



The Influence of Brand Awareness on Brand Love "Somethinc" In Padang City: Brand Image As A Mediator

Aisyah Hamida Zahra^{1*}, Astri Yuza Sari²

¹⁻²Universita Negeri Padang

Email: aisyahhamida2001@mail..com¹, astriyuza@fe.unp.ac.id²

Abstract: This research aims to examine the effect of brand awareness on brand love for the Somethinc brand in Padang City, with brand image serving as a mediating variable. The increasing competition in the local cosmetic industry requires brands to not only focus on product quality but also on creating strong emotional bonds with consumers. Brand love, as an expression of consumers' emotional attachment, is an essential factor in ensuring long-term loyalty. In this context, brand awareness is often considered the first step toward building consumer perceptions, while brand image plays a crucial role in shaping those perceptions into meaningful emotional connections. This research employs a quantitative approach by distributing questionnaires to 140 respondents who have used Somethinc products. Respondents were selected using a purposive sampling method to ensure the relevance of their experiences. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the SmartPLS software. SEM-PLS was chosen for its ability to test complex relationships between latent variables and to evaluate both direct and indirect effects. The results show that brand awareness exerts a positive and significant influence on brand image, indicating that higher consumer awareness enhances the way they perceive the brand. Furthermore, brand image has a significant effect on brand love, demonstrating its role as an emotional bridge that transforms cognitive evaluations into affective attachment. In addition, brand image is proven to significantly mediate the relationship between brand awareness and brand love, highlighting its strategic importance in creating consumer loyalty. However, brand awareness does not have a significant direct effect on brand love, suggesting that awareness alone is insufficient to generate emotional attachment without a favorable brand image. These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening brand image as a pathway to building brand love, particularly for local cosmetic brands competing in highly dynamic markets. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of consumer behavior studies by clarifying the mediating role of brand image. Practically, it provides valuable insights for brand managers to design marketing strategies that go beyond recognition and aim to foster deeper consumer-brand relationships.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Brand Love, Consumer Behavior, SEM-PLS.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia beauty industry has experienced rapid growth in recent years, fueled by increased public awareness of self-care and the widespread penetration of the internet and social media. This environment has provided opportunities for local brands to compete with international players. One of the emerging local brands is Somethinc, founded in 2019 with a focus on halal-certified cosmetic products and a marketing strategy driven by influencers and digital engagement.

Figure 1.1 Indonesian Skincare Chart 2022

Rankings on e-commerce platforms in 2022, before dropping to fourth place. To recover its performance, the brand collaborated with Tasya Farasya in the “Tasya Farasya Approved” campaign, which successfully boosted sales. This Key Opinion Leader (KOL)-based strategy proved effective in building trust and fostering emotional attachment known as brand love defined as a positive emotional connection between customers and a brand, which can drive long-term loyalty (Safitri & Albari, 2024; Putra & Keni, 2020).

Social media marketing, particularly on Instagram, has been shown to enhance brand awareness due to its visual and interactive nature (Park & Namkung, 2022). While Somethinc enjoys a high level of brand awareness among younger generations, high awareness does not necessarily translate into brand love or consumer loyalty. Many consumers are familiar with the brand at a surface level without deeper understanding of its values or quality.

Somethinc strong brand awareness is evident from various awards it received in 2023, including Top 1 FMCG Brand and Local Brand of the Year. However, a study by Safitri and Albari (2024) suggests that awareness alone is insufficient to generate brand love without the presence of a positive brand image. Brand image acts as a critical mediator influencing emotional bonds. Despite its popularity, reviews on platforms like Female Daily suggest that some consumers remain skeptical of Somethinc’s product quality, potentially undermining its image and hindering the formation of genuine brand love.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Love

Brand Love is a vital concept in marketing that reflects a strong emotional attachment between consumers and brands, formed through a series of positive experiences and perceived value alignment. Tolunay and Veloutsou (2025) emphasize that this emotional connection fosters long-term loyalty and brand advocacy. Ferreira et al. (2023) note that pleasant experiences and meaningful interactions are key triggers of brand love. Huang, Yang, and Lin (2021) further outline affect, passion, and commitment as dimensions that sustain this

connection, especially in the digital era. Consumers who experience brand love do not merely like the product—they see the brand as a reflection of their personal values, making the emotional bond difficult to replace.

The development of brand love is influenced by both internal and external factors shaping consumer perception. Internal factors include positive experiences, satisfaction, and emotional value, while external elements like consistent communication and brand interaction reinforce this bond. Brand awareness plays a foundational role—it enables consumers to recognize and recall a brand, which is a prerequisite for emotional attachment (Tolunay & Veloutsou, 2025). A consistent and positive brand image then builds trust, admiration, and pride in the brand, as highlighted by Huang et al. (2021). The synergy between brand awareness and image accelerates the creation of deep and lasting brand love.

Indicators of brand love include intimacy, passion, and commitment—representing emotional closeness, high enthusiasm, and long-term loyalty toward the brand (Ferreira et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2021; Tolunay & Veloutsou, 2025). Intimacy reflects the feeling that the brand understands the consumer personally; passion drives them to actively seek information and engage with the product; and commitment fosters long-term loyalty and resistance to competitors. Together, these indicators ensure that brand love remains a central element in cultivating sustainable emotional relationships between brands and consumers.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness pertains to a consumer's ability to identify and recall a brand, forming the foundation for perceptions, trust, and preferences toward products. Efendioglu and Durmaz (2022) assert that brand awareness enhances promotional effectiveness, particularly in digital media, while Seo et al. (2021) describe it as a cornerstone of brand equity. Keller (2020) distinguishes between levels of brand awareness, from basic recognition to top-of-mind recall—where a brand is the first to come to mind when thinking of a product category. High awareness increases the likelihood that consumers will consider and choose the brand over competitors.

Brand awareness goes beyond simple name recognition; it includes the positive associations embedded in the consumer's memory. Metrics such as recall, recognition, top-of-mind, and dominance indicate how strongly a brand occupies space in consumers' minds (Seo et al., 2021; Keller, 2020). When a brand reaches top-of-mind status, it significantly increases its chances of being chosen during the purchase decision. Strong awareness also facilitates the formation of a favorable brand image, which further reinforces emotional bonds. In competitive sectors like skincare, brand awareness is the first critical step before trial and loyalty formation.

The link between brand awareness and brand love is strong, as awareness enables emotional connections to take root. When brand awareness aligns with an image that reflects consumers' values and aspirations, the likelihood of brand love increases. Marketers must therefore devise strategies to consistently enhance brand awareness—keeping the brand salient in consumers' minds and supporting the emotional bonding process.

Brand Image

Brand image refers to the perception formed in consumers' minds as a result of experience, communication, and associations related to the brand. Tolunay and Veloutsou (2025) identify a positive brand image as a key driver of trust and brand love. Li, Xu, and Zheng (2022) add that brand image reflects symbolic, functional, and social values associated with the brand. Mousavi et al. (2020) show that a consistent image can enhance re-purchase intention and customer loyalty. A strong image makes a brand more meaningful and relevant, fostering enduring emotional connections.

Indicators of brand image include reliability, attractiveness, satisfaction, and reputation. Reliable performance builds trust; aesthetic and emotional appeal enhances consumer interest; while satisfaction and a positive reputation reinforce consumers' pride in using the brand (Dam & Dam, 2021). These elements work together to shape a positive perception, laying the groundwork for emotional attachment. A well-managed brand image also helps achieve competitive differentiation, making it more difficult for consumers to switch to alternatives. The interrelationship between brand awareness, brand image, and brand love forms a reinforcing cycle: awareness enables brand recognition, brand image deepens positive perceptions, and emotional attachment culminates in brand love—driving loyalty and advocacy. A comprehensive understanding of this relationship equips companies to develop integrated marketing strategies, deliver consistent positive experiences, and foster long-term consumer relationships.

H1: The Influence of Brand Awareness on Brand Love

Brand awareness serves as the foundational element in building emotional attachment between consumers and brands. High awareness allows consumers to recognize, recall, and associate the brand with certain values, thereby increasing the likelihood of developing trust and emotional attachment. Previous studies suggest that digital advertising, consistent messaging, and electronic word-of-mouth contribute to positive perceptions, which serve as the starting point for brand love. This process typically unfolds through stages of recognition, trust-building, and finally, the emergence of emotional connection.

Consumers with high brand awareness tend to establish affective closeness and long-term loyalty more easily. Repeated exposure to brand attributes and messages helps them internalize the brand's identity and strengthens their belief in its ability to meet expectations. The higher the consumer's awareness, the greater the likelihood of forming a deep emotional bond that evolves into sustainable brand love.

H2: The Influence of Brand Image on Brand Love

Brand image reflects consumers' perceptions shaped by their experiences, brand associations, and consistent communication. A positive brand image creates trust, pride, and emotional closeness, serving as a foundation for brand love. When brand image aligns with consumers' values and aspirations, they tend to feel psychologically connected, resulting in greater loyalty and stronger brand preference. Therefore, brand image is considered one of the main drivers in deepening emotional connections.

Positive experiences from product quality to service interaction enhance the credibility and authenticity of the brand image. Consumers are more likely to remain loyal to a brand that aligns with their expectations and personal values. As the brand image strengthens, consumers not only feel satisfied but also develop deep affection and loyalty that are not easily replaced by competitors.

H3: The Influence of Brand Awareness on Brand Image

Brand awareness not only directly influences brand love but also serves as a precursor to the formation of brand image. Consumers' awareness of a brand helps them understand its characteristics and values, fostering a stable and positive perception. Consistent exposure through digital media and marketing communications reinforces brand associations that align with consumers' expectations. High levels of awareness allow brand image to be more easily understood and internalized in the consumer's mind.

The greater the awareness, the more opportunities a company has to shape an image that matches its identity and strategy. Consumers with strong brand awareness can better distinguish the brand from its competitors, develop perceptions of reliability, and form a solid image. As such, awareness is a critical starting point for shaping a brand image that strengthens emotional bonds and long-term preferences.

H4: The Mediating Role of Brand Image in the Relationship Between Brand Awareness and Brand Love

Brand image plays a pivotal role in bridging brand awareness and brand love. The image that emerges from awareness enables consumers to translate initial perceptions into deeper emotional attachment. When the brand image is positive and aligned with consumers' aspirations, the impact of brand awareness on brand love is significantly amplified. This accelerates the formation of affective bonds, as consumers feel that their values are reflected in a brand they recognize and trust.

Research has shown that a strong brand image enhances the effect of awareness in creating lasting brand love. When the image aligns with the consumer experience, brand awareness not only serves as recognition but evolves into emotional affection. Therefore, a well-managed brand image acts as a key driver mediating the relationship between awareness and love, ensuring psychological engagement and consumer loyalty.

3. METHOD

This research adopts a quantitative approach aimed at empirically explaining the causal relationship between variables within the context of Somethinc consumers in Padang City. A total of 140 respondents participated in the study. Data analysis was conducted using the SmartPLS software and path analysis method within the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) framework. The data in this study was collected through questionnaires distributed to 170 respondents.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The respondents in this study were 140 women, aged 16 to 30, with the majority aged 21 to 25. The highest educational level, 87 respondents, was a bachelor's degree.

A. Data Processing Results

Before data processing, it was ensured that the AVE value for each indicator was >0.50 , thus meeting convergent validity overall. Furthermore, the outer loading values for each statement item were above 0.70.

B. Structural Model Measurement (Inner Model)

R-Square

R squared is a number ranging from 0 to 1, indicating the extent to which the combination of exogenous variables influences the value of the endogenous variable. The closer to one, the better the regression model. The following are the results of the R-squared test.

Tabel 1. R-Square

Variabel	R-Square	Adjusted R-square
Brand Image (Z)	0.379	0.375
Brand Love (Y)	0.800	0.797

Source : Primary Data 2025

Based on Table 1, the R-square value for the Brand Image variable is 0.379, indicating that 37.9% of the Brand Image construct's variability can be explained by the Brand Awareness variable, while the remaining 62.1% is explained by variables outside the variables examined in this study. Furthermore, the R-square value for the Brand Love variable is 0.800, indicating that 80% of the Brand Love construct's variability can be explained by the Brand Awareness variable, while the remaining 20% is explained by variables outside the variables examined in this study.

4.1.2 Hypothesis Testing

At this stage, hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the influence between variables in the research model constructed using the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. Testing was conducted after the measurement model was declared to meet the validity and reliability criteria. The following is a picture of the structural model depicting the relationships between the constructs being tested:

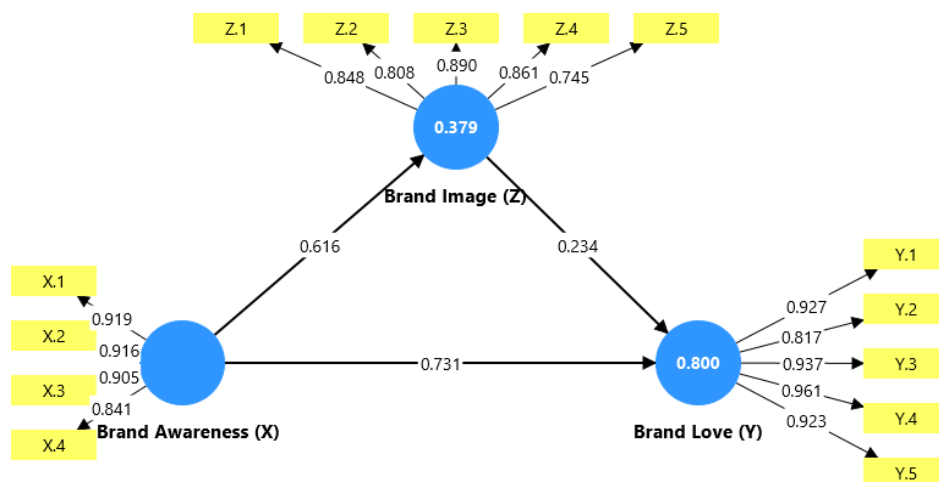


Figure 3. Final Ouplus PLS Model**Tabel 2. Hypothesis Testing**

Variabel	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P-values	Description
Brand Awareness (X) -> Brand Image (Z)	0.616	0.623	0.038	16.144	0.000	Accepted
Brand Awareness (X) -> Brand Love (Y)	0.731	0.737	0.059	12.352	0.000	Accepted
Brand Image (Z) -> Brand Love (Y)	0.234	0.229	0.060	3.894	0.000	Accepted
Brand Awareness (X) -> Brand Image (Z) -> Brand Love (Y)	0.144	0.142	0.034	4.209	0.000	Accepted

Source : Primary Data 2025

H1: Brand Awareness has a positive effect on Brand Love, Based on the results of testing the first hypothesis using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, it was found that Brand Awareness has a significant effect on Brand Love. This is evident from the t-statistic of 12.352 and the p-value of 0.000, which is much lower than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted. This means that the higher a consumer's level of awareness of the Somethinc brand, the greater their likelihood of developing a sense of love for the brand. These results confirm that brand awareness is not only an initial factor in the consumer decision-making process but also plays a strong role in building a deep emotional connection with the brand.

H2: Brand Image has a positive effect on Brand Love, The results of testing the second hypothesis indicate that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Brand Love. With

a t-statistic of 3.894 and a p-value of 0.000, this hypothesis is accepted. These findings reinforce the understanding that positive consumer perceptions of brand image, such as perceived quality, innovation, and uniqueness of the Somethinc brand, can foster emotional attachment. The more positive the brand image embedded in consumers' minds, the more likely they are to develop brand love and long-term loyalty.

H3: Brand Awareness has a positive effect on Brand Image, The third hypothesis also showed significant results. A coefficient value of 0.616, a t-statistic of 16.144, and a p-value of 0.000 indicate that Brand Awareness has a positive effect on Brand Image, thus accepting the third hypothesis. These results explain that consumer awareness of the Somethinc brand, from recognition, recall, and initial experience, will foster positive perceptions of the brand image itself. Consumers who are familiar with the Somethinc brand tend to form favorable opinions about the value, reliability, and visual appeal of the product.

H4: Brand Image Mediates the Relationship Between Brand Awareness and Brand Love, The results of testing the fourth hypothesis, or indirect effect, indicate that Brand Image significantly mediates the relationship between Brand Awareness and Brand Love. This is indicated by the t-statistic value of 4.209 and p-value of 0.000, which means this hypothesis is accepted. Thus, although Brand Awareness can directly influence Brand Love, this influence will be stronger if it is accompanied by a positive brand image. This means that consumers who already have high awareness of a brand will not necessarily immediately love it, unless they also have a good perception of the quality and image of the brand. Therefore, Brand Image plays an important role as an "emotional bridge" that strengthens the transition from simply knowing the brand to loving the brand.

4. DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to understand how brand awareness influences consumer brand love for the Somethinc brand in Padang City, and to assess the extent to which brand image can act as a mediating variable in this relationship. The findings of this study provide in-depth insight into the psychological processes consumers use to form emotional attachments to local brands, particularly in the highly competitive beauty industry. After analyzing the data using SmartPLS, the following statistical results were obtained to test the research hypotheses:

1. The Effect of Brand Awareness on Brand Love

The results show that Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Brand Love (coefficient 0.731; t-stat 12.352; p-value 0.000). This aligns with research by Sudarwati et al. (2023), which found that brand awareness significantly predicts brand love in the context of

purchasing decisions, with brand image acting as a mediator. According to Nohekhan & Barzegar (2024), who discussed green marketing strategies and their impact on brand awareness, awareness built on sustainable values can also increase brand loyalty and love. This is relevant because Gen Z consumers are increasingly supporting brands with values such as halal, cruelty-free, and sustainability, which are hallmarks of Somethingthinc. Furthermore, Efendioglu & Durmaz (2022) highlighted the role of social media in quickly and effectively increasing brand awareness among millennials and Gen Z. Consumers are able to recall brands within seconds, and this directly influences emotional attachment. In conclusion, awareness is not just a brand identifier, but a strong cognitive and emotional foundation for brand love.

2. The Influence of Brand Image on Brand Love

Brand Image has also been shown to have a positive influence on brand love (coefficient 0.234; t-stat 3.894; p-value 0.000). Na et al.'s (2023) research on the Chinese smartphone market showed that brand love acts as a key mediator between brand experience and loyalty, supporting the hypothesis that a strong brand image triggers deep emotional affection. Local relevance is evident in Indriani & Mulyati's (2024) study on Kopi Kenangan Padang, which found that brand image significantly influenced brand love. In the context of Somethingthinc, the halal and cruelty-free brand image, as well as aesthetic packaging, strengthen consumer emotional connection and brand love, in line with cross-industry findings. Theoretically, Springer et al. (2023) highlighted that brand authenticity is an important mediator between brand experience and brand love, especially for global or culture-based brands. This emphasizes the importance of strengthening brand image through authentic narratives, storytelling, and credible evidence ((halal certificationcruelty-free)).

3. The Influence of Brand Awareness on Brand Image

The results of this study indicate that brand awareness has a significant positive effect on brand image (coefficient 0.616; t-stat 16.144; p-value 0.000). Research by Sudarwati et al. (2023) also shows that brand awareness contributes to the formation of a positive brand image, strongly impacting purchase intention through the mediation of brand image. Brand image reflects how consumers perceive and experience a brand, including in terms of quality, trustworthiness, aesthetics, and reputation. When consumers have a positive image of a brand, they feel more comfortable and proud to use the brand's products repeatedly and even recommend it to others. Furthermore, global surveys show that green marketing strategies have been proven effective in increasing consumer awareness and positive perceptions of a brand, leading to long-term loyalty. This is relevant for Somethingthinc as it continues to emphasize the values of sustainability and halal authenticity.

4. Brand Image as a Mediator in the Relationship Between Brand Awareness and Brand Love

The mediation hypothesis is supported by an indirect coefficient of 0.144 with a t-statistic of 4.209 and a p-value of 0.000. These results confirm that Brand Image significantly mediates the relationship between Brand Awareness and Brand Love. Layna & Hidayat's (2023) research on green skincare products in Indonesia found a similar pattern—brand love mediates brand experience and loyalty, including a high willingness to pay. Na et al. (2023) also confirmed that brand love (and brand trust) mediate the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty in the smartphone market. Therefore, although awareness is the initial trigger, brand image is an essential bridge that strengthens consumers' emotional attachment to the Somethinc brand.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion of the influence of brand awareness on brand love, with brand image as a mediating variable among Somethinc consumers in Padang City, several important points can be concluded as follows:

1. Brand awareness has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on brand love, meaning that a high level of brand awareness directly increases consumers' emotional attachment to Somethinc. This means that when consumers feel familiar with the brand, frequently see it on social media, or have experience recognizing the Somethinc name and logo, it encourages feelings of liking, comfort, and even pride in the brand. In the context of millennial and Gen Z consumers in Padang City, this is crucial because purchasing decisions often begin with visual exposure, recommendations from influencers, and strong initial impressions of a brand. Awareness of Somethinc also strengthens their intention to continue using the product due to familiarity and trust, thus forming a deeper emotional connection.
2. Brand image has a positive and significant influence on brand love. This means that the more positive the Somethinc brand image is in the eyes of consumers, the more likely they are to feel emotionally connected to the brand. Brand image, in this case, encompasses consumer perceptions of Somethinc's values, such as quality, safety, halal certification, and product innovation. When consumers believe that Somethinc products provide real benefits, use safe ingredients, follow relevant skincare trends, and have attractive brand designs and communications, feelings of love, loyalty, and even advocacy will grow. This

finding reinforces the understanding that brand love is not solely built on emotional aspects but is also strongly influenced by rational assessments of how the brand presents itself.

3. Brand awareness also has a positive and significant impact on brand image. This finding indicates that brand recognition and recall are not only the initial steps in the consumer journey but also the primary factors shaping their perception of the brand's image. In this case, the more frequently consumers see, hear, or are exposed to information about Somethinc—whether through advertisements, testimonials, or social media—they tend to perceive the brand as trustworthy, high-quality, and superior compared to other brands. This perception doesn't form instantly, but rather is the result of the accumulation of numerous small interactions between brands and consumers, both direct and indirect. Therefore, brand awareness serves not only as a reminder but also as a gateway to forming a comprehensive perception of a brand's identity and credibility.
4. Brand image has been shown to be a significant mediating variable in the relationship between brand awareness and brand love. This means that while brand awareness can directly influence brand love, this influence is even stronger if consumers' brand image of Somethinc is also positive. In this context, consumers who are familiar with Somethinc will not necessarily love it if they do not have a positive perception of the brand's quality, value, and credibility. In other words, brand awareness paves the way for consumers to become familiar with the brand, but a positive brand image is what truly deepens their love for the brand. This demonstrates that consumers' emotional journey does not stop at the introduction stage but must be strengthened through the formation of consistent and positive perceptions of the brand as a whole.

Overall, brand awareness is the most dominant variable in shaping brand love, both directly and indirectly. However, it is important to emphasize that brand love will not develop optimally if consumer awareness is not accompanied by a strong brand image. In practice, Somethinc needs to build awareness not only to be recognized but also to drive positive perceptions of the brand, ultimately forming long-term, emotional, loyal, and sustainable relationships with consumers. Brand love is the result of a holistic consumer journey, starting with recognition and strengthening the brand image, and continuing through to creating a consistent and enjoyable experience. The practical implications of this research emphasize the importance of aligning awareness-raising strategies with brand image-strengthening strategies. These two aspects cannot stand alone; they must support each other so that companies can build consumer loyalty based on brand love. In the highly competitive beauty world, where consumers have numerous choices and are easily

influenced by trends, the emotional connection between brands and consumers is crucial for creating long-term differentiation.

Therefore, this research not only contributes to the development of theories on brand awareness, brand image, and brand love but also offers practical guidance for companies like Somethinc in developing brand communication strategies that are not only informative, but also affective and relational.

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