

The Influence of MRT Jakarta Featuring Tahilalats Co-Branding on Brand Image and MRT User Behavior

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Abstract

The collaboration between MRT Jakarta and Tahilalats represents a co-branding strategy that utilizes public spaces to strengthen brand image while enhancing user engagement. Although co-branding strategies have been widely implemented in commercial industries, studies examining their application in public transportation services remain limited. This study aims to analyze the influence of the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats co-branding strategy on MRT Jakarta's brand image and user behavior. The study is based on Keller's (2013) co-branding theory, the concept of brand image, and the concept of user behavior proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) as well as Eagly and Chaiken (1993). This research adopted a positivist paradigm using an explanatory quantitative design, a survey method, and questionnaire-based data collection techniques. Data were collected from 100 MRT Jakarta users selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4 tools. The findings indicate that the co-branding strategy has a positive and significant effect on MRT Jakarta's brand image, with a path coefficient of 0.582 and a p-value of 0.000. Furthermore, the co-branding strategy also has a positive and significant effect on user behavior, with a path coefficient of 0.814 and a p-value of 0.000. These findings demonstrate that the collaboration between MRT Jakarta and Tahilalats successfully strengthens the public's positive perception of MRT Jakarta while encouraging greater user interest, understanding, and intention to use MRT Jakarta services



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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary marketing, brand collaboration or co-branding has become an effective communication strategy for expanding market reach and strengthening brand image. This strategy enables two or more brands with different values and market segments to combine their respective strengths, create new consumer experiences, and enrich brand meaning in the audience's perception. As market competition intensifies and consumers become increasingly exposed to conventional promotional messages, co-branding has emerged as a creative approach that emphasizes synergy and experiential value rather than solely focusing on product promotion. This phenomenon has expanded beyond commercial contexts into public spaces as a communication medium with significant potential for developing brand image. Public spaces function as environments

for diverse social interactions, allowing brand experiences to become more authentic, contextual, and accessible to the public. This development introduces a new dimension of brand communication in which commercial values can be integrated with public-service values.

One notable example of co-branding in public spaces is the collaboration between Tahilalats, an Indonesian creative brand recognized for its humor and contemporary visual style, and MRT Jakarta, a modern public transportation operator that has become an important symbol of urban mobility. This collaboration attracted attention through the introduction of the MRT Merch Market (MMM) store at Blok M BCA MRT Station and the “Tahilalats Station” concept at Dukuh Atas MRT Station, accompanied by visual displays of Tahilalats’ artwork throughout station areas and MRT trains featuring its distinctive characters in narratives related to everyday Jakarta life. The collaboration functioned not only as a creative initiative but also as a public communication medium that conveyed openness, creativity, and proximity between public transportation services and urban communities. Tahilalats, also known as Mindblowon, is a webtoon created by Nurfadli Mursyid and recognized for its distinctive humor (Rahman et al., 2022), whereas MRT Jakarta operates as a mass public transportation service in Jakarta. From a brand communication perspective, this collaboration represented a strategic effort to establish emotional connections between MRT Jakarta and its users while strengthening the perception of MRT Jakarta as an inclusive, welcoming, and creative public space.

PT MRT Jakarta (Perseroda), the organization responsible for managing, operating, and developing Jakarta’s Mass Rapid Transit service, recorded 40,821,425 users throughout 2024, representing an average of 111,534 users per day and exceeding the 2024 target of 92,000 users per day (www.jakartamrt.co.id, 2025). Ridership increased further to 45.9 million passengers in 2025 (Budhiarto & Hanggara, 2026). According to an online press release (Albanna, 2026), PT MRT Jakarta President Director Tuhayat stated that the busiest stations in 2025 were Dukuh Atas BNI Station, with 781,580 users, followed by Blok M BCA Station, with 553,599 users. These figures demonstrate that MRT Jakarta serves a substantial user base, making its public spaces—including stations, corridors, and platform areas—potential communication channels for brand engagement, particularly at Blok M BCA and Dukuh Atas BNI stations.

This potential was realized through the establishment of merchandise stores at both stations to strengthen interaction between users and the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats collaboration. The first official store, MRT Merch Market (MMM), offered various collaborative merchandise, including keychain-style payment cards featuring special MRT Jakarta and Tahilalats characters (www.jakartamrt.co.id, 2025). The first MMM store opened in May 2025 (Tobing & Maulana, 2025), followed by a second store at Dukuh Atas Station in January 2026 (www.jakartamrt.co.id, 2026). Previously, MRT Jakarta had also collaborated with the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy through “Wonderspace by Wonderful Indonesia,” an immersive technology installation presenting Indonesian tourism visuals at Bundaran HI Station from June 1–30, 2024 (www.jakartamrt.co.id, 2024).

Such collaboration strategies have the potential to strengthen brand image through consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement with brands. When MRT users interact with Tahilalats' visual content within transportation spaces, they become active participants in the brand experience rather than passive audiences. Therefore, the effectiveness of co-branding should not only be assessed through exposure levels but also through its ability to create meaningful relationships and relevant experiences for audiences. Preliminary interviews with three active MRT users regarding their duration of MRT usage and familiarity with Tahilalats as an Indonesian webtoon brand showed that all participants were long-term MRT users and recognized Tahilalats; however, only two participants were aware of the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats collaboration. Nevertheless, responses on social media posts announcing the MRT Merch Market at Blok M and Dukuh Atas stations indicated positive public interest toward the collaboration.

From a marketing communication perspective, this type of co-branding reflects a shift from transactional promotion toward experience-based marketing. The MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats collaboration provides insight into how brands can strengthen relationships with audiences through creative and contextual approaches in public spaces. Accordingly, this study is important for examining the extent to which the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats co-branding strategy influences MRT Jakarta's brand image and user behavior. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to marketing communication studies and practically to creative industry practitioners and public institutions in designing meaningful brand collaborations.

Based on the background described above, this study identifies several research issues: (1) limited awareness among MRT users regarding the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats collaboration; (2) the effectiveness of the co-branding strategy in influencing MRT Jakarta's brand image remains unclear; (3) the influence of the co-branding strategy on user behavior remains insufficiently examined; and (4) the contribution of this collaboration to strengthening MRT Jakarta's image as an inclusive, modern, and community-oriented public space requires further investigation.

Based on these research issues, the problem statement of this study is: how does the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats co-branding collaboration influence MRT Jakarta's brand image and user behavior?

Based on the problem statement, this study aims to: (1) determine the effect of the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats co-branding strategy on MRT Jakarta's brand image; and (2) determine the effect of the co-branding strategy on MRT Jakarta users' behavior.

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of Communication Studies, particularly in the areas of marketing communication and co-branding strategy. It may also serve as an academic reference for understanding brand image formation in public spaces and collaborations between public institutions and creative industries. Practically, this study may benefit several stakeholders. For PT MRT Jakarta, the findings may provide insights for evaluating and developing more effective and sustainable brand communication strategies and public-space collaborations. For

Tahilalats and other creative industry practitioners, this study may provide an understanding of co-branding potential in developing emotional connections and brand experiences with audiences. For future researchers, this study may serve as a reference for further investigations into the effectiveness of brand communication strategies in public spaces.

METHOD

Research Paradigm and Approach

This study adopted a positivist paradigm, which was used to examine the relationship between the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats co-branding strategy, MRT Jakarta’s brand image, and user behavior through empirical measurement. This paradigm was applied to test the extent to which the co-branding strategy influenced MRT Jakarta’s brand image and shaped user behavior.

The research employed a quantitative explanatory design to examine the relationships and effects among the studied variables, namely the co-branding strategy (X), brand image (Y1), and user behavior (Y2). Data were collected using a survey method through a Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to MRT Jakarta users. The questionnaire responses ranged from strongly disagree (score 1) to strongly agree (score 5) (Antoro, 2025). The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS version 4.1.1.8 to evaluate the effects of the co-branding strategy on MRT Jakarta’s brand image and user behavior (Muhajirin et al., 2024).

Population and Sample

The population consists of MRT Jakarta users. Based on official data, MRT Jakarta recorded 45.9 million passengers throughout 2025 (Budhiarto & Hanggara, 2026), with Dukuh Atas BNI Station recording the highest ridership (781,580 passengers) followed by Blok M BCA Station (553,599 passengers) - the two stations selected for this study, as they host the MRT Mech Market (MMM), the physical site of the MRT Jakarta x Tahilalats collaboration. Based on the average monthly ridership at both stations, projected over the most recent three-month period, the study population was estimated at 333,792 users, as summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Study Population Calculation

Item	Blok M BCA Station	Dukuh Atas BNI Station
2025 Ridership	553,599 users	781,580 users
Monthly Average	46,133 users	65,131 users
3-Month Average	138,399 users	195,393 users
Total Study Population	333,792 users	

The sample size was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula (Daulay & Alfikri, 2022), $n = N / (N \cdot d^2 + 1)$, with a 10% margin of error, yielding $n = 333,792 / (333,792 \times 0.1^2 + 1) = 99.97$, rounded to 100 respondents.

Sampling employed non-probability purposive sampling, based on the criteria summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Research Subject Criteria

Criterion	Description
Population	MRT Jakarta users
Sample	100 respondents
Minimum Age	20 years
Active MRT Jakarta User	Uses MRT Jakarta at least 5 times per month
Specific Criterion	Has seen/been exposed to MRT Jakarta x Tahilalats collaboration content (photo/video posts, news, press releases) at stations, in advertisements, on social media, or via merchandise

The minimum age of 20 years was set because early adulthood (16-40 years) is associated with peak cognitive skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity, as well as greater emotional maturity and more stable social relationships (Naibaho et al., 2024; Dwilianto et al., 2024), which is expected to enhance the validity and reliability of the research data.

Data Collection Technique

A. Primary Data

Obtained directly from MRT Jakarta user respondents through a survey questionnaire, used to measure respondents' perceptions of the MRT Jakarta x Tahilalats co-branding strategy in relation to MRT Jakarta's brand image and user behavior.

B. Secondary Data

Obtained from MRT Jakarta's official documents, news publications on the collaboration, MRT Jakarta and Tahilalats social media content, and relevant articles, journals, and books on co-branding, brand image, and user behavior, serving as reference material and supporting analysis in the discussion of results.

Instrument Validity and Reliability Testing

Prior to full-scale data collection, instrument reliability and validity were tested on 30 respondents meeting the study's respondent criteria, using IBM SPSS Statistics 32.0.0.0. Validity was tested using Pearson Correlation, comparing each item's score against the total score, with a significance threshold of 0.05 (Ardhaneswari & Suwitra, 2024; Said et al., 2023). Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a construct considered reliable if the value exceeds 0.60 (Forester et al., 2024). The instrument was found to meet both validity and reliability criteria, so no items were revised or removed, and the 30 respondents' data were retained as part of the main research dataset (Ardhaneswari & Suwitra, 2024).

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS, comprising two stages: outer model (measurement model) analysis and inner model (structural model) analysis (Hair et al., 2012).

Outer Model (Measurement Model): evaluated through four stages - (1) Individual Item Reliability, assessed via outer loading (ideal value > 0.70 , though 0.5-0.6 remains acceptable per Ghozali, 2018); (2) Internal Consistency Reliability, assessed via Composite Reliability (CR), acceptable if > 0.70 (Febryanty & Suryowati, 2021); (3) Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with a minimum acceptable value of 0.50 (Sutriana et al., 2022); and (4) Discriminant Validity, assessed through cross-loading and the Fornell-Larcker criterion, requiring each indicator's loading on its own construct to exceed its cross-loadings on other constructs.

Inner Model (Structural Model): evaluated through six stages - (1) Coefficient of Determination (R^2), categorized as strong (≥ 0.67), moderate (≥ 0.33), or weak (≤ 0.19); (2) Path Coefficient (β), with a threshold of > 0.1 indicating an effective path; (3) Effect Size (f^2), categorized as small (0.02), moderate (0.15), or large (0.35) (Hasanah et al., 2020); (4) T-test, using bootstrapping with a two-tailed test at 5% significance, with a hypothesis accepted if $t > 1.96$ (Luthfi et al., 2021); (5) Predictive Relevance (Q^2), using the blindfolding method, with a threshold above zero; and (6) Relative Impact (q^2), using blindfolding, categorized as small (0.02), moderate (0.15), or large (0.35) (Ernawati et al., 2021).

Statistical Hypotheses

- a) H1: $\beta_1 \neq 0$ - The Co-Branding Strategy has an effect on MRT Jakarta's Brand Image ($H_0: \beta_1 = 0$ - no effect).
- b) H2: $\beta_2 \neq 0$ - The Co-Branding Strategy has an effect on User Behavior ($H_0: \beta_2 = 0$ - no effect).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Research Object

MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) Jakarta is a modern public transportation service operated by PT MRT Jakarta (Persoda) in the Jakarta area. Tahilalats, also known as Mindblowon, is a Webtoon created by Nurfadli Mursyid since 2012, well known for its quirky humor content (Rahman et al., 2022). The collaboration between the two brands - featuring MRT Mech Market (MMM) activations at Blok M BCA and Dukuh Atas BNI stations, social media content, and merchandise - forms the basis of this study.

Data Collection Results

The questionnaire was distributed through three channels: creative content on Instagram, WhatsApp broadcast, and direct distribution to MRT users at Blok M BCA and Dukuh Atas BNI stations. The first stage (16 May 2026, via Instagram and WhatsApp) yielded 30 respondents used for the instrument validity and reliability pre-test; since the instrument met all criteria, this data was retained in the main dataset. The second stage (17 May 2026, direct station visits) completed data collection to a total of 100 respondents.

Respondent Demographics

Of the 100 respondents, 64% were aged 20-25 years, 24% were aged 26-30 years, 4% each were aged 31-35 and 36-40 years, and 2% each were aged 41-45 years and over 45 years. Blok M Station was the most frequently visited station (96% of respondents),

compared with 4% for Dukuh Atas Station. In terms of purpose of use, 52% of respondents used MRT Jakarta for leisure travel, 18% for transit to other transportation, 15% for commuting to work, 12% for commuting to school/campus, and 3% for business purposes. Regarding duration of use, 25% of respondents had used MRT Jakarta for 6 months to 1 year, 21% each for less than 3 months and more than 3 years, 18% for 3-6 months, 11% for 2-3 years, and 4% for 1-2 years. Regarding how respondents learned of the collaboration, 35% learned through Tahilalats' social media, 25% through MRT Jakarta's social media, 20% by seeing it directly at MRT stations, 8% through online news, 7% through influencers/content creators, and 5% through friends or family.

Descriptive Results of Research Variables

Respondents' Likert-scale responses across the Co-Branding Strategy (X), Brand Image (Y1), and User Behavior (Y2) indicators are summarized in Table 3 below, expressed as the combined percentage of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" (S+SS) responses.

Table 3. Summary of Questionnaire Response Percentages

Variable	Item Range	Number of Items	Combined "Agree" + "Strongly Agree" (%)
Co-Branding Strategy (X)	X1.1-X1.18	18	70%-97%
Brand Image (Y1)	Y1.1-Y1.16	6 items reported	91%-99%
User Behavior (Y2)	Y2.1-Y2.9	9	69%-91%

Overall, respondents show a predominantly positive perception across all three variables, with agreement levels generally exceeding 70-90%, indicating that respondents perceive the co-branding collaboration favorably, associate it positively with MRT Jakarta's brand image, and report behavioral tendencies (interest in using the service, purchasing merchandise, and recommending MRT Jakarta) consistent with that positive perception.

Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)

Outer loading testing showed that the reported representative indicators across all three constructs exceeded the minimum acceptable value, as presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Outer Loading Results

Indicator	Co-Branding Strategy (X)	Brand Image (Y1)	User Behavior (Y2)
X1.1	0.773		
X1.2	0.821		
X1.3	0.867		
X1.4	0.796		
X1.5	0.857		
X1.6	0.771		

Indicator	Co-Branding Strategy (X)	Brand Image (Y1)	User Behavior (Y2)
Y1.1		0.921	
Y1.2		0.911	
Y1.3		0.898	
Y2.1			0.883
Y2.2			0.907
Y2.3			0.905

Overall, the outer loading test confirmed good validity for all indicators of Co-Branding Strategy, Brand Image, and User Behavior, exceeding the study's minimum threshold. The P-values for the Co-Branding Strategy → Brand Image and Co-Branding Strategy → User Behavior paths were both 0.000, confirming that all indicators could be retained for the next analysis stage.

Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Results

Variable	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Co-Branding Strategy (X)	0.922	0.664
Brand Image (Y1)	0.935	0.828
User Behavior (Y2)	0.926	0.807

All variables show CR values above the 0.70 threshold, indicating very high internal consistency, and AVE values above the 0.50 threshold, confirming convergent validity is satisfied and the model is suitable for the next testing stage.

Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

The Coefficient of Determination (R^2), Path Coefficient (β), T-test, and P-value results are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination, Path Coefficient, T-test, and P-value Results

Path	R^2	R^2 Category	Path Coefficient (β)	T-test	P-value	Decision
Co-Branding Strategy (X) → Brand Image (Y1)	0.339	Moderate	0.582	5.713	0.000	H1 Accepted
Co-Branding Strategy (X) → User Behavior (Y2)	0.663	Moderate	0.814	26.169	0.000	H2 Accepted

Both paths show a positive relationship and satisfy the hypothesis-testing criteria (t -test > 1.96 and p -value < 0.05). The Co-Branding Strategy's effect on User Behavior ($\beta = 0.814$; $t = 26.169$) is substantially stronger than its effect on Brand Image ($\beta = 0.582$; $t = 5.713$), indicating that the MRT Jakarta x Tahilalats collaboration is more powerful in driving behavioral change among users than in shaping brand image alone. The R^2 value of 0.663 for User Behavior indicates that 66.3% of the variance in user behavior is explained by the Co-Branding Strategy, a moderate-to-strong result, while the remaining 33.7% is explained by other factors outside the model. Additional testing further supports this path: an Effect Size (f^2) of 1.970 (large effect), a Predictive Relevance (Q^2) of 0.648 (very good predictive capability), and a Relative Impact (q^2) of 0.648 (large predictive influence).

Effect of the Co-Branding Strategy on MRT Jakarta's Brand Image (H1)

Bootstrapping results show a Path Coefficient of 0.582, a T-test value of 5.713, and a P-value of 0.000, exceeding the required thresholds ($t > 1.96$; $p < 0.05$). H1 is therefore accepted: the Co-Branding Strategy has a positive and significant effect on MRT Jakarta's Brand Image. The positive path coefficient indicates that a better-executed co-branding strategy between MRT Jakarta and Tahilalats leads to a more positive brand image among users, reinforcing public perception of MRT Jakarta as modern, creative public transportation capable of delivering a distinctive user experience.

This finding is consistent with Keller's concept of co-branding, in which collaboration between two or more brands can mutually reinforce each other and capture audience attention (Hakim, 2020). In this case, Tahilalats' widely recognized, relatable humor content combined with MRT Jakarta's modern transportation identity created a more memorable communication experience, resulting in a more favorable brand image. From a communication theory perspective, this reflects Kotler's concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), in which a company coordinates multiple communication channels to deliver a clear, consistent, and convincing message (Wa'dah & Muksin, 2023) - evident in this collaboration's use of social media, station activations, and merchandise as consistent channels reinforcing public recognition and positive perception of MRT Jakarta.

Effect of the Co-Branding Strategy on MRT Jakarta Users' Behavior (H2)

Testing results show a Path Coefficient of 0.814, a T-test value of 26.169, and a P-value of 0.000, satisfying the hypothesis-testing criteria. H2 is therefore accepted: the Co-Branding Strategy has a positive and significant effect on MRT Jakarta users' behavior. The very strong path coefficient indicates that a better co-branding strategy produces greater positive behavioral change among MRT Jakarta users, further supported by an R^2 of 0.663 (66.3% of behavioral variance explained, a strong result), a large Effect Size ($f^2 = 1.970$), very good Predictive Relevance ($Q^2 = 0.648$), and large predictive influence ($q^2 = 0.648$).

These results show that the MRT Jakarta x Tahilalats co-branding strategy influences not only how the public perceives MRT Jakarta but also how they act - becoming more interested in using MRT Jakarta, wanting to purchase collaboration

merchandise, and being more willing to recommend MRT Jakarta to others. This aligns with the attitude structure proposed by Loudon and Della-Bitta (as well as Ajzen and Fishbein, and Eagly and Chaiken), comprising cognitive (knowledge), affective (emotion and feeling), and conative (action) components (Yusa et al., 2022). In this study, awareness of the collaboration through various media formed the cognitive component; the positive interest and response toward the collaboration reflected the affective component; and this positive feeling subsequently drove the conative component - the desire to use MRT Jakarta, purchase collaboration merchandise, and recommend MRT Jakarta to others. From a communication theory perspective, this confirms that the co-branding strategy functions as a marketing communication approach that creates a positive user experience, consistently reinforced across media (social media and merchandise) in a way that fosters closeness with MRT Jakarta as a modern transportation brand and ultimately drives concrete user action.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and discussion regarding the effect of the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats co-branding strategy on MRT Jakarta’s brand image and user behavior using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the following conclusions were drawn.

The MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats co-branding strategy had a positive and significant effect on MRT Jakarta’s brand image, with a path coefficient (β) of 0.582, a t-statistic of 5.713, and a p-value of < 0.001 , supporting the first hypothesis (H1). This finding indicates that a stronger co-branding strategy was associated with a more positive brand image among users. The collaboration between MRT Jakarta and Tahilalats strengthened public perceptions of MRT Jakarta as a modern, creative, innovative, and community-oriented public transportation service by combining MRT Jakarta’s identity with Tahilalats’ creative visual characteristics.

The co-branding strategy also had a positive and significant effect on user behavior, with a path coefficient (β) of 0.814, a t-statistic of 26.169, and a p-value of < 0.001 , supporting the second hypothesis (H2). This result indicates that the co-branding strategy influenced not only user perceptions but also behavioral responses, including increased interest in using MRT Jakarta, willingness to recommend the service to others, and positive attitudes toward the collaboration.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) showed that the co-branding strategy explained 33.9% of the variance in brand image, indicating a moderate explanatory level, while the remaining 66.1% was explained by other factors outside the research model. In addition, the co-branding strategy explained 66.3% of the variance in user behavior, with the remaining 33.7% influenced by other variables not examined in this study. These findings indicate that the co-branding strategy had a stronger explanatory contribution to user behavior than to brand image.

Overall, this study demonstrated that the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats co-branding strategy functioned as an effective marketing communication approach for strengthening

brand image and encouraging positive user behavior toward MRT Jakarta. These findings support previous research on co-branding effectiveness while providing additional insights into co-branding implementation within the public transportation and creative industry sectors.

Based on the findings regarding the effect of the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats co-branding strategy on brand image and user behavior, several recommendations were proposed to support theoretical development and practical implementation.

Future research should further explore co-branding within public service contexts, as previous co-branding studies have predominantly focused on commercial business sectors, while applications within public institutions remain relatively limited. Expanding research in this area may enrich marketing communication studies, particularly regarding co-branding strategies in public service environments. Future studies may also develop broader conceptual models by incorporating additional communication perspectives, such as brand experience, customer engagement, relationship marketing, or the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the communication mechanisms influencing brand image and user behavior.

Furthermore, because this study found that the co-branding strategy had a stronger effect on user behavior than on brand image, future research may examine brand image as a mediating variable or incorporate additional constructs, such as brand trust, brand experience, and customer engagement, to provide deeper insights into co-branding effectiveness in marketing communication. Future studies are also encouraged to investigate the use of public spaces as strategic communication media, as this area remains less explored compared with digital and conventional media. Such research may contribute to the development of strategic communication approaches for public institutions in building corporate brand image and influencing public behavior through public spaces.

MRT Jakarta is encouraged to continue developing co-branding strategies by collaborating with partners whose characteristics and values align with MRT Jakarta's identity. Appropriate partner selection may further strengthen MRT Jakarta's image as a modern, innovative, and community-oriented public transportation service. MRT Jakarta is also encouraged to improve public communication regarding its co-branding programs, as several respondents still showed uncertainty regarding awareness and understanding of the MRT Jakarta–Tahilalats collaboration. Therefore, communication regarding the objectives, benefits, and concepts of future collaborations should be optimized through channels such as social media, the MRT-J application, station digital displays, and other communication platforms.

In addition, MRT Jakarta may develop more interactive co-branding programs considering the strong influence of the strategy on user behavior. Future collaborations may extend beyond visual displays by incorporating thematic events, station activations, interactive digital campaigns, and limited-edition merchandise programs to increase user engagement and strengthen emotional connections with MRT Jakarta. Finally, MRT Jakarta is encouraged to conduct periodic evaluations of each co-branding program by

focusing on indicators with lower performance scores or higher levels of uncertainty among users. The evaluation results can serve as a basis for developing more effective communication strategies that align with user expectations and needs.

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