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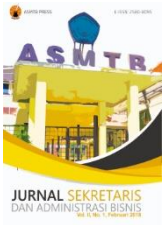

THE ROLE OF CONSUMER'S SELF-CONGRUENCE IN THE FORMATION OF BRAND ATTITUDE (STUDY IN THE SMARTPHONE MARKET)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the brand attitudes of smartphone user. In particular, it examines how users' self-image congruence can affect their brand attitudes towards smartphone products. Previous research indicates that self-congruence can facilitate positive behavior and attitude towards products. This research used cross-sectional survey explanatory method and structural equation modelling approach to test the hypothesis. A questionnaire was sent to 200 smartphone users in Bandung. Results suggest that self–congruence is a good predictor of user's brand attitude.

Penelitian ini menguji brand attitude pengguna smartphone, terutama berfokus kepada peranan self-congruence yang dapat memfasilitasi perilaku dan sikap positif pengguna terhadap produk smartphone. Konsep self-congruence telah lama diketahui dapat mempengaruhi perilaku konsumen dalam hal pengambilan keputusan, namun dalam kontek pasar smartphone -terutama di Indonesia- masih belum jelas mengenai peranan self-congruence dalam mempengaruhi perilaku konsumen oleh karena itu perlunya penelitian mengenai hal ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode explanatory survey dan pendekatan pemodelan persamaan struktural untuk menguji hipotesis. Kuesioner dikirim ke 200 pengguna smartphone di Bandung. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa self-congruence adalah prediktor yang baik dari sikap merek pengguna.

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Introduction

Internet users in Indonesia is approximately 88.1 million and 85% of the users frequently access the Internet using mobile phones (APJII, 2015). Smartphone penetration in Indonesia in 2017 is 20.7% according to Global Mobile Market Report (2017) and it predicted to be growing fast in the future. The reasons why Indonesian people like to use smartphone because it's compactness and its powerful features not only for communication functions but also it can satisfy other needs of users. This fact has led to the increasing trend of smartphones in Indonesia because this device has capability to access the Internet with ease and Indonesian user is very unique because they enjoy surfing the cyberspace using smartphone. With many Internet users and the unique user behavior in Indonesia makes smartphone market in Indonesia is very potential according to smartphone manufacturers.

Table 1

Prediction of Smartphone Growth in the Asia Pacific

Country	**Number of Smartphone User (In Millions)**				
	2015	***2016***	***2017***	***2018***	***2019***
China	525.8	563.3	599.3	640.5	687.7
India	167.9	204.1	243.8	279.2	317.1
Indonesia	55.4	65.2	74.9	83.5	92.0
Japan	51.8	55.8	58.9	60.9	62.6
South Korea	33.6	34.6	35.6	36.5	37.0
Philippines	26.2	29.9	33.3	36.5	39.2
Vietnam	20.7	24.6	28.6	32.0	35.2

a. (emarketer.com, 2015)

b.

There is a lot new smartphone brands in the market, whether local and global brands. These caused a very fierce competition in Indonesian smartphone market. Every manufacturer offers a large selection of smartphones to the consumers, ranging from the series, the features, service and also price. In order to face tight competition like this, it requires constant innovation in order to provide more value for consumers and eventually be able to give the company a competitive advantage compared to its competitors.

Table 2

Top Five Smartphone Vendors and Market Share 2015 in Indonesia

Vendor	**2015 shipment volume (millions)**	**2015 Market share (%)**	**2014 shipment volume (millions)**	**2014 Market share (%)**	**Year-over year Growth (%)**
Samsung	7.3	24.8	6.8	27.0	7.5
Asus	4.7	15.9	1.4	5.6	231.4
Smartfren	3.2	10.8	2.6	10.2	23.7
Advan	2.8	9.6	2.3	9.2	21.5
Lenovo	1.9	6.5	1.4	5.8	31.3
Others	9.5	32.5	10.6	42.2	-9.8
Total	29.3	100	25.0	100	17.1

c. (Hidayat, 2016)

d.

For the consumers, the emergence of many smartphone's brand that offer a lot of things, can only bring confusion when selecting a product or brand. Consumer is also faced with many stimuli of

marketing that will actually make consumers become bored and will negatively affect their behavior towards the brand (Hoyer, Macinnis, & Pieters, 2013). Indonesian smartphone market has around 30 to 40 smartphone brands at the moment, and it predicted will continue to grow. Manufacturers actively give a lot of marketing programs to the consumer like sales promotion and advertising, events and experience, mobile marketing, etc. that made consumer is over exposed to marketing activity.

These conditions make harder for consumer to choose a brand/ product and also affected the attitude of consumer towards smartphone brand/ products. Selection to a brand can be based on the behavior of consumers towards the brand (Keller, 2013); therefore, the formation of positive attitudes toward the brand becomes very important. This study focused on how the formation of attitudes towards brands when associated it with self-congruence.

The literature on consumer behavior has long supported the proposition that the purchasing behavior can be influenced by an individual's self-concept (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Kressmann et al., 2006; M. J. Sirgy et al., 1997; M Joseph Sirgy, 1982). Sirgy (1982) stated that motivation to be able expressing yourself can be a force for buying goods or using services. Other research that focusing on a different construct about self-brand relationship also mentioning the important role of self-congruity with the brand (Razmus, Jaroszyńska, & Palęga, 2017).

Although there are a lot of studies about self-congruity, a lot of questions still needs answered like how this concept can be assessed. Various researches in this concept use lot of measuring scale for the concept. The self-congruity assessment results from a psychological comparison with the product-user image and the self-concept (Albertz, 2014).

Previous studies had a lot of explaining that the individual self-concept can be associated with product and brand preferences, product and brand selection, customer satisfaction and store loyalty (Aguirre-rodriguez, Bosnjak, & Sirgy, 2012; Beerli, Meneses, & Gil, 2007; Das, 2013; M Joseph Sirgy, 1982; Yalcin, Eren-Erdogmus, & Dem, 2009). Those studies take places in various settings but in the context of the smartphone market in Indonesia few studies examined the association of self-congruity to the formation of brand attitude. For the reasons above, arise a lot of questions about this topic. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the description of self-congruity and brand attitude by smartphone users in Indonesia and find out the influence of self-congruity on brand attitude.

Literature Review

Brand Attitude

Brand attitude is one of the key elements on achieving brand equity. Marketers have long invoked the construct of brand attitude as key antecedents to consumer behavior (Whan Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010). The definition of brand attitude is the overall evaluation of individual towards a brand, usually the basis of brand choice and also an evaluation of expected capacity to deliver a currently relevant buying motive (Keller, 2013; Olson & Mitchell, 1981; Rossiter, 2014). In the evaluation process, consumers consider many things and one of them is the self-concept congruity with the brand. This means the emergence of attitude toward a brand from the consumer perspective is the result of perceptions of themselves regarding a brand, and it can be a predictor of consumer's behavior towards the brand (Liu, Li, Mizerski, & Soh, 2012).

Self-congruity

The term self-congruity was starting to emerge when Rosenberg introduced a theory of self-concept in 1979. The definition of self-concept is the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to him as an object (M Joseph Sirgy, 1982). Self-concept is construed into two perspectives: the actual self and the ideal self. Both dimensions can affect consumers when evaluating brands. Consumer efforts to match himself with a brand that is known as self-congruity. Self-congruity theory states that consumers prefer a brand that in line with their self-image. Past research (M. J. Sirgy et al., 1997; M Joseph Sirgy, 1991) has suggested that consumer will choose or have positive attitude towards the brands that are perceived to have strong favorable human characteristics that are congruent with his or her self-concept. Self-congruence proved to have important roles in consumer decision-making and motivation (Aguirre-rodriguez et al., 2012) and it also very persuasive as it often motivates

consumer irrationally through their emotion (Jie, Chou, & Chou, 2011). Past researches showed that self-congruence can be a basis for consumer to give an evaluation of the brand through the congruity of consumer's self-concept with the brand and several studies also show that perceived congruity between consumer and brand has a lot of effects on various aspects of consumer behavior (Albertz, 2014). Self-congruity can increase positive behaviors of consumers towards the brand (Liu *et al*., 2012).

H: Self-congruity has a significant and positive effect on brand attitude.

Research Method

This study included students at two private universities in Bandung. Students serve as respondents because they are very familiar with smartphone products and their brands. The type of research is descriptive verification using cross-sectional survey explanatory. The sampling technique using simple random sampling and Structural Equation Modelling using software from SPSS Amos 22 was used to test the hypothesis.

Measurement Scale Development

This study uses measurement scale that has been widely used in previous studies on self-congruence and brand attitude. All questions in the questionnaire have been translated into Indonesian in order to ease the respondents when answering the questionnaire. Self-congruity measurement scale (as exogenous variable) using the scale used by Sirgy *et al.* (1982), which consists of two statements that examined the actual and ideal self-congruity, each statement was assessed using a five-point Likert scale (Kressmann *et al*., 2006; M. J. Sirgy *et al*., 1997). This measurement has been used by a lot of research in self-congruence and the composite reliability value always above the requirement standard (>0,7), this means each indicator of self-congruence is reliable to measure the self-congruence construct (Lee & Jeong, 2014). To measure brand attitude (as endogenous variable) in this research, uses a scale from previous studies in which respondents were asked to answer six questions with a five-point Likert scale (Li, Daugherty, & Biocca, 2002).

Table 3

Measurement Scale

Self-congruence (Endogenous Variable) (M. J. Sirgy et al., 1997) **5 point scale**	
x1	The typical user of this brand is consistent with how I see myself
x2	The typical user of this brand is consistent with how I like to see myself
Brand attitude (Exogenous Variable) (Li et al., 2002) **5 point scale**	
y1	This brand is good
y2	This brand is attractive
y3	This brand is interesting
y4	This brand is appealing
y5	This brand is like
y6	This brand is pleasent

Fig. 1

Research Model

Result and Discussion

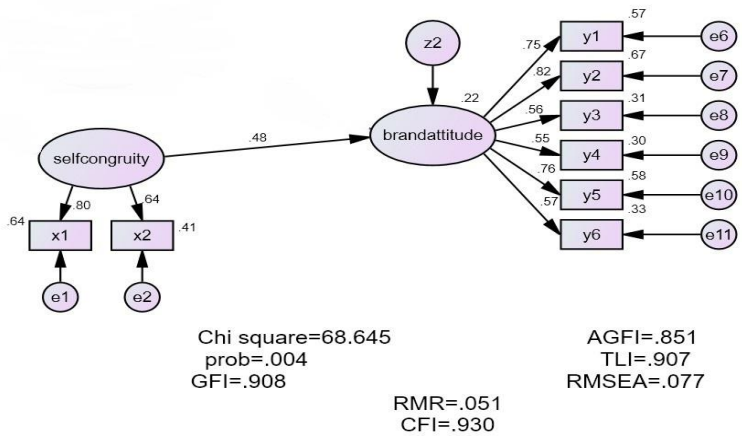
Result

Characteristics of Sample

This study used a questionnaire with a sample size of 200, but the questionnaire that meets the requirements to be used in this study was 116. As many as 51.4% of respondents were male, and the remaining 48.6% were female. Last education level of the respondents is high school (100%) because they all are college students. As many as 50% of respondents own an iPhone; 35% had a Samsung, and the rest have a smartphone with a variety of brands such as Oppo, MI, LG, and Sony. Most familiar brand of smartphone is iPhone (44.83%), Samsung (29.31%), Sony (8.62%) and the rest (17.24%) is a combination of various brands such as Nokia, Lenovo, MI, Oppo, and others.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To evaluate the goodness of fit (GOF) between the data and the model, assessment was done based on the absolute and incremental GOF value. The results can be concluded that the measurement model fits quite well with the data (GFI = 0.9; RMR = 0.05; RMSEA = 0.077; AGFI = 0.85; CFI = 0.93).



Source: Processed Data

Fig. 2

Final Model Results with Path Coefficients

Hypotheses Testing

SEM was run to investigate the causal relationships of the constructs proposed in the theoretical framework. The result shows that hypothesis was supported. Self-congruence influenced brand attitude (β=0.48), therefore supporting the hypothesis.

Table 4

Path Analysis Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis		Est	C.R	Signifikansi	Conclusion
H1	*Self congruity* ➔ *brand attitude*	0,48	3,445	Significant	H Supported

Source: Processed Data

Discussion

The results of this study show that the self-congruity affects brand attitude. This result is consistent with earlier research about this topic. Smartphone nowadays is considered as an identity of the user, it becomes the symbol of status, and it represents the user self-image.

In this research, self-congruity is affecting brand attitude positively, the result also prove that actual self-congruence can generate more positive brand attitude than ideal self-congruence. Overall, despite having a positive effect to brand attitude, self-congruity only gave 0, 48 points. This result indicates that there are still rooms for other concept to increase the formation of brand attitude.

The development of marketing strategy is the efforts to build clear brand personality and in accordance with the intended target market. Brand personality has to be adjusted with the self-concept of consumer target markets therefore marketers should identify very clearly the self-concept of consumers to match the brand personality of the product. If it matches the behavior of consumers towards the brand, it will become more positive. The similarity between the self-image of consumers with brand personality provides a positive role towards the establishment of consumer behavior (Aguirre-rodriguez et al., 2012; M. J. Sirgy & Su, 2000; M Joseph Sirgy, 1991). Self-congruity model has a hypothesis that the desired brand attitude will happen when there is a match between the consumer's self-image with the image of the brand (Parker, 2009).

In this research, showed facts that for smartphone users in Indonesia, actual self-congruence is more important that ideal self-congruence. This means that when buying a smartphone, the user chooses a brand that can be a representative of the actual self.

The analysis also shows that although there is significant correlation between self-congruence with brand attitude, but the value of loading factors is only 0, 48. This means that only 48% of brand attitude construct that can be explained by self-congruence.

Abundant information about a brand this day makes easier for consumer to evaluate the brand i.e. when consumer wants to buy products they just access review site and read numerous review about the brand from others consumer that had used the product or brand. This kind of behavior makes lack of involvement when choosing the brand, they make the decision based on the opinions of other. Brand knowledge has two dimensions: brand awareness and brand image where there are trusts in the brand. Creation of brand knowledge is a process of converting the trust into the experience and vice versa, therefore in its creation required the exchange of information between marketers and consumers. Brand knowledge is related with certain quality associations the consumer links to the brand and it can work both directions, in the perspective of brand and also from consumer mind.

Conclusions

This study provides further additional knowledge about the influence of self on brand attitude, especially in the smartphone market. Self-congruity may significantly affect the formations of brand attitude, which is in line with previous studies, and strengthens the theory about this subject. The most important indicator that can explain a lot about self-congruity in this research is actual self-congruity

meaning that smartphone users in Indonesia prefer smartphone brands that can describe themselves and the reflections of who they really are, not just for improving their status in the eyes of others.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations of this study are not maximal respondents in answering a questionnaire. This may be due to the lack of clarity of the questions in the questionnaire, the lack of explanation of the items and the use of biased phrase in the question.

For further research considered that only 48% of brand attitude construct that can be explain by self-congruity, this means that there are still a lot of things to explore on how to form a good brand attitude. This can be done by adding other construct like brand knowledge, or experience to make sure what other factors that can affect the forming of brand attitude. This is logic because it is likely a reflection of themselves can be influenced by the knowledge that came both from experience and trust that generated during contact with the brand. These additions should gave a clear understanding on how brand attitude can be formed.

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