

Mediating Role of Customer Engagement: Brand Image Enhancement from Social-Media Marketing

Roymon Panjaitan

Management, Universitas Sains dan Teknologi Komputer (STEKOM), Indonesia

Author correspondence: roymon@stekom.ac.id

Abstract. To be more competitive, the growth of the creative economy requires customer interaction. This necessitates the use of social media marketing as an efficient marketing platform for products or services based on the existing brand image. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of customer engagement in mediating brand image from relational social media marketing, as well as the role of brand image in mediating consumer engagement from relational social media marketing. The sampling approach is probability sampling, and the method is quantitative. With the sampling approach used, simple random sampling through the distribution of questionnaires, data was collected from 100 respondents. The results of the data analysis were then processed using SPSS 25 software. According to the findings of this investigation, the mediation function is important.

Keywords: Social media marketing; Brand image; Customer engagement.

Abstrak. Agar lebih kompetitif, pertumbuhan ekonomi kreatif membutuhkan interaksi pelanggan. Kondisi ini mengharuskan penggunaan pemasaran media sosial sebagai platform pemasaran yang efisien untuk produk atau layanan berdasarkan citra merek yang ada. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji peran keterlibatan pelanggan dalam memediasi citra merek pada pemasaran media sosial relasional, serta peran citra merek dalam memediasi keterlibatan pelanggan pada pemasaran media sosial relasional. Pendekatan sampel yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah probability sampling dan metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif. Dengan pendekatan sampel yang digunakan, simple random sampling melalui penyebaran kuesioner, data dikumpulkan dari 100 responden. Hasil analisis data diolah dengan menggunakan software SPSS 25. Menurut temuan dalam investigasi ini, fungsi mediasi tersebut menjadi penting karena berpotensi meningkatkan pengaruh citra merek pada pemasaran media sosial relasional. Kontribusi lain adalah tingginya citra merek dapat ditingkatkan dari hubungan positif pemasaran media sosial relasional terhadap keterlibatan pelanggan.

Kata kunci: Pemasaran media sosial; Citra merek; Keterlibatan pelanggan.

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BACKGROUND

The growth of social media is simultaneously moving fast with the potential of businesses around the world, especially in Indonesia. The potential of social media marketing business again becomes just a trend, but does not increase customer engagement to meet needs quickly (Bhargava & Ojha, 2019; Farook & Abeysekara, 2016). On the other hand, the importance of customer involvement should be explored more deeply to improve the brand image of a product or service. In addition to customer involvement, the urgency of brand image becomes a mediator to stimulate the high desire for customer involvement from the development of social media marketing which is an interesting thing to discuss.

This is in line with research from Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour (2011); and Ahmed, Abed, Hassoon, & Ahmed (2016) who stated that the growth in the use of the internet and social media marketing affects many aspects of human communication that have an impact on business. So the importance of customer engagement and brand image is the choice of the mediation function of social media marketing. Figure 1 shows that the data of digital users around the world until November 2021.



Source: Kemp (2021).

Figure 1. Digital Around the World

Based on the results of the latest research from We Are Social in collaboration with Hootsuite, by 2021 internet digital users in the world have almost reached almost 4.9 billion, with more than 6 out of 10 people worldwide using the internet by the end of 2021. With the COVID-19 pandemic having limited research on internet adoption for the past 2 years, so there is a high probability that the actual figure is higher than the available data suggest. The world's internet population is likely to pass the 5 billion mark by the middle of 2022. Reportedly above 7.89 billion of the total population, 61.8% of them are already using the internet. In addition, it is known that as many as

5.29 billion who have cellular phones, 4.55 billion are active using social media. and it can be seen that there are around 160 million people who use social media. The most widely used social media applications by internet users in Indonesia from the top are Youtube, Whatsapp, Facebook, and Instagram (Kemp, 2021).

In previous studies, there were inconsistencies in the findings which became a problem in previous studies. Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger III (2019) states that social media marketing influences brand image and awareness which can help marketers where to direct scarce resources. In line with research findings Barreda, Nusair, Wang, Okumus, & Bilgihan (2020) that the benefits of social media affect users' brand commitment. Social media interactivity and rewards help build a stronger brand image. Furthermore, social media users of digital media marketing have a positive impact on echoing digital values to improve product innovation performance which in turn can increase brand love and image (Panjaitan, Moonti, & Adam, 2021; Panjaitan & Indriani, 2022). However, on the other hand in the fashion industry, luxury brands provide a lower perceived value on social media (Park, Im, & Kim, 2020).

In line with research findings, Pantano (2021) dissemination of marketing information on social media creates negative stereotypes that result in brand hatred, especially in developing countries. In contrast to the findings of social media advertising which has a significant positive effect on the marketing mix in the context of the use of social media for adolescents (Panjaitan, Fassa, Sulaimawan, & Indriyani, 2021). Therefore, it is important to mediate customer involvement to bridge these inconsistencies.

Customer Engagement is considered as a direct and voluntary resource contribution from consumers where the company will get feedback, suggestions or ideas as a basis for seeing what consumers need as a new form of company value added (Mohammed, Moffett, Arnold, & Carlson, 2017), and the value added focus aims to create a Brand Image (Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009).

Previous researchers have discussed about Social Media Marketing, Customer Engagement, and Brand Image. This research is separated from one variable to another. Based on research conducted by Febriyan & Supriono (2018), customer engagement is an indicator of social media marketing. However, in this study customer engagement is a stand-alone variable. Based on previous research that researches in the business field and focuses on fashion (Islam & Rahman, 2016), cosmetic (Muchardie, Yudiana, & Gunawan, 2016), hotel industry (Perera & Perera, 2016), and aviation industry (Seo & Park, 2018), so in this study the researcher intends to focus on researching in the field of social media marketplace in Indonesia.

The assumption of the concept used in this learning is the proposed Theory of Reasoned Action by Ajzen & Fishbein (1980), and updated with the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991). The involvement of customers in business through the social web there is a relational exchange and emotional bond that characterizes their relationship with the seller (L.D. Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014; Sashi, 2012). Positive words using social media marketing or electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) mediate to increase customer engagement to increase the intensity of consumer purchases due to trust, shared value creation, and brand image (Rao, Rao, & Acharyulu, 2021). Therefore, the theory of reasoned action is considered appropriate to be a reference in knowing the intensity to behave.

The study context was selected for a number of online media users based on the content uploaded by the Shopee Indonesia Social Media application. The high level of engagement on Shopee Indonesia's Instagram can be used as a measure when compared to other marketplaces. So it can be seen that the content uploaded by Instagram Shopee Indonesia is a strong indicator of Customer Engagement. Customer engagement can be measured by how customers interact and see opportunities to increase the value of the brand which in shot has a bearing on the Brand Image.

The solution to the above inconsistency from the results of previous research, several researchers focused on the relationship of social media marketing to brand image mediated by brand trust (Dib & Alhaddad, 2015; Perera & Perera, 2016). In addition, the study of the relationship of community methods promotion on client commitment mediated by satisfaction and positive emotions (Santini, Ladeira, Pinto, Herter, Sampaio, & Babin, 2020; Muchardie et al., 2016). However, there are limited studies on the mediating role of client appointment on trademark image plus brand image on client commitment from social media marketing. Therefore, this research is intense to discuss the two mediation functions in the use of Indonesian shopee social media. The purpose of this study is to bridge the impact of social media marketing on customer engagement and the mediating function of brand image from social media marketing on customer engagement on social media.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

According to Gunelius (2011), social media marketing is a formula of straight and unplanned promotion that is used to construct responsiveness, gratitude, remembrance, and action for products, establishments, commodities, society, or extra objects and is transmitted banned with outfits from the public network such as blogging, microblogging, social interacting, collective bookmarking, and substance involvement. Around are quaternary components that are expended as variable quantity for the achievement of social media marketing, specifically contented invention, content sharing, connecting, and community building.

According to Patterson, Yu, & De Ruyter (2006), customer engagement is the balanced of substantial, cognitive, and emotional manifestation of customers in their connection with the company. Several indicators to measure customer engagement that focus on a brand's social media are consumption, contribution, and creation (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

According to Panjaitan (2021), brand image is the observation and certainty held by clients, as mirrored in the suggestions implanted in the client's memorial, which are always retained for the earliest occasion when they perceive the watchword and are inserted in the notices of clients. The supporting factors for the construction of brand image which are used as indicators of brand image are exclusivity of brand suggestion, potency of trademark connection, and favorability of trademark relationship.

RESEARCH METHODS

The quantitative method was employed in this study. Questionnaires and field interviews were used to gather social media users who used the shopee app to transact.

The conceptual model developed from the respondents' data will be continued by confirming the rational arguments that served as the foundation for the concept's development. Figure 2 shows an illustration of the model's image.

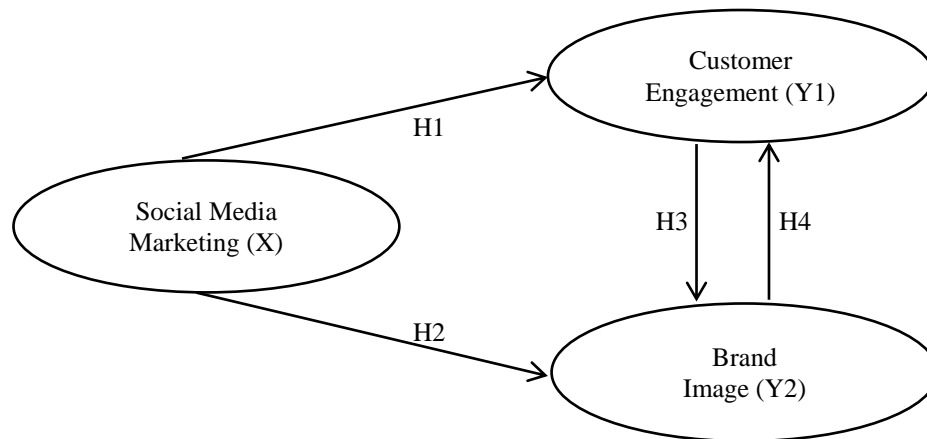


Figure 2. Conceptual Model

This analysis practices a type of causal investigation to prove the truth of a hypothesis that the researcher proposes. The functioning variable quantity in this report are the liberated variables, namely Social Media Marketing, the prevailing adaptable, which is customer engagement, and the determined variable, which are customer engagement and brand image.

The data expended in this exploration is calculable numbers. The data collection technique was carried out by making direct observations through the Shopee Indonesia Instagram account, as well as by delivering forms to 124 respondents in the form of queries that were in accordance with the research topic and distributed to followers of the Shopee Indonesia Instagram account. The collection scale uses a Likert scale. The time required to collect data is approximately from November 2021–January 2022.

The characteristics of respondents using social media are measured by gender, age, occupation and income. From the results of the percentage of respondents from gender characters, 65.6% of social media users are female, the rest are male. Then from the age of social media users, the majority are in the productive age from 20-45 years, amounting to 75.3%. For work, the majority of social media users, namely students or college students, account for more than 63.5%, followed by employees and business actors. Meanwhile, in terms of income, the intensity of social media users is more dominant in employees or business actors.

The selection system expended is prospect specimen. The testing means used is modest random sampling, where the examiner in choosing the section provides equal opportunities to all participants of the populace to be selected as affiliates of the population. Data processing was carried out using the SPSS version 25 computer program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Validity Test

In the validity test of the results of data processing using SPSS, there is an R table value of 0.195, which means it can be explained that the calculated R-value $>$ R table based on a 0.05 significance test, meaning that the data from each item is correct. From the indicators of social media marketing variables, it can be explained that there is an R-value of 0.798 and an R table of 0.195, meaning that the calculated R is $0.798 > 0.195$. The lowest value for the indicator is 0.461, which is still more significant than the R table value of 0.195. In the customer engagement variable, the highest calculated R was 0.857, then R was $0.857 > 0.195$. At the same time, the lowest calculated R-value on the indicator is 0.430. Furthermore, the brand image variable has the highest value at the R-value of 0.785, so the value is $0.785 > 0.195$. Then the lowest value is 0.622. From the validity test results, it can be concluded that all variables are said to be valid, meaning that all variables are constructs. It can be seen that all the items that make up the research variables are correct. This means that all indicators can construct research variables.

Reliability Test

Based on the Table 1, the Cronbach Alpha value for all research variables is $>$ 0.07 so it can be said that the instrument in this study is reliable and feasible to use.

Table 1. Reliability Test Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Rule of Thumb	Description
<i>Social Media Marketing</i>	0.891	0.70	Reliable
<i>Customer Engagement</i>	0.962	0.70	Reliable
<i>Brand Image</i>	0.880	0.70	Reliable

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results (2022).

Path Analysis

The results of the regression analysis that have been carried out then produce the path analysis model as showed in Figure 3.

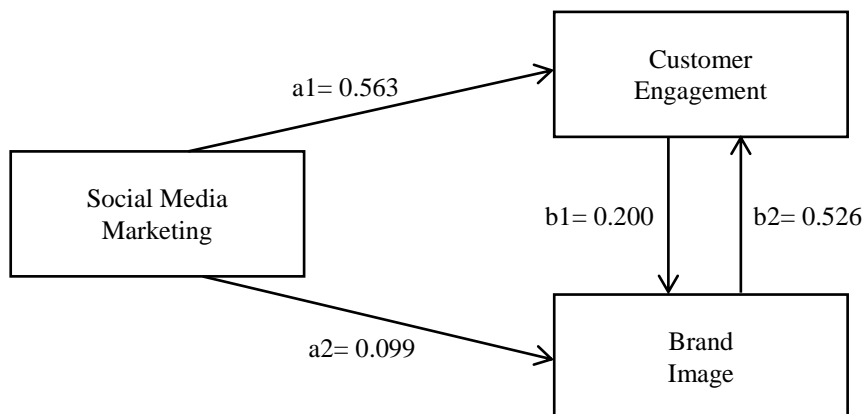


Figure 3. Path Analysis Model

The outcomes of the analysis indicate that the amount value of the social media marketing variable is 0.563 or 56.3%, which is positive, meaning that social media marketing is directly proportional to customer engagement. The results of this study are in accordance with the theory of Van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner, & Verhoef (2010); Verhoef, Reinartz, & Krafft (2010) which states that with the growth of internet and social media usage, the use of social media as a marketing tool to figure attentiveness, detection, memorial, and accomplishment for products, industries, commodities, or erstwhile things becomes easier to do which can then form interactions between customers and consumers. customer-enterprise where interaction is a way to achieve engagement, the result of customer participation in a product, service, and company value. The results of the t-test statistical test (partial test) show the t-count value of the social media marketing variable on customer engagement is 4.164, the t-table value with an error rate of (0.05) is 1.984 or t-count is $4.164 > 1.984$. When viewed from the ability substance worth of 0.000, it is reduced than 0.05, this indicates that Shopee Indonesia's Instagram social media marketing has a constructive and major impact on customer engagement.

The results of the regression analysis show that the coefficient value of the social media marketing variable is 0.099 or 9.9%, which is positive, meaning that social media marketing is directly proportional to the brand image and the results of the t-test statistical test (partial test) show the t-count value of the social media marketing variable on brand image is 1.102, the value of t-table with an error rate of (0.05) is 1.984 or t-count is $1.102 < t\text{-table } 1.984$. When viewed from the significance value of social media marketing, 0.273 is greater than 0.05, so these results indicate that social media marketing has a positive and insignificant effect on brand image.

The consequences of the regression analysis show that the coefficient value of the customer engagement variable is 0.200, which is positive, meaning that customer engagement is directly proportional to the brand image. According to Patterson et al. (2006), customer engagement is the level of physical, cognitive, and emotional presence of customers in their correlation among the company. Customer engagement is considered as a direct and voluntary resource contribution from consumers where the company will get feedback, suggestions or ideas as a basis for seeing what consumers need as a new form of company value added (Harmeling et al., 2017), and the value added focus aims to create a brand image (Merz et al., 2009). The results of the t-test statistical test (partial test) show the t-count value of the customer engagement variable on brand image is 3.379, the t-table value with an error rate of (0.05) is 1.984 or t-count is $3.379 > 1.984$. When viewed from the significance value of customer engagement, 0.001 is smaller than 0.05, this indicates that Shopee Indonesia's Instagram customer engagement has a positive and significant impact on Shopee Indonesia's brand image.

The results of the regression analysis show that the coefficient value of the brand image variable is 0.526, which is positive, meaning that the brand image is directly proportional to customer engagement. Brand image is the insight and acceptance thought by customers, as mirrored in the relations implanted in the consumer's memorial, which are always retained the original period when they overhear the motto and are surrounded in the attentions of buyers (Kotler & Keller, 2009) which then develop and depend on the possibilities of interaction, relationship development, and community experiences facilitated by social media. The results of the t-test statistical test (partial test) show that the t-count of the brand image variable on customer

engagement is 3.379, the value of t-table with an error rate of (0.05) is 1.984 or t-count is $3.379 > 1.984$. When viewed from the brand image significance value of 0.001 which is smaller than 0.05, this indicates that Shopee Indonesia's Brand Image has a progressive and important stimulus on customer engagement.

Founded on the consequences of the path analysis, it shows that the indirect effect coefficient is 0.113, which is bigger than the direct effect of 0.099 or indirect effect $0.113 > \text{direct effect } 0.099$. The marks of the evaluation using the Sobel Exam also show that the t-count of the social media marketing variable on brand image with customer engagement as the intervening variable is 2.628, the t-table value with an error rate of 0.05 is 1.984 or t-count $2.628 > 1.984$, so it can be decided that there is a mediating validity between social media marketing on brand image with customer engagement as an intervening variable. In other words, customer engagement significantly mediates the authority of Societal Channels Publicizing on Brand Image. This is in line with the theory put forward by L. Hollebeek (2011) that social media as a context that can encourage customer engagement, leads to meaningful relationships with brands that can affect brand image.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

This study aims to provide a new concept that can be seen from the importance of the mediating function of brand image on customer engagement and, conversely, customer involvement to improve brand image. The second contribution is made from being able to bridge social media marketing strategies carried out by product sellers on the Shopee application. From the results of the proposed hypothesis, we provide several conclusions that the progressive and substantial effect of the role of social media marketing through customer involvement has the potential to increase the brand image of Indonesian Shopee Instagram users. In addition, the function of the instagram of Shopee Indonesia product brand image from marketing on social media is proven to stimulate customer engagement to intensely use the Shopee Indonesia Instagram application. Although there were inconsistencies from previous researchers and the results of data processing in this study, there was a positive and insignificant relationship with public channels promotion and the product appearance of Shopee Indonesia.

The practical implications of the results of this study are for Shopee product brand owners to continue to involve customer involvement by actively providing a testimonial or discussion room feature as a means of assessment or a place for customer complaints to owners of social media applications. The desire for customer involvement in social media to support the reputation of the brand image, so Shopee brand owners must actively offer joint value creation which must change from thinking that is not only product-oriented, but the provision of services rather than goods is fundamental to economic exchange (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). While the theoretical implication is the individual's desire to do or not do a certain behavior or vice versa. The theory of planned behavior was developed from the theory of reasoned action by including the addition of constructing perceived control behavior. Ajzen's theory of attitudes concerning compoment refers to the gradation to which a person has an encouraging or adverse appraisal of the performance in a query (Ajzen, 2011). So the impact of

social media marketing is that it provides a reason for the convenience of users to continue to transact which in the end results in involvement and brand image.

Thus, these five hypotheses have the potential to increase the competitive advantage of the role of social media marketing. Therefore, from the limitations of this study, there is a community channels advertising relationship that is not still significant through customer involvement in brand image, besides the number of respondents is still less than 150 respondents and the variables used are still not specific to measure the strength of the relationship. So suggestions for further researchers can sharpen the results of this study by adding a variable echoing brand love from the company's side and increasing the duration of the research period. In addition, the company's competitive advantage is increasingly dynamic, creative and aggressive in looking for competitive gaps, so to strengthen product brand reputation. It is recommended to actively participate in innovative economy exhibitions, e-business media technology training, e-commerce with business-to-business, and business-to-business concepts. The government and educational institutions organized them in community service.

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