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CLICK. CONNECT. COMMIT: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING BUILDS BRAND LOYALTY ON INDONESIA'S LEADING E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS

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Abstract

This study investigates the indirect effect of social media marketing (SMM) on brand loyalty through the mediating roles of consumer brand engagement, brand trust, brand experience, and brand equity within Indonesia's e-commerce industry. Although SMM plays a crucial role in shaping brand loyalty, few studies have comprehensively examined the relational and experiential variables underlying this process. A cross-sectional survey was conducted involving 285 active social media users who had previously made purchases via TikTok Shop, Shopee, or Tokopedia. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS. The results indicate that SMM positively affects consumer brand engagement, brand trust, brand experience, and brand equity. However, SMM has a negative direct effect on brand loyalty. Conversely, all four mediating variables significantly and positively influence brand loyalty, suggesting that emotional interaction and meaningful brand experiences play a greater role than mere digital exposure in fostering loyalty. This study provides a holistic model for understanding digital relationship strategies. Practically, e-commerce companies are encouraged to shift their focus from purely promotional tactics to interactive content, personalized experiences, and trust-based communication to cultivate long-term consumer loyalty in an increasingly competitive digital environment.

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INTRODUCTION

E-commerce platforms such as TikTok Shop, Tokopedia, and Shopee are increasingly active in utilizing social media. These companies leverage features such as live streaming, micro-influencers, and short video content. As of January 2025, the number of social media users in Indonesia including platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and X has reached 143 million, representing 50.2% of the total population of 285 million (We Are Social & Kepios, 2025). This reflects a significant shift in social media marketing strategies. Social media has become a primary channel for building relationships between brands and customers, ultimately fostering brand loyalty. This phenomenon transforms marketing strategies and reshapes how brands create experiences and emotional connections with their consumers, thereby contributing to brand loyalty.

Although social media marketing plays a crucial role, consumers today tend to place more trust in reviews from other users. They are more attracted to transparent and active brands on social media. Brands utilize social media marketing to influence consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. This strategy allows consumers to engage at various stages of the buying process (Ali et al., 2024). However, there is still a lack of comprehensive research examining the relationship between elements of social media marketing and brand loyalty. This gap is significant in Indonesia's highly dynamic and. Therefore, this presents a relevant research opportunity for further exploration.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of this process, an appropriate theoretical approach is the Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) framework. The theory of consumer brand engagement (CBE) originates from relationship marketing literature (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The CBE concept has become a fundamental foundation in social media marketing research. It is often regarded as an initial step that can lead to positive outcomes, such as increased consumer loyalty toward a brand. As a result, many companies have made CBE a top priority in their marketing strategies. Businesses actively invest resources to create systems that encourage greater customer engagement and participation(Winell et al., 2023). CBE also serves as a theoretical basis for understanding the relationship between social media marketing and brand loyalty, as it helps explain the roles of other variables, such as brand experience, brand trust, and brand equity.

Social media marketing now plays an increasingly vital role in executing marketing strategies in the modern era (Bushara et al., 2023). It is considered more effective compared to traditional marketing. Social media platforms are utilized through various marketing approaches, including influencer collaborations, engaging content, location-based promotions, and strengthening community interactions(Islam & Sheikh, 2024). The success of marketing communication via social media can be examined through several key variables in this study: consumer brand engagement, brand equity, brand trust, and brand experience.

One of the key variables in this context is Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE), which is conceptually rooted in consumer engagement theory. CBE is a critical variable influenced by social media marketing. Marketing strategies on social media can enhance engagement through elements of entertainment, interactivity, and trend-relevant content both social media marketing and consumer brand engagement play essential roles in building brand loyalty. Interactive and appealing social media content can strengthen customer relationships and, in turn, boost brand loyalty (Aljuhmani et al., 2023). Various interactive features on e-commerce platforms enable consumers to engage with brands actively. This engagement acts as a bridge between social media marketing and the formation of brand loyalty.

In addition to consumer engagement, perceptions of brand value or equity are critical aspects influenced by social media marketing activities. Brand equity represents the long-term perception and value that consumers associate with a brand. Consumers who are active on social media are more frequently exposed to a brand's digital activities, which fosters positive perceptions of the brand(Emeralda & Kurniawati, 2022). This exposure helps create favourable impressions that support the brand's overall image. High-quality social media content can strengthen brand associations in the minds of consumers. Brand equity is a key indicator of successful branding strategies in the digital era. Therefore, it must be strategically managed, especially in the increasingly competitive e-commerce landscape.

Brand trust is another essential component in building brand equity that cannot be overlooked. Trust is a fundamental factor that underpins purchasing decisions in digital environments and aligns with the goals of social media marketing in strengthening communication between businesses and consumers (Azhar et al., 2023) . Brand trust helps consumers feel secure, reduces perceived risks, and fosters emotional bonds with the brand. When trust is high, consumers tend to be more loyal and continue engaging with the brand. In e-commerce, brand trust is vital for establishing long-term customer relationships. As such, it must be built strategically to ensure the sustainability of customer relationships.

Beyond brand equity and trust, brand experience is also shaped through ongoing digital interactions on social media. Social media marketing enhances consumers' experiences with a brand, allowing them to interact (Syahputra & Kurniawati, 2023). The perceived uniqueness of these experiences can strengthen the link between social media marketing and brand experience (Hafez, 2022). A consistent and distinctive experience becomes a key differentiator in today's highly competitive digital market. The brand experience leaves an emotional imprint on consumers' minds, making it a strategic variable that must be adequately understood and managed.

With the formation of consumer engagement, trust, and positive experiences with a brand, brand loyalty emerges as the outcome of an integrated digital marketing process. Brand loyalty reflects consumers' emotional and behavioural attachment to a brand. Effective social media marketing can encourage repeat purchases and customer advocacy (Daya et al., 2022). Brand loyalty refers to consumers' strong and ongoing commitment to continue purchasing and choosing a particular brand, even when alternative options in the market may appear more appealing (Oliver, 1999; Deng et al., 2024). Engagement, experience, trust, and equity are crucial in shaping loyalty. Therefore, loyalty is not an isolated result; it grows through consistent and meaningful interactions between brands and consumers. As such, brand loyalty becomes the primary goal in implementing modern digital strategies.

Although previous studies have explored the topic of social media marketing, many have only examined a limited number of relevant variables (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Comprehensive studies that integrate all key variables into a unified model remain relatively scarce in the academic literature. This gap becomes even more evident in the context of Indonesia's rapidly growing e-commerce industry, which has yet to receive extensive and comprehensive academic focus. Hence, there is a need for an approach that examines the interrelationships among multiple variables simultaneously in order to achieve a more holistic understanding.

The significant relationships among these variables can serve as a valuable reference for designing strategies to enhance customer loyalty (Ali et al., 2024). This study addresses that need by developing a systematic and comprehensive mediation model. Specifically, it explores the mediating roles of brand engagement, brand experience, brand trust, and brand equity in shaping customer loyalty influenced by social media marketing strategies. The novelty of this research lies in its holistic and integrative model design, which not only addresses theoretical gaps but also offers practical guidance for e-commerce industry practitioners. Amid increasingly intense digital competition, the findings of this study are expected to provide strategic insights into building brand loyalty through the effective use of social media.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

A positive perception of social media marketing—encompassing social interaction, informational value, and entertainment—leads to increased consumer engagement with the brand on these platforms (Zeqiri et al., 2024). The significant and positive effect of social media marketing activities (SMMA) on brand engagement demonstrates that brands actively providing information, following trends, and interacting with customers tend to foster higher levels of consumer engagement (Mettasari et al., 2023). Social media marketing has a positive influence on consumer engagement with brands. The content shared on social media often highlights user perspectives, opinions, and experiences previously expressed through posts (Kumar et al., 2022). In short, various academic studies consistently confirm that social media marketing significantly impacts consumer brand engagement. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer brand engagement.

Social media marketing, which incorporates elements such as personalization, current trends, interaction, and entertainment to represent brand identity, tends to strengthen brand awareness and create positive associations in the minds of consumers. This finding reflects that social media marketing activities are positively associated with the enhancement of brand equity (Ali et al., 2024). Social media marketing has a positive impact on brand equity, meaning that the more intensive the marketing activities conducted through social platforms, the greater the improvement in brand equity (Emeralda & Kurniawati, 2022). Social media also shapes public perception of digital product brands through shared content to capture audience attention (Lesmana et al., 2023). Prior research has shown that social media advertising campaigns can enhance brand equity. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Social media marketing positively and significantly affects brand equity.

Social media marketing has a positive impact on brand loyalty. Therefore, companies utilize social media platforms to facilitate transactions, foster engagement, and build ongoing customer communication. These efforts aim to enrich consumers' brand experiences and communicate brand values, ultimately influencing consumer behavioural responses toward the brand on social media (Aljuhmani et al., 2023). Social media marketing positively influences brand loyalty by providing up-to-date information, aligning with current trends, and enabling effective communication—all of which contribute to cultivating consumer loyalty toward the brand (Syahputra & Kurniawati, 2023). Moreover, brand loyalty derived from social media engagement offers a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Emeralda & Kurniawati, 2022). Previous research confirms that brands actively engaged on social media enhance brand loyalty. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer brand engagement.

Social media marketing has a positive relationship with brand trust, emphasizing that enjoyable experiences with a brand on social media are key to building trust within the consumer–brand relationship (Ali et al., 2024). Social media marketing has a positive effect on brand trust. Interactive communication initiated by brands can be a strong connector between the brand and its consumers (Emeralda & Kurniawati, 2022). Social media marketing contributes positively to developing brand trust, which is essential in establishing long-term customer relationships. Trust is considered one of the most critical factors in such relationships (Mettasari et al., 2023). Based on the above explanation and prior research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Social media marketing positively and significantly affects brand trust.

Brand experience plays a crucial role in customer satisfaction, as consumers today expect superior product features and seek a holistic experience throughout the purchasing and usage process (Lesmana et al., 2023). Social media marketing positively impacts brand experience, with various activities enhancing the customer's interactions and perceptions of a (Syahputra & Kurniawati, 2023). Social media marketing activities (SMMAs) positively influence brand experience, as consumers who gain valuable information about how a brand can fulfil their needs and desires are likely to develop a more substantial positive experience with the brand (Hafez, 2022). Multiple academic studies confirm that social media marketing significantly affects brand experience. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Social media marketing positively and significantly affects brand experience.

Customer engagement positively influences brand loyalty (Mettasari et al., 2023). The higher the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural interaction between consumers and a brand, the more likely they are to remain loyal, make repeat purchases, and recommend the brand to others. Strong engagement creates a deep bond, a critical foundation for building long-term loyalty. The brand engagement has been found to have a positive impact on brand loyalty. The stronger the consumer's involvement with a brand, the more loyalty they tend to demonstrate (Sujana et al., 2023). Consumer interaction with a brand positively influences and adds value to the loyalty consumers feel toward that brand (Wulandari et al., 2022). In summary, various academic studies consistently confirm that brand engagement significantly contributes to brand loyalty. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Customer brand engagement positively and significantly affects brand loyalty.

Brand equity positively influences brand loyalty (Ali et al., 2024). It directly and significantly affects consumers' loyalty levels (Daya et al., 2022). Brand equity is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty, indicating that higher brand equity is associated with greater customer loyalty (Safutra et al., 2023). Previous research confirms that substantial brand equity directly enhances brand loyalty. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Brand equity has a direct and significant effect on brand loyalty.

Brand trust plays a positive role in shaping customer loyalty. The use of social media communities provides significant advantages in building trust—particularly through the ease of information sharing and peer support. This directly contributes to increased brand loyalty(Ali et al., 2024). Trust in a brand firmly and positively influences consumer loyalty (Deng et al., 2024). Trust is crucial in establishing customer loyalty, as it fosters emotional security and confidence in the brand (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H8: Brand equity has a direct and significant effect on brand loyalty.

Brand experience makes a significant contribution to brand loyalty. In this study, the researchers expand on existing literature to evaluate how brand experience influences loyalty, particularly among young smartphone users. Brand experience positively affects brand loyalty. When consumers have a positive experience with a brand, it creates a favourable impression that encourages them to seek out and repeat the experience in the future (Syahputra & Kurniawati, 2023). A strong brand experience increases the likelihood of repeat purchases, reinforcing customer loyalty (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022). Based on previous research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: Brand experience has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty.

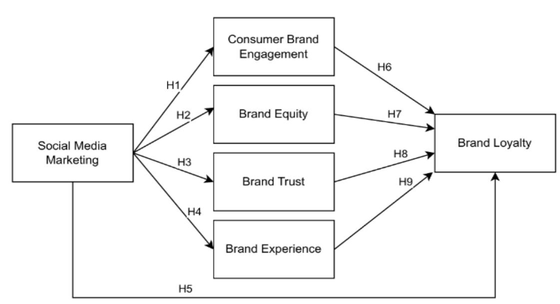

Figure 1. Research Model

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal research design. The objective is to examine whether social media marketing (SMM) strategies influence brand loyalty directly or indirectly through the mediating variables of brand engagement, trust, experience, and equity. The research uses a cross-sectional design, where data were collected at a single point in time. A total of 285 respondents were collected in Indonesia, and were selected using purposive sampling. The participants in this study consisted of both male and female respondents aged 17 years and above, representing a wide range of educational backgrounds from junior high school to doctoral level and diverse occupational fields. All participants were active users of social media platforms. Data were collected online via a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms.

The research instrument was developed based on indicators adapted from previous studies, using a five-point Likert scale to measure six key variables: social media marketing, brand engagement, brand trust, brand equity, brand experience, and brand loyalty. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the help of AMOS software. The analysis procedure followed the guidelines of (J. F. Hair et al., 2019), which include: Construct validity testing through standardized loading factors (considered valid if ≥ 0.50) Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha (≥ 0.70)

Convergent validity testing using Average Variance Extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50) and Construct Reliability (CR ≥ 0.70) Model fit was assessed using several goodness-of-fit indicators, including CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and CMIN/DF. Hypothesis testing was conducted based on parameter estimates, critical ratios (CR), and significance levels (p-value < 0.05).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Validity testing refers to the extent to which an instrument accurately measures the intended variable, ensuring that each indicator genuinely reflects the construct it represents (Hair et al., 2019). In this study, data were obtained from 285 respondents, and the minimum acceptable loading factor for confirming indicator validity is 0.45. Indicators are considered valid when their loading factor exceeds 0.45, whereas those with values below this threshold are regarded as invalid.

To evaluate the reliability of the constructs, a consistency check was performed to ensure the uniformity of responses related to each variable (Hair et al., 2019). Cronbach’s Alpha was employed as the reliability coefficient, where values above 0.60 indicate that the items used in the questionnaire consistently measure the same construct and are therefore considered reliable.

This study involved a total of 285 respondents. Based on gender, 107 respondents (37.5%) were male and 178 (62.5%) were female. In terms of age, 40 respondents (14.0%) were under 20 years old, 170 (59.6%) were between 21–25 years old, 48 (16.8%) were aged 26–30, and 27 (9.5%) were over 30. Regarding education, 2 respondents (0.7%) had completed junior high school, 97 (34.0%) senior high school, 41 (14.4%) diploma, and 145 (50.9%) held a bachelor’s degree or higher. Based on occupation, 74 respondents (26.0%) were students, 127 (44.6%) worked in the private or public sector, 33 (11.6%) were entrepreneurs, and 51 (17.9%) had other types of employment.

Validity Testing, Testing Reliability & Descriptive Statistics

Tabel 1. Validity and Descriptive Statistics

Variabel and Indicator	Loading Factor	Conclusion	Mean	Std. Devision
Social Media Marketing			**4.2491**	**0.8814**
I share e-commerce brand info on social media.	0.732	Valid	4.1123	0.95018
I find e-commerce info on social media	0.700	Valid	4.3965	0.82265
I often share brands with friends online.	0.755	Valid	4.1404	0.94643
Social media ads catch my attention.	0.707	Valid	4.3333	0.80345
Sharing brands online is trendy.	0.708	Valid	4.3404	0.83915
Social media makes sharing easier.	0.685	Valid	4.3825	0.78568
I enjoy posting my favorite brand content.	0.730	Valid	4.0386	1.02190
Consumer Brand Engagement			**4.0816**	**0.9059**
I focus on e-commerce brand content.	0.770	Valid	4.1404	0.84833

E-commerce brands leave a good impression.	0.775	Valid	4.1404	0.83156
Social media drives me to join brand activities.	0.788	Valid	4.0596	0.92307
I feel close to other brand fans.	0.766	Valid	3.9860	1.02081
Brand Equity			**4.0374**	**0.9599**
I still choose brands from social media.	0.849	Valid	4.0912	0.96347
I choose brands often seen on social media	0.898	Valid	3.9789	0.96026
I feel comfortable choosing brands from social media.	0.856	Valid	4.0421	0.95588
Brand Trust			**4.1114**	**0.9218**
Brand promotions show they care.	0.808	Valid	4.2386	0.91115
I trust brand info on social media.	0.805	Valid	3.9930	0.94195
Ads are easy to understand.	0.784	Valid	4.2105	0.85450
Info from brands is trustworthy.	0.826	Valid	4.0035	0.98044
Brand Experience			**4.1188**	**0.8691**
Product promotion is right and efficient.	0.746	Valid	4.2140	0.84741
Visual content is attractive and memorable.	0.708	Valid	4.1860	0.75326
I feel emotionally involved.	0.666	Valid	3.9474	1.05852
Content is meaningful dan relevant.	0.755	Valid	4.1018	0.85178
Products match my lifestyle.	0.777	Valid	4.0351	0.90314
Content makes me curious.	0.714	Valid	4.1614	0.84457
Content makes me evaluate the product.	0.678	Valid	4.1860	0.82467
Brand Loyalty			**4.0655**	**0.9479**
BL1	0.880	Valid	4.0246	0.98013
BL2	0.875	Valid	4.0386	0.95787
BL3	0.829	Valid	4.1333	0.90564

Based on the data presented in the table 1, validity and descriptive statistic tests, all constructs in this study demonstrate a high level of validity. This indicates that all items within each variable are consistent and dependable. The highest mean score was found in the Social Media Marketing variable (4.2491), followed by Brand Experience (4.1188) and Brand Trust (4.1114), suggesting that respondents gave strong ratings to social media marketing activities as well as their experience with and trust in the brand. Meanwhile, Brand Loyalty (4.0655), Consumer Brand Engagement (4.0816), and Brand Equity (4.0374) also received high average scores, indicating that respondents tend to be loyal, engaged, and hold positive perceptions of the brand.

All indicators within each construct have loading factor values above 0.6, confirming their validity in measuring the respective variables. The standard deviation values, ranging from 0.75 to 1.05, show that responses were relatively homogeneous and stable. Overall, the research instrument proved to be both valid, and it received favorable responses from the participants.

Tabel 2. Reliability Test

Variabel	CR	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	Conclusion
Social Media Marketing	0.930	0.621	0.902	Reliabel
Consumer Brand Engagement	0.934	0.723	0.855	Reliabel
Brand Equity	0.902	0.744	0.899	Reliabel
Brand Trust	0.889	0.675	0.880	Reliabel
Brand Experience	0.922	0.648	0.880	Reliabel
Brand Loyalty	0.911	0.794	0.900	Reliabel

Based on the data presented in the table 2. All variables in this study exhibit Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeding 0.7, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.5, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients above 0.8. These results indicate that each construct demonstrates strong internal consistency and convergent validity. Therefore, the measurement instruments used in this research are considered both reliable and valid in capturing the intended variables.

Fit Model Test

Hypothesis testing involves using sample data to make inferences about population parameters, as illustrated in Figure 2.

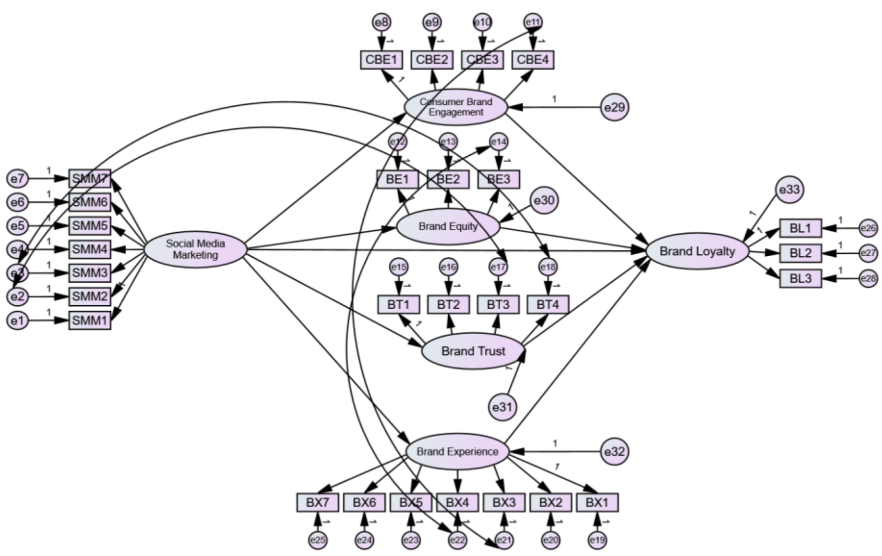

Figure 2. SEM Model

Tabel 3. Model Suitability Testing Indicators

Measurement Type	Measurement	Fit Model Decision	Processed	Decission
Absolute Fit Measure	Chi-Square	Low Chi-Square	939.644	Poor Fit
	p-value Chi-Square	>0.05	0	Poor Fit
	GFI	>0.90	0.791	Poor Fit
	RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.079	Marginal Fit
	NFI	>0.90	0.852	Marginal Fit
	IFI	>0.90	0.900	Fit
	TLI	>0.90	0.889	Marginal Fit
	CFI	>0.90	0.999	Fit
Parsimonius Fit Measure	CMIN/DF	Between 1 to 5	2.756	Fit Model

Based on the Goodness of Fit (GOF) test results on the initial model, as shown in table 3, the Chi-Square value was 939.644 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the model does not achieve absolute fit since the p-value is below 0.05. The GFI value of 0.791 is also below the threshold of 0.90, categorizing it as a poor fit. However, several other indicators, such as RMSEA (0.079), NFI (0.852), and TLI (0.889), fall into the marginal fit category. Meanwhile, IFI (0.900) and CFI (0.999) meet the minimum threshold of > 0.90, indicating a good fit. Additionally, the CMIN/DF value of 2.756 remains within the ideal range (1–5), suggesting that the model is still parsimonious and acceptable with specific adjustments.

Tabel 4. Revised Model Suitability Testing Indicators

Measurement Type	Measurement	Fit Model Decision	Processed	Decission
Absolute Fit Measure	Chi-Square	Low Chi-Square	622.440	Poor Fit
	p-value Chi-Square	>0.05	0	Poor Fit
	GFI	>0.90	.0806	Poor Fit
	RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.074	Fit
	NFI	>0.90	0.864	Marginal Fit
	IFI	>0.90	0.912	Fit
	TLI	>0.90	0.902	Fit
	CFI	>0.90	0.912	Fit
Parsimonius Fit Measure	CMIN/DF	Between 1 to 5	2.546	Fit Model

After revising the model, as shown in table 4 improvements were observed in most GOF indicators. The Chi-Square value decreased to 622.440; however, the p-value remained at 0.000, still indicating poor absolute fit. Nevertheless, the RMSEA value declined to 0.074, signifying that the model has achieved an acceptable fit according to this indicator. Moreover, there were increases in NFI (0.864), IFI (0.912), TLI (0.902), and CFI (0.912) all surpassing the minimum threshold of 0.90, and thus considered to indicate a good fit. Although the GFI value remains slightly below 0.90 at 0.806, the revised model shows significant improvement overall. The CMIN/DF value also declined to 2.546, which still falls within the ideal range of 1 to 5.

In conclusion, the revised model satisfies most model fit criteria, particularly those related to incremental and parsimonious fit indices. Therefore, it is considered feasible for hypothesis testing and further interpretation of the relationships among the variables.

Hypotheses Test

Tabel 5. Hypothesis Testing Results

	Hypothesis Description	Estimate	CR	p-value	Conclusion
H1	Social media marketing has a direct and significant effect on consumer brand engagement.	0.885	12.516	0.000	Hypothesis supported
H2	Social media marketing has a direct and significant effect on brand equity.	0.958	11.935	0.000	Hypothesis supported
H3	Social media marketing has a direct and significant effect on brand trust.	0.958	12.561	0.000	Hypothesis supported
H4	Social media marketing has a direct and significant effect on brand experience.	0.798	11.516	0.000	Hypothesis supported
H5	Social media marketing has a direct and significant effect on brand loyalty.	-1.252	-3.363	0.000	Hypothesis rejected
H6	Consumer brand engagement has a direct and significant effect on brand loyalty	0.662	2.156	0.031	Hypothesis supported

H7	Brand equity has a direct and significant effect on brand loyalty.	0.610	7.004	0.000	Hypothesis supported
H8	Brand trust has a direct and significant effect on brand loyalty.	0.521	3.088	0.002	Hypothesis supported
H9	Brand experience has a direct and significant effect on brand loyalty.	0.668	4.416	0.000	Hypothesis supported

H1 is supported, indicating that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer brand engagement. This finding suggests that social media marketing activities successfully encourage consumers to interact with and engage with the brand. H2 is also supported, demonstrating that social media marketing positively influences brand equity. This result implies that social media marketing contributes to strengthening consumers' perceptions of brand value. Similarly, H3 is supported, showing that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand trust, which indicates that effective social media communication can enhance consumer confidence in the brand.

H4 is supported, confirming that social media marketing positively affects brand experience. This finding suggests that interactions and content delivered through social media help create favorable experiences associated with the brand. In contrast, H5 is not supported because the relationship between social media marketing and brand loyalty is significant but negative. This result suggests that certain social media marketing practices may reduce customer loyalty, potentially due to excessive promotional content, consumer fatigue, or unmet expectations.

H6 is supported, indicating that consumer brand engagement positively influences brand loyalty. This finding highlights that consumers who actively engage with a brand are more likely to develop loyalty toward it. Greater engagement can strengthen emotional connections with the brand and encourage continued patronage.

Finally, H7, H8, and H9 are all supported. The results show that brand equity, brand trust, and brand experience each have a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty. These findings suggest that consumers are more likely to remain loyal when they perceive the brand as valuable, trustworthy, and capable of providing positive experiences. Collectively, these results emphasize the importance of strengthening brand equity, trust, experience, and engagement to foster long-term customer loyalty.

DISCUSSION

H1: The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Brand Engagement

The results of this study indicate that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer brand engagement (Estimate = 0.885; p < 0.001). This suggests that the more intensive the social media marketing activities conducted by e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, or TikTok Shop, the higher the consumer engagement with the brand. Consumers feel closer and more emotionally and cognitively connected because social media provides an interactive space that traditional marketing channels lack.

This finding aligns with (Hollebeek et al., 2014) who emphasized that engagement arises when consumers are exposed to brand content that is interesting, relevant, and participatory. Furthermore, reinforced that consistent and value-driven interactions through social media can encourage consumers to pay more attention to the brand, ranging from liking and commenting to actively participating in digital campaigns (Aljuhmani et al., 2023). In Indonesian e-commerce, features such as Shopee Live, Tokopedia's Instagram polls, and TikTok Shop's short videos are essential for building this engagement.

H2: The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Equity

The hypothesis test results show that social media marketing positively impacts brand equity (Estimate = 0.958; p < 0.001). This implies that a stronger and more consistent brand presence on social media increases the brand's perceived value in the eyes of consumers. Brand equity is shaped by consumers' impressions of the quality of digital communication, promotional content, and brand responses to positive and negative consumer feedback.

Frequency and quality of communication on social media contribute to perceptions of brand quality, uniqueness, and credibility (Emeralda & Kurniawati, 2022). added that consumers' perceptions of the reliability of information and visual aesthetics are also vital components in brand equity formation. In the cases of Shopee and Tokopedia, programs such as Shopee Big Sale and Tokopedia WIB go beyond sales campaigns they shape consumer perceptions that these platforms are leading, trustworthy, and highly valued.

H3: The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Trust

This study demonstrates that social media marketing significantly influences brand trust (Estimate = 0.958; $p < 0.001$). This indicates that positive experiences can cultivate consumer trust while interacting with an e-commerce platform's digital content and services. Consumers are more likely to trust the brand when an e-commerce platform is responsive, communicative, and transparent in delivering promotional information or addressing complaints.

Who found that transparent digital communication enhances brand integrity and competence perceptions (Ali et al., 2024). Brand trust develops when consumers feel that social media is used for selling and, listening to and resolving their concerns. In practice, features such as comment sections, testimonials, and product ratings on Shopee and Tokopedia reinforce the perception that these brands are reliable.

H4: The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Experience

Social media marketing also significantly influences brand experience (Estimate = 0.798; $p < 0.001$). This means that social media is a communication channel and a source of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural brand experiences. Brand experience is shaped through visual design, tone of voice, direct interaction, and storytelling embedded in social media content.

Brand experiences delivered via social media strongly impact long-term brand perceptions (Hafez, 2022). Emphasized that emotionally driven content such as testimonials or behind-the-scenes campaigns creates profound experiences that strengthen the consumer-brand relationship (Syahputra & Kurniawati, 2023). TikTok Shop is a compelling example, where the shopping experience is packaged in an entertaining, fast, and personalized format through live shopping.

H5: The Direct Effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Loyalty

Unlike most other hypotheses, H5 reveals a unique outcome. Social media marketing was found to have a significant adverse effect on brand loyalty (Estimate = -1.252; $p < 0.001$). This implies that overly aggressive or poorly targeted digital marketing strategies may erode consumer loyalty. While promotional content may attract consumers, it does not necessarily translate into long-term commitment to the platform.

This phenomenon is consistent with findings by (Dwivedi et al., 2021), who stated that brand loyalty cannot be built solely through promotional stimuli but requires emotional connection and consistently positive experiences. (Islam & Sheikh, 2024) further added that excessive exposure to advertisements, clickbait content, or large-scale promotions that fail to meet expectations may lead to distrust and fatigue. Therefore, social media marketing should not function in isolation but must be integrated with intense brand experiences, added value, and authentic relationships.

H6: The Effect of Consumer Brand Engagement on Brand Loyalty

Consumer brand engagement positively affects brand loyalty (Estimate = 0.662; $p = 0.031$). This confirms that when consumers feel involved in brand-related activities, they are more motivated to continue using and recommending the brand. Engagement fosters a sense of ownership, pride, and emotional connection, strengthening loyalty.

(Sujana et al., 2023) found that consumers actively engaging on social media are likelier to become brand loyalists. (Wulandari et al., 2022) also revealed that engagement creates a psychological effect known as a sense of belonging, which, over time, leads to more substantial brand commitment. In e-commerce, loyalty programs such as Shopee Coins, wishlist features, and active commenting on TikTok Shop represent tangible forms of consumer engagement that drive loyalty.

H7: The Effect of Brand Equity on Brand Loyalty

Brand equity positively and significantly affects brand loyalty (Estimate = 0.610; $p < 0.001$). When consumers perceive a brand as having a strong reputation, value, and differentiation, they are likelier to remain loyal and less inclined to switch to competitors. Substantial brand equity acts as a shield in retaining consumers amid intense market competition.

stated that brand equity is a strategic asset that reinforces loyalty by creating trust and added value (Ali et al., 2024). Consumers who perceive a brand as high-quality tend to have a high emotional switching cost, making them less susceptible to competitor pricing or features (Safutra et al., 2023). E-commerce platforms like Shopee Mall and Tokopedia Official Store have built substantial brand equity through quality assurance, originality, and trusted transaction experiences.

H8: The Effect of Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty

Brand trust also positively affects brand loyalty (Estimate = 0.521; $p = 0.002$). Consumers who trust a brand are likelier to remain loyal, as trust provides security, confidence, and comfort in transactions. In the e-commerce industry, trust is a key currency for maintaining long-term relationships.

(Deng et al., 2024) stated that trust forms an emotional bond that cannot be easily replaced by low prices alone. (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022) added that trust not only acts as an outcome but also as a catalyst for other positive behaviours, including word-of-mouth and customer retention. In Indonesia, features like Shopee Guarantee or Tokopedia Refund Center are crucial in building digital consumer trust.

H9: The Effect of Brand Experience on Brand Loyalty

Brand experience significantly influences brand loyalty (Estimate = 0.668; $p < 0.001$). A consistent, enjoyable, and meaningful brand experience provides an emotional reason for consumers to remain loyal. This goes beyond just app interface or promotions—it includes every interaction during the transaction process.

Brand experience is a key predictor of loyalty in the digital age, as modern consumers seek products and memorable experiences (Gazi et al., 2025). Overall quality of the experience from interface and loading speed to after-sales service plays a crucial role in strengthening loyalty (Santos & Schlesinger, 2021). TikTok Shop, for instance, has created a joyful experience through fast shopping flows and entertainment-based content, making consumers not only buy but return.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study reveals that social media marketing (SMM) significantly enhances consumer brand engagement, brand trust, brand experience, and brand equity within the Indonesian e-commerce landscape. However, the direct effect of SMM on brand loyalty is found to be negative. This indicates that while social media strategies are effective in initiating consumer interaction, they are not sufficient to cultivate long-term loyalty without being supported by deeper emotional connections and meaningful experiences. All four mediating variables—engagement, trust, experience, and equity—demonstrate a strong and positive influence on brand loyalty. These findings suggest that the success of digital marketing strategies depends not only on visibility or promotional reach but also on the quality of interactions and relationships established with consumers. As such, loyalty emerges not as a result of exposure alone, but from a continuous and personalized brand-consumer engagement process that fosters trust and emotional attachment.

Based on the study's results, it is recommended that e-commerce businesses transition from promotion-centric strategies to relationship-driven approaches. First, companies should encourage active consumer participation by implementing interactive content such as hashtag campaigns, user-generated posts, polls, quizzes, and real-time live streaming events. These initiatives enhance brand engagement and deepen emotional bonds. Second, creating personalized and enjoyable brand experiences is essential. This can be achieved by offering tailored product recommendations, storytelling aligned with consumer lifestyles, and visually appealing content that resonates with users. Third, building trust requires transparent communication, clear product information, and responsive customer service—features such as open product reviews, quick replies to inquiries, and reliable after-sales services are vital. Fourth, firms should reduce the frequency of overly promotional content that may lead to consumer fatigue or skepticism. Instead, content should offer educational, entertaining, or value-driven narratives. Finally, fostering a strong brand community can significantly strengthen loyalty. Businesses should support consumer forums or online groups where users can interact, share experiences, and feel a sense of belonging. This communal space not only enhances consumer satisfaction but also turns loyal customers into brand advocates. Collectively, these strategies are essential for sustaining consumer loyalty in today's highly competitive digital marketplace.

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