

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. The Background of The Research

Brands are ubiquitous; they penetrate nearly every aspect of our life: economic, social, cultural, even religious. Due to its tendency to invade everywhere, they have come beneath developing criticism. In post-modern societies where people need to provide a title to their consumption, brands can and ought to be analyzed through different points of view: macroeconomics; microeconomics, human science, human studies, history, semiotics, logic, etc.(Kapferer, 2008), thus, companies need to focus their efforts on increasing consumer interest in the brand carried out by existing marketing managers.

The concept of love in psychology is often interpreted as terminology that describes the impact on repetitive behavior involving feelings, emotions, and intimacy so that it has an impact on the emergence of a desire from catalyst to stay on the object he loves (Feurman, 2020; Sternberg, 1986). Ahuvia, Batra, & Bagozzi (2009) add that this concept can be applied not only in individual contexts but also in customers and brands. Building the concept of brand love in companies aims to measure consumers' feelings of love for the brands they believe in (Green, 2016; Sharahi & Heshmat, 2020). According to Zhang, Xu, & Gursoy (2020), a person can be said to love a brand when they feel satisfied with the brand, have emotional feelings, and have made repeat purchases of the products they love. Moreover, this achievement is often referred to as the highest achievement in consumer behavior research, especially in consumer relations and brand management. Khairani & Abdillah (2018) and Gumparathi & Patra (2020) state that love for a brand is defined as long-lasting and meaningful because it impacts the integrity and consumer associations where a beloved brand can transform into an identity that is then embedded in consumers. Therefore, growing brand love is a major concern for companies that generally enjoy doing their business (Abosag, Roper, & Hind, 2012; Mulyawati *et al.*, 2020)

Early research related to “brand love” was developed by Shimp & Madden (1988). Meanwhile, Ahuvia & Adelman (1993) studied the definition and measurement of this concept. Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) and Anwar & Jalees (2020) described the concept of “brand love” as emotional connection and love felt by the satisfied consumer towards the brand. When consumers like a brand, the brand's sales volume will increase, along with the fact that brand love will turn into loyalty (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Nurfitriana, Surachman, & Hussein, 2020). The need for brand love must be conceptualized from the bottom-up, built on a deep understanding of how consumers experience it, and provides a good connection for interpersonal love literature so that consumers can feel it (Ahuvia et al., 2009; Joshi & Garg, 2020).

Previous researches have shown some notable results. Verma (2020) highlighted the importance of brand love by saying that brand love and brand engagements are second-order constructs an essential brand mix elements. Meanwhile, other researchers mention that brand love is predictive of superior brand performance, has a significant impact on all dimensions of customer engagement and customer loyalty (Junaid et al., 2020; Nurfitriana et al., 2020).

Brand love has been researched in various industries, and one of them is on Fashion Industry in countries. In Turkey, for example, Gultekin & Turgut (2015) found that brand love is confirmed to influence resistance to negative information and intention to repurchase positively. In India, Islam & Rahman (2016) revealed that brand image and brand love significantly influence customer engagement. Meanwhile, recently in Vietnam, Nguyen et al. (2020) assess the influence of celebrity image (CI) on social media advertising (SMA) and the impacts of SMA on brand love in the Viet Nam fashion industry. The SMA has a positive influence on brand love. Many fashion brands in Viet Nam need to increase brand love by focusing on the SMA tools to develop the brand's CI (attractiveness, expertise, and relevance). In Indonesia, Hermanto (2019) researched the effect of the hedonic product and self-expressive brand factors on willingness to pay a premium with brand love in Zara retail shop.

However, it seems that any research regarding brand love in Micro-Small Medium Enterprise in Indonesia could not be found yet, particularly in Modest Fashion MSMEs.

The creative industry has popularized modest fashion products in Bandung and Jakarta through Modest fashion products' annual exhibition, the Indonesia Hijab Fest. This exhibition was first held in 2012 and is a major annual event for the meeting of hijabers with their communities, as well as a barometer of the development of hijab fashion in Indonesia. At this event, Indonesian hijab designers were presented to introduce their designs. Big names like Dian Pelangi, Ria Miranda, Jenahara, Zaskia Adya Mecca are some of the talented young designers presented at the grand event. The public interest in this event was extraordinary. This is proven by the number of visitors who always crowd every event and an impressive number of deals for each title. This, of course, is an achievement that needs to be supported by the Bandung City Government to increase PAD (Local Own-source Revenue) from the creative industry sector. Bandung's hijab fashion industry players are one of the components that have contributed to the successful implementation of the Indonesia Hijab Fest.

Modest fashion brands from the city of Bandung are starting to gain a place in consumers' hearts. However, the Modest fashion industry's development in the city of Bandung is still challenged by some problems, especially in consumers' love for the brand (brand love). Several brand owners in Bandung who gave birth to original designs have complained about plagiarism. The designs' results are copied consciously or unconsciously by other business actors, resulting in consumers who switch to other brands because of the same design (Hijabfest, 2015). Therefore, a solution to this problem is needed, primarily referring to the importance of the fashion industry in Indonesia as conveyed by the Minister of Industry Airlangga Hartato, "The fashion industry is still a foreign exchange earner with export values reaching US \$ 8.2 billion (Rp. 122 trillion) until July 2018. This means that the export growth value is 8.7%. With this performance, Indonesian fashion products will be able to control 1.9% of the world fashion market "(Yulistara, 2018)

The development of the Modest fashion industry is also influenced by changes in technology and consumer minds. The use of the Internet today changes the way people think about shopping for a product. With a touch of technology, people do not have to look at the visualization of a product (Haekal & Widjajanta, 2016). Increased high competition with global products is challenging for companies to adapt to existing markets. The emergence of various services and easy access can put other companies at risk of failure (Albert & Merunka, 2013).

In addition, a phenomenon has occurred among Muslim millennials in Indonesia. The phenomenon of Islamic *hijrah* occurs in many millennial societies growing broadly in Indonesia, caused by individual's or groups' desire to become better individuals in terms of Islam. *Hijrah* is the movement of an individual or group for a better direction. In the context of Islam, *hijrah* is defined as the movement of an individual or group to a better direction based on Islam.

The phenomenon of *hijrah* is supported by the number of Islamic studies with *ustadz* and *ustadzah* that have an appeal for worshipers such as *ustadz* Abdul Somad, Hanan Ataqqi, Adi Hidayat, Khalid Basalamah, Aam Amiruddin, Mamah Dedeh, and so on. Like Ustadz Abdul Somad, who has a million viewers on youtube, and Ustadz Adi Hidayat, who preaches a lot using social media, Ustadz Hanan Attaki preaches with the target of young people and creates a “Pemuda hijrah” movement. The three Ustadz conveyed Islamic studies or da’wah through social media to survive in today’s modern times (Abdullah, 2018; Fajriani & Sugandi, 2019). The movement of “Pemuda Hijrah” initiated by Ustadz Hanan Attaki has also influenced the community's dress style. This community has launched its modest fashion product under the brand “Shift Merch”. Therefore, this movement has transformed from being merely a muslim youth community, into business entity with high business potential from their die-hard lovers.

Table 1.1 describes the items that are often traded in Indonesia. This shows the current state of Indonesia. The position of items shows that Modest fashion is among the superior. The highest gain in clothing was achieved in the 6th position. It is assumed that consumers have a considerably high level of love for Modest fashion brands.

**TABLE 1. 1**  
**THE DATA ON THE MOST PURCHASED ITEMS IN INDONESIA**

<i>Items</i>	<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Clothes	1	45,8 %
Accesories	2	10,9 %
Shoes	3	6,7%
Travel Ticket	4	4,7 %
Handphone	5	4,6 %
Modest fashion	6	3,5%

(Source: *swa.co.id*, Accessed on October 11<sup>th</sup> 2020)

Based on Table 1.1, Modest fashion occupies the top 6 items commonly purchased by the public. This is because Modest fashion has become a medium for someone to express himself and as his identity. The development of this type of Modest fashion with various brands that can change quickly will create a new social trend.

Data from Guide (2016) show that the number of companies engaged in the fashion sector reached 1,107,955 units which around 10% of them are large companies, 20% are medium enterprises, and 70% are small enterprises. Of 750,000 SMEs engaged in Indonesia's clothing sector, around 30% of them are Muslim wear producers, with large companies occupying 40%, while small and medium enterprises each occupy 30% respectively of the market. Furthermore, according to data from the MSMEs Service and the West Java Provincial Industry Office, the number of MSMEs in the Modest fashion creative industry in West Java is 1,200 MSMEs. As many as 30.5% (367 MSMEs) of Modest fashion have used digital technology in marketing their products, while 29.5% (354 MSMEs) of Modest fashion have used digital technology, but have not focused on marketing their products, the remaining 40% (479 MSMEs) Modest fashion have not used digital technology at all. This is happening because Modest fashion MSME actors might not adapt to existing technology (Guide, 2016).

The Modest fashion industry, which is part of the textile and clothing industry, contributes to the national economy. The exports of textile and fashion products in 2018 reached US \$ 13.27 billion or grew by 5.4% from 2017, which only reached US \$ 12.59 billion. The textile and clothing industry showed positive growth from 3.76% in 2017 to 8.73% in 2018 (Sari, 2019).

Unfortunately, this condition might be significantly affected by the uncertainty caused by the covid-19 pandemic. This outbreak was first known to occur in the city of Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared a global pandemic of a new coronavirus that causes a disease known as covid-19 that has spread to at least 177 countries and regions. The state of China first reported this outbreak in December 2019 (Baharman, 2020).

To avoid the spreading of viruses, various strategic policies are designed and implemented by countries in various parts of the world, and one of them is a lockdown policy. In the Cambridge dictionary, lockdown is a situation where people are not allowed to enter or leave a building or area freely for reasons of emergency. However, the Indonesian government took a different step in handling the Covid-19 pandemic, as conveyed by President Joko Widodo that Indonesia would not impose a lockdown policy (Faranto, 2020). Through the Ministry of Health, the Government of Indonesia has decided to implement Large Scale Social Restrictions or in Bahasa Indonesia it is called *Pembatasan Social Bersekala Besar* (PSBB) in several areas in Indonesia to reduce the transmission and spread of Covid-19. *PSBB* is a limitation of particular residents' activities in an area suspected of being infected with the coronavirus to prevent the possibility of more widespread spread (Dewi, 2020). This policy has led to the closing of many stores, including fashion stores. Priatmojo (2020) reported that 70% of Fashion MSMEs are impacted due to the policy.

The Director-General of Small, Medium and Miscellaneous Industry of the Ministry of Industry, Gati Wibawaningsih, said that almost all Modest fashion SMEs were affected by the corona and laid-off employees. Even though the market is decreasing, Gati said that the numbers of Modest fashion SMEs moving to the online platform have a significant increase of up to 600% because they have different product specifications. Therefore, Modest fashion products' commercialization and distribution need to be encouraged during the pandemic to quickly reach consumers through exhibitions or visual exhibitions.

**TABLE 1. 2**  
**THE DATA OF MSMES STATING DECLINE IN SALES DURING THE PANDEMIC**

No	MSME's Brand Name	Amount of Decline in Sales	Source
1	Nadjani Indonesia	30%	merdeka.com, 2020
2	Wilma	50%	Ayobandung.com, 2020
3	Mouza Store Indonesia	30%	Republika.co.id
4	Riamiranda	30%	Detik.com

(Source: Researcher, 2020)

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Table 1.2 shows the data on the MSMEs that stated their decline in sales during the pandemic. The data are gathered from the newspaper as a representative of modest fashion MSMEs showing how pandemic impacted their business. Also, some regions represented by the local government started a decline in sales on modest fashion MSMEs with a relatively high percentage, as shown by table 1.3 below.

**TABLE 1. 3**  
**THE DATA OF REGION STATING DECLINE IN SALES DURING THE PANDEMIC**

No	MSME's Brand Name	Amount of Decline in Sales	Source
1	Kab. Banten	80%	Akurat.co, 2020
2	Kab. Gowa	75%	Antaraneews.com, 2020
3	Banda Aceh	75%	Tempo.co

(Source: Researcher, 2020)

However, other interesting data are also found regarding the number in sales. When some of the modest fashion MSMEs stating that there is a decline in their sales, other modest fashion MSMEs are gaining benefits. Table 1.4 shows how other fashion MSMEs perform during the pandemic.

**TABLE 1. 4**  
**THE DATA OF REGION STATING INCREASE IN SALES DURING THE PANDEMIC**

No	MSME's Brand Name	Amount of increase in Sales	Source
1	Indah Bordir Sidoarjo	100%	kumparan.com, 2020
2	Jaya Shoes Group	400%	Bangka.sonora.id, 2020
3	Popytbynisa	Up to 500%	Fimela.com, 2020
4	odeca.official	Up to 500%	Fimela.com, 2020
5	Ariona	30-40%	Ayobandung.com, 2020

(Source: Researcher, 2020)

These data might seem contradictory to one another. However, there is an interesting fact behind the sales number difference. Those MSMEs and Region stating the decline in sales only took into account the number of offline store sales, which is heavily affected by the existence of *PSBB* (Large Scale Social Restrictions). They were stating that their offline store was not performing well during this pandemic. Meanwhile, those MSMEs stating the increasing sales volume is considering their online store sales. They mentioned that by moving to the online marketplace, they have succeeded. From the data, it could be assumed that it might not be the

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purchasing power of modest fashion consumers that is declining but the consumers' behavior in choosing the merchant when purchasing the intended goods.

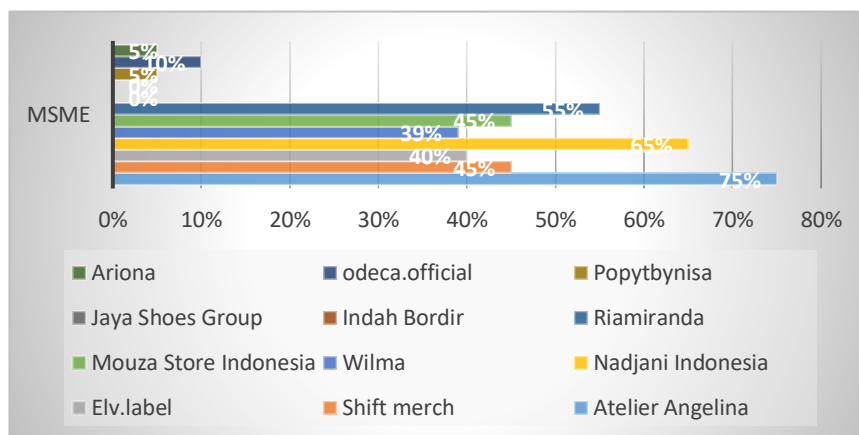
Moreover, a preliminary survey has been done by the researcher which is aimed to assist the study in finding essential data to support the research background. Figure 1.1 describes the respondents' awareness on the modest fashion MSMEs brand. It is found that the Atelier Angelina and Nadjani Indonesia is ranked first followed by Shift Merch on the Second.



(Source: Researcher, 2021)

**FIGURE 1. 1 THE AWARENESS RANK OF MODEST FASHION MSMES' IN 2021**

Meanwhile, figure 1.2 shows the ranking of which modest fashion MSME they love most. From this figure, it is found that the Atelier Angelina brand is ranked first as the most loved brand with Nadjani Indonesia following at the second.



(Source: Researcher, 2021)

**FIGURE 1. 2 THE BRAND LOVE RANK OF MODEST FASHION MSMES' IN 2021**

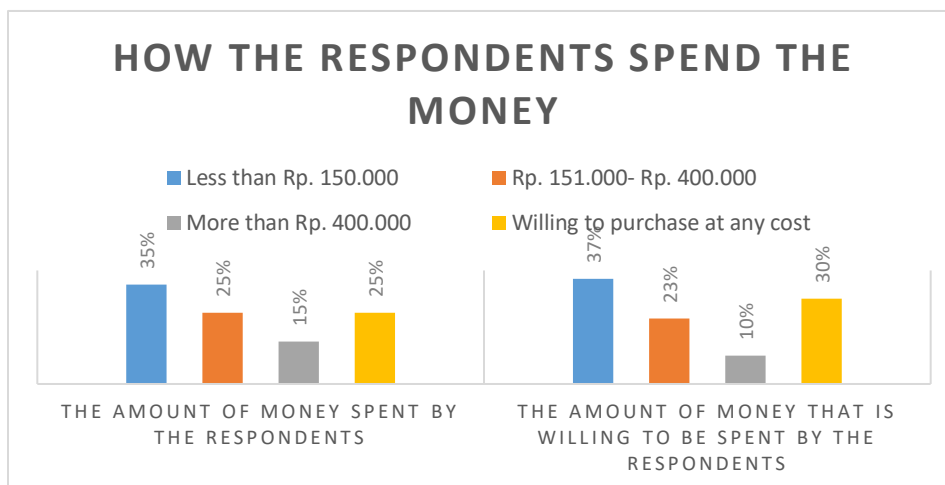
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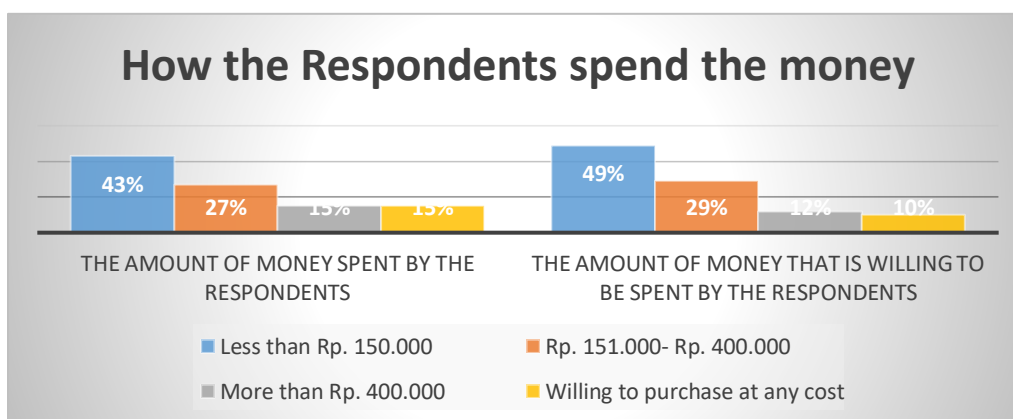
The preliminary survey also provides the information on how much the respondents have paid to purchase the loved MSMEs products before the pandemic was started. It is shown in Figure 1.3 and as a comparison, it also provides the information on how much the respondents are willing to pay for the loved MSMEs products. From this figure, it is found that 30% of the respondents are willing to purchase their loved product at any cost.



(Source: Researcher, 2021)

**FIGURE 1. 3 THE INFORMATION ON HOW RESPONDENTS ARE SPENDING THE MONEY BEFORE THE PANDEMIC**

However, when being asked the same questions but in the context of pandemic, there is a notable change on how the respondents are spending their money on purchasing modest fashion MSMEs products. Figure 1.4 shows a decrease on the way the respondents are willing to purchase the products they love at any cost which could also represent the decrease on brand love.



(Source: Researcher, 2021)

**FIGURE 1. 4 THE INFORMATION ON HOW RESPONDENTS ARE SPENDING THE MONEY DURING THE PANDEMIC**

Thus, referring to this phenomenon and the results of preliminary survey, the consumers' level of love toward the brand that is arguably decreasing is essential to be further researched.

The approach or theory used in brand love is the theory of consumer-brand relationship by Susan Fournier in 1998 (Fournier, 1998), which suggests that the brand relationship paradigm has been successful because of its relevance to understanding brand loyalty, conceptualized as a long-term relationship with a brand that the company relies on. This theory explains what consumer relationships with brands are in the minds of consumers. Brand love is influenced by several factors, including brand relationship (Hegner & Teravest, 2017), brand loyalty, brand experience (Singh et al., 2020), brand image (Sarkar, 2014), brand trust (Albert & Merunka, 2013) brand identification, sense of community (Lyu, 2012), and Sensory Marketing (Dissabandara & Dissanayake, 2020).

Brand experience is one reason why consumers love a brand. Brand Experience is affecting customer-brand love. This relationship is reinforced (positively or negatively) by the customer's personality traits effectively (Singh et al., 2020). Singh et al., (2020) outline that the brand experience is responsible for affecting the customer-brand love. This relationship is reinforced (positively or negatively) by the customer's personality traits effectively. This study provides significant insights into the customers' personality traits for improving the relationship between brand experience and brand love in Indian hypermarket brands. Furthermore, brand love is also influenced by sensory marketing. A study in Sri Lanka, conducted by Dissabandara & Dissanayake (2020) revealed that four dimensions of sensory marketing, namely visual, olfactory, auditory & gustative, impact brand love. However, the influence of tactile factors was not proven.

Nevertheless, Krishna (2012) referenced that the area of sensory marketing is important to be investigated further especially on interaction senses, dominant senses, sensory congruence etc. Then, Hultén (2011) proposed the validity of the connection between sensory marketing and the multi-sensory brand experience ought to be re-evaluated. Previous researches have been conducted in the domain of sensory marketing, however, because of the novelty of this concept, this study raises a lot of gaps to be filled by the academics especially in the online context with the new concept of digital sensory marketing. In the area of brand experience, few studies that examine the antecedents and the dimensions of the brand experience are suggesting to re-examine the topic because it has not yet been studied extensively by marketing scientists (Brakus et al., 2009; Şahin et al., 2011). Meanwhile in brand love, the preliminary survey suggests that during the pandemic,

there might be a shift on consumers' brand love that is too important to be neglected. Furthermore, the relationship between digital sensory marketing, brand experience, and brand love has not yet been clarified, so it is not obvious to what extent it influences each other and how significant the influence is. In this work, we address the issue of how digital sensory marketing could influence the brand experience which is followed by the investigation of how it might impact the brand love. This study is expected to give a different perspective since it will reveal the muslim millennial's brand love during the pandemic of covid-19 in Indonesia, particularly Bandung city, West Java province.

Seeing the urgency in this research and the previous researches, a further study needs to be done with the title **“Construing Brand Love Through Digital Sensory Marketing: The Mediating role of Brand Experience (A Millennial Muslims' Perspective on Modest Fashion MSMEs during Covid-19 Pandemic in Bandung)”**

### **1.2. The Formulation of The Problem**

Based on the research background, the following research problems can be formulated:

1. How is the description of digital sensory marketing towards the hijrah community in Bandung?
2. How is the description of the brand experience towards the hijrah community in Bandung?
3. How is the description of brand love towards the hijrah community in Bandung?
4. How is the influence of digital sensory marketing on brand love through brand experience?
5. How is the influence of digital sensory marketing on brand experience?
6. How is the influence of brand experience on brand love?
7. How is the influence of digital sensory marketing on brand love

### **1.3. The Purpose of The Research**

This research is intended to analyze brand love in-depth, but it is also intended to examine the essential factors influencing brand love. Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out:

1. The description of digital sensory marketing towards the hijrah community in Bandung.
2. The description of the brand experience towards the hijrah community in Bandung.

3. The description of brand love towards the hijrah community in Bandung.
4. The magnitude of the influence of digital sensory marketing on brand love through brand experience.
5. The magnitude of the influence of digital sensory marketing on-brand experience.
6. The magnitude of the influence of brand experience on brand love.
7. The magnitude of the influence of digital sensory marketing on brand love.

#### **1.4. The Benefits of The Research**

The benefits of the research might cover:

##### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

This research is expected to be a means of additional insight and knowledge for the author, especially regarding the theory of digital sensory marketing and brand experience and brand love, which can be an application for users and consumers of trading.

##### **2. Practical Benefit**

- a. The author expected that this writing would contribute to interested parties' ideas to grow brand love in the hijrah community in Bandung.
- b. For users, this writing is expected to be used as motivational material and increase understanding of the importance of digital sensory marketing and brand experience for the future.
- c. As information material for parties who will further research on a similar topic.