

Exploring the influence of 'Korean Wave' on brand loyalty: The moderating role of product type

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Abstract

The 'Korean Wave' has significantly impacted the global economy, especially in Indonesia. However, there is a gap in understanding how Korean celebrities, as brand ambassadors, influence local consumer behavior and purchase intentions. This study aims to clarify this impact using the theory of planned behavior (TPB) framework. The roles of brand attachment, brand love, and brand loyalty, moderated by product type, were examined with 194 survey respondents, and data was analyzed using SmartPLS software. Key findings indicate that brand personality significantly influences brand attachment. Customer brand engagement positively affects brand love. Brand attachment impacts both brand loyalty and brand love, while brand love strongly influences brand loyalty. Brand loyalty significantly affects purchase intentions, confirming that loyal customers are more likely to make repeat purchases. Product type only moderates the influence of brand attachment on brand loyalty, not the influence of brand love on brand loyalty. The implications for marketers are significant. Businesses should leverage Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors to enhance brand visibility and loyalty. Aligning brand personality with ambassadors can deepen consumer attachment. Creating engaging content and focusing on emotional branding can foster stronger connections. Tailoring marketing strategies to different product types and monitoring brand loyalty feedback can enhance market performance. Despite its contributions, the study acknowledges limitations, including potential demographic biases and the need for broader cultural and product category exploration in future research.

Introduction

The global economy has become increasingly interconnected and reliant on various factors, making it essential to understand its dynamics. Smith, an expert in the philosophy of economics, posits that the global economy connects countries to interact and coordinate for common economic goals. The global economy is projected to grow by 6.0% in 2021, moderate to 4.4% in 2022, and decrease to 2.7% in 2023 (Mulyani, 2022). Indonesia, however, managed to grow above market analysis forecasts for Q2 2023, achieving a growth rate of 5.17% (Ayuni et al., 2021). These changes in economic growth are closely related to the creative economy and the influence of the internet on society. The creative economy in Indonesia has continuously increased its contribution to the national economy, accelerating economic recovery.

The Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia, Salahudin Uno, emphasized the importance of leveraging the momentum of the creative economy and digitalization to develop the domestic creative economy digital ecosystem, particularly contributing to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Fransisca, 2021). Indonesia ranks third globally in the contribution of the creative economy to GDP. Economic growth is also driven by the widespread use of social media, allowing users to interact and present themselves to a wide audience. Active social media users in Indonesia

total 167 million, with an average use duration of 3 hours and 11 minutes, and about 58.9% using social media to fill their free time (We Are Social, 2024). This extensive social media usage influences societal tastes and preferences, particularly among the younger generation.

The development of the creative industry, especially the art sector, has led to South Korea's influence on international culture, known as the 'Korean Wave or Hallyu'. This cultural phenomenon, encompassing K-Pop, K-Drama, fashion, and food, has spread widely across Asia and beyond. The 'Korean Wave' is particularly popular in Indonesia, where fans spend significant amounts of money on South Korean products and entertainment. According to a Twitter report released in January 2023, Indonesia had the largest number of K-Pop fans in the world in 2021 and was the country that discussed K-Pop the most on Twitter (Alifah, 2022). This popularity underscores the strong brand loyalty associated with South Korean entertainment.

Artists and celebrities play a crucial role in delivering trustworthy and appealing messages to consumers, fostering brand loyalty. When consumers trust and are loyal to a brand, it increases their buying interest and even creates repeat purchases (Mainardes et al., 2019). Many local brands in Indonesia employ Korean stars as their brand ambassadors to attract and retain customers. Brand ambassadors, chosen for their appearances and personalities, can significantly influence consumer perceptions and buying (Kotler et al., 2019). In the context of the Korean Wave's impact on Indonesian local brands, there remains a gap in understanding how endorsements from Korean celebrities can influence brand loyalty and purchase intention. Previous studies measure more about non-brand related variables.

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) focuses on how attitudes and behavioral norms can influence decision-making and provides a robust framework for understanding consumer behavior. Previous research by Ajzen (1991) has measured this topic and found that TPB is very useful in explaining how and why consumers are attracted to businesses with brand ambassadors, acknowledging the influence of social and cultural trends such as the 'Korean Wave' on many decisions. Although TPB has been widely used in research, its application to product moderation with elements of the 'Korean Wave' is still somewhat limited. Therefore, utilizing TPB in this context could provide valuable insights.

Understanding how the presence of Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors can influence consumer loyalty and purchase intentions across customers in Indonesia is the goal of this research. Specifically, this study will explore the role of brand attachment, brand love, and the moderating effect of product type on these influences. The novelty of this research focuses on the 'Korean Wave' (Hallyu) developing in Indonesia and its impact on brand loyalty, particularly through the role of product type as a moderating factor, an area that has not been extensively researched before. By examining how product type can affect the effectiveness of Korean celebrity endorsements, this study aims to provide new insights into consumer behavior and brand loyalty within the context of the 'Korean Wave'. The selection of Korean celebrities as the brand ambassadors by various local brands highlights the importance of leveraging Korean celebrities to enhance brand awareness and loyalty. Recent years, many local brands extensively use Korean celebrities in brand marketing, demonstrating the practical application of these arguments. The question is whether the decision to choose Korean celebrities as the brand ambassador is worth for the cost spending. Do Korean celebrities can improve or affect the brand loyalty of a consumer to local brand, or it's only relevant to Korean origin products? Does the decision to choose Korean celebrities influence brand loyalty (which is long-term impact)?

The findings of this research have implications for professionals in the field as well as scholars and decision makers alike. Professionals can use these findings to improve their brand marketing strategies by choosing brand representatives that resonate with their brand ethos and the preferences of their target audience. Scholars can expand on this study to delve deeper into the effects of celebrity endorsements on consumer behavior. Decision makers can apply these discoveries to assist businesses in utilizing celebrity endorsements to stimulate creativity, in the economy and foster economic progress (Alamsyah et al., 2018; Hariyanto, 2018) by grasping how Korean celebrity endorsements impact consumer behavior dynamics.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention encompasses both a consumer's interest in a brand or product and their likelihood of making a purchase, which is closely tied to their attitude and preferences toward the specific brand or product. This construct measures an individual's probability of purchasing a product Hasanah and Anjaningrum (2023) as well as their engagement in activities that drive them to seek out and acquire the desired product.

Purchase intention is subjective and varies among individuals, as it arises when a product's characteristics align with the utility value that meets the individual's needs. Customer behavior also plays a role in shaping purchase intention (Hariyanto, 2018). Chen et al. (2016) have identified several indicators of purchase intention, such as searching for product information, considering whether to buy, showing interest or desire to try the product, and ultimately wanting to own it. Purchase intention can also trigger impulsive buying behavior (Domínguez et al., 2020) and purchasing behavior can be measured through the intention to buy, as reflected in customers' purchasing actions (Liu et al., 2019).

Theory of Planned Behavior

In consumer relationships, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) helps differentiate between attitudes and intentions, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). TPB provides a framework for understanding how psychological factors such as brand attachment, brand love, and loyalty influence consumer behavior. Positive attitudes toward a brand are driven by love for the brand, which then enhances purchase intentions and leads to consistent consumer behavior (Strang et al., 2017). Subjective norms, including social pressure, brand ambassadors, and social circles, significantly impact purchasing decisions. The study aims to understand how social attitudes moderate product type and brand attachment (Strang et al., 2017). Perceived behavioral control refers to consumers' feelings of ease or difficulty in purchasing a product and their confidence in making decisions. By using product type as a moderating variable, this research explores how other products, such as luxury goods, affect perceived behavioral control, as discussed by Penz and Hogg (2011).

Personality Congruence

"Congruence, similarity, and fit" as concepts and keys in building personal relationships between brands and products. The theory of personality congruence explains that products with a clear personality will be more attractive to certain customers. Shetty and Fitzsimmons (2022) found in their research that personality congruence significantly affects feelings of love, loyalty, and also the direct relationship consumers have with a brand. This theory illustrates that when consumer behavior aligns with the brand's personality, it strengthens the bond between them. Evaluation based on personality, including brand personality, consumer personality, and celebrities, aligns with fit as an independent variable (Arora et al., 2021). Shetty and Fitzsimmons (2022) concluded that a strong brand personality enhances satisfaction and deepens the emotional bond with consumers. Research supports that the stronger the brand personality, the higher the attachment, with individuals often seeing the brand as part of themselves, as explained by the theory of self-expansion (Aron et al., 2022). Therefore, the hypothesis can be concluded as follows:

H₁: Personality congruence has a positive influence on brand attachment.

Customer Brand Engagement (CBE)

CBE is defined as the voluntary investment motivated by affective resources to interact with a brand. It arises from customers' positive interactions or comments about a brand, influencing performance outcomes (Adhikari & Panda, 2019) Customers engage with a brand only if their needs, desires, and perceived value are met. In marketing, CBE is highly valued for fostering customer loyalty and encouraging continued brand use (Martínek, 2021). The presence of CBE can

lead to increased sales, reduced operational costs, and positive consumer promotion of a brand's products (Singh & Srivastava, 2019). Studies like those by Leckie et al. (2022) highlight that CBE is a prominent topic in contemporary marketing research.

The attachment to a brand, especially with a sense of love, is crucial in developing a strong relationship with the brand (Martiyanti et al., 2021). However, there are still limitations in understanding the nuances between these concepts in marketing. Raji (2019) emphasizes that maintaining a close relationship with consumers is key to expressing affection. Expressive brand relationships are built through goodwill interactions, where the quality of the brand relationship is developed by Zhang and Ma, (2020), leading to expectations or possibilities, such as:

H₂: Customer brand engagement has a positive influence on brand love.

Brand Attachment

Brand attachment is the emotional bond between an individual and a brand, varying among consumers based on the strength of their emotional connection, passion, or affection for certain brands. This concept reflects psychological principles, indicating a close, affective relationship between the consumer and the brand. Consumers develop and maintain this attachment with marketing goals in mind, often driven by strong emotions (Vahdat et al., 2020). Over time, this emotional bond strengthens, particularly through interactions with meaningful brands. Strong brand attachment emerges from these repeated interactions and deepens as consumers continue to engage with the brand (Aboulnasr & Tran, 2020).

Brand attachment has been central to consumer literature on brand relationships. Meanwhile, brand loyalty plays a crucial role in outperforming competitors, as noted by Hameed (2018). A key indicator of brand loyalty is whether customers remain attached to a brand or switch to another. The strength of brand loyalty is vital for maintaining future profitability, as strong loyalty helps sustain market profits. Conversely, a decline in brand loyalty can lead to decreased market profitability (Kristianti & Margarita, 2021). Brand attachment is seen as a solution to issues in brand loyalty, having a direct impact by maintaining emotional bonds that keep consumers engaged over time. Based on these statements and research findings, it is assumed that:

H₃: Brand attachment has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

The attachment to a brand, combined with customers' love for that brand, creates a vital and strong relationship, particularly in the context of marketing. However, the boundaries between these two concepts remain somewhat blurred. Research has shown that while brand attachment and brand love significantly overlap, they also have distinct differences: brand attachment is more self-focused, based on specific thoughts and feelings, whereas brand love emphasizes cognitive consistency, strong positive attitudes, and frequent thoughts or conversations about the brand (Martiyanti et al., 2021). Palusuk et al. (2019) also concluded that these constructs have different focal connections. Both brand attachment and brand love are essential for maintaining relationships with the brand. In marketing practice, their combined contributions can inspire strong engagement, motivate consumer closeness to the brand, and foster long-term relationships. Active consumer involvement positively impacts brand love and related loyalty outcomes. The inference that can be made from this is:

H₄: Brand attachment has a positive influence on brand love.

Brand Love

"Affection" is defined as the enduring love for a brand, rather than just a fleeting emotion (Junaid et al., 2020). Recent research emphasizes that brand love significantly positively shapes the relationship between consumers and brands. Originating from the concept of interpersonal relationships, brand love has garnered substantial attention in marketing research due to its potential to create competitive advantages and drive marketing success (Junaid et al., 2020). When consumers experience "love at the first sight" with a brand, they are likely to develop intense passion for interaction, which tends to endure over time, creating a stable and lasting bond (Palusuk et al., 2019).

In practical terms, research highlights the dynamics of brand love and its interaction with other variables, offering valuable insights for marketers. Consumers who experience love for a brand often become brand advocates, engaging in repeat purchases, word-of-mouth promotion, and active participation in brand communities. This advocacy is a key component of brand loyalty, underscoring the importance of fostering brand love as it impacts long-term marketing success.

The concept of brand loyalty has been extensively studied across various contexts, with brand love playing a crucial role in mediating these relationships. Expanding on the concept of brand love and its impact on positive brand experiences can help attract and create more loyal customers (Ahn & Back, 2018). Therefore, to strengthen findings from existing research by considering previous studies with various brands, it is anticipated that:

H₅: Brand love has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to the consistent purchasing habits of customers who repeatedly buy the same brand over time. Brand loyalty is shaped by purchasing decisions and the psychological processes involved in comparing available product alternatives. It represents a positive response from customers who are satisfied with the quality and benefits provided by a brand (Shanahan et al., 2019). Loyalty is evident in customer behavior that consistently favors a particular brand, with minimal or no switching to other brands.

Brand loyalty is central to brand equity, a fundamental marketing concept that measures the strength of the relationship between customers and a brand. Loyal customers are more confident in their decisions regarding products from the brand, making repeat purchases essential for achieving a competitive advantage and sustaining performance (Chou et al., 2018). The higher a consumer's loyalty to a brand, the greater their interest in continuing to purchase from it, driven by the strong positive association they have with the brand. Brand loyalty also has a long-term impact, as consumers who have been loyal to a brand are less likely to switch to another. Based on this understanding, the hypothesis can be proposed as follows:

H₆: Brand loyalty has a positive influence on purchase intention.

Moderating Role of Product Type

Product type plays a crucial role in consumer loyalty and satisfaction, helping to deepen the connection between consumers and brands (Hinchcliff et al., 2023). Brand attachment often leads to continued brand use, manifested in repeat purchases, word-of-mouth promotion, brand community engagement, and brand advocacy (Shimul, 2022). When business value is effectively communicated, it fosters consumer loyalty, particularly when products are perceived as a good fit, encouraging repeat purchases, such as with skincare products. Rezaei and Valaei (2017) divided product type into 6 (six) types which are food; health and beauty products; media, games and music; travel reservation and ticketing; apparel; and others. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₇: Product types have a positive moderating influence on the impact between brand attachment and brand loyalty.

Brand love, often influenced by other brands, is a key driver of brand loyalty (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahegh, 2020). Brand loyalty, reflecting consistent future purchases, has been supported by studies on popular smartphone users like Apple, Xiaomi, Oppo, and Samsung. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₈: Product types have a positive moderating influence on the impact between brand love and brand loyalty.

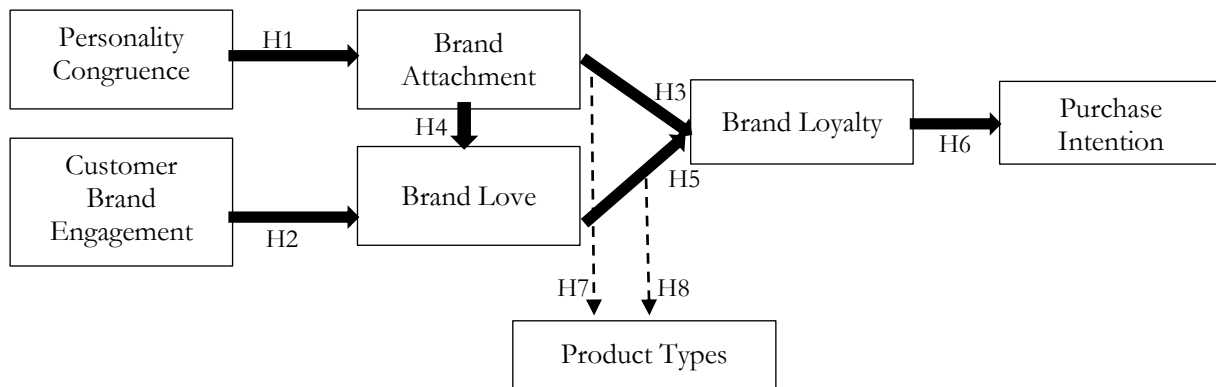


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Methods

Study Design

This study, in the process of analyzing data, employs a quantitative research design using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is a regression-based and component-based approach. This method is highly effective for handling complex models and providing reliable results, even with smaller sample sizes. The approach was chosen for this study due to its suitability for exploratory research aimed at prediction and theory development, focusing on maximizing the explained variance of the dependent variables (Hair et al., 2021). Unlike covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM), using PLS-SEM is more flexible with respect to sample size requirements, measurement scales, and assumptions about data normality, making it ideal for analyzing complex relationships between constructs and indicators. Data processing in this study includes both the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). PLS-SEM also reduces the residual variances of endogenous constructs, thereby contributing to the robustness of the study's findings.

The PLS-SEM analysis follows a two-step process. First, the measurement model is evaluated for convergent and discriminant validity to ensure that constructs are appropriately correlated and distinct. Convergent validity is verified through composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and factor loadings (Hair et al., 2021). Discriminant validity is confirmed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The HTMT test also helps to prevent and detect Common Method Bias (CMB) by identifying issues related to multicollinearity. The second step involves analyzing the structural model, examining path coefficients and p-values to support the hypotheses.

Data Source

PLS was chosen for this study due to its widespread use in technology adoption research and its ability to explore relationships between observed and latent variables, as well as between exogenous and endogenous latent (Hair et al., 2021). Using G*Power analysis, it was determined that a minimum of 193 samples was necessary to achieve a power of 0.80 for the analysis, based on a correlation result (r) of 0.2 (Cohen, 1992). With 194 respondents, this study's sample size comfortably exceeds the required threshold. Data were collected from respondents who were aware of the Korean celebrity serving as a local brand ambassador in Indonesia. Sampling was conducted via online surveys using a non-probability technique, specifically purposive sampling. The online survey was conducted between October 2023 and February 2024, with data collected through social media platforms.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire included 27 questions, featuring multiple-choice and Likert scale options to observe behavioral patterns and emotional responses from consumers, particularly those engaging

with brands using Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors for local brands in Indonesia. According to Harpe (2015), the Likert scale measures attitudes, opinions, or perceptions of an individual about a specific object. The scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

This research employed measurement scales for the model constructs based on prior studies (refer to Table 1). Measurement scales were adapted from previous research: personality congruence (Dwivedi et al., 2015), CBE (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Wirtz & Ambtman, 2013), brand attachment (Lacœuilhe, 2000), brand love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), brand loyalty (Lara & Ponzoa, 2008), purchase intention (Wiedmann et al., 2009), and product types (Rezaei & Valaei, 2017) which used Korean celebrities as the brand ambassadors.

Table 1. Research Operational Variables

Variables	Questions/Statements
Personality Congruence – congruence of product (Dwivedi et al., 2015)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel that Korean celebrities are very suitable and convincing if they become brand ambassadors of Indonesian products. 2. I feel very confident about local products recommended by Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors. 3. I feel Korean celebrities are very knowledgeable and experienced with local Indonesian products. 4. I feel interested if local products have Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors. 5. I agree with the compatibility between local products and Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors.
Customer Brand Engagement – brand engagement in a community (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Wirtz & Ambtman, 2013)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am one of the fans of Korean celebrities in a local product. 2. I like to discuss and talk about Korean celebrities who are brand ambassadors of local products in Indonesia. 3. I like to browse many websites to find information on Korean celebrities who are brand ambassadors of local products.
Brand Attachment – attachment (Lacœuilhe's Attachment Scale, 2000)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am using many local brands. 2. I am very interested and comfortable with many local brands. 3. I feel very happy and very satisfied if I use local products.
Brand Love – affection and passion (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel inclined to use local products that feature Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors. 2. I feel that I have a pleasant and memorable experience when I wear a product endorsed by my favorite Korean celebrities. 3. I feel an emotional connection with a local product brand that features my favorite Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors.
Brand Loyalty – loyalty programs (Lara & Ponzoa, 2008)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I will use local brands endorsed by Korean celebrities even though there are many competing products. 2. I always recommend local brands with Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors to people who ask for my advice. 3. I always say positive things about local product brands to others.
Purchase Intention (Wiedmann et al., 2009)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I often use local brands endorsed by Korean celebrities. 2. My expectations and willingness to use local brands with Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors are very high. 3. I will buy local products endorsed by Korean celebrities.
Product Types (Rezaei & Valaei, 2017)	<p>Products that are most frequently utilized and endorsed by Korean celebrities are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skincare 2. Cosmetics 3. Food or drink 4. Investment 5. Education website

Results and Discussion

Respondent Profiles

In this study, the sampling was conducted across the entire Indonesian population according to their respective city domiciles. The characteristics of the respondents are detailed in Table 2. The demographic profile reveals a significant female majority, with 75.8% females. The age distribution is predominantly between 18-30 years old, comprising 92.3% of the respondents. In terms of education, the majority have completed senior high school, accounting for 88.7%. The primary occupations are private employees (41.2%). Most respondents frequently use Shopee, with each platform used by 78.9% of respondents. The time spent browsing marketplaces varies, with the majority spending less than 4 hours per day (41.2%). The specific contents are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	%
<i>Gender</i>	Male	47	24.2
	Female	147	75.8
<i>Age (years old)</i>	<18	13	6.7
	18 – 30	179	92.3
	31 – 40	2	1.0
<i>Educational Level</i>	Elementary school	1	0.5
	Junior high school	6	3.1
	Senior high school	172	88.7
	Bachelor's degree	13	6.7
	Master's degree	2	1.0
<i>Job Status</i>	Student	29	14.9
	Undergraduate student	75	38.7
	Employee	80	41.2
	Housewife	7	3.6
	Unemployed	2	1.0
	Others	1	0.5
<i>Frequently accessed marketplaces</i>	Tokopedia	29	14.9
	Blibli	1	0.5
	Bukalapak	1	0.5
	Shopee	153	78.9
	Lazada	10	5.2
<i>Time spent browsing marketplaces</i>	>4 hours per day	47	24.2
	<4 hours per day	80	41.2
	Once in a week	45	23.2
	1-2 times a month	22	11.3
<i>Product types</i>	Skincare	77	39.7
	Cosmetics	17	8.8
	Food or drink	100	51.5

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement was conducted using SmartPLS 3.2.9 software, focusing on convergent validity and reliability. Data were considered valid if each indicator had an outer loading value greater than 0.6. These loadings measure the strength and direction of the relationship between the observed and latent variables. Notably, all of the outer loadings exceeded 0.7, with values above 0.8, surpassing the minimum recommendation by Hair et al. (2021). The outer loadings can be seen in Figure 2 and Table 3.

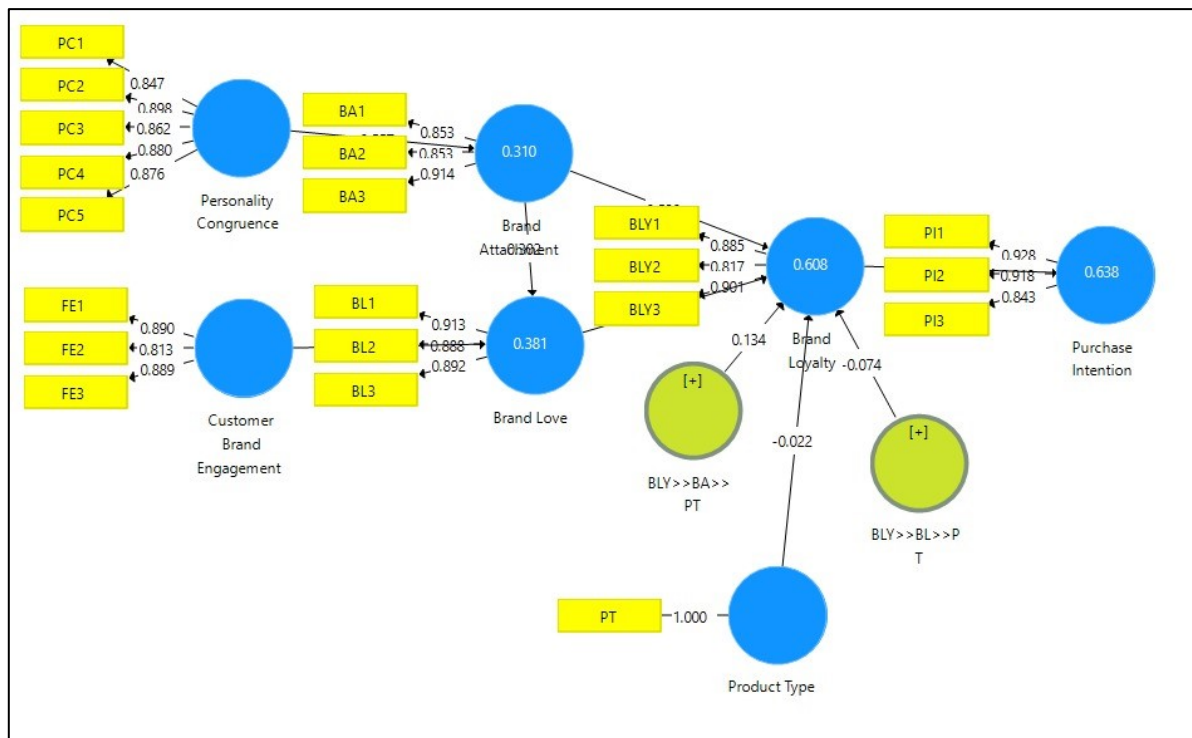


Figure 2. Outer Loadings Measurement Model

Table 3. Outer Loadings

Indicators	Outer Loadings	Result
<i>Personality Congruence</i>		
PC1	0.847	Valid
PC2	0.898	Valid
PC3	0.862	Valid
PC4	0.880	Valid
PC5	0.876	Valid
<i>Customer Brand Engagement</i>		
CBE1	0.890	Valid
CBE2	0.813	Valid
CBE3	0.889	Valid
<i>Brand Attachment</i>		
BA1	0.853	Valid
BA2	0.853	Valid
BA3	0.914	Valid
<i>Brand Love</i>		
BL1	0.913	Valid
BL2	0.888	Valid
BL3	0.892	Valid
<i>Brand Loyalty</i>		
BLY1	0.885	Valid
BLY2	0.817	Valid
BLY3	0.901	Valid
<i>Purchase Intention</i>		
PI1	0.928	Valid
PI2	0.918	Valid
PI3	0.843	Valid
<i>Product Types</i>		
PT1 * Brand Loyalty <- Brand Attachment	1.011	Valid
PT2 * Brand Loyalty <- Brand Love	1.008	Valid

Construct Reliability and Validity

The AVE values for all constructs exceeded 0.5, confirming convergent validity (Hair et al., 2021). All Cronbach's alpha values consistently surpassed 0.70, and all variables' CR values were above 0.8, significantly exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70. These reliability tests indicate that the data are stable and consistent, meeting the standards established by Hair et al. (2021). The details are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Validity and Reliability Tests

	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	CR
Brand Attachment (BA)	0.763	0.845	0.906
Brand Love (BL)	0.806	0.880	0.926
Brand Loyalty (BLY)	0.755	0.838	0.902
Customer Brand Engagement (CBE)	0.748	0.832	0.899
Personality Congruence (PC)	0.761	0.922	0.941
Product Type (PT * BA -> BLY)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Product Type (PT * BL -> BLY)	1.000	1.000	1.000
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.805	0.878	0.925

Discriminant Validity

The Fornell-Larcker criterion is a commonly used test for measuring discriminant validity. This test compares the square root of the AVE for each construct with the correlation values between constructs in a model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). If the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs, it is considered satisfactory. The results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion can be seen in Table 5. The HTMT ratio is also used to assess the validity of the data in this study. The HTMT criterion is particularly effective in detecting collinearity or multicollinearity issues between latent constructs. However, the presence of three HTMT values exceeding 0.9 suggests potential problems, likely due to overlapping items that measure similar aspects of the constructs.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity Assessment

Fornell-Lacker Criterion								HTMT Correlations							
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1)	1.000														
(2)	0.626	1.000						0.626							
(3)	-0.124	-0.101	0.874					0.136	0.109						
(4)	-0.100	-0.092	0.594	0.898				0.107	0.099	0.689					
(5)	-0.010	-0.074	0.721	0.650	0.869			0.017	0.082	0.845	0.754				
(6)	-0.073	-0.066	0.868	0.598	0.725	0.865		0.098	0.067	1.026	0.692	0.852			
(7)	0.026	-0.061	0.557	0.483	0.702	0.504	0.873	0.040	0.068	0.629	0.535	0.803	0.568		
(8)	-0.036	-0.031	0.784	0.720	0.799	0.734	0.704	0.033	0.037	0.033	0.907	0.819	0.918	0.847	0.781

Note. (1): Brand Attachment, (2): Brand Love, (3): Brand Loyalty, (4): Customer Brand Engagement, (5): Personality Congruence, (6): Product type (Moderated Brand Attachment to Brand Loyalty), (7): Product type (Moderated Brand Love to Brand Loyalty), (8): Purchase Intention.

Ringle et al. (2023) suggest that HTMT values should be below 0.9 to confirm discriminant validity. However, this study reveals 3 HTMT values exceeding 0.9. This anomaly may be attributed to the similarity between the constructs of brand attachment and CBE, which often overlap in meaning. In this context, brand attachment specifically refers to the customer's relationship with the local brand, while CBE is more closely associated with the customer's connection to a Korean celebrities linked to the local brand. Similar conclusion was reached regarding purchase intention in relation to brand attachment and purchase intention in relation to brand loyalty. Despite the HTMT value not meeting the required threshold, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was still satisfied.

Common Method Bias

A multicollinearity assessment was performed on the latent constructs as one method to evaluate common method bias. Hair et al. (2021) strongly recommend that the inner construct VIFs should be below a threshold of 5. The VIF values in this study range from 1.100 (the smallest) to 3.911 (the largest), as shown in Table 6. All values are below the minimum acceptance threshold of 5. Therefore, multicollinearity is not a critical issue in this study.

Table 6. Common Method Variance Test: Inter-Construct Collinearity (VIFs)

	BA	BL	BLY	Purchase Intention
Brand Attachment (BA)		4.051	1.568	
Brand Love (BL)			1.548	
Brand Loyalty (BLY)				1.000
Customer Brand Engagement (CBE)		4.051		
Personality Congruence (PC)	1.000			
Product Type (PT * BA -> BLY)			1.655	
Product Type (PT * BL -> BLY)			1.646	

Goodness-of-Fit Model

The subsequent analysis pertains to data adequacy, evaluated through the Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) analysis to measure model accuracy (quality index) using the average of AVE and the average of RSquare. According to Wetzels et al. (2009), the range of GoF values is divided into three categories: 0.10 (weak GoF), 0.25 (moderate GoF), and 0.36 (strong GoF). Based on the results of the GoF test, it can be concluded that the structural model is considered fit in this study, as the results mostly indicate good adequacy.

$$GoF = \sqrt{AVE \times R^2} \quad (1)$$

$$GoF = 0.49 \quad (2)$$

The advancement of the PLS method has also focused on establishing the validity of derived models, such as R^2 and Q^2 , for practical use (Hair et al., 2021). An R^2 value greater than 0.50 indicates “strong” prediction results. As shown in Table 7, the R^2 values for brand attachment and brand love are less than 0.50, meaning that personality congruence, customer brand engagement, and brand loyalty explain 35.1% of brand attachment and 31.4% of brand love. The remaining variance is explained by other variables, indicating “weak” prediction results. Additionally, Hair et al. (2021) explains that the qualitative measure for Q^2 is categorized as low (0), medium (0.25), and significant (0.50). The findings of this study show that the Q^2 value of the relationship is greater than 0.25, indicating that this research has moderate predictive power.

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is an absolute goodness-of-fit measure that reflects the discrepancy between the anticipated and observed correlations. It is particularly well-suited for PLS-SEM models. According to Hair et al. (2021), an SRMR value below 0.8 is generally considered to indicate a good fit, suggesting that the model effectively replicates the observed correlations. In this study, the SRMR value is 0.059, as shown in Table 7, indicating a strong model fit—the lower the SRMR, the better the fit.

Table 7. SRMR, R^2 , and Q^2 Test Result

	SRMR	R^2	Q^2
Brand Attachment	0.060	0.311	0.232
Brand Love		0.358	0.295
Brand Loyalty		0.608	0.445
Purchase Intention		0.638	0.503

Hypothesis Testing

The inner model is a method used to compare latent variables with each other, also known as a stage in conducting structural model evaluation. The results of the inner model test in hypothesis testing are presented in Table 8. The results are accepted if the p-value is less than 0.05 and the beta coefficient is positive. The hypothesis test was conducted using SmartPLS 3.2.9 software with the bootstrapping method (See Figure 3). Cohen (1992) stated that the f^2 test is used to measure the effect size between variables. An f^2 value of 0.02 indicates a small effect. A value greater than 0.15 suggests a moderate effect, while a value greater than 0.35 indicates a large effect.

The results of the hypothesis tests presented in Table 8 reveal several significant findings. For H1, the positive coefficient, with a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05) and an f^2 value of 0.449 (exceeding the threshold of 0.35), indicates that personal congruence has a large and significant effect on brand attachment, supporting the acceptance of H1. Similarly, for H2, the positive coefficient, combined with a p-value of 0.003 and an f^2 value of 0.045 (greater than 0.020), suggests that CBE has a small but significant positive effect on brand love, leading to the confirmation of H2.

In the case of H3, the results show a positive coefficient and a p-value of 0.000, with an f^2 value of 0.452, signifying that brand attachment has a large positive significant effect on brand loyalty, thus supporting the acceptance of H3. H4 demonstrates a positive coefficient with a p-value of 0.012 and an f^2 value of 0.036, indicates a small but significant positive effect of brand attachment on brand loyalty, leading to the acceptance of H4.

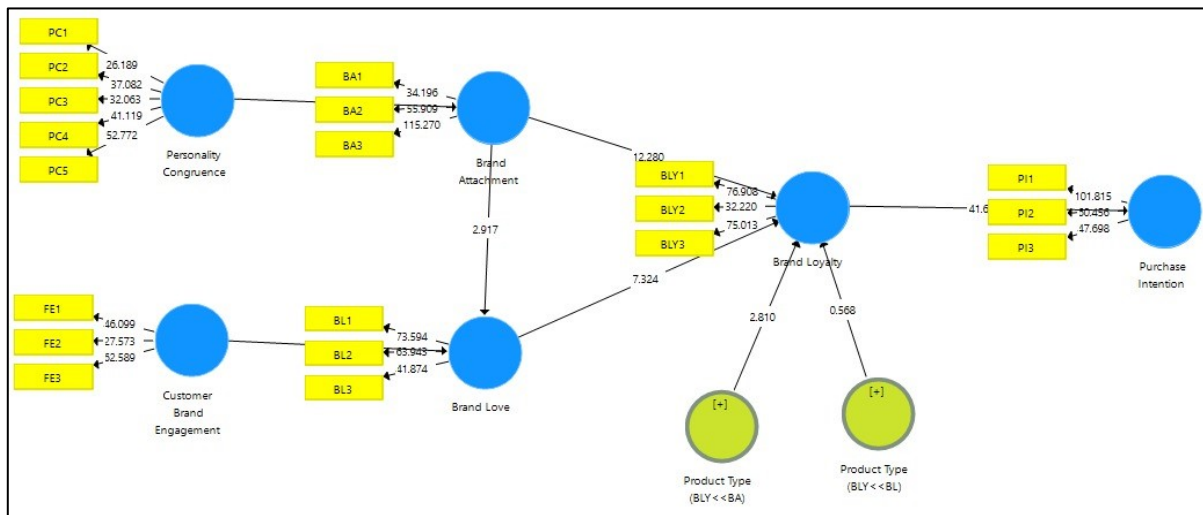


Figure 3. Inner Model Evaluation

Table 8. Hypothesis Test Result

Hypothesis	Coefficient	p-value	Effect size (f^2)	Decision
H1 PC → BA	0.557	0.000***	0.449	Accepted
H2 CBE → BL	0.337	0.003**	0.045	Accepted
H3 BA → BLY	0.528	0.000***	0.452	Accepted
H4 BA → BL	0.302	0.012*	0.036	Accepted
H5 BL → BLY	0.345	0.000***	0.195	Accepted
H6 BLY → PI	0.799	0.000***	1.764	Accepted

Note. PC: Personality Congruence; CBE: Customer Brand Engagement; BA: Brand Attachment; BL: Brand Love; BLY: Brand Loyalty; PI: Purchase Intention.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.000$.

For H5, the positive coefficient and p-value of 0.000, along with an f^2 value of 0.195, which surpasses the 0.15 threshold, indicate that brand love has a moderate positive significant effect on brand loyalty, resulting in the acceptance of H5. The results for H6 show a positive coefficient, a

p-value of 0.000, and an f^2 value of 1.764, far exceeding 0.35, which means that brand loyalty has a large positive significant effect on purchase intention, thereby confirming H6.

Table 9. Moderation Test Result

Hypothesis	Moderation			p-value	Effect size (f^2)	Decision
	Confidence Level					
	Full	2.5%	97.5%			
H7 PT moderates BA to BLY	0.107	0.022	0.194	0.014*	0.028	Accepted
H8 PT moderates BL to BLY	-0.059	-0.137	0.017	0.133	0.009	Not Accepted

Note. PT: Product Type; BA: Brand Attachment; BL: Brand Love; BLY: Brand Loyalty.
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.000$.

Based on Table 9, the analysis for H7 reveals a positive coefficient with a p-value of 0.014 and an f^2 value of 0.028, indicating that product type has a small but significant positive effect on the relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty, thus leading to the acceptance of H7. It is common for the effect size (f^2) of a moderating variable to be smaller than the direct effects in a model (Cohen, 1992), as moderation primarily examines how the relationship between two variables changes at varying levels of the moderator, rather than directly explaining variance in the outcome variable. The estimated moderation effect is 0.107, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.022 to 0.194, indicating a statistically significant positive moderation effect (Cheung & Lau, 2017). This suggests that as the moderator increases, the dependent variable also tends to increase. Figure 4 further supports this conclusion; the simple slope graph illustrates that both lines diverge from the center line, indicating that the effect of brand attachment on brand loyalty varies by product type.

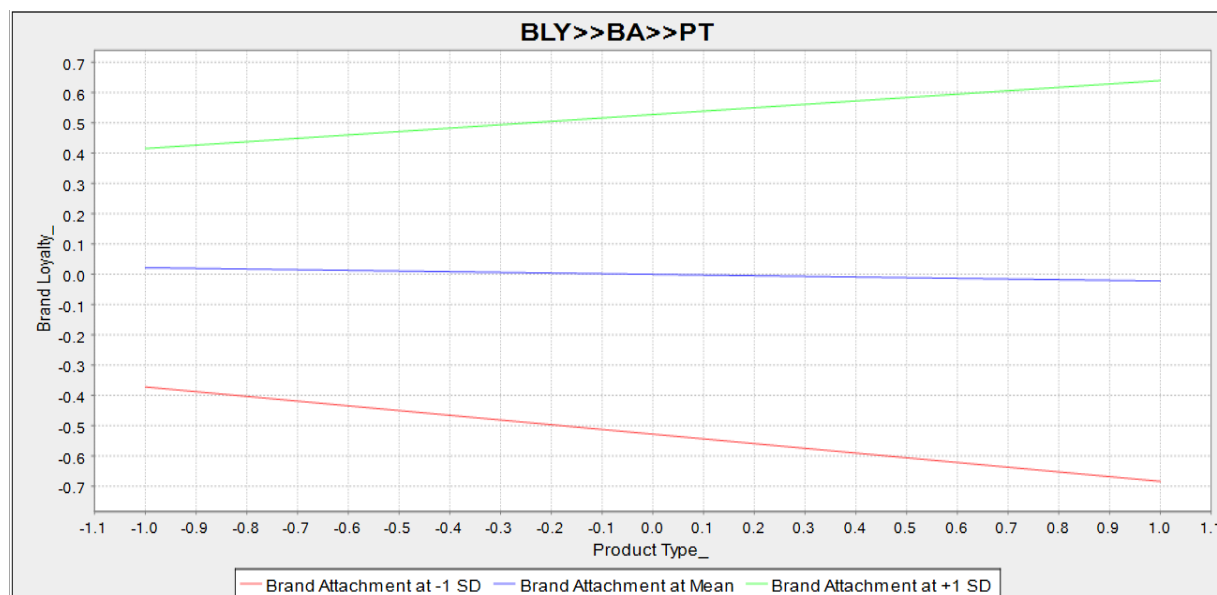


Figure 4. Product Type Moderation Effect of BA on BLY

In contrast, for H8, a p-value of 0.136 and an f^2 value of 0.009 (below 0.02) suggest that product type does not significantly moderate the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty, leading to the rejection of H8. In Table 9, the 2.5% lower bound of the confidence interval is -0.137, while the 97.5% upper bound is 0.017. This implies that the moderation effect can encompass both negative and positive impacts, suggesting that while the overall moderation is not statistically significant, the direction and strength of the effect may vary across different contexts. In the simple slope graph (Figure 5), as the lines extend to the right, they converge towards the center line, indicating that the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty weakens at higher levels of product type.

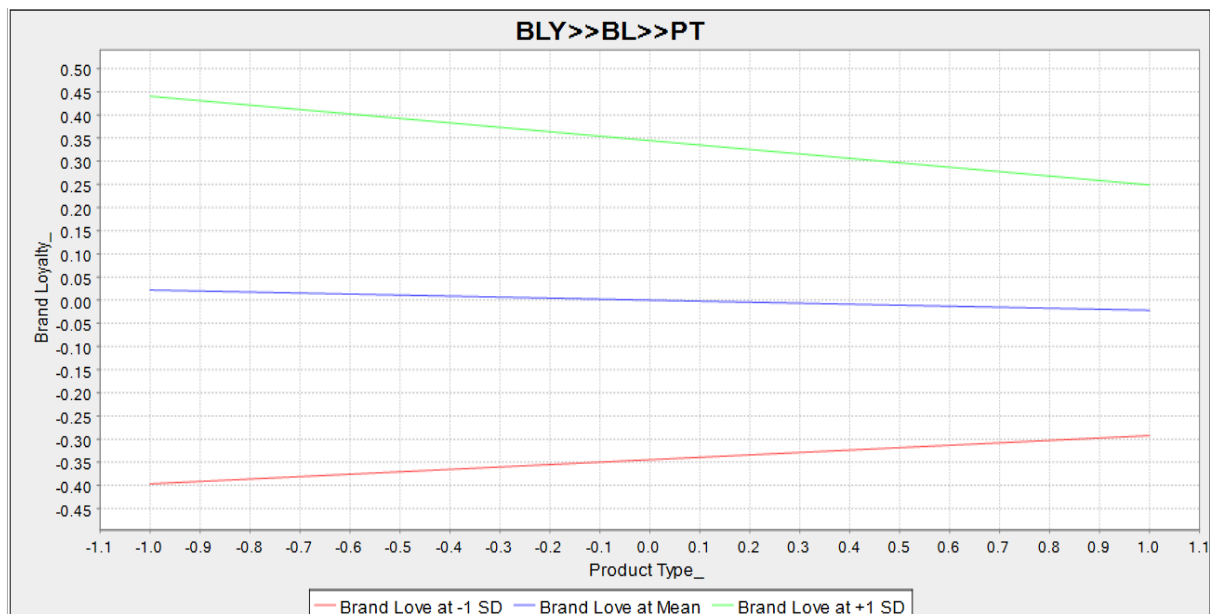


Figure 5. Product Type Moderation Effect of BL on BLY

Discussion

It was found that personality congruence has a large and significant positive influence on the interrelationship of brands, indicating that the distinct characteristics of a brand's personality strongly impact brand attachment. This supports the acceptance of H1, highlighting the crucial role that brand personality plays in brand attachment. Previous research also supports this finding, showing that stronger brand personality leads to greater brand attachment (Shetty & Fitzsimmons, 2022). Additionally, Donvito et al. (2020) demonstrated that brand-personality congruity significantly influences brand attachment, particularly in the context of luxury goods.

H2 reveals that CBE has a small but significant positive influence on brand love. Over the past decade, the world has experienced transformational advancements that have revolutionized how consumers interact with brands (Swaminathan et al., 2020). When consumers perceive a sense of self-similarity with a brand, they are more likely to admire the brand as a whole (Mandl & Hogueve, 2018). This psychological engagement leads consumers to invest both cognitively and affectively in the brand, fostering a deeper, more intimate admiration for it.

Based on the hypothesis test results, it is found that H3, which posits a large and significant positive influence between brand attachment and brand loyalty. Consumers will continue to strive to maintain their relationship with brands they have a strong bond with. Attachment to the brand influences behaviors such as consistently sticking with the brand, willingness to pay a premium price, making more purchases, and resistance to brand switching (Hinchcliff et al., 2023).

The next finding, H4, reveals a small but significant positive influence between brand attachment and brand love. Recent marketing research has reinforced this result, highlighting the growing focus on the emotional relationships between consumers and brands. Brands that effectively fulfill psychological, utilitarian, hedonic, social, and even spiritual needs are considered particularly compelling. When brands can meaningfully enhance goal fulfillment, consumers are more likely to form an emotional connection with them (Martiyanti et al., 2021). Brand love originates from this strong emotional bond and positive attitude toward the brand. Moreover, brand attachment is seen as a precursor to brand love, with stronger attachment gradually evolving into love over time.

H5 reveals a moderately positive significant influence between brand love and brand loyalty. Brand love represents a heightened form of satisfaction, leading to consistent consumer loyalty (Veloutsou & Delgado-Ballester, 2018). This deep affection for a brand strengthens loyalty, as satisfied consumers become even more committed (Ahn & Back, 2018). The research also shows that Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors for local brands in Indonesia enhance consumer loyalty and consistent support for the brand.

H6 shows that brand loyalty has a large and significant positive influence on purchase intention. This finding aligns with Shanahan et al. (2019), who note that strong brand loyalty leads to repeated purchases and reduces the likelihood of switching brands. Loyal and satisfied customers are more likely to continue buying from the same company, reinforcing the brand's position and driving sustained growth. This underscores the importance of cultivating a loyal customer base for long-term success.

Product type has a small but significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty, as shown in the results for H7. Brand attachment often arises from a functional or emotional connection that develops over time and is closely tied to the type of product. For instance, consumers may feel more attached to products like skincare or cosmetics, which are integral to their daily routines. Hinchcliff et al. (2023) found that brand attachment influences consumers' emotional well-being, making those with strong ties to a brand more likely to commit long-term and promote it. The alignment between Korean celebrities' personalities and a brand's product is key to effectively conveying the product's message and fostering consistent, long-term purchasing behavior among emotionally connected consumers.

In contrast, the results for H8 indicate that product type does not significantly moderate the positive influence between brand love and brand loyalty. Brand love is a deeper, more intense emotional connection that often transcends specific product type, rendering the moderating role of product type ineffective. Whether it's food, skincare, or cosmetics, once consumers love a brand, this emotional connection remains strong and stable across different categories. Hinchcliff et al. (2023) found that customer satisfaction with a brand, particularly its products, deepens consumer loyalty. However, this research suggests that while brand love drives brand loyalty, the influence of product type as a moderating factor is minimal. Once consumers develop an attachment characterized by brand love, they are likely to maintain their loyalty regardless of product type. This loyalty arises from a strong affection for both the celebrities endorsing the brand and the brand itself, which is why the influence of product type on the impact of brand love to brand loyalty is not significant.

Implication and Conclusion

The research concludes that brand loyalty among consumers is significantly influenced by the use of Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors for local brands in Indonesia. Companies striving for market success, especially in competitive environments, continually seek innovative marketing strategies. The increasing use of Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors impacts several factors, including personality congruence, customer brand engagement, brand attachment, and brand love, all of which contribute to brand loyalty and shape consumer purchase intentions.

The findings have several important implications for marketers and brand managers. While leveraging celebrity endorsements can enhance brand visibility and loyalty, the impact of product type as a moderating factor in the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty appears negligible. This suggests that aligning brand personality with ambassadors is crucial for deepening consumer attachment, regardless of the specific products being promoted. Marketers should focus on creating engaging content and emphasizing emotional branding to foster stronger connections with consumers. Although tailoring marketing strategies to different product type might not significantly enhance loyalty in the context of strong brand love, it remains important for catering to diverse consumer preferences. At the same time, product-specific strategies are essential for fostering brand attachment, particularly in categories like skincare and cosmetics, where consistency and daily relevance are crucial. Implementing cross-category loyalty programs and maintaining a consistent brand experience across all product lines will further encourage consumer engagement and enhance overall brand loyalty. Continuously monitoring consumer feedback to adapt and refine approaches will still play a vital role in overall market performance, ensuring that both product-specific and emotional branding strategies contribute to sustained growth and customer retention. Engaging ambassadors who embody the brand's values and utilizing their influence effectively can significantly impact purchase intentions and long-term consumer relationships, even if the type of product is less influential in driving loyalty.

Despite its contributions, this research has several limitations. In addition to potential biases in respondent demographics, the total number of respondents in this study was limited to 194 samples, which may impact the generalizability of the findings. Future research should aim to include a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the robustness of the results. Furthermore, future research could investigate the moderating effects of different categories of product types, such as low versus high involvement products or material versus experiential products, as these factors may further influence the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty. Finally, examining the long-term effects of using Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors, and how these effects evolve over time, would be valuable for understanding the sustained impact of such marketing strategies.

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