



## Influence of Brand Image, Self-Congruence, and Brand Love on Brand Sacredness and Word-of-Mouth: Insights from Emina Skincare Users

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Brand image, Self Congruence, Brand Love, Brand Sacredness, and Positive WOM.

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study examines the effects of brand image, self-congruence, and brand love on brand sacredness and word-of-mouth (WOM) among Emina Skincare users in Indonesia. **Methodology:** A quantitative survey approach was employed, collecting data through structured questionnaires from 150 respondents. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with WarpPLS 7.0 was used to analyze the relationships between variables. **Results:** The findings reveal that brand image and self-congruence significantly influence brand love, which enhances brand sacredness and WOM. **Findings:** The study highlights the importance of emotional drivers like brand love in fostering brand sacredness and encouraging positive WOM. **Originality:** This research contributes uniquely to understanding emotional attachment and brand advocacy in the local cosmetics market in Indonesia. **Novelty:** It addresses the gap in studying emotional branding and consumer behavior in emerging markets. **Conclusions:** Emina and similar brands should align their brand image with consumer identities, enhance emotional connections, and foster brand sacredness to encourage loyalty and positive WOM. **Type of Paper:** Survey-based quantitative research paper.

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## INTRODUCTION

The beauty and skincare industry in Indonesia has witnessed significant growth in recent years, fueled by increasing consumer awareness about the importance of skin health and appearance. As consumers become more discerning, the demand for high-quality, affordable, and locally tailored skincare products has surged. In this dynamic market, local brands have risen to prominence, offering products that cater to the diverse needs of Indonesian consumers (Kompas.com, 2022). One such brand, Emina Skincare, has captured the attention of younger consumers through its playful, fun, and accessible image. Positioned as a brand "born to be loved," (EminaCosmetics.com 2022). Emina has successfully aligned itself with the aspirations and identities of its target market.

Brand image, self congruence, and brand love are essential factors in shaping consumer perceptions dan fostering emotional attachment to a brand (Giantari et al., 2020; Joshi & Garg, 2021, 2022);Atha, 2023); (Ayuningsih & Maftukhah, 2020). Previous research has highlighted the role of these factors in driving brand loyalty and advocacy in various industries. However, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to examining how these factors, specifically brand image,

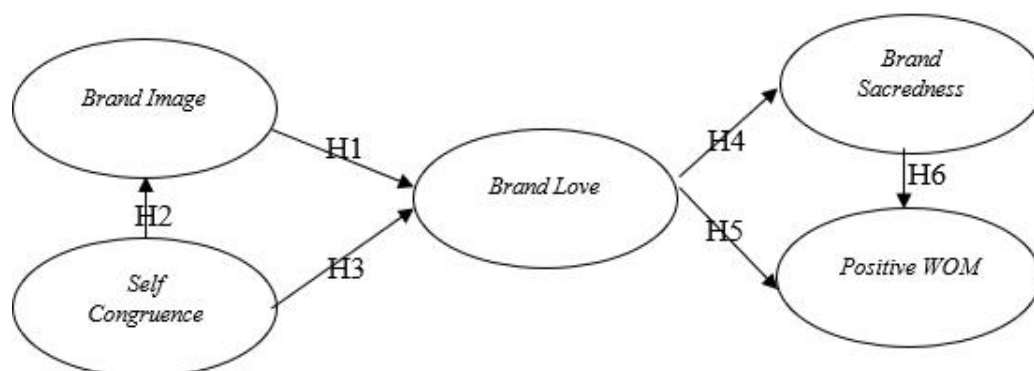
self-congruence, and brand love, contribute to the development of brand sacredness and positive word-of-mouth (WOM) in the context of local skincare brands in emerging markets like Indonesia (Destiana, 2022; Kania Nisa Fauziah et al., 2022; Nandy, 2024). Brand sacredness, a deeper emotional connection where consumers view a brand as irreplaceable and significant, has been linked to higher levels of brand advocacy and WOM, yet it has not been extensively studied in the context of local Indonesian brands (Angelina Widjaja, 2024).

This study aims to address this gap by exploring the relationships between brand image, self-congruence, brand love, and their influence on brand sacredness and WOM among users of Emina Skincare (Barnhart, 2022). The objectives of this study are: To examine the impact of brand image on brand love among Emina Skincare users (Jang et al., 2023). To assess the role of self-congruence in shaping brand image and brand love for Emina Skincare (Shimul, A. S., & Phau, 2023). To investigate how brand love and brand sacredness contribute to positive WOM for Emina Skincare.

By exploring these relationships, this research will contribute to the understanding of emotional attachment in branding, particularly in the context of local skincare brands in emerging markets. The findings will provide valuable insights for marketers aiming to strengthen consumer loyalty and advocacy through emotional engagement with their target audience (Money.kompas.com, 2024).

## Research Framework

Figure 1. Research Framework



## Hypotheses

The hypotheses in this study are:

- H1 : Brand image significantly influences brand love among Emina consumers.
- H2 : Self-congruence significantly influences brand image among Emina consumers.
- H3 : Self-congruence significantly influences brand love among Emina consumers.
- H4 : Brand love significantly influences brand sacredness among Emina consumers.
- H5 : Brand love significantly influences positive WOM among Emina consumers.
- H6 : Brand sacredness significantly influences positive WOM among Emina consumers.

## METHOD

### Research Type

This study uses a quantitative research with a descriptive method to test the extent to which positive hypotheses can be measured based on data from a specific population or sample (NF Andhini, 2017). The type of data used in this research is primary data collected through questionnaires distributed via Google Forms and measured using a Likert scale.

### Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of all individuals who use Emina skincare products. The sampling process was conducted using purposive sampling, a technique for determining samples based on specific criteria (Purwanza et al., 2022; Sari & Sari Sitompul, 2023). The criteria for selecting respondents in this study include respondents aged 19 years and older, respondents who have purchased Emina products at least once in the past month, and respondents who have used Emina products at least once in the past month. The sample size for this study is 150 respondents.

### Data Analysis Methods

Hypothesis testing in data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with WarpPLS version 7.0. Descriptive analysis was used to evaluate the variables, which include brand image, self-congruence, brand love, brand sacredness, and Positive WOM. Statistical analysis includes a measurement model (outer model) used to test the validity and reliability of variable indicators and a structural model (inner model) used to evaluate p-values (Hair et al., 2020).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

The study analyzed data from 150 respondents who met the criteria of purchasing and using Emina Skincare products at least once in the past month. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire, and the analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with WarpPLS 7.0. The reliability and validity tests confirmed that all variables, including brand image, self-congruence, brand love, brand sacredness, and positive WOM, met the required thresholds for measurement, with all composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70.

**Tabel 1. Validity and Reliability Test Results**

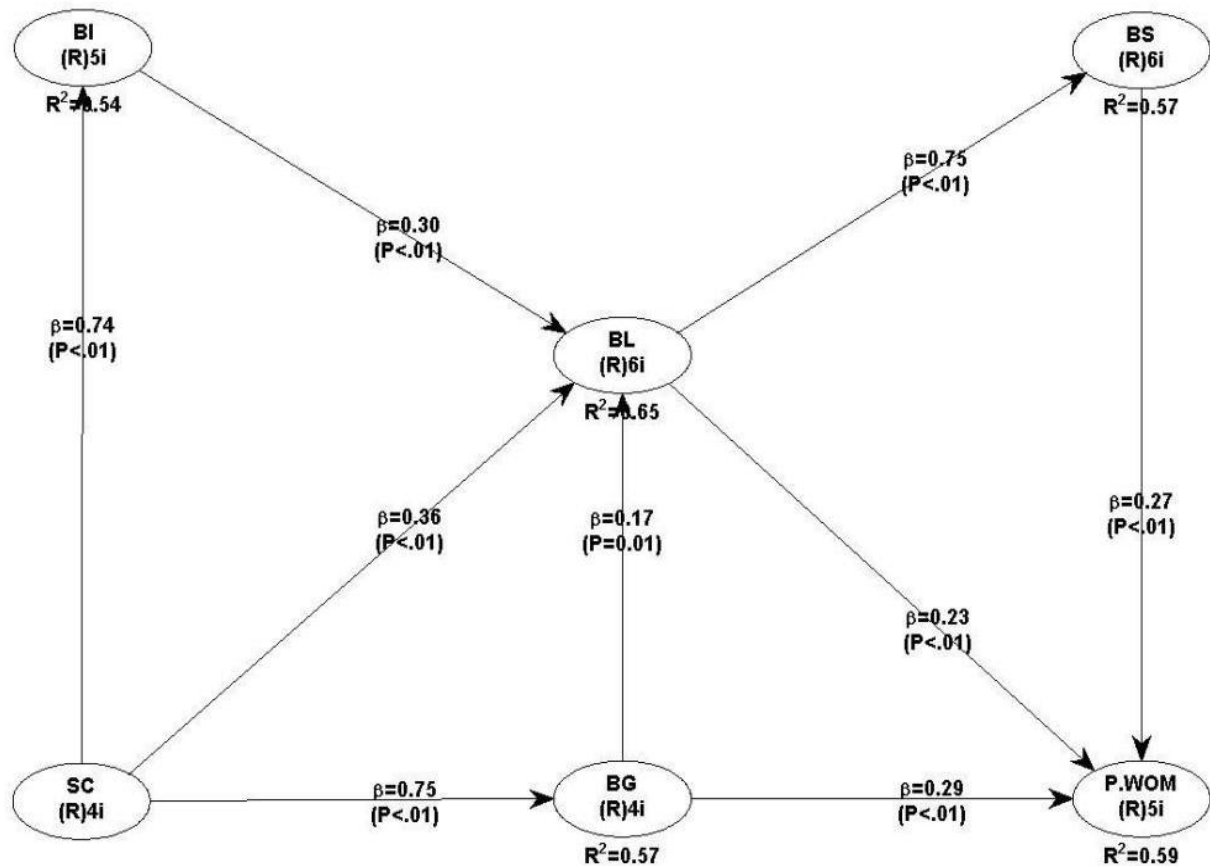
Variable	Item Code	Reliability			Validity
		Indicator Reliability	Internal Reliability	Consistency	Convergent Validity
		Loading Factor	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha	AVE
Brand Image	BI 1	0.894	0.951	0.935	0.794
	BI 2	0.904			
	BI 3	0.862			
	BI 4	0.895			
	BI 5	0.900			
Sel Congruence	SC 1	0.922	0.952	0.933	0.832
	SC 2	0.900			
	SC 3	0.905			
	SC 4	0.921			
Brand Love	BL 1	0.903	0.957	0.946	0.789
	BL 2	0.872			
	BL 3	0.878			
	BL 4	0.912			
	BL 5	0.887			
	BL 6	0.877			
Brand Sacredness	BS 1	0.901	0.960	0.950	0.801
	BS 2	0.884			
	BS 3	0.891			
	BS 4	0.882			

	BS 5	0.901			
	BS 6	0.911			
Brand Gratitude	BG 1	0.902	0.944	0.921	0.808
	BG 2	0.908			
	BG 3	0.895			
	BG 4	0.891			
Positive WOM	P.WOM 1	0.874	0.946	0.928	0.778
	P.WOM 2	0.879			
	P.WOM 3	0.861			
	P.WOM 4	0.902			
	P.WOM 5	0.893			

**Hypothesis Testing**

The hypothesis testing results showed significant path coefficients for all relationships in the proposed model. Specifically, brand image significantly influenced brand love ( $\beta = 0.299, p < 0.05$ ), and self-congruence had a significant impact on both brand image ( $\beta = 0.736, p < 0.05$ ) and brand love ( $\beta = 0.360, p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, brand love significantly influenced brand sacredness ( $\beta = 0.753, p < 0.05$ ) and positive WOM ( $\beta = 0.233, p < 0.05$ ). Brand sacredness also had a significant effect on positive WOM ( $\beta = 0.273, p < 0.05$ ), confirming the key role of emotional attachment in driving advocacy behaviors.

**Figure 2. Coefficient of Determination Guidelines**



Source: Data processed, 2024

**Table 2. Path Coefficients and P-Values**

Hypothesis		$\beta$ coefficients	P Values	Conclusion
H1	BI → BL	0.299	0.001	Accepted
H2	SC → BI	0.736	0.001	Accepted
H3	SC → BL	0.360	0.001	Accepted
H4	SC → BG	0.755	0.001	Accepted
H5	BL → BS	0.753	0.001	Accepted
H6	BL → P.WOM	0.233	0.002	Accepted
H7	BS → P.WOM	0.273	0.001	Accepted
H8	BG → BL	0.174	0.014	Accepted
H9	BG → P.WOM	0.293	0.001	Accepted

Source: Data processed, 2024

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of emotional engagement in building strong consumer-brand relationships. The significant influence of brand image and self-congruence on brand love aligns with prior research (Joshi & Garg, 2022). Specifically, self-congruence, which refers to the alignment between a consumer's self-concept and the brand's image, was found to play a pivotal role in shaping brand love. This finding is especially relevant in the context of Gen Z consumers, who highly value brand identities that reflect their personal values and aspirations (Waluyo et al., 2023).

For local brands like Emina, these insights provide actionable strategies to enhance emotional connections with consumers. Emina could leverage the concept of self-congruence by tailoring marketing campaigns that highlight inclusivity and personal relevance, such as showcasing how their products align with the diverse identities and needs of young Indonesian consumers (Torres et al., 2022). For example, Emina could create content on social media platforms that features real stories or testimonials from users who share how Emina Skincare aligns with their daily lives and self-image, making the brand feel more personalized and relatable.

Furthermore, the significant impact of brand love on brand sacredness and WOM suggests that fostering deep emotional connections with consumers can lead to brand advocacy (Jang et al., 2023). When consumers feel that a brand holds significant personal value, as reflected in brand sacredness, they are more likely to spread positive WOM, which in turn enhances the brand's reputation and attracts new customers (Keenan, 2021). Emina could utilize this by encouraging user-generated content, such as reviews, social media posts, and testimonials, where consumers share their positive experiences and the meaningful impact the brand has had on their lives.

Limitations despite the valuable insights provided by this study, several limitations should be considered. First, the research relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias or inaccuracies in respondents' recollections. Future studies could employ mixed methods, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus group discussions, to gain a deeper understanding of the emotional drivers behind brand attachment.

Additionally, the sample was limited to 150 respondents, all of whom were Emina users, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other skincare brands or markets. Expanding the sample size and including users of other local and international brands would provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer-brand relationships in the skincare industry.

Moreover, the study focused solely on the emotional aspects of consumer behavior, such as brand love and brand sacredness. Future research could also explore the role of other factors, such as product quality, pricing, and brand trust, in shaping brand loyalty and WOM. Lastly, examining how cultural and social factors influence brand attachment in different demographics could offer additional insights into the broader implications of branding strategies in diverse markets.

## CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical importance of emotional factors such as brand image, self-congruence, and brand love in enhancing brand sacredness and promoting positive word-of-mouth (WOM) among users of Emina Skincare. The findings indicate that brand image and self-congruence serve as essential drivers of brand love, which significantly impacts both brand sacredness and WOM. This emotional attachment is pivotal for fostering brand advocacy, as consumers who perceive a strong alignment between their identity and the brand are more likely to cultivate a loyal relationship, sharing positive experiences with others.

From a practical standpoint, the study offers valuable insights for marketers aiming to boost consumer loyalty and advocacy (Handique & Sarkar, 2024). For Emina and similar local brands, aligning brand identity with the aspirations and self-concept of target consumers is crucial for establishing stronger emotional connections. Social media strategies that emphasize inclusivity and resonate with consumer identities can be particularly effective in enhancing brand sacredness (Hollensen, 2020). For example, campaigns featuring user-generated content that highlights personal stories or experiences can strengthen the perceived value of the brand, making it irreplaceable for consumers.

Additionally, this research contributes to the existing literature on branding in emerging markets by exploring the emotional dynamics between consumers and local brands in Indonesia (Cheung et al., 2021). Future studies should consider examining the role of cultural factors in shaping brand sacredness and WOM across different demographic segments. Furthermore, investigating other elements such as product quality, brand trust, and consumer satisfaction could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing brand loyalty and advocacy in emerging markets.

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