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How Can Brand Excitement Enhance Emotional Responses of Local Fashion Brands in Indonesia? : Moderating of Ethnocentrism

Cindy Suwandhi[a]
Tengku Ezni Balqiah[b*]

[a,b] Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia

Abstract

In the last few decennium, research pertaining to the brand has gained the attention of many academicians. Interest in further studies of matters related to it, such as brand love and brand engagement has increased tremendously as well. This study was conducted to examine the effect of brand love, brand image and brand personality on brand engagement with ethnocentrism as a moderating factor by using the case study of the local fashion brand in Indonesia. Respondents in this study were people who have purchased clothing items from a specific brand of local fashion. Data processing method used is Structural Equation Model (SEM). This study indicates that the excitement does not have a positive influence towards brand love, and the brand image does not have a positive effect on word-of-mouth (WOM). Nonetheless, with the existence of ethnocentrism as moderating factor, excitement's effect towards brand love and brand image were even greater. Hereafter, brand advocacy was finally formed by brand love's positive effect towards WOM. This study demonstrated the importance of ethnocentrism in enhancing word of mouth and further brand advocacy.

Keywords

Introduction

Up to early 2017, global fashion brands such as Zara, Forever21, Mango, H&M and Topshop have proliferated and succeeded in Indonesia's market. This situation could be due to the high growth of demand for clothing in Indonesia that increase from 8,1 Billion USD in 2011 to 16.1 billion USD in 2018 (forecast) (statistic, 2017). On the other hand, the demand for local fashion brand has also increased since 2014, which is mostly contributed by the younger generation (Jaramaya, 2014).

There are many apparel's local brands in Indonesia that have well known globally. Aliisan has introduced since 1960 as formal wear for men. Followed by The Executive, specialty in office fashion in 1987 (previously was known as Wood in 1979), Minimal in 2002, Gaudi in 2004. LEA, jeans' product is the very reputable brand, has already marketed since 1973. Meanwhile, Osella and Hammer, the brand that focuses on casual for youth start their business in 1987. The youth market is very potential in Indonesia, that attract many local brands to enter, including 3second in 2002, Greenlight in 2004. Based on Euromonitor (2017), various domestic brands such as Triset, Yongki Komaladi, LEA and GT Man have the strong market position, especially in the urban outskirts. High competition increases the importance of brand power in consumer purchases decision making.

One of the indicators of brand strength is brand love. It is defined as the level of the emotional bond of a contented consumer to a trade name. Brand passion is included in brand love, along with positive brand evaluation and positive emotions responding to brands and declarations of love for the related brand (Ahuvia, 2005). Consumers' feeling towards a brand, be it love or like, is relatively a new idea originated from research on excitement, love, and relationships between consumer and the brand itself (Ahuvia, 2005; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012; Karjaluoto et al., 2016). However, this feeling is developed differently compared to a person's affinity or dislike towards another individual or objects.

Former studies concluded that brand love has a positive association with WOM (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006) as brand love indicates an active bond with brands and consumers. In a broad sense, WOM communication involves transferring any information about a targeted object (e.g. a company or a specific brand) from one individual to the other either directly or through communication mediums (Brown et al., 2005).

Symbolic signs of the brand tend to be called brand personality, which by Aaker (1997) is defined as a collection of human characteristics associated with the brand. By purchasing a fashion brand which has conformity with a consumer's personality, consumers can communicate something about themselves (Leung & Chang, 2000 in Spinelli & Ismail, 2012). Aaker (1997). Kapfere (1997) argues that brand personality is essential in creating a strong brand image, which allows the product to be differentiated from its rivals.

Derived from the brand association, brand image is a series of perception

concerning brand which is reflected from brand association in consumer's recollection (Koubaa, 2008). Brand image is the overall impression created in the consumer's mind about a product or service. Although the brand image is very essential in the field of marketing, the inadequacy of theory development leads to a lot of dubiety in the interrelation of brand image to brand personality (Patterson, 1999).

When it comes to fashion, brand love is a substantial aspect of research. Marketers need to understand the relationship between consumers and their fashion brands since this relationship offers significant impact towards corporate's profitability. It is important to not only understand how relationships are formed between consumers and fashion brands, but marketers must also understand the aspects that drive these relationships in order to create brand engagement which is both related to the functional and emotional aspects at the same time.

Thus, the main issue to be analyzed further in this research is whether there is a relationship amongst brand personality, brand image, brand love, and brand engagement. Since the object of this research is local fashion brand, ethnocentrism might be one of the factors in play as well. In the next section, this paper will elaborate more on related construct and literature review as the foundation to develop a conceptual framework. Then, it discusses the methodology adopted in this study and the discussion of result will be followed by the conclusion and, finally, a discussion on future research and research implications.

Literature Reviews

The theoretical review will discuss brand love, brand image, brand personality, word-of-mouth, brand advocacy and ethnocentrism.

Brand love

Brand love is defined as the passionate level of emotional bond possessed by a contented consumer to a particular trade name. Aligned with the literature on the prototype of love (Ahuvia, 2005b) which stated that sense of passion for the brand, brand attachment, positive brand evaluation, positive emotions in brand response and brand love declarations are all included in brand love. Brand love is a long-term relationship between consumers and brands (Fournier, 1998), expressing the strongest emotional bond between a brand and a consumer (Robert, 2005).

Brand image

Keller (1993) described the brand image as a perception about the brand as resembled by brand association in consumer's remembrance that contains the essence of the brand for consumer himself. There are three classifications concerning brand association: attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Attributes are features that portray a product or service, such as product-attributes and non-product attributes. Benefits are the personal value attached to the attributes by the consumer, such as functional, experiential, and symbolic benefit. Lastly, brand attitudes are defined as consumer's overall appraisal, which often shapes consumer behavior. Different category of the brand association will construct

the brand image, consisting product or non-product attributes, functional, experiential, symbolic benefits, and overall brand attitude.

Cho and Fiore (2015) summarized three dimensions of the brand image, namely cognitive association, emotional association, and sensory association. The cognitive association is formed by both direct and indirect interaction between consumer and brand, which concerns about consumer's personal belief, idea and evaluation of brand-related attributes. Emotional association involves subjective feeling that contributes to experiential benefit. Finally, sensory association engages consumer's physical senses.

Brand Personality

Defined as a series of human characteristics associated with a particular brand, brand personality encompasses characteristics such as gender, age, social class, and human personality traits as well as warmth, attention, and sentimentality (Aaker 1997). 5 dimensions of brand personality are stated as below (Figure 1).

Furthermore, Aaker et al (2004) mentioned that sincerity and excitement have represented most of the variance in personality rating. Brand personality "sincere" is characterized by warmth, family orientation, and traditionalism. Meanwhile "excitement" conveys vitality, uniqueness, and independence. Personalities of fashion brands were directly conveyed through attributes of cloth, or indirectly through advertising, store design and shopping malls. E.g. Levi's Jeans elicit a feeling of excitement, stylish, youthful and extroverted (Ismail and Spinelli, 2012).

Word-of-Mouth and Brand Advocacy

In the fashion industry, word-of-mouth is a priceless asset since WOM offers effectiveness three times more than advertising (Hogan et al, 2004). As a form of communication between private parties (consumers) in evaluating a product or service (Anderson, 1998), WOM is characterized as an oral communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, regarding a brand, product or service. WOM may be positive, negative, or neutral.
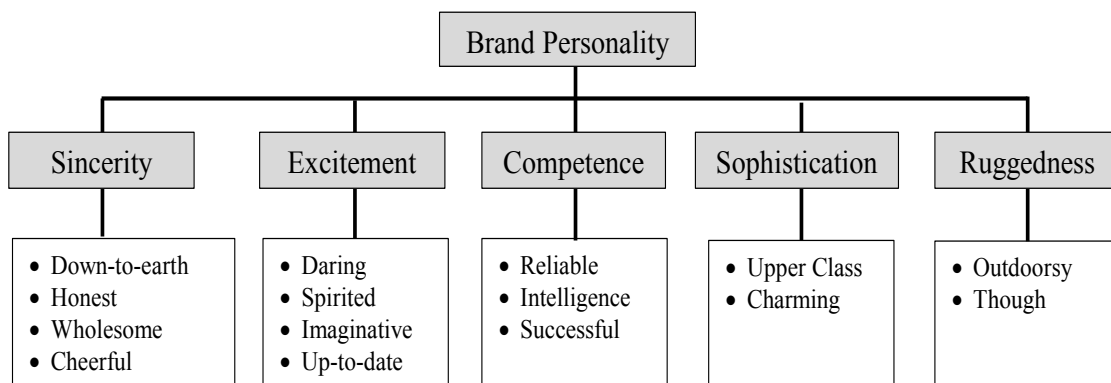

Figure 1. Brand Personality Dimension (Aaker, 1997)

Since WOM is a non-commercial communication, customers tend to rely on WOM when it comes to purchasing decision (Shen et al, 2016).

Brand advocacy is commonly associated with positive WOM, which is informal communication between consumers about their experiences with particular services, products, or providers (Westbrook, 1987 in Wilder, 2015). From the customer-brand relationship perspective, brand advocacy is originated from the stronger personal stake in their brand than positive WOM thus engage empathy (Wilder, 2015), an urge of not just wanting but desiring to share a brand's information. Palmatier (2008) explained that the outcome of relationship marketing strategy can be measured through specific behavior: cooperative behavior, relational loyalty, referrals, and empathetic behavior. Empathetic behavior means customer's ability to understand the seller's position and having the willingness to forgive minor infraction.

Ethnocentrism

Consumer's ethnocentrism (CET) represented consumer's faith in the supremacy of their own country's product, and the belief that it is inappropriate to consume foreign products since it could harm domestics economy and national employment (Shimp, 1984), and involve morality to purchase domestic products and rejection of foreign products (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). With the existence of individual differences, the level of consumer ethnocentrism in each individual also varied, where low and high level of consumer ethnocentrism will affect the consumer's actions and

desires in buying foreign products (Klein et al, 2002; Orth and Girbasova, 2003). Individual with strong CET supports tradition, symbols, icon, and product of their own country, dislikes other culture and sees his own group as central (Kwak et al, 2006).

Methodology

Research Model and Hypotheses

Research model (Figure 2) was developed through literature study regarding the objectives of this research. Relationships are found among brand personality, brand love, brand image, and WOM (Ismail and Spinelli, 2012), brand advocacy (Wilder, 2015; Islam and Rahman, 2016), and moderating of Consumer Ethnocentrism (Shimp, 1984; Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Wang and Chen, 2004; Klein et al, 2006).

Excitement, Brand Love, Brand Image, and WOM

Brand portrays a relationship function and possesses a personality that allows it to form relationships with consumers (Hankinson, 2004). The consumer may attribute the human characteristic to the brand (Aaker, 1997). Excitement is one of 5 dimensions of brand personality by Aaker (1997) which conveys that affection towards brand can elicit positive emotion (Robert, 2005). Brand love is the passionate level of brand attachment (Ahuvia, 2005). This personality creates meaning to consumers as the brand association and brand image, and furthermore, the meaning will enhance the brand's emotional bonding. The excitement dimension of brand personality could influence the consumer to share their

feeling about brand personality to another consumer. Based on arguments, the hypotheses are:

H1: Excitement will positively influence brand love

H2: Excitement will positively influence brand image

H3: Excitement will positively influence WOM

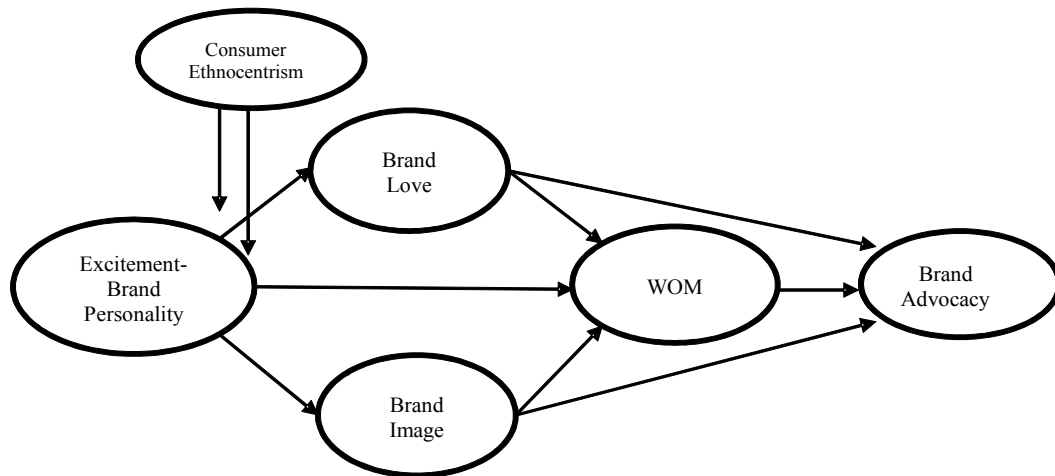H4: Brand Image will positively influence brand love

Figure 2. Research Model

The Moderating Effect of Consumer Ethnocentrism

Individual with strong CET supports tradition, symbols, icon, and product of their own country, dislikes other culture, and sees his own group as central (Kwak, et. al, 2006). Contrasts in perception about the domestic and foreign brand will demonstrate various responses to the brand.

H5a. Consumer Ethnocentrism enhance the positive influence of excitement toward the brand love.

H5a. Consumer Ethnocentrism enhance the positive influence of excitement toward the brand image

The Influence of Brand Love and Brand Image towards WOM and Brand Advocacy

Satisfied consumers have the emotional response to the brand, love the brand, and are more eager to share positive WOM to another consumer (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Positive communication from consumers about a brand can push another consumer to consider and consume the brand (Keller, 1993). Karjaluoto et al., (2016) demonstrated that brand love has a strong effect on WOM and e-WOM, and the relationship will be even stronger when a customer gains more experience with the brand. When a consumer has a solid emotional bond with a brand, the consumer will deliver WOM about the brand and advocate the brand to another consumer (Matzler et al., 2007 in Wallace et al.,

2014). The brand image contains the meaning of a brand for the consumer (Keller, 1993). If the brand has positive appraisement about the attributes, benefit, and attitude, it is more likely that the consumers will engage with the brand.

H6. Brand love will positively influence WOM.

H7. Brand image will positively influence WOM.

H8. Brand love will positively influence Brand Advocacy.

H9. Brand image will positively influence Brand Advocacy.

Brand Advocacy

Brand advocacy is resulted by the stronger personal stake in the brand than positive WOM thus engage more empathy (Wilder, 2015), an urge of not just wanting but desiring to share a brand's information.

H10. WOM will positively influence Brand Advocacy.

Research Design

Data were collected by cross-sectional online survey using Typeform-paid promotional services from official LINE accounts such as Scholarship Info and Student Info Universitas Indonesia-in Jakarta (capital city of Indonesia) and its satellite city (Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi). In Indonesia, this area, Jakarta became the center of activities related to the fashion. Many fashion events and exhibitions are organized annually, e.g. Jakarta Fashion Week, Indonesia Fashion and Craft Exhibition, Jakarta Fashion and Food Festival,

Cikini Fashion Festival. It is assumed that these urban areas' communities could represent Indonesia consumers perception toward local brand fashions because they have easier access to information and local brand products in the fashion industry.

Samples

Population in this research are male and female that had passed through screening; respondents who had ever bought or consume local clothing brand with 17 – 35 years old of age which popularly known as Gen Y or Millenials. A total 680 respondents completed the online survey. Purposive sampling technique was used in obtaining respondents. The sample consisted of female (76%), respondents aged 17-21 years old (79%), students (86%), 88% had bought the local brand more than once, and bought the product from the offline store (56%).

Measurement and Data Analysis

The questionnaire consists of 29 questions with six-point likert scale regarding six research constructs: 4 items of Excitement Brand Personality (Aaker, 1997; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012), 5 items of Brand Image (Low and Lamb, 2000); Ismail and Spinelli, 2012), 7 items of Brand Love (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Albert, et al. 2008); Ismail and Spinelli, 2012), 4 items of WOM (Gremler et al., 2001; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012), 3 items of Advocacy (Kim et al, 2000), and 6 items of Customer Ethnocentrism (Klein et al, 2006; Netemeyer et al, 1991). Structural Equation Modelling with Lisrel 8.8 was used to test all hypotheses.

Results

Validity and Reliability

The pretest was held with 30 respondents to measure the validity and reliability of the questionnaires. Through SPSS 23, the result demonstrated, all items were valid with loading factors > 0.5 and Cronbach's Alpha > 0.6. The validity and reliability in main survey were also demonstrated, all items were valid (standardize loading factors > 0.5) and reliable (CR > 0.7, and VE > 0.5).

Hypothesis Testing

Table 1 presents the estimates and t-statistics of all research hypotheses. Based on this table, the conclusion of each hypothesis is as follows.

Based on the t-statistic of t=-0.36, data do not support H1. It can be concluded that the excitement of brand personality could not enhance brand love. But the data support H2 and H3, based on t-statistics of t=5.57 and t=2.61. This result leads to the conclusion that the excitement of brand personality could enhance brand image and WOM. The same result was found in testing the statistical H4, the data support H4, based on the t-statistic of t= 13.41. Thus, it can be concluded that Brand Image positively influence Brand Love.

The data support H5a and H5b based on t-statistics of t=3.90 and t=6.26. This result leads to the conclusion that consumer ethnocentrism can enhance the positive influence of excitement of brand personality towards brand love and brand image. In other words, if consumer ethnocentrism is high, the influence of excitement of brand personality towards brand love and brand image will be higher than the low consumer ethnocentrism. The same result was found in testing the statistical H6. The data support H6 based on t-statistics of t=10.51.

Table 1. Summary Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	B	t value	Conclusion
H$_1$: *Excitement* will positively influence brand love	-0.01	-0.36	*Not Supported*
H$_2$: *Excitement* will positively influence brand image	0.28	5.57	Supported
H$_3$: *Excitement* will positively influence WOM	0.08	2.61	Supported
H$_4$: *Brand Image* will positively influence brand love	0.71	13.41	Supported
H$_{5a}$. Consumer Ethnocentrism enhance the positive influence of e*xcitement* toward brand love	0.17	3.90	Supported
H$_{5a}$. Consumer Ethnocentrism enhance the positive influence of e*xcitement* toward brand image	0.34	6.26	Supported
H$_6$. *Brand love* will positively influence WOM.	0.65	10.51	Supported
H$_7$. *Brand image* will positively influence WOM.	0.10	1.64	*Not Supported*
H$_8$. *Brand love* will positively influence Brand Advocacy	0.02	0.25	*Not Supported*
H$_9$. *Brand image* will positively influence Brand Advocacy	-0.02	-0.36	*Not Supported*
H$_{10}$. *WOM* will positively influence Brand Advocacy.	0.86	16.74	Supported

Thus, it can be stated that brand love will enhance WOM. Meanwhile, the data do not support H7 based on t-statistics of t=1.64. These finding showed that brand love will only enhance WOM, but will not influence brand advocacy. The result indicates that there is the influence of brand love and brand image toward brand advocacy. The data support H8 and H9, based on t-statistics of t=0.25 and t=-0.36. However, a different result is found H10, data support H10, based on the t-statistic of t = 16.74, that is WOM positively influence brand advocacy.

Discussion

In this study, excitement is the personality of a brand, while brand love is the result of interaction between consumers with a brand. Excitement can enhance brand image and WOM directly but has no effect on brand love. Even though the respondents had high excitement (mean=4.62), and high brand love (mean=4.70) but the only brand image will enhance brand love. Acevedo and Aron (2009) explained that the intensity of the formation of love is influenced by time. Researchers suspect there is no relationship between excitement and brand love because consumers have not consumed the brand in long term.

In 2015, there was more than 33% young population (15-34 years old) in Indonesia, this number reaches 40% for urban areas such as Jakarta. This group age is known as the millennial generation (Ali and Purwandi, 2016). Urban middle-class millennials in Indonesia have three main characteristics: creative, connected, and confidence. They think out the box, have many ideas, and could communicate brilliantly, very fluent in social media,

and confident in arguing. Because they are very active in social media, they have the abundance of information, especially the information about price, product features, promotion, and customer reviews Ali and Purwandi, 2015).

Research from Nielsen (2015) mentioned that Gen Y is a very up-to-date consumer segment. In this case, Gen Y will follow the latest style of fashion as Gen Y tends to be more fashion conscious (Casidy, 2012). Hence, even though they feel the excitement and love the brand, they interest in search information could generate excitement and love another brand because they want to be seen as fashionable.

Excitement influence brand loves indirectly through moderating effect from consumer ethnocentrism. In the situation where support for local fashion brands is increasing, the excitement personality will further enhance local brand love and local brand image. Supporting local brand will be reflected by individual has strong CET that supports tradition, symbols, icon, and product of their own country, dislikes other culture, and sees his own group as central (Kwak et al, 2006), and this situation will increase their love for local brand and positive image of local brand. This research shows high ethnocentrism (mean=4.29). Most respondents (64%) are undergraduate students with age range 17-21 years old. Older consumers more ethnocentrism than the younger consumer (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Josiassen et al., 2011). But in this research, interestingly, although most respondents are young, the ethnocentrism still high. This situation could be resulted by the campaign of "Love local products" by

Indonesia government to grow domestic products. This result in accordance with Indonesia Consumer Survey (2017) that demonstrated the declining of purchase branded fashion goods. Indonesian customers prefer to buy less branded items. In fashion, consumer's appetite on foreign brands is decline from 77% in 2010 to 48% in 2016. Even though, they preference to foreign brand and increase awareness toward the foreign brand, their plan to purchase foreign brands decline from 80% in 2010 to 66% in 2016. Conversely, their plan to purchase domestic brands increase from 20% in 2010 to 32% in 2016. They trust and pride in using domestic brands because local company more comprehend their needs, and better value for money (Razdan, Das, and Sohoni, 2014).

Interestingly, there is no direct effect of brand love and brand image towards brand advocacy yet it is built through mediating of WOM. Although respondents have high brand love and brand image, it must also follow by WOM, and furthermore brand advocacy. In this research, the context of WOM discussed is positive WOM. While brand advocacy is certainly similar to positive WOM, brand advocates have a stronger personal stake in their brand than WOM, and thus should engage in behaviors that are somewhat more emphatic (Wilder, 2015). If consumers feel they love the brand, this feeling will create a desire to recommend the brand to another consumer, such as friends and relatives (Ismail and Spinelli, 2012). From relationship marketing paradigm, brand advocacy is a result of a relationship between consumer and brand. Advocacy is the outcome of relationship marketing efforts (Bendapudi and Berry, 1997).

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, this research adopted the research model of Ismail and Spinelli (2012) by incorporating consumer ethnocentrism as moderating variable and brand advocacy as the ultimate level of brand engagement. Consumer ethnocentrism becomes essential because this research stresses on the local fashion brand. The excitement of brand personality has positively influence brand image and WOM but has no relationship to brand love. Brand love can be formed through brand image. Hence, brand advocacy must be formed through WOM. This outcome demonstrated the importance of WOM to create brand advocacy.

Local fashion brands should pay attention to the person best suited to its brand by emphasizing that the product is a domestic product. The formation of a suitable brand personality is essential for consumers to feel closer to a brand. Thus, the company could attract more consumers and increase the company's revenue. Aligned with one of the indicators in the excitement, Gen Y consumers feel that by using the local fashion brand, they will be perceived as a modern and up-to-date consumer. By leveraging the momentum of social media and the internet in marketing the products to consumers, companies can create products that represent images of related brands to stimulate the creation of word-of-mouth from consumers.

Respondents in this study have a benchmark or reference to their local

fashion brand (selected by respondents) effecting brands in this study is too varied and reduced the strength of some construct. Additionally, this study does not account the time or duration of the interaction of respondents to the selected local fashion brand. Meanwhile, according to Acevedo and Aron (2009), the intensity of the formation of love is influenced by time. Future research could enrich the result by focusing on particular brand and comparing between some demographic variables, such as age, and education.

Notes on Contributors

Cındy Suwandhi is a graduate majoring management marketing from Management Department, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia.

Tengku Ezni Balqiah is a senior lecturer of Management Department, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia. Her research interests are CSR activities and their impacts on business performance, consumer behavior, promotions, and branding.

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Appendix

Local fashion brands by respondents:

Brand	Brand	Brand
Alleira Batik	Osella	Batik Keris
Cottonink	Minimal	Aye Denim
The Executive	Erigo	Bateeq
Colorbox	Dian Pelangi	Eiger
LEA	Salt and Pepper	KickDenim
Nevada	Petersaysdenim	Raden Sirait
Gaudi	Magnolia Collection	