

THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF BRAND ATTACHMENT IN PRODUCING NEGATIVE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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Abstract. This research is triggered by the author's concern about a brand that will build a strong bond with consumers regardless of its impact. Previous research conducted in the UK stated that brand attachment leads to favorable consumer behavior such as brand loyalty and detrimental consumer behavior such as trash-talking, schadenfreude, and anti-brand actions, which are only moderated by attachment avoidance styles (Japutra *et al.*, 2018). Trash-talking is different from negative WOM. The purpose of this study was to examine positive behavior (brand loyalty) and negative consumer behavior (trash-talking, schadenfreude, and anti-brand action) due to brand attachment using anxiety attachment style and attachment avoidance style as moderating variables in Indonesia. This study uses an online questionnaire method with a sample of 80 respondents. Furthermore, the data were tested using the PLS-SEM method with the help of the WarpPLS 7.0 software. The results explain that strong brand attachment strongly influences brand loyalty, trash-talking, schadenfreude, and anti-brand actions. However, these relationships were not moderated by either anxiety attachment styles or avoidance attachment styles. It can be concluded that the relationship between the brand attachment variable and the brand loyalty variable, the trash-talking variable, the schadenfreude variable, and the anti-brand action variable were not moderated by the anxiety attachment style and the avoidance attachment style.

Keywords: anti-brand, consumer behavior, loyalty, brand attachment.

Abstrak. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kekhawatiran penulis terhadap sebuah merek yang akan membangun sebuah ikatan yang kuat dengan konsumen tanpa memperhatikan dampak yang akan ditimbulkan. Penelitian sebelumnya yang dilakukan di Inggris menyatakan bahwa keterikatan merek tidak hanya mengarah pada perilaku konsumen yang menguntungkan seperti loyalitas merek, tetapi juga perilaku konsumen yang merugikan seperti trash-talking, schadenfreude dan tindakan anti-merek yang hanya dimoderasi oleh gaya keterikatan penghindaran (Japutra *et al.*, 2018). Trash-talking berbeda dengan WOM negatif. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji perilaku positif (loyalitas merek) dan perilaku negatif konsumen (trash-talking, schadenfreude, dan tindakan anti-merek) akibat keterikatan merek dengan menggunakan gaya keterikatan kecemasan dan gaya keterikatan penghindaran sebagai variabel pemoderasi yang dilakukan di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuesioner online dengan sampel sebanyak 80 responden. Selanjutnya data diuji menggunakan metode PLS-SEM dengan bantuan

perangkat lunak WarpPLS 7.0. Hasil menjelaskan bahwa keterikatan merek yang kuat memiliki pengaruh kuat pada loyalitas merek, trash-talking, schadenfreude, dan tindakan anti-merek. Namun hubungan tersebut tidak dimoderasi oleh gaya keterikatan kecemasan maupun gaya keterikatan penghindaran. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa hubungan variabel keterikatan merek dan variabel loyalitas merek, variabel trash-talking, variabel schadenfreude dan variabel tindakan anti-merek tidak dimoderasi oleh gaya keterikatan kecemasan dan gaya keterikatan penghindaran.

Kata kunci: anti merek, perilaku konsumen, loyalitas, keterikatan merek.

INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, profit maximization is necessary for any business enterprise. One way to generate maximum profit is to retain and attract more consumers so that the company tries to meet consumer demand. The company will build relationships with consumers so that it will create a strong brand attachment. Consumer satisfaction has a positive impact on brand affection to increase brand loyalty (Manggarani, 2018). However, brand attachment leads to healthy consumer behavior such as brand loyalty and negative consumer behavior such as trash-talking, schadenfreude, and anti-brand action (Japutra *et al.*, 2018).

Brand loyalty is traditionally understood as a behavioral construct related to the goal of repeat purchases (Nam *et al.*, 2011). Brand loyalty is vital for service organizations because loyal consumers directly relate to the current and future constant flow of sales revenue (Dwivedi, 2013). The higher the brand loyalty shows that consumers give choices to certain brands of companies, although other alternatives may exist (Casalo *et al.*, 2010).

A powerful brand-consumer relationship can result in anti-brand action when the relationship ends badly (Johnson *et al.*, 2011). Anti-brand action is behavior that causes harm to a brand, such as revenge, obsession, and complaints (Japutra *et al.*, 2014). Anti-brand action refers to consumer rejection and even revenge against certain brands (Yuan and Lei, 2017).

Studies show that consumer attachment to brands that function well to increase company profits causes bad consumer behavior. Practically, this can harm consumers and the image of the company. Meanwhile, from the point of view, brand attachment reflects the strength between consumers and brands, which is illustrated by the perception of ease of accessibility and recognition in the minds of consumers (Park *et al.*, 2010). Brand engagement is a significant predictor of brand equity, brand attitude, and brand extension success (Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008; Schmalz and Orth, 2012). Previous research has suggested that attachment motivates consumer-brand relationships and good consumer behavior (Schmalz and Orth, 2012; Japutra *et al.*, 2014; Brocato *et al.*, 2015). However, recent studies argue that not every consumer developing a relationship with a brand (Mende *et al.*, 2013).

Hazan and Shaver (1994) note that building relationships between individuals are varied and is complex. Attachment theory suggests that such diverse relationships occur because of attachment styles which refer to patterns of expectations, emotions, behaviors, and history of attachment experiences (Shaver and Mikulincer, 2005). Mende and Bolton

(2011) extend this theory from person-to-person relationships to consumer-company relationships. They suggest that the consumer's attachment style guides the relationship between consumers and firms. Adopting this definition into the realm of consumer-brand relationships, we recommend that consumer attachment styles influence the relationship between consumers and brands. Thus, we define consumer attachment style as a systematic pattern of relational expectations, needs, emotions, and social behavior, in relationship with the brand, based on their previous engagement experience.

Different individuals have different attachment styles, resulting in different characteristics that guide their attachment process (Collins and Read, 1990). Following studies in psychology, consumer attachment styles are categorized into two, which are; first, different dimensions; second, anxiety attachment and avoidance attachment (Mende and Bolton, 2011). Attachment anxiety is "the degree to which the customer is concerned that the company may not be "available when needed, has an exaggerated need for approval, and is afraid of rejection and abandonment from this company", whereas attachment avoidance is "the degree to which the customer does not trust the company's good intentions, characterized with an exaggerated need for independence, fear of being dependent on the company, and striving for emotional and cognitive distance from the company" (Mende et al., 2013, pp. 127). Only a few studies have acknowledged that brand attachment and consumer attachment style are related to positive and negative behaviors. For example, Johnson et al. (2011) shows that, when a brand is more self-relevant in consumer-brand relationships, the more likely the consumer will be anti-brand. Furthermore, Johnson et al. (2012) shows that attachment style predicts the amount of harmful consumer behavior (e.g., complaints, obsessions, and revenge).

This study uses attachment style anxiety and attachment style avoidance as moderating variables. Anxious attachment style to consumers is described as being afraid to build a relationship with a brand because they are scared of not being treated well in terms of service, meeting their needs, and fear that brands are not happy to have consumers like them (Vieira et al., 2016). In contrast, people with avoidance attachment style are characterized by distrust of others and tend to ignore others, so they have a high level of independence and need less support from others because they think that other people will not provide support when they are necessary (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand attachment. Brand attachment describes any strong relationship between brands and consumers, which is characterized by easy access and recognition that is felt in the hearts of consumers (Park et al., 2010). Companies are competing to form bonds with consumers so that consumers stay on the side of the company. Consumers who have developed a bond with a brand will usually find it challenging to move to another brand because they already trust and get satisfaction from the brand they trust. Brand attachment has a significant role in the influence of brand satisfaction and trust on brand loyalty (Widikusyanto, 2014). The existence of a bond between brands and consumers can also provide benefits for the company. Companies generate many profits when they can maintain emotional ties and get

help in the form of repurchases which are helpful in anticipating other consumers moving to compete companies (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011).

Brand loyalty. Brand loyalty has traditionally been understood as a behavioral construct related to objectives towards repeat purchases (Nam *et al.*, 2011). Brand loyalty will be created when consumers feel satisfaction when using a particular brand, starting from the product, price, and service. Apart from their satisfaction, brand loyalty will occur when there is a strong bond between the brand and the consumer. Building a strong bond between the brand and the consumer will result in an emotional connection with the network subject, helping to build consumer loyalty (Casalo *et al.*, 2010).

Brand loyalty is essential for service organizations because loyal consumers directly relate to the current and future constant flow of sales revenue (Dwivedi, 2015). Brand loyalty is one of the essential things for companies to increase their profit because sales will continue to run with brand loyalty. Buybacks made by consumers will continue to provide benefits for the company. Loyalty shows that consumers give certain brands or companies choices, although other alternatives may exist (Casalo *et al.*, 2010).

Trash-talking. Trash-talking is bad behavior that can hurt other people. Trash-talking can include arrogant comments, derogatory comments, or both (Yip *et al.*, 2018). People who do trash-talk will not realize that what they are saying will hurt other people. In the relationship between consumers and brands, trash-talking can harm consumer welfare and brand image of a company (Japutra *et al.*, 2015). When a consumer wants to prove that the brand they have chosen is better than the competitor's brand and do trash-talking, this consumer indirectly makes this brand terrible in the eyes of other consumers and competitors.

Schadenfreude. Schadenfreude is a feeling of joy when seeing failures about others, generally experienced, facilitated by frequent interpersonal interactions (Li *et al.*, 2019). Schadenfreude to brands will usually occur when consumers see a competing brand from a brand they like experiencing failure. They will feel satisfaction and joy over the discomfort or pain that other people experience (Li *et al.*, 2019). Consumers will usually express schadenfreude when copycats appear, especially when global brand copycats rather than local brands (Loebnitz and Grunert, 2019).

Consumers experiencing schadenfreude is a fairly common occurrence (Moisieiev *et al.*, 2020). This is because consumers are indirectly affected by advertisements from a brand that they like. Comparative ads that feature lower brand failures can give schadenfreude too (Yucel-Aybat and Kramer, 2017). Given the consumer response that an ad can influence, it's no surprise that companies rely on schadenfreude to create advertisements for their brands.

Anti-brand actions. A solid brand-consumer relationship can result in anti-brand action when the relationship ends badly (Johnson *et al.*, 2011). Anti-brand action is behavior that causes harm to a brand, such as revenge, obsession, and complaints (Japutra *et al.*, 2014). Anti-brand action can occur when consumers feel let down (for example, lousy service, products that are not what they want) by a brand they like; it will hurt consumers' feelings and then lead to anti-brand action on the brand they used to be very good at, like it.

Consumers are even creating anti-brand action communities. An anti-brand community is a group of people who have negative feelings towards a brand and join together to express their disapproval of corporate actions (Dessart et al., 2020). This is very detrimental to a brand. When they are disappointed by a brand, they will tell their community which influenced people in the community to hate the brand. The feeling of disappointment will arise when consumers expect the brand to meet all consumer expectations. This anti-brand action will harm the company in the short and long term. When consumers take anti-brand actions, then the company's revenue will decrease, even though it still has consumers who are loyal to the brand.

Brand attachment. Engagement styles with brand attachment are different. Brand attachment is how strong the relationship between consumers and brands is, whereas engagement style is an individual working model that guides their relationship with a brand (Japutra et al., 2018). In this study, the authors used two attachment styles, which are the anxiety attachment style and the attachment avoidance style. People with a high anxiety attachment style will feel less confident, feel unloved, and feel difficult for others to accept and thus need support from others. (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2012).

The moderating effect of attachment style. In this study, the authors used two attachment styles: the anxiety attachment style and the attachment avoidance style. A high attachment to anxiety will feel less confident, feel unloved, and feel difficult to accept, so they need support from others. (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2012). In comparison, people with attachment avoidance styles are characterized by distrust of others and tend to ignore others, so they have a high level of independence and need less support from others because they think that other people will not provide support when they are required (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2012).

High levels of anxiety and avoidance from consumers reduce customers' intention to be close to their bank (Vieira et al., 2016). Attachment style predicts blame attributions after a product-loss crisis (Whelan and Dawar, 2016). Managers must understand that consumers with high attachment avoidance styles tend to commit anti-brand actions when disappointed with the brand (Japutra et al., 2018). Consumers with high anxiety attachment styles will find it difficult to build bonds with a brand because of their fear of rejection. At the same time, consumers with an attachment avoidance style will tend to avoid building relationships and being involved by a brand. It is caused by a sense of ignorance and distrust of other people. The authors suggest that high anxiety attachment styles and avoidance attachment styles reduce positive consumer behavior (brand loyalty) and reinforce harmful behaviors (trash-talking, schadenfreude, and anti-brand action).

Based on the background and the literature that are described previously, the hypotheses that are proposed in this research are as follow:

- H₁ : Brand attachment has a positive effect on brand loyalty.
- H₂ : Brand attachment has a positive effect on trash-talking.
- H₃ : Brand attachment has a positive effect on schadenfraude.
- H₄ : Brand attachment has a positive effect on anti-brand actions.

- H₅ : Anxiety attachment style moderates the relationship between brand attachment and trash-talking.
- H₆ : Anxiety attachment style moderates the relationship between brand attachment and schadenfreude.
- H₇ : Anxiety attachment style moderates the relationship between brand attachment and anti-brand actions.
- H₈ : Anxiety attachment style moderates the relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty.
- H₉ : Avoidance attachment style moderates the relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty.
- H₁₀ : Avoidance attachment style moderates the relationship between brand attachment and trash-talking.
- H₁₁ : Avoidance attachment style moderates the relationship between brand attachment and schadenfreude.
- H₁₂ : Avoidance attachment style moderates the relationship between brand attachment and anti-brand actions.

METHOD

A research location is a place where the research is conducted so that the researcher gets the data from the respondents who will be investigated by the author. In this study, the authors researched are based in Yogyakarta. The reason for choosing Yogyakarta as a place of research is because the writer wants to know how consumer behavior in Yogyakarta is if they have a strong relationship with a brand and whether attachment styles can moderate this behavior.

A population is a group of people, events, or exciting things that a researcher wants to contribute to (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016: 236). The sample is a part of the population selected using specific procedures and is expected to represent the population (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016: 237). Due to the writer's limitations in conducting research such as time, energy, and large population, the authors conducted a sample in this study. Respondents that the authors use as samples in this study meet the following required criteria, (1) are at least 18 years old and (2) are currently using or have had experience using Converse brand shoes.

The authors determine these criteria because (1) 18 years of age is considered an age that indicates a person's ability to make decisions (Sudman in Bradburn *et al.*, 2004). This is necessary because this study requires consumer attitudes towards a brand. (2) The experience consumers get when using a product from a brand will determine consumer attitudes towards the product or brand (Kotler and Keller, 2015: 200).

In determining the sample size used in this study, the writer refers to Chin (2000). According to (Chin 2000), the sample used in the PLS-SEM model is 30-100 sample sizes, so the authors select 80 respondents who have met the required criteria to produce consistent data. The sampling technique used in this study is a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique. The author uses this method because the data comes from

selected sources based on specific criteria and ensures that the respondents follow the research objectives (Cooper and Schindler, 2014, pp. 359).

The data source used in this research is primary data. Primary data is data obtained directly without interpretation or filtering from a second party (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016: 2). The author uses an online questionnaire via Google Form as a data collection method in this study. The authors use online questionnaires as a data collection method because online questionnaires are easily accessible to respondents so that they can minimize meeting with other people during a pandemic. This application is web-based so that everyone can provide responses or answers to quizzes or questionnaires quickly wherever they are by using the internet applications for computers, laptops, and smartphones they have (Batubara, 2016). The questionnaire will be given via Google Form, and then the address of the Google Form link will be distributed through communication tools and social media to respondents.

This study uses a Likert scale of measurement. The Likert scale is used to measure a person's attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of social phenomena (Sugiyono, 2013: 93). The author uses numbers as weights in respondent assessments. Each answer choice has a different weight, and all respondents' answers are added up based on their importance to produce a single score on a particular topic (Morissan, 2012: 88).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The people who have filled out this questionnaire show demographic characteristics in this study. The selection of respondents in this study was based on several criteria. Namely, the respondent must be at least 18 years old and have bought or used Converse shoes. Therefore, the data collection technique was carried out by using the purposive sampling technique. Following are the profiles of respondents presented in Table 1.1 below:

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Profile	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	40	50%
Female	40	50%
Age		
18 – 23	34	42,5%
24 – 29	44	55%
30 – 35	2	2,5%
36 – 40	-	-
>40	-	-
Profession		
Student	25	31,3%
Private Sector Employee	32	40%
Civil Servant	4	4,9%
Entrepreneur	19	23,8%
Income		
< Rp1.000.000	14	17,5%
Rp1.000.001 - Rp3.000.000	52	65%

Rp3.000.001 - Rp5.000.000	14	17,5%
>Rp5.000.001		-

Table 2 shows that the variable brand loyalty is influenced by brand engagement of 0.53 (53%), and the rest is explained by other variables outside the research model. Furthermore, the trash-talking variable is influenced by brand attachment of 0.26 (26%) and other variables outside the research model explain the rest. The *schadenfreude* variable is influenced by brand attachment of 0.21 (21%) then the rest is explained by other variables outside the research model. Finally, the anti-brand action variable is influenced by the attachment of 0.18 (18%) and the rest is explained by other variables outside the research model.

Table 2. The Results of Inner Model (R-Square)

Variable	R-Square
Brand Attachment	-
Brand Loyalty	0,53
Trash-talking	0,26
<i>Schadenfreude</i>	0,21
Anti-brand Actions	0,19
Anxiety Attachment Style	-
Avoidance Attachment Style	-

Furthermore, an evaluation of the GoF model value is conducted to show that the research model used is the best. The model is feasible or cannot be analyzed using average path coefficient (APC), average R-square (ARS), an average of variance inflation factor (AVIF) data which states that the P-values of APC <0.05, the APC is significant. Furthermore, if the ARS P-values <0.05 then the ARS is declared significant. AVIF value <5 is considered acceptable and ideal if the value is <3.3. This data can be seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Goodness of Fit Model

Results	P-values	Criteria	Notes
APC = 0,225	P = 0,009	Good if P < 0,05	Significant
ARS = 0,296	P = 0,001	Good if P < 0,05	Significant
AVIF = 1,238		Accepted if $\leq 5, \leq 3,3$	Accepted

Based on table 1.3 above, it shows that APC has a value of 0.225 with P-value = 0.009 which means that endogenous and exogenous variables have a cause and effect. Next in the table above shows that ARS produces a value of 0.296 and a value of P = 0.001 which explains that the independent variable in this study has an influence on the dependent variable by 29.6% and the remaining 71.4% is influenced by other variables outside the research model. The last data is AVIF which has a value <5, which is equal to 1.238, which means that there is no multicollinearity in this study. All GoF criteria are met in the interpretation of the fit model indicators, so the authors use this data to conduct hypothesis testing.

In order to find out how the independent variable affects the dependent variable, hypothesis testing is carried out. The independent variable used in this study is brand

attachment, and the dependent variable used in this study is brand loyalty, trash-talking, schadenfreude and anti-brand action. Furthermore, hypothesis testing is also carried out to determine the presence of moderating variables in the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The moderating variables used in this study were anxiety attachment style and attachment avoidance style. Hypothesis testing in this study was carried out by comparing the p-value. In this study the p-value is determined at 0.05, so that each hypothesis is significant if it has a p-value <0.05 . An overview of the results of hypothesis testing can be seen in Figure 1. below:

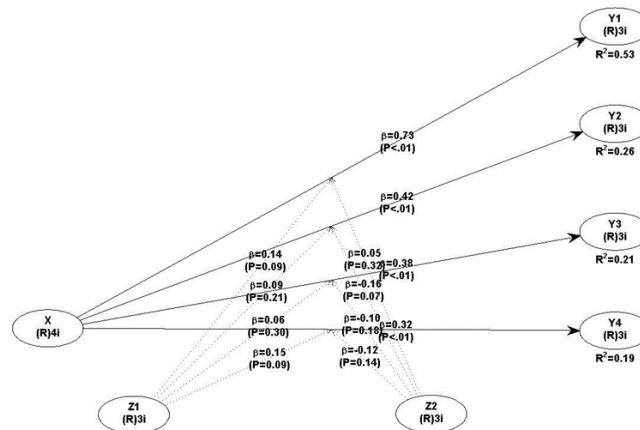


Figure 1. Hypotheses Testing

Based on Figure 1.1 above, it can be seen that the description of the influence between variables (hypotheses) is shown by an arrow, while the beta sign (β) is helpful for showing the coefficient, then the P symbol shows the level of profitability.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to determine the extent to which brand attachment influences positive and negative consumer behavior and whether there is a moderating effect of attachment style on the relationship between brand attachment and its consequences. The reason used to conduct this research is that companies are competing to build strong relationships without predicting the outcomes they will get. Companies must start segmenting consumers using demographic profiles and psychological profiles such as consumer attitudes and attachment styles (Japutra *et al.*, 2018).

This study states an effect of brand attachment on positive (brand loyalty) and negative (trash-talking, schadenfreude, and anti-brand action) behaviors, but this relationship is not moderated by anxiety attachment styles or attachment avoidance styles. Although Japutra *et al.* (2018) research conducted in the United Kingdom has stated that the anxiety attachment style variable does not moderate the relationship between the brand attachment variable and the brand loyalty variable, the trash-talking variable, the schadenfreude variable, and the anti-brand action variable, the authors still use it. The anxiety attachment style variable is a moderating variable because this research was

conducted in different countries. With the hope of giving different results. However, it turns out that the resulting data is the same.

In this study, different findings from the research of Japuta *et al.* (2018) about the avoidance attachment style variable as a moderating variable. The findings in the study indicate that the variable avoidance style does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between the brand attachment variable and the brand loyalty variable, the trash-talking variable, the schadenfreude variable, and the brand action variable. These findings support the statement of Mikulincer and Shaver (2012) that people with high attachment avoidance styles are characterized by distrust of others and tend to ignore others, so they have a high level of independence and need less support from others because they think that other people will not provide support in their time of need. Consumers with a high attachment style of avoidance will choose to avoid strong relationships with consumers so that they are less likely to show negative behavior (trash-talking, schadenfreude, and anti-brand action). However, when a brand builds a strong relationship with a brand, it will provide high loyalty (Salzberger and Koller, 2010). Thus it can be concluded that the relationship between brand attachment variables and brand loyalty variables, trash-talking variables, schadenfreude variables, and anti-brand action variables are not moderated by anxiety attachment styles and avoidance attachment styles.

This study has several limitations. First, this study only use one competing brand to see any negative behavior caused by brand attachment, namely the Vans brand. Thus, the results of this study are not intended to determine the negative behavior of consumers towards other competing brands. However, using one behavior (single act criterion) and one product is quite reasonable because it is one of the criteria so that the relationship between attitude and behavior can be improved (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010: 44). Furthermore, this limitation relates to the scope of the study. Demographic, psychological characteristics, and respondents' differing views of the Converse brand limit the results of this study to show that attachment style moderates the relationship between brand attachment and induced behavior.

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