

MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Brand Authenticity on Brand Loyalty Towards Local Skincare Products: Mediating Role of Brand Attachment

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the influence of consumer perceptions regarding the authenticity of something as a local skincare brand on their level of loyalty, while also comparing the results when mediated by the role of brand attachment. Empirical data were collected from 255 respondents in Indonesia who had purchased Somethinc skin care products at least 3 times for their personal use. The respondent data was processed using Partial Least Squares Path Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis integrated through Smart PLS 3 software. It was found that brand authenticity doesn't influence brand loyalty directly in the beauty industry. However, brand authenticity can influence brand attachment significantly. Likewise, brand attachment has a significant effect on brand loyalty. Then, the relationship between brand authenticity and brand loyalty becomes significant when mediated by the brand attachment variable. This study contributes to becoming a benchmark for local beauty brands in developing their strategies to gain consumer loyalty.

Keywords: Brand Authenticity, Brand Attachment, Brand Loyalty, Local Skincare Products.

JEL Code: A10, M31, M37.

I. Introduction

The rise in individual income, aligning with global economic growth and exposure to cultural factors where society increasingly values aesthetic appearance, has influenced shifts in consumer purchasing behavior alongside evolving trends, as noted by Kotler et al. (2016) and Sobol et al. (2018), cited in Sun et al. (2024). Businesses in the skincare industry keenly feel this phenomenon. With its increasingly essential role in the daily lives of global society, the skincare industry's market size is projected to grow rapidly in the coming years, becoming a significant contributor to national revenue (Research and Markets, 2024). This projection is supported by data from the Statista Research Department (2024), which reported global skincare industry revenue of \$188.612 billion in 2024. This market share is also expected to grow by 15.54%, or \$29.3 billion, from 2024 to reach an estimated \$217.9 billion in 2029.

In Indonesia itself, the skincare market share has been facing intense escalation when viewed in the past few years. (Report Linker, 2024). With a revenue figure of \$2,762.08 per year in 2024, this strong market expansion is expected to continue with a projected growth rate of 19.88% or equivalent to \$549.1 million from 2024 to 2029, which serves as proof of the increasing adoption of skincare products among the Indonesian population. In this regard, this push makes companies involved in the beauty industry face increasingly tight levels of competition in their market share (Wilendra et al., 2024). Due to the increasing demand and consumer



tendency to adopt the use of products that are closer to them, both in terms of brand story and nationalism aimed at domestic products, various alternative local brands for skincare have spreading rapidly in the Indonesian market share through official distribution at offline or online outlets which have increased over time. Among the many brands, Somethinc is one of the leading local beauty brands among the Indonesians. Although it has only entered the market since 2019, Somethinc has proven the superiority of its products through various achievements it has achieved. Even in the same year as the brand was founded, Female Daily (2019) named Somethinc in the Best Beauty Awards 2019 as the "Best Newcomer Local Brand."

However, it's also important to recognize that the local skincare market features numerous brands intensely competing to become consumers' primary purchasing choice. In today's era of aggressive market competition, brands must maximize their consumer base to grow and survive (Al Mamun et al., 2023; R. P. Singh & Banerjee, 2021). Along with the era of consumer doubt regarding the claims promised by brands, a momentum has been created for skincare brands to prioritize the element of authenticity (Sun et al., 2024). With the crucial impact of its existence, marketers are increasingly competing to prioritize the element of authenticity which is believed to be able to influence their company's position in the market share and increase the attractiveness of the products they offer, as stated by Sun et al. (2024) in their exploration of Lu et al. (2015)'s earlier perspective. With the contributions it brings, there has been a lot of previous literature, including those from Busser & Shulga (2019), Södergren (2021), Xu et al. (2022), and Le et al. (2022) which explains that when a brand successfully applies the concept of authenticity in marketing its products, then brand loyalty is the result it obtains. They have proven that there is a direct relationship between brand authenticity and brand loyalty, where when the results of consumer cognitive assessments form a perception that a brand is committed to adhering to the core values it wants to convey or in other words, consumers consider a brand to be an authentic brand, this will naturally give rise to behavioral impacts in the form of loyalty behavior shown by consumers through consumer involvement and subjective preferences over time to stick to only brands that are considered capable of providing genuine or authentic value, from among all similar choices available Busser & Shulga (2019).

Although much literature states a direct relationship between brand authenticity in forming brand loyalty (Busser & Shulga, 2019; Le et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2022), these studies only look at the relationship that arises in the food & beverage and hospitality industry objects. Meanwhile, for the beauty industry, Sun et al. (2024) saw that the flow of the relationship that occurs between how brand authenticity is able to produce brand loyalty can be detailed in more depth by adding affective aspects to the process. The affective aspect they meant was expressed through the use of the brand attachment variable. Which is indicated by the dependence and connection consumers feel towards a brand, stemming from their identity, beliefs, and satisfaction with that brand and acts as a form of intermediary connection created between the cognitive aspect of brand authenticity and the behavioral aspect of brand loyalty (Kompas, 2022; Lee & Chung, 2019; Sun et al., 2024). By focusing on reviewing the perceptions held by Chinese consumers, they used Korean cosmetic brands as the object of their research and found a significant positive influence between the three variables.

However, research measuring the influence of brand authenticity on brand loyalty, with the mediating role of brand attachment, is still rare among users of local skincare products, especially within Indonesian society. Therefore, by using the proposed interrelationship between the variables of authenticity and attachment as factors forming loyalty, as suggested by Sun et al. (2024), this research looks at whether there are similarities in the results obtained or not, when consumers from developing countries are faced with domestic products, rather than foreign products. With this background which is also supported by relevant data findings, the research idea entitled "The Influence of Brand Authenticity on Brand Loyalty on Local Skincare Products with the Mediating Role of Brand Attachment" was formed. This research aims to provide benefits for various local skincare brands to be able to review current market conditions and what factors influence consumer loyalty. It is important as the increased loyalty to local skincare products will decrease consumer dependence on imported goods and subsequently boosting job availability. This would also become a factor in encouraging local brands to continue to innovate due to strong support of interest from consumers which can ultimately significantly strengthen the domestic industry (RRI, 2024).

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Brand Authenticity

Brand authenticity is a key concept in marketing, viewed as a brand's "genuineness" (Xu et al., 2022) and an assessment linked to a product or experience (Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2020). Its study has grown, focusing on extrinsic aspects like preventing imitation (Spiggle et al., 2012) and intrinsic qualities such as originality, integration, and accurate self-description without economic pressure (Cinelli & LeBoeuf, 2020; Nunes et al., 2021; Warren et al., 2019). Brand authenticity is also categorized into indexical (associating with an ideal authentic brand) and symbolic (user-derived views and feelings) perspectives (Khan & Fatma, 2021). The symbolic view highlights a brand's ability to express unique, natural, and authentic qualities (Haq et al., 2024). As time goes by, the concept of brand authenticity has evolved to include personal consumer assessments based on connectedness and symbolic representation of identity (Lv et al., 2023). For a brand to be seen as authentic, it must uphold its principles, understand its messaging, and fulfill commitments (J. K. Park et al., 2023). Authenticity is also seen as a brand's consistent reflection of its values (Sun et al., 2024) and consumers' perception of it as supportive, authentic, and trustworthy, built on legacy, credibility, and quality (Papadopoulou et al., 2023). Ultimately, brand authenticity can encourage consumers to express their own identities (Hyun et al., 2024). Based on the literature review, this study will adopt J. K. Park et al. (2023) definition of brand authenticity. Viewing brand authenticity as a consumer's perception that a brand upholds its principles, understands what it communicates, and fulfills all its promises. This adaptation is solely because the definition aligns with the study's purpose to assess the extent to which consumer perceptions of Somethinc's persistence as a local skincare brand reflect the values associated with its foundational milestones. The Literature Review and Hypothesis Development section serves to position your research within the existing body of knowledge, identify gaps, and logically develop your hypotheses. Begin with an overview of the key themes and topics related to your research, highlighting the most relevant theories, models, or findings in the field. This demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the academic landscape and contextualizes your study within it.

2.2. Brand Attachment

Brand attachment describes consumers' emotional connection to a brand, stemming from positive experiences and leading to feelings of intimacy and dependence (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021; Pandey & Sahu, 2020; Ragab et al., 2024). This concept, rooted in attachment theory, reflects how brands influence consumers' emotions, thoughts, and actions (J. Hwang et al., 2021; Kuo & Chen, 2023). Dimensions of brand attachment often include brand passion, affection, and self-brand connection (Abdul Aziz et al., 2023; Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021), or brand prominence, passion, and anxiety (Japutra et al., 2022). Essentially, it's a strong emotional and cognitive bond formed through consumer experiences and memories (J. Hwang et al., 2021). Ultimately, brand attachment fosters a long-term, hard-to-replace relationship between consumers and brands, often leading to consumer dependence on a brand's consumption (Donvito et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2024). Based on the literature review above, this study will adopt the definition put forward by Sun et al. (2024) regarding brand attachment which is defined as the range of emotional-based connections originating from identity, beliefs, and satisfaction as depicted in the perspective of consumer assessment of a brand which create a situation of dependence from the consumer's side on the consumption behavior of a brand. This adaptation is solely because the definition written regarding brand attachment aligns with the purpose of this study to assess the level of emotional dependence of consumers on the local skincare brand Somethinc based on the points projected by the consumer.

2.3. Brand Loyalty

For a decade, Wernerfelt (1991) has linked brand loyalty elements as a vital concept in the field of strategic marketing, where this idea was reapplied in the study of Tang et al. (2023). Continuing to the study conducted by Zhang et al. (2023), loyalty is defined based on a behavioral perspective expressed as the consumer's ability to strive for long term positive interactions with a brand due to the good reputation found after using the brand's launched product, even willing to make repeat purchases from the related brand without any element of coercion. This concept often evolves into "commitment," signifying a strong, unwavering dedication to a brand despite external influences or competitive efforts (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021; Ragab et al., 2024; Santos & Schlesinger, 2021; Y. Singh & Milan, 2024). Loyal consumers not only make repeat purchases but also act as brand advocates, enthusiastically recommending it to others (J. K. Hwang et al., 2021; Song et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2024). This loyalty is rooted in positive attitudes, preferences, and a perceived superior value consistently delivered by the brand (Bonisoli & Blacio Guañuna, 2023; Jones & Taylor, 2007; Leckie et al., 2016; Li & Zhang, 2023; Vicente et al., 2020). Ultimately, brand loyalty signifies a deep consumer attachment (Kim & Kim, 2024). Based on the literature review above, this study will adopt the definition put forward by J. K. Hwang et al. (2021) regarding brand loyalty which is defined as a sincere commitment that comes from consumers to consistently repeat purchases of products or services offered by the same brand from time to time accompanied by a reluctance to switch their options to other brands even when faced with situations and potential marketing efforts from other competitors which lead to a desire for advocacy from within to spread the quality of the related brand. This adaptation is solely because the definition written regarding brand loyalty aligns with the purpose of this study to assess the extent to which individuals are committed to loyal consumption of the local skincare brand Somethinc compared to other alternatives by making the brand their main purchase choice within their personal item spending category, as well as their willingness to spread recommendations to their daily circle.

2.4. Effects of Brand Authenticity on Brand Loyalty

Brand authenticity is a complex concept measured by various components depending on the context (Nunes et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023). For instance, Wang et al. (2023) building on M. B. Beverland et al. (2008), explored the existential aspect, or "indexical cue," finding that consumers evaluate authenticity based on confirmable factors like materials, origin, performance, or age, often found on product labels. Conversely, research on the "iconic" aspect suggests a brand is authentic when it meets consumer expectations (Wang et al., 2023). Ultimately, according to Alhouti et al. (2016) as cited in Hyun et al. (2024), brand authenticity is a positive attribute encompassing credibility, genuineness, honesty, and trustworthiness. This authenticity directly links to consumers' behavioral intentions (Nunes et al., 2021). Busser & Shulga (2019) further demonstrate that authenticity directly fosters brand loyalty. This is because brands that uphold their core values and commit to social, cultural, and business responsibilities naturally cultivate loyalty (Södergren, 2021). This aligns with Xu et al. (2022) findings that brand authenticity directly influences consumer loyalty. Conversely, Le et al. (2022) note that consumer loyalty erodes when a brand deviates from its perceived quality and value commitments. Based on the study above, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: Brand authenticity (X) has a significant positive influence on brand loyalty (Y)

2.5. Effects of Brand Authenticity on Brand Attachment

To be considered an authentic brand, both in existence and communication, a brand must demonstrate consistent fundamental values and behaviors over time, as highlighted by Bulmer et al. (2024), referencing Fritz et al. (2017), Bruhn et al. (2012), and Spiggle et al. (2012). Beyond consistency, Bulmer et al. (2024) and Jian et al. (2019) agree that an authentic brand must accurately represent its intended message,

focusing on originality, sincerity, and honesty while reflecting its true identity. This aligns with the paradigm proposed by Bulmer et al. (2024), building on earlier findings from Becker et al. (2019) and M. Beverland (2006). Furthermore, Bulmer et al. (2024)'s work, exploring findings from Fritz et al. (2017) and Morhart et al. (2013), shows that brand authenticity significantly boosts positive outcomes like brand attachment, positive word-of-mouth, relationship quality, and forgiveness. Sun et al. (2024) also found that the consistency of brand authenticity sub-elements positively influences brand attachment. Consequently, drawing from the outcomes of previous studies, the second research hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: Brand authenticity (X) significantly positively affects brand attachment (M)

2.6. Effects of Brand Attachment on Brand Loyalty

Previous research highlights that emotional brand attachment makes consumers perceive a brand as irreplaceable. This leads to positive behaviors like willingness to pay more (Ragab et al., 2024; Santos & Schlesinger, 2021). Once deeply connected, consumers remain loyal, even ignoring better offers from competitors (Chen et al., 2021; Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011; C. W. Park et al., 2010). Studies by Ragab et al. (2024) and Kankhuni et al. (2023) show a significant link between emotional attachment, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. When brands connect emotionally, consumers tend to repeatedly use the brand and promote it positively. Stronger brand attachment also directly results in higher brand loyalty (Sun et al., 2024). Based on relationships identified in previous research, the third hypothesis for this study is established as follows:

H3: Brand attachment (M) has a significant positive influence on brand loyalty (Y)

2.7. Mediating Role of Brand Attachment

Recent research consistently highlights the critical role of emotional brand attachment in driving brand loyalty. Mostafa & Kasamani (2021) were the first to confirm brand attachment as a mediator between brand experience and loyalty, emphasizing emotional perspectives. Building on conceptual paradigms from C. W. Park et al. (2006) and Qinghua et al. (2019), Zhang et al. (2023) demonstrated that when a brand satisfies personal needs, it significantly influences brand attachment, ultimately impacting purchasing behavior and shaping both attitudinal and behavioral consumer loyalty. Similarly, Sun et al. (2024) found that brand authenticity (both product and firm authenticity) significantly impacts consumer perceptions of brand attachment and brand loyalty (Arya et al., 2019). In marketing, authenticity is valued for increasing credibility, reducing consumer skepticism, and fostering trust, which indirectly leads to loyalty and advocacy (Bulmer et al., 2024; Pérez, 2019). Empirical findings by Sun et al. (2024) and Deng et al. (2024) confirm that brand attachment, characterized by sentiment, dependence, identity, trust, and satisfaction, mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand loyalty. Specifically, Deng et al. (2024) found this mediation in international sports brands among Chinese consumers. When consumers feel a strong connection and affection for a brand, they are more likely to become loyal, provide positive word-of-mouth, and frequently choose that brand over competitors. Therefore, based on the results of previous research, the fourth hypothesis of this study is established as follows:

H4: Brand attachment (M) mediates the relationship between brand authenticity (X) and brand loyalty (Y)

Based on the literature review and the relationships between the variables included in this study, the conceptual framework, visualized in the image below, aims to help readers understand the research flow. This framework was designed after analyzing previous research journals by experts, with brand authenticity as the independent variable (X), brand loyalty as the dependent variable (Y), and brand attachment as the mediating variable (M).

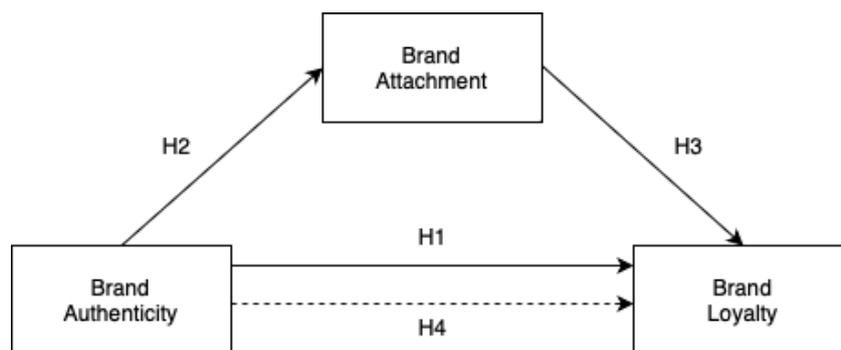


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

III. Research Method

In this study, the target population is consumers of the Somethinc skincare brand in Indonesia. The respondents selected as samples were Indonesian individuals who were familiar with the Somethinc brand, had purchased at least three Somethinc products, and used them for personal needs. Since the population size for this study is unknown, the sample size was estimated using the formula by Hair et al. (2021), which suggests that the ideal sample size is 10 times the number of indicators. Given that the questionnaire included 25 statement items, the initial estimated number of respondents for this study was 250. To obtain more valid data, researcher gather the necessary data for analysis, ultimately resulting in a final sample of 255 respondents. The demographic data from the respondents who participated in this research are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Sample Criteria (N = 255)

Measurement	N	%
Gender		
Female	218	85.5
Male	37	14.5
Age (years-old)		
<13	-	-
13 - 28	246	96.5
29 - 44	8	3.1
<4	1	0.4
Occupation		
Student	176	69
Entrepreneur	11	4.3
Private Employee	45	17.6
Freelancer	22	8.6
Housewife	1	0.4
Domicile		
DKI Jakarta	65	25.5
Banten	16	6.3
West Java	92	36.1
Central Java	14	5.5
East Java	31	12.2
Special Region of Yogyakarta	20	7.8
Outside of Java	17	6.7
Last Education Level		

Measurement	N	%
Elementary School	-	-
Junior High School	1	0.4
Senior High School	134	52.6
Diploma	6	2.4
Bachelor Degree	112	43.9
Master Degree	2	0.8
Doctor Degree	-	-
Monthly Spending		
>IDR6.000.000	38	14.9
IDR2.600.000 – IDR6.000.000	86	33.7
IDR1.000.000 – IDR 2.600.000	89	34.9
<IDR1.000.000	42	16.5

Out of 255 valid respondents, 85.5% (218) were female and 14.5% (37) were male. The majority, 96.5% (246), were Gen Z (13-28 years old). Regarding occupation, 69% (176) were students, 17.6% (45) were private employees, 8.6% (22) were freelancers or part-time workers, 4.3% were entrepreneurs, and 0.4% (1) was a homemaker. In terms of education, 52.6% (134) completed senior high school, followed by 43.9% (112) with a Bachelor's degree. Additionally, 2.4% (6) held a Diploma, 0.8% (2) had a Master's degree, and 0.4% (1) completed junior high and was pursuing high school. West Java was home to the largest proportion of respondents at 36.1% (92), followed by DKI Jakarta at 25.5% (65), East Java at 12.2% (31), and Yogyakarta at 7.8% (20). Other regions included outside Java (6.7% or 17), Banten (6.3% or 16), and Central Java (5.5% or 14). In terms of monthly expenditures, 34.9% (89) spent between IDR 1,000,000 and IDR 2,600,000 (lower-middle class). Another 33.7% (86) spent between IDR 2,600,000 and IDR 6,000,000 (upper-middle class). Furthermore, 16.5% (42) spent less than IDR 1,000,000 (lower class), and 14.9% (38) spent over IDR 6,000,000 (upper class).

This study was employed using a quantitative approach, utilizing both descriptive and causative methods. This involved testing the influence of one variable on others, with the findings then meticulously detailed in scientific literature, based on validated data (Aaker et al., 2018). For modeling and estimating the relationships between variables, the Partial Least Squares Path Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis technique, as discussed by Hair et al. (2021), will be adopted. This study specifically investigates the causal correlation among three variables: brand authenticity as the independent variable, brand loyalty as the dependent variable, and brand attachment as the intervening variable. Empirical data were collected from the distribution of questionnaires comprising five sections: consumer experience with Somethinc skincare products, respondent demographics, brand authenticity, brand attachment, and brand loyalty. The measurement scale for brand authenticity was adopted from Hyun et al. (2024), utilizing 7 measurement items. Brand attachment was measured using 12 items, adopted from Abdul Aziz et al. (2023), and brand loyalty was measured using 6 items, adopted from Ragab et al. (2024). Respondents will assess each of these measurement items using a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 2. Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Definition	Dimension & Indicator	Source
Brand Authenticity	Consumers perceive a brand as upholding its principles, understanding what it communicates, and fulfilling all its promises.	Product authenticity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Naturality - Authenticity - Accuracy - Ethics Corporate authenticity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsibility - Facilitate opinions - Sustainability 	(Hyun et al., 2024)

Variable	Definition	Dimension & Indicator	Source
Brand Attachment	Emotional-based connections originating from identity, beliefs, and satisfaction as depicted in the perspective of consumer assessment of a brand which create a situation of dependence from the consumer's side on the consumption behavior of a brand.	Brand passion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passion - Trust - Familiarity - Attractiveness - Delight Self-brand connection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embodiment of belief - Self-indication - Sense of belonging Brand Affection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positiveness - Happiness - Feeling good - Pride 	(Abdul Aziz et al., 2023)
Brand Loyalty	Sincere commitment that comes from consumers to consistently repeat purchases of products or services offered by the same brand from time to time accompanied by a reluctance to switch their options to other brands even when faced with situations and potential marketing efforts from other competitors which lead to a desire for advocacy from within to spread the quality of the related brand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First choice - Reuse intention - Regular consumption - Positive compliment - Recommendation - Encouragement of use 	(Ragab et al., 2024)

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Measurement Model Evaluation

Measurement model analysis is conducted to confirm that each indicator consistently assesses and correlates with its latent variable. (Hair et al., 2021). Therefore, reliability and validity tests are performed to measure this model. To calculate the reliability of each measurement item, the researchers used Cronbach's α and composite reliability as the constants. For validity testing, it is divided into convergent validity, assessed through outer loading and AVE values, and discriminant validity, assessed through cross-loading values. (Hair et al., 2021). The data presented in the following table are the reliability and convergent validity test results for each measurement item used in this study.

Table 3. Reliability and Convergent Validity Test

Constructs	Items	Loading Factor	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	AVE	
Brand Authenticity	Product authenticity	0.852			0.887	0.530
		0.757			0.846	0.578
	PA1	0.759				
	PA2	0.750				

Constructs		Items	Loading Factor	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	AVE
		PA3	0.754	0.715	0.841	0.638
		PA4	0.778			
	Corporate authenticity	CA1	0.825			
		CA2	0.770			
		CA3	0.799			
Brand Attachment	Brand passion		0.914	0.779	0.872	0.694
			0.818			
		BP1	0.777			
		BP2	0.771			
		BP3	0.763			
		BP4	0.737			
	BP5	0.757				
	Self-brand connection					
Brand affection		SBC1	0.796	0.813	0.877	0.641
		SBC2	0.855			
		SBC3	0.848			
		BA1	0.840			
		BA2	0.806			
		BA3	0.758			
		BA4	0.797			
Brand Loyalty			0.839	0.882	0.555	
		BL1	0.704			
		BL2	0.753			
		BL3	0.750			
		BL4	0.742			
		BL5	0.709			
		BL6	0.804			

Based on the calculations above, every item used proved to be reliable and persistent in assessing the constructs of brand authenticity, brand attachment, and brand loyalty. This is because they met the requirements for reliability, demonstrating Cronbach's α and composite reliability values exceeding 0.60 (Hair et al., 2020). Furthermore, all indicators included in explaining the variables satisfied the convergent validity requirement. Their outer loading values exceeded 0.70, and their AVE values surpassed 0.50 (Hair et al., 2021). This indicates that each item representing variables X, M, and Y has a high correlation with other items forming the same construct. In addition to convergent validity, another aspect of construct validity can be assessed by examining the cross-loadings to determine the discriminant validity of the research constructs. Based on data calculations, the discriminant validity of the research items used is as follows:

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

Item	BA	BAC	BAP	BL	BP	SBC
BA1	0.840	0.448	0.409	0.477	0.629	0.578

Item	BA	BAC	BAP	BL	BP	SBC
BA2	0.806	0.419	0.423	0.487	0.624	0.473
BA3	0.758	0.379	0.470	0.479	0.604	0.549
BA4	0.797	0.402	0.334	0.510	0.588	0.537
BAC1	0.402	0.825	0.625	0.333	0.412	0.364
BAC2	0.416	0.770	0.576	0.397	0.353	0.353
BAC3	0.418	0.799	0.602	0.322	0.393	0.397
BAP1	0.376	0.578	0.759	0.360	0.406	0.399
BAP2	0.387	0.537	0.750	0.389	0.421	0.451
BAP3	0.358	0.548	0.754	0.304	0.448	0.405
BAP4	0.430	0.625	0.778	0.300	0.414	0.366
BL1	0.381	0.265	0.235	0.704	0.453	0.508
BL2	0.443	0.376	0.380	0.753	0.465	0.464
BL3	0.457	0.255	0.356	0.750	0.530	0.547
BL4	0.463	0.337	0.339	0.742	0.473	0.363
BL5	0.428	0.364	0.281	0.709	0.382	0.284
BL6	0.541	0.370	0.376	0.804	0.480	0.460
BP1	0.598	0.347	0.404	0.538	0.777	0.520
BP2	0.535	0.390	0.470	0.445	0.771	0.569
BP3	0.551	0.323	0.417	0.421	0.763	0.569
BP4	0.666	0.468	0.435	0.530	0.737	0.500
BP5	0.553	0.313	0.384	0.449	0.757	0.591
SBC1	0.547	0.461	0.499	0.418	0.610	0.796
SBC2	0.515	0.320	0.399	0.481	0.600	0.855
SBC3	0.606	0.382	0.430	0.584	0.596	0.848

Since the cross-loading values have surpassed the minimum threshold of 0.70 which considered a safe limit and greater than their row-wise counterparts (Hair et al., 2021), each indicator used has met good discriminant validity standards. This indicates that every item demonstrates a low correlation with items forming different latent constructs.

4.2. Structural Model Evaluation

A structural model analysis was conducted to determine how much of the variance in the exogenous variables could explain the endogenous variables, and the magnitude of influence each latent variable had, based on path coefficients tested through bootstrapping calculations (Hair et al., 2021). Therefore, the steps taken to test this model involved measuring R-squared to assess the variation in independent variables explaining the dependent variables, and examining the magnitude and significance of the path coefficients to observe the relationships among each research construct (Hair et al., 2021). Here are the results of the coefficient of determination calculation for the structural model analysis in this research:

Table 5. R- Square Testing

Original Sample (O)	
Brand Attachment	0.368
Brand Loyalty	0.465

The output shows an R-squared value of 0.368 for the brand attachment variable and 0.465 for the brand loyalty variable. This indicates that 36.8% of the variability in brand attachment can be explained by the brand authenticity variable within the model, which is considered weak. Furthermore, 46.5% of the variability in brand loyalty can be explained by the brand authenticity and brand attachment variables in the model, which is also categorized as weak. Subsequently, hypothesis testing in this research was performed by analyzing the significance and values of the path coefficients. The research model, shown in the figure below, serves to visualize the constructs utilized and the directional relationships between the latent variables in this research.

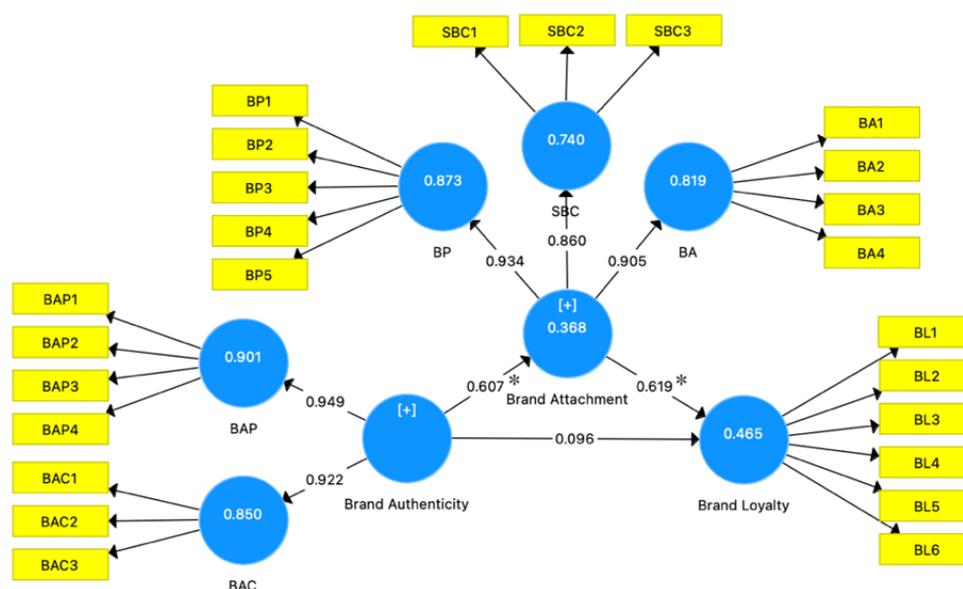


Figure 2. Research Model

The calculation of path coefficients yielded results that demonstrate the value and significance of each variable relationship. Path coefficients close to +1 indicate a perfect positive relationship, -1 indicates a strong negative relationship, and 0 signifies no relationship (Hair et al., 2017). Hair et al. (2021) classify the strength of relationships as strong (0.75), moderate (0.50), and weak (0.25) based on path coefficient values. For significance, a correlation is considered significant if its significance level is below alpha (0.05) and the T-statistic exceeds the t-table value (1.96) (Hair et al., 2021). Which the results for the path coefficient calculations in this study can be seen in the following table. The results are presented in the table below:

Table 6. Path Coefficient

Hypothesis	O	T Statistics	P Values	Results
Brand Authenticity → Brand Loyalty	0.096	1.259	0.104	Unsupported
Brand Authenticity → Brand Attachment	0.607	10.439	0.000	Supported
Brand Attachment → Brand Loyalty	0.619	9.338	0.000	Supported

Based on the hypothesis testing results above, further explanation can be provided as follows:

Hypothesis 1 aimed to determine whether brand authenticity influences brand loyalty for Somethinc's local skincare products. The tests yielded the following results: O = 0.096, T-statistics = 1.259, and P-values = 0.104. These findings lead to the rejection of the alternative hypothesis (Ha) and the acceptance of the null hypothesis (H0). This indicates that brand authenticity does not have a direct, significant impact on brand loyalty for Somethinc's local skincare products.

Hypothesis 2 aimed to confirm whether brand authenticity influences brand attachment for Somethinc's local skincare products. The tests conducted yielded the following results: $O = 0.607$, T -statistics = 10.439, and P -values = 0.000. These findings support the alternative hypothesis (H_a), indicating a significant positive influence of brand authenticity on brand attachment for Somethinc's local skincare products.

Hypothesis 3 aimed to confirm whether brand attachment influences brand loyalty for Somethinc's local skincare products. The tests conducted yielded the following results: $O = 0.619$, T -statistics = 9.338, and P -values = 0.000. These findings support the alternative hypothesis (H_a), indicating a significant positive influence of brand attachment on brand loyalty for Somethinc's local skincare products. Furthermore, the mediation analysis in this research was conducted using the bootstrapping method within SmartPLS. This approach was employed to address the hypotheses and ascertain the mediating variable's influence on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, resulting in the following findings:

Table 7. Mediation Testing

Hypothesis	O	T Statistics	P Values	Results
Brand Authenticity → Brand Attachment → Brand Loyalty	0.376	6.806	0.000	Supported

Based on the mediation test results above, further explanation can be provided as follows:

Hypothesis 4 aimed to confirm whether brand attachment mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand loyalty for Somethinc's local skincare products. The tests conducted yielded an O value of 0.376, a T -statistic of 6.806, and a P -value of 0.000. These results indicate acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a), demonstrating that brand attachment significantly mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand loyalty for Somethinc's local skincare products.

4.3. Discussion

The following provides a more detailed explanation of the variable relationships, based on both the results of data processing and findings from similar prior publications:

4.3.1. The Impact of Brand Authenticity on Brand Loyalty

Hypothesis 1 (H_a) was rejected, indicating that brand authenticity does not directly and significantly impact brand loyalty for Somethinc local skincare products, with an O -value of 0.096, T -statistics of 1.259, and P -values of 0.104. This suggests that consumers' perception of Somethinc as an authentic brand offering high-quality, safe local skincare ingredients doesn't automatically translate into loyalty, especially given the abundance of similar products in the market. Therefore, consumer loyalty to Somethinc in Indonesia appears to be driven by factors other than brand authenticity. This finding contrasts with studies by Busser & Shulga (2019) and Xu et al. (2022), which found a direct link between authenticity and brand loyalty in US coffee shops and Beijing's time-honored restaurants, respectively. The discrepancy likely stems from significant differences in industry sectors and respondent demographics. While the previous studies focused on the hospitality and F&B industries, this research centered on the Indonesian beauty industry, specifically local skincare products.

The fast-moving nature of beauty trends and continuous innovation in the beauty market provide consumers with numerous product alternatives. Coupled with aggressive marketing strategies, including collaborations with beauty influencers promoting new skincare routines, consumers are prone to switching behavior. While brand authenticity might initially drive purchases, the many external influences encouraging the use of other beauty products mean that authenticity alone may not lead to long-term loyalty. The authentic value delivered by a brand through its products and marketing communications doesn't necessarily

result in repeat purchases or recommendations. The study's findings are further supported by the demographic profile of the respondents, who were predominantly from lower-middle-income social classes with monthly expenditures ranging from Rp1,000,000 to Rp2,600,000. For this group, the emergence of "dupe" skincare brands offering more affordable alternatives to Somethinc (which typically costs Rp100,000 or more) can easily lead to brand switching. Additionally, the majority of respondents were students who had completed high school, indicating their high exposure to various digital information. This reliance on digital media, including numerous reviews and information about skincare products from different brands, influences them to try a variety of products to satisfy their curiosity rather than remaining loyal to a single brand long-term. This highlights that many factors can influence brand loyalty in the skincare product market.

4.3.2. The Impact of Brand Authenticity on Brand Attachment

Hypothesis 2 (Ha) was accepted, demonstrating that brand authenticity significantly and positively influences brand attachment for the local skincare brand Somethinc. The analysis yielded an O value of 0.607, a T-statistic of 10.439, and a P-value of 0.000. These results indicate that Indonesian consumers' perception of Somethinc as an authentic local skincare brand—one with clear values, understanding of its messaging, and consistent fulfillment of commitments—leads to emotional dependence and attachment to the brand's consumption patterns and engagement. This finding aligns with previous research, such as Sun et al. (2024) which found that brand authenticity in Korean beauty products positively impacts brand attachment among Chinese consumers. Similarly, Lin & Ku (2023) showed that brand authenticity predicts brand attachment in the luxury fashion industry, citing Choi et al. (2014) who found a positive relationship between brand authenticity and brand attachment in sports brands. As consumers increasingly value authenticity, they tend to form emotional bonds with brands that consistently embody these characteristics (Lin & Ku, 2023). This is because consumers feel more relevant and connected to brands that demonstrate originality, transparency, and consistency in their values and promises. Given that skincare products directly affect consumers' faces and physical appearance, they are more likely to feel emotionally connected to beauty brands perceived as authentic—those that are honest about ingredients, production processes, prioritize natural elements, and avoid over-claiming product benefits. The study's findings are further supported by the demographic of the respondents, predominantly Gen Z (ages 13-28). Gen Z consumers are highly aware of social and environmental issues, integrating these concerns into their daily lives. For instance, they prioritize using local products, natural ingredients, oppose animal testing, and support environmental sustainability. Consumers perceive Somethinc as a local beauty brand that is cruelty-free certified, uses natural "hero" ingredients, and actively preserves the ecosystem through eco-friendly packaging and participation in environmental conservation efforts. This genuine authenticity fostered by Somethinc resonates with consumers' values, creating a strong self-brand connection that leads to brand attachment.

4.3.3. The Influence of Brand Attachment on Brand Loyalty

Hypothesis 3 (Ha) was accepted, confirming that brand attachment significantly and positively influences brand loyalty for the local skincare brand Somethinc. The results show an O value of 0.619, T-statistics of 9.338, and P-values of 0.000. This indicates that consumers' emotional connection to Somethinc, encompassing passion, self-brand connection, and affection derived from positive experiences and alignment with personal values, fosters loyalty. This loyalty is demonstrated by Somethinc being their primary choice for skincare and their willingness to positively recommend it to others without incentive. Similar findings were reported by Ahmad & Akbar (2023) in the hospitality sector, where brand attachment positively impacted brand loyalty among 4- and 5-star hotel consumers in Pakistan. Lin & Ku (2023) also found a significant positive relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty in their study of digital brand experiences on luxury fashion brands' official Instagram accounts. Lin & Ku (2023) attributed this to Carlston (1992) finding that deeper consumer associations with a brand lead to stronger brand-consumer relationships. The

more profound the emotional connection between a brand and an individual consumer, fostered by positive feelings and memories, the higher their brand loyalty. When consumers are loyal to a brand, they are more willing to make repeated purchases of the same brand. They also develop a genuine commitment to the brand, becoming willing to recommend it to others as a way of showing support and appreciation.

This study's findings are further supported by the demographic of respondents, predominantly female. While self-care products are now more diverse in their use, women often exhibit stronger emotional attachment, particularly to skincare. Naturally, women tend to be influenced by their emotions when making judgments and decisions. This extends to brand loyalty in personal care. Given societal expectations for women to engage in self-care, they have a high level of emotional involvement with these products. When consumers develop a strong brand attachment due to the emotional value a beauty brand provides, they tend to be loyal in their personal consumption and are eager to recommend the products to others.

4.3.4. The Influence of Brand Authenticity on Brand Loyalty Mediated by Brand Attachment

This study confirms Hypothesis 4 (Ha), showing that brand authenticity significantly and positively influences brand loyalty for the local skincare brand Somethinc, with brand attachment acting as a mediator. The mediation analysis, with values of $O = 0.376$, T-statistics = 6.806, and P-values = 0.000, indicates a significant indirect effect. Following Hair et al. (2021), the significant indirect effect combined with an insignificant direct effect between brand authenticity and brand loyalty confirms a full mediation (indirect-only) scenario. This means brand authenticity alone cannot directly foster brand loyalty; instead, brand attachment is crucial for this relationship to become significant. The presence of brand attachment, encompassing brand passion, brand affection, and self-brand connection, is essential for establishing loyalty toward Somethinc. These findings align with recent research. Sun et al. (2024) found that Chinese consumers developed loyalty to authentic imported Korean beauty products only when an emotional connection was forged. Similarly, Deng et al. (2024) identified brand attachment as a mediator bridging brand authenticity and loyalty for international sports brands among Chinese consumers. When a brand consistently aligns its information and values with consumer expectations, it stimulates emotional attachment. This is because high authenticity fosters positive attitudes and trust, which are foundational for brand attachment. Brand attachment signifies a deep emotional bond, stemming from product satisfaction and the brand's resonance with a consumer's values, lifestyle, and culture. This emotional connection not only strengthens a consumer's sense of identity with the brand but also enhances loyalty by reinforcing loyal attitudes and behaviors.

This study's focus on a skincare brand further supports these findings. Like cosmetics and sports brands in the studies by Sun et al. (2024) and Deng et al. (2024), these studies all demonstrate a significant positive connection between authenticity, attachment, and loyalty, particularly for products consumers use to enhance their appearance. In today's competitive beauty and apparel industries, consumers often face cheaper alternatives. If purchasing decisions were solely based on price, consumers would easily switch to "dupe" products. However, when brands prioritize emotional connections, they stand out by giving consumers a reason to care, not just to buy. An authentic skincare brand that creates consistency between expectations and offerings, fostering an emotional connection that reflects consumers' values and self-identity, transforms from a mere product provider into a lifestyle partner. Therefore, for Somethinc to build long-term loyalty, its authenticity must resonate with consumers' intrinsic values, forming an emotionally built attachment.

V. Conclusion

This research indicates that brand authenticity does not directly influence brand loyalty for Somethinc products among Indonesian consumers. However, brand authenticity has a positive and significant effect on brand attachment. This means consumers' perception of Somethinc's genuineness can foster a strong emotional connection. Furthermore, brand attachment was found to have a significant positive impact

on brand loyalty. Most importantly, brand attachment serves as a full mediator between brand authenticity and brand loyalty. This suggests that in the beauty industry, like with Somethinc, brand authenticity will only drive loyalty if a strong emotional bond (brand attachment) is formed with consumers.

This study, while providing insights into Indonesian consumers' perceptions of Somethinc skincare products, is limited by its specific focus on one brand and its sole reliance on Indonesian respondents. Future research expanding the scope to include other brands, industries, and international demographics would be beneficial for achieving more broadly applicable and generalizable conclusions. Such recommendations based on the research findings, conclusions, and limitations are further research should investigate potential reasons why brand authenticity doesn't directly and significantly impact brand loyalty for local skincare products among Indonesian consumers. Since brand authenticity only significantly influences brand loyalty when mediated by brand attachment, Somethinc should focus on building emotional connections with consumers. This includes fostering passion, self-brand connection, and affection to deepen their engagement with Somethinc and secure their loyalty. Other local skincare brands could enhance their competitiveness by benchmarking factors that drive Somethinc's brand loyalty among Indonesian consumers. This strategy would reduce the market share of imported products and boost the domestic economy. Finally, future research could explore other mediation effects, as this study only examined one.

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