


**IDEAL SELF-CONGRUENCE: ITS IMPACTS ON CUSTOMER LOVE AND LOYALTY TO LUXURY BRANDS IN INDONESIA**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b></p> <p>Received 04 October 2022</p> <p>Accepted 20 December 2022</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> This research is conducted to examine the influence of ideal self-congruence on customer love and loyalty to two luxury brands.</p> <p><b>Theoretical Framework:</b> Luxury brands have three dimensions, namely functional, experiential, and symbolic. A brand is said to be luxurious if it has some characteristics such as high quality, high price, sensuality, beauty, exclusivity, historicity, and uniqueness. Customer loyalty to brand is a crucial strategy choice for companies struggling to maintain business continuity. The organizations believes that brand loyalty can provide benefits for organization. Brand love is one of the determinants of brand loyalty. The concept of love developed in the context of interpersonal relationships.</p> <p><b>Design/Methodology/Approach:</b> Sample random sampling technique used as sampling method in this study, this research collected 214 data through self-administrative survey from respondents of two luxury handbag brands in Indonesia. Analysis method in this research using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> There are significant relationships between ideal self-congruence and customer love to brand, between ideal self-congruence and customer loyalty to brand, and between customer love and customer loyalty to brand.</p> <p><b>Research/Practical/Social Implications:</b> On the theoretical level, this research contributes to a better understanding of how to create customer loyalty to brand through tracking the self-congruence construct and the customer love to brand. On the managerial level, this research provides a very useful actionable guidance to loyalty program managers on how to create luxury brand which incorporates customer ideal self-congruence and simultaneously arises a strong emotional bonding to brand.</p> <p><b>Originality/Value:</b> The contemporary interest in customer loyalty to brand has resulted in a variety research of it conducted in many areas. Our investigation indicates that there are a few researches which address the relationship between ideal self-congruence, brand love, and customer loyalty to luxury brands.</p>
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## AUTO-CONGRUÊNCIA IDEAL: SEUS IMPACTOS NO AMOR DO CLIENTE E FIDELIDADE ÀS MARCAS DE LUXO NA INDONÉSIA

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Esta pesquisa é conduzida para examinar a influência da autocongruência ideal no amor e lealdade do cliente a duas marcas de luxo.

**Estrutura teórica:** As marcas de luxo têm três dimensões, nomeadamente funcional, experiencial e simbólica. Diz-se que uma marca é luxuosa se possuir algumas características como alta qualidade, preço elevado, sensualidade, beleza, exclusividade, historicidade e singularidade. A fidelidade do cliente à marca é uma escolha estratégica crucial para empresas que lutam para manter a continuidade dos negócios. As organizações acreditam que a lealdade à marca pode proporcionar benefícios para a organização. O amor à marca é um dos determinantes da lealdade à marca. O conceito de amor se desenvolveu no contexto das relações interpessoais.

**Design/Methodologia/Proteção:** Amostra da técnica de amostragem aleatória utilizada como método de amostragem neste estudo, esta pesquisa coletou 214 dados através de pesquisa auto-administrativa dos entrevistados de duas marcas de bolsas de luxo na Indonésia. Método de análise nesta pesquisa utilizando Modelagem da Equação Estrutural (SEM).

**Conclusões:** Existem relações significativas entre autocongruência ideal e amor do cliente à marca, entre autocongruência ideal e fidelidade do cliente à marca, e entre amor do cliente e fidelidade do cliente à marca.

**Pesquisa/ Implicações práticas/sociais:** No nível teórico, esta pesquisa contribui para uma melhor compreensão de como criar fidelidade do cliente à marca através do acompanhamento da construção da autocongruência e do amor do cliente pela marca. No nível gerencial, esta pesquisa fornece uma orientação muito útil para os gerentes de programas de fidelidade sobre como criar uma marca de luxo que incorpore a autocongruência ideal do cliente e simultaneamente surge uma forte ligação emocional com a marca.

**Originalidade/Valor:** O interesse contemporâneo na fidelidade do cliente à marca resultou em uma variedade de pesquisas realizadas em muitas áreas. Nossa investigação indica que existem algumas pesquisas que abordam a relação entre autocongruência ideal, amor à marca e fidelidade do cliente às marcas de luxo.

**Palavras-chave:** Brand Love, Brand Loyalty, Marca de Luxo, Autocongruência.

## AUTOCONGRUENCIA IDEAL: SU IMPACTO EN EL AMOR Y LA FIDELIDAD DE LOS CLIENTES A LAS MARCAS DE LUJO EN INDONESIA

### RESUMEN

**Propósito:** Esta investigación se lleva a cabo para examinar la influencia de la autocongruencia ideal en el amor y la lealtad de los clientes hacia dos marcas de lujo.

**Marco teórico:** Las marcas de lujo tienen tres dimensiones: funcional, experiencial y simbólica. Se dice que una marca es de lujo si posee algunas características como alta calidad, precio elevado, sensualidad, belleza, exclusividad, historicidad y singularidad. La fidelidad de los clientes a la marca es una opción estratégica crucial para las empresas que luchan por mantener la continuidad de su negocio. Las organizaciones creen que la fidelidad a la marca puede aportar beneficios a la organización. El amor a una marca es uno de los factores determinantes de la fidelidad a una marca. El concepto de amor se desarrolló en el contexto de las relaciones interpersonales.

**Diseño/Methodología/Enfoque:** En este estudio se utilizó la técnica de muestreo aleatorio por muestreo y se recopilaron 214 datos a través de una encuesta autoadministrativa a los encuestados de dos marcas de bolsos de lujo de Indonesia. El método de análisis utilizado en esta investigación es el modelo de ecuaciones estructurales (SEM).

**Resultados:** Existen relaciones significativas entre la autocongruencia ideal y el amor del cliente hacia la marca, entre la autocongruencia ideal y la lealtad del cliente hacia la marca, y entre el amor del cliente y la lealtad del cliente hacia la marca.

**Implicaciones de la investigación/prácticas/sociales:** A nivel teórico, esta investigación contribuye a una mejor comprensión de cómo fidelizar al cliente a la marca mediante el seguimiento del constructo de autocongruencia y el amor del cliente a la marca. Desde el punto de vista de la gestión, esta investigación ofrece una guía práctica muy útil a los gestores de programas de fidelización sobre cómo crear una marca de lujo que incorpore la autocongruencia ideal del cliente y, al mismo tiempo, genere un fuerte vínculo emocional con la marca.

**Originalidad/Valor:** El interés contemporáneo por la fidelización de los clientes a la marca ha dado lugar a una gran variedad de investigaciones al respecto llevadas a cabo en numerosos ámbitos. Nuestra investigación indica que hay pocas investigaciones que aborden la relación entre la autocongruencia ideal, el amor a la marca y la lealtad del cliente a las marcas de lujo.

**Palabras clave:** Amor a la Marca, Fidelidad a la Marca, Marca de Lujo, Autocongruencia.

## INTRODUCTION

Customer loyalty is a crucial marketing topic among academic researchers and practitioners. Loyal customers have a willingness to pay higher prices, purchase higher quantities, and involve in positive word-of-mouth referrals that can attract new customers (Ngobo, 2004). Marketer's success to make many more loyal customers will be useful for creating barriers to entry (Knox and Walker, 2001). Searching for new customer requires four times expenses than defending the existing loyal customers (Kotler and Keller, 2009). Marketing managers always try to create loyalty among their customers because it is a crucial driver for long-term financial performance (Park et al., 2010). Financial benefits in the long-term will be a strong base for company to increasing its ability to defend business sustainability and strengthen competitive advantage (Keiningham et al., 2005).

Amid the tightness of business competition now and in the future, customer loyalty to brand is increasingly becoming a crucial strategy choice for companies which seek to maintain its business continuity (Sirdeshmuk et al., 2002). To maximize customer loyalty to brand, managers must have enough knowledge of the key success factors to create customer loyalty and show how important these factors are realized by marketers. Tracing the key success factors, marketers are particularly useful for uplifting the aspects of self-congruence because it can be a critical aspect when customers buy a luxury brand.

Many empirical studies addressed customer loyalty to luxury brands in a variety of settings by raising a number of factors that are proven to affect the formation of customer loyalty. Some studies employed the aspect of self-congruence as antecedents to customer loyalty to brands. Meanwhile, it is still a few of empirical research that investigates a crucial role of ideal self-congruence factor to explain customer loyalty to luxury brand. Drawing on the self-congruity theory, this research is intended to examine the impact of ideal self-congruence on customer love and loyalty to luxury brand.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Luxury Brand

Many studies has tried to define the criteria for determining which brands are considered as luxurious (e.g., Keller, 2009; Berthon et al., 2009; Kapferer and Bastien, 2009). Luxury

brands have three dimensions, namely functional, experiential, and symbolic (Berton, 2009). A brand is said to be luxurious if it has some characteristics such as high quality, high price, sensuality, beauty, exclusivity, historicity, and uniqueness (Kapferer, 1997). Luxury brands have some characteristics such as expensive price, high quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness, and symbolic meaning (Heine, 2012).

Luxury brands can be divided into four, namely entry, medium, top, and elite (Heine, 2012). Entry-level luxury brands are luxury ones that fall below the luxury segment. Medium-level luxury brands are luxury brands that are widely known as members of the luxury segment group but are one level below the high-end luxury brand. Meanwhile, top-level luxury brands include brands that are considered to be leading luxury brands, such as Louis Vuitton and Gucci. At the highest level, the elite-level luxury brands are the luxury brands in the elite market segment and a few who become consumers. Elite luxury brands target the elite market segment that not only has unlimited financial resources, but also special intellectual culture (Marguier, 2007; Lombard, 1989).

It's been realized from the start by the experts in marketing and consumer behaviour that customers buy a desired luxury brand not only for the functional benefits provided by the brand, but especially for the symbolic benefits. The customers will be willing to buy a luxury brand if it can be used to explain and express their self-concept (Sirgy, 1982). When luxury brand is able to provide a positive way to express customer ideal self-concept, then it can raise a customer love and loyalty to the brand.

### **Brand Loyalty**

Customer loyalty to brand is a crucial strategy choice for companies struggling to maintain business continuity (Kotler and Keller, 2009; Oliver, 1999; Dick and Basu, 1994). The organizations believes that brand loyalty can provide benefits for organization (Maheshwari, Lodorfos & Jacobsen, 2014). The importance of customer loyalty encourages marketing experts to develop a conceptualization of loyalty. Oliver (1999) conceptualizes loyalty as a process of loyalty formation in four phases from the phases of cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, and conative loyalty to action loyalty. In that conceptualization, customer loyalty is not described as a dichotomous entity, namely: loyal and loyal, and not typology with many categories, namely: low loyalty, false loyalty, latent loyalty, and true loyalty. Customers are expressed as loyal in the sense of cognitive, affective, conative, and ultimately action. The action phase occurs through a series of processes ranging from cognitive loyalty, affective

loyalty, and conative loyalty. Cognitive loyalty is the most volatile form of loyalty because it is simply an expression of the possibility to choose a particular brand based on the information obtained. Customers who have affective loyalty are more likely to prefer a particular luxury bag product that is preferred. Conative loyalty is stronger than affective loyalty.

Brand loyalty is an action taken by a customer in repurchasing products of the same brand (Soomro, 2019). Dick and Basu (1994) define loyalty as the strength of the relationship between attitude and behaviour. In their view, loyalty includes two elements contained in it, namely the elements of attitude and behavioural elements. Based on these two elements, there are four forms of loyalty, namely no loyalty, spurious loyalty, loyalty, and true loyalty. Customers are said to have no loyalty if their attitudes and behaviour toward the brand is very low. No loyalty means the customer has no loyalty. Spurious loyalty is the result of a low attitude to the brand but high behaviour. Latent loyalty occurs when the customer has a high degree of attitude towards the brand but the choice of brand that can be taken is limited. True loyalty is the most expected form of loyalty among the three other forms of loyalty. The customer is stated to be true loyalty if the customer who holds a positive attitude to the brand and often takes the desired brand repurchase action. This form of true loyalty has always been the goal of various efforts by marketers and for that to be the main study of this research effort.

### **Brand Love**

Brand love is a relatively new construct in the science of consumer marketing and behavior (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2005). Brand love is one of the determinants of brand loyalty (Arbouch & Barzi, 2019). The concept of love developed in the context of interpersonal relationships (Barelds and Barelds-Dijkstra, 2007) becomes the foundation of experts to formulate the concept of love associated with objects in the context of marketing science (Ahuvia, 2005a). Shimp and Madden (1988) are the first thinkers to adopt the concept of love in the field of marketing and consumer behavior. Feelings of love are not only directed to personal persons, but also can be against various other objects such as activities, products, and brands (Ahuvia, 2005a). People not only use the word love when talking about their relationship with others, but also when expressing and describing relationships with other objects. People not only say "I love you" but also "I love my bag" or "I love soccer". This means that people can have feelings of love on a variety of objects that can be compared with the love of humans.

Batra et al. (2012) found that the brand love construct includes seven main elements: self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviors, positive emotional connections, long-term

relationships, positive overall attitude valence, attitude certainty and confidence (strength), and anticipated separation distress. To be able to love and loyal to the brand, customers need to get to know the brand well. Customers may not have a feeling of love for a brand that no customer is familiar with. That means a good introduction of the brand becomes the basis for the growing and growing feelings of love and loyalty to the brand. Customers can become acquainted with the brand thanks to experience during brand consumption made after the initial purchase. The introduction during the consumption period basically contains the customer's experience of the brand. One assessment built in the context of luxury brand consumption is the assessment of the degree of compatibility between brand characteristics and customer self-concept. For that reason, the following section outlines the concept of self-congruity to explain the actual and ideal self-congruence.

### **Self-Congruence**

Self-congruence is the self-actualization of every customer to themselves by buying a brand that is in line with their concept of themselves (Islam et al., 2018). Self-congruence is defined differently but all of them explain the reality of similarity between several aspects of a brand and customer self-concept. The self-concept is the customer's understanding or thought about himself. Some aspects of the brand may be symbolic meanings of the product, the nature of the brand personality, or the image of the product user. Self-congruence is defined as the resemblance between the customer's self-concept and the symbolic meaning of the product (Govers and Schoormans, 2005; Dolich, 1969; Birdwell, 1968), similarities between customer self-concept and brand personality (Kressmann et al., 2006; Helgeson and Supphellen, 2004), or the similarity between the customer self-concept and the product user image (Sirgy et al., 1997; Sirgy, 1986). Taking into account the first definition above, this study defines self-congruence as a customer's assessment of the level of compatibility or appropriateness between the symbolic attributes of the brand and its self-concept.

Sirgy (1982) argues that customers have four forms of self-concept. Referring to the conceptualization of a multidimensional self-concept, customers can have two forms of self-concept, namely the actual self-concept and the ideal self-concept (Malar et al., 2011). The actual self-concept is the current real self-understanding of the customer, while the ideal self-concept is the desired customer's self-understanding (Wily, 1979; Lazzari et al., 1978). Referring to the conceptualization of two-dimensional self-concept, this study formulates self-congruence into two separate independent constructs, namely: actual and ideal self-congruence.



Actual self-congruence is the customer's judgment of the degree of compatibility between the brand personality and his actual self-concept, while the ideal of self-congruence is the customer's judgment of the degree of compatibility between brand attributes and their ideal self-concept. Brands that have attributes that fit the actual self-concept are seen to be able to reflect who the customer really is, while brands that have attributes that match the ideal self-concept are judged to reflect who the idealized person is (Malar et al., 2011).

## **HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **The effect of Ideal Self-Congruence on Brand Love**

Customers have an ideal self-concept. The ideal self-concept is the customer's self-image of the ideal self or the aspired self. The ideal self-concept is important because it is not only part of the customer's effort to understand himself but rather as part of his efforts to build and improve self-esteem, his judgment of his own worth. The customer seeks to present himself according to the ideal image he envisions and aspires to. The ideal self-construction is built through the use of luxury brands that are judged to be ideally compatible.

Given that luxury brands are purchased and used as a means of uncovering and explaining self-ideal customers, the ideal aspect of self-congruence seems to be far more relevant for customers to make it the basis for building a love for the brand. Brands that are able to represent aspirations about themselves are likely to be able to foster a sense of customer love for the brand. This is in line with opinion that the customer's need for the symbolic meaning of the brand is more motivated by the customer self-improvement motive. Brand will be a symbol or a sign for the ideal self-image that wants to be realized through it. The more a brand is able to represent the ideal self-concept, the more customers have a high degree of love for the brand. When consumers see that their aspirations and dreams are attached to a brand (that is, the ideal of self-congruence), then they will feel a strong emotional bonding to the brand. The first hypothesis for this study as follows: H1: Ideal self-congruence affects the customer's love of the brand.

### **The effect of Ideal Self-Congruence on Brand Loyalty**

Customers will consider the existence of an ideal self-congruence when evaluating a brand. The consideration is more related to the internal drive to improve themselves. Motive self-improvement is a boost in a person to find useful information for efforts to increase self-esteem (Ditto and Lopez, 1992). Self-improvement theory suggests that people are motivated

to enhance feelings about their worth (Sedikides and Strube, 1997). Self-improvement motives encourage people to get closer to the aspirations they have about themselves (the ideal self-concept) that is useful in order to increase their self-esteem (Higgins, 1987; Rosenberg, 1979). A brand that has a personality capable of reflecting on the ideal self is a brand that is supposed to support consumers' efforts to improve themselves by providing consumers with a closer feeling to an idealized self (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967).

The ideal self-concept is the self-image of the customer about the self that he or she propose. Customers are not merely possessing it, but trying to realize that ideal self-image as part of its effort to build itself. Customers consider the match between the brand personality and their ideal self-concept. If brand consumption provides a positive experience, meaning that the brand personality really matches his ideal self-concept, then the future is likely that customers will be willing to be loyal. If customers see that their aspirations and dreams are attached to the idealized brand of self-congruence, they will be willing to buy the brand again in the future (Abdalat, 2010). Mahjoub (2015) proves the ideal of self-congruence can lead to customer loyalty to the brand. In line with the opinions and findings of the research, the research in this study assumes that customers will be loyal to a luxury brand purchased and used when customers have an assessment of the presence of a brand personality with their ideal self-concept. Based on the above description, this study hopes that the ideal of self-congruence has a positive effect on brand loyalty. Thus, the second hypothesis is as follows: H2: Ideal self-congruence affects customer loyalty to the brand.

### **The Effect of Brand Love on Brand Loyalty**

Customers have a need to express what people think about themselves. Brand is expected to be a means to express themselves (Escalas and Bettmann, 2005). When a brand is judged to have a personality in accordance with the concept itself, then consumers are willing to make a brand purchase. The main consideration of brand purchase is the ability of brands as a means to represent self-concept (Aaker, 1999; Sirgy, 1982) both to oneself and to others. When a brand is purchased and used it fits in with the concept itself, the customer may develop deep emotional attachment to the brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

Fournier (1998) reveals that consumers are driven to develop and maintain strong relationships with brands. The relationship is characterized by the strong emotional attachment of the customer on the brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). A deep affection for the brand can be seen when a person feels a sense of nearness and unity, attention and memory are always



directed at the brand, and a great hope to own a brand. That feeling is not merely a feeling of affection, but a special affinity that customers experience with brands (Langner et al., 2014). When customers are happy with brand-built relationships, this will result in high loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009).

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) show that customer love affects the brand loyalty. Customers who feel a love for brands tend to be loyal (Albert et al. 2009). Customers who have a love for the brand will be more likely to buy back the same brand rather than switch to a competing brand (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia 2006). Customer's love for brands is the foundation for customer loyalty (Langner et al., 2014). Based on the explanation, the third hypothesis in this research is formulated as follows: H3: Brand love affects brand loyalty.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses quantitative approach. The quantitative approach is applied because this research intended to obtain generalization of result by hypothesis testing empirically. Undertook in Indonesia, this research takes population in this research is customers of luxury handbag brands that domiciles in Jakarta and Surabaya. The two places are selected because both are the largest and metropolitan cities in Indonesia. Research sample is decided by accidental sampling technique. There are two luxury handbags brand selected as the research object, Luis Vuitton and Gucci.

This research uses 214 data that are obtained by survey. The instrument for getting the data is questionnaire and the collecting data is conducted cross-sectional way, meaning that the data is taken once in this research. Before used in the research, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire must be tested. The collected data is analyzed by Structural Equation Modeling with software program Amos 24.0. And the model mediation is examined by Barron and Kenny (1986).

At the beginning of survey, researcher asked the respondent to answer some questions about personal identity. After respondents fulfill the step, they respond to questions on ideal self-congruence, brand love, and brand loyalty. The measurement items of ideal self-congruence were adopted from Sirgy et al. (1997). Ideal self-congruence is measured by three items: "This brand is consistent with how I would like to see myself", "I would like to be perceived as similar to the typical customer of this brand", and "The image of the typical user is congruent with how I would like to see myself". Each three-point Likert scale was anchored by "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (3).

We measured brand love using five items adapted from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006). The construct is measured by five items: “This is a wonderful brand”, “This brand makes me very happy”, “I’m very attached to this brand”, “I am passionate about this brand”, and “I love this brand!” The constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

To measure consumer loyalty, we adopted five standard loyalty items from the work of You and Donthu (2001): “In the future, I will be loyal to this brand”; “I will buy this brand again”; “This brand will be my first choice in the future”; “I will not buy other brands if this brand is available at the store”; and “I will recommend this brand to others.” Again, we measured the items on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

## RESULT

To test the hypothesized relationships among the constructs, a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used via Amos 24.0. Based on the suggestion of Hair et al. (2014), researchers validated the measurement model using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) prior to running SEM. Parameters were estimated using Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) index, Degrees of Freedom index, Probability index, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) index, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) index, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) index, CMIN\DF, Root Mean Residual (RMR) index, Normed Fit Index (NFI) index, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) index.

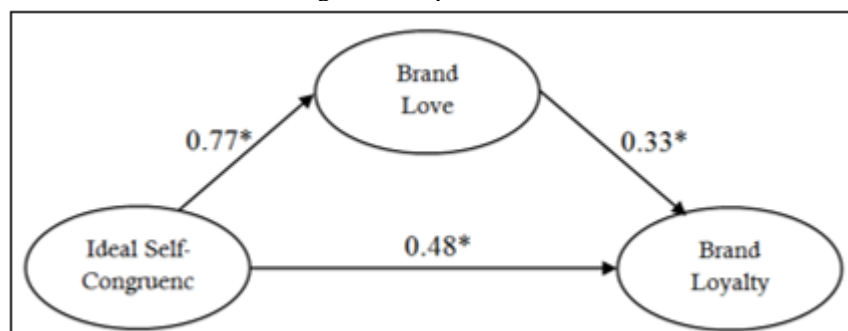
The CFA results provided a good fit of the data: ( $\chi^2$ ) (214) = 211.900, Degrees of Freedom = 98, Probability = 0.06, RMSEA = 0.06, GFI = 0.90, AGFI = 0.92, CMIN\DF = 1.68, RMR = 0.04, NFI = 0.92, CFI = 0.95, IFI = 0.95, and TLI = 0.93. Construct validity was checked with both convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was confirmed in three ways. First, the standardized factor loading, ranging from 0.65 to 0.87, were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Second, all reliability scores of the latent constructs ranged from 0.78 to 0.95, were above the threshold score ( $> 0.70$ ) (Hair et al., 2014). Third, the average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.68 to 0.83, exceeding the recommended level of 0.50 (Hair et al. 2014). Seeing the result, we can conclude that the construct validities of all latent variables were satisfactory.

The structural model also exhibits satisfactory model fit: ( $\chi^2$ ) (214) = 114.560, Degrees of Freedom = 79, Probability = 0.05, RMSEA = 0.05, GFI = 0.93, AGFI = 0.90, CMIN\DF =

1.450, RMR = 0.03, NFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.97, IFI = 0.97, and TLI = 0.96. The structural model is illustrated in the Figure 1. Based on the results of the tests performed, the relationship between self-congruence ideal and brand love is significant, which is shown by the value of standardized regression weight of 0.77 with p-value 0.000, which means meet the recommended level of value ( $<0.05$ ). This means that if the ideal self-congruence is higher, then the brand love for the brand will also be stronger. Thus, study proved that the ideal of self-congruence affect the customer's love to the brand.

The tests revealed that the relationship between ideal self-congruence and brand loyalty was significant as indicated by the large standardized regression weight of 0.48 with p-value of 0.008, which means that it fulfils the requirement ( $<0.05$ ). Although the standardized regression weight value obtained in the relationship is not as great as the relationship between ideal self-congruence and customer love, it still shows that the ideal of self-congruence affects customer loyalty to the brand. It can be interpreted that the higher the customer's judgment of the fit between the brand personality and the ideal self-concept, the higher the likelihood and willingness of the customer to be loyal.

Figure 1. Empirical model



Source: Prepared by the Authors (2022)

Note: - \* Indicating that the significant relationship is confirmed

-  $(\chi^2)$  (214) = 114.560, Degrees of Freedom = 79, Probability = 0.05, RMSEA = 0.05, GFI = 0.93, AGFI = 0.90, CMIN\DF = 1.450, RMR = 0.03, NFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.97, IFI = 0.97, and TLI = 0.96

The result of hypothesis test shows that the relation between brand love and customer loyalty is significant indicated by standardized regression weight of 0.33 with p-value 0.002. The results illustrate that brand love affects brand loyalty. The description of the results can be interpreted that the higher the customer's love for the brand the higher the customer's loyalty to the brand.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

This study proves that the ideal self-congruence affects the customer's love. By proving the influence of the ideal self-congruence towards the love of customers, it can be interpreted that the ideal self-congruence plays a role in making customer's love the brand. The formation of customer love is determined by their assessment of level of compatibility between brand personality and ideal self-concept. The higher the customer judges the level of compatibility between the brand personality and the ideal self-concept, the higher their love to brand. This result can be a strong prove for personal relationship theses of which consumer-brand relationship theses is built (e.g., Byrne, 1971; Byrne and Nelson, 1965; Morry, 2005). It is relevant to the opinion of Byrne (1971) from the field of personal relationships science that people have tendencies to establish closeness with people who have a match with them. The more there is a match between the two people, the higher the interest among them (Byrne and Nelson, 1965). One's interest in others is determined by the degree of compatibility between them (Lucas et al., 2004). The mutual feeling of belonging will not only enable the person to validate his or her beliefs about the world and himself, but also reduce the risk of differences and possible conflicts that may occur between them (Morry, 2005).

This research found that ideal self-congruence affects customer loyalty. By proving the influence of ideal self-congruence towards the love of customers, it can be interpreted that the belief of fit between customer's ideal self-concept with brand personality is significant contributor in making customers loyal to the brand. The higher the customer judges the level of compatibility between the brand personality and the ideal self-concept, the higher their loyalty level. The results of this study provide support to previous research findings that show that the ideal of self-congruence has significant impact on customer loyalty to the brand. Research conducted Mahjoub et al. (2015) and Abdallat (2012) indicate that the customer's willingness to be loyal to brand is determined by the customer's judgment of the presence of an ideal self-concept with personality of the brand. The results of this study also support several other studies that have previously been conducted that there is a positive and significant impact between self-congruence and customer loyalty (e.g., Kressmann et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2011; Ekinci et al., 2006; Sirgy et al., 2008). In line with the research finding obtained by Batra et al. (2012), the customer's assessment of a desired or expected self-concept of a brand conception has strong implications for customer loyalty to the brand.

This research showed that customer love affects customer loyalty to brand. Given customer's love have an impact on customer loyalty, it means that the customer's love to brand

play a big role in realizing customer loyalty to brand. The higher the customer's love, the higher their loyalty to brand. The results of this study support the findings of research conducted by some previous researchers. Research conducted by Batra et al. (2012) indicates that customer loyalty is determined by the presence of customer love to brand. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) have proposed an empirical evidence that it is possible to create customer loyalty by generating customer love. The results of this study are also relevant to the opinion of Tam et al. (2009) which asserts that the customer's repurchase behaviour is determined by the customer's emotional bond on the brand to be purchased and used.

By this research, we modelled an indirect relationship among ideal self-congruence, customer's love to brand, and customer's loyalty to brand. In the model, we placed and tested of customer's love to brand as a mediating variable. We found that the ideal self-congruence affects brand loyalty through brand love. It means that customer love to brand provides a significant contributor as a mediator variable. These findings indicate that customer loyalty to the luxury bag brand determined by the ideal self-congruence will become even higher when the customer has a love for the brand in question. Customer's love to brand is an important factor in this study to mediate relationship between the ideal self-congruence and brand loyalty. In deciding to be loyal to brand, customers consider their love that grows and develops during the previous consumption period. In the context of luxury hand bag, the customer's loyal to brand can't be separated from the affective element (especially the emotional bond that manifests in the form of love for the brand) that the customer perceives on the brand. When customers perceives there is a congruence between ideal self-concept and brand personality, they will be willing to repurchase the same brand in the future, will not turn to other brands, and are willing to willingly recommend the same brand to friends and family. The customer's love to brand determines the customer loyalty to brand (Batra et al., 2012; Langner et al., 2014), when the customers believes there is a congruence between ideal self-congruence and brand personality.

## CONCLUSION

This study has a number of limitations. The first is results are limited to studies on luxury bags. The second limitation concerns the self-congruence variable raised in this study which only refers to two forms, namely actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence. Both types of self-congruence refers to two personal self-concept dimensions, namely the actual self-concept and the ideal self-concept that the customer possesses. As a multidimensional

construct, the self-concept is actually composed of four dimensions, two dimensions involving the personal dimension and two dimensions related to the social dimension (Sirgy, 1982). This study limits itself by simply lifting two dimensions of self-concept and overriding social self-concept. The behaviour of luxury brand consumption is likely to be motivated by the motive of social self-concept (Kim et al., 2015).

The third limitation relates to the difficulties of the researcher and the data taker at the time of data collection. The respondents of this study are middle and upper class people with a high level of financial strength and a lifestyle that likes to shop for luxury goods. In terms of the seriousness level of respondents in providing answers to the questions formulated in the questionnaire is something that is beyond the control of the researcher. Researchers have attempted to obtain respondents who are representative but how high the level of seriousness of respondents in filling out the questionnaire became part of the limitations.

With regard to the form of self-congruence, further research can use self-regulation theory (e.g., Higgins, 2002), sorting the constructs into ideal self-guides and ought self-guides and showing how the mechanisms occur. The theory of self-regulation argues that everyone has a self-concept that serves to regulate and direct attitudes and behavior toward an object. It would be useful if previous researchers sought to explain how the mechanisms that occur when individuals form attitudes and behaviors directed by the ideal self-guides and ought self-guides. For example, subsequent researchers seek to know how ought self-guides play a role in the context of publicly consumed goods.

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