Does Self-congruence Mediate Brand Familiarity on Brand Attachment?

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Abstract. This study investigates how actual and ideal self-congruence regulate the relationship between brand familiarity and brand attachment. Quantitative research is part of this study. In this study, 200 respondents in total were used, with the sample method being purposeful random sampling. Structural equation modeling was applied to this study's analysis. According to the study's findings, brand familiarity influences actual and ideal self-congruence positively and significantly, actual and ideal self-congruence positively and significantly influences brand attachment, actual self-congruence partially mediates the effect of brand familiarity on brand attachment but ideal self-congruence does not mediate in the relationship between brand attachment. Future studies should be able to put this idea to the test utilizing an experimental research approach.

Keywords: brand familiarity · self-congruence · actual self-congruence · ideal self-congruence · brand attachment

1 Introduction

In this study, quantitative research is included. In this study, 200 respondents in total were used, with the sample method being purposeful random sampling. Structural equation modeling was applied to this study's analysis. Future studies should be able to put this idea to the test utilizing an experimental research approach. Familiar brands and those that are not familiar are, of course, different. Consumers can become familiar with a brand by using it, hearing about it from family and friends who use it, or even just by seeing it in brand marketing communication media. Of course, their level of brand familiarity will differ from that of brands they are unfamiliar with [1–3]. At the same time, brand attachment occurs when a higher memory structure known as a proposition or scheme sharpens overall emotions that can be used to evaluate and predict certain behaviors, including hedonic satisfaction, social status, as well as individual and group achievements [4]. Furthermore, consumers will be emotionally attached to the brand when they can embody their self-concept, both actually and ideally, which is shaped

when the consumer's brand knowledge fits the suitability between the consumer's self-concept and the brand's personality. The more the brand embody the consumer's self-concept, both the ideal and actual self, the more brand self-congruence is structured [5].

In their research, Malär et al. (2011) revealed that brand attachment can be formed through compatibility between consumer self-concept and brand personality, both actual and ideal (actual-ideal self-congruence) [6]. Furthermore, Chinomona and Maziriri (2017) in their research disclosed that brand attachment could also be directly formed from the degree of consumer knowledge of a brand (brand familiarity) [3]. Moreover, this study look for investigate how brand familiarity affects brand attachment, all through self-congruence. This study attempts to predict how actual and ideal self-congruence would serve as mediators of the relationship between brand familiarity and brand attachment using the theory of cognitive consistency.

2   Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

A. *Brand Familiarity*

Brand familiarity is the extent of direct or indirect product experience that is shaped by the associations in consumers' brains; the greater the preference [1].

B. *Self-congruence*

A person's self-concept is defined as what and who they are cognitively and emotionally. The actual self refers to the perception of reality, and the ideal self refers to one's ideal perception. Self-congruence occurs when a brand's personality matches its actual or ideal concept. Specifically, actual self-congruence is recognized as the perceived fitness between the consumer and the brand personality, and ideal self-congruence reflects the perceived fit between the consumer's ideal concept and the brand personality [6].

C. *Brand Attachment*

Brand attachment is the strength of the bond that connects a person with a brand. This bond is a mental representation consisting of brand self-connection and brand prominence. The main aspect of brand self-connection is the cognitive and emotional linking between a brand and a person, and brand prominence is a positive feeling towards the brand [7].

In order for a brand to be easily recognized, remembered, and to hold a prominent position in the consumer's mind, it must first reach a certain level of understanding in the consumer's memory structure. The associations that appear in the consumer's memory then determine the brand's strengths and weaknesses. When a higher memory structure called a proposition or schema, which may be used to assess and anticipate particular behaviors, such as hedonic happiness, social standing, and individual and group accomplishments, sharpens overall feelings, brand attachment takes place. In their study, Chinomona and Maziriri (2017) revealed that brand attachment can be formed

from the degree of consumer knowledge of a brand (brand familiarity) [3]. Thus, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: Brand familiarity has a positive and significant effect on brand attachment

Knowledge can form mental representations in the higher phases, namely propositions and schemes. The cognitive consistency theory reveals that consumers try to be reliable because inconsistency will make them feel uncomfortable. Therefore, ideal-actual self-congruence arises when a brand can accurately reflect the consumer's self-concept in reality and fantasy, this develops when the consumer's brand knowledge meets the criteria for self-concept and brand personality compatibility [5]. Furthermore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: Brand familiarity has a positive and significant effect on actual self-congruence
H3: Brand familiarity has a positive and significant effect on ideal self-congruence

Self-expansion theory reveals that consumers have the motivation to equate their self-concept. In the context of brands, if brands become part of consumers' self-definition, they will be emotionally attached. In other words, the more the brand reflects the consumer's self-concept, the stronger the feelings between the consumer and the brand are. The self-verification theory reveals that a person will be motivated to verify, validate, and retain one self-concept and behave according to it. That means that consumers will tend to consume brands with the same personality as themselves. Furthermore, self-enhancement theory reveals that consumers will be motivated to increase their feelings of self; therefore, they tend to look for activities that can bring their feelings closer to their ideal self; therefore, they tend to look for activities that can give them a feel close to themselves' the ideal concept. When they see their ideal self-concept in the brand, they will be attracted to and emotionally attached to the brand [4]. In their research, Malär et al. (2011) showed that brand attachment may be built by a consumer's self-concept and the brand's ideal and actual personality being well-suited (actual-ideal self-congruence) [6], the following is how the hypothesis is put forth:

H4: Actual self-congruence has a positive effect on brand attachment
H5: Ideal self-congruence has a positive effect on brand attachment

Customers attempt for consistency because they find fickleness unpleasant. This means that consumers will tend to consume brands that have the same personality as themselves. When a brand becomes part of consumers' self-definition, both actual and ideal, they will be emotionally attached. Several researches revealed that brand familiarity has a direct effect on actual-ideal self-congruence, and actual-ideal self-congruence positively affects the brand attachment [3, 6]. So, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H6: Brand familiarity affects brand attachment mediated by actual self-congruence
H7: Brand familiarity affects brand attachment mediated by ideal self-congruence

3   Method

This research consists of one exogenous variable, namely brand familiarity, two mediating variables, namely actual and ideal self-congruence, and one endogenous variable, brand attachment. The analysis unit in this research is the consumer. The sampling technique uses purposive random sampling. The data source for this research is primary data obtained from a survey involving 200 respondents. The questionnaire was prepared using a Likert scale.

Brand familiarity is defined as brand knowledge; actual self-congruence is defined as the suitability relating the consumer's actual concept and brand personality; ideal self-congruence is defined as conformity relating the consumer's ideal concept and brand personality; and brand attachment is defined as the attachment relating the consumer and the brand. This research questionnaire was adopted from Kent and Allen (1994) to assess brand familiarity, Malar (2010) to assess self-congruence and Park et al. (2010) to assess brand attachment. The research data were analyzed using SPSS and SEM to analyze the measurement model, structural model, and the index of goodness of fit to test hypotheses.

4   Result and Discussion

A.   *Descriptive Data*

This study tested 55 brands, the most familiar brands, to the 200 respondents involved in this study. Respondents involved in this study comprised 56% women and 44% men, and 69% of respondents graduated with a bachelor's degree; the rest were entrepreneurs, professionals, and technicians.

B.   *Measurement Model*

Table 1, Figs. 1 and 2 demonstrate the good validity of the study's variables. These are evident from the brand familiarity, real self-congruence, ideal self-congruence, and
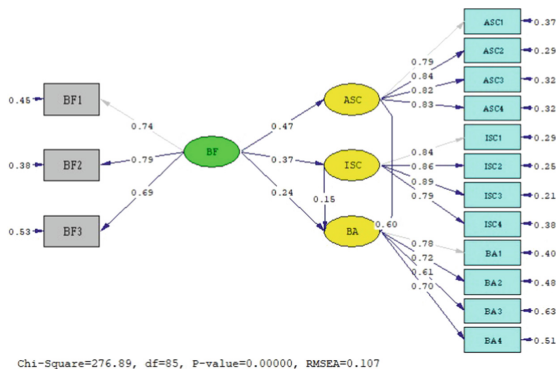

Chi-Square=276.89, df=85, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.107
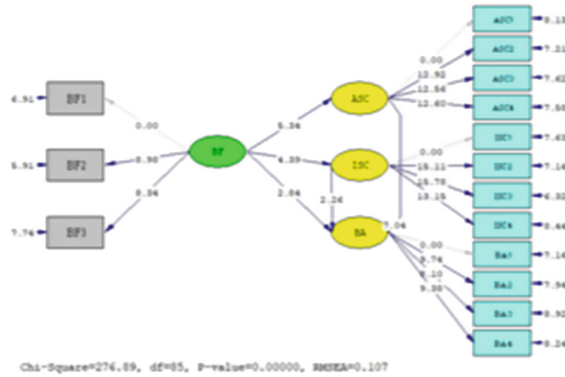
Fig. 1. Standardized Loading Factor

Fig. 2. t-value

brand attachments standardized loading factors and t-values, which are 0.5 and 1.96 respectively. The variables in this study have strong reliability, as shown by the figures and tables, where construct reliability is 0.7 and variance extracted is 0.5.

C. *Structural Model*

The findings of the data processing indicate that hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are supported based on Figs. 1, 2, and Table 2, respectively. The association established has a positive t-value of 1.96 and standardized loading factors of 0.5. Furthermore, it is evident that proposition 6 is likewise supported. Brand familiarity has a mediated affect on brand attachment through actual self-congruence to a certain extent. As can be seen in Table 2, hypothesis 7 is not supported because the standardized loading factor of brand familiarity is higher than the standardized loading factor of brand familiarity in brand attachment; Because the value of the standardized loading factor is smaller than the standardized loading factor of brand familiarity in brand attachment, ideal self-congruence does not have mediation the influence of brand familiarity on the brand.

Hypothesis 1 is supported; namely, that brand familiarity has a positive significantly effect on brand attachment. This result is in line with prior research, such as Chinoma and Maziriri (2017) [3]. The more a person is familiar with a particular brand, the more likely he will be attached to it compared to unfamiliar brands. Familiarity is being exposed to a brand every day; it will be stored in the individual's memory and have an awareness of the brand, and then the brand will become top of mind.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 supported that brand familiarity positively affects actual and ideal self-congruence. Actual and ideal self-congruence is formed when a particular brand can represent the consumer's self-concept, both actually and ideally, which is established when the consumer's brand knowledge matches the suitability between one self-concept and the brand personality. This is consistent with the study from Sheeraz et al., (2018) [5].

Hypotheses 4 and 5 supported that actual and ideal self-congruence proved to have a direct effect on brand attachment. According to Malär et al. (2011), brand attachment can develop when self-congruence and brand personalities are well-suited [6]. Consumers

Table 1. Measurement Model

Observed Variables	Standardized Loading Factor ($\geq$0.5)	R^2	Error Variance ($\geq$1.96)	t-Value ($\geq$1.96)	Conclusion
BRAND FAMILIARITY (BF)					
BF1	0.74	0.55	0.45	**	Valid
BF2	0.79	0.62	0.38	8.98	
BF3	0.69	0.48	0.53	8.34	
$\sum$	2.22	1.65	1.36		
Construct Reliability ($\geq$0.7) 0.78					Reliable
Variance Extracted ($\geq$0.5) 0.55					
ACTUAL SELF CONGRUENCE (ASC)					
ASC1	0.79	0.62	0.37	**	Valid
ASC2	0.84	0.71	0.29	12.92	
ASC3	0.82	0.67	0.32	12.56	
ASC4	0.83	0.69	0.32	12.60	
$\sum$	3.28	2.69	1.30		
Construct Reliability ($\geq$0.7) 0.89					Reliable
Variance Extracted ($\geq$0.5) 0.67					
IDEAL SELF CONGRUENCE (ISC)					
ISC1	0.84	0.71	0.29	**	Valid
ISC2	0.86	0.74	0.25	15.11	
ISC3	0.89	0.79	0.21	15.78	
ISC4	0.79	0.62	0.38	13.15	
$\sum$	3.38	2.86	1.13		
Construct Reliability ($\geq$0.7) 0.91					Reliable
Variance Extracted ($\geq$0.5) 0.72					
BRAND ATTACHMENT (BA)					
BA1	0.78	0.61	0.40	**	Valid
BA2	0.72	0.52	0.48	9.74	
BA3	0.61	0.37	0.63	8.10	
BA4	0.70	0.49	0.51	9.38	
$\sum$	2.81	1.99	2.02		
Construct Reliability ($\geq$0.7) 0.80					Reliable
Variance Extracted ($\geq$0.5) 0.50					

Table. 2. Structural Model

Hypotheses	Relationship Direction	Standardized Loading Factor (>0.5)	t-Value (≥1.96)	Sig. R²	Conclusion (Ha)
H1. BF to BA	(+)	0.24	2.84	0.06	Supported
H2. BF to ASC	(+)	0.47	5.34	0.22	Supported
H3. BF to ISC	(+)	0.32	4.39	0.10	Supported
H4. ASC to BA	(+)	0.60	7.04	0.36	Supported
H5. ISC to BA	(+)	0.15	2.26	0.02	Supported
H6. BF - ASC - BA	(+)	0.282			Partially Mediated
H7. BF - ISC - BA	(+)	0.048			No Mediation
Note:					
H6. 0.282 > 0.24 Partially Mediated					
H7. 0.048 < 0.24 No Mediation					

will become emotionally devoted to brands if they seek to define themselves through them. Consequently, the stronger the feelings in between the consumer and the brand, the more the brand mirrors the consumer's sense of self.

Hypothesis 6 is supported that brand familiarity has a partially mediated effect on brand attachment through actual self-congruence to a particular degree. A strong bond is formed when a person is exposed to a familiar brand with the same tendency as his self-concept. He will like and feel attached to a brand that he considers part of himself and can reveal his identity to others. This is consistent with Malar et al. (2011), their results described that brand familiarity has a positive and significant effect on actual and ideal self-congruence, and then it has a positive effect on brand attachment [6].

Hypothesis 7 is supported that brand familiarity does not have a mediation in the correlation between ideal self-congruence and brand attachment. Without ideal self-congruence, someone continuously exposed to a particular brand will tend to be attached to that brand. The reason for answering the unsupported hypothesis is that it can be seen from the indicators that exist in brand familiarity [1], such as "i felt that the claim that the brand was credible and was knowledgeable". So, when customers feel knowledgeable about a brand, they get close to it and become emotionally invested in it [7, 8]. Because people depend on a brand to consistently fulfill its resources, a conviction toward the brand is considered a crucial element in creating a brand attachment [9, 10].

D. *Goodness of Fit Index*

Eventhough the CFI is higher than 0.9, Table 3 showed that this study's goodness of fit index is medium because the GFI is below than 0.90, the RMSEA is greater than

Table 3. Goodness of Fit

Degree of Freedom	Chi-Square (X^2)	Sig. p (>0.05)	(0.08 ≥ RMSEA ≥ 0.05)	CFI (≥0.90)	GFI	Conclusion
85	276.89	0.00	0.107	0.95	0.84	Medium Fit

0.08, and the significance is below than 0.05. The model in this study has a good level of suitability, and further testing of the research model can be carried out.

5   Conclusion

In this study, brand familiarity and brand attachment are examined through the lenses of actual and ideal self-congruence. The results of this study indicate that all hypotheses are supported except that the hypothesis regarding ideal self-congruence has no mediation in the relationship between brand familiarity and brand attachment. The result of research indicates that the attachment between brands and consumers occurs when consumers are not only familiar with the brand but also have compatibility with the brand because the brand can represent the consumer's self-concept. It is likely that future research would look into this effect using a different methodology, such as by conducting experiments to gain a more advance knowledge of the topic.

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