

# Investigating the Relationship between Brand Self-Reliance and Loyalty with the Mediating Role of Brand Experience: A Case Study in Tehran Private Hospitals

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of Brand Experience mediation on the relationship between Self-Brand Connection and brand loyalty. The current research is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive research is about data collection. Structural equation modeling has been used for analysis. The statistical population of this research is Tehran Private Hospitals customers in north of Tehran. Therefore, the sampling method is available. With regard to the unknown population of the statistical population, the sample size with a confidence level of 0.95, based on the Cochran formula, is 384. Regarding the survey, the research was used to collect data from a questionnaire tool. The results showed that the first hypothesis based on the effect of self-brand relationship on brand loyalty has been confirmed. The second hypothesis of the research, which measures the impact of brand equity on the brand's experience, has been confirmed. In addition, the third hypothesis is based on the impact of brand experience on brand-approved loyalty. Also, the results confirmed the fourth hypothesis based on the effect of the mediating role of brand experience on the relationship between Self-Brand Connection relationship to brand loyalty.

**Keywords:** Self-Brand Connection, Brand loyalty, Brand Experience, Structural equations

## INTRODUCTION

Brand loyalty is a fundamental concept in strategic marketing today. Companies develop marketing strategies to enhance loyalty and to maintain market share and profitability. Having a large number of loyal customers reduces marketing costs and obtains competitive advantage, such customers are the assets of a brand and play a decisive role in its particular value. Brand loyalty can be defined as the degree to which a customer has a positive attitude toward a brand name, the extent to which he adheres to the brand name and brand, and intends to continue purchasing in the future. In fact, loyalty to the brand creates an obligation to re-purchase<sup>[1]</sup>. Brand loyalty is an almost fanatical behavioral response to a purchase or purchase recommendation that a person represents over a time to a brand, and his behavior leads to decision making and evaluation processes among other brand names, Finds a special brand of brand. This reaction is a function of individual psychological and mental processes<sup>[2]</sup>. In fact, brand loyalty is a prerequisite for the competitiveness and profitability of the company. Every company hopes that its brand has the highest loyalty. Unfortunately, all brands are not able to attract high loyalty. Developing and maintaining brand loyalty is at the heart of the company's marketing

plans, especially in contrast to highly competitive markets that are predictable and product differentiation. It's also important in banking marketing programs, so it's important to identify the factors that can drive brand loyalty to banks. According to Van (2018), two important variables of brand experience and self-correlation can affect brand loyalty through specific mechanisms<sup>[3]</sup>.

In this study, we study Van (2018) to study the effects of

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brand communication on brand loyalty in Tehran Private Hospitals offices in northern Tehran.

In fact, for the development of consumer relations, focus has been on brand theory. The brand acts as a two-way mechanism between the buyer and the seller in a long-term relationship to the brand consumer. The main input in this regard is brand experience and the main output in this regard is brand loyalty<sup>[4]</sup>. According to Van (2018), the main input in the two-way mechanism between the buyer and the vendor is the self-help communication that can affect brand loyalty through brand mediation<sup>[3]</sup>. Brand connectivity is defined as "the extent to which individuals have introduced trademarks to themselves"<sup>[5]</sup>. Shopping and the use of branding creates an identity for consumers. When people realize that the brand has the characteristics that these attributes are related to personality traits. They see the brand as a community leader. As a result, when consumers introduce themselves to specific brands, they create a psychological relationship with the brand and instinctively act and act in favor of the brand. The brand's experience can be defined by consumer perception at any time of contact with that brand, whether it is brand image in a promotional project, or during the first personal contact, or the level of quality that a person feels has received. On the other hand, the brand experience is created when the consumer uses the brand; he talks about the brand to others, searches for brand information, promotions, events, and so on<sup>[6]</sup>. Brand experience means the consumer's internal (emotional, emotional, and cognitive) response, as well as his behavioral response to brand drivers. These stimuli include design, packaging, brand identity, and such concepts. Brand experience can be positive or negative, and more importantly, this experience can also affect the level of consumer satisfaction and loyalty<sup>[7]</sup>. According to previous studies, there are four types of experiences: emotional, cognitive, sensory and behavioral<sup>[3]</sup>. However, experience can not be clearly divisible in this way. Instead, this experience can be seen in a combination of these forms. Therefore, companies need to combine the experience to improve the results and advance the work and create a comprehensive experience, including emotional, intellectual, sensory and behavioral. Experiences in different forms can exist in every kind of service or service<sup>[4]</sup>.

With regard to the topics mentioned, the work in this area and the linking of the three basic concepts of Self-Brand Connection, brand experience and brand loyalty, if applicable to the banking system, will provide a service-giving advantage. This topic forms part of the innovation aspect of this research, because according to the research literature, the following topic has so far been a research on the effect of brand association on brand loyalty with the mediating role of brand experience (Case Study: Tehran Private Hospitals of Northern Branch of Tehran) in Inside Iran is not accepted. Accordingly, we can say that the main question of this study is: "Is there a significant relationship

between Self-Brand Connection relationship to brand loyalty and the mediating role of brand experience?"

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

### Brand Experience

The main input of the brand-customer relationship is the brand experience and the main output is brand loyalty. Brand experience is conceived as passion, emotions, perceptions, behavioral responses, and is acquired through brand-related stimuli that are part of the design, identity, packaging, communication, and brand environment<sup>[8]</sup>.

Brand experience can positively influence customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in addition to brand trust. It is also worth noting that customer satisfaction is an important factor for customer loyalty, but research shows that it is not the only factor<sup>[9]</sup>. Studies show that the greater the satisfaction, the greater the loyalty. In fact, when dissatisfaction is high, customers will give an excuse to leave the company or express dissatisfaction<sup>[10]</sup>.

Brand experience means the consumer's emotional (emotional, emotional, and cognitive) response as well as his or her behavioral response to brand stimuli. These triggers include design, packaging, brand identity, and concepts such as these. Brand experience can be positive or negative and, more importantly, it has the potential to affect consumer satisfaction and loyalty<sup>[7]</sup>.

According to the view<sup>[11]</sup> there are five types of experience: emotion, emotion, thinking, action, and relationship. However, the customer experience cannot be clearly divided into these five forms. Rather, the experience is visible in a combination of these five forms. Companies should therefore consider a combination of experience to improve outcomes and advance work and create a holistic experience, including emotion, emotion, thinking, action and relationship. Experience in its various forms can be found in any product or service. Loyalty has been defined by Oliver in 1997 as a deep commitment to support the product or service consistently in the future<sup>[12]</sup>. This behavior replicates brand buying in spite of the situational influences and marketing efforts with the potential to change the buying behavior. The consumer-brand relationship stems from brand loyalty. Brand experience refers to a type of persuasive activity to increase profitable activities and profitability for the brand that leads to loyalty. Brand experience enhances loyalty through intuitive communication by providing an attractive and adaptive environment that one encounters in the environment, incorporating the physical and communicative features of a service set or anything that the consumer deals with. Have been associated with the formation<sup>[4]</sup>. Brakus *et al.* (2009) showed that brand experience affects both its dimensions directly and indirectly through brand identity. According to

their study, brand experience seems to be a strong predictor of actual shopping behavior toward brand identity, and in turn can better predict satisfaction. Kang et al (2011) found that brand experience affects brand loyalty through stimulating emotional commitment<sup>[13]</sup>. They proved the impact of the brand experience on brand loyalty by establishing a qualitative relationship between the brand and consumers<sup>[4]</sup>.

### Brand Loyalty

In today's world, the principal capital of many organizations is the brand of that organization. Over the past decades a company's value was measured in terms of real estate, then tangible assets, factories, and equipment. Today, however, economics and management researchers have come to the conclusion that the true value of a company lies somewhere outside the minds of potential buyers. The price of a product measures its monetary value, but the brand introduces the product and reveals distinctive aspects<sup>[14]</sup>. Brands can communicate with their customers. When a consumer in his daily life seeks a particular brand to fulfill his wishes, he seeks a name that satisfies him<sup>[15]</sup>, and this is the same brand-customer relationship as brand loyalty. This is one of the important topics of research in brand management. Huber (2009), business names that identify and differentiate their identities and goals and present a tangible and friendly face are able to communicate with their customers in a rich and beneficial way, not just a part of their minds and minds<sup>[16]</sup>. Rather, they capture part of everyday consumer life. In addition, customer loyalty also has a competitive edge in the trademark market, especially in trademark product loyalty customers can guarantee or not guarantee the life of a company. Bringing the mark, emphasizing loyalty, helps companies strategize for their future To compete effectively with global giants who have conquered global markets. In today's world, buyers are faced with a wide variety of products to choose from, with many questions and, if they are faced with a wide variety of products, customers are faced with many choices. Customers are current, and losing a customer is not just a loss of a sales item, but beyond that means losing the entire flow of purchases that the customer could make during his or her lifetime<sup>[14]</sup>. Over the past two decades, many organizations have recognized the importance of customer satisfaction and have found that retaining existing customers is far less costly than attracting new customers. In addition, the strong relationship between customer satisfaction and profitability has been acknowledged and the provision and promotion of customer satisfaction has become a critical operational objective of organizations. Therefore, companies should always monitor

the interaction between themselves and their customers and provide them with valuable understanding of the needs and values of their customers, providing them with valuable goods and services to create loyalty<sup>[17]</sup>. Brand loyalty is a deep commitment to re-purchase or re-subscribe to a preferred product or service in the future. It redesigns the same brand, although situational and commercial influences attempt to change the behavior<sup>[14]</sup>.

### Self-Brand Connection

Marketing research shows that brand identity or psychological attachment to the brand leads to the individual's self-esteem in such a way that it recognizes the brand's success and failure<sup>[18, 19]</sup>. More precisely, brand identity refers to the mental state, feeling and value of belonging to one's brand<sup>[20]</sup>. Buying and consuming the brand creates a consumer identity. When people understand that a brand has characteristics that are related to one's personality traits, they identify the brand as representing themselves in society. As a result, when consumers introduce themselves to particular brands, they establish a psychological relationship with the brand and instinctively engage in brand-favoring practices<sup>[21]</sup>. This leads one to go for brand shopping<sup>[20]</sup>. Customer perceived value has been documented in the relational marketing area as its critical impact on some important communication outcomes, such as brand trust, brand satisfaction and brand loyalty<sup>[22, 23]</sup>. Recent studies have shown that the direct relationship between customer value and business loyalty is based on the quality relationship<sup>[24]</sup>. Quality communication involves five dimensions, namely commitment, quality partners of quality, love and passion, intimacy and self-relevance to the brand. Papista and Krystallis (2013) suggest that perceived customer value affects the dimensions of communication quality<sup>[25]</sup>. Self-brand communication is defined as "the extent to which individuals have introduced themselves to brands"<sup>[26]</sup>. Social exchange theory<sup>[27]</sup> suggests that consumers are more likely to develop current brand relationships through favorable behavior when their expectations are met<sup>[28]</sup>. A stronger customer by identifying the brand can achieve a personalized relationship that is enhanced<sup>[29]</sup>.

### Theoretical model and hypotheses

The conceptual model of the research has been derived from Van (2018). As seen in the conceptual model of research, self-brand communication is considered as the main independent variable in this research. Brand loyalty: as the main dependent variable. Contractual sales behavior and brand experience: both as a mediator variable in this study.

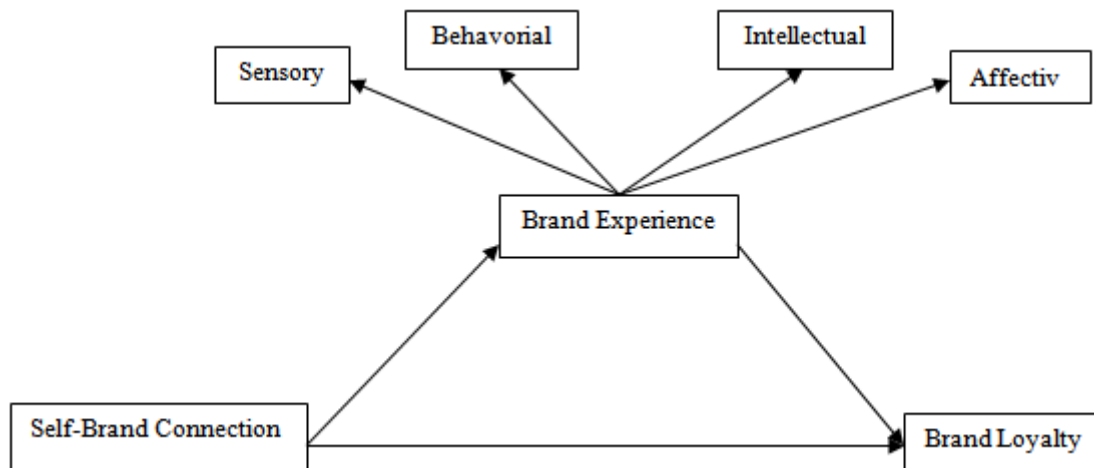


Figure 1. Conceptual model of research From Van (2018)

One of the most valuable assets of each company is the company's trade name. Whatever the value of a trademark in the minds of consumers, the company can, in the shadow, gain more benefits from consumers. Continuous monitoring and control of this concept is an essential step in its effective management. In recent decades, research and research on brand names has been a specialty in a variety of fields, including academic and business markets. Many researchers and corporate executives have come to the conclusion that the most valuable asset of a company for improving marketing is branding knowledge that is made by investing in marketing programs and creating a brand image in the mindset of consumers [7]. Banking and financial services form an important part of the service industry. Banks are expanding across borders by offering diverse benefits and competitive services and restructuring their services towards brand loyalty by meeting the changing needs of customers. Due to these actions, the nature of banking services and customer relationship has undergone changes. The highly competitive and rapidly changing environment that banks have to work on will lead them to revise their attitudes toward loyalty to their brand and to optimize the quality and performance of their services. Therefore, considering the importance of brand loyalty on the one hand and the necessity of using brand marketing for banks in accordance with the needs of customers on the other hand, it is necessary that the role of the mediator of brand experience in the path of the effects of Self-Brand Connection on brand loyalty is examined.

Therefore, the main question in this study would be: Is Brand Experience Affecting The Relationship Between Self-Brand Connection And Brand Loyalty?

- **Main Hypothesis:**

**Hypothesis 1:** Self-Brand Connection has a significant effect on Brand Loyalty.

**Hypothesis 2** Self-Brand Connection has a significant effect on Brand Experience.

**Hypothesis 3:** Brand Experience has a significant effect on Brand Loyalty.

- **Sub- Hypothesis:**

**Hypothesis 4:** Brand Experience mediates the relationship between Self-Brand Connection on Brand Loyalty.

## METHODOLOGY

### Measures

According to the conceptual model, this study has 29 observable variables, which is the same questionnaire questionnaire as van der Westhuizen, L. M. (2018). Have been extracted.

Table 1. Questionnaire information

Variable	Number of questions	Reference
self-brand connection	5	[3]
Sensory dimension	3	
Behavioral dimension	3	
Intellectual dimension	3	
Affective dimension	3	
loyalty brand	7	

To assess the validity and validity of the questionnaire, their credibility was assessed by the professors of the guide, consultant and experts, and their views were improved to improve the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire used in this study was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, derived from the output of pls software, the results of which are given in Table (3).

### Sampling

The statistical population of the study consisted of Tehran Private Hospitals customers in Northern Tehran Branch whose number is unlimited. To calculate the sample size required for research, using the Cochran formula for an

unlimited society at a confidence level of 5% is 384 people. If we want to determine the standard deviation of 0.5% and margin of error of 5% - / + of sample size with 95% accuracy, then we have:

$$n = \left( \frac{(1.96)(0.5)}{0.05} \right)^2 = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

**Formula**

**1. Cochran formula**

Therefore, the sample size was calculated to be 384.

**Analysis**

For data analysis, smartpls3 software has been used by least squares method.

- **Descriptive Statistics**

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics**

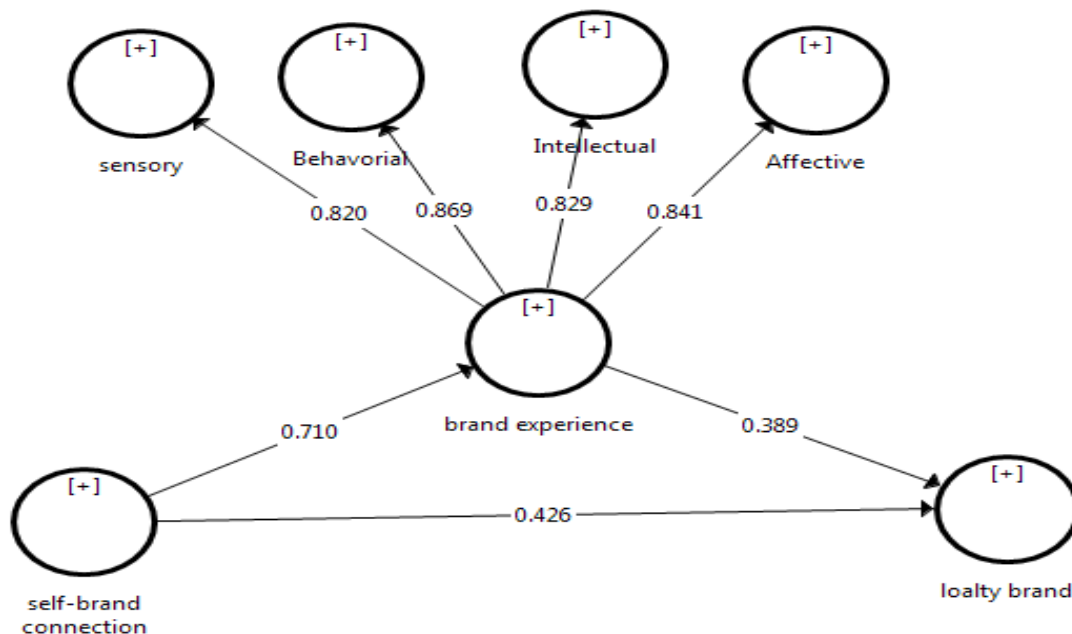
	Percentage Abundance	Abundance	Percentage Abundance
<b>Sex</b>	Male	167	43.5
	Female	209	54.4
	No response	8	2.1
<b>Degree of Education</b>	Bachelor and lower	165	43
	Masters	189	49.2
	P.H.D	16	4.2
	No response	14	3.6
<b>Age</b>	25 years or less	38	9.9
	26-30	96	25
	31-35	64	16.7

	36-40	77	20
	41 years and older	99	25.8
	No response	10	2.6
<b>Monthly Income</b>	Under \$200	116	30.2
	\$200-\$300	146	38
	Above \$300	97	25.3
	No response	25	6.5
	<b>Total</b>	384	100

- **Inferential statistics**

Before entering the testing stage of hypotheses and the conceptual model of the research, it is necessary to ensure the accuracy of the models of measurement of the exogenous and intrinsic variables. This is done through a confirmatory factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis is one of the oldest statistical methods used to investigate the relationship between the variables (achieved factors) and the observed variables (questions) and expresses the model of measurement. This technique, which evaluates the parameters and tests hypotheses with respect to the number of underlying factors among the markers, is based on a strong empirical and theoretical basis and determines which variables are determined by which factor, as well as by which factor which of the factors is correlated. Validation criteria of the measurement model include Convergent and Divergent Validity Factor Loads and Cronbach's Alpha and Combined Reliability and Single-Value Attribution Ratio to Multi-Valued Attribute.

Figure 2 shows the view of the measurement model in pls software for this study and Table 3 and (4) show the status of the fitness indexes of the measurement model for this study.



**Figure 2. Measurement Model (coefficients of the hypothesis path) Research**

**Table 3.** Indicators Fitness For the research measurement model

		Outer loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>self-brand connection</b>	q1	0.664	0.776	0.843	0.518
	q2	0.689			
	q3	0.820			
	q4	0.716			
	q5	0.701			
<b>Sensory</b>	q6	0.835	0.724	0.846	0.649
	q7	0.683			
	q8	0.884			
<b>Behaviorial</b>	q9	0.596	0.763	0.871	0.700
	q10	0.938			
	q11	0.930			
<b>Intellectual</b>	q12	0.698	0.800	0.886	0.725
	q13	0.924			
	q14	0.912			
<b>Affective</b>	q15	0.845	0.741	0.853	0.661
	q16	0.712			
	q17	0.872			
<b>loalty brand</b>	q18	0.777	0.878	0.906	0.584
	q19	0.537			
	q20	0.793			
	q21	0.756			
	q22	0.865			
	q23	0.741			
	q24	0.836			

As the information in Table (3) shows, all factor loads are higher than 0.5. The average extracted variance (AVE) for all structures is higher than 0.5. Also, the composite reliability is above 0.7. Therefore, it can be said that the model has validity and reliability.

**Table 4.** Divergent validity for the research measurement model

	Affective	Behaviorial	Intellectual	Sensory	loalty brand	self-brand connection
<b>Affective</b>	0.813					

<b>Behaviorial</b>	0.692	0.836				
<b>Intellectual</b>	0.629	0.562	0.851			
<b>Sensory</b>	0.520	0.657	0.586	0.805		
<b>loalty brand</b>	0.519	0.579	0.577	0.631	0.764	
<b>self-brand connection</b>	0.506	0.658	0.549	0.645	0.703	0.720

Divergent Validity for the Measurement Model As shown in Table (4) for divergent validity, the relationship between each construct and its indices is much higher than that of a structure with other structures, so we can say that the fitting measurement model is approved.

Now that the research measurement model shows a good situation, it is necessary to approve the fitting of the structural model, which is used in two ways:

- R Square:** One of the most common criteria for verifying the fitness of the structural model in PLS is the coefficients of the dependent variables (inverted variables). Indicates the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable. Three values of 0.19, 0.33 and 0.67 are considered as a criterion value for weak, moderate and strong values.
- Stone Gyser (Q<sup>2</sup>) criterion:** This criterion shows the predictive power of the model, and if the value of Aston Gyser for a dependent variable (intrinsic) has three values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, then The order indicates the strength of the predicted weak, moderate, and strong variables or the independent variables (exogenous) associated with that variable. In fact, the quality of the structural model is measured for each inferior block.

Table 5 shows the status of the fitness indexes of the structural model for this study.

**Table 5.** Indicators Fit for a structural model of research

	R Square	Q <sup>2</sup> (=1-SSE/SSO)
<b>Affective</b>	0.707	0.443
<b>Behaviorial</b>	0.755	0.497
<b>Intellectual</b>	0.688	0.468
<b>Sensory</b>	0.673	0.414
<b>brand experience</b>	0.505	0.221
<b>loalty brand</b>	0.569	0.304

As shown in Table (5), all results are also in good order for the coefficient of determination for the Aston Gisner criterion. Therefore, it can be stated that the structural model also has an approved fit. Now that the research and

measurement model shows a good situation, it is necessary to test the research hypotheses by the statistics. To test the research hypotheses, the structural equation model has been used. In Table 6, the coefficient of the path that indicates the

effect of the variables on each other and the significance of these coefficients is summarized. Figure 3 also shows the structural model of research.

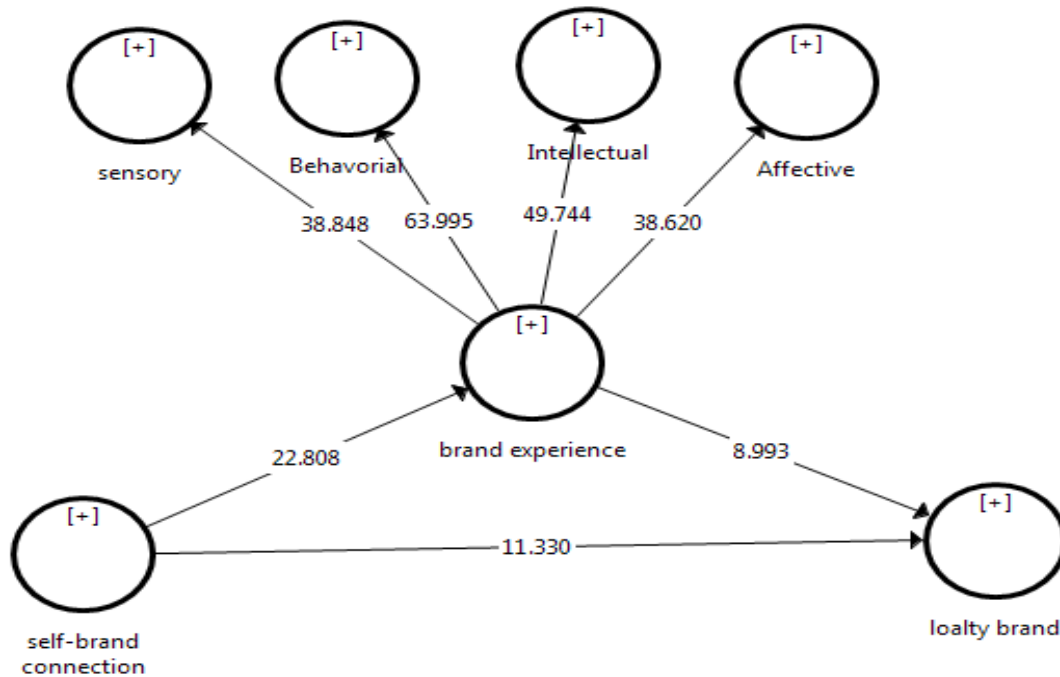


Figure 2. Structural Research Model

Table 6. Test Results: Research Hypotheses

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
self-brand connection → loyalty brand	0.426	11.330	0.000
self-brand connection → brand experience	0.710	22.808	0.000
brand experience → loyalty brand	0.389	8.993	0.000
self-brand connection → brand experience	0.276	7.667	0.000

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In general, it can be argued that the purpose of this research is to explain how brand communication relates to brand loyalty using brand experiences. The brand experience was considered as the interface between the brand's relationship, which is linked to a brand loyalty mechanism. Brand experience is known as a new factor in how brand managers can control the autonomy of communication and lead to brand loyalty. The research argues that brand communication, regardless of all else, creates consumer-brand relationships. This research proves the role of

mediator of brand experience on the relationship between brand communication and brand loyalty, which was considered as an intermediary in the model of this research. The statistical results of the research hypotheses are as follows:

The first hypothesis of the research: self-correlation has a significant effect on brand loyalty.

Considering the result of partial least squares modeling, as the significant value (T-VALUE) between the two variables of brand connectivity and loyalty is greater than 2.57. Therefore, self-correlation has positive and significant brand loyalty and the effect rate is about 426.0.

The second hypothesis of research: self-correlation has a significant effect on brand experience.

Considering the result of the partial least squares modeling, the meaningful number (T-VALUE) between the two variables of self-correlation and brand experience is greater than 2.57. So, there is a positive and significant correlation between self-referencing on brand experience and the amount of this effect is as much as 0.710.

Third hypothesis of research: Brand experience has a significant effect on brand loyalty.

Considering the result of partial least squares modeling, because of the significant number (T-VALUE) between the two variables of brand experience and brand loyalty greater than 2.57. Therefore, brand experience has a positive and significant brand loyalty, and this effect is as high as 389/0.

The fourth hypothesis of research: Brand experience mediates the relationship between self-referential relevance to brand loyalty.

Considering the result of partial least squares modeling, because of the significant number (T-VALUE) between the three variables of brand experience, brand connectivity and brand loyalty greater than 2.57. Therefore, brand experience mediates positively and significantly the relationship between self-reliance on brand loyalty.

The proposal is based on the first hypothesis: It is suggested to the bank's managers that the brand's purpose is to attract the attention of the addressee to the brand, so that its effect can increase the awareness and call of the brand. Therefore, the customer will purchase the brand with the highest call and customer satisfaction will be optimized. Exposure to brand affiliation affects customer response and can be influenced by the analysis of variables such as brand awareness in terms of calling and recognition, popularity, power, brand identity in customer memory, so it is desirable that bank executives of strategy Consider the need to influence the customer in their bank advertising programs.

The proposal is based on the second hypothesis: It is suggested to the bank managers that brand positive attitudes such as brand trust and brand loyalty are crucial to the long-term and sustainable success of the brand. Brand relationship has consistently played a significant role in creating a positive brand image and thus creating a brand experience. Therefore, it is advisable for bank managers to consider strategies for influencing customers in their banking advertising programs.

The proposal is based on the third hypothesis: According to the results of the third hypothesis, it is suggested that banks can bring their consumers' communities together through appropriate advertising and brand connectivity influence. It is also recommended that banks identify the factors that can help shape such relationships. Banks should act in such a way as to find a positive brand experience even at the first consumer confrontation. This can be done by improving network design, reducing costs, and enhancing oral-to-mouth talent

The proposal is based on the fourth hypothesis: the results show that brand experience is effective in influencing the self-referential relationship to brand loyalty, and it intermediates this effect. Therefore, it is suggested to the bank managers that the brand experience will play a key role in creating consumer loyalty to the brand. Therefore, attention to the customer brand experience can be used as a

model for understanding customer behavior to increase their satisfaction and loyalty, and to take risks and Avoid advertising costs.

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