The Impact of Customer Engagement on Brand Loyalty: The Mediation Roles of Brand Attachment and Customer Trust

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
  	This study explores the influence of brand love and brand experience on customer engagement and then the influence of customer engagement on brand loyalty directly or mediated by brand attachment and customer trust in cosmetic industry brands in Indonesia. This research was conducted in 2022 by involving 202 respondents using Instagram who is women of the millennial generation in Indonesia. Quantitative research using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) method with data analysis using SmartPLS. Some of the findings in this study are that brand love and brand experience indirectly affect brand loyalty mediated by brand attachment and customer trust. Meanwhile, customer engagement does not have a direct influence on increasing brand loyalty directly. The managerial implications of this research for industry practitioners and researchers are to build strong brand love, and brand experience will be able to create customer engagement, then loyalty to the customer's brand will be higher when the brand can strengthen customer engagement which then creates brand attachment and customer trust

INTRODUCTION

The existence of social media has an essential role for a company, especially in marketing. Through social media, companies can reach large numbers of customers and make it easy for companies to engage with customers actively and efficiently through two-way online communication (Chiu, Huang & Cheng, 2015). The more rapid development of marketing through social media give an impact for interaction relationship between a brand's customers it becomes essential to note, that the company must be able to build customer engagement as one of the factors that can drive a business to be able to survive and continue to grow in the market (Kumar & Pansari, 2015). Companies can use social media to extensively create customer engagement, building a good relationship between a brand and customer (Aluri, Price, & McIntyre, 2019).

Several customers can instantly love some brand very quickly like *love at first sight*, but other customers might take longer time to change their feelings for a brand (Langner, Bruns, Fischer, & Alexander, 2016), so companies must be able to create a business strategy that can build engagement between a brand with customer consistently, thus generating potential profits for the long term and increasing levels of loyal customers toward brand (Kumar & Pansari, 2015; Leckie, Nyadzayo, & Johnson, 2016). This engagement refers to the connection formed between the customer with a brand which is manifested in affective and cognitive actions (Harrigan, Evers, Morgan, & Daly, 2018), if a company can build a strong engagement with customers, more loyal customers they get (Hollebeek, 2011; Li & Chen, 2020). Brand loyalty will benefit the company because it shows customers love and has a positive attitude toward the brand by repurchase product or services (Bergel, Frank, & Brock, 2019).

Customer engagement toward a brand is indicated y emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement (Harrigan *et al.*, 2018). Customer engagement toward a brand can show an attachment between the brand and the customer (Hwang & Lee, 2019). Customers who emotionally attach to a brand will reflect on themselves through brands they like by positively responding to them (Hwang & Lee, 2019; Prentice, Wang, & Lin, 2020). When customers have a brand attachment, they can maintain the stability of the relationship between a customer with that brand (Loureiro, Sarmento, & Le Bellego, 2017), which can generate brand loyalty (Hollebeek, 2011; Li *et al.*, 2020). In addition, when a company can build customer engagement with a brand, then it will result in satisfaction, loyalty, commitment, and trust from customer to brand (Hollebeek, 2011; Li *et al.*, 2020), then the higher trust from customer, the more brand loyalty generated (Fung, Ceridwyn, Beverley, Sparks, & Wang, 2016).

Research on the influence of customer engagement, brand attachment, and customer trust to brand loyalty has been investigated by several previous studies (e.g., Li *et al.*, 2020; Prentice *et al.*, 2019; Prentice & Loureiro, 2017). However, this study has yet to explore the factors that have an essential role as antecedents of customer engageme; therere are brand love and brand experience (Prentice *et al.*, 2019). This research will focus on the cosmetic business industry brand in Indonesia, thereby expanding previous studies that focused on the (Ningthoujam, Manna, Gautan, & Chauhan, 2020), *service* (Hwang *et al.*, 2021), *airline* (Prentice *et al.*, 2019), dan *fast food* (Omran, 2021).

This research aims to explore the influence of brand love and brand experience on customer engagement, and then the impact of customer engagement on brand loyalty both directly and mediated by brand attachment and customer trust in the local brand cosmetic industry in Indonesia. It is hoped that this research can contribute to the theoretical or scientific level in the marketing management and provide positive managerial implications, especially for companies engaged in the local brand cosmetic business industry in Indonesia.

790

METHODS

This research used a survey method by distributing online questionnaires. Measurements were made using a Likert scale of 1 – 5 (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The measure of the customer engagement (CE) variable was adopted from Harrigan *et al.* (2017) using 10 statements for its measurement. The brand love using 6 statements adopted from Batra *et al.* (2012). Brand experience using Brakus *et al.* (2009) with 8 statements. Brand attachment refers to Park *et al.* (2010) by submitting 6 statements. Measurement of customer trust variables using 4 statements of Sun & Lin (2010). And brand loyalty is measured by 4 statements by Zeithanl *et al.* (1996).

This research was conducted in 2022 with a population of women customers and Indonesia local brand cosmetics. Sample in this study uses purposive sampling method with the sample criteria; millennial women generation (25-41 years) and have Instagram account, following at least 1 Instagram account from Indonesia local cosmetic brand and have interacted (likes and comment on content (photos/videos) and have shopped for cosmetic products with the same brand at least 3 times for the past year. This study is quantitative research using Structural Equation Model (SEM) method, and data analysis processing using SmartPLS. The respondents used in this study were at least 5 to 10 times the total path or path in the research model, because there are a total of 7 paths, the required sample is at least 70 respondents (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2001)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents who participated in this study were 202 respondents, who are millennial women generatio who have Instagram social media, following at least 1 Instagram account from *brand* local cosmetics in Indonesia and have interacted (*likes* and comment on content (photos/videos) and have shopped for cosmetic products with *brand* such locale at least 3 times with *brand* the same for the past year. Construct validity and reliability tests on the reflective measurement model were carried out based on Hair et al., (2018). First, for the convergent validity test loading factor score required in SmartPLS is $\geq$ 0.70. Measurement of construct validity in this study is acceptable and valid, because all of the indicators in each variable have a value loading factor above 0.70. Second, regarding the discriminant validity test using cross loading method, where each indicator of the latent variable has a higher correlation with its latent variable compared to other latent variables, so it meets the requirements of discriminant validity (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). For reliability testing, the calculation results Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in this study is acceptable. According to Hair et al., (2018) the required value is CR $\geq$ 0.70 and AVE $\geq$ 0.50. Calculation results for CR and AVE for variables customer engagement (CR=0,932; AVE=0,632), brand love (CR=0.911; AVE=0,692), brand experience (CR=0,926; AVE =0,660), brand attachment (CR=0,946; AVE=0,758), customer trust (CR=0.923; AVE=0.811), andbrand loyalty (CR=0.904; AVE=0.777).
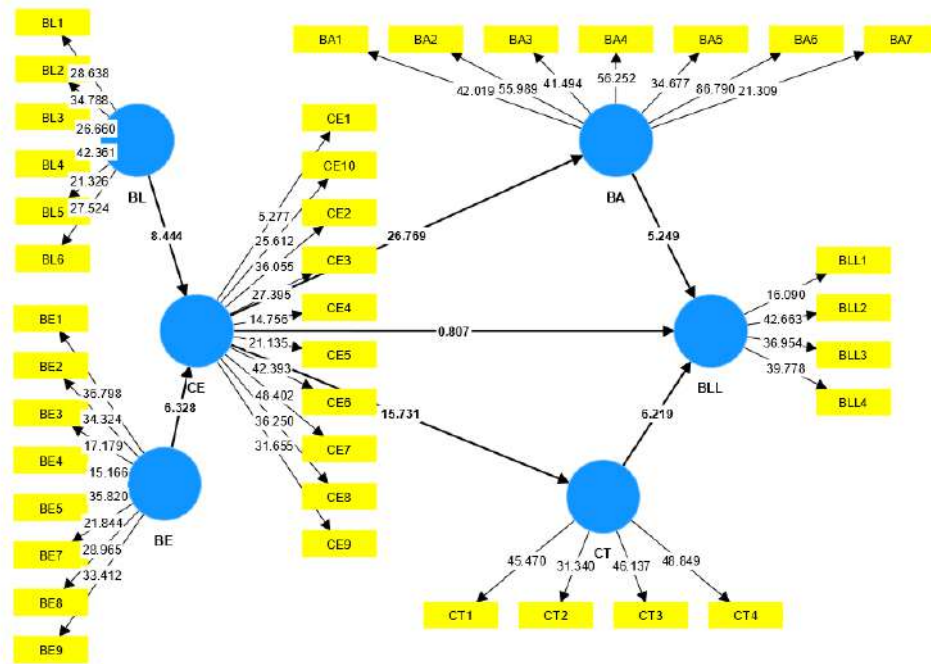
Picture 1. Path Diagram T-Value

Structural test analysis was carried out to determine the value of R² in each equation. The R² value shows how much the independent variable can explain the dependent variable. Obtained the results of the analysis of variables customer engagement (CE) are simultaneously influenced by variables brand love (BL) and brand experience (BE) with an R² value of 0.780. Thus it can be interpreted that 78% of the variance ofcustomer engagement (CE) can be described by brand love (BL) and brand experience (BE), while the remaining 22% can be explained by other variables not included in this study.

Next analysis, for brand loyalty (BLL) are simultaneously influenced by variables customer engagement (CE), brand attachment (BA) soncustomer trust (CT) with an R² value of 0.758. Thus it can be interpreted that 75.8% of the variance ofbrand loyalty (BLL) can be described by variables customer engagement (CE), brand attachment (BA), and customer trust (CT), while 24.2% can be explained by other variables that not included in this study. Regarding the fit model test, the SRMR value (standardized root mean square residual) 0.07 <0.08 which indicates that the relationship observed in this research model is suitable or appropriate (Hu & Bentler, 1998). Based on path diagram T-Value in Figure 2 above, the research model hypothesis testing can be presented as follows:

Table 1. Research Model Hypothesis

Hypotesis	Hypothesis Statement	T-Value	Information
H1	*Brand Love has a positive effect on Customer Engagement*	**8.444**	Data supports the Hypothesis
H2	*Brand Experience has a positive effect on Customer Engagement*	**6.328**	Data supports the Hypothesis
H3	*Customer Engagement has no positive effect on brand loyalty.*	**0.807**	Data does not support the Hypothesis
H4	*Customer Engagement has a positive effect on Brand Attachment*	**26.769**	Data supports the Hypothesis
H5	*Brand attachment has a positive effect on brand loyalty*	**5.249**	Data supports the Hypothesis
H6	*Brand attachment has a mediating role between customer engagement and brand loyalty.*	**5.454**	Data supports the Hypothesis
H7	*Customer engagement has a positive effect on customer trust.*	**15.731**	Data supports the Hypothesis
H8	*Customer trust has a positive effect on brand loyalty.*	**6.219**	Data supports the Hypothesis
H9	*Customer trust has a mediating role between customer engagement and brand loyalty.*	**6.342**	Data supports the Hypothesis

Based on the hypothesis test table, 8 hypotheses have T-Value above 1.96 so that the data supports the research hypothesis. While 1 hypothesis related to moderation has T-Value below 1.96 so that the hypothesis is rejected. Then, based on hypothesis testing, it shows that the type of mediation in this study is *"full mediation"*, because customer engagement can have a positive effect on brand loyalty when going through mediation customer trust and brand attachment (Baron & Kenny, 1986)

This study explores and empirically tests the effect of customer engagement toward brand loyalty through a mediating role brand attachment and customer trust. The results of the first study show that especially women related to Indonesian cosmetic products. When the cosmetics product fits to the personality of customer and able to give a beauty make up finisih look which related by customers expectation, they will actively share a positive review of the products on Instagram and build interactions between brand with customers. The intense interaction between brand and customer also increases the interest in using a variety of cosmetic products from local brand. This study is in line with previous research by Palmatier *et al*. (2017) which shows that when customer have a strong brand love, it will eventually grow a strong engagement between customers and brand. Several other studies also show that when customer connected by values and identity, customers will showing their love to the brand which is give an impact for customer engagement (e.g., Abrar, 2019; Aro *et al*., 2018; Gumparthi & Patra, 2020; Islam & Rahman, 2016; Palmatier *et al*., 2017).

Second, this study also found that brand experience can improve customer engagement on cosmetic local brand users. When the brand can provide a good service to customer, customer would be interested to interact further to the brand. Values of the cosmetic product which match for the users and give a best result from the make up product, customer will also be increasingly interested in anything related to the brand. Customer who are already interested to brand also increase engagement between brand and customer, which is followed by behavior customer who tend to be more excited when using the product and increase the feeling of wanting to be involved in some event or groups that talking about the brand they have chose. This is in line with the statement from Thakur (2018), which is the impact of brand to customer face will affect them to share their experience to people around and social media, and it that can improve engagement between brand and customer. The results of this study were also supported by several previous research brand experience able to improve customer engagement toward abrand (e.g., Andreini *et al.*, 2018; Kumar & Pansari, 2015; Prentice *et al*., 2019; Roswinanto & Strutton, 2014; Thakur, 2018).

Finding that brand love and brand experience in this research increases the enrichment of the theory that customer engagement not only came from an interaction on social media, but there is also a brand love process and brand experience which can improve customer engagement, such as an excellent service and product will make customer actively see the changes and impact when customer use that brand (Prentice *et al*., 2019). Positive experience from the brand will increase brand love which give an positive impact for customer engagement (Palmatier *et al*., 2017). Previous research stated that customer which have positive experience on brand products such as give their a good make up finish look and give a same value with customer expectation will gain a brand love that will increase a strong engagement between customers and brand (e.g., Abrar, 2019; Aro *et al*., 2018; Gumparthi & Patra, 2020; Islam & Rahman, 2016; Palmatier *et al*., 2017)

But on the other hand, the third result of this study found that customer engagement does not have a positive impact to brand loyalty on local brand cosmetic research. This is because if respondents not interest with some brand, they will not give it as a brand recommendation. Besides, brand which are not suitable for the respondents also cause a lack of enthusiasm when using these local cosmetic brand and the respondent decided not to engage on a long-term basis with brand which doesn't suit to her. Lack of attachment from respondents can also reduce the intention of respondents to share a review nor experience to thers.

Positive review and recommendations from friends who use different cosmetics brand can also affect customer loyalty. Therefore, customer engagement can involve experience and emotional sense of customer to build a brand loyalty. As an example, brand can give a special treatment to affect their emotional attachment toward brand. Brand can actively answer questions and complaints from customer and show materials information and certification from cosmetic brand, so customers will feel safe and comfortable when using any variant of products from local brand cosmetics. Build a brand loyalty not only just increase an engagement, but also gain their good experience, trust and emotional attachment toward local brand cosmetic. This is in line with several previous studies which show that when customers have a strong engagement, it will increase customer trust and build a brand loyalty (Kosiba *et al*., 2018; Li *et al*., 2020; Ruswanti *et al*., 2022). Then, when customer have a positive engagement with a brand, it will increase brand attachment which is able to maintain the stability of the relationship betweenbrand withcustomer the (Loureiro *et al*., 2017).

Fourth, the results of this study show that customer engagement can encourage stronger brand loyalty through the role of brand attachment, especially to local Indonesian cosmetic brands. This shows that when customers get some compliment for their make-up results, the customer will feel happy with the brand and build an engagement between the customer and the brand. This engagement will make

customers think about the brand more often before buying cosmetics. Customers who feel comfortable with a local cosmetic brand tend to choose the same brand when buying cosmetic products. Previous studies also show that when the positive engagement formed between the customer and brand, it will increase a brand attachment which able to maintain the stability of the relationship between the brand and the customer, as well as increase customer commitment to the brand, thus creating brand loyalty (Levy & Hayiel, 2016; Loureiro *et al.*, 2017). This also reinforces several previous studies which show that mediation from brand attachment increases customer engagement and brand (e.g., Arya *et al.*, 2019; Hwang *et al.*, 2021; Jahn & Kunz, 2014; Li *et al.*, 2020; Yu & Yuan, 2019).

Fifth, this study shows that customer engagement can strengthen brand loyalty through creating customer trust, especially in local cosmetic brands. That is, customers who feel happy when the local cosmetic brand is able to give looks that match with their expectations and have good continuous interactions with a brand can increase their customer's trust in the local cosmetic brand. The engagement between brand and customers can persuade customers that the local cosmetic brand will give a good products and services. Customers who trust these local cosmetic brands can increase brand loyalty (Ruswanti *et al.*, 2022; Kosiba *et al.*, 2018) where customers will re-purchase products from the same brand, give good reviews and want to recommend local cosmetic brands that they use to others. This is in line with previous research which shows customer trust as mediation can increase customer engagement and brand loyalty (e.g., Ruswanti *et al.*, 2022; Kosiba *et al.*, 2018; Li *et al.*, 2020; Florencio *et al.*, 2018; Singh *et al.*, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Most of hypotheses built in this research have been proven, where brand love and brand experience have a direct influence on customer engagement and indirectly on brand loyalty mediated by brand attachment and customer trust. Meanwhile, customer engagement does not have a direct effect on increasing brand loyalty, but when engagement is mediated by brand attachment and customer trust, engagement indirectly has a significant effect on brand loyalty through this mediation.

The influence given by brand love and high brand experience can increase engagement between customers and their brands. And the stronger the engagement between the customer and brand, the higher the customer will have a sense of brand attachment and trust which can encourage customers to be loyal to the local cosmetic brand. Customers will repurchase cosmetic products from the same local brand if the brand succeeds in providing safe products for long-term use thereby building a sense of customer trust. Fast response online services can also increase brand attachment between customers and these local cosmetic brands. So, when the customer already has attachment and trust towards the local cosmetic brand of his choice, the customer will show brand loyalty behavior.

This study still has several limitations that need to be improved in the future. First, this study only focuses on female gender, which does not necessarily describe the condition as a whole, so that future studies can involve males or gender can be used as a moderating variable so that the results of the study can be more complete. Second, this research only focuses on local Indonesian cosmetic brands which are not necessarily able to describe conditions in other existing types of industries, therefore, further research can examine other industries that are also growing rapidly, such as the digital product industry or the fashion industry.

Third, this study only measures customer engagement as a variable. In future research, we can examine customer engagement in detail with its 5 different dimensions, namely interaction, attention, absorption, identification and enthusiasm (Tonder & Petzer, 2018) , so this will be able to enrich the study literature.

This research provides several managerial implications. First, brand love and brand experience can be applied to the non-service industry sector in this study represented by the local cosmetic industry, where customers will feel the direct impact of the

benefits provided by products from cosmetic brands and the services provided to their customers. Second, local cosmetic brands need to provide quality products and fast response services so that customers will feel safe when using cosmetic products and feel comfortable when customers want to submit complaints or share information, ideas, input or experiences about products that are being used or have been used by customers.

Third, the use of social media plays an important role as a digital marketing medium. Cosmetic brands need to actively engage in two-way interactions with their customers through online media such as Instagram so that customers can easily search for product-related information, new product teasers and share information also experiences from customers who have used products from that brand which can increase engagement between brand with customers. Information on social media must have an attractive, complete and accurate design and give some space for customers for their reviews of the products.

Reviews that given by customers through the comment feature on Instagram not just increasing customer engagement, but also will be used as purchase decision to Instagram users through Zero Moment of Truth owned by online stores. Fourth, local cosmetic brands must also give a safe, comfortable and enjoyable service experience by displaying attractive post designs and copywriting, aesthetic product photos, and call to action that are easily accessible to customers. Fifth, the online shop must also include clear information regarding customer service if the customer has problems or complaints about the products, such as showing the official website link of the brand or the whatsapp business number specifically for complaint services related to products from the local cosmetic brand.

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