

The Role of Inner Self and Social Self as Antecedents of Brand Love and its Impact on Word of Mouth: The Moderating Effect of Gender on Jumputan Shibori Products in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the antecedents and consequences of Brand Love toward Word of Mouth (WOM) behavior among consumers of Jumputan Shibori products in Indonesia. A quantitative research design was employed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with SmartPLS 4.0. Data were collected through online and offline questionnaires distributed to 200 Jumputan Shibori consumers across several regions in Indonesia. The results indicate that both Inner Self and Social Self have positive and significant effects on Brand Love. Brand Love, in turn, significantly influences Word of Mouth behavior. The moderating analysis reveals that Gender strengthens the relationship between Inner Self and Brand Love, but weakens the relationship between Social Self and Brand Love. However, Gender does not moderate the link between Brand Love and Word of Mouth.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's fashion industry has experienced rapid growth, supported by increasing public awareness of creativity, lifestyle, and cultural identity. One of the distinctive local products representing this cultural richness is Jumputan Shibori a traditional tie-dye textile combining ethnic artistry with modern aesthetics. Beyond its function as apparel, Jumputan Shibori symbolizes self-expression and local pride, particularly among young consumers. In this context, emotional attachment between consumers and brands plays a critical role in establishing long-term loyalty and fostering positive brand-related behaviors.

Despite its cultural and aesthetic potential, the Jumputan Shibori industry still struggles to develop strong consumer-brand relationships. Many consumers are influenced by transient fashion trends rather than emotional attachment or loyalty toward local brands. Brand love a deep emotional connection between consumers and a brand has been proven to encourage repurchase intentions, advocacy, and positive word of mouth. However, empirical studies on brand love in the context of local, culturally based products remain scarce in Indonesia.

Previous research has explored various antecedents of brand love, including brand experience, satisfaction, and trust. Nevertheless, limited attention has been given to psychological factors such as inner self and social self, which may strongly shape emotional attachment to brands. The inner self reflects personal identity and self-perception, while the social self represents how individuals wish to be perceived by others through their brand choices. These dimensions are especially relevant in fashion consumption, where products like Jumputan Shibori act as symbols of both self-expression and social belonging.

Most prior studies on brand love have focused on global or large-scale commercial brands in industries such as technology, cosmetics, and automotive. Few have examined local brands rooted in traditional culture, despite their rising popularity. Moreover, the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between brand love and word of mouth remains underexplored. Since gender differences can influence how consumers experience and express emotional attachment to brands, investigating this factor may reveal new insights into consumer behavior within cultural product markets.

This study draws upon self-concept theory and brand relationship quality theory, which posit that consumers form emotional bonds with brands that align with their self-identity. Within this framework, inner self and social self are conceptualized as antecedents of brand love, while word of mouth serves as its behavioral consequence. Gender functions as a moderating variable to assess whether emotional and social perceptions differ between male and female consumers in influencing brand love outcomes.

The present study aims to examine the influence of inner self and social self on brand love and to analyze how brand love drives word of mouth behavior toward Jumputan Shibori products in Indonesia. Furthermore, it investigates the moderating role of gender in this relationship. Employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) 4.0, this research seeks to provide empirical evidence and practical insights for local entrepreneurs and marketers in developing emotionally driven strategies to strengthen the positioning of cultural fashion brands.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspectives on Brand Love Formation

This section discusses the theoretical foundations underlying the relationships among Inner Self, Social Self, Brand Love, and Word of Mouth (WOM), as well as the moderating role of Gender. The framework is grounded in consumer psychology and marketing behavior theories that explain emotional attachment and self-concept in brand relationships.

a. Self-Congruity Theory

Self-Congruity Theory (Sirgy, 1982) posits that consumers tend to prefer brands that align with their self-image. This theory forms the foundation for the concept of the Inner Self, which reflects personal identity, values, and aspirations. Consumers are more likely to develop Brand Love for brands that resonate with their inner values and personality traits (Belk, 1988; Schmitt, 2012). When a brand becomes a symbolic extension of the consumer's self, emotional attachment and commitment are strengthened.

b. Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 2010) emphasizes that individuals define themselves through social affiliations and group memberships. The Social Self relates to how individuals seek social approval and recognition by associating with particular brands. In the context of Jumputan Shibori, a culturally rooted fashion product, consumers may use the brand to express social belonging and cultural pride (Escalas & Bettman, 2015). Thus, the social self drives consumers to form emotional bonds with brands that reflect desirable social meanings.

c. Triangular Theory of Love

The Triangular Theory of Love (Sternberg, 1986) identifies three components of love intimacy, passion, and commitment. Translated into the branding context, these dimensions represent emotional connection, enthusiasm, and loyalty toward a brand (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). Brands that successfully evoke emotional and symbolic meaning can cultivate Brand Love, which in turn enhances consumer loyalty and generates positive Word of Mouth.

d. Theory of Social Influence

The Theory of Social Influence explains how individuals' attitudes and behaviors are shaped by the opinions and actions of others (Aral & Walker, 2022). In this study, the theory provides a foundation for understanding Word of Mouth (WOM) behavior, both in offline and digital contexts. WOM often arises from emotional attachment to a brand and is amplified through social networks and peer influence, making it a key behavioral outcome of Brand Love.

e. Gender Role Theory

Gender Role Theory (Palan, 2001) describes how social and cultural norms influence behavioral differences between men and women. Prior studies have revealed that women tend to express stronger emotional connections to brands and are more active in engaging in WOM behaviors than men (Holbrook & Schindler, 1994; Kessous & Valette-Florence, 2021). Therefore, gender is considered a moderating variable in this study to examine whether emotional and social responses to Brand Love differ by gender.

Empirical Studies on Brand Love and Word of Mouth

A number of empirical studies have examined the antecedents and outcomes of *Brand Love* across various industries.

- a) Batra et al. (2012) found that *Brand Love* positively influences brand loyalty and *Word of Mouth*.
- b) Albert et al. (2021) emphasized that *Self-Brand Congruity* plays a vital role in the formation of *Brand Love*.
- c) Kim et al. (2020) demonstrated that *Social Self* has a stronger effect in collectivist cultures such as Indonesia, where social harmony and identity are emphasized.
- d) Fetscherin & Heinrich (2023) confirmed that *Brand Love* enhances consumers' likelihood to engage in positive WOM.
- e) Kessous & Valette-Florence (2021) identified gender-based differences in how consumers express *Brand Love* and share WOM.

These studies collectively highlight the emotional and social dimensions of *Brand Love*, yet few have applied these insights to local cultural products such as *Jumputan Shibori*.

Conceptual Framework

Drawing from the theoretical and empirical literature, this study proposes a conceptual model that connects the psychological antecedents and behavioral outcomes of *Brand Love*. The model includes:

- a) Inner Self → Brand Love
- b) Social Self → Brand Love
- c) Brand Love → Word of Mouth (WOM)
- d) Gender as a moderating variable influencing the strength of these relationships.

This framework aims to explain how personal and social identity factors shape emotional attachment to brands and how such attachment translates into consumer advocacy behavior in the form of WOM.

Research Gap and Novelty

Most prior studies have focused on global or large-scale commercial brands, such as those in the technology, cosmetic, or automotive industries. Research on *Brand Love* for culturally based local products remains limited, particularly in Indonesia's traditional fashion sector. Moreover, the moderating influence of Gender within the relationships between *Inner Self*, *Social Self*, *Brand Love*, and WOM has not been extensively examined in collectivist cultural settings. This study contributes to the literature by integrating self-concept theory and social identity theory to explain *Brand Love* in a cultural consumption context. It also offers practical implications for local marketers and creative entrepreneurs to design emotionally resonant branding strategies that strengthen consumer attachment and foster sustainable brand advocacy.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative causal-explanatory research design aimed at analyzing the relationships between psychological antecedents (inner self and social self), brand love, and its behavioral consequence (word of mouth) toward Jumputan Shibori products in Indonesia, with gender acting as a moderating variable.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

This study employed an online survey distributed to targeted respondents. To ensure the accuracy and quality of the collected data, a screening process was conducted to detect potential response bias, such as random answering patterns or repetitive response behaviors. According to Hair (2019), data screening is essential to prevent response bias and maintain the integrity of the analysis. After filtering, a total of 220 valid responses were obtained and included in the analysis.

Table 1. Respondent Description

Description	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25 years	21	9.46
	26–35 years	49	22.07
	36–45 years	75	33.79
	46–55 years	54	24.32
	> 55 years	23	10.36
Education Level	Primary School	0	0.00
	Junior High School	0	0.00
	Senior High School	68	30.63

	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	135	60.81
	Master's Degree (S2)	13	5.86
	Doctoral Degree (S3)	1	0.45
	Others	5	2.25
Gender	Male	59	26.58
	Female	163	73.42
Occupation	Student	10	4.50
	Employee	115	52.70
	Entrepreneur	21	9.46
	Housewife	32	14.41
	Others	42	18.92
Monthly Income	< Rp 1,000,000	47	21.17
	Rp 1,000,000 – Rp 3,000,000	69	31.08
	Rp 3,000,000 – Rp 5,000,000	82	36.94
	> Rp 5,000,000	24	10.81
Domicile	Sumatra	11	4.95
	Java	181	81.53
	Kalimantan	7	3.15
	Sulawesi	12	5.41
	Bali & Nusa Tenggara	7	3.15
	Papua	0	0.00
	Others	4	1.80

Table.1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents, categorized by gender, age, education level, occupation, income, and domicile. The results show that the majority of respondents were aged between 36 and 45 years (33.79%), followed by those aged 46–55 years (24.32%) and 26–35 years (22.07%). Respondents aged above 55 years accounted for 10.36%, while those aged 18–25 years made up 9.46%. In terms of education level, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (S1) (60.81%), followed by high school graduates (30.63%), master's degree holders (5.86%), and doctoral graduates (0.45%). A small number of respondents (2.25%) reported other educational backgrounds, while none had completed only primary or junior secondary education.

Based on gender distribution, the majority of participants were female (73.42%), while male respondents accounted for 26.58%. This suggests that women are more involved as consumers or users of *jumputan shibori* products, possibly due to higher interest in cultural fashion.

Regarding occupation, employees constituted the largest group (52.70%), followed by other professions (18.92%), housewives (14.41%), entrepreneurs (9.46%), and students (4.50%). In terms of monthly income, most respondents earned between Rp 3,000,000 and Rp 5,000,000 (36.94%), followed by those earning Rp 1,000,000 to Rp 3,000,000 (31.08%), below Rp 1,000,000 (21.17%), and above Rp 5,000,000 (10.81%).

Geographically, the majority of respondents resided on Java Island (81.53%), while others were from Sulawesi (5.41%), Sumatra (4.95%), Kalimantan (3.15%), and Bali & Nusa Tenggara (3.15%). No respondents were recorded from Papua, while 1.8% were from other regions. These findings reflect that the *jumputan shibori* consumer base is largely centered on Java, where the creative and cultural industries are more developed.

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the aid of SmartPLS version 4. The analysis was conducted through three main steps: (1) discriminant validity testing, (2) internal consistency reliability testing, and (3) convergent validity testing. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Result
Brand Love	0.868	Excellent
Gender	0.914	Excellent
Inner Self	0.949	Excellent
Social Self	0.912	Excellent
Word of Mouth	0.865	Excellent

The reliability analysis results indicate that all constructs exhibit Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.7, ranging from 0.865 to 0.949. According to Hair et al. (2017), values above 0.6 are considered acceptable, and those exceeding 0.7 indicate strong internal reliability. Therefore, all variables in this study Brand Love, Gender, Inner Self, Social Self, and Word of Mouth demonstrated excellent internal consistency, confirming that the measurement items were reliable for subsequent analysis.

Convergent validity was assessed through factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), as displayed in Table 4.3. All factor loadings exceeded the 0.5 threshold, CR values were above 0.7, and AVE values surpassed 0.5, signifying satisfactory convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, each construct effectively represents the intended latent variable.

Table 3. Cosntruct Validity

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	C.R.	AVE	Status
<i>Brand Love</i>	BL1	0,563	0,902	0,609	Sangat Baik
	BL2	0,815			Sangat Baik
	BL3	0,802			Sangat Baik
	BL4	0,859			Sangat Baik
	BL5	0,842			Sangat Baik
	BL6	0,762			Sangat Baik
<i>Gender</i>	G1	0,902	0,946	0,854	Sangat Baik
	G2	0,942			Sangat Baik
	G3	0,928			Sangat Baik
<i>Inner Self</i>	IS1	0,912	0,963	0,866	Sangat Baik
	IS2	0,946			Sangat Baik
	IS3	0,945			Sangat Baik
	IS4	0,920			Sangat Baik
<i>Social Self</i>	SS1	0,878	0,938	0,790	Sangat Baik
	SS2	0,895			Sangat Baik
	SS3	0,906			Sangat Baik
	SS4	0,875			Sangat Baik
<i>Word of Mouth</i>	PWOM1	0,836	0,918	0,788	Sangat Baik
	PWOM2	0,904			Sangat Baik
	PWOM3	0,921			Sangat Baik

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), discriminant validity is achieved when the square root of each construct's AVE exceeds its correlation with other constructs. Table 3 shows that all constructs met this criterion, as the diagonal AVE values (e.g., 0.780 for Brand Love and 0.931 for Inner Self) were higher than their correlations with other variables. This confirms that all latent variables are empirically distinct and free from multicollinearity.

After validating the measurement model, the next step was to evaluate the structural model to test the proposed hypotheses. The hypothesis testing used bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples, examining the T-statistics and p-values of each path. A hypothesis is accepted when T-statistics ≥ 1.96 and $p \leq 0.05$ (Setiaman, 2023). The summary of hypothesis testing results is presented in Table 4, and the structural model output is illustrated in Figure 1.

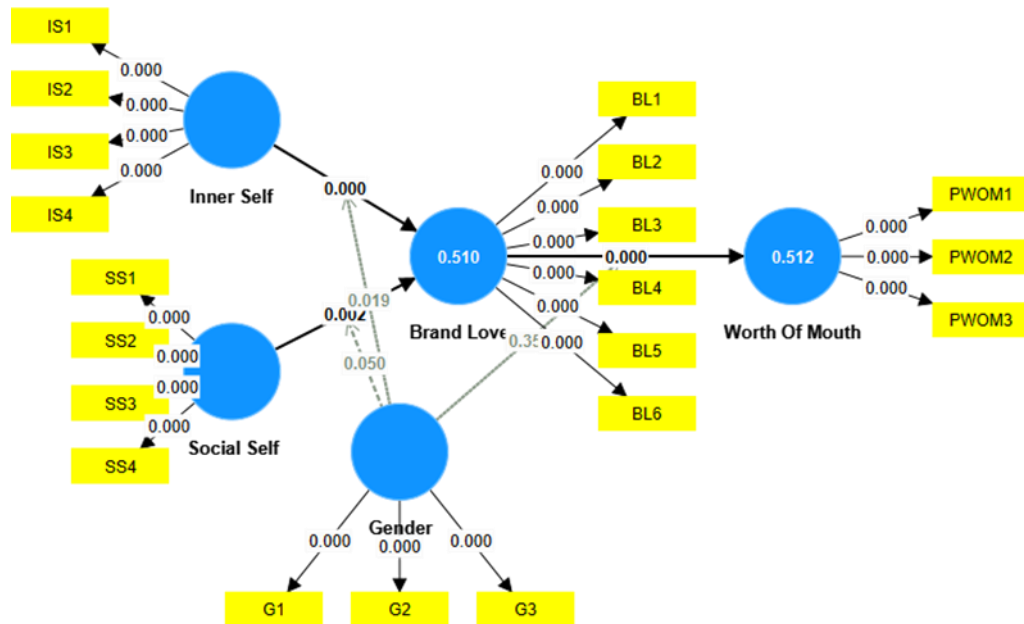


Figure 1. Model Results of the PLS-SEM Analysis

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
<i>Brand Love -> Word of Mouth</i>	0.467	0.466	0.065	7.222	0.000
<i>Gender -> Brand Love</i>	0.109	0.111	0.088	1.238	0.216
<i>Gender -> Word of Mouth</i>	0.346	0.348	0.068	5.939	0.000
<i>Inner Self -> Brand Love</i>	0.391	0.385	0.081	4.825	0.000
<i>Social Self -> Brand Love</i>	0.259	0.264	0.082	3.154	0.002
<i>Gender x Inner Self -> Brand Love</i>	0.178	0.179	0.076	2.355	0.019
<i>Gender x Social Self -> Brand Love</i>	-0.178	-0.172	0.091	1.999	0.050
<i>Gender x Brand Love -> Word of Mouth</i>	0.031	0.035	0.033	0.532	0.351

The analysis revealed that Inner Self has a positive and significant effect on Brand Love, with a path coefficient of 0.391 and a p-value of 0.000 ($t = 4.825$). This indicates that individuals with stronger personal values and self-awareness tend to develop greater emotional attachment to *jumputan shibori*. Consumers who perceive the product as an expression of their identity are more likely to experience Brand Love.

Similarly, Social Self also has a positive and significant effect on Brand Love ($\beta = 0.259$, $p = 0.002$, $t = 3.154$). This suggests that consumers' perceptions of how they are viewed by others when using *jumputan shibori* strengthen their emotional connection to the brand. The product's cultural symbolism and uniqueness enhance social pride and brand attachment.

The findings also demonstrate that Brand Love has a strong and significant effect on Word of Mouth (WOM) ($\beta = 0.467$, $p = 0.000$, $t = 7.222$). Consumers who love the brand are more likely to share positive experiences and recommend *jumputan shibori* to others. This aligns with the notion that emotional attachment is a key driver of voluntary brand advocacy.

Regarding moderation effects, Gender significantly moderates the relationship between Inner Self and Brand Love ($\beta = 0.178$, $p = 0.019$, $t = 2.355$). This indicates that gender differences influence how personal identity shapes emotional attachment. Female consumers tend to express stronger emotional bonds when the product aligns with their inner values compared to male consumers.

Conversely, Gender also moderates the relationship between Social Self and Brand Love negatively ($\beta = -0.178$, $p = 0.050$, $t = 1.999$). This implies that gender weakens the strength of this relationship suggesting that the impact of social identity on Brand Love varies by gender, possibly being more pronounced among women than men.

However, the interaction between Gender and Brand Love on Word of Mouth was found to be insignificant ($\beta = 0.031$, $p = 0.351$, $t = 0.532$). This means that gender does not significantly influence the relationship between Brand Love and WOM. Both male and female consumers demonstrate similar tendencies to recommend *jumputan shibori* when they feel emotionally connected to the brand.

Overall, these results confirm that both Inner Self and Social Self significantly contribute to the formation of Brand Love, which in turn enhances Word of Mouth behavior. Gender plays a moderating role in the psychological processes leading to Brand Love but not in the behavioral expression of WOM.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the antecedents (Inner Self and Social Self) and consequences (Word of Mouth) of Brand Love toward *Jumputan Shibori* products in Indonesia, as well as the moderating role of Gender in these relationships. Using a mixed-methods approach and data analysis through PLS-SEM 4.0, several key findings were revealed.

First, Inner Self was found to have a positive and significant effect on Brand Love. This indicates that when consumers perceive *Jumputan Shibori* products as a reflection of their personal identity and self-expression, they are more likely to develop strong emotional attachment and affection toward the brand. This finding supports previous research in consumer-brand relationship literature, suggesting that personal congruence enhances emotional connection and brand attachment.

Second, Social Self also exhibited a positive and significant influence on Brand Love. Consumers who believe that Jumputan Shibori products enhance their social image and recognition within their communities tend to form stronger brand relationships. This emphasizes the social dimension of Brand Love, where brand attachment is not only personal but also reinforced by external validation and social belonging.

Third, Brand Love positively and significantly affects Word of Mouth (WOM). Consumers who experience strong emotional attachment to Jumputan Shibori are more likely to engage in positive advocacy, share recommendations, and encourage others to purchase the product. This supports the notion that emotional bonds between consumers and brands drive voluntary promotional behavior, which is critical for the growth of cultural and creative industries.

Fourth, Gender was found to moderate the relationship between Inner Self and Brand Love. The moderating effect suggests that emotional attachment formed through self-expression differs between male and female consumers. Female consumers tend to show higher emotional resonance between personal identity and brand attachment compared to males, indicating that gender-based emotional processing plays an important role in shaping Brand Love.

Fifth, Gender also moderates the relationship between Social Self and Brand Love, but with a negative effect. This implies that the influence of social validation on emotional attachment is weaker for female consumers compared to male consumers. In other words, while males are more affected by the social image and recognition associated with Jumputan Shibori, females are more intrinsically motivated by self-expression and internal emotional satisfaction.

Lastly, Gender does not moderate the relationship between Brand Love and Word of Mouth. This finding suggests that once consumers regardless of gender develop strong emotional attachment to the brand, their likelihood to share positive experiences and recommend the product remains consistent. Thus, emotional engagement is a universal driver of advocacy across genders.

Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of Brand Love formation and its behavioral outcomes within the context of Indonesia's cultural fashion industry. It highlights the dual influence of personal and social identity in fostering brand attachment and reveals nuanced gender-based differences that shape emotional and communicative consumer behavior.

The findings affirm that Brand Love acts as a critical emotional bridge between identity expression (Inner Self and Social Self) and consumer advocacy (Word of Mouth), offering both theoretical and practical implications for marketing local creative brands such as Jumputan Shibori.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future studies should consider incorporating other moderating variables, such as cultural values, brand experience, or digital engagement, to expand understanding of emotional brand relationships. In addition, qualitative exploration through in-depth interviews or ethnographic studies may reveal deeper cultural meanings behind the consumer-brand connection in traditional textile products.

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