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The Influence of Brand Awareness and Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty of Halal Skincare Products: The Mediating Role of Brand Love

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the effect of brand awareness and brand trust on brand loyalty in Wardah brand halal skincare products, with brand love as a mediating variable. Using an explanatory quantitative approach, data was collected from 219 Muslim female respondents in Medan City through a Likert scale questionnaire. The analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS. The results showed that brand awareness and brand trust have a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty, both directly and indirectly through brand love. This finding indicates that consumer loyalty to halal skincare products is not only formed by brand recognition and trust, but also influenced by emotional attachment to the brand. This study provides a theoretical contribution by integrating cognitive and affective dimensions in shaping brand loyalty, and provides practical implications for marketing strategies for halal products that focus on young Muslim female consumers.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, Brand Love, Halal Skincare Products

INTRODUCTION

With the largest halal cosmetics market in the world, Indonesia reaches a revenue of more than USD 4.19 billion by 2022 and an annual growth of around 8 per cent until 2025. This indicates the high demand of Muslim consumers for safe and shariah-compliant halal cosmetic products. The halal cosmetics sector, in particular, recorded global revenues of approximately USD 12.3 billion by 2023 and continues to grow. Although awareness of halal is high, research shows there is a discrepancy between brand awareness, brand trust, and willingness to buy - especially among female customers in urban areas such as Medan.

This research focuses on skincare brand *Wardah*, one of the pioneers and market leaders of halal cosmetics in Indonesia. Wardah is widely known as a local brand that not only emphasises halal aspects and product safety, but also manages to build an image that is modern, relevant, and close to urban Muslim women. With various marketing campaigns that highlight spiritual values, natural beauty, and women empowerment, Wardah has become the top choice of many Muslim women in Medan. Therefore, the brand is an appropriate object to explore the relationship between brand awareness, brand trust, brand *love*, and brand loyalty in the context of halal skincare products.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which brand awareness and brand trust influence brand loyalty towards halal skincare products, with brand love as a mediating variable, among Muslim female consumers in Medan City. This study aims to understand how rational and emotional elements of brands contribute to consumer loyalty in value-sensitive product categories such as halal cosmetics.

The methodology used is an explanatory quantitative approach with a survey method through a Likert scale-based questionnaire. To test the hypotheses and mediation effects, *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) was used with the help of SmartPLS software. The research sample consisted of approximately 219 Muslim female respondents who use Wardah brand halal skincare in Medan who were purposively selected based on certain criteria.

Theoretically, this study enhances research on halal brands and brand relationship models using brand love as a mediator in the context of halal skincare in Indonesia. Practically, halal skincare brands can increase the desire to purchase products by Muslim women by increasing awareness, trust, and loyalty through strategies that build emotional bonds, also known as "brand love". To increase customer loyalty and purchase intention, these findings encourage marketers in Medan to concentrate on creating content that generates affection.

This study shows that the three variables namely brand awareness (X1), and brand trust (X2) have a direct effect on brand loyalty of halal skincare products and indirectly through brand love as a mediating variable. These findings support previous studies by Wijayanti et al. (2023) which shows that brand love mediates the effect of brand experience and brand trust on the loyalty of Muslimah consumers who use halal cosmetics in Bekasi. However, some other studies such as Hanaysha (2018) show that brand awareness does not significantly influence brand love in the context of general cosmetic consumers, indicating inconsistent results.

In addition, most of the previous studies mostly examined the effect of brand love on brand loyalty (not purchase intention), or only made brand love as the final dependent variable (for example: Albert & Merunka, 2013). Research that examines brand love as a mediator between brand trust and awareness on purchase

intention in the context of halal skincare is still very limited, especially in Indonesia. There are no documented studies in the Scopus database that focus on Muslim women in Medan City as a representative local context, even though this population is a major potential consumer in the national halal cosmetics market.

Thus, this study offers novelty in two main aspects: (1) presenting a mediation model that integrates brand awareness, and brand trust through brand love to brand loyalty in an integrated framework, and (2) exploring this phenomenon contextually on Muslim women consumers who use halal skincare in Medan City, which has not been the focus of many studies in international and national literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Awareness

The degree to which customers can recognise or remember a cosmetic brand is known as brand awareness, and this has a significant impact on their purchasing decisions. Higher brand awareness is positively associated with higher purchase intentions, according to several studies, suggesting that brand awareness precedes consumer behaviour (Zainuddin et al., 2023; J. Zhao et al., 2022). Brand awareness has a huge impact on consumer purchasing behaviour, especially in the cosmetics sector. According to a study, advertisements that increase brand recognition have a direct impact on customers' purchasing decisions and increase their propensity to buy products (J. Zhao et al., 2022). Research from (Itasari & Hastuti, 2023), shows how brand awareness affects consumer purchasing decisions; specifically, brand-aware consumers are more likely to respond positively to advertisements, which increases their propensity to make purchases.

H1: Brand Awareness of skincare halal products has a positive and significant effect on Brand Love.

H2: Brand Awareness of skincare halal products has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty.

Brand Trust

According to (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), trust is "the degree to which a consumer believes that a particular brand that he trusts fulfils his desires." This idea has been discussed extensively in the branding literature in relation to consumer trust in brands. (Holbrook & Chaudhuri, 2001), defines brand trust as "the average consumer's willingness to rely on a brand's ability to fulfil promised functions." As the concept of brand trust is particularly relevant in times of uncertainty, cosmetics brands should take this seriously. The use of cosmetics puts consumers in a vulnerable position, so a trusted brand can increase customer trust and reduce

uncertainty (Chiu et al., 2010; Pavlou et al., 2007). Brand loyalty is the result of a trusted relationship with the brand, and brand trust is a driver of brand loyalty (Holbrook & Chaudhuri, 2001). In addition, feelings of affection towards the brand arise from continued belief in it. Brand satisfaction, brand loyalty, and brand love are some of the important marketing constructs influenced by brand trust, according to the branding literature (Drennan et al., 2019).

H3: Brand Trust of halal skincare products has a positive and significant effect on Brand Love.

H4: Brand Trust of halal skincare products has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty.

Brand Love

Brand Love is the number of strong emotional ties and satisfaction with a particular brand name (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). According to his research, more hedonistic items can increase brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. In addition, good word-of-mouth about self-expressing brands and brand loyalty are positively influenced by brand love. According to recent studies, brand love plays an important role in the interaction between customers and brands. One of the things that gives a business a competitive advantage over its competitors is brand loyalty. Strong emotions that transcend brands are the cause (Joshi & Garg, 2022). Brand love is important for loyalty, satisfaction, and trust, according to findings (Khan et al., 2019). Nonetheless, evidence from research suggests that brand loyalty can be predicted by love for the brand (Bıçakcıoğlu et al., 2018; Kocakuş & Özmen, 2020; Misra et al., 2021).

H5: Brand Love of halal skincare products has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty.

Brand Loyalty

(Oliver, 1999), defines loyalty to a brand as "a strong desire to consistently use a brand or service provided consistently over time, despite being influenced by circumstances or marketing actions that could produce unfavourable results, with a strong desire to ensure that every action is taken, be it attitudinal or behavioural." (Oliver, 1999). Brand loyalty refers to a customer's commitment to repurchase or continue using a particular brand, while purchase intention describes the likelihood of a customer to purchase a particular product. Based on research from (Melliya & Puji, 2023; Nawawi, 2022), it is explained that higher levels of brand loyalty tend to increase customer purchase intentions. Brand loyalty based on attitude is related to the level of indifference to the brand, while brand loyalty based on behaviour is related to the frequency of brand purchases (Holbrook & Chaudhuri, 2001).

In addition, loyalty is one of the most important metrics in evaluating the effectiveness of marketing campaigns (Reichheld. et al., 2000). Loyal consumers who are already confident in their purchase decisions can help reduce communication costs with marketers and process information quickly, so they do not need as many advertisements or sales promotions as brands with low levels of loyalty. In addition, satisfied and loyal customers often become brand ambassadors who spread information about the company to potential new customers. Potential consumers are heavily influenced by brand ambassadors when making decisions, and they are more likely to look favourably on a company if they believe it has a loyal customer base.

H6: Brand Awareness of halal skincare products positively affects Brand loyalty through Brand Love.

H7: Brand Trust of skincare halal products positively affects Brand loyalty through Brand Love.

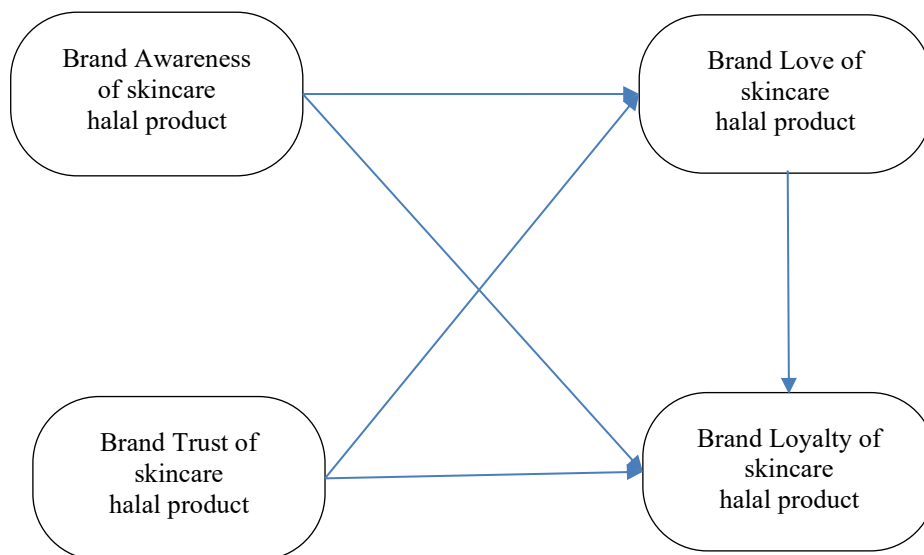


Figure 1: Conceptual framework.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to test the causal relationship between the variables studied. The data collection method was carried out through a 5-point Likert scale-based questionnaire survey distributed to purposively selected respondents, namely Muslim women in Medan City who are users of Wardah brand halal skincare products. The number of samples obtained was 219 respondents. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique based on Partial Least Square (PLS) through SmartPLS software. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for testing mediation models and simultaneous relationships between latent variables. Testing the validity and reliability of constructs is done through the loading factor value, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 1 explains that the majority of respondents in this study were women (92.24%), which is in accordance with the main target market for Wardah brand halal skincare products. This finding reflects that the research focus is directed at the main users of skincare products in Medan city, namely Muslim women.

In terms of age group, most of the respondents were in the age range of 21-25 years old (42.47%) and 16-20 years old (21.92%). This shows that the main users of Wardah products in Medan City come from the younger generation, especially late teens and young adults, who are generally more responsive to halal issues, beauty trends, and digital marketing strategies.

In terms of occupation, more than half of the respondents are students (58.90%). This finding indicates that Wardah products have strong penetration among academics and young adults. In addition, there were also a number of respondents who worked as employees and self-employed, reflecting the diversity of socio-economic backgrounds in the research sample.

Based on length of use, most respondents have been using skincare products for more than two years (46.12%). This indicates a high level of trust and loyalty towards the Wardah brand. Thus, this finding strengthens the relevance of studies on brand loyalty and brand love in the context of long-term consumers.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Measure	items	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	202	92.24
	Female	17	7.76
Age	21 - 25 years old	93	42.47
	16 - 20 Years	48	21.92
	> 41 Years	31	14.16
	36 - 40 Years	20	9.13
	31 - 35 Years	19	8.68
	26 - 30 Years	8	3.65
Occupation	Student	129	58.90
	Employee	46	21.00
	Self-employed	37	16.89

	Civil Servant	7	3.20
Length of time using skincare products	> 2 years	101	46.12
	> 1 Year	58	26.48
	< 2 Years	42	19.18
	< 1 Year	18	8.22

The measurement model test results presented in Table 2 show that all constructs in this study, namely Brand Awareness, Brand Trust, Brand Love, and Brand Loyalty, meet the criteria for convergent validity and good internal reliability. All indicator items have a loading factor value above 0.65, which is the minimum threshold in PLS-based SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2017). The Brand Loyalty construct, for example, shows a very high loading factor value, such as 0.906 for the item *"I consider myself loyal to brands with halal products"*, indicating that respondents have a strong attachment to the halal brands they use, especially Wardah.

Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all constructs is above 0.50, with Brand Loyalty recording the highest value of 0.724, which indicates that most of the indicator variance can be explained by the construct. The Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability (ρ_c) values for each construct also exceed 0.7, indicating excellent internal consistency between items within each construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

This finding also correlates strongly with the characteristics of the respondents, where the majority are young Muslim women aged 21-25 years (42.47%) and 16-20 years (21.92%), and most are students (58.90%). This group tends to be more aware of religious values, beauty trends, as well as exposed to digital content that strengthens brand perception and experience, as mentioned in studies (Zainuddin et al., 2023) and (W. Zhao et al., 2022) that the younger generation is more responsive to brand awareness formed through social media and online campaigns. This explains why Brand Awareness values have strong indicators, such as 0.874 for the item *"I am aware of the Wardah brand."*

Furthermore, the high value of Brand Trust, such as in the item *"This cosmetic brand is a very good brand"* (loading = 0.887), indicates that the respondent group has high confidence in Wardah as a reliable brand, in accordance with research (Drennan et al., 2019), which states that brand trust is crucial in the cosmetics industry because it involves aspects of product safety and halalness. In line with that, items on Brand Love such as *"This cosmetic brand is totally awesome"* (loading = 0.818), reflect respondents' high emotional attachment to the Wardah brand. This positive emotion is very likely to arise from exposure to the spiritual and women empowerment content carried by Wardah, as stated by (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) that *brand love* develops when consumers feel that the brand matches their values and identity.

Thus, the measurement model test results show that the measurement tools in this study are valid and reliable, and substantially reflect the characteristics of the respondents - young Muslim women in Medan who are loyal, trust, and love the Wardah brand because of its value congruence and perception of its quality and halal commitment.

Table 2. The Result of The Measurement Model

Constructs	Scale items	Loading Factor	Cronbach' alpha	rho_a	rho_c	AVE
Brand Awareness Adapted from (ÇELİK, 2022)	BA1. I can recognise the Wardah brand among other competing brands	0.759	0.827	0.841	0.885	0.658
	BA2. I am aware of the Wardah brand	0.874				
	BA3. Some characteristics of the Wardah brand come to my mind quickly	0.827				
	BA4. I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of the Wardah brand	0.782				
Brand Trust Adapted from (Drennan et al., 2019; Haq & Arief Noviarkahman Zagladi, 2024)	BT1. This is a reliable cosmetic brand.	0.738	0.857	0.860	0.898	0.641
	BT2. This cosmetic brand is likeable.	0.851				
	BT3. This cosmetic brand is a very good brand.	0.887				
	BT4. Brand Reliability	0.815				
	BT5. Brand Intention	0.697				
Brand Love Adapted from (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006)	BLO1. This is a wonderful cosmetic brand.	0.734	0.823	0.829	0.877	0.589
	BL02. I love this cosmetic brand.	0.658				
	BL03. This cosmetic brand makes me feel good.	0.812				
	BL04. This cosmetic brand is totally awesome.	0.818				
	BL05. Positive emotions in response to the Brand	0.803				
Brand Loyalty Adapted from (Fajria et al., 2022)	BL1. Brands with halal products are the only brands I will buy.	0.774	0.872	0.872	0.913	0.724
	BL2. I consider myself loyal to brands with halal products.	0.906				
	BL3. I consider myself loyal to brands with halal products and I will be loyal for a long time.	0.870				

	BL4. I have no intention of switching to another brand	0.848				
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The results of the Fornell-Larcker analysis shown in Table 3 are used to test discriminant validity, which is to assess the extent to which each construct in the model is truly conceptually distinct from other constructs. Discriminant validity is declared achieved if the square root value of the AVE (Average Variance Extracted), which is displayed on the diagonal of the table, is higher than the correlation value between other constructs in the row and column concerned (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In this study, all constructs fulfil these criteria. Brand Awareness has an AVE value of 0.811, higher than its correlation with Brand Love (0.565), Brand Loyalty (0.473), and Brand Trust (0.446). Brand Love recorded an AVE of 0.768, which is also higher than its correlation with Brand Trust (0.647) and Brand Loyalty (0.798). Although Brand Loyalty showed the strongest correlation with Brand Love (0.798), the AVE value of Brand Loyalty was still higher, at 0.851. Meanwhile, Brand Trust has an AVE of 0.800, exceeding its correlation with all other constructs. Thus, the four constructs in this study Brand Awareness, Brand Trust, Brand Love, and Brand Loyalty show adequate discriminant validity. This finding indicates that each construct can be measured separately without empirical overlap, so it can be trusted to be used in subsequent structural analyses.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker

	Brand Awareness	Brand Love	Brand Loyalty	Brand Trust
Brand Awareness	0,811			
Brand Love	0,565	0,768		
Brand Loyalty	0,473	0,798	0,851	
Brand Trust	0,446	0,647	0,549	0,800

The results of hypothesis testing in this study show that **all hypotheses are accepted**, because each relationship between variables has a *p-value* of 0.000 (smaller than 0.05) and a *t-statistics* value exceeding 1.96, which indicates statistical significance at the 95% confidence level. First, Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Brand Love ($\beta = 0.345$; $t = 5.868$), so H1 is accepted. This result is in line with the findings of (Zainuddin et al., 2023) which states that brand recognition forms initial emotional perceptions that can develop into affection for the brand. Furthermore, Brand Awareness also has a direct effect on Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.285$; $t = 4.475$), supporting H2 and confirming the study from (W. Zhao et al., 2022) that consumers tend to be loyal to brands that are known and recognised consistently.

Hypothesis H3 which states that Brand Trust affects Brand Love also proved significant ($\beta = 0.494$; $t = 8.311$). This finding is consistent with (Drennan et al., 2019), which explains that trust in halal brands plays an important role in building consumer emotional attachment. Likewise, H4, namely the effect of Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.422$; $t = 6.685$), is accepted, strengthening the argument (Holbrook & Chaudhuri, 2001) that trust is the main foundation in the formation of brand loyalty.

Brand Love is also shown to have the strongest influence on Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.750$; $t = 11.918$), which supports H5 and is in line with the findings of (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) and (Bıçakcıoğlu et al., 2018), that strong loyalty is formed from emotional closeness to the brand. Indirectly, Brand Love mediates the effect of Brand Awareness on Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.259$; $t = 5.665$) and the effect of Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.370$; $t = 6.302$), so hypotheses H6 and H7 are also accepted. This supports the mediation model in the study (Budiarti & Wijayanti, 2024), which shows that Brand Love is a significant link between cognitive and affective factors with loyalty in halal cosmetics consumers.

The acceptability of all hypotheses is further strengthened by the characteristics of the respondents, the majority of whom are young women aged 16-25 years (64.39%) and students (58.90%). This age group is known as digital natives who tend to be emotional and idealistic in choosing products, and easily form emotional bonds with brands that represent personal values such as halalness, spirituality, and women's empowerment (Joshi & Garg, 2022). In addition, most respondents have used Wardah products for more than two years (46.12%), indicating a long-term attachment that supports the important role of Brand Trust and Brand Love in creating loyalty.

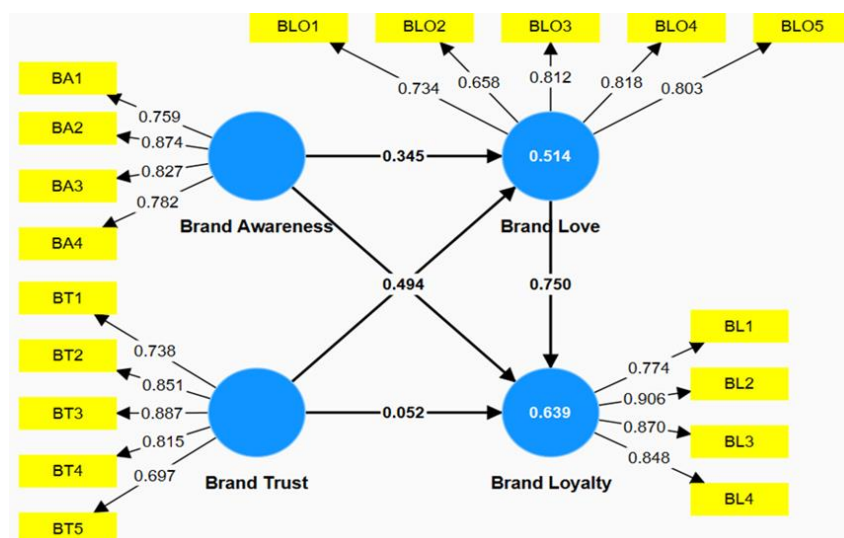


Figure 2. The hypothesis testing results

Table 4. Hypothesis results.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Brand Awareness -> Brand Love	0.345	0.350	0.059	5.868	0.000
Brand Awareness -> Brand Loyalty	0.285	0.286	0.064	4.475	0.000
Brand Love -> Brand Loyalty	0.750	0.748	0.063	11.918	0.000
Brand Trust -> Brand Love	0.494	0.491	0.059	8.311	0.000
Brand Trust -> Brand Loyalty	0.422	0.423	0.063	6.685	0.000
Brand Awareness -> Brand Love -> Brand Loyalty	0.259	0.261	0.046	5.665	0.000
Brand Trust -> Brand Love -> Brand Loyalty	0.370	0.368	0.059	6.302	0.000

CONCLUSION

This study proves that both brand awareness and brand trust have a significant effect on brand loyalty in Wardah brand halal skincare products. This relationship is also strengthened by the role of brand love as a mediating variable. This finding reinforces the theory that brand loyalty is not only determined by rational perceptions such as brand recognition and trust, but also by consumers' emotional involvement with the values that the brand carries. In the context of halal products, brand love is the key that bridges the cognitive and affective dimensions towards long-term loyalty.

The strength of the influence of brand love on brand loyalty is the most dominant in this model. This is in line with the characteristics of respondents, the majority of whom are young women aged 16-25 years and are students. This generation is known as digital natives who are highly exposed to visual content and emotional narratives through social media. They are more likely to form emotional attachments with brands that represent the values of religiosity, female empowerment, and natural beauty - all things that the Wardah brand consistently communicates.

This research makes important contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study offers an integrated mediation model that explains the mechanism of the relationship between brand awareness and brand trust on brand loyalty through brand love in the context of halal products. Practically, the results of this study can be utilised by marketers of halal products, especially in the cosmetics industry, to develop marketing strategies that not only focus on product information, but also on building a brand image that can generate

consumer trust and love. A value- and emotion-orientated approach is proven to be more effective in building long-term consumer loyalty in the young Muslim women segment.

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