertise	5.62	0.86	2
Congruence	5.64	0.87	1

The study identified congruence, expertise and attractiveness as key attributes of ambassadors' personal brands influencing brand love. Among these, congruence exhibited the strongest influence with the highest mean score (5.64 ± 0.87), followed by expertise (5.62 ± 0.86) and attractiveness (5.57 ± 0.86). These findings highlight that consumers resonate more deeply with ambassadors who align well with Al-Ikhsan's brand image, underscoring the importance of ambassador-brand fit [1].

B. Level of Brand Love

The overall level of brand love among Al-Ikhsan consumers was found to be high with a mean score of 5.35.

Although the study did not analyze variations across different consumer groups, the strong overall score indicates that consumers hold a favorable emotional connection with the brand. This finding reinforces Al-Ikhsan's brand appeal and the effectiveness of its marketing strategies in building consumer loyalty [2].

C. Relationship between Ambassadors Personal Brand and Brand Love

The correlation matrix indicates a moderate positive relationship between ambassadors' personal brand and brand love (Pearson's $r = 0.589$). The relationship is statistically significant, with a $p < 0.05$, based on a sample size of 200 degrees of freedom ($df = 200$). This significance indicates strong evidence that the relationship between ambassadors' personal brand and brand love is not due to chance. It suggests that higher perceptions of an ambassador's attributes, such as attractiveness, expertise, and congruence, are associated with stronger feelings of brand love among consumers [1]. These findings highlight the critical role of ambassador branding in influencing consumer-brand relationships.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study confirms that congruence in ambassadors' personal brand significantly influences brand love. The findings emphasize the importance of aligning personal branding strategies with consumer expectations to strengthen emotional connections with the Al-Ikhsan brand. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of personal branding's role in driving brand loyalty and love.

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