Does Brand Attachment Make Consumers Overly Loyal to Skintific? Examining Self-Image Congruence and Consistency

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effects of self-image congruence and self-consistency on brand loyalty toward Skintific products in Indonesia, with brand attachment serving as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was employed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) based on data collected from 160 Skintific consumers in Southeast Sulawesi selected through purposive sampling. The findings reveal that self-image congruence has a positive and significant effect on both brand attachment and brand loyalty. Self-consistency significantly influences brand attachment; however, it does not have a direct effect on brand loyalty. Furthermore, brand attachment has a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty and mediates the relationship between self-consistency and brand loyalty. In contrast, brand attachment does not mediate the relationship between self-image congruence and brand loyalty, indicating that the alignment between consumers' self-image and brand image can directly foster loyalty. These findings contribute to the brand loyalty literature in a collectivist cultural context by demonstrating that loyalty does not always depend on emotional attachment. From a managerial perspective, companies should align their brand identity with consumers' self-concept and cultivate strong emotional bonds to enhance long-term loyalty. Future studies are encouraged to incorporate socio-cultural factors and switching barriers as additional variables.

Keywords: Brand Attachment, Brand Loyalty, Self Image Congruence, Self Consistency

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world, has emerged as one of the most promising markets for the global beauty and personal care industry. The value of the national beauty industry currently stands at approximately USD 7 billion and is projected to continue growing at an annual rate of around 10% through 2027 (East Ventures, 2024). The rapid expansion of the cosmetics sector is also reflected in Indonesia's export performance, which reached USD 842 million in 2023, while the number of registered cosmetic products increased more than tenfold over the past five years (Komdigi, 2024). This growth has been driven by changing consumer lifestyles, increasing awareness of skincare and personal care, government support, and the expanding influence of social media (Nawiyah *et al*., 2023).

Skintific has emerged as one of the most successful beauty brands in Indonesia since its introduction in 2021. The brand has consistently ranked among the top performers in the beauty category across various e-commerce platforms and recorded the highest sales on TikTok Shop in 2022 (CNN Indonesia, 2023). According to data from Compas.co.id, Skintific accounted for 89.2% of the market share in the beauty package category and generated approximately IDR 47.6 billion in sales through its official store on Shopee (Andini, 2024). Despite being a relatively new brand, Skintific has been able to establish strong consumer loyalty within a relatively short period.

This phenomenon indicates that Skintific's success is not solely driven by its product performance, but also by its ability to build strong consumer loyalty. According to Oliver (1999), brand loyalty refers to a deeply held commitment to repurchase or repatronize a preferred brand consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts from competitors. Brand loyalty not only reflects repeat purchase behavior but also represents a psychological bond that leads

consumers to continuously prefer a particular brand over available alternatives. Such a psychological bond may emerge when consumers perceive a brand as a reflection of their self-identity (self-image congruence) (Sirgy, 2018) and when the use of the brand helps them maintain consistency with their existing self-concept (self-consistency) (Swann, 2012).

Self-Image Congruence refers to the extent to which a brand's image aligns with consumers' self-concept, thereby influencing their preferences and behavioral responses toward the brand (Li *et al*., 2022; Chieng *et al.*, 2022). In contrast, Self-Consistency reflects consumers' motivation to maintain preferences and behaviors that are consistent with their established self-identity (Vestner *et al.*, 2022). When consumers perceive that a brand represents their personal values and identity, they are more likely to develop Brand Attachment, which refers to a strong emotional bond between consumers and the brand (Reihani *et al*., 2019). This emotional bond is considered a key mechanism in the development of enduring Brand Loyalty**.**

Although the relationships among Self-Image Congruence, Self-Consistency, Brand Attachment, and Brand Loyalty have received considerable attention in the academic literature, several research gaps remain to be addressed. Previous studies have generally assumed that Self-Image Congruence and Self-Consistency influence brand loyalty through similar mechanisms, despite the fact that they represent distinct dimensions of the self-concept (Li, 2021; Sirgy, 2018; Vestner *et al*., 2022; Diker, 2024). Furthermore, Brand Attachment has often been positioned as the primary mechanism linking self-perception to loyalty, leaving uncertainty as to whether Self-Image Congruence can directly influence Brand Loyalty without the mediation of emotional attachment (Fayrene *et al*., 2022; Indraswari & Ningrum, 2023; Shimul & Phau, 2023). In addition, most existing brand loyalty models have been developed and tested in Western societies characterized by individualistic cultural values, whereas empirical evidence from collectivistic cultures, such as Indonesia, remains relatively limited (Pryor, 2024; Kusawat & Teerakapibal, 2021; Yazdi *et al.*, 2024).

This study contributes to the existing literature by simultaneously examining Self-Image Congruence and Self-Consistency within a single research model, while also re-evaluating the mediating role of Brand Attachment in a collectivistic cultural context. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effects of Self-Image Congruence and Self-Consistency on Brand Loyalty, with Brand Attachment serving as a mediating variable among Skintific consumers in Indonesia. Based on the proposed relationships among the variables, seven hypotheses were developed and empirically tested using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method.

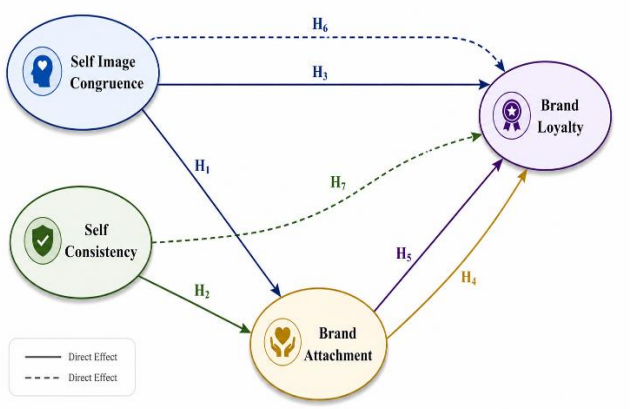


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach and PLS-SEM to test the proposed relationships among the constructs (Hair et al., 2021). Because the study population is considered infinite, purposive sampling was employed. The sample comprised Skintific skincare users in Southeast Sulawesi who had used the products for at least six months and made more than three purchases. Following Hair *et al*. (2010), a minimum sample size of

160 respondents was determined based on 16 indicators across four constructs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Measurement Model

Reliability in SEM-PLS ensures that indicators are dependable, with a factor loading of ≥ 0.70 (Hair *et al*., 2011). Consistency is measured using Cronbach's alpha, rho-A, and composite reliability, with acceptable values ranging from 0.70 to 0.90 (Hair *et al*., 2021). AVE (> 0.50) assesses convergent validity (Sarstedt, Hair, *et al*., 2020). Discriminant validity is evaluated using HTMT (< 0.90) and the Fornell-Larcker Criterion (Henseler *et al*., 2015).

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Construk with item	LF	CA	Rho-A	CR	AVE
Self Image Congruence (SIC)					
I feel that the Skintific brand reflects my personality and values (SIC1).	0.935	0,844	0,847	0,928	0,865
The Skintific brand reflects the personality and values I aspire to have or achieve (SIC2)	0,925				
Self Consistency (SCons)					
I am satisfied with the Skintific brand and therefore not interested in trying other brands (SCons2)	0,910	0,881	0,884	0,926	0,807
I am confident that my decision to choose the Skintific brand is the best for me (SCons3)	0,891				
I prefer to stick with my choice rather than try a new brand that I am unfamiliar with (SCons4)	0,893				
Brand Attachment (BA)					
I have a very positive impression of this brand compared to other brands (BA1)	0,803				
When using the Skintific brand, I feel more authentic and confident (BA2).	0,849	0,861	0,865	0,905	0,705
I regularly purchase products from the Skintific brand rather than other brands (BA3).	0,839				
The services provided by the Skintific brand always meet or even exceed my expectations (BA5)	0,866				
Brand Loyalty (BL)					
I am proud to use this brand because of its positive image in the eyes of the public (BL3)	0,927	0,844	0,845	0,927	0,865
I believe that my chosen brand is superior to others, making it difficult for me to consider alternatives (BL4)	0,933				

Source: Processed PLS-SEM Data, 2026.

Tabel 2. Discriminat Validity

	Brand Attachment	Brand Loyalty	Self Image Congruence	Self Consistency
Forner and Larcker Criterion				
Brand Attachment	0,839			
Brand Loyalty	0,727	0,930		
Self Image Congruence	0,714	0,614	0,930	
Self Consistency	0,785	0,702	0,760	0,898
HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio				
Brand Attachment				
Brand Loyalty	0,848			

Self Image Congruence	0,828	0,725	
Self Consistency	0,880	0,811	0,881

Source: Processed PLS-SEM Data, 2026

Based on the results of the SEM PLS analysis, the constructs of reliability, validity, and discriminant validity presented in Tables 2 and 3 have been proven to be both valid and reliable. Therefore, further analysis can be conducted as they meet the recommended criteria.

Structural Model Fit

Structural model fit in PLS-SEM is crucial for analyzing the relationship between observed and latent variables. It utilizes fit indices such as RMSEA, NFI, and GoF to assess model suitability. R^2 measures the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by independent variables, while F^2 indicates the contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable (Sarstedt, Ringle, *et al.*, 2020; Hair *et al*., 2017).

Tabel 3 .Structural Model Fit

	BA	BL	SIC	SCons	Model Fit Indicated
R^2	0,649	0,576			
f^2					
BA		0,159			
BL	-	-	-	-	
SC	0,092	0,004			
SCons	0,397	0,067			
SRMR					0,081
d_ULS					0,432
d_G					0,379
NFI					0,753
GoF					0,704

Notes : SIC: Self Image Congruence; SCons: Self Consistency; BA: Brand Attachment; BL: Brand Loyalty
Source: Processed PLS-SEM Data, 2026

The structural model results indicate satisfactory explanatory power, with R^2 values of 0.649 for Brand Attachment and 0.576 for Brand Loyalty. Self-Consistency demonstrates the strongest effect on Brand Attachment ($f^2 = 0.397$), while Brand Attachment exerts a moderate effect on Brand Loyalty ($f^2 = 0.159$). Furthermore, the SRMR value of 0.081 and the GoF value of 0.704 suggest that the proposed model exhibits an acceptable level of fit.

Path Coefficients

According to Hair et al. (2017), path analysis examines causal relationships among variables in a structural model. In PLS-SEM, a hypothesis is supported when the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05.

Tabel 4. Results of Hypothesis-testing

Hypotesis	Relationship	Coefficient	T-Statistik	P-Value	Conclusion
Direct Hypotesis					
H1	SIC→BA	0,277	2,616	0.009	Supported
H2	SCons→BA	0,575	5,857	0,000	Supported
H3	SIC→BL	0,307	3.767	0,000	Supported
H4	SCons→BL	0,067	0,726	0,468	Rejected
H5	BA→BL	0,438	4,520	0,000	Supported

Indirect Hypotesis (Mediation)					
H6	SIC→BA→BL	0,121	1,927	0,055	Rejected
H7	SCons→BA→BL	0,252	4,138	0,000	Supported

Source: Processed PLS-SEM Data, 2026

Table 4 shows that all tested hypotheses indicate significant and accepted relationships, except for H4, which demonstrates that high self-consistency increases consumers' tendency to remain loyal to the brand, this hypothesis is rejected. Meanwhile, brand attachment serves as a mediator in the relationship between self-consistency and brand loyalty (H7)

DISCUSSION

Hypotheses 1 and 2 indicate that Self-Image Congruence and Self Consistency have a positive effect on Brand Attachment among Skintific users. These findings suggest that consumers' emotional attachment to a brand develops when the brand not only reflects their identity but also aligns consistently with their values and self-concept. As a result, consumers perceive Skintific not merely as a skincare product, but as an integral part of their Self Identity.

The positive effect of Self Image Congruence on Brand Attachment indicates that the greater the alignment between consumers' self image and Skintific's brand image, the stronger the emotional attachment they develop toward the brand. This finding is consistent with Self Congruity Theory, which suggests that individuals tend to choose and maintain relationships with brands that reflect their self-concept (Sirgy, 2018). In the skincare industry, brands provide not only functional benefits but also serve as a means of self expression. Therefore, the congruence between consumers' identity and brand identity becomes an important factor in fostering emotional attachment to the brand (Shimul & Phau, 2023).

Meanwhile, Self Consistency exerts a stronger influence on Brand Attachment than Self-Image Congruence. This finding indicates that consumers not only seek brands that are congruent with their self-image, but also brands that help maintain the consistency of their identity over time. According to Self Consistency Theory, individuals tend to maintain choices that are aligned with their established beliefs and self-identity because such choices provide a sense of comfort, stability, and certainty (Swann, 2012). In the context of skincare, the routine and continuous use of products leads consumers to place greater value on consistent experiences, which in turn strengthens their emotional attachment to the brand.

These findings support Brand Attachment Theory, which posits that brand attachment develops when a brand is able to fulfill consumers' identity related needs (Thomson *et al.,* 2005; Park *et al*., 2010). The results are also consistent with the studies of Chieng *et al.* (2022), Li *et al.* (2022), Rabbanee *et al.* (2020), and Roy Bhattacharjee *et al*. (2023), which found that the congruence and consistency between consumers' identity and brand identity can strengthen emotional attachment to a brand. Therefore, Skintific should focus on developing a brand image that aligns with the identity of its target consumers while maintaining consistency in product quality and brand communication to sustain consumers' emotional attachment over the long term.

The results indicate that Self Image Congruence has a positive effect on Brand Loyalty(Hypotesis 3), whereas Self Consistency does not have a significant effect on Brand Loyalty (Hypotesis 4). These findings suggest that consumer loyalty toward Skintific is driven more by the congruence

between consumers' identities and the brand than by mere consistency in maintaining previous choices. In other words, consumers are more likely to remain loyal when they perceive Skintific as a reflection of their values, lifestyle, and self identity; however, they are not necessarily loyal simply because the brand is consistent with their established identity.

The positive effect of Self-Image Congruence on Brand Loyalty indicates that the greater the congruence between consumers' self image and Skintific's brand image, the higher the level of loyalty demonstrated by consumers. This finding supports Pryor (2024), who argues that the alignment between consumers' self image and brand characteristics plays a crucial role in fostering loyalty through brand self-identification. Similarly, Aini and Ferdinand (2021) explain that the alignment between consumer values and brand values strengthens brand identity in consumers' minds, thereby contributing to long-term loyalty. The findings of this study are also consistent with those of Hidayat and Setiawati (2021) and Bagaskara and Marsasi (2023), who found that brands capable of reflecting consumers' self concept are more likely to establish long-term relationships and sustain customer loyalty.

In contrast, Self Consistency was not found to have a significant direct effect on Brand Loyalty. This finding differs from the studies of Liang et al. (2024), Kini et al. (2024), Ismail et al. (2020), and Wijnands and Gill (2020), which suggest that consistency between consumers' identity and brand characteristics can enhance loyalty. The discrepancy in findings indicates that, in the context of Skintific users, identity consistency alone is insufficient to directly generate brand loyalty. In the highly competitive skincare industry, consumers are constantly exposed to product innovations, beauty trends, and recommendations from social media, making them more open to trying alternative brands even when their current brand aligns with their identity. This condition suggests that identity consistency does not automatically translate into a strong commitment to remain loyal to a particular brand.

These findings indicate that Self-Image Congruence and Self Consistency operate through different mechanisms in shaping Brand Loyalty. Self Image Congruence is associated with a brand's ability to represent consumers' identities, thereby directly fostering loyalty. In contrast, Self Consistency is more closely related to consumers' efforts to maintain their established identity, but it does not necessarily lead to loyalty unless accompanied by other factors that strengthen the relationship between consumers and the brand.

In a collectivistic culture such as Indonesia, loyalty is influenced not only by personal identity but also by social identity, group acceptance, and the emotional connections consumers develop with a brand. Therefore, identity congruence that provides social meaning and reinforces consumers' sense of belonging plays a more significant role in fostering loyalty than identity consistency alone.

These findings reinforce the argument that Self-Image Congruence and Self-Consistency, although often assumed to operate through similar mechanisms in shaping Brand Loyalty, actually function differently. The results demonstrate that Self Image Congruence can directly influence Brand Loyalty, whereas Self Consistency cannot. Furthermore, this study contributes to the brand loyalty literature by providing empirical evidence from the collectivistic cultural context of Indonesia, which has received relatively limited attention in previous research.

The results indicate that Brand Attachment does not mediate the relationship between Self-Image Congruence and Brand Loyalty (Hypothesis 6), however, it does mediate the relationship between Self-Consistency and Brand Loyalty (Hypothesis 7). These findings suggest that Brand

Attachment does not play a uniform mediating role across all dimensions of the self concept. Consumer loyalty toward Skintific can be formed directly through the congruence between consumers' identity and the brand, while at the same time requiring emotional attachment when loyalty is developed through consumers' identity consistency.

The non significant mediating role of Brand Attachment in the relationship between Self-Image Congruence and Brand Loyalty suggests that the congruence between consumers' self-image and Skintific's brand image is sufficiently strong to foster loyalty without the need for emotional attachment as an intermediary mechanism. This finding indicates that when consumers perceive Skintific as a reflection of their values, lifestyle, and identity, loyalty can be established directly through a process of brand self-identification.

This result is consistent with the studies of Pryor (2024), Aini and Ferdinand (2021), and Bagaskara and Marsasi (2023), which suggest that congruence between consumers' identity and brand identity can directly enhance consumer loyalty. However, the finding contradicts those of Indraswari *et al.* (2023), Chieng *et al.* (2022), Shimul and Phau (2023), and Shimul (2022), who argue that Brand Attachment serves as an important mediating mechanism linking Self Image Congruence to Brand Loyalty. This discrepancy suggests that, in the context of Skintific users, the primary role of Self-Image Congruence lies in its ability to facilitate brand self-identification rather than in fostering emotional attachment as the main pathway to loyalty.

The differing results between H6 and H7 indicate that Self Image Congruence and Self-Consistency operate through distinct mechanisms in shaping Brand Loyalty. Self-Image Congruence is capable of influencing loyalty directly because it is associated with identity congruence, which provides symbolic meaning to consumers. In contrast. Self Consistency is more closely related to consumers' efforts to maintain their established identity and therefore requires emotional attachment as a mediating mechanism to generate loyalty. These findings further reinforce the results of the previous hypothesis tests, which demonstrated that Self-Image Congruence has a direct effect on Brand Loyalty, whereas Self-Consistency does not exert a direct influence on Brand Loyalty.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that different dimensions of self-concept generate different pathways to brand loyalty. Self-Image Congruence directly enhances Brand Loyalty through consumers' identification with the brand, whereas Self-Consistency requires Brand Attachment as an emotional mechanism to translate identity consistency into loyalty. These findings suggest that, in the collectivistic context of Indonesia, emotional and symbolic factors play a more important role in fostering brand loyalty than identity consistency alone.

RECOMMENDATION

Future research is encouraged to examine other psychological variables, such as brand identification, brand trust, or brand love, as potential mechanisms underlying the relationship between Self-Image Congruence and Brand Loyalty. In addition, future studies may explore other dimensions of self concept, including actual self congruence, ideal self congruence, social self congruence, and Brand Engagement in Self Concept (BESC). Cross cultural comparative studies and the inclusion of social variables, such as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), influencer credibility, social media engagement, and social identity, are also recommended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of brand loyalty formation.

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