

# Effect of Value Congruence, Brand Distinctiveness, Brand Social, Brand Warmth, and Memorable Brand Experience on Customer-Brand Identification and Brand Loyalty (Case Study: Brand of ACER Laptop)

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**Abstract.** This study has several purposes. First, this study aims to investigate the effect of consumer-brand value congruence, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, and memorable brand experience on customer-brand identification (CBI). We call all of those factors as the antecedent factor of CBI. Second, this study aims to investigate the effect of CBI on customer loyalty. Third, investigate the role of product involvement as a moderating variable of the relationship between brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, memorable brand experience and CBI. This research used primary data collected through closed questionnaires using a Likert scale of 1 - 5. The total sample size was 273 respondents located in Semarang City who has or has been using Acer Laptop for minimal one year. This research was conducted using Partial Least Square (PLS) method through SmartPLS 3.0 software. The result of data processing indicated that all of the antecedent factors of CBI have the positive and significant effect on CBI of the user of Acer Laptop. In this case, among the five antecedent factors of CBI, value congruence has the greatest effect on CBI of the user of Acer Laptop. The result of data processing also indicated that CBI has the positive and significant effect on brand loyalty of user of Acer Laptop. This study fails to prove the role of product involvement as a moderating variable of the relationship between brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, memorable brand experience and CBI of the user of Acer Laptop. Moreover, based on the result of hypothesis testing, this study gives some recommendation to Acer Laptop to develop or create some features which are match with the value of user of Laptop Acer in Semarang City.

## 1 Introduction

According to The American Marketing Association, brand related to the name, term, sign, symbol or design that identifies the products and services resulted by one seller or group of sellers and brand can be used to differentiate the products and services from the competitors. The brand concept is much more comprehensive than its graphical representation [1-7]. Brands have role to ensure the company's identity. Moreover, several researchers have concluded that brand which can create the real value in customer's mind is more important than the company's products and services [8]. Then, one of the important brand concept is customer-brand identification (CBI). The concept of CBI is important to understand about how, when, and why the consumer articulate their identities through the brand. This concept is important in the recent condition when the time of great customer skepticism toward brands, coupled with the fall in the value of traditional media in promoting brands [9]. This concept even more important today when there are too many choices available for customers, so the company should make the effort to

work out what makes a particular brand specific [10]. Moreover, the importance of the concept of CBI in building the brand of the products or services cannot be separated from the several impacts of this concept on individual consumer behavior including: consumer buying-related decisions [11], consumer satisfaction and a higher possibility of repurchase [12], positive word of mouth [12], [13], [14], psychological sense of brand community and brand commitment [15], brand loyalty [14], [16], [17], and brand preference [18]. Among the several impacts of CBI on individual customer behavior, this study will focus on the impact of CBI on customer or brand loyalty.

There were several definitions of CBI. According to, Bergami and Bagozzi [19] and Elbedweihy et al [20], CBI can be defined as the primary psychological substrate for deep, committed and meaningful relationships that marketers are increasingly seeking to build with their customers. CBI can be seen as a kind of cognitive state of self-categorization [21]. According to Wolter et al [22], CBI is a decision of consumer to define his or her "self" by including a specific brand into their self-concept. In the marketing literature, the process

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of CBI was influencing of several antecedent factors. Referring to the perspective of social identify, CBI is resulted when a brand satisfies self-consistency, self-enhancement, or self-differentiation motives [21], [23]. Theory suggests the symbolically-based antecedents of identification are prestige for the self-brand similarity for self-consistency motives, satisfaction of self-enhancement motives, and distinctiveness for self-differentiation motives [21]. On the simple way, Bachman and Wilkins [24] only use self-congruity as an antecedent factor of CBI. Bachman and Wilkins [24] proposed that the higher the perceived congruity between the self and a brand, the higher the positive evaluation of the brand. In this case, the process of associating the self-image owned by one person with the personality of the brand contributes to the state of consumer-brand identification. Different with Bachman and Wilkins [24], more comprehensive framework in describing the antecedent factor of CBI was proposed by Stokburger-Sauer et al [17]. According to Stokburger-Sauer et al [17], antecedent factors of the CBI can be differentiated into two categories, namely cognitive and affective factors. The cognitive factor includes the extent to which customers (i) have a personality that is similar to his or her own (i.e. brand-self similarity), (ii) to be unique or distinctive (brand distinctiveness), and (iii) and to be prestigious (brand prestige). Then, the affective factor includes the extent to which customers (i) feel that their interactions with a brand help them connect with important social others (brand social benefit), (ii) perceive a brand in warm, emotional terms rather than cold, rational ones (brand warmth), and (iii) have fond memories of brand consumption experience (memorable brand experience). Moreover, Stokburger-Sauer et al [17] proposed that consumer's involvement in the product category in which a brand belongs (product involvement) act as a moderating variable; it made the relationship between the antecedent factor and CBI stronger. Rather than six factors, this study only uses the five factors as an antecedent factor of CBI or exclude the brand prestige from the antecedent factor of CBI because this study will test the construct of antecedent factors of CBI and the effect of CBI on customer loyalty on one of the laptop brands (Acer Laptop) and this brand do not belong to luxury items. Referring to the result of hypothesis testing from Stokburger-Sauer et al [17], CBI is less sensitive to brand prestige in product categories such as soft drinks, supermarkets, and even athletic shoes than in the more conventionally status or luxury product categories in building the CBI. Besides that, rather to use brand-self similarity in describing the extent of customers have a personality that is similar to the brand, this study prefer to use consumer-brand value congruence (or value congruence for short) in building the CBI as Elbedweihy et al [20].

This study will use the brand of Acer Laptop as the object for testing the relationship between consumer-brand value congruence, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, memorable brand experience, product involvement, and the CBI and customer loyalty for the following reason. In Indonesia, Acer was awarded the Top Brand Award 2016 in the

laptop / notebook category. This success reflects that Acer laptop/notebook products become the main choice of Indonesian society. Top Brand survey results obtained through data collection by interviewing directly to 14,000 respondents in 15 major cities of Indonesia. The results of this interview show that Acer has the highest index value, which is 34.7%. This result exceeds Asus and Lenovo which only have index values of 16.5% and 11.1%. Moreover, Acer Indonesia received an Indonesian Customer Service Award (ICSA) 2015 from the SWA magazine for our outstanding customer service quality. ICSA 2015 marked our achievements for 8 consecutive years in this annual awarding. It seems that Acer Laptop have good brand in the market of laptop and also achieve a loyalty from their customer. In the worldwide, Acer group was one of the top five vendors which had significant contribution towards worldwide personal computer shipments during 2014 and 2015. Acer group capture around 7 % market share towards worldwide personal computer shipments [25].

## 2 Literature Review

As stated in the introduction, basically, this study refers to the framework from Stokburger-Sauer et al [17] in building the CBI. Specifically, after removing the brand prestige as an antecedent factor of CBI and changing brand-self similarity with customer-brand value congruence, this study use consumer-brand value congruence, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, and memorable brand experience as an antecedent factor of CBI and product involvement as a moderating factor for the relationship between antecedent factor and CBI. Then, the CBI will impact the individual customer behavior through brand loyalty [14], [16], [17].

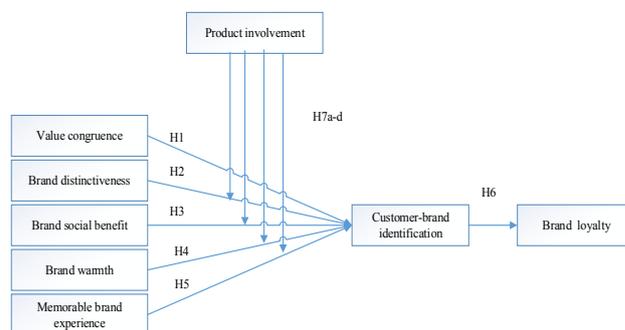
- Customer-brand value congruence or value congruence in short. Reference [20] among the first to introduce value congruence as an antecedent of CBI. According to self-congruity theory from Johar and Sirgy [26], value congruity can be defined as a mental evaluation that consumers make the comparison of the similarity or dissimilarity between their own set of values and the entity's values. Moreover, self-congruity theory describes customer behavior as partly determined by the congruence resulting from a psychological comparison between the consumer self-concept and the product user or brand image [27].
- Brand distinctiveness refers to "need for uniqueness". Brand distinctiveness can be defined as pursuit of individual's of differentness relative to others that is achieved through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one's personal and social identity [17]. Brand distinctiveness is significant for several reasons. Brand distinctiveness can provide an effective communication with consumers, help consumers to identify brands easily, and reduce consumer's cognitive effort. Moreover, brand distinctiveness is

a significant concept to help consumers identify a certain brand among other brands easily. The brand name, colors, logos, taglines, symbols/characters, celebrities and advertising styles are some important elements to achieve the brand distinctiveness [28].

- Brand social benefit refers to the condition that consumers are more likely to identify with brands that help them to connect with important others, groups, communities, or subcultures. In this case, the brand used by their reference groups become an important thing to gain or strengthen the membership of certain group [29]. Brand is the important tool for linking people to one another [30]. [31], [32]. Sometimes, consumers join into distinct subgroups of society on the basis of a shared commitment to a brand [33], [34].
- Brand warmth perceptions is a judgment of the brand's pro-sociality and trustworthiness, and its ability to achieve corporate and market goals. In this case, the brand's production and distribution practices, the way it treats its customers, suppliers, and employees, or the brand's financial performance can all be informed about the brand's warmth [35]. Brand warmth perception makes the consumer have more intense feelings about warmer brands and the role of those brands in their lives [36].
- A memorable brand experience can be defined as the extent to which consumers have positive, effectively charged memories of a certain brand. In this case, memorable brand experience is related to the ability of a brand to deliver the remarkable and vivid experiences creating from extraordinary consumption activities, regardless the frequency of use [37], [38]. The brands that offer memorable experiences are more likely to lead to individuals' intertwining of brand-related and self-related thoughts, thus contributing to CBI [17].
- Product involvement can be defined to a common level of concern about a product class [39]. Product involvement should be distinguished from product evaluation. Product involvement can be classified into two categories, high involvement and low involvement. The highly involved consumer is defined as one who is very interested in differences between particular brands and is willing to invest considerable energy in decision making; whereas, the low involvement is defined as one who is not very interested in differences between particular brands because it is related with something that are not very important to consumer and the customer only hold little perceived risk on the product [40]. According to Stokburger et al [17], the higher product involvement can moderate the relationship between the various antecedents and CBI because the knowledge structure of consumers regarding high involvement product categories are more likely to contain deeply processed and highly elaborated beliefs regarding brands' abilities to meet self-definitional needs.
- Brand loyalty

Reference [41] state that there is no simple one or two-dimensional concept to illustrate the contract of brand loyalty. The concept of brand loyalty is a complex construction which involves multiple dimension. Reference [41] also state that brand loyalty related with the action of the consumer regarding with their thoughts and feelings of the brand. In this way, reference [41] divide attitudinal loyalty into a simple two component in order to understand the concept of brand loyalty as a whole. The first component is cognitive loyalty and the second component is emotional loyalty. Cognitive loyalty can be described to the decision of the consumers to repurchase a certain brand after they analyse some factors such as attribute of the brand. Emotional loyalty can be described as an affective commitment to a brand involving of the positive feelings about and attached to purchasing a brand on the next purchase occasion. Related with CBI, Stokburger et al [17] argue that CBI is an significant predictor of brand loyalty.

So, based on the relationship between value congruence, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, memorable brand experience, product involvement, CBI, and brand loyalty which was expressed by the previous researcher, the conceptual model and the hypothesis of this study can be described as follow.



**Fig. 1.** Conceptual model of the relationship between antecedent factor of CBI, CBI, and brand loyalty

- H1 Value congruence has a positive significant effect on customer-brand identification
- H2 Brand distinctiveness has a positive significant effect on customer-brand identification
- H3 Brand social benefit has a positive significant effect on customer-brand identification
- H4 Brand warmth has a positive significant effect on customer-brand identification
- H5 A memorable brand experience has a positive significant effect on customer-brand identification
- H6 Customer-brand identification has a positive significant effect on customer loyalty
- H7a-e Product involvement has a positive significant effect in strengthening the relationship between (a) brand distinctiveness and CBI, (b) brand social value and CBI, (c) brand warmth and CBI, and (d) memorable brand experiences and CBI

### 3 Method of Research

#### 3.1. Sample of Research

The research was done in Semarang, the capital of Central Java Province, Indonesia. There are 273 citizens of Semarang City chosen as the respondent of this study. In this study, the researcher cannot define the population frame during the period of data collection because the actual number of a user of Acer Laptop cannot determine exactly. So, the researcher had to give the questionnaire to the user of Laptop Acer who was available at the time questionnaire of data were distributed or the user of Laptop Acer who was available to fill the online questionnaire. The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability purposive sampling. In this technique, the selection of respondent in the sample was based upon certain appropriate characteristics, i.e. people of ages 18 to 50 who have used Laptop Acer at least one year. Characteristics of a respondent in a study can be seen in the following section.

#### 3.2 Instrument and Measurement

Forty-eight items were used to test the relationship between value congruence, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, memorable brand experience, product involvement, CBI, and customer loyalty. Out of these forty-eight items, ten items were used for measuring value congruence, three items were used for measuring brand distinctiveness, four items were used for measuring brand social benefit, three items were used for measuring brand warmth, three items were used for measuring memorable brand experience, four items were used for measuring product involvement, seven items were used for measuring CBI, and four items were used for measuring customer loyalty. Except for value congruence, most of those items were adopted from Stokburger-Sauer et al. [17]. For measuring the CBI and customer loyalty, this study had adopted the items from Elbedweihy et al [20]. Items for measuring value congruence were adopted from the short version of Schwartz's value survey [42]. In detail, all the items used in this study can be seen in the next section (Table 1). Then, the condition of all of the items used in this study was measuring in Likert Scale (1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, and 5= strongly agree).

#### 3.3 Data Analysis Tool

The study used the Partial Least Square (PLS) method through SmartPLS 3.0 software for processing the data obtained from the questionnaire.

### 4 Result and Discussion

#### 4.1 Characteristic of Respondent

The characteristics of the respondent of this study can be explained as follow. The respondents consisted of 158

males (57.86%) and 115 females (42.12%) which indicated that the sample of research consisting more male than females. The majority of the respondent of this study have 23-30 years old (60.07%), followed by 15-22 years old (24.71%), 31-38 years old (8.43%), 39-46 years old (4.03%), and 47-54 years old (1.83%). The level of the majority of respondents has the highest level of education on bachelor degree (70.69%), followed by senior high school (16.12%), Magister degree (9.89%), and junior high school (3.29%). Then, the majority of respondent of this study have monthly as much as IDR 2,000,000-4,000,000 (42.12%), followed by IDR 4,000,000-6,000,000 (21.98%), less than IDR 2,000.000 (27.47%), and more than IDR 6,000,000 (8.43%). The majority of respondents have been using the Acer Laptop for 2-4 years (54.58%), followed by less than 2 years (29.67%), 4-6 years (10.99%), and more than 6 years (4.76%).

#### 4.2 Evaluation of Outer Model Test

The result of evaluation of outer model test can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The result of outer model test.

Construct	Items	Cross Loading	AVE/ Composite Reliability
Value Congruence (VCO)	Brand X is .....; I am ...		0.592/ 0.935
	Power (VCO1)	0.753	
	Achievement (VCO2)	0.763	
	Hedonism (VCO3)	0.777	
	Stimulation (VCO4)	0.776	
	Self-Direction (VCO5)	0.736	
	Universalism (VCO6)	0.775	
	Benevolence (VCO7)	0.818	
	Tradition (VCO8)	0.761	
	Conformity (VCO9)	0.763	
	Security (VCO10)	0.767	
Brand Distinctiveness (BDT)	Acer brand has a distinctive identity (BDT1)	0.832	0.707/ 0.879
	Acer brand is unique (BDT2)	0.846	
	Acer brand stands out from its competitors (BDT3)	0.845	
Brand Social Benefit (BSB)	Acer brand offers me the opportunity to socialize. (BSB1)	0.790	0.657/ 0.885
	I feel a sense of kinship with other people who use Acer brand (BSB2)	0.841	
	I gain a lot from interactions with other customers/users of Acer brand (BSB3)	0.797	
	Being a customer of Acer brand makes me feel like I belong to a special (BSB4)	0.813	
Brand Warmth (BWM)	Acer brand creates warm feelings among its users (BWM1).	0.834	0.685/ 0.867
	Acer brand is very loveable (BWM2)	0.838	
	Acer brand is emotional rather than rational (BWM3)	0.811	
Memorable Brand Experience (MBE)	I have had a lot of memorable experiences with Acer brand (MBE1)	0.849	0.707/ 0.879
	Thinking of Acer brand brings back good memories (MBE2)	0.817	
	I have fond memories of Acer brand (MBE3)	0.856	
Product Involvement (PIN)	I am very interested in anything related to laptop (PIN1)	0.749	0.608/ 0.861
	Which brand of laptop I buy matters a lot (PIN2)	0.788	
	I value laptop as an important	0.772	

Construct	Items	Cross Loading	AVE/ Composite Reliability
Consumer-Brand Identification (CBI)	part of my life (PIN3)		0.615/ 0.918
	Laptop mean a lot to me (PIN4)	0.809	
	I feel a strong sense of belonging to Acer brand (CBI1)	0.793	
	I identify strongly with Acer brand (CBI2)	0.745	
	Acer brand embodies what I believe in (CBI3)	0.773	
	Acer brand is like a part of me (CBI4)	0.842	
	Acer brand has a great deal of personal meaning for me (CBI5)	0.755	
	The degree my self-image overlaps with Acer brand image (CBI6)	0.783	
The degree my self-identity overlaps with Acer brand identity (CBI7)	0.797		
Brand Loyalty (BLO)	I will buy Acer brand the next time I buy (BLO1)	0.868	0.696/ 0.902
	I would be willing to pay a higher price for Acer brand over other brands of laptop (BLO2)	0.824	
	I stick with Acer laptop because I know it is the best for me (BLO3)	0.819	
	I intend to keep purchasing Acer laptop (BLO4)	0.825	

The outer model was evaluated by convergent validity and composite reliability. For convergent validity, the outer loading value of the indicator is considered sufficient on early stage if its value between 0.5 until 0.6 [43] or  $\geq 0.5$  [44] and each construct has an average variance extracted (AVE) value higher than 0.5 [45]. In the study, the result of convergent validity test indicates that all items have outer loading and AVE value higher than 0.5. Therefore, no indicator needs to be excluded from the construct. Then, the composite reliability is used to assess whether the sample is truly free from bias or if the responses –on the whole– are reliable [46]. Composite reliability coefficients between 0.60 and 0.70 are considered appropriate in exploratory studies, while coefficients of 0.70 and 0.90 are considered satisfactory for the other types of research [47]. Table 1 shows that CR value of each construct had the value higher than 0.7. Based on this condition, we can conclude that each construct exhibited satisfactory reliability.

#### 4.2 Evaluation of Inner Model

The evaluation of inner model could be seen from the value of determinant coefficient ( $R^2$ ), and the value of Goodness of Fit (GoF). The value of  $R^2$  indicates the amount of variance in the dependent variables that are determined by the independent variables. According to reference [43], the  $R^2$  values can be 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67. The value of 0.19 indicates weak levels of determination, the value of 0.33 indicates moderate levels of determination, and the value of 0.67 indicates substantial/strong levels of determination. The value of  $R^2$  for CBI was about 0.884 which indicated that CBI variables could be determined through value congruence, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, and memorable brand experience with its

percentage of 88.4%; while the value of  $R^2$  for the brand loyalty variables was 0.696 which indicated that the variables could be determined by CBI with percentage around 69.6%.

GoF suggested by reference [48] was used for assessing the global validity of PLS-based complex models. According to reference [48], the GoF values can be 0.1, 0.25, and 0.36. The value of GoF 0.1 indicate the small global validity, the value of GoF 0.25 indicate the moderate global validity, and the value of GoF 0.36 indicate the large global validity of a PLS based complex model. The result of calculation indicated that GoF value from the model was 0.721, which exceeds the cut-off value of 0.36 for the large global validity of a PLS based complex model. It indicates that the model has a better prediction power in comparison with the baseline values.

#### 4.3 Result of Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis is accepted if the value of t statistic (t stat) larger than 1.96 (t critical) and value significance (p-value) less than 5% (0.05). The result of hypothesis testing can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The result of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	T-value (p-value)	Conclusion
H1: VCO → CBI	0.438	0.053	8.311 (p-value<0.05)	Accepted
H2: BDT → CBI	0.112	0.033	3.401 (p-value<0.05)	Accepted
H3: BSB → CBI	0.086	0.035	2.417 (p-value<0.05)	Accepted
H4: BMW → CBI	0.078	0.036	2.134 (p-value<0.05)	Accepted
H5: MBE → CBI	0.105	0.039	2.709 (p-value<0.05)	Accepted
H6: CBI → BLO	0.834	0.021	39.095 (p-value<0.05)	Accepted
H7a: BDT * PIN → CBI	0,374	0,198	1,890 (p-value>0.05)	Rejected
H7b: BSB * PIN → CBI	-0,414	0,253	1,639 (p-value>0.05)	Rejected
H7c: BMW * PIN → CBI	0,084	0,228	0,371 (p-value>0.05)	Rejected
H7d: MBE * PIN → CBI	-0,135	0,292	0,461 (p-value>0.05)	Rejected

As seen in Table 2, the relationship between value congruence, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, memorable brand experience, and CBI had a path coefficient of 0.438, 0.112, 0.086, 0.078, 0.105 and the t-stat value of 8.311, 3.401, 2.417, 2.134, 2.709 (more than 1.96). Based on this result, value congruence, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, memorable brand experience have a significant positive relationship with CBU. Therefore, hypothesis 1 (H1) until hypothesis 5 (H5) were accepted. We can also see that the relationship between CBI and brand loyalty had a path coefficient of 0.834 and the t-stat value of 39.095 (more than 1.96). Based on this result, CBI has a significant positive relationship with brand loyalty. Therefore, hypothesis 6 (H6) was accepted. Moreover, this study failed to prove the effect of brand involvement in strengthening the relationship between brand distinctiveness and CBI, brand social value and CBI, brand warmth and CBI, and between memorable brand experiences and CBI. It could happen

because a majority of respondents have an age between 23-30 years with the level of education bachelor degree which tends to use a laptop just as a complementary tool to help their work and as well as lifestyle. Evidence of involvement as a moderator does not exist and the situational brand choice of factors was a solely factors influence the decision of consumer in using a brand.

## 5 Conclusions

According to its purpose, our findings showed that value congruence, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, and memorable brand experience of the consumer have the positive significant effect on CBI. In this case, based on the value of path coefficient, the value congruence has the higher effect on CBI compared to the other factors. Brand distinctiveness is the second factor that has positive significant on CBI, followed by memorable brand experience, brand social benefit, and brand warmth. Then, our finding also showed that CBI has the positive significant effect on CBI. However, this study fails to prove the role of product involvement in strengthening the relationship between brand distinctiveness, brand social benefit, brand warmth, and memorable brand experience on CBI.

There are several limitations in this study which are wished to motivate forthcoming researcher in this field. The first limitation of this study is associated with the location of the respondent who became the sample of this study. The sample of the study was restricted to the customer of Acer laptop in Semarang city who have the willingness to participate in filling the questionnaire. So, the sample may do not represent all the users of Acer laptop. Regarding this limitation, the next study may increase the range of the data collection to another area in Central of Java and also to another area in Indonesia. Second, the impact of brand loyalty isn't observed in the context of the process of interaction between customer and brand, so this study cannot capture the indication about the dynamism of process of development of brand loyalty over the time. To capture the impact of brand loyalty as an essential of an interactive activity of marketing of the company, it would need to adopt the longitudinal study through more than one case study. In this case, it is better to use a longitudinal data and not a cross-sectional data to track the experience of the development of CBI and its impact on brand loyalty. Third, this study is using the Likert scale to measure a brand loyalty. It can be the source of biased in articulating the level of loyalty of customer to the Acer brand. Regarding this limitation, a future study can improve the scale of measurement of brand loyalty of the customer of Acer Brand by using a direct measure of how long the customer being the user of Acer laptop, how often the customer gives the other third party to buy Acer laptop, etc.

## Acknowledgment

This study has been supported by the Faculty of Engineering, Diponegoro University through grand for "Penelitian Dasar". The authors wish to acknowledge to Dean of Faculty

Engineering for giving the authors the opportunity to conduct this study. The authors also wish to acknowledge our appreciation and gratitude all the partners in grand of "Penelitian Dasar" for their support to the development of numerous ideas and concepts presented in this paper.

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