

DOES EXPERIENCE LEAD PEOPLE TO BUY? THE FORMATION OF BRAND LOYALTY USING THE THEORY OF LOVE ON OLDER CONSUMERS

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ABSTRACT

The research investigated factors that influenced the positive brand experiences of older consumers that led them to be loyal to the product. Data were collected using a paper-based survey, and 362 older consumers participated in the research. Using path analysis, the results suggested that the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty was stronger when the experience of older consumers predicted their loyalty through affectivity and trust. The research provided evidence that the consumer and brand relationship could be explained using the triangular theory of love and the theory of planned behavior. It can be concluded that the affection and trust of older consumers are essential. Thus, their experience of the product leads to loyalty.

Keywords: brand affect, brand experience, brand loyalty, brand trust

INTRODUCTION

As a part of brand management, many companies attempt to promote their product by providing consumers with their experiences before purchasing the product. They do it to develop trust and loyalty. For example, companies may give a gift card or free products to consumers on the street or inside shopping malls and design the product that is relevant to current trends, issues, or events. People tend to be willing to try products that are offered if they are free or have a unique design. Previous studies discover that the experience of using the product increases the loyalty of consumers (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). This research argues that consumers may not only purchase the product as a result of previous positive experiences. There are more individual factors that lead consumers to purchase the product. This argument is addressed explicitly toward older consumers who tend to be loyal (Lambert-Pandraud, Laurent, & Lapersonne, 2005). Therefore, it may be difficult to convince older consumers to purchase a new product in the future only by providing them with experiences. This study

will investigate the factors that influence the positive brand experiences of older consumers that lead them to be loyal to the product. For this reason, the researchers believe that using deductive research approach is appropriate to explain the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

Older consumers may experience changes in their life due to the loss of loved ones, retirement, or decline in their health (Berg, 2015; Moschis, 2012). They should not be grouped with adult consumers, as they may have different needs or require special treatment (Moschis, 2012). Older consumers are a new and promising segment of the market. By 2050, the number of older people in the world may reach 17% of the global population, including Asia (He, Goodkind, & Kowal, 2016; Moschis, 2012). Although older consumers tend to be loyal, investigating the antecedents of their loyalty is required. It is because the marketing research in this group of consumers is limited (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). A loyal consumer voluntarily recommends a product to other consumers (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Many older consumers are more likely to recommend the products they regularly use to other family members or friends (Kitapci et al., 2013;

Baloglu, 2002; Vun et al., 2013). From the researchers' observation in the community, it shows that older people are more likely to advise their friends and young generations to buy a specific product. This is beneficial for the company as these recommendations indirectly reduce their marketing costs (Kitapci et al., 2013; Baloglu, 2002).

In marketing studies, the loyalty of consumers is measured using brand loyalty. This refers to the behavioral and attitudinal commitment of consumers to consistently purchase the product or services over time. It is influenced by the unique value of the product (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Previous studies discover some antecedents of brand loyalty such as brand satisfaction, brand equity, brand value, brand trust, brand experience, and brand affect (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Foguet, 2011; Singh, Iglesias, & Batista-Foguet, 2012; Kuikka & Laukkanen, 2012). This research investigates how brand experience influences brand loyalty through brand affect and brand trust.

Brand experience is an affective, cognitive, and behavioral response after the consumer processes, evaluates, and appreciates a product's information, emotions, and activities. It includes its design, identity, packaging, communications, and environment (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Ha & Perks, 2005; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Başer, Cintamür, & Arslan, 2015). In this research, brand experience is not only described as the consumer's direct experience in using the product, but also the consumer's indirect experience from other people's experiences (Ha & Perks, 2005). Previous studies on brand experience have mostly investigated its relationship with brand loyalty (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Foguet, 2011), brand trust (Ha & Perks, 2005; Başer, Cintamür, & Arslan, 2015), or purchase intention (Shamim & Mohsin Butt, 2013). Because none of those studies investigate how older consumers can influence the relationship between brand experiences and brand loyalty, this research tries to examine the effect of affectivity on the relationship.

The particular interest in this research is the effect of positive affection in influencing the loyalty of older consumers. In addition, it is believed that through the positive affection toward the product, experiences also influence the development of brand trust. Thus, it influences the loyalty of older consumers. To explain the way brand experience predicts brand loyalty through affection and trust, an interpersonal relationship theory, inspired by the research by Fournier (1998), is used. Therefore, the model shown in Figure 1 is suggested.

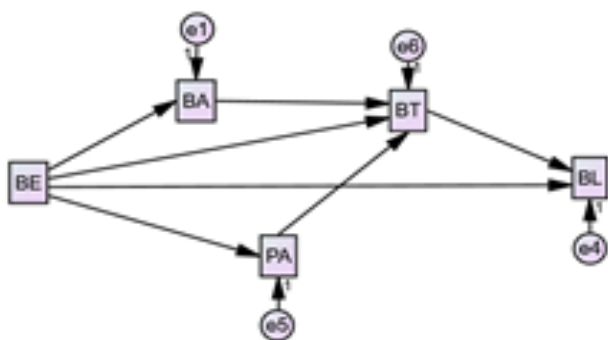


Figure 1 Research Model

Note: BE = Brand Experience, BA = Brand Affect, PA = Positive Affectivity, BT = Brand Trust, PI = Purchase Intention, BL = Brand Loyalty

As shown in the model (Figure 1), brand affect and general affectivity are differentiated. This is to measure affectivity as a result of self-evaluation and the automatic activation of the cognitive representation of emotions (Quirin, Kazén, & Kuhl, 2009). In consumer behavior research, brand affect is an emotional response that may occur after consumers use a product. It is often used to measure the affection of consumers toward a product (Afif et al., 2015; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). In psychological science, affection is an interpretation of emotion from an individual's perception, information process, and knowledge, which is related to their positive or negative perception of an object (Huitt & Cain, 2005). Every individual processes information differently or has different perceptions of an object. This may influence their attitudes, behaviors, and decisions (Cohen, Pham, & Andrade, 2015; Dick & Basu, 1994; Liu & Zhou, 2009). Therefore, this research argues that measuring affectivity in different ways can improve the interpretation of the effect of affectivity on the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

Brand affect is normally measured using a self-report questionnaire. Then, respondents evaluate and reflect on their answers. In terms of brand affect, evaluating and reflecting on the responses of the questionnaires may be more appropriate as it is intended to measure the emotions of older consumers after using the product. Conversely, a well-known measurement of affectivity in psychology is the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). PANAS is intended to measure two mood factors (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). This research uses Implicit Positive and Negative Affect Test (IPANAT) to measure the positive affectivity of older consumers toward the product. IPANAT measures individual emotions. It is not as a result of self-reflection but as a result of the automatic activation of the cognitive representation of emotions (Quirin, Kazén, & Kuhl, 2009; Quirin et al., 2018). Measuring implicit affectivity is important for measuring the 'real' emotions of older consumers toward a product. In addition, positive affectivity (happy, cheerful, and energetic) is only measured as the goal to investigate if experience toward the brand results in positive affect.

Next, brand trust is the long-term relationship between the consumer and the brand. The consumer believes that a brand is reliable and provides the product they offer (Afif et al., 2015; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Many previous studies discover that brand trust is one solid antecedent of brand loyalty (Kim, Yoon, & Yan, 2015; Matzler, Grabner-Kräuter, & Bidmon, 2008; Mishra, Kesharwani, & Das, 2016; Sahin, Zehir, & Kitapci, 2011). People who trust a brand can develop a positive attitude toward the product, which transmits a positive attitude to other people (Matzler, Grabner-Kräuter, & Bidmon, 2008). It is argued that older consumers who have a positive attitude toward a brand tend to have greater trust in the brand. They transmit their trust in the brand to other people and make them a loyal consumer. Aside from brand loyalty, brand trust is also positively related to brand experience (Ha & Perks, 2005; Singh, Iglesias, & Batista-Foguet, 2012; Shimp, Carolina, & Madden, 1988). A positive experience may improve the trust of the consumer when they are familiar with the product (Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). When consumers do not know what they should purchase, in a risky and uncertain situation, they tend to purchase a product they trust (Moorman, Zaltman, & Deshpande, 1992).

Interpersonal relationship theory is used to explain

the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty through affectivity and brand trust. The quality of the brand relationship depends on love and passion, self-connection, commitment, interdependence, intimacy, and brand partner quality. Those factors reflect the qualities of human relationships (Fournier, 1998; Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). All of these factors lead to relationship stability and durability through accommodation, tolerance, forgiveness, biased partner perception, the devaluation of alternatives, and attribution biases (Fournier, 1998). Fournier (1998) also provides further details about the brand relationship quality framework. The relationship between brand and consumer is influenced by the way the brand gives meaning to consumers in terms of their psychological, sociocultural, and relational contexts. One interpersonal relationship theory that can be used to explain the brand and consumer relationship is the triangular theory of love (Bairrada, Coelho, & Coelho, 2018; Bıçakcıoğlu, İpek, & Bayraktaroğlu, 2018; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 1998; Roy, Eshghi, & Sarkar, 2013).

From the triangular theory of love, three features explain how the experiences of older consumers make them loyal to a brand or a product. The components are intimacy, passion, and decision or commitment (Anderson, 2016; Madey & Rodgers, 2009; Sternberg, 2004). In a loving relationship, a person may have a feeling of closeness, connectedness, and intimacy that creates a deeper attraction or passion by leading them to commit to maintaining a relationship (Sternberg, 2004). Related to the brand and consumer relationship, an experience of using a product directly or indirectly (through the experiences of others) can more easily be recorded in the memory of the consumer than the specific features or benefits of the product (Ha & Perks, 2005).

In addition, the theory of planned behavior argues that an individual's attitude toward an object together with subjective norms and perceived behavioral control creates intention. Thus, it may direct them to a specific behavior (Ajzen, 2001). The attitudes of older consumers and their experiences of the brand developed after the first positive experience can develop into a feeling of closeness, connectedness, and intimacy. After several times, those who repeatedly experience the same positive feeling have the passion for purchasing the product again until they commit to always purchasing the product.

It is noted that once older consumers have a positive attitude toward the brand, they are reluctant to discover more information about the product or any other product (Deshpande & Krishnan, 1982; Lambert-Pandraud, Laurent, & Lapersonne, 2005). This indicates that once older consumers have a positive attitude and experience, they develop trust and habit (Lambert-Pandraud, Laurent, & Lapersonne, 2005). Therefore, the tendency to purchase a product that has been on the market for a long time increases (Deshpande & Krishnan, 1982). Then, the researchers hypothesize that brand experience predicts brand loyalty through brand affect, positive affectivity, and brand trust.

METHODS

The convenience sample comprises 362 older people (M_{Age} = 65.78; S_DAge = 6.99; 63% [n = 230] are males). It represents a response rate of 80%. Data are collected in Indonesia using a paper-based questionnaire. All participants are required to be familiar with the brand used in this research, be capable of purchasing goods themselves,

or be capable of deciding to make the purchase themselves. The brand is well-known mineral water. The brand is chosen since it has been available for more than 40 years. Therefore, it is expected that the respondents know the product and identify it easily from its current promotions and advertisements.

Moreover, all respondents receive a small gift for participating. Informed consent is provided before data collection. Only respondents who are willing to participate are provided with the questionnaire. After all, questionnaires are collected; only the completed questionnaires are used in the data analysis.

For the data collection, four short surveys are used. Each survey consists of three to six items. A paper-based version of IPANAT is used, which is developed by Quirin, Kazén, and Kuhl (2009). Short surveys are used to minimize the effects of fatigue, as respondents are older people. Therefore, it is expected that they will complete the questionnaire between 10 and 15 minutes. All instruments are translated from English to Bahasa Indonesia using the translation procedure from Sousa and Rojjanasrirat (2011).

There are five variables used. First, it is brand loyalty. Four items from the questionnaire Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) are used to measure brand loyalty. For scoring, a five-point Likert-style scale is used. It ranges from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Some examples of the statements are "I will always buy the product" or "I will pay more than other brand". Second, it is brand experience. Five used items are adapted from Ha and Perks (2005). Like the first variable, a five-point Likert-style scale is also used from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The examples of items are "I participate in a special event offered" and "Offering reasonable prices is very important".

Third, there is brand affect. Three items are from Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) to measure brand affect. The scoring uses a seven-point Likert-style scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Fourth, it is positive affectivity. The IPANAT from Quirin, Kazén, and Kuhl (2009) is used to measure positive affectivity. This test uses artificial words (e.g., SAFME, VIKES, TUNBA, TALEP, BELNI, and SUKOV) to rate the participants' expression of positive moods (happy, cheerful, or energetic) and negative moods (helpless, tense, or inhibited). Each word is paired with positive and negative moods. Then, the participants are required to express their feelings toward the word. Participants rate each word using a four-point Likert-style scale ranging from 1 = does not fit at all to 4 = fits very well. Fifth, it is brand trust. Using a seven-point Likert-style scale for scoring, the researchers use four items from the questionnaires by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001). Two examples are "I trust the brand" and "I rely on this brand".

Next, the data are analyzed using the maximum likelihood estimation method of path analysis. It uses the analysis of moment structure software (AMOS, version 25) (Arbuckle, 2017). The regression coefficients, direct, indirect, total effect, and the model's goodness-of-fit are calculated. In addition, the indirect effects plugins by StatWiki (n.d.) are used to add additional information to the indirect effect model. The goodness-of-fit used is a chi-square, comparative fit index, goodness-of-fit index, adjusted goodness-of-fit index, incremental fit index, root mean square residual, and root mean square error of approximation (Bentler, 1990; Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Hayakawa, 2019; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006; Marsh, Hau, & Grayson, 2005; Wang, Fan, & Willson, 1996; Yuan et al., 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities for all the scales used in this research. The Cronbach's alpha reliabilities for all variables are satisfactory. Then, all variables are positively correlated to each other, ranging from $\alpha = 0,803$ to $\alpha = 0,958$ and $r = 0,229$, $p < 0,01$ to $r = 0,832$, $p < 0,01$ respectively.

Figure 2 presents the standardized estimate coefficients for the proposed model using a maximum likelihood estimation method of path analysis in AMOS (Arbuckle, 2017). All standardized estimates are significantly different from 0 at the 0,05 level. The indirect effect resulting from StatWiki (n.d.) is presented in Table 2. This demonstrates that all possible indirect effects from

brand experience to brand loyalty, through to brand affect, positive affectivity, and brand trust, are also significant. This means that brand affect, positive affectivity, and brand trust mediate the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty. The model's goodness-of-fit indices are also measured as detailed in Table 3, which provides a satisfactory fit.

This research investigates the way of brand experience predicts brand loyalty through brand affect, positive affectivity, and brand trust in older consumers. It is understood that older consumers having previous positive experiences in using a product have positive affectivity toward that product. Those positive experiences and affectivities develop into the trust so that they voluntarily promote the product to others and commit to buy it in the

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Scale Reliabilities

	Mean	SD	BE	BA	PA	BT	BL
BE	22,569	3,773	0,803				
BA	14,843	2,588	0,667**	0,914			
PA	2,592	0,839	0,309**	0,229**	0,958		
BT	18,876	3,433	0,703**	0,770**	0,297**	0,863	
BL	18,456	3,846	0,665**	0,643**	0,286**	0,832**	0,889

Note. Diagonal entries in bold are scale reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha). BE = Brand Experience, BA = Brand Affect, BT = Brand Trust, PA = Positive Affectivity, BL = Brand Loyalty.

*Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

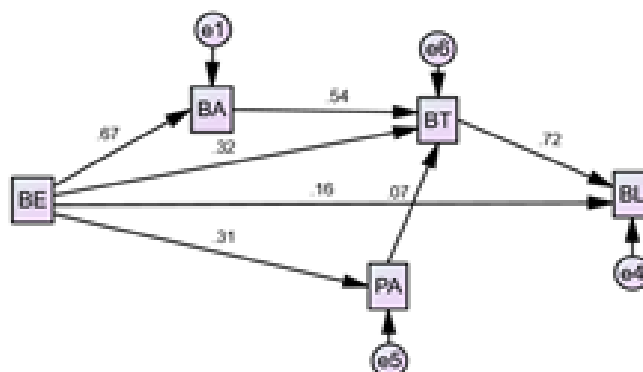


Figure 2 Standardized Direct Effect Estimates of the Model

Note: BE = Brand Experience, BA = Brand Affect, PA = Positive Affectivity, BT = Brand Trust, BL = Brand Loyalty.

*Regression weight is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

**Regression weight is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 Indirect Standardized Estimate Results

Indirect path	Standardized estimate	Lower	Upper	P-value
BE → BA → BT	0,360**	0,266	0,39	0,001
BE → PA → BT	0,023*	0,006	0,04	0,019
BE → BT → BL	0,230***	0,184	0,298	0,001
PA → BT → BL	0,053*	0,064	0,435	0,025
BA → BT → BL	0,388**	0,468	0,691	0,001

Table 3 Goodness-of-Fit Indices

X2	d.f	p	X2/d.f.	GFI	AGFI	CFI	IFI	RMSEA
1,987	3	0,575	0,662	0,998	0,989	1	1	0

Note: X2/d.f = Relative Chi-Square, GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index, AGFI = adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, IFI = Increment Fit Index, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

future. The hypothesis of this research is tested using path analysis. It states that brand experience is a better predictor of brand loyalty through brand affect, positive affectivity, and brand trust.

The analysis supports the finding that brand experience directly predicts brand loyalty. This supports the research of Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009); Iglesias, Singh, and Batista-Foguet (2011); Ramaseshan and Stein (2014), and Şahin, Zehir, and Kitapci (2011). However, the model in this research suggests that the strength of the relationship is increased when brand affect, positive affectivity, and brand trust are introduced into the relationship as mediators, as shown in Table 2. This research provides additional understanding of how brand experience is more likely to lead to brand loyalty in older consumers. Using the triangular theory of love to explain the relationship, the researchers argue that older consumers' intimacy feeling toward a product can direct their positive affections to improve their trust in the brand (Ha & Perks, 2005; Sternberg, 2004). After trust has developed, older consumers develop their habit by purchasing the product (Deshpande & Krishnan, 1982; Lambert-Pandraud, Laurent, & Lapersonne, 2005).

In addition, this research suggests that older consumers' impression when first trying the product creates a positive intention that may direct them to purchase the product again in the future (Ajzen, 2001). This research provides evidence to explain the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty. It is done through brand affect, positive affection, and brand trust using the triangular theory of love and the theory of planned behavior.

CONCLUSIONS

This research demonstrates the importance of creating experiences for older consumers to improve their attitudes and intentions in a product that can develop their trust and loyalty. These researches are essential for business and academics to increase the number of research that involve older consumers. Although the research is more difficult to conduct, it may provide valuable information on what influences or improves the loyalty of older consumers. Business people can use this research to implement relevant marketing strategies. They should increase the number of experiences in promoting the product so that older consumers' trust develops. For example, various product testers should be given to older consumers during exhibitions.

Older consumers who positively experience a product are more likely to develop positive affection and trust in that product. These important and valuable attitudes improve loyalty. More advanced methodologies and data collection are required to improve understanding of the relationship. It is also important to conduct more research on older consumers to discover the most effective strategies to promote products intended for their cohort.

It is important to note the limitations of this research. This preliminary data collection on older consumers must be extended in terms of data collection methods. It is better to investigate the relationship if older consumers can evaluate the product over a longer period of time. In this way, the genuine intentions and attitudes of older consumers can be evaluated. Although this evaluation is not conducted, the method attempts to address this issue by using a product that is known to the respondents (a brand of mineral water known in Indonesia). At the time of data collection, this brand is active in developing the experiences of consumers through direct and indirect methods such as promotions and events.

Additionally, during the data collection, some respondents have difficulty in understanding the instructions in the survey. It is possibly due to fatigue. Future research should be aware that this problem may arise, particularly if the research uses longitudinal methods. It is also suggested that other products should be used as a comparison. It is because older consumers are more likely to use recreational products instead of daily products.

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