

## How to Create Brand Love in Private Label: The Role of Satisfaction as Intervening Variable

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### Abstract

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Private brand is a store own brand that sold products only by its store. A store usually sold its brand with lower price than national brand. However, it is still challenging for store brand to compete with national brand in recent days. Most of buyers are likely to choose national brand considering their lack of risk, experience, and time usage. The store marketers need to change the buyer's paradigm from trial to be loyal, from substitute to love the brand. Previous study proved that brand love plays a crucial role to build brand loyalty. This study aims are to provide the antecedents of brand love and to deliver the strategies in changing to love the store brand. This research also contributes fresh understanding consider investigation about brand love in private label is new also. The samples are taken by purposive sample with cross-sectional survey. The respondents are private label buyers who bought more than one product category of store brand and more than single purchase. Data are gathered from 160 respondents who qualified from 180 distributed questioners. The result showed that brand identification, brand experience, and satisfaction have significant relation to brand love. Surprisingly, satisfaction plays as intervening variable from brand identification to brand love

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**Keywords:** brand identification, brand experience, satisfaction, brand love

### 1. Introduction

A brand name is a spearhead of companies to introduce and win the market. The more valuable is the brand, the higher possibility to be the market leader. A well-known brand can be intangible asset and capital to compete with other brand in the market. Companies may get successful in sustainable competitive advantage not only by making their customer satisfied but also love their brand. American Marketing Association (1960) defined a brand as "*a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors*". Hence, differentiation strategy is critical to distinguish with other brands. When consumers satisfy with a brand, they tend to repurchase and declare to be loyal. But, some researches argued that even though a brand can be satisfied, it doesn't make the customer loyal automatically. Although, satisfaction is not the only one predictor of loyalty (Jones and Sasser, 1995), but satisfaction is a basis to form brand love (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Hence, there should be a long term interaction in order to speak brand love.

Since satisfaction and loyal are no longer defined as long term loyal customer, brand love expresses the emotional element of brand loyalty, which also represent the objects, activities and brands (Ahuvia, 2005, Whang et al, 2004, Kumar and Sahah, 2004). Brand love concern about passion and emotional degree belong to the consumers that reflected in the brand. Private label, sometimes called store brand, is a unique brand that own and sold at its store only. It generally cheaper than national brand because the retailer can optimize the production to suit consumer demand and reduce advertising costs.

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Further, the retailer designed the manufacturing, packaging and marketing of the goods in order to build on the relationship between the products and the store's customer base. Customers who tend to have price sensitive normally choose private label, because it costly lower than any national brands. However, the sales of private label still challenging. Store brand has to face customer loyalty to national brand, unfamiliar store brand for some consumers, and how to link the brand to buyer's congruence.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the antecedents of brand love. We also explore the application of brand love in store brand. This article is organized started by analyzes the theoretical framework of brand love and its antecedents. Next, we exposed the methodology and instrument used in the study, and presented the statistical analyses made as well as the principal findings. And lastly, we will offer the conclusions, limitations of this study and directions for future research.

## 1. Literature Review

### 1.1. Brand Identification

Brand identification is defined as the level of how the consumer recognizes himself coincides with the image of the brand (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). They statement supported Sirgy et al. (1997) idea who considered the identification with the brand as the degree of congruence between consumer and brand image. The degree to which brands enable consumers to express their own identity is crucial to the level of identification with the brand. Further, Hughes and Ahearne (2010) defined brand identification as to what the extent an individual defines himself with the same attributes that he believes the brand has. Therefore, consumers belong to a community that allows them to express their image consumer's freely. Theoretically, consumers will choose a brand that fit with their self-concept or identities. Fournier (1998) confirmed that Consumers identify with brands to the "degree, to which the brand delivers on important identity concerns, tasks, or themes, thereby expressing a significant aspect of the self". Brand identification is also known as self-congruence and self-connection (Sirgy et al, 1997; Fournier, 1998)

Once consumers interact with a brand, they will develop positive feeling toward brand (Harrison-Walker, 2001) and perceived it. Afterward, they perceived the brand fit to their self-congruence. Earlier study suggested that brand identification which is including love and passion dimension (Fournier, 1998) has positive relationship to brand love (Kressman, et al, 2006). This is supported by Bergkvist et al (2009) and Albert et al (2013). Therefore:

***Hypothesis 1: brand identification leads to brand love.***

### 1.2. Brand Experience

Introduced firstly by Holbrook et al (1982), the theory of experience becomes more essential in marketing literature. Brand experience is a combination of subjective, internal (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses consists of sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral, and social dimension (Brakus et al, 2009), which are evoked by brand related stimuli and may lead to a strong emotional bonding between consumer and the brand which encompasses all types of consumer experiences, emotional, contextual, symbolic and non-utilitarian (Zarantello and Schmitt, 2010). Sensory means senses of vision, smell, taste, and touch of brand that impressed customers. Meanwhile affective refers to consumer's emotions and inner feelings. It may induce sentiment and tying customers emotionally. Somehow, the intellectual dimension talks about a customer's creative thinking and the ways of reproducing the things in a different manner. The behavioral dimension refers to customers' life targeting physical experiences. Finally, the social dimension refers to experiences in pursuit of moving beyond individualism to collectivism by involving people, groups, or a society (Brakus et al., 2009; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010).

Consumer's experience with the brand occurs when they interact each other. Consumers who have a great experience in consuming a brand may fall in love with a brand and return to buy the same brand over the period. Moreover, the experience will lead to intentionally and long lasting impression or emerge impulsively and stay for a short moment. It also can be positive or negative.

Brand experience may vary between product, shopping, service, and consumption experience. Consumers have product experience after directly made physical contact with it (Hoch and Ha, 1986), or when presented through advertisement (Hoch & Ha, 1986; Kempf & Smith, 1998). In the meantime, shopping and service experiences happen when consumers interact with a store's physical environments, its policies and practices (Hui & Bateson, 1991; Kerin, Jain & Howard, 1992). Thus, research in this area investigates how atmospheric variables and salespeople affect the consumer's experience (Ofir & Simonson, 2007). Lastly, consumption experiences emerge when consumer use and consuming products.

Some researchers argued that brand experience is a well-known key to generate brand attitude (Shamim and Butt, 2013), enhance brand preference (Yi et al, 2015), brand familiarity (Hong and Perks, 2005), able to build consumer brand equity (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010), brand trust and satisfaction (Hong and Perks, 2005; Brakus et al., 2009; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010), brand personality and loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010), and play as a driver for consumer to commit to the brand (Lee and Kang, 2012).

When consumer feels positive to the brand as a result of prior experience, they tend to consume over and over again. Further, the intimacy and passion of a brand are derived from consumption frequency and reflect romantic brand love (Stenberg, 1997). Prior study proved that brand experience play a significant role as an antecedent of brand love (Sarkar et al, 2012). Based on above discussion, thus, we proposed:

***Hypothesis 2: Favorable affective brand experience leads to brand love.***

### **1.3. Satisfaction**

Satisfaction is a positive reaction to an outcome of prior experience that derived and attitude formed of a prior experience (Ganesan, 1994) then impacts on subsequent purchases (Oliver, 1980), completing cyclical pattern (Bennett et al, 2005). Satisfaction occurs when products' perform as high as consumers' expectation. After the consumers consume the brand, they tend to value how good the brand is. If the brand performs well, consumer will show post buying behavior by repurchase again and again.

Satisfaction is an antecedent of brand loyalty, with increases in satisfaction leading to increases in brand loyalty (Bennett et al, 2005). Moreover, numerous constructs are also well known as its predictor such as: brand experience (Yi et al, 2015), brand familiarity (Hong and Perks, 2005), repeat purchase intention (Ying et al, 2013), perceived value, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and customer switching (Shukla, 2010). Satisfied consumer will emerge continual purchasing. Post consumption cumulative satisfaction likely to lead with multiple interactions with the brand (Thomson et al, 2005). In summary, they show an emotional bonding between those parties.

Further, Thomson et al (2005) stated that post consumption satisfaction likely ends to consumers' emotional attachment with a brand over time. Hence, the aggregate satisfaction over period of time lead to emotional bonding between those parties. Therefore, satisfying consumers with a brand over time related to brand love (Mano and Oliver, 1993; Roy et al, 2012). Thus, we proposed:

***Hypothesis 3: The more consumer satisfied, the more possible to love the brand***

### **1.4. Brand Love**

Caroll and Ahuvia (2006) defined brand love as an emotional and passionate feeling of an individual for a particular trade. When customers fall in love with the brand, they feel attached with the brand. Moreover, they avoid switching and decided to settle with the brand. Brand love is an element of consumer-brand relationship (Fournier, 1998) which derived from interpersonal love (Shimp and Madden, 1988). Another definition made by Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012) who stated that brand love as consumer experience and represent as a high order construct including cognitions, emotions, and behaviors.

In the meantime Keh, Pang and Peng (2007) define brand love as the intimate, passionate, and committed relationship between consumers and a brand, characterized by its reciprocal, purposive, and dynamic properties. Albert et al (2008) stated that consumers who love with the brand may demonstrate some characteristics such as: (1) passion for a brand, (2) brand attachment, (3) positive evaluation of the brand, (4) positive emotions in response to the brand, and (5) declarations of love toward the brand.

Prior study show that brand love is influenced by brand image (Ismael and Spinelli, 2011; Unal and Aydin, 2013), Social Self (Unal and Aydin, 2013), product involvement (Ranjbarian and Kazami, 2013), Self Congruity (Ranjbarian and Kazami, 2013), sense of community (Rodrigues and Reis, 2013), brand trust (Albert and Merunka, 2013). In the meantime, brand love is also may affect toward word of mouth (Ismael and Spinelli, 2011; Batra et al, 2012; Albert and Merunka, 2013), brand loyalty (Caroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al, 2012), commitment (Albert and Merunka, 2013; Ranjbarian and Kazami, 2013), willingness to pay premium price (Albert and Merunka, 2013; Rodrigues and Reis, 2013).

In addition, some researches also established the role of brand love as mediating variable between satisfaction and brand loyalty (Caroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al, 2012), purchase intention and word of mouth (Yasin and Shamim, 2013)

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Data Collection**

Population in this research is store buyers. Purposive sampling is used based on specific criteria (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). In this research, a respondent is a store label purchaser who bought more than twice and more than single product category. So, the respondents will perceive the brand based on their experiences. Sample is taken fit to the item parameters as much as 30 questions. At least 150 samples will use in this project to confirm adequacy sample 5 times item parameters suggested by Hair et al (2006).

### **2.2. Questionnaire Design**

As a field research, survey method was used to gather primer data. All questions were made in closed structure and respondents will choose on provided answer. It is need less than 10 minutes to answer all questions. The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part deals with respondent demography, including purchase frequency and product category they bought. The second part contains about constructs measurement. In this study, the measurement was adopted from previous research. Brand identification was adapted from Mael and Ashfort (1992). Brand Experience taken from Brakus et al (2009). Further, customer satisfaction was adopted from Westbrook and Oliver (1981), while brand love originally made by Albert et al (2008). All the items were measured using seven point Likert Like scale. Meanwhile, secondary data is collected through literature review, data related to product category, previous researches, and journals and books.

### **2.3. Results**

The data were gathered as much as 166 from 180 questioners. 160 questioners are feasible to assess, while the rest is unfeasible because of respondents did not complete the answer. As much as 160 samples are qualified to be examined and reach the minimum sample estimation. Respondents` characteristics are describe in age, sex, education, product categories and purchase intention.

**Table 1: Respondents Characteristic Based on Demographics**

Demographic	Category	Quantity			
Age	< 19	4	Store Brand	Value Plus	104
	20 – 30	56		Alfamart	22
	31 – 40	78		Indomaret	34
	>40	22			
Sex	Male	80	Product Category	Air Freshener	6
	Female	80		Tissue	40
				Detergent	22
				Floor Cleaner	67
				Food	8
				Others	17
Education	S1	108	Frequency	Always	71
	S2	4		Often	62
	Others	48		Sometimes	20
				Rarely	7

Table 1 shows the respondents characteristic based on their ages. There are 4 respondents are under 19 years old, while 56 respondents are between 20-30 years old. The respondents' age between 31-40 years old is the highest number as much as 78 while the oldest age more than 40 years old recorded 22 respondents. Meanwhile, it is also explained that male respondents is equal to female which 80 respondents.

The table is also point up that the main product of shop are floor cleaner as high as 67 respondents followed by tissue as much as 41 and the rest are less than 50 respondents are looking for detergent food and snack air freshener or others. All of respondents are frequent buyers where 81 respondents always purchase the products and 57 respondents often buy the stuff. Meanwhile they purchase sometimes and rarely as much as 14 and 8 respondents respectively.

#### 2.4. Validity And Reliability Test

Validity testing is used to measure how well the item parameter may predict its construct (Hair et al, 1998). In this case, we used convergent validity through AVE numbers. Every item should higher than 0.5. The table 5 shows the exhibit results conducted for the 29 items. The results suggest that not all the parameters are valid. From around 29 item parameters, we exclude 3 item parameters. We excluded Brand Experience parameters from 12 to 10 and Brand Love down 1 parameter. On the other hand, all parameters from both Customer Satisfaction and Brand Identification are acceptable. Reliability test on each indicators construct is used by Internal Consistency Reliability through Composite Reliability. The acceptable value is more than 0,6 (Bagozi & Yi, 1988). The results show that all variables are higher than 0.6. Therefore, the acceptable reliability is reached.

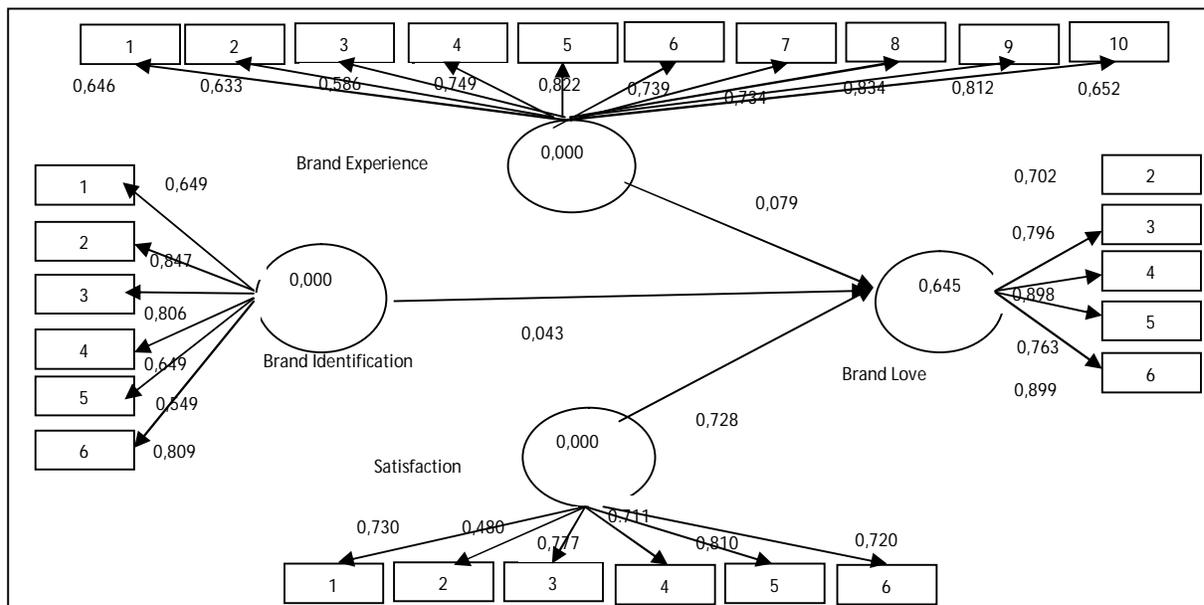
**Table 2: Validity & Reliability Test**

Variable	Indicators	Loadings	Indicator Reliability	Composite Reliability	AVE
Brand Identification	1	0,678	0,6778	0,8685	0,5287
	2	0,828	0,8275		
	3	0,790	0,7897		
	4	0,667	0,6668		
	5	0,551	0,5506		
	6	0,810	0,8103		
Brand Experience	1	0,661	0,6611	0,9168	0,5273
	2	0,637	0,6368		
	3	0,593	0,5927		
	4	0,738	0,7377		
	5	0,825	0,8235		
	6	0,746	0,7463		
	7	0,737	0,7372		
	8	0,833	0,8333		
	9	0,810	0,8099		
	10	0,637	0,6370		
Satisfaction	1	0,704	0,7045	0,8586	0,5085
	2	0,483	0,4825		
	3	0,764	0,7640		
	4	0,723	0,7234		
	5	0,818	0,8183		
	6	0,738	0,7383		
Brand Love	2	0,701	0,7013	0,9076	0,6646
	3	0,795	0,7947		
	4	0,898	0,8978		
	5	0,765	0,7645		
	6	0,899	0,8994		

**2.5. Discussion**

Based on the objective of this research, we measure the antecedents of brand love. First, we examine the proposed model.

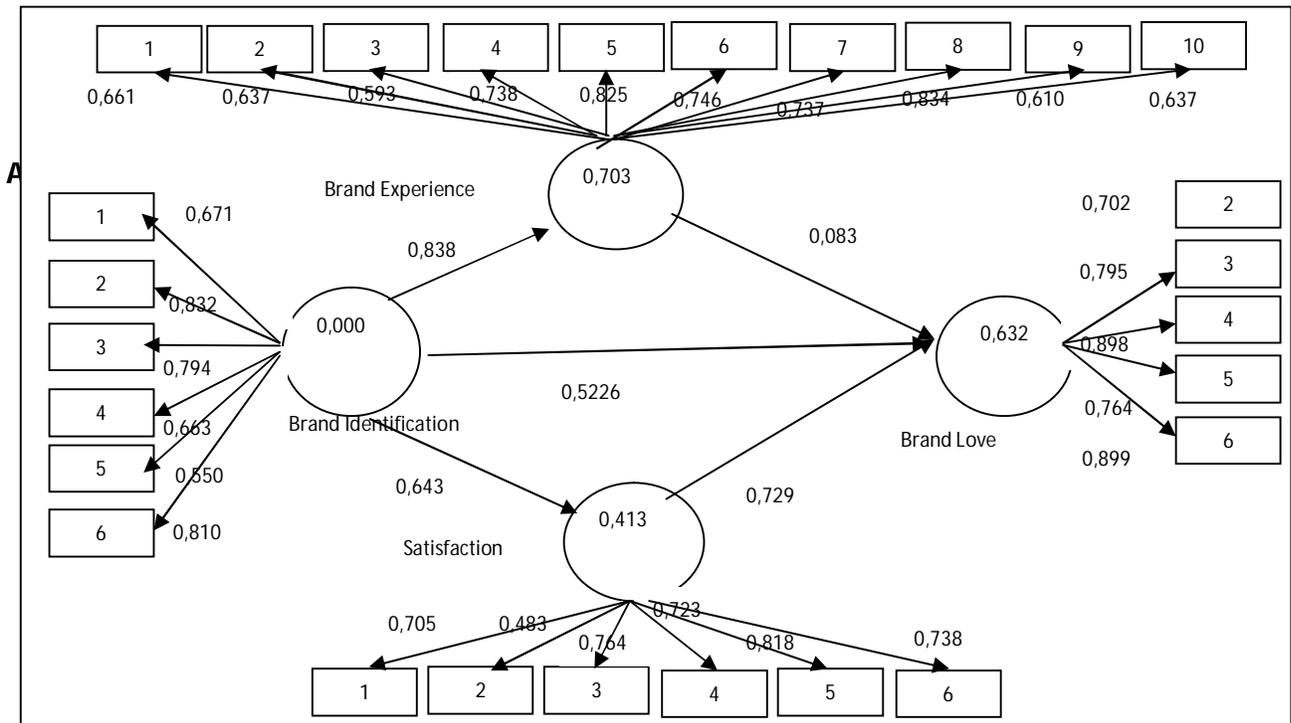
**Figure 1: The Proposed Model**



The result shows that only satisfaction has positive significantly related to Brand Love. The others, Brand Identification and Brand Experience are not statistically significant to Brand Love. Even though those variables moderately explain 64,5 % of variance in Brand Love, the outcome is disappointed.

So, we modify the estimation model and measure the following model in figure 2`

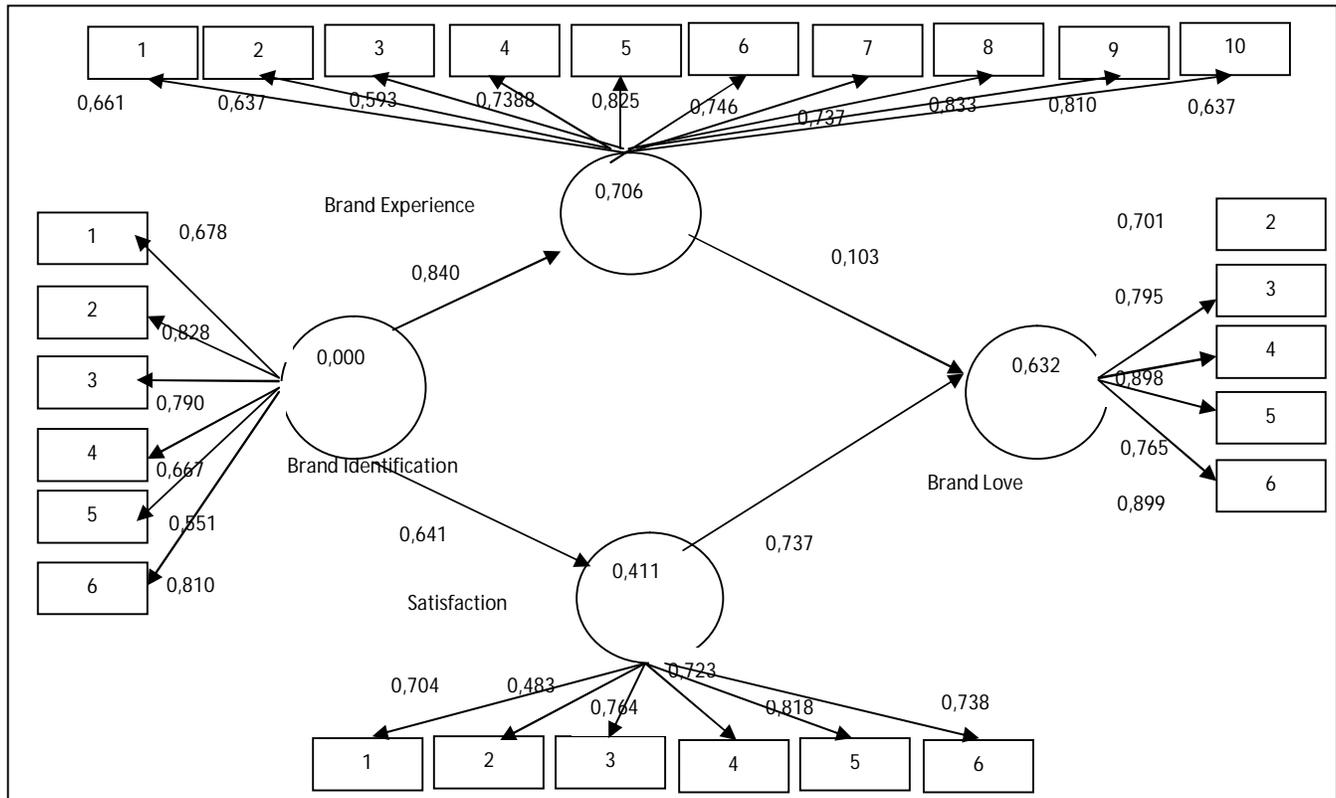
**Figure 2: Revised Model**



Hypothesis testing is made by two ways, first, we analyzing significant causal relationship among constructs in the research model which can be seen in *Critical Ratio (CR)*, second, it can be seen in *standardized structural (path) coefficients* on each hypothesis where the relationship

By examine the revised model, something occurs differentially compared to proposed model. All independent variables, Brand Experience, Satisfaction and Brand Love are significantly influenced by Brand Identification. As much as 70, 3% and 41, 3 % are explained respectively, while Brand Love totally explained 0,632. Moreover, there is possibilities emerge for Satisfaction to have essential role as an intervening variable. To examine the intervening role, we have to fulfill the condition, which is the all relation between those variables are statistically significant (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In order to discover something behind, we consider to propose the final model. The examination can be seen in figure 3.

Figure 3: The Final Model



Overall, the antecedents may explain as much as 63,2 % of Brand Love. Satisfaction (0,737) is a strongest influencer rather than Brand Experience (0,103), while Brand Identification is not supported. Based on the result from figure 3, we tested the hypothesis as follows:

### 1) Hypothesis 1

The objective of this hypothesis is to analyze the relationship of brand identification and brand love. We found that brand identification has a positive effect directly to brand love. Moreover, this finding supported previous researches (Kressman et al, 2006; Bergvist et al, 2009; and Albert et al, 2013) who found the same result. Further explanation in this finding is the store brand might be seen as the easy product to be loved. There are several reasons why it might happen. *First*, the easier the product can be identified, the easier to be loved. *Second*, store brand is easy to identify in their own store because the store stimulates the consumer with catalogues, announces, and display location in primary site.

*Third*, in general, store brand made the same package, color, and logo for every product, which means make it easy way for customer to differ with national brands. *Fourth*, there is an opinion that store brand always offering the chap one. For Indonesian resident who sensitive to price, the perspective is crucial to drive buyers

### 2) Hypothesis 2

In this study we examine the relationship of brand experience and brand love. We found that brand experience has a positive effect to brand love. Moreover, it confirmed previous research when Kumar Roy, Esghi, and Sarkar (2012), and Yasmin and Shamim (2013) who found the same result. Further explanation in this finding is the product's positive experience may lead customer to love the brand. It means after they tried the brand, the customer like and intense to memorize as their first choice.

### 3) Hypothesis 3

We also measure the relationship of satisfaction and brand love. We found that satisfaction has a positive effect to brand love. Likewise, it confirmed previous research (Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Bergkvist et al., 2009; Roy et al., 2012) who found the same result. Further explanation in this finding is more customers satisfy to the brand, the more they tend to lead emotional attachment between those parties (Thomson et al; 2005).

In addition, we discover another interesting finding. *First*, we examine the relationship between Brand Identification and Brand Experience. We found a strong significant relation (0,840) and the antecedent predict 70.6 % of Brand Experience. Similarly, Brand Identification has a moderate relationship to satisfaction (0.64) and explain 41.1%.

*Second*, satisfaction plays an important role as an intervening variable from Brand Identification to Brand Love. However, the possibilities of Brand Experience to be intervening variable is failed remind that the correlation of Brand Experience to Brand Love is insignificant.

*Third*, we found that female respondents have a great tendency to repurchase and become loyal customer to brand store. From 71 total participants who stated always buy the brand, 44 persons among them are female, greater than male who counted 27 only.

## 3. Conclusion And Recommendation

### 3.1. Conclusion

The measurement of hypothesis confirmed that satisfaction is the strongest antecedent of brand love followed by brand identification and brand experience. Out of the hypothesis testing, we found that satisfaction plays a decisive role as an intervening variable from brand identification to brand love. However, the same path we used to examine the likelihoods of brand experience to play the same role is failed. Another important finding shows that brand identification has relationship to not only satisfaction but also brand experience.

### 3.2. Managerial Implication

Since research's result demonstrate that satisfaction is the greatest determinant to brand love, marketers and practitioners should make it a vital issue. By increasing customer satisfaction means they willing to repurchase. Hence, it will lead to love the brand deeply. Therefore, the brand owner need to fulfill the satisfaction's requirement such as service and product quality, emotional attachment, price and cost (Kotler and Keller, 2007), situational involvement, and customer's psychology (Zeithaml and Bittner, 2003).

Brand identification as a determinant to drive brand experience and satisfaction is an essential concern also. It should persuade the store to create a unique, differentiate, and exclusive brand. That character is in perfect if completed with quality, value, and high performance the brand is give. When customers see it, they aware and willing to try. As consequence, a positive experience and satisfaction will occur after consumption

### 3.3. Research Limitation

This research carried participant in spread or length of buying frequency. It is better to cover respondents who always buy the same private brand. As consequences, we can add brand loyalty in the future research. We also suggest some crucial elements for further research such as perceived quality, perceived value, premium price and packaging.

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