

BUILDING BRAND LOYALTY THROUGH CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT AND BRAND TRUST ON SKINCARE PRODUCT

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of consumer engagement, brand trust, and brand love on brand loyalty. This study also analyzes the indirect impact of consumer engagement and consumer trust on brand loyalty through brand love. The research samples were 175 respondents. The data collected by questionnaire and distributed online. Purposive sampling is used for sampling methods based on certain criteria. In this study, the research sample is consumer in this study, the research sample was consumers who had or are currently using Wardah's personal care products. The analysis result shows that consumer engagement and brand love have a significant and positive effect on brand loyalty. Only consumer engagement has a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty. Mediating effect analysis also shows that brand love does not mediate the relationship between consumer engagement and brand loyalty.

KEYWORDS: Consumer Engagement, Brand Trust, Brand Love, Brand Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

The market for cosmetics is experiencing a significant development globally and nationally. This phenomenon is inseparable from consumers, from baby boomers to Generation Z, who are willing to maintain their physical image and attractiveness. The cosmetics industry experienced significant growth between 2010 and 2015. The development of cosmetics and personal care business occurs in line with the high competitiveness level in the cosmetics sector (Dai & Pelton, 2018), which causes cosmetics marketers to expand their marketing coverage from offline to online to reach broader consumers. The cosmetics industry is a business with billions of US dollars' worth. It covers a wide variety of products from cleansers, toners, serum, moisturizers, foundation, compact powder, lipstick, eyeliners, eyeshadows, blusher, mascara, and many other tools (Lee et al., 2019).

Overall, Indonesia's cosmetics market is experiencing growth due to the awareness of the need to show pride, a positive image, or even social class. Consumer awareness to start skincare from an early age also contributes to this growth. In 2020, it was estimated that the income from the beauty and personal care market in Indonesia reaches US\$ 7.288 million. This income is predicted to grow by 5.6% between 2020 and 2023. The largest segment in this market is the personal care segment, with a market volume of US\$ 3.126 million in 2020 (Statita, 2020).

The income generated by the beauty and personal care market encourages companies in the cosmetics industry to reset or reconsider their product line to create a firm foundation in facing the increasingly competitive cosmetics industry. The increase in consumer demand for innovative and high-quality products also becomes the primary driver of growth in this industry (Phaiboon-Udomkarn & Josiassen, 2014). Consumers' needs to have healthy skin also support the development of the personal care and cosmetics industry in Indonesia. Consumers have a wide alternative of personal care and cosmetics that they can choose. Wardah, as one of the brands in the cosmetics and personal care industry in Indonesia, becomes one of the brands that need to be anticipated by a newly established cosmetic and personal care company. Wardah is also known as a halal cosmetics and personal care brand.

The rapid growth of the cosmetics market in Indonesia is also inseparable from the development in marketing strategy applied by companies to reach broader consumers, for example, social media marketing strategy. Social media appears as an answer for people who need to interact interpersonally. This media brings social activities into the online virtual world (Chen & Lin, 2019) and includes various information, product evaluation, and other kinds of consumer activities. Media social also provides a new alternative for consumers and producers to communicate more freely, providing brand preference to consumers, a media for consumer information and experiences sharing, and review for the company, which is expected to build consumer engagement.

The benefit and interest to build a brand through social media are vital to be studied in digital marketing research to provide a guideline for marketers in utilizing digital media to its full potential. One of the benefits reaped by companies or brands that apply digital marketing, both through social media, website, and e-commerce, is the formation of consumer-to-consumer communication and consumer-to-brand communication, in which consumers are actively involved with a brand or company. This involvement includes following, sharing, replying, liking, participating, and performing other activities in their social media account. An active consumer-to-consumer or consumer-to-brand interaction in social media is a consumer's cognitive, behavioral, and emotional level interaction with certain (Hollebeek, 2011). Hudson et al., 2016 reveal that the more invested a consumer in a relationship, the more committed they are in maintaining the relationship. Therefore, it can be said that the longer the time a consumer spent interacting in social media, the stronger is their relationship with the brand.

This study aims to analyze consumer engagement and brand trust effect on brand love and the impact of brand love on brand loyalty. The constructs of each variable are studied in which consumer engagement and brand trust are designated as the antecedent of brand love. This study also tests the mediation effect of brand love. Previous research on Facebook users reported a significant and positive impact of consumer engagement and brand trust on brand love and an indirect impact of consumer engagement on brand loyalty through brand love (Machado et al., 2019). In the current study, brand trust is added because it acts as a foundation in developing brand love and loyalty. In this study,

consumer engagement is observed through their Instagram app activities, considering the growing users and product information shared through this social media platform.

Several empirical gaps were identified from the previous studies, such as the use of an instrument developed by Karjaluoto et al. (2016) that has four indicators for brand trust, while the current study employs Kwon et al. (2020) instrument, which has five indicators to measure brand trust. The additional indicators will expand the instrument's ability to represent the respondent's answers. Previous studies also focused on service providers while brand trust for a product is relatively under researched. Therefore, the current research will apply the concept to personal care products from Wardah.

The next empirical gap observed by the researcher is the different research findings that identify brand love as an antecedent of consumer engagement (Sarkar, 2014; Sarkar & Sreejesh, 2014). However, the study conducted by Machado et al. (2019) and Vernuccio et al. (2015) find the relationship between consumer engagement and brand love, in which consumer engagement acts as an antecedent of brand love. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between consumer engagement as the antecedent of brand love because this relationship has not been widely studied.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer engagement is not a new concept in the marketing management field. Currently, this concept has moved from a passive model, in which consumers only receive information, to an active model, in which consumers participate directly and provide feedback to the company. The consumer is also expected to participate in creating and offering valuable consumption. Consumer engagement with a brand offers evidence that they purchase more products than those who do not engage with the brand. The engaged consumer will advocate and support the brand (Obilo et al., 2020). Vernuccio et al. (2015) reveal that consumer engagement can affect their love toward a brand. This relationship is caused by consumers' tendency to develop a more intense emotional bond with a brand that can create consumer interaction and social media participation. Gummerus et al. (2012), in their study, also show that high consumer engagement towards a particular brand can improve consumer attitude and behavior toward that brand in social media. High consumer positive engagement also has all the relationship effects between consumer and a brand. In their study, Hudson et al. (2016) reveal that social media interaction between the consumer and a brand can grow emotional bond and intimacy. Based on this description, we can propose the hypothesis: H1: Consumer engagement has a significant effect on brand love.

Consumer trust toward a brand also contributes to developing long-term relationships with a consumer and can be used to reduce consumer uncertainty and skepticism. Because a brand-consumer relationship is considered a replacement for human contact between the company and its consumer (Matzler et al., 2008), brand trust is required for all brand-consumer relationships. Therefore, this study defines brand trust as consumer experience that can affect a brand, such as brand performance, and

can be communicated by brand owner (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). A brand can represent all activities to build trust so that the brand can be used as a symbol of quality in building trust (Kwon et al., 2020). Moreover, brand trust is expressed in consumers' belief that the brand will perform certain functions (Singh et al., 2012) and developed from past experience and interaction. Strong consumer's trust toward a brand can grow positive attitude, commitment, and loyalty that can lead to brand love (Karjaluoto et al., 2016).

Consumer trust becomes a focus in establishing long-term relationships with consumers because it can reduce uncertainty and hesitation to use a product or service (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). Brand trust is also based on affective experience regarding honesty and brand reliability. Thus, trust can be built through consumers' experience in consuming a brand (Albert & Merunka, 2013). This variable can be considered an encouraging factor that forms a consumer's emotional bond with a brand (Langner et al., 2015). A strong trust toward a brand will lead to a stronger positive attitude, commitment, and loyalty (Drennan et al., 2015). Trust is a result of consumer satisfaction and becomes an antecedent of brand love (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). From this explanation, we proposed the second hypothesis: H2: Brand trust affects brand love.

Brand love is an essential aspect of branding literature (Bigne et al., 2020). Brand love is an individual consumer's desire and excitement toward a brand, in which an emotional bond shows a personal emotional bond with a particular object. In this condition, separation from the brand might cause sadness (Prentice et al., 2019). Consumer love toward a brand (brand love) is a form of consumer emotional bonding with a brand used as a marketing strategy by marketers to shape consumer loyalty. As a strategy, marketers aim to build consumer emotional bonding with their brand. Brand love can be described as the level of a satisfied consumer's emotional attachment to the brand they have consumed (Kang, 2015). Consumers who positively feel toward a brand can develop loyalty toward the brand (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Loureiro et al. (2012) reveal that brand love has a strong effect in building consumers' intention to be loyal to a brand.

Machado et al. (2019) state that brand love becomes one of the factors that positively affect brand loyalty because the brand that can build its consumer's brand love tends to achieve high brand loyalty and obtain a sustainable competitive advantage (Drennan et al., 2015). Further, a consumer who trusts a brand has an intention to continue their relationship with that brand, willing to purchase the brand and recommend the brand to other people. Consumers who believe in their future with a brand will continue their existing relationship with that brand and are more willing to purchase the same brand in the future and recommend it to other people (Loureiro et al., 2012). Based on this description, the following hypothesis is proposed: H3: Brand love affects brand loyalty.

Brand loyalty is a widely studied concept in the marketing field. The concept of loyalty is included in the commitment, preference, repeat purchases, and trust from consumers to a brand (Kwon et al., 2020). Loyalty is conceptualized as a behavior to perform repeat purchases from time to time.

Precisely, the repeat purchase pattern can be measured from the frequency of actual purchase and the proportion of occurrences where a particular brand was purchased compared to the total number of brands purchased and/or the number of actual purchases (Kim et al., 2016). Li et al. (2020) state that consumers with high loyalty tend to recommend a brand to their families, colleagues, and friends compared to consumers with low loyalty. Brand loyalty is also defined as consumer attitude and commitment toward a particular brand built through satisfaction and contributes to ongoing purchases (Kim et al., 2020).

Previous studies have indicated that consumer engagement, both with other consumers and with the brand, in social media can increase brand purchase in the future, can contribute to building a significant relationship, contribute through building trust, and improve consumer commitment toward the brand (Brodie et al., 2011; van Doorn et al., 2010). A study conducted by Brodie et al., (2013) reveals that engaged consumer shows higher brand loyalty, satisfaction, connection, trust, and commitment. The finding is supported by a study conducted by Machado et al. (2019), which indicates that consumers who contribute to social media engagement have a significant effect in forming brand loyalty. From this finding, the researchers proposed the fourth hypothesis: H4: Consumer engagement affects brand loyalty.

Consumers who have felt a sense of security and trust in a brand are likely to buy that brand in the near future. Accumulated consumer trust will result in a loyal attitude from time to time (Huang, 2017). Research conducted by Atulkar (2020) indicates that brand trust has a role in the formation of brand loyalty, in which trusted brands are often purchased by consumers and dispel consumer’s doubt over the brand. Brand trust also developed as a result of fulfilling consumer’s expectations and needs (He et al., 2012). Based on this description, the researchers proposed the following hypothesis: H5: Brand trust affects brand loyalty.

This study focuses on brand loyalty formed through consumer engagement, brand trust, and brand love. Consumer engagement and brand trust are designated as the independent variables, brand love as the mediating variable, and brand loyalty as the dependent variable. The study’s conceptual framework was prepared based on the existing studies and was adapted to suit the research need. The conceptual framework of the current research can be seen in Figure 1.

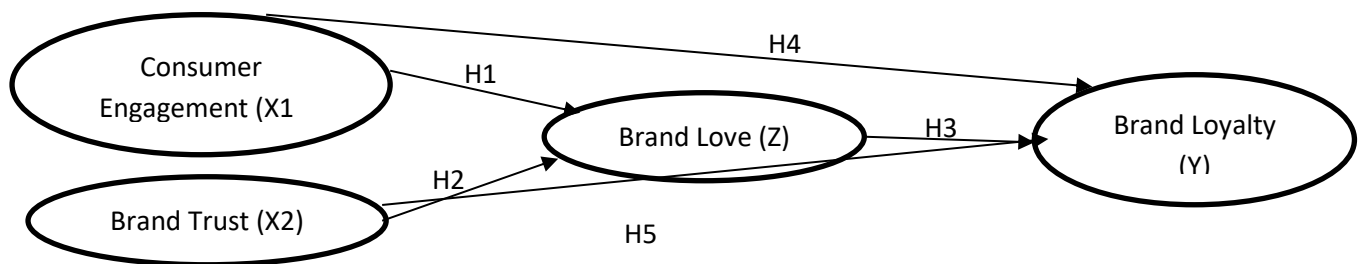


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design and Samples

This study is survey research in which the required data are collected using an online questionnaire from respondents. The current study's target population is all the Wardah brand consumers, with a total sample of 175 female respondents who are using Wardah personal care for at least two months. Samples are selected using a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling. The study respondents are identified through their demographic characteristics, including their age, education, occupation, how long they have been using Wardah products, and time spent on social media each day. The questionnaire used to gather data from respondents consists of 18 question items; 4 items to measure consumer engagement adapted from (Adhikari and Panda, 2019), five items to measure brand trust based on the study of Song et al. (2019), five items to measure brand love adopted from the research conducted by Sarkar and Sreejesh (2014), and four items to measure brand loyalty adapted from the study of Jung et al., (2020). Each question item is assessed using the 7-points Likert-Scale.

Validity, Reliability, and Hypothesis Testing

The validity testing in this study is performed using the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) through Partial Least Square (PLS) method. An outer loading score higher than 0.5 shows that the research instrument is valid (Ghozali, 2014). The research instrument's reliability is tested using the Cronbach Alpha score with a cut off of 0.6. Question item is considered reliable when its Cronbach Alpha score is higher than 0.6. The proposed hypotheses are analyzed using Structural Equation Model (SEM) in SmartPLS 3.0 software. The proposed hypotheses are supported when the T-Statistic score is higher than 1.96 with a significance level less than 0.05.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of respondent characteristics identification, including their age, education, occupation, how long, and the usage of Wardah personal care products, were summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent’s Characteristics

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 17 years old	32	18%
	17 - 22 years old	76	43%
	23 – 28 years old	34	19%
	29 – 34 years old	15	9%
	Above 35 years old	18	10%
Education	Junior High School (SMP)	30	17%
	Senior High School (SMA)	62	35%
	Bachelor (S1)	59	34%
	Master (S2)	24	14%
Occupation	University/School Students	76	43%
	Civil Servant (PNS)	35	20%
	Private Employees	20	11%
	Entrepreneur	12	7%
	Housewife	15	9%
	Other	17	10%
Wardah Personal Care Usage	2 – 5 months	65	37%
	6 – 9 months	35	20%
	10 – 12 months	30	17%
	More than 1 year	45	26%

Source: Processed primary data, 2021

Table 1 shows that the majority of consumers are around 17 to 22 years old (43%), most of the respondents have last education of Senior High School (SMA) (62%), mostly are university or school students (43%), and have been using Wardah personal care products for 2 – 5 months (37%).

The research instrument validity was tested using the partial least square (PLS) method. The instrument has a good validity when it has outer loading and AVE score above 0.5. The results of validity testing are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Research Instrument Validity

	BL	BLO_	BT	CE	AVE
BL1	0.830				0.802
BL2	0.949				
BL3	0.933				
BL4	0.865				
zBLO1		0.932			
BLO2		0.918			0.821
BLO3		0.913			
BLO4		0.859			
BT1			0.888		0.755
BT2			0.894		
BT3			0.909		
BT5			0.778		
CE1				0.929	0.684
CE2				0.920	
CE5				0.584	

Source: Processed primary data, 2021

Table 2 shows that all items have an outer loading score above 0.5. Thus, it can be said that this research instrument is valid. However, the question items: BL5, BLO5, BT4, CE3, and CE4 were excluded from the analysis because validity score below 0.5. All items passed the convergent validity test because each question item has a score above 0.5.

The reliability result in this study can be observed from Cronbach’s Alpha and the composite reliability score. The research instrument is reliable if it has Cronbach’s Alpha score above 0.7. in Composite Reliability, the research instrument should obtain a score above 0.7. Therefore, it can be said that the research instrument is reliable. The result of reliability testing is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. The Result of Reliability Testing

	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability
BL	0.918	0.942
BLO_	0.928	0.948
BT	0.890	0.925
CE	0.759	0.862

Source: Processed primary data, 2021

Table 3 shows the result of reliability testing in this study. Each variable shows Cronbach’s Alpha score above 0.7, which means the research instrument is variable. Besides Cronbach’s Alpha,

instrument reliability is also assessed through the Composite Reliability score. Each research instrument obtains a Composite Reliability score above 0.7, indicating that the research instruments passed the reliability testing.

After the validity and reliability analysis, the next analysis step is testing the research hypotheses. The proposed hypotheses were tested using the structural equation model (SEM) to test the direct impact of consumer engagement and brand trust on brand love and brand loyalty. The model also tested the indirect effect of consumer engagement and brand trust on brand loyalty with brand love as a mediating variable.

a. Direct Impact between Variables

The direct impact tests the impact of consumer engagement and brand trust on brand love, brand love on brand loyalty, and the direct effect of consumer engagement and brand trust on brand loyalty. The result of hypothesis testing is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Result

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
CE -> BL	0.497	0.110	4.528	0.000
BT -> BL	0.332	0.117	2.830	0.005
BL -> BLO_	-0.022	0.087	0.249	0.803
CE -> BLO_	0.699	0.083	8.436	0.000
BT -> BLO_	0.200	0.105	1.898	0.058

Source: Processed primary data, 2021

The result of testing of direct effect summarized in Table 4 indicates that consumer engagement has a positive and significant impact on brand love with the t-statistic value of 4.528, which is greater than 1.96 cuts off, and the significance score below 0.05. Therefore, the first hypothesis that consumer engagement affects brand love is supported. Vernuccio et al. (2015) state that brand love can be affected by consumer engagements. A consumer who loves a brand will develop a more intense emotional connection with the brand, encouraging consumer interaction and participation in the brand’s social media. High intensity of consumer engagement with a brand can improve their attitude and behavior toward a social media brand (Gummerus et al., 2012).

Table 4 also summarizes that brand trust positively and significantly affects brand love with a t-statistic of 2.830. The t-statistic is higher than the 1.96 cut off and the significance value below 0.05. From this result, we can say that the second hypothesis, brand trust affects brand love, is supported. Previous affective experience in using a product becomes a factor in building brand trust and promoting

emotional attachment to a brand (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Langner et al., 2015). Strong trust toward a brand will lead to positive results such as a stronger positive attitude, commitment, and loyalty (Drennan et al., 2015).

The result of hypothesis testing summarized in Table 4 shows that brand love does not affect brand loyalty. This result can be observed from the t-statistic score of 0.249, below the 1.96 cut off and a significance level of 0.803. Therefore, the research hypothesis is not supported. When a consumer has a negative emotional response toward a product might cause consumers to move away from the brand. Consumers' negative responses caused by bad experiences in product consumption will make that brand-consumer look for other brands that meet their expectations (Fetscherin, 2019).

Table 4 also summarizes the result of the analysis on the effect of consumer engagement on brand loyalty. This result shows a t-statistic score of 8.436, which is larger than 1.96. The resulted significance level was 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. These numbers indicate that consumer engagement has a positive and significant influence. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis, consumer engagement affects brand loyalty, is supported. Brand loyalty, satisfaction, trust, and consumer commitment can be indicated by consumer engagements (Brodie et al., 2013). Machado et al. (2019) also state that consumers who contribute to social media engagements have a significant impact in forming brand loyalty.

The last hypothesis, brand trust affects brand loyalty, is not supported in this study. As shown by the t-statistic value of 1.898, which is lower than 1.96, and the significance level of 0.058 is higher than 0.05. Therefore, based on this result, brand trust does not affect brand loyalty. Trust can appear as the result of consumer satisfaction and prior affective experience (Karjaluoto et al., 2016; Albert & Merunka, 2013). However, a negative experience in using a product will trigger consumer dissatisfaction. Consumer dissatisfaction with a product will form a complaint behavior in consumers in which some of them shared their negative experiences on the internet. A consumer's negative experience shared on the internet is also part of unfulfilled consumer expectations from using a product (Padma & Ahn, 2020). The perceived negative feeling also can trigger consumers to shift to other products or services (Siddiqi et al., 2020).

b. Indirect Effect

This study also examines the indirect effect of brand love on the relationship between consumer engagement, brand trust, and brand loyalty. The result of indirect effect analysis (mediation) is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. The Result of Mediation Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
BT -> BL -> BLO_	-0.007	0.033	0.219	0.826
CE -> BL -> BLO_	-0.011	0.043	0.252	0.801

Source: Processed primary data, 2021

Table 5 shows the result of mediation analysis, which indicates that brand love does not have a mediating role. In other words, there is no mediating effect of brand love on the relationship between brand trust and brand loyalty. The t-statistic value in the analysis is 0.219, which is lower than 1.96, and the significance level of 0.826, which is higher than 0.05. The relationship between consumer engagement and brand loyalty is also not mediated by brand love with the t-statistic value of 0.252, below the 1.96 cut-offs, and a significance level of 0.801, higher than the 0.05 cut-off.

c. Coefficient of Determination (R2)

The coefficient of determination in this study shows the extent of variations in the endogenous variable that can be explained by the study’s exogenous constructs. The coefficient of determination score ranged from 0 to 1. The coefficient of determination in this study is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination

	R Square
BL	0.614
BLO_	0.718

Source: Processed primary data, 2021

The result of the coefficient of determination presented in Table 6 shows that the effect of consumer engagement and brand trust on brand love is 0.614 or 61.4%, while the rest is explained by other variables besides consumer engagement and brand trust. Further, 0.718 or 71.8% of the variation in brand loyalty is caused by consumer engagement, brand trust, and brand love, and other variables outside the research model contribute to the rest 28.9%.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study aims to identify the effect of consumer engagement, brand trust, and brand love on brand loyalty. This study also identifies the indirect impact of consumer engagement and brand trust on brand loyalty through brand love. The research data was collected through an online questionnaire shared to consumers who use Wardah personal care for at least two months. The data collected was analyzed using PLS-SEM.

The analysis results show that consumer engagement and brand trust positively and significantly impact brand love. Consumer engagement has a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty, while brand trust and brand love have no significant effect on brand loyalty. The result of mediation testing also shows that brand love does not mediate consumer engagement and brand trust effect on brand loyalty.

This study has several limitations, such as respondents were not fully understanding the guidelines to fill the questionnaire because it is distributed online. The samples of this study only focused on female consumers, which might cause a bias because the researchers consider that male consumer also can use personal care products. Future research needs to go in deep with studies on brand loyalty, such as adding consumer experience, product quality, and other variables.

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