

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF BRAND LOVE, BRAND IMAGE, AND BRAND ATTACHMENT ON BRAND LOYALTY

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Abstract – *This study aims to investigate the impact of brand love, brand image, and brand attachment on brand loyalty within the context of fashion industry. The research population consisted of 100 respondents who have maintained a consumer relationship with Pull & Bear products for a duration exceeding two years. The methodological framework encompassed a meticulous series of analyses, including tests of data validity and reliability, as well as hypothesis testing. The findings reveal a positive relationship between brand love and the brand loyalty construct. Conversely, there was no positive correlation between brand image and brand loyalty. The results also demonstrate an evident impact of brand attachment on brand loyalty.*

Keywords: *brand love, brand image, brand attachment, brand loyalty*

I. INTRODUCTION

Brand constitutes a form of identity for a product offered to customers, enabling differentiation between a company's product and competitors' products in the form of a name, word, sign, symbol, design, or their combination. Brand plays a pivotal role in distinguishing one product from another (Irawan, 2019). Bergkvist and Larsen (2010) define brand love as an affectionate sentiment towards a brand. Brand love represents the strong emotional connection consumers develop towards a specific brand. It encompasses two main aspects: sentiment and passion, with sentiment measuring an individual's closeness to the brand. Brand image, as defined by Wijayanto and Iriani (2013), refers to consumers' perceptions and beliefs about a set of brand associations that exist within their minds. Conversely, Sibagariang and Nursanti (2010) define brand image as the accumulation of brand associations formed from the consumer perspective.

Brand attachment, according to Lacoueilhe (Louis & Lombart, 2010), is a psychological variable that reveals an enduring and unchangeable affective relationship with a brand, expressing a psychological closeness to it. Brand loyalty, as described by Mowen and Minor (Hasanah, 2009), represents a state in which consumers possess a positive attitude towards a brand, exhibit commitment to it, and intend to continue purchasing it in the future.

With the influx of foreign fashion brands into Indonesia, consumers are presented with a plethora of choices. It has been found that 60% of Indonesian consumers are more inclined towards foreign fashion brands compared to local ones (Yulistara, 2018). Indonesia, as a major global market, holds a

1.1% share of the world's ready-to-wear garment production (Salim & Ernawati, 2015). Since 2019, every brand has experienced an increase in sales. ZARA holds the first position, followed by Berskha in second, and Pull&Bear in third (Deloitte, 2020).

Amidst the fierce competition in Indonesia's fashion industry, doubts persist regarding the influence of brand love on brand loyalty (Andriani and Bunga, 2017), as well as the factors influencing brand loyalty in the fashion business (Sari and Sudarti, 2016). Considering the aforementioned background, the business phenomenon, and the existing research gap, this study aims to investigate the influence of Brand Love, Brand Image, and Brand Attachment on Brand Loyalty within the context of Pull&Bear fashion.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Brand Love

According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006, as cited in Azizah, 2016), brand love is defined as a level of emotional attachment wherein consumers derive satisfaction from possessing a specific brand. In line with the literature on the prototype of love, Albert et al. (2008, as cited in Azizah, 2016) define brand love as *"the degree of emotional attachment characterized by passion/desire to possess a particular brand."* Consumer brand love encompasses the following characteristics, a strong desire for a brand, attachment to the brand, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotional response to the brand, and declaration of love for the brand. Hence, brand love has thremensions; affiliation and need for dependence, predispositi absorption (Albert et al., 2008, as cited in Lumba & Siwalankerto, 2019). Further, Batra et al (2012) revealed that there are ten key elements of brand love. They are high quality, alignment with core values, perception of intrinsic rewards, self-expression through the brand, positive affect, sense of alignment and passion, emotional attachment, investments of time and money, recurrent contemplation and utilization, and duration of usage.

Brand Image

According to Peter and Olson (as cited in Kurniawan, 2017), brand image denotes consumers' perceptions and preferences towards a brand, encompassing varied brand associations. These associations, categorized by attributes and strengths, constitute a brand's overall perception, shaped by past experiences. A positive brand image fosters favorable attitudes and preferences, influencing purchasing decisions. This image's impact on loyalty is noteworthy, as it simplifies consumer product evaluations, reducing the need for extensive information search (Sari & Sudarti, 2016). According to Aaker, 2000 (as cited in Sari & Sudarti, 2016), key elements for brand image are Product Attributes, Consumer Benefits, User Imagery, Organization Association, and Brand-Customer Relationship.

Brand Attachment

According to Park et al. (2008), brand attachment is defined as the cognitive and affective strength that binds a brand to a consumer's self-concept. The self-concept encompasses a collection of characteristics, traits, and affiliations that cognitively represent an individual. Further, Lacoeyuilhe, 2000 (cited in Sabrina & Khoiriyah, 2011), defines brand attachment as a psychological variable that reveals an enduring and unchangeable affective relationship with a brand, expressing a psychological closeness to it.

Lacoeuilhe (Hartini, 2012) argued that there are two key elements representing brand attachment. First, brand self-connection; this denotes a cognitive and emotional bond between a consumer and a brand. Second, brand prominence; this refers to something distinctive about a brand (salience), signifying perceptions, ease, and frequency of thinking about the brand

Brand Loyalty

According to Rajput (2019), brand loyalty is the emotionally charged decision of customers to repeatedly purchase a specific brand. Consumers perceive that a particular brand possesses the quality to meet their expectations and they identify with it on a personal level. Further, Schiffman and Kanuk, 2012 (as cited in Hasugian, 2015), define brand loyalty as a consistent consumer preference for making purchases from the same brand in a specific product or service category. Brand loyalty signifies a robust commitment to consistently subscribe to or purchase a brand in the future. Notably, brand loyalty considers significant as it can create barriers to entry for competitors, mitigate competitive threats, and boost sales and revenue (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman, 2001, as cited in Laksamana, 2018).

According to Durianto et al. (2004), proper management and utilization of brand loyalty can serve as a strategic asset for a company. The benefits of brand loyalty include; first, reduced marketing costs, whereby retaining customers is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones. Therefore, marketing costs decrease as brand loyalty increases. The distinguishing feature of this customer type is that they make purchases due to affordability. Second, trade leverage, loyalty generates increased trade and reinforces marketing channel confidence. It can be inferred that buyers base their brand purchases on established habits. Finally, attracting new customers.

The satisfaction and preference of existing brand customers create a sense of confidence among potential customers, particularly in high-risk purchases. Satisfied customers often recommend the brand to those close to them, thereby attracting new customers.

Hypotheses Development

According to Ismail and Spinelli (2012), Brand love plays a significant role for consumers when deciding to purchase a product. Consumers develop an affection for a brand due to their interest in it, which subsequently inspires them. Thus, Brand love influences Brand loyalty, as observed in studies conducted by Sari and Sudarti (2016) and Filho et al. (2010). Building on the arguments and literature discussed, the researcher hypothesizes as follows:

H1: Brand Love has a positive impact on Brand Loyalty.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008), companies with a favorable brand image not only provide quality products but also represent a consumer's perceptions and feelings. Consequently, Brand Image affects Brand Loyalty, as indicated by research conducted by Kurniawan (2017), Sari and Sudarti (2016), and Sibagaring and Nursanty (2010). Based on the arguments and literature review presented, the researcher proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Brand image has a positive impact on Brand loyalty.

Thus, Brand attachment influences Brand loyalty, as observed in a study by Tsiotsou (2010). Grounded in the arguments and literature review, the researcher puts forth the following hypothesis:

H3: Brand attachment has a positive impact on Brand loyalty.

Figure 1 Research Model

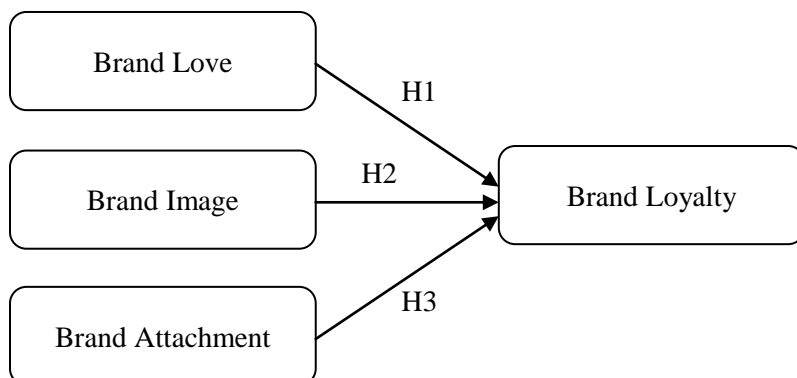


Figure 1 shows the research model and all of the hypotheses in the study.

III. METHODS

This study adopts an empirical research design utilizing a cross-sectional approach. The research was carried out in the Jakarta metropolitan area and involved a total of 100 respondents. A self-administered survey was employed as the data collection method, aligning with the quantitative research paradigm. The survey consisted of structured questions with predetermined response options, involving a substantial number of participants (Burns & Bush, 2010). A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (indicating "strongly disagree") to 5 (indicating "strongly agree"), was utilized to measure respondents' perceptions. The survey questions were drawn from prior scholarly investigations.

All items from this study were adopted from past research. Whilst the measurement items for Brand Love were adopted from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), the measurement items for Brand Image were adopted from Kim and Kim (2005). Hence, the measurement items for assessing Brand Attachment were adopted from Chinomona and Sandada (2013). Lastly, the measurement items employed to gauge Brand Loyalty were adopted from Kim and Kim (2005) and Yoo et al. (2000).

To ensure the coherence, durability, and authenticity of the presented results, reliability and validity assessments were employed, following the methodology proposed by Hair et al. (2006). To assess the formulated hypotheses, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was applied. This analytical approach facilitates the examination of a dependent variable in relation to two or more independent variables, in accordance with the methodology elucidated by Zikmund et al. (2011).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 100 respondents, there were 56 female respondents (56%) and 44 male respondents (44%). The respondents' age distribution was predominantly within the 21-30 years bracket, comprising 75%, while the age group below 20 years accounted for 25%. Among the respondents, the student category had the highest representation at 60%, followed by entrepreneurs (3%), private sector employees (21%), and others (16%). Regarding respondents' highest education level, those with a high school

diploma constituted 49%, Bachelor's degree (BSc) holders were 42%, Diploma holders constituted 7%, and junior high school (SMP) graduates were 2%. In terms of monthly income, the majority of respondents earned less than Rp3,000,000 (59%), followed by those earning between Rp3,000,001 and Rp13,000,000 (39%), and a small percentage earning between Rp13,000,001 and Rp23,000,000 (1%), with another respondent earning over Rp33,000,001 (1%).

For the purpose of the study validity and reliability test runs to study the factor structure. Out of 19 items, all variables are stated valid and reliable. As for the reliability test, the results provided decent confirmation of measurement choice. Cronbach's alpha for the four constructs ranged between 0.649 for Brand Image and 0.909 for Brand Love as seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Reliability of the Measurement

Variable	Crobach's Alpha (≥ 0.6)
Brand Love	0.909
Brand Image	0.649
Brand Attachment	0.894
Brand Loyalty	0.884

As H1 stated that there is a positive relationship between brand love and brand loyalty, it has been demonstrated with positive correlations with a probability level is 4.431 that indicates a positive relationship. Therefore, H1 is supported.

However, as H2 stated that there is a positive relationship between brand image and brand loyalty, it has been demonstrated with negative correlations with a probability level is .628 that indicates a negative relationship. Therefore, H2 is not supported.

Finally, H3 stated that there is a positive relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty, it has been demonstrated with positive correlations with a probability level is 6.438 that indicates a positive relationship. Therefore, H3 is supported. Table 2 shows the details of the t-test of the study.

Table 2 T-test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.345	1.483		-0.232	0.817
Brand Love (X1)	0.295	0.067	0.346	4.431	0.000
Brand Image (X2)	0.095	0.151	0.042	0.628	0.532
Brand Attachment (X3)	0.621	0.096	0.555	6.438	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty (Y)

Results indicate that brand love and brand attachment partially have positive impacts on brand loyalty. However, the brand image was found to have a negative impact on brand loyalty. These findings offer new insights for both research and managerial implications.

First, brand love was found to affect brand loyalty. This aligns with the findings of Sari and Sudarti (2016) as well as Hwang & Kandampully (2012), who observed that brand love positively augments brand loyalty for particular brands; the strong positive influence within consumers' minds facilitates

brand loyalty and brand commitment. Interestingly, one of the indicators on the survey also found that if Pull&Bear continues to innovate and provide product designs favored by consumers, they will develop an increasing fondness for Pull&Bear, leading to periodic repurchases of their products. Love itself represents a profoundly potent emotional experience, extending beyond interpersonal relationships to encompass the connection between consumers and brands (Fournier, 1998).

Second, brand image has no impact on brand loyalty. This outcome stands in contrast to the research conducted by Dwiputranto (2017), which asserts a significant and positive impact of brand image on brand loyalty. To the best of our knowledge, this disparity can be attributed to the differing characteristics between the fashion and automotive domains. Within the realm of fashion, Pull&Bear falls within the category of low involvement products. This circumstance diminishes the significance of image for consumers. However, for automobiles, which fall under the high involvement product category, brand image holds paramount importance for brand loyalty. Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) similarly find that brand loyalty signifies consumers' preference for purchasing the same brand within a specific product or service category. Thus, the nexus between brand image and loyalty is rooted in the desires, choices, and preferences of consumers.

Finally, brand attachment has a positive impact on brand loyalty. This is in line with the research conducted by Tsiotsou (2010), which asserts that brand attachment influences brand loyalty. Hence, according to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), brand loyalty can be regarded as an indirect connector to link brand trust and brand attachment with market performance features of brand equity. Therefore, brand attachment plays a pivotal role in fostering brand loyalty.

V. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that brand love and brand attachment positively influence brand loyalty, emphasizing the importance of emotional connections in fostering repeat purchases and commitment. Conversely, brand image was found to negatively impact brand loyalty in the fashion industry, suggesting its varying significance across different product categories. These findings provide valuable insights for marketers, highlighting the need to focus on cultivating brand love and attachment. Future research should further explore these dynamics across various sectors to enhance our understanding of brand loyalty.

However, the study still has some limitations. First, one limitation is that the current study is solely based on cross-sectional data with a limited number of respondents. Consequently, longitudinal studies would be beneficial to foster a new understanding by involving a larger respondent pool. Second, additional factors influencing brand loyalty could be incorporated to refine the model and enhance the comprehension of the phenomenon. Third, caution should be exercised when generalizing the results to all industries. Thus, it is recommended that empirical research across various industries be conducted to further comprehend brand loyalty in diverse contexts. Finally, it's noteworthy that only respondents from Indonesia were recruited for the study; as a result, generalizing the findings to the entire consumer population is inappropriate. Consequently, research involving respondents from diverse nationalities would provide added value for a more comprehensive understanding, thereby enhancing the study's quality.

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