THE EFFECTS OF BRAND EXPERIENCE ON BRAND LOYALTY MEDIATED BY BRAND PASSION, SELF-BRAND CONNECTION, BRAND AFFECTION, AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ON SMARTPHONE USERS IN INDONESIA

Aditya Revaldi[1], Kurniawati[2], Latifianisa Hayuningtyas[3], Putri Kusumastuti Suhardi[4], Atikah Gantini[5]

[1, 2, 3, 4, 5]*Universitas Trisakti, Indonesia*

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of brand experience on brand loyalty with the mediation effect of brand passion, self-brand connection, brand affection, and customer satisfaction of smartphone users in Indonesia. This study used a sample of 259 respondents who have been using smartphones for at least two years. The data was obtained using purposive sampling by filling out an online questionnaire. Data analysis generated by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results of this study show that brand experience has little impact on brand loyalty. However, brand experience has a positive influence on brand loyalty if it is mediated by brand passion, self-brand connection, brand affection, and customer satisfaction. The implication of this study argues that it is better for companies engaged in the smartphone industries can pay attention to the role of brand passion, self-brand connection, brand affection, and customer satisfaction as factors that can mediate brand experience to increase the tendency of brand loyalty. Companies should enhance the focus, not only on the visual and feature but also the emotional indicators so that the customer could have a good experience to become a loyal one.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Today's consumers are more interested in collecting memories and experiences than goods. According to market research conducted by eMarketer in 2020, 65% of consumers buy something because of the positive experiences while buying a brand (DeBlasio, 2020). Many companies compete to provide the best buying experience for their consumers, including the gadget and technology company, Apple Inc (DeBlasio, 2020).

In Indonesia, the Apple brand is stealing the public's attention, and many Android users are willing to switch to iPhone. The reason why Indonesian consumers are starting to like the iPhone is that all the applications available for the iPhone are not necessarily on Android but all Android applications can certainly be found on the iPhone, so there is an exclusive impression when using the iPhone. The exclusivity and purchase price of the latest iPhone series, which are relatively expensive, creates a stereotype among Indonesian consumers that people who use iPhones are classified as middle class and above, so iPhones are often used as a benchmark for one's social status. These things make the iPhone have a higher resale value in the gadget market than Android smartphones (Ilmupedia, 2018).

Apple made other gadget technology companies realize that in addition to product proficiency, brand experience is also important to make customers feel comfortable and loyal in

using a brand. Many smartphone brands from China are becoming new forces in the global smartphone market. Smartphone brands from China are generally known for their low prices, so sometimes customers are not too proud to use them because they are less prestigious. Smartphone brands from China such as Huawei, Oppo, and Vivo have now managed to dominate the gadget market in several countries because they have proven that they can provide a good brand experience and sophisticated products.

Huawei launched the Huawei P30 Pro product as their product with an extraordinary camera lens from the well-known camera company, Leica. The Huawei P30 Pro camera is also equipped with a periscope lens for an optical zoom of up to 5 times. This provides the experience of using a professional camera using only a smartphone. Oppo company launched the Oppo Reno 10x Zoom, which has a camera with optical zoom capability reaching six times with an anti-mainstream pop-up front camera. Oppo Reno is also supported by the ability of an in-screen fingerprint sensor and fast charging (Gunawan, 2019).

Although there are more and more smartphone brands circulating among the public, traditionally a brand usually doesn't focus too much on touchpoints and emotional attributes between brands and customers (Iglesias, Singh & Batista-Foguet, 2011). So, to distinguish a brand from its competitors, it takes the ability to develop large experiential customer touchpoints, such as the ability to produce visuals that are comfortable, pleasing, and attractive to the customer's senses (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Consumers are not only looking for tangible, functional value when buying a product, they are also looking for intangible or symbolic functional value, namely a distinct buying experience. Distinctive experience begins from communication, the brand environment, servicescape, identity, and others (Ong, Lee & Ramayah, 2018).

The main stimulus for the association between customers and brands is a brand experience, and the main benefit that will be generated is brand loyalty (Sahin, Zehir & Kitapci, 2011), especially with the many studies showing that brand experience affects the connection between a brand and its customers (Brakus et al., 2009; Ong et al., 2018; Şahin et al., 2011). Brand passion, self-brand connection, and brand affection are three crucial aspects that reflect the emotional side of brand attachment, according to previous study. Each of these aspects has a significant impact on the outcome variable, brand loyalty in this example (Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005).

If customers already have a strong sense of attraction to a brand, then customers will tend to choose and include the brand in their daily lifestyle (Thomson et al., 2005), and tend to feel lost when the brand cannot be found or purchased (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2013). Customers who already feel very close to a brand will then enter the brand into the customer's self-concept (Escalas & Bettman, 2005) or what is called a self-brand connection. This self-brand connection is defined as a feeling of oneness between a customer and a brand, resulting in the customer incorporating the brand into their self-concept (Whan Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich & Lacobucci, 2010). Self-brand connection can be built from a positive, extraordinary, and memorable customer experience with the brand, affecting customer loyalty to the brand (Van der Westhuizen, 2018).

A customer can build close bonds and associations with a brand if the brand can satisfy experiential, emotional, and functional desires through the products offered (Whan Park et al., 2010). Customers who have an affection for a particular brand will tend to participate with the brand for a long period of time (Choi & Kim, 2020). When customers get a good experience from

a brand, they tend to be satisfied with the brand (Hussein, 2018). In a variety of industries, customer pleasure has been generally recognized as one of the predictors of brand loyalty (Hussein, 2018).

Previous study has shown that emotional brand attachment, which comprises brand passion, self-brand connection, and brand affection, is an essential element that can influence brand loyalty, and that each component of emotional brand attachment contributes differently to the variable outcomes (Thomson et al., 2005). The development of emotional brand connection is also influenced by brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009). Customer pleasure, in addition to emotional brand attachment, has been proven to mediate the positive impact of brand experience on customer loyalty (Hussein, 2018), so it is deemed necessary to develop research on the influence and interaction between brand experience on brand loyalty, directly and mediated by brand passion, self-brand connection, brand affection, and customer satisfaction.

In the limitation of research conducted by Mostafa & Kasamani (2020), it is stated that it is recommended that further research can involve cognitive mechanisms, one of which is customer satisfaction, to strengthen a comprehensive understanding of the role of emotional brand attachment. Therefore, the difference between this study and previous research is to add customer satisfaction as a variable that can mediate the positive influence of brand experience on customer loyalty of smartphone users in Indonesia. It is hoped that with this research, smartphone companies in Indonesia can improve brand experience and customer satisfaction for smartphone customers. Therefore, the formulation of the problem in this study is how brand experience can affect brand loyalty with brand passion, self-brand connection, brand affection, and customer satisfaction as a mediation?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoritical Framework

Based on the research background, consumers are more interested in buying because of the positive experience they feel in buying a brand. This is evidenced by the theory of brand experience, which states that compared to the function of features and benefits in traditional products, brand experience can create long-term effects in the minds of consumers (Khan & Rahman, 2015). Based on the foregoing, it can be argued that brand experience is the start of a consumer's relationship with a brand that determines their brand loyalty. So there are several variables that will be raised in this study to achieve consumer loyalty to the brand, namely brand passion, self-brand connection, brand affection, and customer satisfaction.

2.2. Brand Experience

Brand experience is an experience or consumer insight that is formed when interacting with a brand (Bilal, 2018). Previous research suggests that consumers can be attracted by various visual stimuli, such as logos, designs, shapes, colors, and other aspects that make up a brand (Das, Agarwal, Malhotra & Varshneya, 2018). In addition, the services provided by employees are an important part so that consumers can have a satisfying or good experience (Bettencourt & Gwinner, 1996). Therefore, the experience of a brand is constructed from many sides and must be started holistically.

Smartphones are made to have elegant attributes such as in terms of color, design, and beauty, and have been used such as in terms of battery life, software, and sound systems. In other

words, elegant attributes can be like color, design, and phone responsiveness. Due to the close interaction between consumers and their cellphones, where customers use their smartphones frequently every day, previous studies in the smartphone market have indicated that the luxury component can trigger a greater user brand experience than the utility value (Yu & Yuan, 2019). Brand experience is divided into four dimensions of consumer response: sensory, affective, and intellectual (Brakus et al., 2009).

The sensory dimension defines the visual and brand aspects perceived by consumers sensory (Hwang & Hyun, 2011). Because it may evoke the consumer's senses of touch, sight, hearing, and scent, the aesthetic part of a brand adds to the sensory experience (Brakus et al., 2009). Furthermore, the affective dimension defines all kinds of views of the consumer experience that are accompanied by a sense of emotion and sentiment (Hwang & Hyun, 2011). Individuals can view a brand positively and positively (e.g., happy, eager, and loyal) or negatively (e.g., difficult, afraid, and disgusted) (Kang, Manthiou, Sumarjan & Tang, 2017).

The behavioral dimension component is represented by a specific reaction to a brand caused by certain stimulants (Wang, 2014). The behavioral dimension shows variations that are formed from consumer actions towards positive brand experiences, and these last long in consumers' minds, and is considered essential marketing practices (Brakus et al., 2009). Finally, the intellectual dimension is defined as a condition that triggers the minds of consumers and causes their curiosity (Schmitt, 1999). Consumers will remember a brand that has intellectual appeal and will be able to recollect all memories associated with the brand if they are given the same cues and indicators in multiple places (Brakus et al., 2009; Hwang & Hyun, 2011).

2.3.   Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is a consumer's steadfast commitment to stick with a product or service brand, which will lead to future repeat purchases despite situational factors and market conditions that could trigger behavioral switching (Oliver, 1999). Loyal customers are vital to generate a strong market share, and brand loyalty is considered the key to measuring the success of a company's marketing strategy (Aaker & Express, 1996). It is important for marketers to continue to develop and maintain brand loyalty relationships with their customers, this is needed in order to be able to survive in a very tight and unstable competition (Nawastha & Alversia, 2020). To establish and increase consumer loyalty, companies usually focus their focus on consumer brand loyalty programs, member discounts, coupons, and redeemable points or exclusive services for loyalty membership holders (Ong et al., 2018). Previous researchers explained that brand experience is an important stimulant to develop a desire for a brand, which can successively encourage the tendency of brand loyalty (Das et al., 2018).

2.4.   Brand Passion

A strong emotional connection with a brand that people appreciate, think significant, want to have, tie to their identity, and invest resources in over time is known as brand passion (Swimberghe, Astakhova & Wooldridge, 2014). The term "interest" refers to strong favorable thoughts towards a product or service. Consumers with a high level of interest are more likely to acquire a brand's products/services on the spur of the moment (Thomson et al., 2005). Brand passion tends to be more influential when consumers and the brand enter the initial stage of development (Pourazad, Stocchi & Pare, 2020). In addition, the desire for a brand or brand passion creates sentiments or feelings that encourage consumers to form a closer, longer bond with a brand

(Das et al., 2018). Previous research found that customers with memorable, specific, and extraordinary experiences will affect customer loyalty to a brand (Van der Westhuizen, 2018).

2.5.   Self-Brand Connection

The amount to which individuals have assimilated the brand into their own insight is referred to as Self-Brand Connection. Self-brand connection to consumers needs to be anticipated for a pleasant and loyal attitude from consumers (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Self-Brand Connection is described as how far individuals have incorporated the brand into their own insight. Consumers build a personal connection with a brand due to a memorable and enjoyable experience for them so that it stimulates the relationship between consumers and a brand and causes consumers to become loyal (Van der Westhuizen, 2018). In addition, consumers not only buy an item or consume a service out of necessity but also because of aspects of the experience related to themselves (Schmitt, Joško Brakus, & Zarantonello, 2015).

2.6.   Brand Affection

Customers' pleasant, comfortable, and warm feelings for a brand are reflected in brand affection, which demonstrates the brand's ability to elicit favorable responses from customers when they purchase it (Thomson et al., 2005). Through product qualities, people can form attachments and affective associations with brands that meet their experience, emotional, and functional needs (Whan Park et al., 2010). In addition, individuals who have an affection for a particular brand tend to have a long-term relationship with that brand (Choi & Kim, 2020). Previous studies have realized that the relationship of affection or affection with a brand is significantly connected with customer loyalty (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2020). Therefore, the brand experience causes customers to maintain their affection for the brand, so that they can build strong brand loyalty.

2.7.   Customer Satisfaction

Customer happiness is a crucial component of marketing education because it is thought to influence profitability and stock prices (Flint, Blocker & Boutin Philip, 2011). Customer satisfaction is also interpreted as a consequence of the difference between their initial expectations of a brand and how the actual performance of the brand (Oliver, 1999). Customer happiness is one of the determinants of brand loyalty in numerous industries, according to marketing science. Several previous studies provide the view that loyalty is caused by consumer satisfaction (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Satisfaction can be used as a benchmark that affects customer loyalty to a brand for a short period of time. Satisfaction is created when customers accept the company's offer and loyalty will be established after the initial acceptance stage occurs (Susanty & Kenny, 2015). Higher customer happiness leads to increased brand loyalty, according to previous research (Jones & Suh, 2000). Experience of service quality predicts customer satisfaction which in turn will predict customer loyalty (Farooq, Muhammad & Qadir, 2019). Mediation on customer satisfaction is the initial stage for the formation of customer loyalty which will then form long-term relationships and improve the organizational image (Kayani, Muhammad & Ali, 2020).

The Hypothesis in this study is:
H_1: Brand experience has a positive effect on brand loyalty.
H_2: Brand passion mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.
H_3: Self-brand connection mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

H_4: Brand affection mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.
H_5: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

Based on the theoretical aspects that have been described and previous research, the conceptual framework of this research will be described as follows:
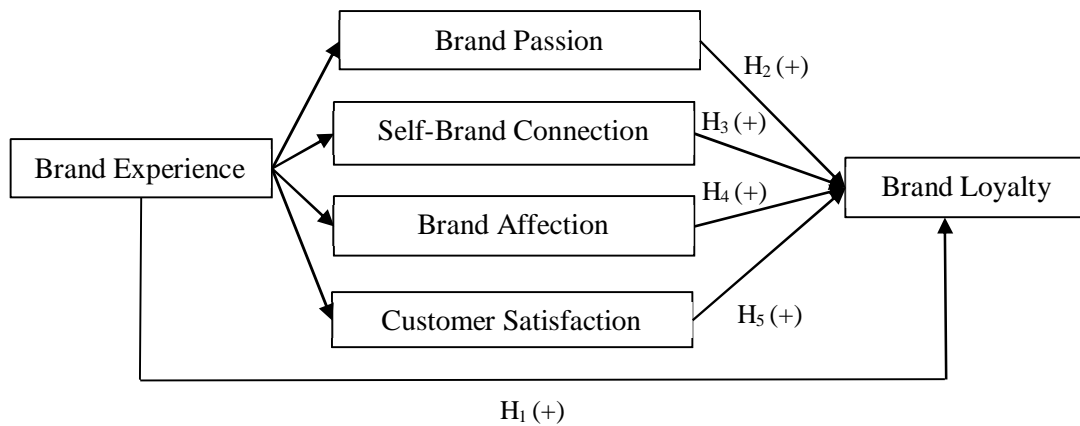
H_1 (+)
Source: Mostafa & Kasamani (2020) and Kataria & Saini (2019)
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3.   RESEARCH METHODS

Research becomes the research variable of respondents who have brand experience, brand loyalty, brand passion, self-brand connection, brand affection, and customer satisfaction. This study was conducted to test the hypothesis to analyze the effect of each variable using Structural Equation Models (SEM). The time horizon in this research is by cross-sectional method because the sampling is limited by the specified time (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This study uses several variables and measurements, namely: brand experience as an independent variable as measured by 12 statement items, mediating variables include brand interest as measured by 5 statement items, self-brand connection as measured by 3 statement items, brand affection as measured by 4 items. The statement, customer satisfaction as measured by 4 statement items and brand loyalty as the dependent variable as measured by 4 statement items. Statements adopted from research by Kataria & Saini (2019) and Mostafa & Kasamani (2020) using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire method from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The population in this study is smartphone users in Indonesia. This study uses samples taken with non-probability sampling methods and purposive sampling techniques (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) that meet certain criteria, namely only individuals who use smartphones in their daily lives with certain brands and individuals who use the brand for two years. consecutively and individuals who have purchased the brand at least twice in two years.

The source of the research data obtained is the distribution of questionnaires carried out to obtain primary data in this study. Questionnaires were distributed online to 433 respondents by distributing questionnaire links using Google Forms. The number of respondents' results received as many as 339 respondents with 80 respondents could not be used because these respondents were not included in the filling criteria. So that the number of respondents who can be processed in 259 respondents (59.81%).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Results and the analysis

Based on table 1, it can be seen that there are 32 indicators, of which 3 question indicators from the brand experience variable have a significant value below 0.35, which means that the 3 indicators are invalid, so there are 29 other indicators that have a significant value above 0.35, which means all 29 indicators is considered valid. It is then the remaining indicators can be used for further analysis. Furthermore, the reliability test results for all variables have a Cronbach's alpha value of more than 0.6, which means that it has met the reliability criteria or there is internal consistency between indicators in a variable.

Table 1. Reliability and Descriptive Statistics

Constructs and Scale Items	Mean (SD)	Factor Loading	Cronbach's alpha
Brand experience	3,8387 (0,72439)	-	0,877
1 This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses	4,25 (0,878)	0,720	
2 I find this brand interesting in a sensory way	4,29 (0,860)	0,709	
3 This brand does not appeal to my senses	3,99 (1,101)	0,646	
4 This brand induces feelings and sentiments	3,77 (1,120)	0,750	
5 * I do not have strong emotions for this brand	-	-	
6 This brand is an emotional brand	3,43 (1,063)	0,746	
7 I engage in physical actions and behaviors when I use this brand	3,41 (1,139)	0,760	
8 This brand results in bodily experiences	4,10 (0,879)	0,717	
9 * This brand is not action-oriented	-	-	
10 I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand	3,58 (1,091)	0,658	
11 * This brand does not make me think	-	-	
12 This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving	3,73 (1,006)	0,707	
Constructs and Scale Items	Mean (SD)	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand passion	4,0788 (0,79043)	-	0,919
1 I am passionate about this brand	4,00 (0,950)	0,889	
2 I have real trust in this brand	4,21 (0,846)	0,848	
3 I feel really close to this brand	3,82 (0,996)	0,850	
4 This brand is really appealing to me	4,20 (0,866)	0,875	
5 This brand makes me feel great delight	4,16 (0,877)	0,894	
Constructs and Scale Items	Mean (SD)	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-brand connection	3,7207 (0,94308)	-	0,874

		Mean (SD)	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
1	This brand embodies what I believe in	3,82 (0,949)	0,888	
2	This brand is an important indicator of who I am	3,53 (1,172)	0,887	
3	I feel a strong sense of belonging to this brand	3,82 (1,031)	0,916	

Constructs and Scale Items	Mean (SD)	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand affection	4,1129 (0,76569)	-	0,904
1 I feel very positive when I use this brand	4,09 (0,883)	0,872	
2 Using this brand makes me happy	4,11 (0,860)	0,911	
3 I feel good when I use this brand	4,19 (0,806)	0,895	
4 I am proud to use this brand	4,07 (0,923)	0,852	

Constructs and Scale Items	Mean (SD)	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Customer satisfaction	4,1670 (0,73852)	-	0,886
1 My current brand is as good as I expected	4,20 (0,843)	0,892	
2 My current brand is worth the price I paid for it	4,19 (0,853)	0,792	
3 This brand entirely fulfills my needs.	4,09 (0,862)	0,851	
4 This brand generally meets my expectations.	4,19 (0,865)	0,916	

Constructs and Scale Items	Mean (SD)	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand loyalty	4,0502 (0,88369)	-	0,904
1 I prefer to purchase this brand to other brands	4,11 (0,974)	0,918	
2 I intend to continue buying this brand	3,96 (1,048)	0,916	
3 Overall, this brand will be my first choice	4,03 (1,060)	0,893	
4 I will recommend this brand to other people	4,10 (0,922)	0,795	

Notes: Brand Experience * item not valid

This study uses the SEM data analysis method with the AMOS 24 program. It can be seen that the chi-square value is where the expected criteria are small or close to 0, so the indicator value is 1159.550 (poor fit). The p value in this study was 0.000 (poor fit). The RSMEA value in the study was 0.091 (goodness of fit). The NFI, TLI, and CFI values in this study are NFI worth 0.824 (marginal fit), TLI worth 0.859 (marginal fit), CFI worth 0.872 (marginal fit). The value of CMIN/DF in this study was 3.151 (goodness of fit). It was concluded that all the tests in this study had results showing a goodness of fit of more than 1 (one) so that the structural model in this study was feasible to use and could be carried out for testing the next hypothesis.

4.2. Hypothesis Test Result

Hypothesis testing aims to test whether the independent variable has an effect on the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing in this study was carried out using the structural equation modeling (SEM) method. Whether or not a hypothesis is supported can be seen by comparing the magnitude of sig with 0.05 (Hair Jr., Black, Babin, Anderson, Black & Anderson, 2018). The basis for making hypothetical decisions is as follows: If p–value <0.05, then Ho rejected; If p–value ≥ 0.05, then Ho accepted. Here are the results of the AMOS version 24 output:

Table 2. Direct Hyphotesis Test Result

Hypothesis	Estimate	t-value	p-value	Conclusion
H_1: *Brand Experience → Brand loyalty*	-0,227	-0,346	0,3645	*Not Supported*

4.3. Discussion

The first hypothesis in this study examines the effect of brand experience on brand loyalty. The results of the research that have been carried out show that there is no influence between brand experience on brand loyalty which is indicated by a p-value of 0.3645 0.05 and an estimated value of -0.227. The results of this study do not support the results of previous studies which showed that brand experience can have a direct effect on brand loyalty.

Table 3. Indirect Hyphotesis Test Result

Hypothesis	Model	Estimate	t-value	p-value	Conclusion
	Model 1				
	Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty (1)	0,747	9,613	0,000	*Significant*
	Model 2				
	Brand Experience → Brand Passion (2)	0,836	10,511	0,000	*Supported*
	Brand Passion → Brand Loyalty (3)	0,817	8,526	0,000	*Supported*
H_2	*Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty (4)*	0,068	0,758	0,224	*Fully Mediated*
	Model 1				
	Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty (1)	0,747	9,613	0,000	*Significant*
	Model 2				
	Brand Experience → Self-Brand connection (2)	0,748	9,240	0,000	*Supported*
H_3	*Self-Brand connection → Brand Loyalty (3)*	0,361	4,321	0,000	*Supported*
	Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty (4)	0,472	5,281	0,000	*Partially Mediated*
	Model 1				
	Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty (1)	0,747	9,613	0,000	*Significant*
	Model 2				
	Brand Experience → Brand affection (2)	0,822	9,897	0,000	*Supported*
	Brand affection → Brand Loyalty (3)	0,728	7,625	0,000	*Supported*
H_4	*Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty (4)*	0,151	1,673	0,047	*Fully Mediated*
	Model 1				
	Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty (1)	0,747	9,613	0,000	*Significant*
	Model 2				
	Brand Experience → Customer Satisfaction (2)	0,705	9,085	0,000	*Supported*
H_5	*Customer Satisfaction → Brand Loyalty (3)*	0,508	7,225	0,000	*Supported*
	Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty (4)	0,394	5,304	0,000	*Partially Mediated*

The second hypothesis in this study shows that brand interest mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty with p-value (1,2,3) 0.000 < 0.05 in model one and

model two which is significant. For the p-value at number 4 with a p-value of 0.224 < 0.05, it shows the mediation role which is fully mediated. There is a relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty if it is not mediated or mediated by brand passion because brand experience is an important stimulant to develop a desire for a brand, which in succession can encourage the tendency of brand loyalty (Das et al., 2018). Consumers who have an interest in a brand create relationship quality in mediating experience and loyalty to a brand (Maffezzolli, Semprebon & Prado, 2014). In addition, the experience of a brand is strengthened by the consumer's self-expression as they desire so as to stimulate their desire for the brand (Schmitt, 2013).

The third hypothesis in this study shows that personal brand connections mediate the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty with p-value (1,2,3) 0.000 < 0.05 in model one and model two which is significant. For the p-value at number 4 with a p-value of 0.000 < 0.005, it shows the mediation role which is partially mediated. There is a relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty if mediated by personal brand connections as mediation because customers who have memorable, specific, and extraordinary experiences will affect customer loyalty to a brand (Van der Westhuizen, 2018). Previous research has also found that personal brand connections can mediate the relationship between brand experience and loyalty (Maffezzolli et al., 2014). The results of the study are strengthened by the opinion that consumers do not only buy an item or consume a service out of necessity but also because of aspects of the experience related to themselves (Schmitt et al., 2015).

The fourth hypothesis in this study shows that brand affection mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty with a significant p-value (1,2,3) 0.000 < 0.05 in model one and model 2. For the p-value at number 4 with a p-value of 0.047 < 0.05, it shows the mediation role which is fully mediated. There is a relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty if it is not mediated or mediated by brand affection because individuals who have affection for a particular brand tend to have a long-term relationship with that brand (Choi & Kim, 2020). Previous studies have recognized that affection for a brand is significantly related to customer loyalty (Hemsley-Brown & Alnawas, 2016). Customers tend to have experiences either positively (e.g. joy, desire, and devotion) or negatively (e.g., distress, fear, and disgust) (Kang et al., 2017).

The fifth hypothesis in this study shows that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty with a p-value of (1,2,3) 0.000 <0.05 in model one and model two which is significant. For the p-value at number 4 with a p-value of 0.000 < 0.005, it shows its mediating role which is partially mediated. Because customer happiness is a key aspect that can make customers loyal, there is a link between brand experience and brand loyalty if mediated by customer satisfaction. Previous research have shown that the higher the customer satisfaction, the higher the customer loyalty. (Henriawan & April, 2015). Experience of service quality predicts customer satisfaction which in turn will predict customer loyalty (Farooq et al., 2019). Client satisfaction mediation is the first step in building customer loyalty, which will lead to long-term partnerships and a better image for the company (Kayani et al., 2020).

5.   CONCLUSION

From the research that has been done, the authors found the results in the form of no influence between brand experience on brand loyalty because the brand experience gained by consumers is more of a sensory indicator not towards a behavioral indicator, because consumers still see smartphone brands from visual and sensory displays. However, brand experience can

affect brand loyalty if it is mediated by brand interest because consumers have a close relationship with the smartphone brand they use because they like, trust, feel close, and consider those brands are attractive so that they feel happy when using the brand.

Then the self-brand connection can also have an effect if this variable mediates the link between brand experience and brand loyalty. Then another mediating variable that influences brand experience on brand loyalty is brand affection. In addition, the customer satisfaction variable can serve as an excellent mediator between brand experience and brand loyalty. This influence arises because of the satisfaction value of consumers towards the chosen brand because of the visuals, features, price, and other aspects of the brand are meeting the expectations of smartphone consumers. Consumer loyalty will be formed by itself if consumers are pleased with the smartphone brand they use.

In this study, there are several research limitations, including this research specifically examines smartphone user respondents who have used a certain smartphone brand for two consecutive years and have purchased the brand at least twice in two years. This study also only examines the relationship of brand experience variables to brand loyalty, either directly (directly) or indirectly (indirectly) mediated by brand interest, self-brand connection, brand affection, and customer satisfaction.

The implications of practical recommendations for managerial in this research are: (1) The management of the smartphone industry should not only focus on visual and feature development, but should pay more attention to emotional indicators so that users always feel to close and proud of the brand. (2) The management of smartphone companies can provide "mini questionnaires" to users, can be through social media, direct personal interviews, and give souvenirs when consumers have filled out the questionnaire so that management can find out more about the expectations of users so that the products marketed can provide a satisfying experience so that consumers become loyal to the brand.

Suggestions for further research are to be able to add and expand the respondents' criteria, such as increasing the range of time for using smartphones and adding other brands besides those that have been tested in this study. Further research is also suggested to involve other industries such as the fashion, automotive, or tourism industries. Further researchers are also expected to be able to add other supporting and relevant variables, such as consumer brand engagement (Fernandes & Moreira, 2019) and consumer brand identification (Rather, Tehseen & Parey, 2018).

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