

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING, BRAND ENGAGEMENT, BRAND FAMILIARITY, AND BRAND LOYALTY

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**Abstract:** The relationship between social media marketing, brand engagement, brand family, and brand loyalty are multifaceted and complex. Social media platforms have become pivotal in shaping consumer-brand interactions, influencing brand loyalty. This research examines the pattern of relationships between the above variables, using a total of 183 respondents. The analysis using PLS revealed several interesting findings regarding the relationships among the variables. Social media marketing has a positive impact on both brand engagement and brand familiarity, but it does not affect customer loyalty. Meanwhile, brand engagement and brand familiarity have a positive impact on customer loyalty. On the other hand, there is no direct influence of SMM on customer loyalty.

**Keywords:** Social Media Marketing, Brand Engagement, Brand Familiarity, Brand Loyalty

### 1. Introduction

Building customer loyalty is crucial for repeated purchases, which affect sales revenue, market penetration, and corporate profitability (Onamusi & Ayo, 2021; von der Heide & Ponirin, 2011). However, in today's Internet era, trying to build loyalty is becoming more and more difficult, where both large and small companies use the Internet to market their products and services. The use of Internet applications, i.e. social media, has become popular in the marketing of products/services, which are now known as social media marketing.

Social media marketing is widely done through applications such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, Telegram and others. Indonesia itself is one of the countries with the largest number of social media users in the world. Some of the most widely used are WhatsApp (204 million), YouTube (197 million), Instagram (180 million), Facebook (173 million), TikTok (140 million) and others (Nada, 2023). So social media marketing in Indonesia is one of the forces that needs attention because it has huge potential for increasing customer loyalty (Aji et al., 2020; Santini et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2024).

Some studies have noted that social media marketing does not directly increase customer loyalty. Some factors that also influence the low level of customer loyalty are brand engagement (Iqbal et al., 2023) and brand familiarity (Ahmed et al., 2023). The presence of social media marketing is a tool for business owners to increase brand engagement by customers, such forms of brand engagement include customer interaction with specific brand social media that is intense, becoming active brand users and so on. Social media marketing is also said to increase customer familiarity with a brand. The familiarity of these brands can be identified through, among other things, brand preferences by customers, routine use, customer support over brands, to customer brand identification and

others. Successful social media marketing will create brand familiarity that can further increase customer loyalty.

Putting together all the research variables

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Social Media Marketing**

Social media marketing has become an important part of modern marketing strategies. These conditions have changed the way companies interact with customers and promote their goods and services. According to Kotler & Keller (2016, p. 582), social media marketing is the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers using social media platforms to marketing goals. Social media marketing encompasses the use of various platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and so on.

The existence of platforms such as Friendster, Myspace, and LinkedIn in the early 2000s was a milestone in the beginning of social media marketing. More real developments occurred when Facebook was launched in 2004, when could market goods or services to their users. Since then, other platforms like YouTube, X (Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok have become very fast and used in marketing. The use of social media as a marketing tool has invited many researchers to study the phenomenon further.

Social media marketing activities are shaped by five dimensions, each interaction, entertainment, customization, trendiness, and WOM (A. J. Kim & Ko, 2012). Interaction, exchange of information is the key to social media interaction. Social media interactions encourage content creation because they help change the user's perspective. Social Media gives customers a place to talk and share ideas with others (Zhu & Chen, 2015). Furthermore, Social Media interactions serve as a platform where users can interact, contribute to discussions, give suggestions about a particular product or service, and meet people who agree to express their perspectives on a particular issue (Ahmed et al., 2023). The focus of this information is basically to make media users connected to the information and make sure they keep the information up to date.

Entertainment, one of the fun things about using social media is the ability of social media to entertain (Muntinga et al., 2011), so it can be understood that the main motivation for social media use is to look for entertainment. Based on that, the creation of content in social media that contains entertainment either in the form of photos, music, videos, or otherwise is done by marketers in addition to providing relaxation and pleasure in filling the user's leisure time, also bringing brand messages (Cheung, Pires, Rosenberger, et al., 2020; Lee & Park, 2022; Samarah et al., 2022).

Customization, is the provision of services tailored to individual preferences. Customization carried out through the company's website, brands can express individuality that can help build strong brand loyalty and affinity (Godey et al., 2016). Social media posts can be customized whether in the form of push or pull messages depending on the level of personalization of messages: broadcasts and customized messages (Ahmed et al., 2023).

Trendiness, social media provides the latest and hottest news and topics. So it's the most trusted source of consumer advertising compared to the company's advertisements delivered through conventional channels. According to Muntinga et al. (2011) there are four sub-motivations that social media embraces: surveillance, knowledge, pre-purchase information, and inspiration. Monitoring can be described as keeping up-to-date by observing the environment. Inspiration relates to consumers following brand-related information to get new ideas.

WOM, or more specifically eWOM (electronic Word-of-Mouth) relates to online consumer-to-consumer interactions about brands through social media (D. Kim et al., 2015; Matute et al., 2016; Muntinga et al., 2011; Nur & Ponirin, 2021; Teng et al., 2014). According to Ahmed et al. (2023) eWOM has a very high level of empathy, credibility, and relevance to customers compared to the sources of information generated by web marketers. Social media is an ideal tool for eWom, as consumers can create and share brand-related information to their network of friends, family, and contacts without limitation (Nur & Ponirin, 2021).

### **Brand Engagement**

Consumer brand engagement, hereinafter referred to as CBE, is a psychological condition of consumers that shows their passion for a brand as a result of the strength of the relationship between consumers and the brand (Brodie et al., 2011). As a result of the psychological process, of course CBE involves various activities such as cognitive and emotional within the framework of consumer behavior in relation to the strong interaction between consumers and brands (Hollebeek et al., 2014). As a dynamic process, CBE requires consumers to actively participate in activities carried out by a brand, including interaction with brand content, providing positive brand reviews, sharing experiences and contributing to the brand community (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2012; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Sadiq et al., 2023). To measure CBE, a measurement scale has been developed that is formed by dimensions including brand participation, brand identification, and adoption of brand values (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

### **Brand Familiarity**

Brand familiarity can be defined as the ability of consumers to recognize a brand as a result of a series of repeated exposures from the brand name, logo, packaging, to the consumer experience in using a particular brand, including in this case the various elements of a brand, its benefits and its image as a whole (Laroche et al., 1996; Yoo et al., 2000; Yu et al., 2017). Various studies have been conducted to measure the variables of brand familiarity, some of which involve several indicators, among others the identification of the logo, the name of the brand, for measuring brand awareness through other brand elements. Some researchers used specific stimuli to measure the ability to remember a brand, test the memory of a brand in a conditioned situation, consumer interaction and experience with the brand, including the frequency of use or purchase of a product from the brand studied (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Gill & Dawra, 2010; Yoo et al., 2000).

Customer loyalty is the strong tendency of customers to consistently buy or use goods or services of a particular brand produced by a particular company repeatedly over a certain period of time (Dick & Basu, 1994). Loyal customers generally have a positive and consistent attitude towards a brand or company, they have a tendency to recommend a product or service that they are committing to others (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998).. Some researchers use various indicators to measure customer loyalty, including customer retention rates, purchase frequencies, and the rate of brand spread (Athanasopoulos et al., 2001; Ponirin et al., 2010; von der Heidt & Ponirin, 2011; Yang & Peterson, 2004).

### **Brand Loyalty**

According to Dick & Basu (1994), customer loyalty can be defined as the tendency or strong desire of customers to continue purchasing products or using services from a company repeatedly over a certain period. Customer loyalty also involves a consistently positive attitude towards the brand or company, as well as the tendency to recommend those products or services to others. (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998). In this context, customer loyalty can be measured through indicators such as customer retention rate, purchase frequency, and brand spread rate. (Athanasopoulos et al., 2001; Ponirin et al., 2010; von der Heide & Ponirin, 2011; Yang & Peterson, 2004)

### **Relationship between research variables**

Social media marketing is an antecedent of brand engagement (Cheung et al., 2021; Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger, 2020; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Mukherjee, 2020; Unnava & Aravindakshan, 2021; Zailskaitė-Jakstė & Minelgaite, 2021). Therefore, the first proposed hypothesis is that social media marketing has positive influence on brand engagement.

Increased social media marketing is also believed to be able to increase brand familiarity (Husin et al., 2023; Ilicic & Webster, 2011; Jin et al., 2019; A. J. Kim & Ko, 2012; J. Kim et al., 2022). based on the results of previous research, this study proposes a second hypothesis, namely social media marketing has positive influence on brand familiarity.

Social media marketing is widely known to be a predictor of customer loyalty (Swaminathan, 2016; Taoana et al., 2022; Thompson et al., 2022; Titis et al., 2021; Yoo et al., 2000; Zha et al., 2023). Thus, this study puts third hypothesis that social media marketing has positive influence on brand loyalty.

Hollebeek et al. (2014) emphasize the importance of consumer adoption of brand values and identification with the brand in building brand engagement. According to Hollebeek et al. (2014) brand engagement plays an important role in creating long-term relationships with consumers and driving brand loyalty. So that consumers who are emotionally involved with a brand tend to be more loyal and communicate positively about the brand. In turn, the fourth hypothesis is brand engagement has positive influence on brand loyalty.

Brand familiarity on the other hand is known to have a role in increasing customer loyalty (Yu et al., 2017). The tendency of consumers who are familiar with a brand shows an increase in their consumption levels in addition to being more likely to make a particular brand their first choice. Based on these previous findings, the fifth hypothesis is brand familiarity has positive impact on brand loyalty.

Acharya (2021) revealed that brand familiarity positively impacts customer brand engagement by enhancing the cognitive, affective, and activation dimensions of engagement. Familiar brands are more likely to be cognitively processed, emotionally connected, and actively engaged with by consumers. Other scholars also found that brand familiarity enhances attitudinal and behavioral intentions towards the brand, thereby increasing engagement (Yu et al., 2017). Further studies also that familiar brands provide consistent and memorable experiences, which are crucial for engaging consumers (Amin & Nika, 2022). In turn, the sixth hypothesis is brand familiarity has positive influence on brand engagement.

### **3. Method**

This research is a survey study of social media users and e-commerce customers residing in the all over Indonesia, consisting of Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Considering

that there is no official data on the population in this study, it is concluded that the population size is infinite. Thus, the sample was taken using purposive sampling technique, totaling 183 people. The research was conducted online by preparing an online form.

Data analysed using Partial Least Square (PLS) with the help of the SmartPLS application (Hair et al., 2021) and JASP. (JASP Team, 2024). A series of The steps for processing data using PLS are outer model analysis, inner model analysis, and hypothesis testing. A set of steps was taken starting from the validity and reliability testing of the research instruments to the PLS testing conducted in this study. Validity and reliability of the research instruments are shown below.

**Table 1. Validity of the research instrument**

| Variable | Validity | Variable | Validity | Variable | Validity | Variable | Validity |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| SMM1     | 0.656    | CBE1     | 0.747    | BF1      | 0.679    | LOY1     | 0.604    |
| SMM2     | 0.606    | CBE3     | 0.724    | BF2      | 0.740    | LOY2     | 0.636    |
| SMM3     | 0.737    | CBE4     | 0.787    | BF3      | 0.835    | LOY3     | 0.806    |
| SMM4     | 0.766    | CBE5     | 0.702    | BF4      | 0.842    | LOY4     | 0.840    |
| SMM5     | 0.691    | CBE6     | 0.714    | BF5      | 0.768    | LOY5     | 0.801    |
| SMM6     | 0.651    | CBE7     | 0.768    | BF6      | 0.862    | LOY6     | 0.755    |
| SMM7     | 0.546    | CBE8     | 0.730    | BF7      | 0.828    |          |          |
| SMM10    | 0.652    | CBE9     | 0.748    | BF8      | 0.619    |          |          |
| SMM11    | 0.649    | CBE10    | 0.680    |          |          |          |          |
| SMM12    | 0.716    | CBE11    | 0.727    |          |          |          |          |

**Source: Research findings**

All indicators of the items of the proposed instruments have validity scores between 0.604 for the lowest one and 0.862 for the highest. Indeed, all questionnaire items are valid as they above the threshold level of 0.30; and so they can be used for further analysis.

**Table 2. Reliability of the variables**

| Variables Name            | Abbreviation | Cronbach's $\alpha$ |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Social Media Marketing    | SMM          | 0.905               |
| Consumer Brand Engagement | CBE          | 0.929               |
| Consumer Familiarity      | BF           | 0.933               |
| Loyalty                   | LOY          | 0.905               |

**Source: Research findings**

Reliability of all proposed variables show very good reliability, as all variables have Cronbach's  $\alpha$  more than threshold levels (0.70).

## 4. Result and Discussion

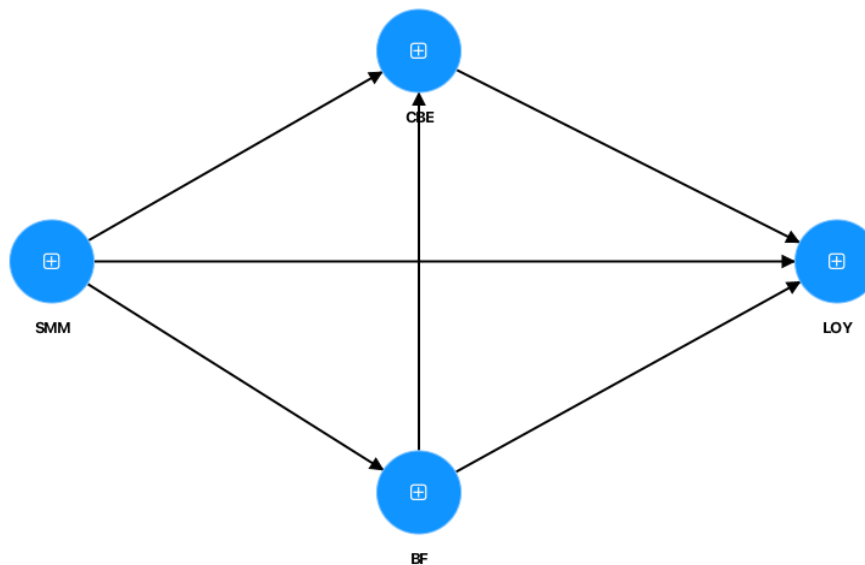
Research Findings indicate demographics of respondents of the research as follow.

**Table 3. Demographics of research respondents**

| Description                  | Freq | %    |
|------------------------------|------|------|
| <b>Gender</b>                |      |      |
| Man                          | 70   | 38.3 |
| Women                        | 113  | 61.7 |
| <b>Education</b>             |      |      |
| Doctor (S3)                  | 17   | 9.3  |
| Master (S2/Specialist)       | 92   | 50.3 |
| Bachelor (S1)                | 45   | 24.6 |
| High School                  | 29   | 15.8 |
| <b>Income</b>                |      |      |
| Rp 2.000.000 or less         | 11   | 6.0  |
| Rp 2.000.001 - Rp 4.000.000  | 42   | 23.0 |
| Rp 4.000.001 - Rp 6.000.000  | 35   | 19.1 |
| Rp 6.000.001 - Rp 8.000.000  | 20   | 10.9 |
| Rp 8.000.001 - Rp 10.000.000 | 13   | 7.1  |
| More than Rp 10.000.000      | 23   | 12.6 |
| No Answer                    | 39   | 21.3 |

**Source: Research findings**

## Results



**Figure 1. Research Model**

**Source: Research Findings**

Followed are the results of analysis done using SmartPLS. Analyses are started by analysing construct reliability, outer loadings, and then inner model.

**Table 4. Construct Reliability**

|     | Original<br>sample (O) | Sample<br>mean<br>(M) | Standard<br>deviation<br>(STDEV) | T statistics<br>( O/STDEV ) | P values |
|-----|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| BF  | 0.946                  | 0.945                 | 0.011                            | 84.338                      | 0.000    |
| CBE | 0.940                  | 0.939                 | 0.009                            | 108.148                     | 0.000    |
| LOY | 0.922                  | 0.921                 | 0.012                            | 78.860                      | 0.000    |
| SMM | 0.939                  | 0.937                 | 0.013                            | 72.532                      | 0.000    |

The table represents the **Cronbach's Alpha** values for the latent constructs, indicating the internal consistency of the items measuring each construct. All values are above 0.9, signifying **excellent reliability** across all constructs such as **Brand Familiarity (BF)**, **Customer Brand Engagement (CBE)**, **Customer Loyalty (LOY)**, and **Social Media Marketing (SMM)**. This suggests that the items within each construct are highly consistent in measuring the same underlying concept, providing a strong foundation for the measurement model.

**Table 5. Outer Model**

|              | Original<br>sample (O) | Sample<br>mean (M) | Standard<br>deviation<br>(STDEV) | T statistics<br>( O/STDEV ) | P<br>values |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| BF01 <- BF   | 0.774                  | 0.769              | 0.048                            | 16.216                      | 0.000       |
| BF02 <- BF   | 0.873                  | 0.872              | 0.023                            | 37.404                      | 0.000       |
| BF03 <- BF   | 0.861                  | 0.861              | 0.023                            | 37.108                      | 0.000       |
| BF04 <- BF   | 0.890                  | 0.888              | 0.026                            | 34.586                      | 0.000       |
| BF05 <- BF   | 0.858                  | 0.857              | 0.024                            | 35.814                      | 0.000       |
| BF06 <- BF   | 0.843                  | 0.840              | 0.041                            | 20.525                      | 0.000       |
| BF07 <- BF   | 0.901                  | 0.900              | 0.019                            | 47.490                      | 0.000       |
| BF08 <- BF   | 0.812                  | 0.810              | 0.047                            | 17.183                      | 0.000       |
| CBE01 <- CBE | 0.740                  | 0.739              | 0.042                            | 17.792                      | 0.000       |
| CBE03 <- CBE | 0.804                  | 0.802              | 0.033                            | 24.581                      | 0.000       |
| CBE04 <- CBE | 0.787                  | 0.785              | 0.043                            | 18.161                      | 0.000       |
| CBE05 <- CBE | 0.805                  | 0.804              | 0.033                            | 24.233                      | 0.000       |
| CBE06 <- CBE | 0.827                  | 0.826              | 0.032                            | 25.932                      | 0.000       |
| CBE07 <- CBE | 0.838                  | 0.838              | 0.027                            | 30.719                      | 0.000       |
| CBE08 <- CBE | 0.817                  | 0.815              | 0.031                            | 26.177                      | 0.000       |
| CBE09 <- CBE | 0.761                  | 0.760              | 0.047                            | 16.266                      | 0.000       |
| CBE10 <- CBE | 0.850                  | 0.849              | 0.024                            | 34.880                      | 0.000       |
| CBE11 <- CBE | 0.820                  | 0.820              | 0.026                            | 32.005                      | 0.000       |
| LOY01 <- LOY | 0.787                  | 0.786              | 0.033                            | 23.893                      | 0.000       |
| LOY02 <- LOY | 0.846                  | 0.845              | 0.023                            | 36.538                      | 0.000       |
| LOY03 <- LOY | 0.861                  | 0.862              | 0.020                            | 42.134                      | 0.000       |
| LOY04 <- LOY | 0.900                  | 0.899              | 0.018                            | 49.072                      | 0.000       |

|              |       |       |       |        |       |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| LOY05 <- LOY | 0.844 | 0.843 | 0.029 | 29.458 | 0.000 |
| LOY06 <- LOY | 0.846 | 0.846 | 0.025 | 33.228 | 0.000 |
| SMM01 <- SMM | 0.819 | 0.818 | 0.030 | 27.059 | 0.000 |
| SMM02 <- SMM | 0.785 | 0.781 | 0.049 | 15.875 | 0.000 |
| SMM03 <- SMM | 0.826 | 0.824 | 0.032 | 25.488 | 0.000 |
| SMM04 <- SMM | 0.811 | 0.805 | 0.043 | 18.822 | 0.000 |
| SMM05 <- SMM | 0.803 | 0.800 | 0.035 | 22.848 | 0.000 |
| SMM06 <- SMM | 0.801 | 0.798 | 0.040 | 20.273 | 0.000 |
| SMM07 <- SMM | 0.779 | 0.775 | 0.039 | 20.097 | 0.000 |
| SMM10 <- SMM | 0.764 | 0.760 | 0.055 | 14.013 | 0.000 |
| SMM11 <- SMM | 0.815 | 0.815 | 0.026 | 31.121 | 0.000 |
| SMM12 <- SMM | 0.829 | 0.828 | 0.027 | 31.146 | 0.000 |

### Source: Research findings

The high Cronbach's Alpha values ensure that the constructs in your model are robust and reliable. This strong internal consistency supports the validity of your results and enhances the confidence in your structural model's findings. Therefore, the relationships between the constructs can be interpreted with greater certainty, knowing that the measurement tools are cohesive and effectively capture the theoretical dimensions they are designed to assess.

The reliability and validity of the latent constructs (**BF**, **CBE**, **LOY**, **SMM**) were confirmed through high and significant loadings of their respective items. All item loadings were above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, with only one item (CBE01) slightly below this level at 0.704, which is still acceptable. This demonstrates **convergent validity**, meaning that the items are effective at measuring their intended constructs. Moreover, the low standard deviations and high t-statistics indicate that the items are consistently reliable across bootstrap samples.

The **Brand Familiarity** construct showed very strong loadings across all eight items (BF01-BF08), with loadings ranging from 0.774 to 0.901. This suggests that the selected indicators provide a robust measure of brand familiarity, capturing various dimensions of customer awareness and recognition of the brand.

**Customer Brand Engagement** (CBE) also exhibited high item loadings (0.704 to 0.827), indicating that the engagement construct is well-represented by its indicators. Engagement is a multi-faceted construct, and the diversity of items ensures that different aspects of engagement—such as emotional involvement and interactive behavior—are adequately captured.

The **Customer Loyalty** (LOY) construct had extremely high loadings (0.787 to 0.899), confirming that the items chosen effectively represent loyalty. This implies that customer loyalty in this context encompasses both behavioral aspects (e.g., repeat purchases) and attitudinal aspects (e.g., advocacy and attachment).

Finally, the **Social Media Marketing** (SMM) construct showed consistently high and significant loadings (0.764 to 0.829), confirming that social media marketing activities are well-reflected in the chosen items. These indicators capture different facets of social media effectiveness, such as content engagement, customer interaction, and brand visibility.

**Table 6. Inner Model**

|           | Original<br>sample (O) | Standard<br>deviation<br>(STDEV) | T statistics<br>( O/STDEV ) | P values | Hypothesis |
|-----------|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|------------|
| BF → CBE  | 0,447                  | 0,085                            | 5,249                       | 0,000    | Accepted   |
| BF → LOY  | 0,203                  | 0,122                            | 1,672                       | 0,095    | Accepted   |
| CBE → LOY | 0,582                  | 0,110                            | 5,277                       | 0,000    | Accepted   |
| SMM → BF  | 0,721                  | 0,054                            | 13,237                      | 0,000    | Accepted   |
| SMM → CBE | 0,436                  | 0,082                            | 5,295                       | 0,000    | Accepted   |
| SMM → LOY | 0,048                  | 0,087                            | 0,553                       | 0,580    | Rejected   |

**Source: Research findings**

## Discussion

The results from the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis provide valuable insights into the relationships between **Brand Familiarity (BF)**, **Customer Brand Engagement (CBE)**, **Customer Loyalty (LOY)**, and **Social Media Marketing (SMM)**. This discussion will cover the implications of both the structural and measurement models, addressing each of the significant relationships and the reliability of the constructs.

### a. Brand Familiarity's Impact on Customer Brand Engagement (BF → CBE)

The relationship between **Brand Familiarity** and **Customer Brand Engagement** was found to be both positive and statistically significant (path coefficient = 0.447,  $p = 0.000$ ). This indicates that as customers become more familiar with a brand, their engagement with that brand tends to increase. This finding aligns with existing research that suggests familiarity enhances consumers' comfort and trust with a brand, making them more likely to interact with and engage in brand-related activities. The strength of this relationship suggests that brand familiarity should be a key focus for firms aiming to enhance customer engagement.

### b. Brand Familiarity's Impact on Customer Loyalty (BF → LOY):

The path between **Brand Familiarity** and **Customer Loyalty** was not statistically significant (path coefficient = 0.203,  $p = 0.095$ ), indicating that familiarity alone may not be sufficient to drive loyalty directly. While familiarity is essential for creating awareness and initiating engagement, it appears that familiarity must translate into deeper constructs like engagement or satisfaction before it leads to loyalty. Therefore, brands should focus on strengthening engagement and other factors, such as customer satisfaction, to convert familiarity into loyalty.

### c. Customer Brand Engagement's Impact on Customer Loyalty (CBE → LOY):

The relationship between **Customer Brand Engagement** and **Customer Loyalty** is both strong and statistically significant (path coefficient = 0.582,  $p = 0.000$ ). This highlights the critical role engagement plays in fostering loyalty. Engaged customers are more likely to develop an emotional attachment to a brand, leading to repeat purchases and advocacy behaviors. This result reinforces the idea that driving engagement is a key strategy for cultivating long-term customer loyalty. Brands should invest in personalized experiences, social media interactions, and other engagement strategies to strengthen this connection.

**d. Social Media Marketing's Impact on Brand Familiarity (SMM → BF):**

The relationship between **Social Media Marketing** and **Brand Familiarity** was also strong and statistically significant (path coefficient = 0.721,  $p = 0.000$ ). This finding underscores the powerful role that social media plays in increasing brand visibility and awareness. Effective social media strategies can create touchpoints that familiarize customers with a brand, thereby enhancing their recognition and recall of the brand. This result supports the growing body of literature on the influence of digital marketing on brand awareness.

**e. Social Media Marketing's Impact on Customer Brand Engagement (SMM → CBE):**

Similarly, **Social Media Marketing** has a significant positive effect on **Customer Brand Engagement** (path coefficient = 0.436,  $p = 0.000$ ). Social media provides a platform for interaction, community-building, and personalized communication, all of which are critical in engaging customers. The significant relationship found in this study suggests that brands should leverage social media to facilitate two-way communication and interactive content to foster deeper engagement with their audiences.

**f. Social Media Marketing's Impact on Customer Loyalty (SMM → LOY):**

However, the path between **Social Media Marketing** and **Customer Loyalty** was not significant (path coefficient = 0.048,  $p = 0.580$ ). This suggests that while social media marketing is effective at increasing brand familiarity and engagement, it does not directly influence loyalty. Loyalty may require more than just exposure and interaction on social media, such as consistent positive experiences, value offerings, or personalized customer service. Brands should consider integrating social media strategies with other loyalty-building efforts to achieve long-term customer retention.

## 5. Conclusion

The findings highlight the importance of **Social Media Marketing** in driving **Brand Familiarity** and **Customer Engagement**, which in turn lead to **Customer Loyalty**. Although familiarity and engagement both play significant roles in loyalty formation, social media marketing by itself does not directly create loyalty. This suggests that brands should adopt a multi-channel approach, using social media to boost familiarity and engagement while also focusing on deeper loyalty-building efforts like customer experience management, personalized offers, and community engagement. This research offers important implications for marketers, emphasizing the need to strategically utilize social media platforms to increase brand engagement and indirectly foster loyalty. However, brands must recognize that loyalty is a complex construct that requires more than just social media interaction—it involves consistent brand experiences and sustained customer satisfaction.

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