

The Influence of Social Media Interaction and Brand Engagement on Brand Awareness, Brand Image, and Brand Loyalty of Modern Bakery

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of social media interaction and customer brand engagement on brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty in the modern bakery industry in Indonesia. With a quantitative approach, this study collected data from 141 respondents who were social media users who had interacted with modern bakery brands. Data processing used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The results showed that social media interaction had a significant effect on customer brand engagement. Furthermore, social media interaction also had a significant direct effect on brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty. Path analysis showed an indirect effect of social media interaction through customer brand engagement on the three dependent variables, indicating a partial mediation effect. This study emphasizes the importance of active interaction on social media as a primary strategy in building brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty in the modern bakery industry. These findings provide important implications for modern bakery industry players in optimizing their digital marketing strategies to increase consumer engagement and loyalty.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty, Customer Brand Engagement, Modern Bakery, Social Media Interaction

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly developing digital era, the role of social media has undergone a major transformation and has evolved from a tool for communication to a strategic tool for corporate marketing. This development is in line with the increase in active social media users in Indonesia, which will reach 167 million or 84.2% of the population in 2024 (Balqis & Saroso, 2024). This phenomenon encourages social media interaction to become key in building relationships between brands and consumers. When consumers interact with brands on social media, they expect to respond in less than 24 h (Pokhrel, 2024).

In the modern bakery industry, where visual engagement is critical for success, effective social media interaction can significantly increase sales (Ki et al., 2020). Furthermore, research shows that by optimizing social media interactions, companies can sustainably increase customer lifetime value sustainably (Shafique et al., 2020). Personalizing social media interaction plays a key role in building customers' emotional bonds with brands, which in turn creates strong long-term relationships (Islam et al., 2019). These findings emphasize the importance of social media interaction in creating sustainable value for customers.

As competition in digital space increases, customer brand engagement has become an increasingly critical strategy that cannot be ignored (Chahal et al., 2020). Thus, a strategic approach to social media interaction can be a key factor for business success. In the modern business environment, the use of social media to build customer engagement has been proven, with businesses implementing this strategy experiencing significant increases in customer retention compared with their competitors (Pokhrel, 2024). Specifically, in the bakery industry, stores that actively utilize social media have managed to record substantial increases in their average revenue (Ashraf et al., 2023).

In the highly competitive Food and Beverage industry, brand awareness is a key factor for success, particularly through reviews and recommendations on digital platforms. Research shows that strong brand awareness can significantly increase sales conversion rates, underscoring the importance of brand-strengthening strategies in the digital space (Onofrei et al., 2022). Furthermore, customer brand engagement has been shown to have a profound impact on brand loyalty in the Food and Beverage industry (Siregar et

al., 2023). Customer groups with high levels of engagement consistently show increased brand loyalty. In line with this, Garcia et al. (2018) revealed that a strong brand image plays a crucial role in influencing online purchasing decisions and increasing sales conversions.

Many factors can influence social media interaction, which is one of the keys to a brand's success. Customer brand engagement through mechanisms such as likes, comments, and shares is an important indicator of how active and trusting customers are towards a brand's identity (Torres et al., 2008; Yuefei et al., 2024). In addition, research has shown that the frequency and quality of well-planned social media interactions can significantly increase brand awareness in various categories of goods and services (Zhang et al., 2022).

Comprehensive studies have revealed that the consistency and quality of social media interactions play a crucial role in forming a positive brand image in the minds of customers with a better functional and emotional (Nekmahmud et al., 2022). This further contributes to increased brand loyalty, as evidenced by previous research (Jayasingh, 2019). Furthermore, brand loyalty built between consumers and brands is positively correlated with more intense and realistic levels of social media interaction (Garcia et al., 2018). With increasing brand engagement, consumers find it easier to find and remember brand elements in various consumption contexts (Wani et al., 2024).

However, there were some differences in this study. Previous studies mentioned earlier (Kurniawati et al., 2023; Azhari & Adiwijaya, 2023; Ovtaviani, 2023) have discussed the variables of social media interaction, customer brand engagement, brand awareness and brand image separately. Meanwhile, this study combines the four variables in one comprehensive model to see the relationship simultaneously to provide a complete understanding. In addition, this study adds a brand loyalty variable, which is an effort by a business to maintain its sustainability (Aljumah et al., 2023). Another factor that is different from previous studies is the selection of local modern bakery brands in Indonesia (Don Bakeshop, Dapur Cokelat, and The Harvest) as research objects that have different characteristics, especially regarding digital consumer behavior.

This study aims to improve the understanding of social media interaction, customer brand engagement, brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty in Indonesia's modern bakery industry. Specifically, this study analyzes how social media interactions can affect customer brand engagement. Furthermore, this study is expected to provide input to modern bakery industry players for developing appropriate marketing strategies and increasing consumer loyalty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Interaction

Social media interaction is defined as the exchange of information and expression between users through digital platforms that enables the formation of social relationships, where the dimension of digital engagement is the main foundation of this interaction (Grover et al., 2022). According to Shukla and Dubey (2022), Social Media Interaction is a two-way communication process that occurs between social media users through various features provided by digital platforms to participate in interactive content, such as comments, likes, shares, and direct messages. According to Bartoloni and Ancillai (2023), social media interaction is a form of dynamic and collaborative information exchange that allows users to form communities and strengthen social relationships in a digital environment. According to Pascucci et al. (2023), social media interaction is a very powerful form of informal marketing because it involves communication between consumers, which is often more trusted than promotions from the brand itself.

Customer Brand Engagement

Customer brand engagement can be interpreted as customer trust and commitment to a brand (Rather et al., 2019). According to Fernandes and Moreira (2019), customer brand engagement is a psychological state that occurs due to the interaction between customers and brands, and is characterized by the level of customer attention, energy, and activeness towards the brand. Customer brand engagement can be defined as the level of customer investment in the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions during interactions with a particular brand (Sohail, 2023). According to Kossyva et al. (2023), customer brand engagement is an interactive process that involves consumer cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement with a particular brand, which develops in the context of the consumption experience and is reflected in various forms of online and offline customer interactions.

Brand Awareness

According to Laurent et al. (2019), awareness is an important element of a marketing strategy that serves as a foundation for building long-term relationships with consumers. Brand awareness is defined as the ability of consumers to recognize and remember a brand in various situations. It is an important foundation in modern marketing strategies, where visual recognition is the first dimension that reflects the ability of consumers to recognize the visual elements of a brand (Tantri et al., 2020). According to Aimee (2020), brand awareness is consumers' ability to recognize or remember a brand as part of a particular product category. According to Veloutsou (2023), this includes two main components: brand recognition (the ability to recognize a brand when seeing it) and brand recall (the ability to remember a brand when thinking about a product category). According to Jiao et al. (2024), brand awareness is a condition in which consumers can recognize a brand as one of their choices when they are in a purchasing situation.

Brand Image

Brand image is a collection of brand associations formed in the minds of consumers, forming a deep perception of a brand's identity with the dimension of brand association strength as a fundamental element (Nuseir, 2019). According to Chen et al. (2020), brand image is a picture formed in consumers' memories that reflects brand associations, based on experiences and information received by consumers. In addition, Park and Kim (2021) define brand image as playing an important role in providing relevant information about a brand's position in the market by showing strength, preference, and uniqueness through customer perceived value, which reflects the dimension of brand differentiation. According to Tantri and Dora (2022), brand image is defined as a collection of associations formed in the minds of consumers that describe how they view a brand.

Brand Loyalty

According to Fernandes and Moreira (2019), brand loyalty is a form of psychological attachment and consumer behavior toward a brand that is reflected in a consistent tendency to choose and use the brand repeatedly, even though there are other alternative choices. According to Rather et al. (2019), brand loyalty is defined as a positive attitude and satisfying consumer experience, which develops into a long-term commitment to a particular brand. They emphasize that loyalty is not just about repurchasing but also about a deep emotional bond to the brand. According to Liu et al. (2022), brand loyalty is a multidimensional attachment that includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. Ahmed et al. (2024) defined brand loyalty as a positive attitude and commitment to a particular brand that is built through consumer satisfaction.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

The Relationship between Social Media Interaction and Customer Brand Engagement

Social media interaction increases customer brand engagement through an interactive atmosphere. According to Cheung et al. (2020) and Onofrei et al. (2022), interaction is the most important element in social media interaction for increasing customer brand engagement. The emotional bond of customer brand engagement increases with social media interaction (Febriyuni et al., 2024). Research has shown that social media interaction can significantly optimize customer brand engagement (Kumar et al., 2019) and has a profound impact on consumer loyalty and future purchasing behavior patterns (Eigenraam et al., 2018). Engagement can demonstrate how active social media interaction occurs in customer brand engagement (Torres et al., 2008; Yuefei et al., 2024). According to Anaya et al. (2020) and Eslami et al. (2022), customer brand engagement is positively correlated with consumer social media interactions. Based on this research, the following hypothesis are proposed:

H₁: Social Media Interaction has a positive effect on Customer Brand Engagement.

The Relationship between Social Media Interaction and Brand Awareness

By utilizing social media interactions provided by social media platforms, brands can maintain brand awareness of customers through various interactions and interactive content (Garcia et al., 2018; Onofrei et al., 2022). Brand awareness increases with the frequency of social media interactions (Azzaakiyyah, 2023; Sembiring et al., 2020). According to Chierici et al. (2018) and Trunfio and Rossi (2021), recall and brand awareness are related to the frequency and quality of social media interaction. Further research has revealed a positive correlation between the level of social media interactions and increased brand awareness (Ki et al., 2020). Karayalcin and Yaras (2024) found a direct relationship between social media interactions and brand awareness, while Ibrahim (2024) emphasized the importance of visual consistency on digital platforms in

increasing brand recall. Planned and implemented social media interactions can significantly increase brand awareness of various categories of goods and services (Zhang et al., 2022). Combining the findings of previous studies, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₂: Social Media Interaction has a positive effect on Brand Awareness.

The Relationship between Social Media Interaction and Brand Image

According to Liu and Zheng (2024), social media interaction has become a strategic means by which brands can communicate their position, values, and personality through brand image content, which creates emotional resonance with the audience. Social media interaction plays a role in shaping and changing brand image through various forms of interactive, visual, and textual communication on online platforms (Wani et al., 2024). Studies show that the consistency and quality of social media interaction significantly contributes to the formation of a positive brand image in the minds of customers (Nekmahmud et al., 2022). In the modern digital context, brand image consistency across various social media interactions has been shown to significantly increase brand trust (Mohammad et al., 2024). Liu and Zheng (2024) and Zhang et al. (2014) argue that brand image becomes better functionally and emotionally when it performs well in social media interaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H₃: Social Media Interaction has a positive effect on Brand Image.

The Relationship between Social Media Interaction and Brand Loyalty

Social media interaction has been shown to be an important component in building and maintaining brand loyalty through consistent interaction (Siregar et al., 2023; Sumitha et al., 2014). Brands can build stronger brand loyalty relationships with their consumers through more intimate and engaging social media interactions utilizing online platforms (Wani et al., 2024). The consistency and quality of social media interactions increase brand loyalty to the brand (Jayasingh, 2019). Furthermore, brand loyalty built between consumers and brands is positively correlated with more intense and realistic levels of social media interaction (Garcia et al., 2018). Interestingly, Morales et al. (2018) find that brand loyalty has a more profound impact on purchasing actions than mere action loyalty. The following hypotheses are proposed based on and supported by the empirical findings:

H₄: Social Media Interaction has a positive effect on Brand Loyalty.

The Relationship between Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Awareness

Customer brand engagement activities such as participation in brand communities and interaction with content can create strong brand awareness (Rohm et al., 2013). Customer brand engagement through various touchpoints has been shown to increase brand awareness (Anaya et al., 2020; Azzaakiyyah, 2023). Active customer brand engagement shows higher levels of brand awareness and recall than do passive consumers (Siregar et al., 2023). Customer brand engagement shows a reciprocal relationship in which initial involvement increases brand awareness (Nguyen et al., 2024). Customers with high levels of brand engagement tend to pay more attention to the brand and interact more actively with other customers, strengthening brand awareness (Xi & Hamari, 2019). Increased brand engagement makes it easier for consumers to remember the brand in various consumption contexts (Wani et al., 2024). The following hypothesis is based on previous theories.

H₅: Customer Brand Engagement has a positive effect on Brand Awareness.

The Relationship between Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Image

Customer brand engagement shapes and strengthens brand image through the experiences and emotional connections that are built (Cioppi et al., 2023). Customer brand engagement with low levels of engagement tends to have a less clear brand image perception than consumers with high levels of engagement (Trunfio & Rossi, 2021). According to Islam et al. (2018) and Nurfitriana et al. (2020), brand image and value congruence influence customer brand engagement but not directly. Various forms of customer brand engagement, including interaction with content and involvement in brand communities, form the functional and emotional dimensions of a brand image (Anaya et al., 2020). Research shows a significant relationship between good brand image and customer brand engagement (Mai & Cuong, 2021). According to the data, there is a positive correlation between the level of customer brand engagement and strong brand image for customers (Azzaakiyyah, 2023; Sembiring et al., 2020). Theoretical studies and previous research results were combined to formulate the following hypotheses:

H₆: Customer Brand Engagement has a positive effect on Brand Image.

The Relationship between Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Loyalty

Customer brand engagement can determine sustainable brand loyalty both behaviorally and attitudinally (Tahir et al., 2024). Customer brand engagement tends to encourage customers to buy the product again and recommend others to buy the product because of brand loyalty (Siregar et al., 2023). Intense customer brand engagement in various brand initiatives such as loyalty programs and brand communities increases the sense of emotional bonds that drive the formation of brand loyalty (Cioppi et al., 2023; Khandai et al., 2023). The level of customer brand engagement is proportional to the level of customer resistance to brand loyalty (Anaya et al., 2020). Similarly, research shows that brand loyalty can significantly increase customer brand engagement (Trunfio & Rossi, 2021). The following hypotheses are formulated on a theoretical basis, and the empirical evidence is as follows:

H₇: Customer Brand Engagement has a positive effect on Brand Loyalty.

Based on the theoretical logic explanation above, the following research model was created:

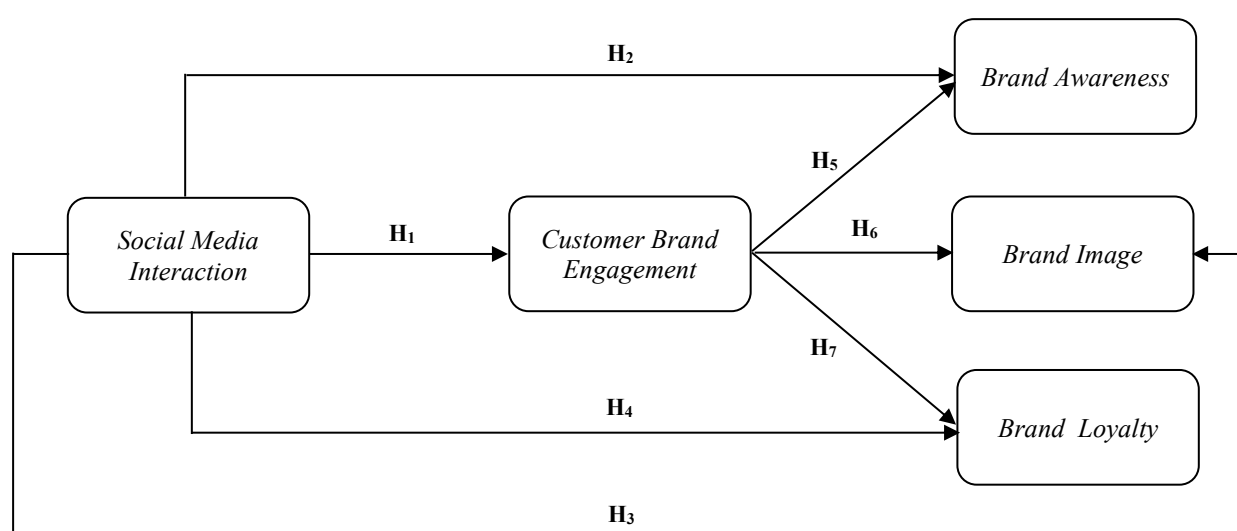


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

Using quantitative methods, this study investigated the relationship between social media interaction, customer brand engagement, brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty. All constructs discussed in this study are assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 point indicates strongly disagree and 5 points indicate strongly agree. Social media interactions were measured using five items adapted from Cheung et al. (2020). Customer brand engagement was measured using five items developed by Xi and Hamari (2019) and Cheung et al. (2020). Brand awareness was operationalized using six items adapted from Xi and Hamari (2019) and Cheung et al. (2020). Brand image was measured using the five items quoted from Cheung et al. (2020). Brand loyalty was measured using four items adapted from Xi and Hamari (2019), with a total of 25 measurement items.

The population of this study was social media users in Jabodetabek who viewed or engaged (such as comments and shares) with modern bakery brand accounts. The sampling used a purposive sampling technique with the following criteria: (1) respondents were at least 17 years old, (2) respondents must be Instagram users, and (3) respondents must have been involved or viewed (like, comment, share) on Instagram content from one of the bakery brands (Don Bakeshop, Dapur Cokelat, and The Harvest) in the last three months. Based on the guidelines of Hair et al. (2019), the minimum sample size was 5-10 times the number of parameters and the minimum number of samples required in this study was 125. However, the researcher obtained additional data through a questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms, so the total number of respondents collected was 141. All respondents met the criteria and were used as samples in this study.

A pre-test was conducted on 30 respondents before the main data collection to test the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Data were collected through Google Forms and distributed to the

respondents in January 2025. To ensure reliability and validity, the pre-test results were analyzed using SmartPLS 4. The measurement model was evaluated using convergent and discriminant validity and reliability tests. A convergent Validity test with a standard loading factor value of > 0.70 , and average variance traded (AVE) with a value of > 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017). The Discriminant Validity Test was then carried out by looking at the square root value of AVE. For the reliability test on the questionnaire data, with the condition that it is reliable if the value of Composite Reliability (CS) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) is > 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). The pre-test results showed that all indicators met the validity and reliability criteria with loading factor values > 0.70 , AVE > 0.50 , and CR and CA > 0.70 .

The main data of this study were analyzed by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the SmartPLS 4 program, referring to the methodology recommended by Sukono et al. (2021). The analysis process is divided into two stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model). The measurement model was evaluated by testing the Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, and reliability of all latent variables. Convergent Validity test with a standard loading factor value of > 0.70 , and average variance traded (AVE) with a value of > 0.50 (Hair et al., 2021). Then the Discriminant Validity Test is carried out by looking at the square root value of AVE. Then for the reliability test on the questionnaire data, with the condition that it is reliable if the value of Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) is > 0.70 (Hair et al., 2021). The next stage was the evaluation of the structural model (inner model) to test the suitability of the data for the model and hypothesis testing. In the evaluation of the coefficient of determination (R^2), if the R^2 value > 0.67 , the inner model is strong, $0.33 - 0.67$ means moderate, while < 0.33 means weak (Cui et al., 2020). Model fit testing by examining the SRMR standard shows that the model is said to be fit if $SRMR < 0.1$. Hypothesis testing was performed by comparing the T-statistic values with the T-table. If the T-statistic value is $> T$ -table (1.96), it can be accepted or proven (Wright et al., 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents of the study were customers of modern bakery brands such as Don Bakeshop, Dapur Cokelat, and The Harvest. Of the 141 respondents, 66.67% were female and 33.33% were male, with the majority being domiciled in Bogor (26.9%). More than half of the respondents were aged 17-26 years (65.96%) and had jobs as employees (39.4%). Most respondents spent more than IDR 200,000-IDR 500,000 per month (32.4%) on baking.

Outer Model Test Results

Table 1. Results of Respondent Data Validity Test

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Outer Loading</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Brand Awareness	BA1	0.740	0.825	0.873	0.533
	BA2	0.740			
	BA3	0.701			
	BA4	0.744			
	BA5	0.735			
	BA6	0.720			
Brand Image	BI1	0.812	0.814	0.871	0.574
	BI2	0.756			
	BI3	0.737			
	BI4	0.716			
	BI5	0.762			
Brand Loyalty	BL1	0.815	0.791	0.863	0.612
	BL2	0.723			
	BL3	0.790			
	BL4	0.799			
Customer Brand Engagement	CBE1	0.753	0.791	0.856	0.543
	CBE2	0.747			
	CBE3	0.722			
	CBE4	0.731			
	CBE5	0.731			

Social Media Interaction	SMI1	0.764	0.802	0.861	0.553
	SMI2	0.757			
	SMI3	0.738			
	SMI4	0.756			
	SMI5	0.702			

Source: Researcher-processed data findings, 2025

The validity and reliability test of the construct in the reflective measurement model was carried out based on the recommendations of Hair et al. (2021), where the loading factor value required in SmartPLS 4.0 is ≥ 0.70 . The measurement of construct validity in this study can be accepted and declared valid because all indicators have a loading factor value of ≥ 0.7 , with the highest value of 0.823 (BL2) and the lowest at 0.702 (SMI5). The results of the calculation of Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha (CA) in this study can be said to meet the overall requirements. According to Hair et al. (2021), the required values were $CR \geq 0.70$, $AVE \geq 0.50$, and $CA \geq 0.70$. The calculation results for CR, AVE, and CA for Social Media Interaction ($CR=0.861$; $AVE=0.553$ and $CA=0.802$), Customer Brand Engagement ($CR=0.856$; $AVE=0.543$ and $CA=0.791$), Brand Awareness ($CR=0.873$; $AVE=0.533$ and $CA=0.825$), Brand Image ($CR=0.870$; $AVE=0.574$ and $CA=0.814$), and Brand Loyalty ($CR=0.863$; $AVE=0.612$ and $CA=0.791$). Based on these results, the entire research instrument met the validity requirements with loading factor values > 0.7 and $AVE > 0.5$, and met the reliability requirements with CR and CA values > 0.7 for all constructs tested.

Table 2. R Square Adjusted

	<i>R Square</i>	<i>R Square Adjusted</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Brand Awareness	0.362	0.353	Moderate
Brand Image	0.466	0.459	Moderate
Brand Loyalty	0.319	0.309	Weak
Customer Brand Engagement	0.125	0.119	Weak

Source: Researcher-processed data findings, 2025

Structural test analysis was conducted to determine the adjusted R-squared value in each equation. The adjusted R-squared value indicates the extent to which the independent variable can explain the dependent variable. The results of the analysis showed that the customer brand engagement variable was influenced by the social media interaction variable, with an adjusted R-squared value of 0.119. Thus, it can be interpreted that 11.9% of the variance of customer brand engagement can be explained by social media interaction, while the remaining 88.1% can be explained by other variables not included in this study. The next analysis, namely, the brand awareness variable, is jointly influenced by the social media interaction variable through customer brand engagement, with an adjusted R-square value of 0.353. This shows that 35.3% of the brand awareness variant can be explained by this variable, while the remaining 64.7% can be explained by other variables. Brand image is jointly influenced by the social media interaction variable through customer brand engagement, with an adjusted R-squared value of 0.459. This means that 45.9% of the brand image variants can be explained by this variable, while the remaining 54.1% can be explained by other variables. Finally, brand loyalty is jointly influenced by the social media interaction variable through customer brand engagement, with an adjusted R-squared value of 0.309. This shows that 30.9% of the variance in brand loyalty can be explained by this variable, while the remaining 69.1% can be explained by the other variables.

Inner Model Results (Hypothesis Testing)

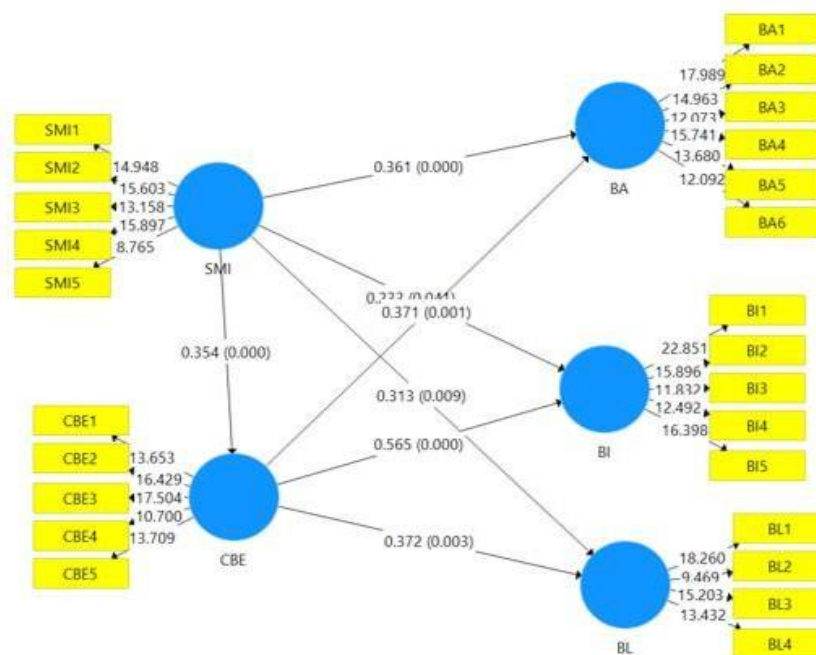


Figure 2. Hypothesis Test Results

The Quality Model test results show a good fit with the SRMR value for the saturated model (0.084) and the estimated model (0.090), both of which are below the limit of 0.100. Based on the T-Value Path Diagram, all research hypotheses (H1-H7) have T-statistics values above 1.96 and p-values below 0.05, so that the data supports all research hypotheses that are built. Based on the T-Value Path Diagram, the research model hypothesis can be presented as follows:

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results

	Hypothesis	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Information
SMI → CBE	H ₁	4.560	0.000	The data support the hypothesis
SMI → BA	H ₂	3.555	0.000	The data support the hypothesis
SMI → BI	H ₃	2.052	0.041	The data support the hypothesis
SMI → BL	H ₄	2.610	0.009	The data support the hypothesis
CBE → BA	H ₅	3.378	0.001	The data support the hypothesis
CBE → BI	H ₆	5.832	0.000	The data support the hypothesis
CBE → BL	H ₇	2.968	0.003	The data support the hypothesis

Source: Researcher-processed data findings, 2025

From the results of hypothesis testing in Table 3, the following results can be interpreted:

The direct influence of Social Media Interaction on Customer Brand Engagement has an Original Sample value of 0.354, with a T Statistic of 4.560 and a p-value of 0.000. It is known that if the p-value < significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and the Original Sample is positive, then H₁ is accepted, which means that Social Media Interaction has a positive and significant effect on Customer Brand Engagement. The direct influence of Social Media Interaction on Brand Awareness has an Original Sample value of 0.361, with a T Statistic of 3.555 and a p-value of 0.000. It is known that if the p-value < significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and the Original Sample is positive, then H₂ is accepted, which means that Social Media Interaction has a positive and significant effect on Brand Awareness.

The direct influence of Social Media Interaction on Brand Image has an Original Sample value of 0.233, with a T Statistic of 2.052 and a p-value of 0.041. It is known that if the p-value < significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and the Original Sample is positive, then H₃ is accepted, which means that Social Media Interaction has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. The direct influence of Social Media Interaction on

Brand Loyalty has an Original Sample value of 0.313, with a T Statistic of 2.610 and a p-value of 0.009. It is known that if the p-value < significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and the Original Sample is positive, then H_4 is accepted, which means that Social Media Interaction has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty.

The direct influence of Customer Brand Engagement on Brand Awareness has an Original Sample value of 0.371, with a T Statistic of 3.378 and a p-value of 0.001. It is known that if the p-value < significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and the Original Sample is positive, then H_5 is accepted, which means that Customer Brand Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Brand Awareness. The direct influence of Customer Brand Engagement on Brand Image has an Original Sample value of 0.565, with a T Statistic of 5.832 and a p-value of 0.000. It is known that if the p-value < significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and the Original Sample is positive, then H_6 is accepted, which means that Customer Brand Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. The direct influence of Customer Brand Engagement on Brand Loyalty has an Original Sample value of 0.372, with a T Statistic of 2.968 and a p-value of 0.003. It is known that if the p-value < significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and the Original Sample is positive, then H_7 is accepted, which means that Customer Brand Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty.

Based on the results shown in Table 3, it can be concluded that of the seven research hypotheses, all are accepted, namely H_1 , H_2 , H_3 , H_4 , H_5 , H_6 , and H_7 .

The first hypothesis test showed that the relationship between social media interaction and customer brand engagement emerged as the most dominant factor in this study. This finding indicates that social media interaction plays a crucial role in building customer brand engagement in modern bakeries. This finding becomes even more interesting when associated with the demographic profile of respondents, who are dominated by the younger generation aged 17-26 years and the majority are women. For this generation, sharing culinary content is not just an additional activity but has become an integral part of their digital identity expression. This high influence can also be explained by the highly visual nature of the bakery industry, where customers tend to be attracted to interacting with content that displays visually appealing products. The highest score on the average indicator is shown by brand content sharing activities, reflecting a paradigm shift from personal culinary experiences to "shareable experiences. Most respondents allocated a sufficient monthly budget for bakery products, illustrating the existence of consistent financial support for their digital activities. This finding is in line with research by Cheung et al. (2020) and Onofrei et al. (2022), which emphasizes the importance of sharing visual content in building customer brand engagement, as well as underlining the relationship between consumer willingness to spend and the level of social media interaction. This reveals a unique dynamic in the bakery industry regarding the role of social media interactions in building customer brand engagement.

In the second hypothesis test, it was stated that social media interaction had a significant influence on brand awareness, with the ability to remember the brand logo being the strongest indicator. This finding emphasizes the importance of a strong and memorable visual identity in a digital era filled with visual stimuli. The context of respondents' domicile provides a unique additional perspective, considering the characteristics of the city as a culinary destination with a variety of food choices. In an environment rich in culinary choices, a bakery brand needs to have a strong visual identity to help consumers remember and differentiate the brand from its competitors. In a competitive culinary industry, a memorable logo can be a factor in purchasing decisions, especially when customers are faced with many choices in a limited time. When analyzing the relationship between social media interaction and brand awareness, a more complex phenomenon than brand recognition was revealed. This study found that consumers' ability to remember a brand logo was the strongest indicator of brand awareness. When consumers are faced with thousands of brand messages daily, the ability of a logo to trigger memories is a significant competitive advantage. This is becoming increasingly important in the bakery industry, which relies heavily on visual aspects amid increasingly fierce competition (Ki et al., 2020).

The third hypothesis test shows that the influence of social media interaction on brand image has a lower relationship strength compared to the other hypotheses, although it remains significant. This shows that although social media interaction is important, the formation of brand image does not solely depend on digital interaction, but is also influenced by other factors, such as direct experience with the product. This finding is relevant considering the characteristics of the bakery industry, which are highly dependent on product quality and direct consumption experience. The influence of social media interaction on brand image, although positive, shows a relatively moderate relationship compared to the other variables. The results revealed that consumer perceptions of product quality are the most important factors in forming brand image. This study shows that consistent and reliable product quality remains the basis of brand image, although

"Instagrammability" and visual appeal are the main focus of many brands in their efforts to create buzz on social media. Contemporary bakery brands must understand and accommodate the specific characteristics of the professional segment. They tend to allocate adequate budgets for quality culinary experiences and have appropriate purchasing power for premium products. In addition, their experiences with a variety of local and international culinary choices form a high-quality standard. Liu and Zheng's (2024) research strengthens these findings by explaining how professional consumers can become influential brand advocates on their social networks, where their opinions are considered credible and reliable.

The fourth hypothesis proves that there is a positive relationship between social media interaction and brand loyalty. This finding demonstrates an important transformation in the formation of brand loyalty in the digital era. The results of the study revealed that consumers' tendency to recommend brands is the strongest indicator of brand loyalty, reflecting a fundamental shift in word-of-mouth behavior from one-to-one to one-to-many communication through social platforms. This is relevant in the demographic context of this study, where most of the respondents are young professionals who work as employees with sufficient purchasing power. They not only act as consumers but also become influential brand advocates on their social and professional networks. This phenomenon creates a strong multiplication effect, in which positive social media interaction triggers wider recommendation activities, resulting in a positive feedback cycle that strengthens brand loyalty. In the modern bakery industry, which is highly visual and experience-based, recommendations from friends or colleagues have a much higher credibility than traditional advertising. Interestingly, this brand loyalty is not only about repeat purchases, but about "social signaling" where recommending premium bakery brands becomes a way to project a curated self-image and taste on social media. Wani et al. (2024) previously identified the importance of social media interactions in building brand loyalty, but the findings of this study suggest that in the context of the bakery industry, visual factors and "shareable experiences" play a much more dominant role in shaping recommendation behavior.

The fifth hypothesis test confirms the positive effect of customer brand engagement on brand awareness. The results showed that customer brand engagement significantly increased their ability to recognize and recall the brand. Consumer ability to identify a brand among competitors has emerged as the strongest indicator, emphasizing that deeper customer brand engagement helps consumers distinguish brands in an industry with a relatively high level of product uniformity. A deeper analysis revealed an interesting dynamic associated with the geographic profile of the respondents. With most respondents residing in Bogor, a city known for its density of culinary outlets, the ability to differentiate brands is crucial. In a competitive urban environment with many culinary choices, customer engagement with a particular brand creates a cognitive "mental shortcut" that allows consumers to quickly identify and select the brand among many choices. This phenomenon explains why customer brand engagement programs, such as baking classes, photo contests, or customer-only events, are very effective in not only creating experiences but also in increasing brand recall. Xi and Hamari (2019) previous research has identified a relationship between customer brand engagement and brand awareness; however, the findings of this study provide an important additional dimension in the context of the food industry. In an industry that relies heavily on visual appeal, active customer engagement contributes significantly to the formation of strong "visual memory traces" resulting in higher levels of brand recognition even in an environment full of competitive visual stimuli.

The sixth hypothesis test shows that the influence of customer brand engagement on brand image has the strongest relationship among all the hypotheses in the model. This result indicates that customer brand engagement has a transformative effect on brand image formation. The perception that the brand is well-positioned in the local market emerged as the dominant aspect of brand image influenced by customer brand engagement, reflecting how consumers' active interaction with bakery brands shapes collective perceptions of the brand's position in the market. When analyzed together with the profile of respondents, who are mostly women and consumers with middle-to-upper purchasing power for bakery products, this finding reveals an important dynamic. Intense customer brand engagement with bakery brands has been shown to create premium perceptions beyond the quality of the product itself. Previous research by Trunfio and Rossi (2021) identified the importance of customer brand engagement in shaping brand image, but the findings of this study provide a new perspective. In an industry with strong experiential and visual components, such as modern bakeries, customer brand engagement not only influences individual perceptions, but also actively shapes collective narratives about the brand's position in the local market. This explains why bakery brands that succeed in creating an active customer community tend to have a much stronger brand image than brands with similar product quality, but lower levels of customer brand engagement.

The seventh hypothesis test proved the positive influence of customer brand engagement on brand loyalty. This finding reveals how customer brand engagement transforms transactional relationships into the

emotional bonds that drive brand loyalty. Consumer willingness to continue using a brand has emerged as the strongest manifestation of brand loyalty, indicating that deep customer brand engagement can create long-term commitment to a brand. The demographic context provided additional valuable insights, with more than half of the respondents being younger. This finding illustrates how a generation accustomed to digital interactions develops brand loyalty through a different engagement process than that of previous generations. For these young consumers, bakery customer brand engagement is not only about the product but also about being part of a community, expressing identity, and sharing values. When bakery brands successfully create a platform for this expression and customer brand engagement, they build brand loyalty that goes far beyond price and convenience considerations. Interestingly, the results of the study indicate that although customer brand engagement contributes significantly to building brand loyalty, there are still many other factors outside the model that influence this loyalty, including consistent product and service quality that meets customer expectations coupled with positive customer experiences through quality service and ease of customer brand engagement. This reflects the complexity of brand loyalty in the bakery industry, which is influenced by situational, emotional, and personal factors. Cioppi et al. (2023) previous research has identified the relationship between customer brand engagement and brand loyalty, but the findings of this study show that in the context of modern bakeries in Indonesia, customer brand engagement that drives brand loyalty often has a strong social and cultural dimension, where sharing culinary moments and experiences becomes a social bond that strengthens the relationship with the brand.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTION, AND LIMITATIONS

Based on the research findings, seven hypotheses were tested in the contemporary bakery industry regarding social media interaction and customer brand engagement regarding brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty. First, there is strong evidence that social media interaction influences customer brand engagement, which aligns with the major shift in the culinary marketing industry. Second, social media interaction has been proven to influence brand awareness, indicating the importance of digital interaction in increasing brand awareness. Third, the relationship between social media interaction and brand image is also significant, indicating that digital interaction is important in building brand awareness. The study also found that social media interaction played a significant role in increasing brand loyalty, emphasizing the importance of ongoing digital interaction in influencing customer loyalty. Furthermore, bakery customer brand engagement significantly contributes to brand awareness and brand image, indicating how strong customer brand engagement with bakery brands on social media helps strengthen brand equity metrics. Lastly, customer brand engagement with bakery brands has been proven to contribute positively to brand loyalty, confirming that customers who are actively engaged with brands tend to show better attitudes.

These findings have important strategic implications for the modern bakery industry in Indonesia, indicating that an integrated marketing approach that connects social media interaction with customer brand engagement can effectively build brand awareness, image, and loyalty. In an industry that relies heavily on visual aspects and consumer experience, a digital strategy that focuses on social media interaction and consumer engagement is no longer an option. However, it is necessary to build sustainable brand equity in the digital era.

Each dependent variable had a different predictive power, as shown in the research model. Brand loyalty shows significant predictive value from both, while brand awareness and brand image can be explained by a considerable proportion of the combined influence of social media interaction and customer brand engagement, although digital interaction is important. This study had several limitations that must be considered. First, the sample is mainly composed of young people and women, which limits the generalization of the findings to other demographic groups. Second, with the majority of respondents living in Bogor, the focus of the sample is limited to the Jabodetabek area, which limits the generalization of the findings to various socio-cultural and geographical contexts. Third, this study does not include many variables, and it is possible that other variables that have not been studied affect the results such as the variables Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), food involvement level, hedonic motivation, Cultural values, Price sensitivity, Experiential value, User-generated content quality and Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM).

To gain a better understanding of how social media interactions impact brand metrics in different situations, future research should include more demographic and geographic data. A mixed-method approach could also be used in future research to gain better understanding through interviews or case studies. In

addition, adding moderator variables such as cultural orientation, consumer engagement level, and product category could offer new perspectives on the dynamics of the relationship between digital interaction and brand equity.

The results of this study have practical implications from the management perspective. First, bakery brands should develop more sophisticated and personalized social media interaction strategies, such as creating dedicated teams to respond to customer comments. Second, developing an integrated omnichannel strategy and loyalty program is essential for seamlessly integrating online and offline experiences. Third, programs that encourage active customer engagement, such as user-generated content and partnerships with micro-influencers, can be optimized to increase customer brand engagement. Fourth, brands should continue to evolve their digital communication strategies, such as using more interactive content formats, given the younger consumer demographi that dominate them. Finally, to assess the effectiveness of digital strategies, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive measurement system that includes sentiment analysis conversion monitoring, and standard engagement metrics.

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