

The Role Of Brand Love As A Mediation Of Satisfaction And Loyalty

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Abstract

Satisfaction and loyalty are essential strategic concepts for marketers and companies. Furthermore, emotional aspects can be important in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. This study aims to analyze the role of brand love in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. The sample size in this study was 174 respondents who were consumers of skin care products. Based on the results of data analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), it was found that satisfaction has a positive effect on brand love. Still, satisfaction has yet to be proven to affect consumer loyalty. Meanwhile, brand love proves to have a positive influence on loyalty. Furthermore, brand love does not mediate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Based on the results of this research, it is recommended for future research to modify the model related to mediation relationships by examining other emotional constructs, such as emotional attachment, where satisfaction felt by consumers will bring up emotional attachment to the brand, which eventually leads to consumer loyalty.

Key Words: satisfaction, brand love, loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

Satisfaction and loyalty, as strategic concepts in marketing literature, are essential for marketers and companies. From the traditional perspective, some researchers maintain that satisfaction is an indicator of loyalty, and there is no doubt that loyalty comes after satisfaction with a product or service (Cardozo, 1965; Oliver, 1999). Furthermore, at this time, marketers realize that more than customer satisfaction is needed to build relationships with consumers sustainably. It is, therefore, necessary to create an emotional bond beyond satisfaction to create loyalty.

The review of the existing literature reveals that the role gap is an emotional construct that can start in an orderly and rational order of satisfaction and ultimately lead to consumer loyalty (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021). (Oliver, 1999) states that satisfaction and loyalty have an irregular relationship. Although loyal customers are satisfied, satisfaction only sometimes results in loyalty. Other researchers also emphasize that consumer satisfaction is not a good predictor of loyalty, so consumer engagement needs to be considered (Elias-Almeida et al., 2016; Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021).

Emotional aspects such as brand love and emotional attachment can be sought at a higher level of satisfaction, manifested in consumer interactions with brands several times (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Furthermore, (Kotler, 1997)

states that satisfaction not only creates rational preferences but also creates an emotional attachment to the brand resulting from this emotional bond, which leads to high consumer loyalty. In addition, a study conducted by (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) empirically shows that emotion and passionate love for a brand drive loyalty. Brand love is a phenomenon experienced by an individual or group of consumers who are satisfied with a product. Brand love is a concept consumers have, such as love for a brand. When consumers have pleasant feelings and are satisfied with a product, this will lead consumers to love.

Several previous studies have confirmed the mediating role of emotional aspects on satisfaction and loyalty (Drennan et al., 2015; Roy et al., 2013; Unal & Aydin, 2013). Nevertheless, the study did not specifically show what emotional variables mediate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh (2021) found that satisfaction does not directly affect brand loyalty. This proves the importance of mediating emotional constructs such as consumer attachment and brand love in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, where satisfaction does not affect loyalty, if not through brand love. However, it has yet to specifically discuss whether these two emotional aspects mediate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

This research will expand the concept (Oliver, 1999), which states that satisfaction is the initial factor in forming loyalty by assuming the emotional aspect, namely brand love, as a mediating variable. This study will also answer whether brand love mediates the transition process from satisfaction to loyalty in the correct order so that the role of emotional aspects in mediating the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty becomes clearer. Furthermore, this study will focus on users of skin care products in Semarang based on suggestions from previous research, which suggested using other product categories besides smartphones and clothing. Nowadays, skincare products have become essential for women to maintain their looks. Not only feeling satisfied the emergence of a feeling of love and attachment to the skincare product brand you like can give rise to a loyal attitude towards that product brand.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Loyalty

Loyalty is a consumer's commitment to consistently repurchase the brand in the future (Oliver, 1999). Brand loyalty is a crucial indicator of brand sustainability (Nam et al., 2011). Loyal customers tend not to switch to competing brands (Nam et al., 2011) and spread positive word of mouth (Krystallis & Chrysochou, 2014; Shirsavar et al., 2012). Loyalty is a deeply held dispositional commitment that encourages users to resist situational influences and marketing efforts that may cause brands to switch behavior (Krystallis & Chrysochou, 2014; Oliver, 1999). According to (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), brand love is an antecedent of brand loyalty.

Brand Love

Brand love is defined by (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) as the level of emotional attachment possessed by consumers who feel satisfied with a particular product or service. Love for a brand includes brand attachment, positive evaluation

of the brand, passion for the brand, positive emotions, and statements of love. When consumers trust a brand, they will buy products with brands they have purchased, so they will feel satisfied and happy and then love the brand (Aprilianingsih & Putra, 2021). (Manthiou et al., 2018) argue that brand love is a form of attitude that satisfied consumers have towards a brand and is described as a level of passionate, emotional attachment to a particular brand.

Furthermore, (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) suggests that brand love is an individual with emotions and passion for the brand. Brand commitment is a core component of brand loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Therefore, brand love is conceptualized as an emotional and passionate feeling for a brand that might lead to brand commitment or loyalty in time.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a type of cognition resulting from a purchase experience or consumption of a particular product (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021). A brand must engage in action to engage consumers. The more they have contact with consumers, the more brands will have positive returns from that relationship, one of which is satisfaction (Ferreira et al., 2019). According to the conceptualization, satisfaction confirmations result from a good correspondence between customer expectations and service experience (Churchill Jr & Surprenant, 1982). (Thomson et al., 2005) argue that satisfaction is based on brand attachment, noting that consumers with a passion for a brand generally feel satisfied. Satisfaction is an initial factor that predicts loyalty.

Hypothesis Development

The Effect of Satisfaction on Brand Love

Satisfaction develops from the accumulation of experiences that consumers feel about a product (Drennan et al., 2015). Satisfaction changes the set of long-term experiences and relational behaviors such as brand love (Drennan et al., 2015; Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021). A study (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) states that brand love is a new marketing construct that better predicts and explains variations in long-term relational behavior among consumers who feel satisfaction with a brand. In a literature review of previous studies, satisfaction is considered a factor in forming brand love (Al-Haddad, 2019; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Drennan et al., 2015). Satisfaction can lead to brand love resulting from the accumulation of satisfying experiences and produce positive emotional responses from consumers. Furthermore, research conducted by (See Al-Haddad, 2019; Aro et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2021) shows that satisfaction positively affects brand love. Consumers' love for the brand will increase when satisfaction is higher. Based on the previous explanation, we conclude that:

H1: Satisfaction has a positive effect on brand love.

The Effect of Satisfaction on Loyalty

Research in marketing has provided empirical evidence that satisfaction is a strong predictor of repurchase intention and willingness to recommend products and services, which is the critical component of loyalty (Toyama &

Yamada, 2012). Several previous studies have proven that satisfaction can increase consumer loyalty. A study conducted by (Shapoval et al., 2018) confirmed that the satisfaction felt by millennial consumers after visiting a green restaurant would increase their likelihood of returning to that restaurant. Besides, (Kim et al., 2021) research on customers who visited Robot Barista Coffee Shops (RBCS) in Korea confirmed that satisfaction can increase loyalty. Satisfied RBCS customers are more likely to revisit it in the future and be willing to recommend it to others. Based on the previous explanation, we conclude that:

H2: Satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty.

The Effect of Brand Love on Loyalty

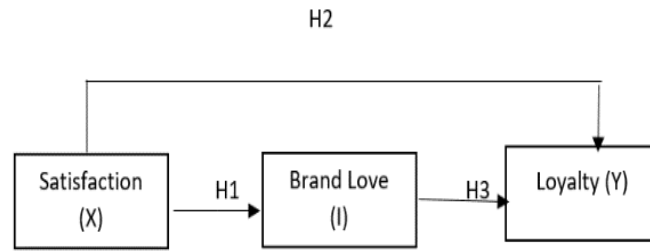
Brand love is an emotional bond studied with consumer behavior, the most profound emotion involving consumer relationships with specific brands. Previous research has empirically proven that consumers' love for a brand is the primary determinant of brand loyalty. Research on brand love includes a study by (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), and an analysis by (Albert & Merunka, 2013), which found that love for a brand arises from closeness so that brand loyalty can be predicted. In their research, (Song et al., 2019) argue that consumers' love for the coffee shop brand is an antecedent to increasing loyalty. (Shen et al., 2016) revealed that brand love formed after consumers felt a pleasant experience of fine dining at a restaurant, which would increase their intention to revisit and be willing to recommend it to others. Based on the previous explanation, we conclude that:

H3: brand love has a positive effect on the loyalty.

Mediating Effect of Brand Love

In a scenario from the sixth scenario of satisfaction and loyalty proposed by (Oliver, 1999), satisfaction is the beginning of a series of transitions that produce loyalty. Furthermore, (Oliver, 1999) stated that although loyal consumers start from perceived satisfaction, satisfaction only sometimes leads to loyalty. More than consumer satisfaction with a product and service is needed to build a sustainable relationship. There needs to be an emotional bond to create loyal consumers. studied the mediating role of emotional aspects, namely brand attachment and brand love, in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. In a study (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021) here is a mediating role of emotional aspects such as brand love in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. The research results state that satisfaction has no direct effect on loyalty. These findings prove the critical role of brand attachment and love in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. For smartphone and clothing consumers, emotional aspects such as love and affection for a brand direct them towards loyalty. Based on the previous explanation, we conclude that:

H4: brand love mediates the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.



Picture 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses quantitative methods. Meanwhile, the method of determining the sample in this study used purposive sampling, with several criteria in the sample, such as women aged over 16 years having purchased and used body care products for approximately one year. Regarding absolute measurements, the sample size should be 100 or larger (Hair et al., 2014). Data collection uses the online survey method. From the data collection results, 174 respondent data can be analyzed. Researchers translated and modified previous measurements in this study to suit the research context. The indicators in this study use indicators of earlier researchers. Measuring satisfaction using four indicators from (Fornell et al., 1996), while the brand love variable uses five measurement indicators (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

Furthermore, the loyalty variable (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) uses five measurement indicators. Furthermore, to measure perceptions at each measurement, researchers used a 5-point Likert scale, with answer choices ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Researchers also included some demographic questions. In addition, to analyze the data, we use SEM analysis using Amos.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the respondents' profiles, it was found that of the 174 respondents who participated in the survey, 62,06 % were 25-30. Then, from an income perspective, most respondents have an income of less than IDR 1,000,000.00, with 58,04 %. Furthermore, for the length of time using skin care products, the usage category of more than one year was the highest category with 57,47 %. Based on purchase intensity, it was dominated by respondents who bought the product once, with 64,36 %. The respondents' profiles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Ages (year)	17-20	56	32,18
	21-24	5	2,87
	25-30	108	62,06
	>30	5	2,87
Income	<1.000.000	101	58,04
	1.000.000-2000.000	41	23,56
	2.100.000-3.000.000	16	9,19
	3.100.000-4000.000	8	4,59
	4.100.000-5.000.000	5	2,87
	>5.000.000	3	1,72
Length of time using skin care products	< 1 year	74	42,53
	>1 year	100	57,47
Purchase Intensity	Once	112	64,37
	Twice	22	12,64
	More than twice	40	22,99

Source: Primary Data (2022)

This study uses the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) equation with Amos software to analyze the effect on each variable. Data analysis begins with confirmatory factor analysis, which aims to determine the measurement of each indicator used. (Hair et al., 2014) stated that the loading factor should be statistically significant. Because the statistical value of the loading factor may still be very weak, especially with large samples, a good rule of thumb is 0.5 or higher and, ideally, 0.7 or higher. This test found that the loading factor values of the indicators used were all above 0.5. This shows that all indicators were valid.

Furthermore, we used composite reliability analysis and Cronbach Alpha to test the reliability variable. Based on the analysis results, it was known that the composite reliability value ranges from 0.76 to 0.85. Meanwhile, the Cronbach Alpha is more than 0.7. These results state that the measurements are reliable (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The results of the validity and reliability tests are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Results of The Validity and Reliability Test**

Indicators	Loading (λ)	Cronbach alpha	CR
Satisfaction			
satisfaction 1	0,780	0.710	
satisfaction 2	0,830	0.705	
Satisfaction 3	0,807	0.712	0,84
Brand Love			
bllove1	0,759	0.718	
bllove2	0,763	0.714	
bllove3	0,634	0.759	0,76
Loyalty			
loy1	0,544	0.714	
loy2	0,639	0.737	
loy3	0,716	0.737	
loy4	0,794	0.724	
loy5	0,708	0.739	0,85

Source: Primary Data (2022)

The following data analysis stage is the Goodness of Fit or normality test on the research model. Model fit compares the theory to reality by assessing the similarity of the estimated covariance matrix theory to the reality of the observed covariance matrix (Hair et al., 2014). From the nine existing components of Goodness of Fit, data in this study showed good results, where eight components were in good standing, and one was marginal. The Chi-square in the data test results obtained at 81.5 is good. Results of the Goodness Of Fit are presented in detail in Table 3.

Table 3. Goodness of Fit

GOF	Statistic Output	Cut-Off Va.	Status
<i>Chi-Square</i>	81,5	Expected small	Fit
<i>Significance Probability</i>	0,00	0,00-0,05	Fit
<i>CMIN/DF</i>	1,988	$\leq 2,0$	Fit
<i>GFI</i>	0,935	$\geq 0,80$	Fit
<i>RMSEA</i>	0,70	$\leq 0,80$	Fit
<i>AGFI</i>	0,896	$\geq 0,80$	Fit
<i>TLI</i>	0,923	$\geq 0,90$	Fit
<i>NFI</i>	0,893	$\geq 0,90$	Marginal
<i>CFI</i>	0,942	$\geq 0,90$	Fit

Source: Primary Data (2022)

After analyzing the Goodness Of Fit test of the model, hypothesis testing used a structural equation model. Based on the structural model analysis results, it was known that the CR value among the variables of

satisfaction with brand love is 3.809 with a significance of 0.00, which means less than 0.05, so hypothesis 1 was accepted. Meanwhile, the CR value between the variables of satisfaction on loyalty was 0.575 with a significance of 0.565 (> 0.05), so hypothesis 2 was rejected. Meanwhile, the CR between brand love and loyalty variables is 2.079 with a significance of 0.38, so hypothesis 3 was accepted. Furthermore, the CR value between satisfaction variables on loyalty through brand love was 1.079 with a significance of 0.100 (> 0.05), so hypothesis 4 was rejected. The results of the structural equation model are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of SEM Analysis

Hypothesis	Beta	CR	P-value	Results
Satisfaction->Brand Love	0,189	3,809	***	Accepted
Satisfaction-> Loyalty	0,030	0,575	,565	Rejected
Brand Love->Loyalty	0,305	2,079	,038	Accepted
Satisfaction-> Brand Love->Loyalty	0,405	1,079	,100	Rejected

Source: Primary Data (2022)

From the results of the analysis, it was found that several findings explained the research model. Based on the test, it is known that satisfaction has a positive effect on consumer love for the brand. This is in line with research conducted by (see; (Al-Haddad, 2019; Aro et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2021), which shows that satisfaction positively affects brand love. Someone highly satisfied with a product tends to love and want to build a long-term emotional relationship with the brand.

On the other hand, the research results state that satisfaction does not affect consumer loyalty. This finding is supported by previous studies that prove that satisfaction is not a good predictor of loyalty (see (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021). More than the satisfaction felt after consuming the product is needed to build a relationship with consumers continuously. Someone satisfied with a product does not guarantee that he will always be loyal to that product. The wide selection of products offered by many companies today creates a desire for consumers to try several other product brands even though they are satisfied with the products used before. There needs to be an emotional bond that goes beyond satisfaction to be able to continue to increase consumer loyalty.

When viewed from the emotional aspect, brand love positively affects loyalty. The results of this study are consistent with several previous studies which state that brand love influences consumer loyalty to a product (Ferreira et al., 2019; Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021; Huang, 2017; Kim et al., 2021). Consumers who like a brand tend to be loyal to the brand. (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021) Found that brand love is the most robust antecedent of brand loyalty. If someone falls in love with a brand, that person will develop a passionate, emotional relationship with that brand. This type of relationship will create a strong emotional response to a brand, which guarantees the brand's

repurchase. A study by (Roy et al., 2013) found that love for a brand positively affects further customer satisfaction, and love for a brand also positively affects customer loyalty.

Meanwhile, research results related to the role of brand love in mediating the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty were not proven in this study. Brand love does not mediate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. This finding does not align with studies conducted by (see Ferreira et al., 2019; Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021). Their research (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021) states the importance of the mediating role of the emotional construct of brand love in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Brand love is the only variable that directly affects loyalty compared to satisfaction, which does not directly affect loyalty but must be through brand love.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, satisfaction positively affects brand love, but satisfaction has yet to be proven to affect consumer loyalty. On the other hand, consumer love for the brand of skin care products used affects the level of consumer loyalty to the product. Furthermore, we prove that brand love does not mediate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. In theory, this research contributes to developing the satisfaction and loyalty relationship model initiated by (Oliver, 1999). This study investigates the role of emotional aspects, namely brand love, in mediating the transition process from satisfaction to loyalty. Although the results of this study indicate that brand love does not mediate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, it is essential to investigate other emotional variables to explain this relationship. Therefore, the authors provide recommendations to modify the model by examining other emotional constructs in future research, for example, emotional engagement, where high consumer satisfaction will lead to emotional engagement with the brand, eventually leading to loyalty.

On the other hand, Identifying the antecedents and consequences of brand love can help managers better understand the factors that drive consumers' emotional attachment to brands. It is essential for skin care companies to consistently provide products that can satisfy consumer needs and create a pleasant experience so that consumers have positive emotions and passion for the brand. The research results also found that brand love influences consumer loyalty. Therefore, managers need to strengthen customer-brand relationships by creating products that suit customer preferences and providing loyalty programs to keep customers loyal to the skin care product brand.

This research also has limitations; there are no open questions in the questionnaire. However, it is essential in this research to explore more deeply the satisfaction, emotional response, and passion that consumers feel towards the brand. For further research, it is recommended to design open questionnaire questions to obtain more comprehensive answers.

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