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Brand Experience and Service Quality in Influencing Customer Engagement in Wardah Cosmetics Brand

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ABSTRACT

Cosmetic products are growing from time to time. In addition to the high demand, the development of products that use natural ingredients is a factor in the community's high demand for cosmetic products. However, there has recently been a decline in brand selection for cosmetic products, so it is essential to identify the predictors that result from it. This study aims to analyze the role of brand experience and service quality in influencing customer engagement with the Wardah Cosmetics brand. This study used a quantitative design. Data were collected by distributing online questionnaires to 220 randomly selected respondents domiciled in Java and surrounding areas. The questionnaires distributed met the validity and reliability tests through piloting previous studies. All collected data were analyzed using SmartPLS version 3.2.9 with a significance level of 95% (p<0,05). This finding obtained the productive age between 20 and 25 dominating among respondents domiciled in Yogyakarta. Confirmation of the hypothesis found that brand experience and love influence customer engagement directly and indirectly in significant direction. This indicates that this factor determines the younger generation's high interest in cosmetic surgery.

Keywords: brand experience, service quality, customer engagement, brand, wardah cosmetics.

INTRODUCTION

Customer engagement becomes very important. Companies can develop customer engagement strategies to build long-term relationships and maintain customer loyalty. At this time, customers expect brands to be able to connect with them and do more than have transactional relationships; they want effective interactions in their relationship with brands (Islam *et al.*, 2019). As time progresses, customer needs become more complex, and customers want to connect more with the brands they love. In a well-established relationship, it will certainly provide benefits for the parties involved. Any company developing a customer engagement strategy will benefit (Prentice, Wang, and Loureiro, 2019).

The benefits arising from customer engagement include maintaining customer loyalty, which is also supported by (Helme-Guizon and Magnoni, 2019). Those who say that with customer engagement, companies can enrich customer value and loyalty. Customer and brand interactions can generate this kind of love that engages customers.

It can also be built through brand experience and love, reflecting customer loyalty and leading to customer engagement (Bagozzi, Batra and Ahuvia, 2017). Customer engagement includes customer engagement that gives a positive value to the company. Customers who have cultivated a sense of love will always try to connect with and contribute to the company. The important thing that must be done to achieve customer engagement is to make customers feel a sense of love for the brand, known as "brand love". Brand love or love for the brand can be interpreted as an emotional attachment between customers and a brand (Aro, Suomi and Saraniemi, 2018). Love includes the passion and excitement of customers toward a particular brand. This will increase customer loyalty in the future. Providing good service is expected to encourage customer engagement. If customers love the brand and obtain good service, then engagement can be realized through purchases, referrals, and good reviews (Prentice, Chen and King, 2013).

Furthermore, in addition to a good experience, it will cause emotional attachment that leads to solid customer feelings for a brand, and the experience of using it will increase. Brand experience is proven to have an impact on brand love. Brand experience is the perceptions, emotions, thoughts, and actions triggered by brand-related stimuli that are a component of the brand's identity and design. Depending on how consumers relate to the brands they enjoy, the brand experience can be perceived in various contexts. Experience is gained due to environmental influences, aesthetics, excitement, knowledge, or escapism (Suntikul and Jachna, 2016).

This has been built on facial care products that have been famous in Indonesia, namely, Wardah Cosmetics. in line with the growth in the national cosmetic industry, which experienced an increase of 7,36% (Maghfiroh and Indrarini, 2022). Thus, the role of products and brands becomes an essential part of the continuity of a company. Wardah Cosmetics became a Paragon Technology and Innovation brand that is engaged in the cosmetic industry. Wardah Cosmetics is one of the most popular cosmetic brands in Indonesia. This is done in cooperation with beauty influencers, hijab celebrities, and hijab communities in several cities to foster customer trust in brands and products. Wardah Cosmetics strives to provide the best experience to customers to create a love for the brand, which leads to the growth of customer engagement, which will later be mutually beneficial (Merrilees, 2016; Chang *et al.*, 2021).

However, until now, research related to brand experience and service quality conducted by cosmetic wardah companies has yet to be studied much, so it is essential to analyze further to provide better information. Brand experience results from interactions between customers and brands, and good service quality will improve customer experience. A good experience will trigger love for the brand, and if customers have started to have love, it will create a reciprocal relationship between customers and brands or customer engagement. Reviewing the concept and results of previous research, this study aims to analyze the role of brand experience and service quality in influencing customer engagement with the Wardah Cosmetics brand. The hope is that it can provide practical and technical information for increasing customer loyalty to cosmetic wardah products and the accompanying predictors. The aim of this research is to analyze the role of brand experience and service quality in influencing customer engagement with the Wardah Cosmetics brand.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Brand Experience

Brand-related stimuli that are a part of brand design and identity can trigger sensations, feelings, cognition, and behavioral responses (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2019). Brands can provide functional value from the sensations generated (Cleff, Lin, and Walter, 2014). Experience is when a customer buys or consumes a product from a particular brand. At this time, the customer is looking for the benefits of a product and the experience related to that product (Khan and Rahman, 2015). Even though they use the same product, each customer's experience is unique. Customers are looking for a memorable experience so that when they use a product from a particular brand, there will be a sensation that can make them love the brand even more (Iglesias, Markovic and Rialp, 2019). Van Doorn says that a fun experience can motivate customers to engage, even forming a community (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010). Experience can be gained due to environmental influences, aesthetics, excitement, acquiring knowledge or expertise, or escapism (fantasizing about a situation) (Suntikul and Jachna, 2016).

Brand Love

The relationship between customers and brands can be very complex and not limited to customers buying a product from a particular brand. Sometimes, some customers have a high emotional attachment to the brand that the brand likes (Rossmann and Wilke, 2017). Brand love is the degree of emotion customers feel about a brand in their interactions with brands. The emotional bond between a customer and a brand that is most intense is "brand love". The emotional bond between a customer and a brand is called "brand love". This brand love comprises people's fervor and enthusiasm for a specific brand (Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi, 2012).

Customers with a long-standing relationship with a brand that produces powerful emotions when using or consuming its products are said to have "brand love" (Aro, Suomi and Saraniemi, 2018). To be able to love a brand takes a long time; although some customers fall in love at first sight, most customers need a long interaction to love the product of a particular brand. Most people must have one of their favorite brands in automotive, fashion, beauty, and others. This love that arises is based on different triggers: some like a brand because of its quality, some like designing products from particular brands, or some due to environmental factors (Adnyana and Sudaryati, 2022). If customers have found a brand that suits them, they will usually faithfully use products from the same brand. For consumers, the love of a brand represents an intimate experience in favorable affective terms (Gómez-Suárez, Martínez-Ruiz and Martínez-Caraballo, 2017).

Service Quality

Good service is one of the keys to success in running a business. Service quality is a significant dimension of competitiveness. Every company is competing to provide the best service to customers. In the marketing literature, consumer perceptions and value considerations of a good or service are frequently reflected in service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). The quality of the services provided is often the reason customers feel satisfied. Providing good service quality and customer satisfaction is an important issue and challenge the company faces.

The definition of service quality is formulated from the customer's perspective, i.e., what the customer feels is an important dimension (Chang *et al.*, 2020; Husain, Paul and Koles, 2022). Everyone will want good service, and if they are served poorly or not at all when they want to buy or ask about the product, it will undoubtedly cause an unpleasant experience and can taint the brand's image. Even good product quality sometimes needs help when the brand image has been tainted due to poor service quality (Chang *et al.*, 2021; Meeprom and Chancharat, 2022). Improving service quality can also be developed in two directions: customers provide helpful advice to the company so that later employees can do their jobs better (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010). Many companies provide compliant services for customers. The company strives to do its best to maintain its image. Complaint services are provided so that customers can submit complaints or provide input and suggestions to improve employee performance (Do, Kim and Wang, 2023). The majority of customer complaints are about the quality of the service, and it is clear from this that the waitstaff's performance is crucial to the business (Chairunnisa and Ruswanti, 2023).

Customer Engagement

Customer engagement behavior is another relationship that is not limited to transactional relationships. Customer engagement behaviors (CEBs) are manifestations of customer behavior toward a brand or company resulting from motivational drivers (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010). Customer engagement encourages customers to participate in the development of a brand. Customers who already have an attachment will be motivated to continually provide reviews or feedback on the brand, which can later be used as a reference in improving future products or as a means of communication to maintain customer loyalty (Merrilees, 2016; Evelina and Safitri, 2019). Customer engagement includes many actions, such as word-of-mouth, referrals, blogging, reviewing products, and even pursuing legal action.

The behavior resulting from this attachment makes customers and brands more connected and benefits both parties. For customers, it is a personal pleasure when they can write something about what they like and give feedback to the brand. On the other hand, the company can receive reviews related to products and maintain customer loyalty (Dhillon, Agarwal, and Rajput, 2021). Companies that manage customer engagement well by taking an integrative and comprehensive approach will benefit from time to time (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010).

More customers tied to a brand will undoubtedly strengthen the customer base. Behaviors resulting from customer engagement primarily benefit the company, such as participation in the community, creating brand-related posts and blogs, and voluntarily suggesting product design improvements. With a base created from a pool of customers that have been bound, the company can know the needs of each customer. Based on the feedback provided, the company can see what customers like and do not like. The community of sure brand lovers will always provide input and suggestions on products from brands they like; this can be used to get to know the needs of each market segment (Wang *et al.*, 2023).

Hypothesis Development

The Role of Brand Experience in Brand Love at Wardah Cosmetics

The sensations created by brands can be used to provide functional value (Cleff, Lin and Walter, 2014). Customers often purchase products to satisfy their requirements, but many also look for novel experiences from their purchases. Depending on how consumers relate

to the brands they enjoy, the brand experience can be felt in many contexts. Experience can be gained due to contextual factors, aesthetic considerations, thrills, gaining information and expertise, or as a kind of escape (Suntikul and Jachna, 2016). We regularly see people with two or more things from the same brand, indicating that they have found a brand they adore. The emotional bond between clients and a brand can be understood as "brand love" (Aro, Suomi and Saraniemi, 2018). We regularly see people with two or more things from the same brand, indicating that they have found a brand they adore. The emotional bond between clients and a brand can be understood as "brand love" (Langner *et al.*, 2016).

Customers with a positive brand experience will feel good, pique their interest in the brand and eventually experience brand love. The quality of the consumer's relationship with the brand will determine how strong that relationship will be. Customers of Wardah Cosmetics have had a positive experience with the company. The first cosmetic company in Indonesia to label its goods as halal was Wardah Kosmetik. Using Wardah Cosmetics products is a unique experience for Muslim women. The results are based on Wardah Cosmetics' reputation as a provider of "halal products", which impresses many cosmetics consumers, particularly Muslim women.

As demonstrated by Wardah Cosmetics' powder products, which won the Top Brand award in 2020, brand experience also influences brand love (Maghfiroh and Indrarini, 2022). The positive user experience makes Wardah Cosmetics' goods popular with the general public, particularly Muslim women. Additionally, the fan base for Wardah Cosmetics' has grown into a community. Based on the assertion mentioned above, the researcher developed the following theory:

H₁: *Brand experience positively influences brand love at Wardah Cosmetics.*

The Role of Brand Experience in Customer Engagement through Brand Love Mediation

When a customer purchases or uses a product from a specific brand, a procedure is established to research and evaluate the product. Customers are invited to rate the product. Customers give a wide range of ratings; some rate positively and others negatively. A positive experience and the perception that both the consumer and the brand have profited are the foundations of a good product evaluation from a specific brand (Merrilees, 2016; Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2019). Long-term partnerships, reliance on each party, and casual connections are the foundations of attachment. Customers will attempt to engage more deeply with a brand if they have developed a long-term relationship due to having a memorable encounter with it. Customers who had a positive experience will undoubtedly strive to engage with the brand more because of their positive emotions. Customers who wish to feel more emotionally connected to the brand will do so (Albert and Merunka, 2013). Because the customer's psychological connection is a crucial component of brand love, a brand will only be loved if customers genuinely have a strong psychological connection.

In 2017, Wardah Kosmetik surpassed well-known cosmetic brands, including Sariayu, Purbasari, and Mustika Ratu, to claim the title of the most talked-about cosmetic brand on Twitter (Maghfiroh and Indrarini, 2022). Customer evaluations on social media show that Wardah Cosmetics has succeeded in giving customers a memorable experience when using their products. Many Wardah Cosmetics users claim on Twitter that they felt something different after using the brand's products. Customers who like their interactions with a brand will grow to love it. Customers who wish to feel more emotionally connected

to the brand will do so (Albert and Merunka, 2013). Customers who encounter Wardah Cosmetics might develop a love for the brand, which strengthens their bond with the company. Based on the assertion mentioned above, the researcher developed the following theory:

H₂: *Brand experience positively impacts customer engagement through brand love.*

The Impact of Moderated Service Quality on The Relationship Between Brand Experience and Brand Love

Service quality is crucial since providing excellent customer service is one of the secrets to running a successful business. Service quality is crucial in the relationship between brand experience and brand love. The cumulative interactions that customers have with the brand create the brand experience. Brands must deliver excellent customer service in every connection with customers, including before, during, and after usage or consumption. Brands must consistently deliver the best service to win clients through regular encounters with them. Every encounter will create an emotional attachment or love. Repeated customer interactions with brands will enhance the customer experience and improve service quality (Prentice, Chen and King, 2013; Alexandris, Dimitriadis and Markata, 2022).

Wardah Cosmetics' employees or beauty consultants are skilled at describing products, including their uses, ingredients, and how they should be used based on the customer's skin type. Wardah Cosmetics' beauty consultants have completed training that calls for them to be prepared to handle challenges. Customers can expect friendly assistance from personnel and beauty consultants. The services are designed to fit the Wardah Cosmetics brand, a "halal" cosmetics company. When clients receive high-quality service, their initial impression of the brand is transformed into a love for it. As indicated by Wardah Cosmetics' powder products winning the Top Brand award in 2020, the company has successfully won over many clients, particularly Muslim women (Maghfiroh and Indrarini, 2022). After making the claim mentioned above, the researcher develops the following hypothesis:

H₃: *Service quality positively moderates the relationship between brand experience and brand love.*

The Impact of Moderate Service Quality on The Link Between Brand Loyalty and Consumer Engagement

Service quality has a beneficial function in the relationship between brand love and customer engagement. Customers will become more devoted if the organization offers good service. Customers who already adore the brand often believe the products are appropriate for their needs. However, some customers are only interested in the products and do not want to be further connected to the brand. Good service quality will bind customers in every connection between customers and brands. Customers who already have a sense of love for the business can grow emotionally attached if the business can deliver the services they want.

Customers' engagement can be shown through purchases, recommendations, and positive reviews if they love the company and receive good service (Prentice, Wang and Loureiro, 2019). Based on the halal designation found on Wardah Cosmetics items, many Muslim ladies enjoy the products from the Wardah Cosmetics brand. Because the main components of Wardah Cosmetics' products are manufactured with natural and safe materials for the body, the company enjoys a large consumer base, particularly among Muslim women. Officers from Wardah Cosmetics are needed to serve clients patiently and

are skilled at solving customer problems. They also have knowledge and competence in explaining products to customers. Customers are becoming more devoted due to Wardah Cosmetics' excellent service. Based on the assertion mentioned above, the researcher developed the following theory:

H₄: *Service quality positively moderates the relationship between brand love and customer engagement.*

METHOD

This study used a quantitative design (Darwin *et al.*, 2021). The study was conducted to confirm the hypothesis related to brand experience, service quality, and customer engagement in cosmetic wardah brands. Two hundred twenty randomly selected respondents who resided in Java and the surrounding areas received online questionnaires as part of the data collection process (Adnyana, 2021). The questionnaires distributed met the validity and reliability tests through piloting previous studies. All collected data are analyzed using SmartPLS version 3.2.9. The decision significance is 95% ($p < 0,05$) and is presented in tables, graphs, and narratives.

Characteristics of Research Respondents

Based on the confirmation of characteristics in each respondent, data on the age of respondents were dominated by the age group of 20–25 years who live in the Yogyakarta region. The results of confirming respondents' characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristic data of respondents

Characteristic	Frequency (n= 220)	Percentage (%)
Age		
<20 Years	57	25,9
20-25 Years	103	46,8
>25 Years	60	27,3
Domicile		
Bandung	45	20,5
Jakarta	54	24,5
Semarang	17	7,7
Surabaya	43	19,5
Yogyakarta	61	27,7

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity and Reliability Testing

Based on the study's findings, the data in each research item were pronounced legitimate since the r-count value was more significant than the r-table and dependable because Cronbach's alpha values were all greater than 0,70. As a result, questionnaires can be utilized as research instruments, as shown in Table 2.

Tabe 2. Confirmation of The Reliability and Validity of The Instrument

Variable	Items	R-calculate	R-table	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Brand Experience	BE.1	0,856	0,278	0,926	Valid and reliable
	BE.2	0,879	0,278		

Variable	Items	R-calculate	R-table	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Brand Love	BE.3	0,94	0,278	0,943	Valid and reliable
	BE.4	0,851	0,278		
	BE.5	0,863	0,278		
	BL.1	0,908	0,278		
	BL.2	0,881	0,278		
	BL.3	0,918	0,278		
	BL.4	0,913	0,278		
	BL.5	0,813	0,278		
	BL.6	0,87	0,278		
Service Quality	SQ.1	0,886	0,278	0,944	Valid and reliable
	SQ.2	0,913	0,278		
	SQ.3	0,929	0,278		
	SQ.4	0,881	0,278		
	SQ.5	0,914	0,278		
Customer Engagement	CE.1	0,827	0,278	0,926	Valid and reliable
	CE.2	0,857	0,278		
	CE.3	0,873	0,278		
	CE.4	0,875	0,278		
	CE.5	0,811	0,278		
	CE.6	0,888	0,278		

Classical Assumption Testing

The results of convergent validity testing show the loading factor value in each item > 0,7 and the AVE root > 0,5; indicating that the indicator is declared valid and feasible to measure the latent variable tested. Furthermore, the results of testing the validity of the discriminant in each item obtained a value of < 0,70; so it was declared discriminantly valid. Reliability testing reveals that the composite dependability and cronbach's alpha on each variable are more significant than 0,7; indicating strong reliability.

The inner model analysis yields an adjusted R-square value of 0,714 for the brand love variable, indicating that an independent variable can explain 71,4 percent of the variance and the remaining 28,6 percent by factors not included in this study. The adjusted R-Square value of the customer engagement variable is 0,302; this number indicates that an independent variable can explain 30,2 percent of the customer engagement variable, and the remaining 69,8 percent can be explained by factors not included in this study.

According to the results of predictive testing for Q2 relevance, brand love received a Q2 value of 0,583, and customer engagement received a value of 0,222. As a result, because the Q2 value is more significant than 0,2, this study has a high observation value. Finally, in testing the VIF value, all variables are free from the symptoms of multicollinearity (VIF < 5).

Hypothesis Confirmation

In this study, four hypotheses are confirmed through hypothesis testing, and the direction of the relationship is modeled using SmartPLS. The results of the confirmation of the relationship between each variable are presented in table 3 and figure 1.

Table 3. Results of hypothesis confirmation

Variable	Original Sample	Mean	SD	t-statistics	p-values
Brand Experience Brand → Love	0,171	0,174	0,063	2,695	0,007
Brand Experience Brand → Love → Customer Engagement	0,066	0,068	0,033	2,003	0,046
BE*SQ → Brand Love	-0,087	-0,085	0,034	2,523	0,012
BL*SQ → Customer Engagement	0,156	0,153	0,079	1,973	0,049

Description: BL = Brand Experience; SQ = Service Quality; SD = Standard Deviation
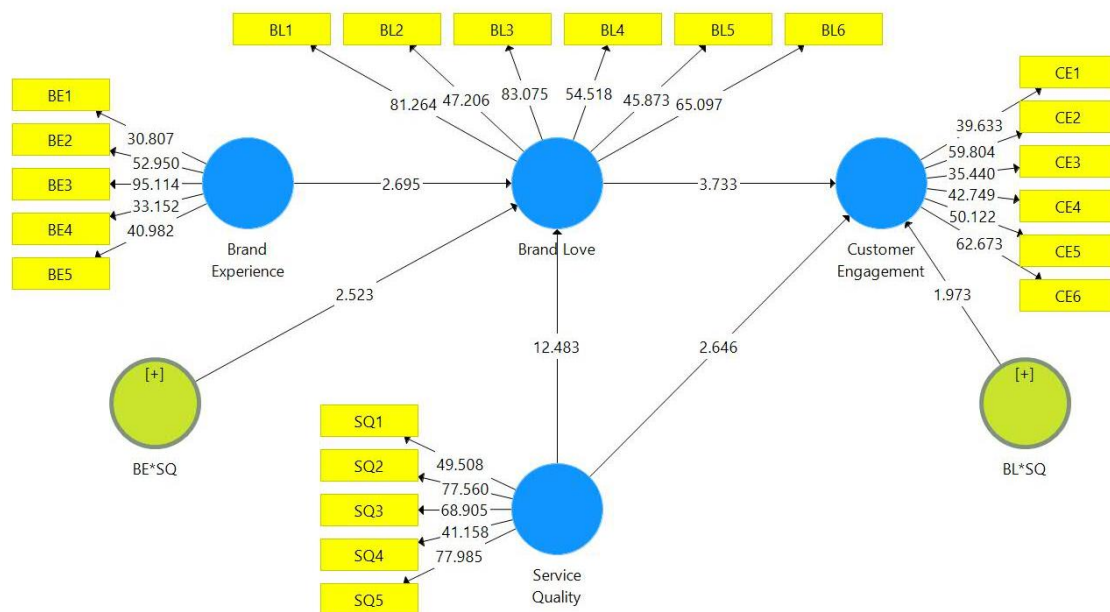

Figure 1. The relationship between research variables

The Role of Brand Experience in Brand Love at Wardah Cosmetics

The findings demonstrated that a coefficient value of 0,171 was found for the first hypothesis, with p-values of 0,007 (p<0,05) and t-statistics of 2,695 > 1,960. These findings indicate that brand experience has an impact on brand love. The findings of this study's analysis demonstrate that brand experience favorably influences brand love. Therefore, the more positive experiences people have, the more they will adore the brand. The findings of this study are consistent with earlier studies that claim that a brand's customers will eventually fall in love with it if they have a good experience with it. (Langner *et al.*, 2016), Furthermore, this is also supported by (Ong, Lee, and Ramayah, 2018) and (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), who say the same thing.

The Role of Brand Experience in Customer Engagement through Brand Love Mediation

A coefficient value of 0,066 for the second variable was found, along with p-values of 0,046 (p<0,05) and a t-statistic of 2,003 >1,960. These findings demonstrate how brand experience, through brand love, influences consumer involvement. The findings of this study's analysis demonstrate that brand experience, through brand love, positively affects customer engagement. Therefore, a positive experience can increase brand loyalty among customers by acting as a mediator of their love for the brand. The findings of this study are consistent with earlier studies showing that consumers who seek to connect with companies more will have a stronger emotional bond (love) (Albert and Merunka, 2013) and (Bairrada, Coelho and Coelho, 2018), which are also supported by their research. The connection creates an intense response that can manifest in engagement with the brand (Kumar *et al.*, 2019).

The Impact of Moderated Service Quality on the Relationship Between Brand Experience and Brand Love

The third hypothesis was tested, and the findings revealed a coefficient value of -0,087, a p-value of 0,012 (p<0,05), and a t-statistic of 2,523 >1,960. These findings demonstrate how service quality influences brand experience, which influences brand love. According to this study's analysis, service quality can negatively regulate the impact of brand experience on brand love. The findings of this study contradictory to prior research that suggests that regular interactions with companies will enhance consumer satisfaction, and exceptional service will lead to greater feelings of love or attachment (Prentice, Wang and Loureiro, 2019). Brand experience is also said to be a series of customer interactions with the services provided (Wang *et al.*, 2023), so it can be concluded that the excellent experience felt can encourage a sense of love for the brand; this is also in line with research from (Alexandris, Dimitriadis and Markata, 2022).

The Impact of Moderate Service Quality on The Link Between Brand Loyalty and Consumer Engagement

The fourth hypothesis was finally tested, and a coefficient value of 0,156 was discovered using p-values of 0,049 (p<0,05) and t-statistics of 1,973 >1,960. These findings indicate that consumer involvement is influenced by brand love and tempered by service excellence. According to the findings of this study's analysis, service quality can positively modify the impact of brand loyalty on consumer engagement. Therefore, service quality can affect how much a consumer loves a brand and how attached they are. The findings of this study are consistent with other research, which indicates that engagement can be attained through purchases, recommendations, and positive reviews if customers already love the brand and receive good service (Prentice, Chen and King, 2013). Rossmann and Wilke (2017) describe brand love as the level of emotionality that consumers have toward a brand, which is also supported by research (Bagozzi, Batra and Ahuvia, 2017).

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

In this study, there are several shortcomings, including the number of samples that have been obtained, which amounts to 220, and it is hoped that in future studies, the number of samples can be increased, which is helpful to strengthen the results of the research conducted. Then, for the following limitation, in this study, the author only focuses on the Wardah Cosmetics

brand and does less research on similar cosmetic brands. In future research, it is expected to be possible to research several similar cosmetic brands in order to be able to make comparisons with competing brands. For the last limitation, the distribution of questionnaires needs to be more comprehensive. The author distributed the questionnaire through social media sites such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Line. For future research, it is expected to maximize all personal platforms owned to provide even better results.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study can be used as a source of information and an understanding of the trends and prediction models in the cosmetic business for Wardah Cosmetics and other cosmetic business actors. This research can contribute to the idea that brand experience is very influential in obtaining customer engagement. Wardah Cosmetics must also be able to instill a sense of love for the brand in customers. This "brand love" includes the passion and excitement of customers toward a particular brand. To maintain customer engagement, service quality should also be remembered.

CONCLUSION

Cosmetic products are growing from time to time. In addition to the high demand, the development of products that use natural ingredients is a factor in the community"s high demand for cosmetic products. This finding found that the productive age range of 20–25 dominates among respondents and is domiciled in Yogyakarta. Confirmation of the hypothesis found that brand experience and love influence customer engagement directly and indirectly in a significant direction. This indicates that this factor determines the younger generation's high interest in cosmetic surgery. In the future, further research is needed related to competitors who increase the role of brand experience and brand love in wardah product types accompanied by more complex customer engagement.

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