Impacts of Consumer-Brand Identification for Strengthening the Sustainability of Malaysian Fashion Brands

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***Abstract*— The study is to examine the impact of consumer-brand identification (CBI) to strengthen the sustainability of Malaysian Fashion Brands (MFBs) that are facing competitive fights in the marketplace. A report showed that approximately 90% of MFBs that falls in SME category have to close down their businesses due to lacking in consumer-brand relationship as a competitive edge. The study had developed an integrated framework where CBI as the independent variable and Brand Loyalty as the dependent variable in creating consistent high values positively perceived through Brand Community that serves as a mediator. The moderating effect of individual heterogeneity of brand preferences among MFB consumers also being examined. The data was collected from 115 respondents of MFBs' consumers by using non-probability sampling of convenient and snowball sampling techniques. A causal model was developed and tested in SEM-PLS and the results indicated that there was no significant relationship between CBI and brand loyalty however, brand community potentially full mediated the relationship of CBI and brand loyalty as well as individual heterogeneity moderated significantly the relationship. Future implications and limitations of the research study were discussed based on the research findings.**

Keywords*—Consumer-brand Identification, Brand Loyalty, Brand Community, Individual Heterogeneity, Business Sustainability*

1. Introduction

Malaysian fashion industry is facing the forever fast-changing trends from international influences that really force major shopping malls in Malaysia like Pavillion, Midvalley, The Garden, One Utama, MyTown, Sunway Velocity Mall and SkyAvenue and others to offer the latest designs to cater different preferences of Malaysia consumers. Thus, creating high and fierce competitions between local and international fashion brands in the market scene. The penetration of international fashion brands is rising at the fast pace by Uniqlo, H&M, Cotton On, Zara and Mango as they have opened many outlets across Malaysia. Meanwhile, local Malaysian Fashion Brands (MFBs) like Padini, Vincci, Anakku, Polo Haus, Sugarscarf, D'yana, Eclipse, Innai Red, Bellaammara, Variante and others only can attract consumers by offering their products at affordable prices. On the contrary, the international brands attack the Malaysian counterparts mainly on strong global reputations of their brands where MFBs could not resist such implications especially those that fall under SMEs category [1], [2].

1.1 Problem of Statement

In today's fierce competition, the exploitation of desirability of buying is to enhance consumers' purchasing urge through strong consumer-brand relationships. Many fashion brands have survived as they closely practice Consumer-Brand Identification (CBI) as competitive edge [3]. Past literatures suggested that brand relationship led consumers buying a brand not to how the brand works but to how the brand gave meanings [4], [5], [6], [7]. In addition, CBI have assisted fashion brands to retain

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their existing consumers [8].

However, MFBs especially for those under SMEs category, failed to keep consumers to buy and be loyal thus, making them lacking in reputation and affecting their sustainability in business [9], [10]. In addition, there were very few studies had examined on the impacts of relational factors between CBI and brand loyalty as well as investigated on the relationship building in brand community activities of MFBs. Therefore, a research on consumers' participation in community identification is crucial for further exploration.

Furthermore, the prevalence of e-commerce, makes businesses realizing the crucial of building brand loyalty through online brand communities where consumers can share their interests and interactions with others [11]. [5] argued that trust developed in the community will encourage members to have high level of loyalty as their commitment. [12] also supported that community commitment is an important determinant of brand loyalty. Furthermore, it is crucial to examine to what extent the variables such as CBI, brand community, brand loyalty as well as individual heterogeneity of brand preferences tendencies would affect Malaysian consumers' buying behaviour in the marketplace. under SMEs category [1], [2].

1.2 Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to explore the potential dimensions of CBI to strengthen brand loyalty as a strategy for the sustainability of MFBs as below;

1. To examine the mediating effect of Brand Community towards relationship between CBI and Brand Loyalty

2. To assess the moderating effect of Individual heterogeneity of brand preferences amongst consumers towards Brand loyalty

3. To investigate the effects of CBI towards building Brand Loyalty as a strategy for strengthening the MFBs

2 Literature Reviews

Proliferation of new emerging brands and fierce competition in the marketplace have been a top priority in brand marketing strategy in avoiding failures. Thus, many businesses have committed in confronting the issue of sustainability and focused on the notion of brand loyalty to enhance brand equity and increase profitability [13]. Based on consumers' perspective, past studies have explored further in the value perception for consumers' retention prospect [14], [15]. The viewpoint has put CBI as the antecedent of strong brand loyalty based on positive result in consumers' satisfaction towards their preferable brands [16], [17].

2.1 Conceptual Framework

For any successful brand, there is always a high tendency of having strong consumer-brand relationship that develops loyalty [3]. CBI has emerged as a concept of interest in its role in influencing consumers' behaviour. As in consumers' views, a strong brand should provide individual expression of their personality [18], [19].

In this research study, a conceptual framework was formed based on the underpinning theory of Social Identity and Self-Categorisation [20], [21] and supported by secondary data from past studies as shown in Figure 1;

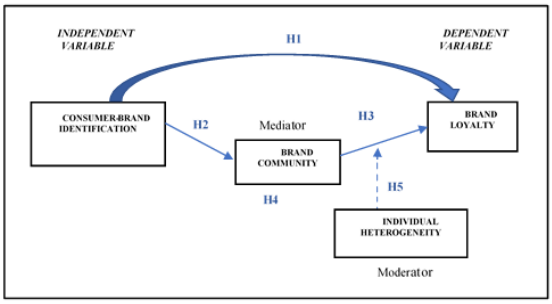

Figure 1. CBI Approach as a Strategy for Strengthening the Sustainability of MFBs

2.1.1 Theory of Social Identity and Self-Categorization

Social identity theory (SIT) is a social psychological theory that was introduced by Tajfel and further developed by Tajfel and Turner [20], [21]. It proposed that individuals categorize themselves as belonging to certain groups. Together with self-categorization, they evaluate the groups that they feel belonged to (in-groups) and groups they do not consider themselves a member of (out-groups).

To determine the in-group and out-group values, they constantly categorize, evaluate in-groups and out-groups and compare their values. Social categorization, group evaluation, and the value of group memberships for the self-concept constitute an individual's social identity.

2.1.2 Hypotheses Development

Consumers use brand to create and communicate of their self-concepts in identifying themselves to share same personality traits and values of a particular brand. Thus, CBI emphasizes on these strategies to create an attractive brand identity and to organize a community for close attachment in interactions [22].

Past studies showed that it is crucial to learn the effects of consumer value in CBI to develop strong brand loyalty [16], [23] through increasing in product utilization [24], repurchasing frequency [3], advocating the brand to others [25], the impacts of word-of-mouth (WOM) [26], purchase intention [27] and consumer commitment [28]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed;

H1: CBI has significant effect on brand loyalty of MFBs Consumers

The strength of the consumer's relationship with brand community can be seen in consumer-community identification [29]. It reflects cognitively in members belonged to a brand community and perceived similarities among them. The affective component of consumer's emotional involves with the community as commitment with feelings, attachment and belongingness [30]. Meanwhile, cognitive self-categorization happened through consumers' comparing of their definitional characteristics with those that define the community [31]. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is put forward;

H2: CBI significantly relates to Brand Community development of MFBs

The advantageous in active brand community interactions are able to increase success rates of new products in retaining consumers [32], [33], [19], [26]. In addition, identification with the brand community attributes to consumers' willingness to share their knowledge with other members thus, leads to further advocacy [5], [25]. [32] indicated that the level of loyalty was closely related to consumers purchase behaviours resulting from highly interactive community in information, self-discovery, social integration, social enhancement and entertainment. [34] argued that brand loyalty was integrated in brand identity and brand-identification value, trust and satisfaction perceived by consumers in such community engagements. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed;

H3: Brand Community has significant effects on Brand Loyalty of MFBs

In relationship marketing, the focus is on the intensity and closeness of relationship quality in influencing loyalty amongst consumers [32]. Thus, giving impact towards consumers' decisions in maintaining, building or withdrawing from such relationships.

Seemingly, the successful relationships in brand community is based on the interpersonal and commercial relationships and loyalty is a relational outcome variable in many marketing strategies [35]. It is a powerful indication of long-term and sustainability performance in business relationships [9], [10]. Thus, there is a potential that brand community mediates the relationship between CBI and brand loyalty and hypothesized as;

H4: Brand Community is the mediating variable between CBI and Brand Loyalty

In addition, past studies on brand loyalty have argued for the important of taking individual heterogeneity into consideration [36,] [37], [38]. As such, individual heterogeneity needs to be considered in the analysis on the effects of loyalty determinants. A moderation specification of individual heterogeneity of brand preference can assist to increase loyalty and enrich existing knowledge [24]. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed as below;

H5: Individual heterogeneity is the moderating factor in Brand Loyalty of MFBs

3 Methodology

The study used a quantitative method to get data of MFBs consumers' perspective. Data was gathered via web-based questionnaires in online cross-sectional survey in non-probability snowball sampling techniques due to time constraints and relatively ease of access [39]. The technique would eliminate the difficulty involved in surveying the population. The representative sampling of the population was selected on those who resided in Klang Valley areas of Kuala Lumpur and major cities in Selangor through email and via Social Networks (SNs) like Facebook, WhatsApp's and SMS.

G-Power 3.1 software was used to calculate the sample size with the setting as follows: f2 = 0.15

(medium), $\alpha = 0.05$ and number of predictors = 3, the power was set at 95% and the sample size required to test this model was 89. The researcher used Partial Least Square Path Modelling (SEM-PLS) to analyse the causal relationship models in the study. [40] supported that more than half of all models estimated with SEM-PLS drew on sample sizes of 100 or less for strategic management studies.

The survey questionnaires were distributed to 250 respondents, out of which 35 responses found incomplete or consisted missing data that could not be used in the analysis and another 100 respondents did not respond at all. Due to time constraint [39], a total of 115 responses were successfully being analysed to get the findings of the study which gave 46% of success rate in the survey. A seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree were used to measure responses for CBI, brand community, brand loyalty and individual heterogeneity variables in the study.

Table 1. Adopted Measurements

Constructs	No. of Items	Sources
CBI:	**16 items**	
Cognitive	4 items	Aaker (1997); Steenkamp & Gielens, (2003); Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006; Bergami & Bagozzi 2000; Lam et al., (2013); Netemeyer et al. (2004); Tuškej, Golob & Podnar (2013); Maria (2014)
Affective	4 items	
Self–Brand Congruity	4 Items	
Consumer-Innate Innovativeness	4 items	
Brand Community;	**52 items**	Liang et al. (2014); Garbarino & Johnson (1999); Maria (2014); Baldus et al., (2015); Zhao et al., (2015); Jeong & Khoo (2015)
Community Engagement	20 items	
Relationship Quality	16 items	
Online Reviews	16 items	
Brand Loyalty;	**8 items**	Krystallis & Chrysochou, (2014); Dawes et al., (2015); Kim & Knutson, (2016); Doyle et al., (2013)
Behavioral Loyalty	4 items	
Attitudinal Loyalty	4 items	
Individual Heterogeneity;	**24 items**	Kim et al., (2009); Wang, et al., (2015)
Interdependent Construal	4 items	
Independent Construal	4 items	
Continuance Intention	4 items	
Public Self-conscious	4 items	
Community Rewards	4 items	
Consumers' Participation	4 items	

This study adopted measurements from previous studies as shown in table 1 and at the same time tried to adapt them in the study.

4 Data Analysis

For data analysis, the researcher used SPSS software to analyse the descriptive data. Whereas, to estimate measurement and structural models of the study, Partial Least Square Path Modelling (PLS) as a component-based Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to analyse the causal relationships among the variables in the study by using SmartPLS 3 Software [41].

4.1 Respondent's Profile

The sample selected for this study were MFBs customers with demographic characteristic in various variables including gender, age, educational background, income level and others by using SPSS software.

Based on the analysis, 115 respondents where female respondents are 59% and male respondents are 41%. They are presented by almost 49% aged between 25 to 34 years old and 33% aged between 18 to 24 years old. Only 2.6% of the responses comes from respondents above 55 years old. 47% of the respondents works full time and 30% is college or university students. Majority of the respondents' income group between RM2000 to RM5000.00 monthly and these characteristics shown by their educational background of having 36 % bachelor degree and 27% master degree. Meanwhile, 28% of the respondents stays in Wilayah Persekutuan, Kuala Lumpur and the rests stay in neighbouring cities in Selangor.

The analysis shows that 68% purchases online indicating that online buying is increasingly popular in Malaysia. 76% of respondents is members to MFBs community while 75% of them has a frequency of buying four to six times in a six-month period. The figures clearly stated that there is possibility that MFBs have pool of loyal customers. Lastly, the most favourite fashion is clothes 62% and accessories (handbags, shoes, etc.) 20%.

4.2 Measurement Model

The purpose of measurement model is to examine the evidence of convergence and discriminant validities and reliability as well as internal consistencies of all items in a proposed model. All constructs need to be linked in a path in the proposed model of Figure 2 by using SmartPLS 3.0 software [41].

4.2.1 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is a degree to which multiple items to measure the same concept consistently in agreement. As suggested by [42], the factor loadings, composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) are applied to assess convergent validity. The recommended values for loadings are set at > 0.5, the average variance extracted (AVE) should be > 0.5 and the composite reliability (CR) should be > 0.7. Figure 3 shows the measurement model that was run under PLS Algorithm. CBI and Brand Community were considered as second order constructs as the repeated indicators considered as second order factors in the measurement model of PLS analysis [43], [44]. In Table 2, the results show that the measurement model exceeded the recommended values thus, indicating sufficient convergent validity after eliminating loadings less than 0.7 leaving 66 items for further analysis.

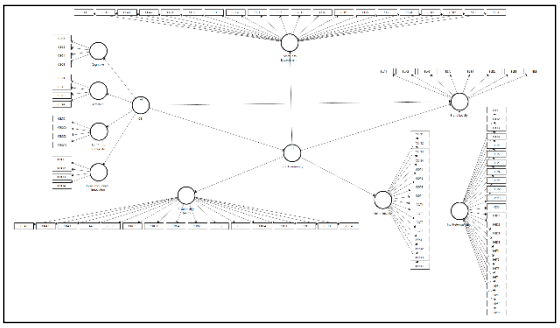

Figure 2. Proposed Model

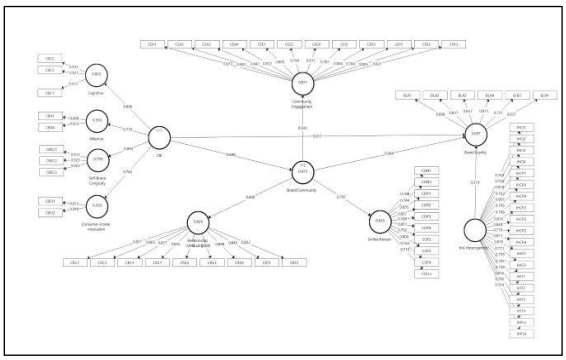

Figure 3. PLS Algorithm Analysis of Measurement Model

4.2.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to difference in certain constructs compared to others in the study assessed by comparing the squared root of AVE values for each construct to be greater than other inter-factor correlations to provide evidence of discriminant validity [45]. It is critical to test the constructs for discriminant validity to verify that the scales developed measuring different constructs in the study.BI and Brand Community were considered as second order constructs as the repeated indicators considered as second order factors in the measurement model of PLS analysis [43], [44]. In Table 2, the results show that the measurement model exceeded the recommended values thus, indicating sufficient convergent validity after eliminating loadings less than 0.7 leaving 66 items for further analysis.

Table 2. Convergent Validity

	Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	Ave. Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
First Order Constructs	Cognitive	CBC1	0.913	0.850	0.944	0.912
		CBC2	0.932			
		CBC3	0.921			
	Affective	CBA1	0.898	0.838	0.912	0.809
		CBA4	0.933			
	Self-Brand Congruity	CBSC1	0.912	0.819	0.943	0.910
		CBSC2	0.925			
		CBSC3	0.923			
	Consumer-Innate Innovation	CBCI1	0.913	0.867	0.929	0.849
		CBCI2	0.949			
	Community Engagement	CEA1	0.873	0.659	0.959	0.953
		CEA2	0.802			
		CEA3	0.843			
		CEA4	0.812			
		CEE1	0.805			
		CEE2	0.794			
		CEE4	0.811			
		CEI3	0.781			
		CEP2	0.804			
		CEP3	0.784			
		CER2	0.805			
		CER3	0.821			
	Relationship Quality	CRC2	0.831	0.726	0.960	0.953
		CRC3	0.805			
		CRC4	0.877			
		CRS1	0.855			
		CRS2	0.848			
		CRS3	0.886			
		CRS4	0.898			
		CRT1	0.845			
		CRT2	0.822			
	Online Review	CON1	0.788	0.634	0.945	0.935
		CON3	0.744			
		COP1	0.855			
		COP2	0.857			
		COP3	0.789			
		COP4	0.851			
		COT2	0.792			
		COT3	0.800			
		COT4	0.763			
		COU3	0.710			
	Brand Loyalty	BLA1	0.868	0.697	0.932	0.912
		BLA2	0.837			
		BLA3	0.857			
		BLA4	0.871			
		BLB2	0.731			
		BLA4	0.837			
	Individual Heterogeneity	IHCI1	0.763	0.628	0.970	0.967
		IHCI2	0.792			
		IHCI3	0.819			
		IHCI4	0.762			
		IHCP1	0.807			
		IHCP3	0.756			
		IHCP4	0.798			
		IHCR2	0.849			
		IHCR3	0.779			
		IHCR4	0.811			
		IHID2	0.819			
		IHID3	0.771			
		IHIT1	0.799			
		IHIT2	0.784			
		IHIT3	0.748			
		IHIT4	0.836			
		IHPS2	0.786			
		IHPS4	0.764			
Second Order Constructs	CBI	Cognitive	0.896	0.600	0.937	0.924
		Affective	0.770			
		Self-Brand Congruity	0.894			
		Consumer-Innate Innovation	0.742			
	Brand Community	Community Engagement	0.933	0.524	0.971	0.969
		Relationship Quality	0.909			
		Online Review	0.797			

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

No.	Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	Affective	**0.915**										
2.	Brand Community	0.588	**0.724**									
3.	Brand Loyalty	0.438	0.760	**0.835**								
4.	CBI	0.770	0.688	0.570	**0.775**							
5.	Cognitive	0.601	0.595	0.498	0.896	**0.922**						
6.	Community Engagement	0.571	0.933	0.642	0.659	0.550	**0.812**					
7.	Consumer-Innate Innovat	0.372	0.463	0.370	0.742	0.630	0.469	**0.931**				
8.	Ind. Heterogeneity	0.500	0.748	0.798	0.596	0.512	0.650	0.354	**0.793**			
9.	Online Review	0.475	0.797	0.660	0.522	0.497	0.610	0.278	0.625	**0.796**		
10.	Relationship Quality	0.499	0.909	0.722	0.622	0.526	0.807	0.449	0.711	0.576	**0.852**	
11.	Self-Brand Congruity	0.649	0.627	0.553	0.894	0.678	0.602	0.564	0.579	0.455	0.583	**0.920**

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the AVE should be higher than the off-diagonals which represent the correlations among constructs in the study

In Table 3, it can be seen that almost all of the diagonal values are greater than the values in their respective row and column, However, squared root of AVE Brand Community and CBI are lower than other constructs, indicating that the measures used in this study are not quite distinct. However, the results showed the highest square root of AVE was 0.931 (Consumer-Innate Innovation) and the lowest was 7.24 (Brand Community). Thus, the results presented in Tables 3 demonstrates inadequate discriminant validity.

Therefore, Table 4 loadings and cross loading procedure were conducted based on Fornell and Larker criterion and Chin cross-loadings [45], [46]. Past reviews of PLS suggested that the method had been widely applied in management information systems [47] as well as in marketing and strategic management [40]. Hence in the marketing studies, [40] showed that the engagement of discriminant validity assessment used the Fornell-Larker criterion [45] at 72.08%, cross-loadings at 7.79% or both at 26.13%.

While past studies had noted that cross-loadings were more liberal in terms of indicating discriminant validity when the Fornell-Larker criterion [45] failed to do so [40], [48]. Therefore, researcher applied the method to show discriminant validity to be distinctive and confirmed by using [46], [40], [48] cross-loadings recommendations when the Fornell-Larker criterion [45] failed to identify the discriminant validity of the study.

4.3 Structural Model

Structural model evaluation is an assessment that is predictive on causal relationship between constructs in the model [49]. The model involves the causal links between variables particularly the inner path model which are usually hypothesized theoretical model [51]. The structural model was assessed after checking for validity and reliability of the constructs in the measurement model and then followed by a bootstrap in re-sampling procedure of 1000 sub-samples to generate the t-values which permit the β values (path coefficients) to be made statistically significance of each path coefficient and to provide estimation for all parameter.

Table 4. Loadings and Cross loadings

Items	Brand Loyalty	Affective	Cognitive	Consumer - Innate	Brand Self-Congruity	Comm. Engagement	Online Review	R/ship Quality	Ind. Heterogeneity
BLA1	**0.868**	0.385	0.489	0.370	0.470	0.519	0.464	0.619	0.657
BLA2	**0.837**	0.392	0.438	0.410	0.490	0.524	0.540	0.605	0.597
BLA3	**0.857**	0.418	0.509	0.313	0.494	0.552	0.598	0.690	0.719
BLA4	**0.871**	0.383	0.433	0.201	0.463	0.585	0.669	0.614	0.730
BLB2	**0.731**	0.239	0.297	0.289	0.384	0.534	0.473	0.523	0.614
BLB4	**0.837**	0.366	0.307	0.287	0.464	0.495	0.537	0.547	0.627
CBA1	0.325	**0.898**	0.479	0.337	0.477	0.439	0.343	0.379	0.408
CBA4	0.465	**0.933**	0.611	0.344	0.692	0.593	0.511	0.521	0.500
CBC1	0.460	0.511	**0.913**	0.522	0.576	0.441	0.446	0.431	0.474
CBC2	0.472	0.613	**0.932**	0.576	0.566	0.526	0.451	0.492	0.461
CBC3	0.494	0.538	**0.921**	0.637	0.724	0.548	0.477	0.527	0.480
CBCI1	0.263	0.217	0.483	**0.913**	0.452	0.338	0.180	0.330	0.248
CBCI2	0.408	0.447	0.668	**0.949**	0.583	0.516	0.322	0.488	0.394
CBSC1	0.514	0.583	0.634	0.519	**0.912**	0.548	0.443	0.509	0.496
CBSC2	0.536	0.659	0.674	0.496	**0.925**	0.574	0.447	0.545	0.568
CBSC3	0.474	0.545	0.559	0.544	**0.923**	0.541	0.363	0.556	0.533
CEA1	0.563	0.572	0.436	0.355	0.543	**0.873**	0.569	0.663	0.595
CEA2	0.476	0.327	0.419	0.300	0.389	**0.802**	0.449	0.610	0.452
CEA3	0.495	0.433	0.359	0.361	0.464	**0.843**	0.502	0.632	0.486
CEA4	0.581	0.429	0.494	0.432	0.519	**0.812**	0.458	0.744	0.578
CEE1	0.407	0.446	0.382	0.297	0.409	**0.805**	0.450	0.634	0.448
CEE2	0.467	0.360	0.512	0.522	0.422	**0.794**	0.543	0.645	0.439
CTE4	0.510	0.432	0.359	0.328	0.437	**0.811**	0.454	0.710	0.483
CEI3	0.643	0.671	0.579	0.548	0.627	**0.781**	0.547	0.696	0.586
CEP2	0.482	0.461	0.418	0.362	0.562	**0.804**	0.437	0.629	0.527
CEP3	0.539	0.519	0.428	0.377	0.481	**0.784**	0.530	0.615	0.597
CER2	0.547	0.436	0.462	0.330	0.531	**0.805**	0.451	0.632	0.575
CER3	0.532	0.457	0.498	0.349	0.474	**0.821**	0.539	0.643	0.560
CON1	0.420	0.344	0.248	0.155	0.276	0.439	**0.788**	0.317	0.469
CON3	0.480	0.192	0.198	0.126	0.319	0.402	**0.744**	0.348	0.473
COP1	0.517	0.362	0.424	0.133	0.309	0.448	**0.855**	0.441	0.474
COP2	0.538	0.322	0.392	0.205	0.300	0.481	**0.857**	0.450	0.474
COP3	0.500	0.359	0.308	0.154	0.414	0.405	**0.789**	0.392	0.414
COP4	0.501	0.348	0.475	0.236	0.270	0.477	**0.851**	0.405	0.470
COT2	0.555	0.578	0.411	0.289	0.429	0.571	**0.792**	0.539	0.552
COT3	0.627	0.372	0.596	0.394	0.492	0.620	**0.800**	0.579	0.561
COT4	0.446	0.289	0.402	0.180	0.216	0.386	**0.763**	0.415	0.485
COU3	0.606	0.533	0.469	0.268	0.521	0.548	**0.710**	0.609	0.564
CRC2	0.535	0.383	0.452	0.529	0.554	0.758	0.385	**0.831**	0.505
CRC3	0.533	0.391	0.359	0.321	0.412	0.686	0.473	**0.805**	0.567
CRC4	0.641	0.432	0.449	0.415	0.526	0.694	0.450	**0.877**	0.634
CRS1	0.593	0.461	0.461	0.337	0.573	0.694	0.472	**0.855**	0.623
CRS2	0.639	0.520	0.375	0.333	0.556	0.660	0.467	**0.848**	0.618
CRS3	0.716	0.428	0.485	0.368	0.481	0.701	0.519	**0.886**	0.656
CRS4	0.613	0.402	0.488	0.396	0.461	0.714	0.533	**0.898**	0.630
CRT1	0.638	0.400	0.531	0.404	0.453	0.633	0.512	**0.845**	0.608
CRT2	0.623	0.411	0.431	0.342	0.460	0.652	0.605	**0.822**	0.610
IHC1	0.648	0.356	0.300	0.280	0.485	0.569	0.401	0.579	**0.763**
IHC12	0.585	0.385	0.338	0.293	0.519	0.599	0.453	0.578	**0.792**
IHC13	0.731	0.407	0.464	0.310	0.462	0.541	0.578	0.627	**0.819**
IHC14	0.648	0.320	0.458	0.226	0.435	0.441	0.517	0.539	**0.762**
IHCP1	0.613	0.408	0.432	0.316	0.460	0.529	0.469	0.577	**0.807**
IHCP3	0.589	0.392	0.375	0.249	0.396	0.415	0.484	0.432	**0.756**
IHCP4	0.634	0.399	0.385	0.210	0.387	0.509	0.468	0.484	**0.798**
IHCR1	0.545	0.403	0.370	0.235	0.446	0.587	0.484	0.544	**0.810**
IHCR2	0.619	0.398	0.365	0.254	0.437	0.517	0.535	0.521	**0.849**
IHCR3	0.516	0.420	0.379	0.244	0.563	0.472	0.403	0.498	**0.779**
IHCR4	0.644	0.444	0.354	0.296	0.485	0.506	0.494	0.539	**0.811**
IHID2	0.663	0.368	0.518	0.299	0.470	0.563	0.613	0.604	**0.819**
IHID3	0.692	0.266	0.418	0.297	0.326	0.501	0.586	0.571	**0.771**
IHIT1	0.641	0.332	0.473	0.333	0.476	0.524	0.405	0.638	**0.799**
IHIT2	0.649	0.427	0.517	0.344	0.472	0.488	0.583	0.608	**0.784**
IHIT3	0.579	0.458	0.358	0.333	0.534	0.509	0.422	0.573	**0.748**
IHIT4	0.604	0.479	0.358	0.189	0.503	0.559	0.501	0.583	**0.836**
IHPS2	0.720	0.446	0.432	0.320	0.449	0.513	0.524	0.619	**0.786**
IHPS4	0.613	0.443	0.367	0.281	0.502	0.452	0.439	0.553	**0.764**

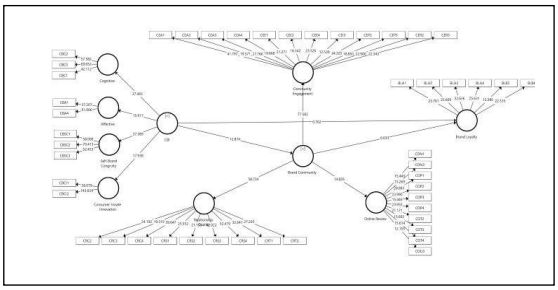

Figure 4. Bootstrapping Analysis of Structural Model

4.3.1 Testing for Mediator

In order to test the mediation effects formulated in hypothesis, the researcher applied Baron and Kenny's approach [51] and [52]. Table 5 shows the structural model analysis of mediating effects found few relationships of variables between predictor to outcome, predictor to mediator and mediator to outcome are significance. However, the table shows that the total indirect effects report of CBI -> Brand Loyalty indicated (β = 0.487, p<0.01) which shows

significance in the relationship and on the other hand, the direct effects report of CBI -> Brand Loyalty indicated (β = 0.083, p = 0.446) which shows no significance in the relationship. Therefore, there is a full mediation effects of Brand Community in the relationship of CBI and Brand Loyalty in the study.

Table 5. Effects between IV (Predictor) and DV (Outcome) Mediated by Brand Community

Relationship	Direct Effects		Indirect effect		Decision
	β	P Value	β	P Value	
CBI -> Brand Loyalty	0.083 (No Significance)	0.446	0.487 (Significance)	0.000	Supported with full mediation
CBI -> Brand Community	0.687	0.000	-	-	Supported
Brand Community -> Brand Loyalty	0.704	0.000	-	-	Supported

4.3.2 Testing for Moderator

The PLS two-stage approach was applied to detect the moderating effect of individual heterogeneity on the relationship between CBI and Brand Loyalty since it is the most likely approach to detect a significant interaction [53]. To test the effect, the predictor variable (CBI) and individual heterogeneity (moderator) were multiplied to create an interaction of construct (CBI x Individual Heterogeneity) to predict Brand Loyalty and to test the moderating effect shown in Table 6 and Figure 5.

The result showed moderating effects of individual heterogeneity that supported brand loyalty in the relationship.

Table 6. Moderating Effects of Individual Heterogeneity on IV and DV

Relationship	β Value	t-value	Decision
Ind. Heterogeneity -> Brand Loyalty	0.506	5.063*	Supported
CBI -> Brand Loyalty	-0.015	0.136	Not supported
(CBI x Ind. Heterogeneity) -> Brand Loyalty	-0.139	3.273*	Supported

Note: * t-value>3.30, significant at p<0.001

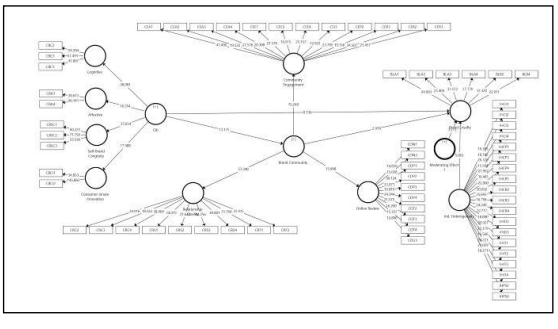

Figure 5. Moderating effects on Relationship between the IV and DV

4.3.3 Hypotheses Testing

Estimation of path coefficients is an important element empirically to investigate the employing of PLS-SEM, as basis of hypothesis testing through the calculation of a p-value associated with the path coefficient [54]. Thus, the structured coefficients analysis shown in Table 7 used to test the research hypotheses. The result indicates that the direction of hypothesized path H1 is not supported in the analysis. CBI does not significantly give positive impacts on Brand Loyalty of MFBs among consumers. The path coefficient of CBI->Brand Loyalty is (β-value = 0.084) is weak with the t-value = 0.768 as well as the effect size is small f2 = 0.000. Therefore, H1 is not supported.

The result indicates that the direction of hypothesized path H2 is consistent with the prediction. The analysis proved that the relationship of CBI -> Brand Community significantly related to the development of MFBs. The path coefficient with (β-value = 0.686) is strong and significant with t-value = 12.482 at p<0.01. The effect size f2 = 0.897 is large. Therefore, H2 is supported.

The result also indicates that the direction of hypothesized path H3 is consistent with earlier assumption. The analysis supported the H3 hypothesis that Brand Community indeed has significant effects on Brand Loyalty of MFBs. The interactivities in Brand Communities has great impacts on developing loyalty among consumers towards MFBs. The path coefficient shows (β-value = 0.707) is strong with t-value = 6.614 as well as medium effect size f2 = 0.153. Therefore, H3 is supported.

Based on the above Figure 4 and Table 6, Brand Community is supported with full mediation of IV (CBI) and DV (Brand Loyalty). CBI -> Brand Loyalty has a significant indirect effect of β-value = 0.487 with t-value = 4.896 and p<0.01. Meanwhile, the direct effect of the relationship shows no significance of β-value = 0.086 with t-value = 0.762 and p = 0.446. On the other hand, CBI -> Brand Community is supported with β-value = 0.687 and p<0.01 and Brand Community -> Brand Loyalty is also supported with β-value = 0.704 and p<0.01.

Therefore, the results of the analysis show hypothesis H4 is supported with full mediation.

A moderator effect exits if the interaction effect of path coefficient is significance independently in the magnitude of path coefficient a and b. The results of the moderating model in Figure 5 and Table 7 show that the path coefficient (CBI x Ind. Heterogeneity) -> Brand Loyalty of β-value = -0.139 and the effect is significance with (t-value = 3.273, $p<0.01$). Therefore, hypothesis H5 is supported.

Table 7. Summary Results of Structural Model of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β Value	Std. Error	t-Value	f^2	Decision
H1	CBI -> Brand loyalty	0.084	0.121	0.768	0.000	Not Supported
H1	CBI -> Brand Community	0.686*	0.055	12.482**	0.897	Supported
H3	Brand Community -> Brand Loyalty	0.707*	0.105	6.614**	0.153	Supported
		Direct Effect β value		Indirect Effect β value		
H4	Brand Community mediates the relationship between CBI and Brand Loyalty	0.083 (t value = 0.762) *No Significance*		0.487* (t value = 4.896) *Significance*		Supported with full mediation
		Interaction Effect β Value		t-Value		
H5	Individual heterogeneity moderates the relationship between CBI and Brand Loyalty	-0.139		3.273*		Supported

Note: Effect size impact indicator is according to Cohen (1988), f^2 values: 0.35 (large), 0.15 (medium) and 0.02 (small),
* t-value >2.58, significant at $p<0.01$

5 Conclusion

The conclusion of this research gives several implications towards MFBs in strengthening their sustainability in business performance. The study shows that CBI is not directly significance in building brand loyalty as MFBs do not have strong representable values measured in cognition, affection, identification and self-congruence perceived. However, there is strong significance in the relationship between CBI and brand community and also strong significance in the relationship between brand community and brand loyalty. Thus, the evidence shows the existence of brand community as the strong mediator of CBI and brand loyalty that measured in interactive community engagement, high relationship quality and online reviews.

In addition, the latest and fastest development in Social Networks (SNs) has high effect on consumers interactions in brand community especially in advocating the brands to others. Hence, the positive roles of brand community of MFBs especially those in SME category are crucial in retaining loyal consumers as well as influencing new consumers in the marketplace [55]. Furthermore, [56] agreed that brand community gave positive impacts on SMEs in business performance and develop strong customer-brand relationships.

The study also shows that individual heterogeneity in brand preferences proved to be strong moderator in giving positive impacts on strengthening loyalty of MFBs consumers. The strong significance of individual heterogeneity in their consumers' preferences has relatively led to increment in brand loyalty [57]. Thus, the study is suggesting that MFBs especially those in SME category to be seriously proactive in developing the positive roles of CBI positively perceived by Malaysian consumers for developing bigger pool of loyal consumers. Hence, the research findings will significantly contribute in both practical and theories in the study of MFBs in such implication to Malaysia SMEs in general.

6 Limitations and Future Implications

As the data was collected from a small sample size of 115 respondents' base on non-probability snowball sampling technique, future study should be conducted in larger sample size and more effective sampling techniques that can lead to generalization.

This research was only conducted on Malaysian fashion industry thus, the same model should also be implemented on other industries like Food and Beverages (F&B), Banking, Hospitality and others as well.

On the other hand, this research only predicts that CBI significantly relates to brand loyalty with brand community and individual heterogeneity as mediator and moderator respectively in the relationship. Hence, the researcher believed that there could be other variables to be tested in the relationships in the future. e study also shows that individual heterogeneity in brand preferences proved to be strong moderator in giving positive impacts on strengthening loyalty of MFBs consumers. The strong significance of individual heterogeneity in their consumers' preferences has relatively led to increment in brand loyalty [57]. Thus, the study is suggesting that MFBs especially those in SME category to be seriously proactive in developing the positive roles of CBI positively perceived by

Malaysian consumers for developing bigger pool of loyal consumers. Hence, the research findings will significantly contribute in both practical and theories in the study of MFBs in such implication to Malaysia SMEs in general.

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