

Bundling Product Program as A Marketing Public Relations Strategy of Erafone Mal-Pik-Avenue in Maintaining Brand Awareness

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the emergence of negative reviews on the Google Review platform, which have the potential to threaten the company's positive image and Erafone's position as a leading smartphone retail company. As part of PT Erataya Swasembada Tbk, a company engaged in the distribution and sales of information and communication technology products, Erafone has consistently implemented Marketing Public Relations (MPR) strategies to maintain its reputation and brand awareness. The purpose of this study is to explain how the bundling program is designed within the framework of the MPR communication strategy, in line with the Three Ways Strategies concept, to share public opinion, strengthen brand image, and enhance brand awareness. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach by analyzing Erafone Mal PIK Avenue's communication strategy in implementing the product bundling program as part of its MPR activities. The results show that MPR activities such as News, Publication, Speech, Public Service Activities, Identity Media, Event, and Sponsorship are considered effective in supporting the company's various products to achieve competitive advantage and build a consistent brand image. In addition, the implementation of the Pull, Push, and Pass Strategy has proven effective in attracting audience attention (pull), encouraging purchasing decisions and customer satisfaction (push), and fostering long-term loyalty and consumer trust (pass). Overall, Erafone's communication strategy focuses not only on promotion but also on strengthening public relations and creating a sustainable customer experience.

Keywords: Marketing Public Relations, Three Ways Strategies, Brand Awareness, Erafone

INTRODUCTION

As time progresses, the era continues to advance and drive the development of information and communication technology, which supports human beings in enhancing their capabilities to simplify activities and fulfill their needs. Technological advancements in this era can fulfill human satisfaction as social beings, particularly in communication and information technology, which undoubtedly have an impact and provide benefits in human life. One of the communication technologies that significantly affects human life is the internet (Danuri, 2019).

Many people around the world use more than one mobile connection. Some use one connection for personal purposes and another for work, resulting in the number of mobile connections far exceeding the total population. Simon Kemp (2023), as reported on datareportal.com, stated that 99.5 percent of people in Indonesia own digital devices such as smartphones. In addition, other digital devices like laptops and tablets are also used in daily life. This is in line with data from GSMA Intelligence on the same platform, which shows that there were 353.3 million mobile connections in Indonesia at the beginning of 2024. This figure indicates that mobile connections in Indonesia were equivalent to 126.8 percent of the total population as of January 2024 (Kemp, 2024).

The advancement of digital communication technology allows people to access information and communication without space or time limitations. This development also drives the evolution of smartphones, enabling easier internet access and supporting digital activities such as social media use, e-commerce, and various daily applications. Through digital technology, individuals can perform tasks more efficiently using online payment methods, transportation apps, and travel services (Danuri, 2019).

Innovation and diversity in smartphone development are fueled by strong public interest and accessibility. Smartphone and internet usage in Indonesia continues to rise, making the country one of the largest smartphone user populations globally. Smartphones have become essential tools in daily life due to their mobility and multifunctional capabilities, serving not only as communication devices but also as integral instruments for productivity and modern lifestyle needs (Daulay, 2020).

Erafone, a leading retail store under PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk, has been selling smartphones and telecommunication products in Indonesia since 2011 (Erajaya.com, 2023). It holds several advantages as a major smartphone retail network, including strategically located outlets accessible across major cities. According to Kontan.co.id (2024), by the end of 2023 Erajaya managed over 1,200 retail outlets nationwide, with Erafone Mal PIK Avenue serving as a flagship store representing the company's premium image. In 2024, Erajaya expanded further by opening 19 new Erafone stores in key cities, strengthening its omnichannel retail presence through the integration of physical and digital services.

Erafone has also developed strong digital marketing strategies and brand public relations through collaborations with leading smartphone brands and national banking institutions. With a comprehensive product portfolio and various payment systems, it has maintained high customer satisfaction. Data from Erafone.com (2023) show that 91 percent of Indonesians recognize the brand and 87 percent are

satisfied with its services, demonstrating Erafone's strong brand awareness and solid positioning within Indonesia's competitive smartphone retail industry.

In Indonesia's smartphone retail industry, Erafone faces growing competition from several major players that also emphasize brand communication and customer experience to strengthen market positioning. Its main competitor, Digimap-owned by PT Mitra Adiperkasa Tbk (MAP Group) – focuses on premium products such as Apple, Samsung, and other digital ecosystem devices. Digimap continues to expand aggressively in major cities while enhancing its image through the MAPCLUB loyalty program and experiential retail strategies that create personalized consumer interactions (Gizmologi.com, 2024). Other competitors such as Samsung Experience Store, Urban Republic, and Huawei Experience Store also adopt user-experience-driven communication strategies and highlight the ease of after-sales services.

Erajaya builds trust by prioritizing public awareness as the foundation for customer loyalty. According to Djatmiko Wardoyo, Director of Marketing and Communication at PR Rajaya Swasembada Tbk, awareness is the cornerstone of building long-term loyalty. To measure this, Rajaya conducts internal surveys every six months in various cities to assess the market position of the Erafone brand and ensure it remains top-of-mind. Brand strengthening initiatives are continuously implemented through both conventional and digital promotions. With the evolution of digital media, online advertising – especially via social media and news portals – has proven to have a greater impact than conventional advertising, contributing an estimated 70-80 percent of the total influence on consumer perception and engagement (Hendra, 2018).

This is supported by a previous study by Trecya (2019), which stated that Erafone is one of the retail stores under PT Rajaya Swasembada Tbk that has achieved top-of-mind status in the modern channel retail category in Indonesia. Although many competitors are operating in the same sector, Erafone has successfully maintained its brand awareness as the leading modern channel retail in Indonesia through its communication strategy.

Enhancing and maintaining brand awareness is an essential task that every company must undertake and consider to preserve its brand image, which in turn can affect customer trust and increase purchase intention for various products offered by the company (Amalia, 2019).

One of the communication strategies implemented by PT Rajaya Swasembada Tbk to maintain and enhance the brand image of all companies under its management is the communication strategy through the product bundling program. Based on previous research, it is explained that marketing public relations plays an important

role because a company needs to engage in communication to preserve its brand image. One form of marketing communication that can be easily done by a company is direct marketing. Through communication strategies, companies can gather criticism, suggestions, or feedback that can help build and improve the company in the future, such as input regarding the products being sold and complaints related to the company's products or services (Wiraditi and Sudibyo, 2020).

A company can determine various products to be bundled according to the primary needs of its customers. The communication strategy can be analyzed through product bundling, in which the company offers products, provides information related to its offerings, and delivers optimal service to enhance relationships, increase brand awareness, and support sales performance. In addition to selling products, a company also offers solutions or benefits that aim to satisfy customers and assist them in achieving their goals (Rini et al., 2019).

A similar point was conveyed by Mr. Hartono, Senior Assistant Manager of Merchandising and Planning, during the pre-research interview. He stated that this strategy can also support customer retention, as the communication strategy through the product bundling program tends to attract customers and make them feel valued by offering products with the best prices and service quality. In this way, Erafone can maintain its brand awareness by fostering customer retention and implementing service excellence (direct interview, 2023).

Satisfactory service generates positive responses and reviews toward the Erafone outlet at PIK Avenue Mall. However, there are numerous negative comments from customers who feel disappointed with the service and products of this outlet. This is evident from unfavorable testimonials on the Google Review page of Erafone PIK Avenue, which state that the outlet provides poor service, along with expressions of customer dissatisfaction toward the offered products.

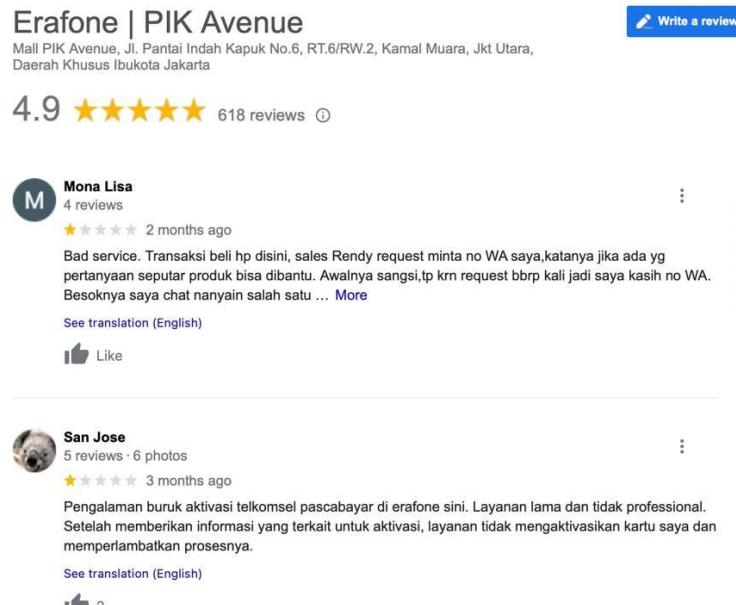


Figure 1. Google Review of Erafone Outlet at PIK Avenue Mall, 2023

Negative reviews of Erafone at PIK Avenue Mall, concerning the strategies prepared by PT Erajaya, indicate a lack of a communication strategy, which becomes the urgency of this study. The unfavorable reviews on the Google Review page of Erafone PIK Avenue Mall have the potential to diminish public trust, threaten the brand image of Erafone, and affect the brand awareness of Erafone PIK Avenue in the eyes of the general public as a leading smartphone retail store.

The researcher aims to examine the product bundling program as a marketing public relations strategy to create and maintain brand awareness, as implemented by PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk at the Erafone retail outlet in PIK Avenue Mall. The researcher seeks to explore in greater depth how the marketing public relations strategy for the product bundling program is formulated and applied by PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk to Erafone PIK Avenue Mall in an effort to sustain the company's brand image or Erafone's top-of-mind status as the leading modern channel smartphone retail store in Indonesia. This strategy is intended to ensure competitiveness with other smartphone retail stores in PIK Avenue Mall, such as Huawei, Digiplus, Samsung, and others, particularly in facing communication crises or unexpected events that could threaten the existence of Erafone PIK Avenue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have shown that marketing public relations (MPR) strategies play a central role in building and maintaining a company's brand awareness, particularly in the retail and technology sectors. Diva (2022), in her study Marketing

Public Relations Strategy of Urban Republic in Building Brand Awareness, explains that interactive communication approaches such as press conferences, product launches, and public promotional events can strengthen emotional connections with audiences without relying on hard-selling techniques. This approach has proven effective in shaping positive perceptions and enhancing public awareness of the brand.

Furthermore, Nel (2021), in her study The Influence of Brand Image and Brand Awareness of Purchase Decisions, emphasizes that a strong brand image not only affects consumer perception but also significantly increases purchase intention and decision-making. The research highlights that consumer satisfaction and consistent brand communication are key factors in fostering long-term customer loyalty.

Wijaya and Kinder (2020), through their research titled The Effect of Price Bundling and Product Bundling on Purchase Intention Moderated by Product Complementarity, found that a product bundling strategy can strengthen the perceived value of the brand in the eyes of consumers. When effectively communicated, bundling programs enhance customer engagement and expand audience reach without relying solely on transactional promotions.

Similarly, Wiraditi and Sudibyo (2020), in their study Marketing Public Relations Strategy in Improving the Brand Image of PT Brodo Ganesha Indonesia, show that MPR activities such as publications, events, sponsorships, and social activities can build public trust in local brands. These activities serve not only as promotional tools but also as means of shaping public opinion and reinforcing brand image through meaningful social interaction.

Meanwhile, Trecya (2019), in her research Factors Affecting Customer Retention of PT Erafone Mega Mall Manado, found that variables such as trust, commitment, communication, and customer handling have a significant impact on customer loyalty and brand awareness. Customers who feel valued and well-served then to become more loyal and are more likely to recommend the brand to others.

Tini (2022), in her study The Effect of Service Quality and Price on Customer Satisfaction of PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk, adds that high-quality service is a primary indicator of customer evaluation toward a brand. Companies that provide comprehensive and value-added services are more likely to maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty, while simultaneously strengthening their positive corporate image.

In addition, Sutrisno (2022), in his research Analysis of Product Quality, Price, and Brand Awareness on Purchase Decisions of Coffee Products at McCafe, emphasizes that brand awareness plays a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions. To strengthen brand awareness, companies need to adopt creative promotional strategies such as events, sponsorships, and product bundling programs that attract consumer attention and enhance brand engagement in public spaces.

Finally, Rini (2019), in her study Decision Support System for Product Bundling Promotions Using the SAW and Apriori Methods, indicates that a bundling strategy tailored to customer needs can serve as an effective marketing communication tool. Such programs not only introduce new products but also strengthen relationships with customers by providing additional value and sustained satisfaction. Thus, the implementation of communication strategies such as marketing public relations and product bundling has been proven to enhance brand awareness, reinforce the company's image, and maintain customer loyalty amid the dynamic and experience-driven competition within the smartphone industry.

Arifin, in his book *Ilmu Komunikasi: Sebuah Pengantar Ringkas*, states that a strategy is a comprehensive plan formulated under particular conditions to achieve a desired goal. Therefore, to develop an effective communication strategy, one must consider the context, conditions, and potential future developments (Arifin, 2016, p. 26).

According to Effendy, as cited in Giantika (2020, p. 145), communication strategy refers to a design that facilitates the communicator in delivering messages to the audience. It carries an essential quality that enables the message recipient to be influenced and potentially experience behavioral or perceptual changes.

Marketing Public Relations

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2006, p. 553), seven essential methods serve as standards in implementing Marketing Public Relations activities. First, Publications: A company can strengthen marketing and product expansion through published materials aimed at influencing and attracting customers. Various forms of publications in this communication strategy include booklets, annual reports, brochures, articles, magazines, corporate newsletters or newspapers, and audiovisual materials. Second, Identity Media: a company needs a symbol or identity that is recognizable and memorable to the public. Examples of identity media include logos, business cards, or employee uniforms. Identity media can also be incorporated through other media such as stationery, notebooks, or company souvenirs. Third, Events: a company can attract the attention of potential

customers or the general public to its products by organizing events such as annual gatherings, product launches, seminars, or talk shows, and other corporate events that can engage and reach the broader public. Fourth, News: As part of public relations, one of the primary responsibilities is to design event concepts that align with the company's character and situation. With a unique selling point, a public relations officer must be able to generate media interest in the company. The public relations team must ensure that the media is interested in covering the company's events, producing articles or releases, and learning more about the company through participation in press conferences or other events. Fifth, Speeches: a corporate public relations officer is responsible for assisting the company's spokesperson during events or meetings with the media, or at a minimum, preparing all the necessary materials. This is important because the company needs to be able to respond to media inquiries and discuss the purpose or objectives of the ongoing activities organized by the company. Sixth, Public Service Activities: Through corporate involvement in social activities, the company has the opportunity to build a positive impression in the public eye by delivering beneficial programs. Seventh, Sponsorship: By providing sponsorship for certain events, the company can establish positive branding by showing its support for activities that have the potential to attract prospective customers.

Push, Pull, and Pass Strategy

The theoretical foundation used in the Marketing Public Relations framework of this study is the Push, Pull, and Pass Strategy. In public relations activities, the implementation of a marketing public relations strategy is essential as a structured plan designed to achieve organizational objectives, such as attracting customer attention and generating interest in the company's brand or products. According to Rahmandani and Setiyarini (2022, p. 46), the communication strategy within marketing public relations comprises three strategic approaches. First, the Pull Strategy, which is applied to attract consumer attention and interest to meet corporate goals. This strategy can be implemented through various methods, depending on the company's needs. Second, the Push Strategy, which aims to stimulate purchase behavior and enhance customer satisfaction. Third, the Pass Strategy, which is intended to influence consumers and build a favorable impression or image of the company among the public.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a critical component of consumer behavior and brand management. According to Aaker (2018, p. 205), brand awareness refers to a consumer's ability to recall or recognize a brand as part of a specific product

category. This is supported by Durianto et al. (2017, p. 54), who define brand awareness as the extent to which customers can identify a brand within a particular category.

Aaker (2018, p. 19) further categorizes brand awareness into four hierarchical levels, ranging from the lowest to the highest. First, Unaware of Brand, where consumers have no knowledge of the brand's existence, even if it has undergone aided recall efforts. Second, Brand Recognition, where consumers begin to acknowledge a brand when prompted, marking the minimum threshold of awareness. Third, Brand Recall, where consumers can spontaneously remember a brand without external cues, indicating a stronger brand association. Fourth, Top of Mind, which represents the highest level of brand awareness, where a specific brand is the first to come to a consumer's mind when thinking of a product category.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive qualitative research method. According to Ramdhan, in his book Research Methods, this method was descriptive and used analysis aimed at delivering information to create an understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In this research, processes and meanings were emphasized by referring to various theoretical foundations that served as guidance, so that the research focus remained aligned with the data found in the field. The formulated problem or ongoing phenomenon had to be relevant to investigate and possess scientific value. The data in this study had to be based on facts and original field findings, and not on opinion (Ramdhan, 2021).

According to Anggito and Setiawan, in the book Qualitative Research Methods, qualitative research has two objectives, namely to describe and reveal, and to describe and explain. In this study, the researcher used a qualitative method to describe and explain a phenomenon based on the data that were successfully collected (Anggito and Setiawan, 2018).

The researcher took part in the events or conditions being studied to deepen the analysis. The primary data in this study were obtained through in-depth interviews to enrich the information and data required to analyze how the planning and implementation of the product bundling program functioned as a marketing public relations strategy in maintaining brand awareness at the Erafone outlet in PIK Avenue Mall.

The data sources of this research consisted of two categories: primary data and secondary data. Primary data refers to the main data in the form of information

obtained directly from subjects related to the research or the ongoing phenomenon. According to Sugiyono (2019), primary data are a collection of results in the form of information or a set of data obtained directly by the researcher, either through questionnaires, interviews, or direct data collection.

The primary data used by the researcher were obtained through in-depth interviews with several informants, both internal and external. The researcher conducted semi-formal and unstructured interviews with internal parties from Erajaya who had knowledge of the product bundling program to gather relevant information, namely Mr. Hartono, Senior Assistant Manager of Merchandising and Planning at Erajaya, and Mr. Muhammad Ilyas, Store Leader of Erafone PIK Avenue. Through these interviews, the researcher was able to collect direct, comprehensive, detailed, and factual information aligned with the phenomena occurring in the company under study.

The researcher also used documentation as a primary supporting data source to complement the information gathered through interviews. The research informants were divided into two categories. The internal informants consisted of two individuals from within Erajaya who had expertise and knowledge in communication strategies for the product bundling program. The external informants consisted of two potential customers of Erafone PIK Avenue Mall and one expert informant, Ms. Latifa Ramonita, M.Ikom, who had more than 15 years of experience in the field of communication, specifically in mass media and public relations.

Meanwhile, the secondary data used in this study consisted of information from books, journals, factual news sources, or previous research, which served to verify the primary data collected. This step was taken by the researcher to strengthen the theoretical basis related to the research object.

This study used source triangulation to verify the reliability of the data by cross-checking information obtained from various sources such as interviews, archives, and other documents. The data analysis technique used in this research followed the Miles and Huberman model, which included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Erafone PIK Avenue Mall

As a subsidiary of PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk, Erafone PIK Avenue Mall adopted the same vision and mission as its parent company, as follows:

Vision: To provide mobility products and solutions to enhance the quality of life and

lifestyle.

Mission: To become the leading distribution and retail company with integrated direct access to consumers and retailers, offering the most comprehensive range of mobility products and solutions (Erafone.com, 2023).

Erafone PIK Avenue Mall is operated by the Corporate Core Values of PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk, which include: Innovation (strategic thinking), Leadership (strategic leadership, leading others, and developing others), Excellence in Customer Service (a reliable partner, quality-oriented, and performance-oriented), Agility (creative adaptability), and Digital (technological literacy).

Erafone PIK Avenue Mall Product Bundling Program

The product bundling program was a marketing and sales strategy that combined two or more products into a single package sold at an affordable price. The products selected for bundling were adjusted to match customer needs and preferences, making them an efficient sales offering. Product bundling strategies have been widely implemented by various companies in Indonesia, particularly in the electronics sector, due to the benefits they provide for both customers and sellers. This bundling program helped increase product sales and introduced less popular products, thereby creating new market opportunities.

Since 2016, Erafone has implemented the product bundling program as one of its marketing public relations strategies, and the program has continued to run effectively. Erafone partnered with three major operator services in Indonesia and became a pioneer in operator bundling initiatives within the country. Numerous products and exclusive promotional programs had been launched by Erafone, and reports from telecommunications operators indicated that Erafone achieved the highest sales in product bundling.

This study aimed to analyze the product bundling program as a marketing public relations strategy at Erafone PIK Avenue Mall based on the marketing public relations concept proposed by Kotler and Keller, which outlines seven key elements that serve as standards in the implementation of marketing public relations activities. These include publications, identity media, events, news, speeches, public service activities, and sponsorships (Yuliana, Z. I., 2020). In addition, the researcher analyzed the communication strategy of marketing public relations based on three approaches: pull, push, and pass strategies. All of these components were directed toward one primary goal: to maintain brand awareness at Erafone PIK Avenue Mall.

Erafone PIK Avenue Mal Marketing Public Relations' Activities

A. Publication

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), the primary benchmark in Marketing Public Relations (MPR) activities is publication. Through effective publication, a company can strengthen its image and expand communication reach with consumers. Forms of publication may include annual reports, booklets, brochures, and digital content that help build public trust (Sari, 2017). The publication strategy serves as a crucial instrument in creating brand awareness and shaping positive perceptions toward the company.

The communication strategy of Erafone Mal PIK Avenue adopts two main approaches: above the line, aimed at reaching a broad audience, and below the line, targeted toward specific consumer segments. Based on an interview with Bapak Hartono, Merchandising and Planning Operator Sales B2C Operator/ Senior Assistant Manager, publication efforts are carried out through various media channels, including collaboration with social media influencers, annual booklets published on Erajaya's official website, and visual promotions such as LED billboards and banners in strategic locations. In addition, publications on the Instagram account of Mal PIK Avenue and promotional product displays demonstrate that Erafone consistently reinforces its position as a pioneer of product bundling programs.

These findings reflect the application of the publicity concept in MPR as proposed by Kotler and Keller (2016), wherein the combination of conventional and digital publications fosters effective two-way communication. This strategy supports the findings of Lestari (2021), which emphasize that the effectiveness of digital publication is determined not only by the breadth of media exposure but also by the consistency of messaging and credibility of the information source. Therefore, Erafone Mal PIK Avenue's publication strategy plays a vital role in strengthening its brand image and sustaining brand awareness amid the competitive landscape of the technology retail industry.

B. Identity Media

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller in *Principles of Public Relations: Theory and Practice*, the second activity that supports the implementation of Marketing Public Relations (MPR) is media identity. Media identity serves as a symbolic representation that reflects the company's values and image, making it easier for the public to recognize and remember the brand (Sari, 2017). A strong identity becomes a key factor in building brand awareness, as it bridges public perception with the values the company seeks to communicate.

This finding aligns with Rachmawati (2020), who argues that the consistency of visual identity elements – such as color, logo, and interior design-has a significant influence on strengthening a brand's image in the minds of consumers. This argument is further supported by Nugraha and Suryani (2021), who explain that visual identity elements function as a form of nonverbal communication, helping consumers to recognize the values and character of a brand. Furthermore, Handayani (2022) found that a strong brand identity not only enhances brand awareness but also reinforces customer loyalty through consistent brand presentation. Thus, Erafone's application of media identity serves as an effective strategy for building brand recognition and maintaining its competitive position within the technology retail market.

C. Event

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), events are one of the key activities in Marketing Public Relations (MPR), serving to reach a wider audience and attract potential customers' attention to the brand or products being offered. Through events, companies can create experiential marketing opportunities that allow audiences to engage emotionally with the brand. This aligns with Sari (2017), who states that well-planned and publicly oriented events can effectively enhance brand awareness while strengthening the company's image in the eyes of society.

As part of its marketing public relations strategy, Erafone Mal PIK Avenue consistently organized various events to increase brand awareness and build relationship with the public. These events include annual, monthly, and weekly programs, divided into two main categories: public events, which reach a broad audience, and in-store events, which are more specific and targeted toward potential customers. Erafone Mal PIK Avenue regularly holds in-store exhibitions featuring new product promotions, collaborations with leading smartphone brands, and interactive activities such as product demonstrations and giveaways. This strategy not only introduces products directly but also strengthens emotional engagement between consumers and the brand.

These findings are consistent with Wulandari (2020), who explains that direct-interaction-based events have a positive impact on brand perception and consumer engagement. Similarly, Hakim and Ardhiana (2021) emphasize that creatively and consistently organized events can be an effective means of maintaining customer loyalty, as they create personal and memorable brand experiences. Thus, the event strategy implemented by Erafone Mal PIK Avenue reflects the event marketing dimension within the MPR framework as proposed by Kotler and Keller, which focuses on building communication that is not only informative but also participatory and experience-oriented toward the customer.

D. News

One of the most important objectives of Marketing Public Relations (MPR) and public relations activities is to generate media interest in the company and its products so that they are featured in press releases and press conferences (Sari, 2017). Therefore, the ability to attract media attention serves as a key indicator of the success of a company's communication strategy.

In this context, the Erajaya Group, as the parent company of Erafone Mal PIK Avenue, possesses a strong unique selling point (USP) in its communication materials, which the Public Relations effectively utilizes to capture media attention through the organization of large-scale events. Press conferences and new product launches often serve as strategic moments to generate positive media coverage while reinforcing the company's image as a leading smartphone retail brand in Indonesia. These efforts demonstrate the implementation of corporate communication function that prioritize mutually beneficial relationships between the company and the media.

These findings are consistent with Pradana and Wijaya (2020), who revealed that well-managed media relations activities can significantly enhance brand visibility and expand the reach of corporate messages to the public. Similarly, Handayani (2021) emphasizes that press releases crafted with engaging narratives and tailored to media editorial needs have a significant influence on shaping a company's positive image. In the context of Erafone Mal PIK Avenue, the strategy of attracting media attention through major events not only results in extensive coverage but also strengthens brand credibility through consistent and repeated exposure. Thus, the news activity within the Erajaya MPR framework function as a strategic bridge connecting the media, the public, and the brand, fostering a sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship.

E. Speech

Another important component of Marketing Public Relations (MPR) activities is the speech, as companies often need to respond to media inquiries and address potential questions from the public regarding specific issues. Typically, a corporate speech is delivered to discuss and present statements related to sales performance of brand positioning, serving as a means to strengthen the company's image (Sari, 2017).

In this context, Erajaya prepares communication materials in the form of national-scale press releases, which function as an extension of corporate speech activities. These publications are primarily disseminated through digital media platforms to ensure wider message reach and accessibility for a national audience. This strategy

reflects the company's adaptation to the evolution of digital media, where corporate messages are not only delivered directly through public forums but are also packaged in written statements that can be quickly accessed and consumed by online audiences.

This finding aligns with Putri and Santosa (2020), who explain that corporate speeches communicated through digital media can enhance a company's credibility and expand the reach of its messages across regions. Meanwhile, Rahman (2021) emphasizes that the success of corporate communication through speeches or official statements largely depends on message clarity, media channel accuracy, and consistency in corporate communication style. Thus, Erajaya's strategy of utilizing digital press releases as a form of corporate communication reflects the application of speech management principles that are highly relevant in the context of modern public communication – where transparency and speed of information delivery are key factors in building and maintaining brand reputation.

F. Public Service Activities

In Marketing Public Relations (MPR), participation in social activities (public service activities) is one of the key strategies for building a positive image and strengthening public engagement with the company. According to Sari (2017), a company's involvement in social initiatives not only demonstrates moral responsibility but also serves as a form of public communication that emphasizes care and empathy toward the community. Such activities act as strategic tools for enhancing brand reputation while showcasing the consistency between corporate values and real actions carried out in society.

In this context, Erafone Mal PIK Avenue, as part of PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk, contributes to social initiatives through the company's flagship program, LENTERA Erajaya Peduli. This program is designed in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and includes tangible activities such as blood donation drives involving employees in collaboration with the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI). These findings are consistent with Hapsari and Utami (2020), who explain that corporate social activities can enhance corporate image by demonstrating a long-term commitment to community welfare. Furthermore, Wijaya (2021) emphasizes that strategically communicating social initiatives within the MPR framework can strengthen customer loyalty and expand brand engagement.

Thus, Erafone's participation through the LENTERA Erajaya Peduli program illustrates the implementation of socially responsible MPR, showing that a positive corporate reputation is built not only through promotional activities but also through genuine contributions to society.

G. Sponsorship

In Marketing Public Relations (MPR) activities, sponsorship serves as a key communication strategy aimed at introducing a brand to a wider audience through the company's involvement in specific events or initiatives. According to Sari (2017), sponsorship is utilized to build emotional connections with the public, enhance brand awareness, and create positive associations between the company and the sponsored activity. Through sponsorship, companies can gain extensive media exposure and strengthen their corporate image without relying solely on direct promotional methods.

In this context, Erafone Mal PIK Avenue does not directly engage in sponsorship activities; instead, such initiatives are represented by its parent company, PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk, which manages various promotional events and strategic collaborations at the national level. This approach demonstrates the application of corporate communication efficiency principles, where sponsorship activities are centrally managed to ensure a more uniform and consolidated impact across business units. These findings align with Nugroho and Puspitasari (2020), who state that sponsorships managed by a parent company can help create a cohesive brand image across multiple business lines. Meanwhile, Fauziah (2021) emphasizes that the effectiveness of sponsorship within the MPR framework is not solely determined by the extent of media exposure but also by how well the activity enhances brand credibility and brand value.

Thus, the sponsorship mechanism implemented by Erajaya as a representative of Erafone reflects a strategic application of MPR, wherein promotional activities are oriented toward maintaining a unified corporate image and fostering long-term relationships with the public.

H. Push, Pull, and Pass Strategy

The concept of Marketing Public Relations (MPR) strategy, according to Kotler and Keller (2016), can be explained through the Pull, Push, and Pass Strategy approach – an integrated framework used by companies to attract consumer interest, drive purchasing decisions, and build a long-term brand image. As stated by Sari (2017), the pull strategy functions to generate audience interest in a product through visually and emotionally engaging communication, while the push strategy focuses on direct persuasion to encourage consumers to make immediate purchases. Meanwhile, the pass strategy emphasizes maintaining customer relationships and trust to ensure that the brand remains strongly embedded in the consumers' minds.

The implementation of these strategies can be observed in Erafone Mal PIK Avenue's communication practices. In the pull strategy phase, Erafone utilizes

visibility programs through Instagram account of Mal PIK Avenue and visual displays in the mal area that highlight the advantages of its product bundling offers. This effort aligns with Lestari's (2019) findings, which reveal that the use of social media and visual displays in public spaces is effective in attracting consumer attention and enhancing brand attraction. Meanwhile, the push strategy is reflected in Erafone's emphasis on personalized services that build customer trust. This approach not only encourages purchases but also creates a positive customer experience. Supporting this, Ramadhan and Fitria (2021) found that trust and direct interaction between sellers and customers significantly influence customer satisfaction and loyalty, particularly in the technology retail sector.

Furthermore, the pass strategy is implemented through efforts to maintain long-term relationship between the company and its customers in order to build a consistent brand image and strengthen brand awareness. This aligns with Wijayanti's (2020) research, which explains that post-purchase communication strategies – such as follow-up services and customer engagement through digital mesia – can extend the relationship cycle between the brand and consumers.

Thurs, the implementation of the Pull, Push, and Pass Strategy at Erafone Mal PIK Avenue demonstrates that the success of Marketing Public Relations is not solely determined by the effectiveness of promotional activities but also by the company's ability to build emotional connections, trust, and a consistent brand image in the eyes of the public.

Brand Awareness and Bundling Programs as Erafone Mal PIK Avenue's Marketing

A. Public Relations Strategy

Brand awareness is a fundamental aspect of marketing Public Relations (MPR) strategies, serving to shape public perception and strengthen a brand's position in the market. For PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk, the parent company of the Erafone retail network, enhancing brand awareness is an integral part of its corporate mission to become a leading distribution and retail company that provides direct consumer access and integrated mobility solutions. This mission is implemented through various communication strategies, one of which is the product bundling program. Based on data from the Top Brand Index 2023, Erafone ranked first in the official smartphone retail category, reflecting the effectiveness of the company's communication strategies in maintaining its brand image and awareness amid intense market competition. These findings are consistent with Putri and Nugraha (2020), who emphasized that the success of brand awareness in the retail sector is influenced not only by promotional activities but also by the consistency of customer experiences reinforced through well-planned communication strategies.

Erafone Mal PIK Avenue serves as a prime example of effective MPR implementation through its product bundling programs, which combine smartphone sales with accessories or additional services presented in an appealing and informative way. This strategy functions not only as a sales promotion tool but also as a means to strengthen the brand's image as an innovative, customer-oriented retailer that delivers added value. The success of this program is further supported by digital communication activities on social media and attractive in-store visual displays within the mall. This aligns with Wijayanti (2020), who found that combining digital communication strategies with direct in-store experiences significantly enhances brand awareness and consumer trust. Thus, product bundling programs serve a dual role: as a marketing instrument and an effective public communication tools for reinforcing erafone's brand equity.

Moreover, the success of maintaining strong brand awareness is also supported by Erafone's commitment to ensuring high-quality interactions between customers and sales staff. Through continuous soft-skill and hard-skill training, the sales team is equipped with strong interpersonal communication abilities to provide informative service and build emotional connections with customers. This approach corresponds with Lestari (2019), who found that direct interaction between sellers and consumers significantly influences brand image formation and customer trust. Therefore, the synergy between product bundling programs, consistent digital communication, and high-quality interpersonal service enables Erafone Mal PIK Avenue to maintain its position as a trusted smartphone retail store in Indonesia, while simultaneously strengthening the company's national brand awareness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, Erafone Mal PIK Avenue has implemented a Marketing Public Relations (MPR) communication strategy through its product bundling program to maintain its brand awareness. This strategy has proven to be effective in building relationships with the public and sustaining a positive brand image, despite facing challenges such as negative reviews on digital platforms like Google Review. These reviews are open to the public and not always verifiable in authenticity, yet they have the potential to influence public perceptions of the brand's credibility. Although the MPR activities conducted by PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk are national in scope and apply to all erafone branches, the implementation at Erafone Mal PIK Avenue has demonstrated the ability to address product and service-related issues through a structured and adaptive communication approach.

Overall, the communication strategy implemented reflects the application of six key MPR activities as outlines by Kotler and Keller (2016): publicity, identity media,

events, news, speeches, public service activities, and sponsorship. Furthermore, the application of the Pull, Push, and Pass Strategy has proven effective in attracting audience attention (pull), encouraging purchase decisions and customer satisfaction (push), and building long-term consumer loyalty and trust (pass). These communication efforts are not solely promotion-oriented but also serve to strengthen public relations and enhance customer experience, demonstrating the integrated role of MPR in sustaining Erafone's brand credibility and competitiveness in the retail technology industry.

Implications

Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of Marketing Public Relations (MPR) implementation within the context of modern retail in the digital era. The findings indicate that the classical MPR elements proposed by Kotler and Keller (2016) remain relevant but must be adapted to digital communication formats that are more interactive and responsive to public feedback. Furthermore, the results strengthen the Pull, Push, and Pass Strategy model as a strategic approach capable of linking marketing communication functions with the development of brand loyalty. Thus, this study affirms that Marketing Public Relations is not merely a promotional tool but a strategic instrument that builds a collaborative, participatory, and long-term communication ecosystem between companies and consumers.

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