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How Brand Experience Drives Brand Equity in Social Commerce: The Mediating Role of Brand Engagement

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ABSTRACT

While brand experience and brand engagement are widely recognized as key drivers of marketing success and brand equity, limited research has examined how engagement functions as both a predictor and a mediating mechanism within social commerce. This study aims to demonstrate how brand experience influences brand equity through brand engagement, highlighting engagement as a key mechanism underlying this relationship. The study population comprises social commerce users, and data were collected from 262 respondents through simple random sampling. PLS-SEM is applied to test the conceptual model hypotheses. The findings show that brand experience and brand engagement have a significant positive influence on brand equity. Brand engagement partially mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand equity. This finding highlights brand engagement as an important mechanism through which brand experience contributes to the development of brand equity in social commerce. The findings enrich theoretical understanding of how brand experience and engagement interact to shape brand equity in social commerce environments. This study provides actionable guidance for marketers in social commerce by demonstrating the interplay between brand experience, brand engagement, and brand equity.

Keywords: Brand experience, Brand engagement, Brand equity, Social commerce, PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

Social commerce has become a salient component of the digital economy, contributing to consumption growth and expanding opportunities in digital labor (Shen et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019). Social commerce has evolved into an integrated platform that facilitates promotional activities and enables commercial transactions (Xue et al., 2020). Research on social commerce is a promising area for studying online consumer behavior and technology adoption (Esmaeili & Hashemi G., 2019). E-commerce and social media platforms, also known as social commerce, enable brands to better understand consumer needs through direct two-way communication, share information in a competitive global environment, and facilitate purchasing transactions on a single platform (Rosário & Raimundo, 2021; Xue et al., 2020).

Brand equity is a valuable asset for a company's branding strategy (Beig & Nika, 2019; Keller & Brexendorf, 2019). Today, successful brands use a combination of online and traditional channels to build brand equity and consumer loyalty (Rochefort & Ndlovu, 2024). The Internet has a significant impact on brand equity in the online environment, as more people spend time online, making it a key avenue for gaining a competitive advantage (Enes et al., 2024; Vlachos et al., 2020). However, as an essential asset, how to measure brand equity in an online environment, what the input and output factors for this concept are, and how to involve consumers in creating high brand equity values remain difficult tasks for marketers and even academics (Kuvykaite & Piligrimiene, 2014; Troiville et al., 2019).

As digital content becomes increasingly available, the shift in audience media consumption is significant and affects how consumers think about brand equity (Saulite, 2022). Brands face opportunities and challenges in social interactions mediated by these internet-based channels (Steinhoff et al., 2019) as they seek to remain consistently present and attract consumer attention. With this shift in online behavior, one way to ensure that brands are always present and appealing is through brand experience and engagement (Amin & Nika, 2022). Experts consider engagement the most important Key Performance Indicator (KPI) in social media marketing. However, given the current abundance of brand engagement-based marketing activities, this study requires further investigation (Beig & Nika, 2019).

Marketing success in social commerce depends on strong brand engagement and its ability to foster meaningful user interaction (Gómez et al., 2019). Brand engagement is generally expected to contribute positively to brand equity by strengthening consumers' interactions and relationships with brands. However, empirical evidence regarding this relationship remains inconclusive. For instance, Xi and Hamari (2020) and Sohaib et al. (2023) found a positive relationship between brand engagement and brand equity, whereas Verma (2021) reported no significant effect in the Indian context.

These inconsistent findings suggest that the relationship may depend not only on the presence of engagement itself but also on the process through which consumers' experiences with a brand are transformed into brand-related evaluations and outcomes.

From a Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) perspective, brand experience can be viewed as a stimulus that generates consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement, thereby influencing their responses toward the brand. Brand engagement therefore represents a theoretically meaningful mechanism through which brand experience may be translated into brand equity. This mechanism is particularly relevant in social commerce, where experiential, social, and transactional interactions are integrated within a single digital environment. Nevertheless, the mediating role of brand engagement in the relationship between brand experience and brand equity remains insufficiently examined in this context. This study addresses this gap by examining the effect of brand engagement on brand equity and its role as a mediating mechanism between brand experience and brand equity.

In other areas, research on brand engagement and brand equity shows positive results. However, the mechanisms and mediating role of brand engagement in the context of social commerce remain to be explored, and the existing model is limited and needs further development (Busalim et al., 2021). Social commerce needs to understand the brand experience and its value (Rahardja et al., 2021). However, the mediating role of brand engagement in linking brand experience to brand equity remains insufficiently examined in social commerce. As social commerce gains momentum in many countries, exploring its impact on consumer behavior is beneficial, given that this remains a relatively rare area of study. Accordingly, this study empirically examines how brand experience and brand engagement influence brand equity, and whether brand engagement mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand equity in the context of social commerce.

This study aims to investigate how brand engagement mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand equity in social commerce, which has received little attention from other researchers, and very few studies have focused on this construct in emerging markets (Molinillo et al., 2020; Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019; Wang & Xie, 2020). The contribution of this research lies in the empirical integration of these constructs into a single structural model in the context of social commerce to reveal how experiential, cognitive, and behavioral processes interact within the social commerce ecosystem, a theoretical study that remains lacking.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: it reviews the relevant literature and develops hypotheses in section 2; outlines the research methodology in section 3; presents the results and discussion in section 4; and concludes with limitations and recommendations for future research in section 5.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stimulus-Organism-Response Model

This study adopts the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework to explain the relationships among brand experience, brand engagement, and brand equity. Within this framework, brand experience is positioned as the stimulus (S), as consumers develop sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual experiences through their interactions with a brand. Brand engagement represents the organism (O), reflecting consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement that emerges from these experiences. Brand equity serves as the response (R), representing consumers' evaluations, associations, and perceptions of the brand (Aaker, 1992; Keller & Brexendorf, 2019).

The S-O-R framework provides the theoretical basis for proposing that brand engagement mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand equity. Positive brand experiences can stimulate consumers to become more cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally engaged with a brand. At the same time, stronger engagement can strengthen brand-related evaluations and contribute to higher brand equity. Thus, the effect of brand experience on brand equity is expected to occur both directly and indirectly through brand engagement. This mechanism is particularly relevant in social commerce, where brand interactions, social participation, and commercial activities are integrated into a single digital environment, making engagement a key channel through which consumer experiences translate into brand-related outcomes.

Brand Experience and Brand Equity in Social Commerce Context

Brakus et al. (2009) define brand experience as the sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli, including a brand's design, identity, packaging, communications, and environments. The concept from Brakus has been the most widely used construct in several studies. Brand experience can lead to brand loyalty with various mediating variables (Na et al., 2023). Consumer satisfaction will be influenced by the brand experience stored in their minds over time (Yunpeng & Khan, 2023). In the online context, consumer experience also contributes to customer satisfaction, which is a strong predictor of loyalty (Alam et al., 2025). When consumers begin looking for products, buying them, receiving services, and consuming them, a brand experience begins (Brakus et al., 2009). When consumers see advertisements or company marketers promoting their products or services on the website, they can experience the brand directly or indirectly.

Several researchers have conducted empirical research on the impact of brand experience on brand equity. Beig and Nika (2019) investigated how brand experience influences brand equity. Beig and Nika (2019) found that brand equity is influenced by brand experience in Jammu and Kashmir, India. Based on surveys of electronic product consumers in Vietnam, Sang and Cuong (2025) discovered that brand experience influences the dimensions of brand equity, including brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. In South Korea, brand experience has also been shown to affect the dimensions of brand equity, namely brand awareness, association/image, perceived quality, and grocery consumer brand loyalty (Jeon & Yoo, 2021).

These studies have demonstrated how brand experience affects brand equity and its dimensions in a variety of countries. These findings indicate that brand experience generally contributes positively to brand equity across different market contexts, including its key dimensions such as brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. However, a survey by Iglesias et al. (2019) in Spain found that the sensory experience dimension did not affect brand equity. There are still conflicting findings regarding the impact of brand experience and its dimensions on brand equity, which merit further investigation. The first hypothesis proposed based on this description is:

H1: Brand experiences have a significant effect on brand equity among social commerce users.

Brand Experience and Brand Engagement in Social Commerce Context

Brand engagement refers to a psychological state and process that encourages customers to develop stronger relationships with a brand and, ultimately, loyalty (Brodie et al., 2011). It can also generate non-financial value for companies through consumers' active involvement with their products or services. Previous research has examined the relationship between brand experience and consumer engagement. Tafesse (2016), for example, found that perceptual, epistemic, social, and embodied brand experiences influence consumer engagement.

Other studies have reported varying findings regarding the relationship between brand experience and brand engagement. Mary Metilda and Grace Antony Rose (2021) found that the affective and cognitive dimensions of brand engagement did not significantly influence online brand experience. In contrast, the activation dimension had a significant effect among consumers in Chennai, India. In contrast, Rather et al. (2024) reported a positive relationship between consumer brand engagement and brand experience among luxury hotel consumers. Evidence from Farhat et al. (2020) showed no significant effect of brand experience on brand engagement among students in Pakistani public and private schools, while Waqas (2022) found a positive effect of brand experience on college student engagement in Malaysia. Overall, the empirical evidence suggests that brand experience can foster brand engagement by stimulating consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral involvement with brands. However, the strength and direction of this relationship may vary across contexts and construct dimensions. These inconsistencies indicate a need for further empirical investigation of the relationship between brand experience and brand engagement:

H2: Brand experiences significantly affect brand engagement among social commerce users.

Brand Engagement and Brand Equity in Social Commerce Context

Brand equity represents the strength and value of a brand and is considered an important asset for marketers (Aaker, 1992). Building strong brand equity can benefit companies; therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to its formation is essential to identifying how brand value develops (Keller & Brexendorf, 2019). In online environments, brand engagement has emerged as an important factor in shaping brand equity. Xi and Hamari (2020) found that brand engagement contributes to the development of brand equity in online brand communities.

Similarly, Perera et al. (2023) demonstrated that brand engagement positively influences brand equity in social media contexts. Sohaib et al. (2023) also found a significant and positive effect of brand engagement on brand equity among technology product consumers in China. Further evidence from the fashion market indicates that brand engagement on social media directly and positively influences several components of brand equity, particularly brand awareness and brand associations (Vo Minh et al., 2022).

Brand equity is generally conceptualized through four dimensions: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (Beig & Nika, 2019). Brand awareness refers to consumers' ability to recognize and recall a brand. Higher brand awareness makes it easier for consumers to identify a brand when making purchasing decisions. Perceived quality reflects consumers' overall assessment of a brand's products or services and can influence both purchase decisions and satisfaction. Brand associations are the thoughts, feelings, and attributes that consumers associate with a brand. Positive associations can strengthen brand image and distinguish the brand from its competitors. Finally, brand loyalty reflects consumers' commitment and preference toward a brand, which may be expressed through repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth or advocacy:

H3: Brand engagement has a significant effect on brand equity among social commerce users.

Brand Engagement as a Mediating Variable

The digital environment enables dynamic, real-time, and multidirectional communication between brands and consumers, fundamentally changing how brands interact with their audiences (Hu & Song, 2025; Rawangngam et al., 2025). Consumer engagement is positively associated with satisfaction and brand loyalty, which can subsequently facilitate value co-creation (Nadeem et al., 2021). Within online brand communities, social media, and other digital environments, brand engagement has increasingly been recognized as a mechanism linking consumer experiences or marketing activities to various brand-related outcomes, including brand equity.

Empirical studies provide support for this mediating role. Waqas et al. (2025) examined the effect of sublime brand experience on brand engagement and brand equity in a social media context. Their findings showed that brand experience had a direct positive effect on brand equity, while brand engagement partially mediated this relationship. Similarly, Karim et al. (2025) found that brand engagement mediated the relationship between brand experience and brand equity in the banking industry. Beyond brand experience, Cheung et al. (2021) demonstrated that consumer brand engagement fully mediated the effect of ongoing search behavior on brand attitude among technology users in Hong Kong, indicating that engagement can translate consumers’ information-seeking activities into more favorable brand evaluations.

These findings suggest that brand engagement can serve as an intervening mechanism through which consumers' experiences and interactions with brands translate into positive brand-related outcomes. The findings of these studies show that consumer engagement is driven by and correlates with brand experience and brand equity, and that engagement serves as a mediator. The hypothesis proposed is based on previous research findings:

H4: Brand engagement mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand equity among social commerce users.

DATA AND METHOD

Sampling and Data Collection

This study employed a quantitative approach. The research adopted a single-brand design, focusing on Shopee Indonesia, the most popular social commerce platform in Indonesia and the one with the highest number of daily active users during the study period (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). The brand was selected to provide a consistent referent across respondents and to ensure that participants had sufficient exposure to the brand within a social commerce environment. The target population consisted of users who followed Shopee's official Instagram account.

Eligible respondents were required to follow Shopee's official social media account and have prior experience interacting with the brand through social media or its social commerce activities. Respondents were recruited over 90 days using a non-probability, purposive sampling method. Shopee was presented as “Brand X” throughout the questionnaire to maintain consistency across the measurement items. A total of 279 questionnaires were received, of which 17 were excluded during the initial screening due to incomplete responses. The remaining 262 complete responses were retained for further analysis.

Research Measurement

The research instrument used to measure brand engagement, brand experience, and brand equity is based on previously conducted, relevant research. The brand engagement item uses the question indicator from Khan et al. (2020), comprising 10 statements. The brand equity variable employs four dimensions of brand awareness, association, perceived quality, and loyalty from Beig and Nika’s (2022) research indicators, with 16 statements. Meanwhile, this study employs the research indicator developed by Beig and Nika (2022), consisting of 12 statements, to assess brand experience across the sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual domains. Respondents’ perceptions are measured using points on a 1-4 Likert scale for each variable in this study. A four-point response scale was adopted to eliminate the neutral midpoint and encourage respondents to provide a more clearly directed evaluation of the statements presented (Adelson & McCoach, 2010; Sun & Drasgow, 2021). This research uses Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as a data analysis tool and tests the structural model. The choice of PLS-SEM in this research is because it can measure and synchronize measurement and structural models, and it is appropriate for research intended to determine the drivers of a study (Hair et al., 2019).

Data Analysis

The outer model test assesses the correlations among the indicators used in the research via PLS-SEM. The criteria we use to test the outer model are construct reliability, discriminant validity, and convergent validity. Based on the convergent validity test, each questionnaire item is considered valid if its loading is > 0.7 and its Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is > 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 1 presents the loadings, AVE’s, Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach’s Alpha (CA) values, computed using SmartPLS 3.30.

Table 1 *Measurement Model: Loading Factors, Composite Reliability, and Convergent Validity*

Items Indicator	Item Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Brand Engagement				
I feel very positive when using brand X’s social commerce. (OBE4)	0.710	0.869	0.905	0.658
Using brand X’s social commerce makes me happy. (OBE5)	0.754			
I am proud to use brand X’s social commerce. (OBE7)	0.807			
I spend more time using brand X's social commerce than other social commerce brands'. (OBE8)	0.825			
Whenever I use social commerce services, I use brand X’s social commerce. (OBE9)	0.835			
Brand Experience				
Brand X’s social commerce makes a strong impression on my visual sense. (SEN1)	0.724	0.929	0.941	0.640
I find my brand X’s social commerce interesting in a sensory way. (SEN2)	0.701			
I do not have strong emotions for brand X’s social commerce. (AFF2)	0.760			
Brand X’s social commerce is an emotional brand. (AFF3)	0.810			
I engage in physical actions and behaviors when using brand X’s social commerce services. (BEH1)	0.848			
Brand X’s social commerce results in bodily experiences. (BEH2)	0.782			
Brand X’s social commerce is not action-oriented. (BEH3)	0.808			
I spend a lot of time thinking when I encounter brand X’s social commerce. (INT1)	0.800			
Brand X’s social commerce does not make me think. (INT2)	0.811			
Brand Equity				
Some characteristics of Brand X’s social commerce come to mind quickly. (BAW1)	0.771	0.951	0.956	0.578
I can quickly recognize Brand X’s social commerce among other e-commerce brands. (BAW2)	0.732			
I am familiar with brand X’s social commerce. (BAW3)	0.788			

Items Indicator	Item Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Compared with other e-commerce brands, brand X’s social commerce has a distinct image. (BAS1)	0.750			
I respect and admire people who shop on brand X’s social commerce platform. (BAS2)	0.720			
I like the brand image of brand X’s social commerce. (BAS3)	0.784			
Brand X’s social commerce is customer-friendly. (BAS4)	0.805			
I trust the quality of the products provided by brand X’s social commerce. (PQ1)	0.799			
Products from brand X’s social commerce are of good quality. (PQ2)	0.752			
Brand X’s social commerce services are excellent. (PQ3)	0.806			
Brand X’s social commerce services are reliable. (PQ4)	0.730			
I am loyal to brand X's social commerce. (BL1)	0.776			
Brand X’s social commerce would be my first choice when shopping online. (BL2)	0.766			
I will keep buying from brand X’s social commerce as long as it continues to offer high-quality products and excellent service. (BL3)	0.808			
I am still willing to buy from brand X’s social commerce, even if its product prices are slightly higher than those of other e-commerce brands. (BL4)	0.782			
I would love to recommend brand X’s social commerce to my friends. (BL5)	0.759			

Source. Author’s work.

Based on Table 1, the item loading values demonstrate that the indicators used in this research are adequate. SEN3, AFF1, INT3, OBE1, OBE2, OBE3, OBE6, and OBE10 have loading values below the standard. Furthermore, items that load below the reference value are deleted and not processed further for structural model testing before being discarded. Hair and Alamer (2022) recommend removing indicators (items) with loadings below a specified threshold to ensure construct validity and reliability in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The Cronbach’s Alpha and CR values exceed the reference value of 0.700, indicating that the construct is reliable. Based on these findings, the scale used in this study is valid.

A convergent validity test is required to ensure that each indicator's correlation with its construct or latent variable is positive. The Smart PLS test results show AVE values between 0.578 and 0.658, exceeding the reference value of 0.50, indicating that the variables related to the construct explain more variance than those not associated with it.

This study also tested multicollinearity with indicator weights and variance inflation factors to evaluate the measurement model (VIF). Multicollinearity examines how indicator correlations affect the standard errors of estimated weights. Weight is used to assess an indicator's relative contribution to its construction (Benitez et al., 2020). The test results show that all VIF values are between 1 and 3, indicating no serious multicollinearity in this study. Furthermore, all indicator weights are large and significant at the 0.1% level.

Discriminant validity implies that two conceptually distinct constructs must also be statistically different. The Fornell-Larcker criteria for evaluating discriminant validity are shown in the table below. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the mean-variance ratio of the extracted constructs should exceed the squared correlations of each construct with all other constructs in the model. The findings of this study show that all latent variables met these requirements, indicating that discriminant validity was achieved. As a result, testing for convergent and discriminant validity in this study revealed good construct validity and reliability. The data processing results using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach indicate the AVE for each construct. Table 2 presents the value of the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and Table 3 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) for the constructs used in the study.

Table 2: *Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

Construct	**Brand Equity**	**Brand Experience**	**Brand Engagement**
Brand Equity	0.760		
Brand Experience	0.886	0.800	
Brand Engagement	0.837	0.754	0.811

Source. Author's Work.

Table 3 *Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)*

Construct	1	2	3
Brand Equity			
Brand Experience	0.924		
Brand Engagement	0.917	0.832	

Source. Author's Work

Discriminant validity was initially assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loadings. The Fornell–Larcker criterion requires the square root of the AVE for each construct to exceed its correlations with other constructs. As presented in Table 2, the square root of the AVE for Brand Equity was lower than its correlation with another latent variable, indicating a potential lack of discriminant validity based on the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

However, the Fornell–Larcker criterion has been criticized for its limited sensitivity in detecting discriminant validity problems, particularly when constructs are conceptually and empirically related. Therefore, following the recommendation of Henseler et al. (2015), the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT) was employed as the primary criterion for further assessment of discriminant validity. HTMT has been shown to provide greater sensitivity in detecting a lack of discriminant validity than the Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loadings. The HTMT values for all pairs of constructs in this study were below the recommended threshold, indicating that the constructs demonstrated adequate discriminant validity (Table 3).

The HTMT results provide mixed evidence regarding discriminant validity. The HTMT ratio between brand experience and brand engagement was 0.832, which remained below the 0.90 threshold, supporting their empirical distinctiveness. However, the HTMT ratios involving brand equity exceeded 0.90, indicating potential empirical overlap. The study recognizes these results as a measurement-model concern and further considers the constructs' conceptual and empirical distinctiveness.

From a conceptual perspective, the three constructs capture related but distinct dimensions of the consumer–brand relationship. Brand experience refers to consumers' experiential responses arising from interactions with or exposure to a brand, encompassing sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual responses. Brand engagement reflects the extent of consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement with the brand, particularly through their active attention and participation. Brand equity, in turn, represents consumers' overall evaluation of the brand's value and strength. The relatively high HTMT values involving brand equity may therefore reflect the expected conceptual relatedness among these constructs. At the same time, their distinct definitions and measurement domains provide a basis for examining them as separate constructs within the proposed model.

In addition, the cross-loading results showed that each measurement item loaded more strongly on its respective construct than on the other latent variables, providing further supporting evidence of discriminant validity. Taken together, although the Fornell–Larcker criterion indicated a potential discriminant validity issue for brand equity, the HTMT results provided stronger and more reliable evidence that discriminant validity was adequately established in the measurement model.

RESULTS

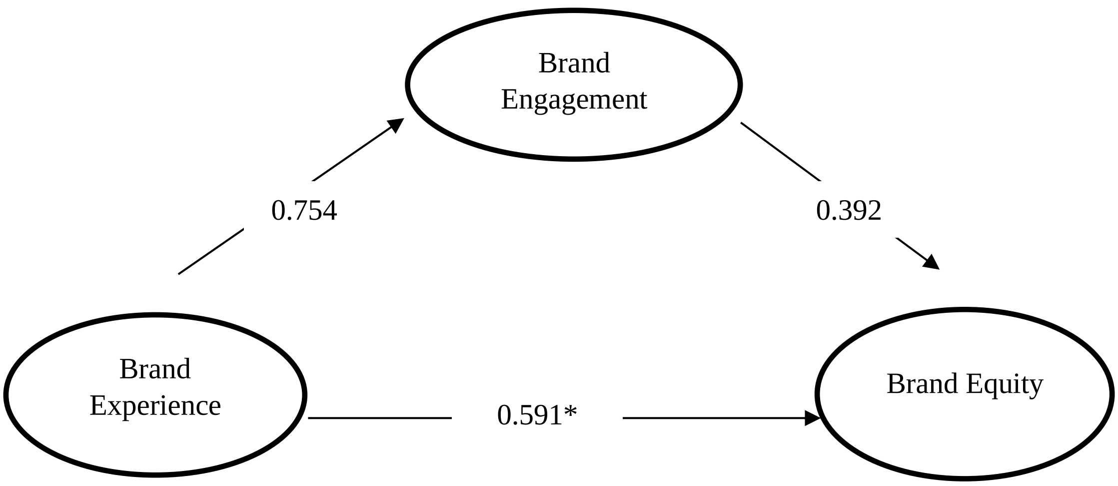
Demographic and Descriptive Statistics

Overall, this research was supported by 262 respondents, who served as the basis for data processing. The respondents in this study were 50.7% male and 49% female. About 20.3% of respondents were between 18 and 24, 38.9% were between 25 and 29, 16.4% were between 30 and 39, and 24.4% were over 40. As for respondents' occupations, 22% are homemakers; 34.3% are private employees; 9.1% are government employees; 4.1% are still in high school or university; 17% are entrepreneurs; and 13.3% are in unspecified fields. In data processing, we used two testing stages to test the research model: an outer model using confirmatory factor analysis to assess the validity and reliability of the latent variables. The inner model test uses R^2 and path coefficients to evaluate the relationships among variables.

Results for Hypothesis Testing

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is used in this study to analyze data and test structural research models without assuming normality. PLS-SEM was chosen because it integrates measurement analysis with structural models and is appropriate for research aimed at identifying a study's drivers (Hair et al., 2019). Given the complexity of this research model, which is designed to measure direct and mediating effects in line with the research objectives, the researcher believes PLS-SEM is appropriate for analyzing the data. To determine the significance level of the path coefficient, this study employs a bootstrapping algorithm with 5,000 re-samples from social media users. Figure 1 shows the results of the SEM-PLS analysis.

Figure 1. Structural Equation Model Output



Source. Author’s Work

This study employs a nonparametric technique, bootstrapping, to estimate model coefficients and the strength of the correlation path (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Based on Figure 1, the R^2 value for brand engagement was 0.568, and the R^2 for brand equity was 0.851. The R2 result indicates that brand experience accounts for 56.8% of the variance in brand engagement. The 85.1% magnitude of brand equity can be explained by brand experience and customer engagement. These findings suggest that brand engagement and brand experience significantly impact brand equity. Table 4 shows the results of the direct and indirect relationships among the constructs. Meanwhile, the Standard Beta indicates that brand experience is the strongest predictor of brand equity, accounting for 59.1% of the variance. Table 4 presents a summary of the results of the research hypothesis testing.

Table 4 *Path Coefficient, Direct, and Indirect Relationship*

Path	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Test-Result
Brand Experience → Brand Equity	0.591	0.042	14.071	<0.001	Support
Brand Experience → Brand Engagement	0.754	0.027	27.665	<0.001	Support
Brand Engagement → Brand Equity	0.392	0.045	8.704	<0.001	Support
Brand experience → Brand Engagement → Brand Equity	0.295	0.0345	8.563	<0.001	Support
R^2 Brand Engagement	0.568	Q^2 Brand Engagement		0.479	
R^2 Brand Equity	0.851	Q^2 Brand Equity		0.368	

Notes: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001

Source. Author's Work

Based on Table 4, the Q^2 values were 0.479 for brand engagement and 0.368 for brand equity, indicating positive predictive relevance of the structural model and demonstrating predictive relevance for both endogenous constructs. The results indicate that all three direct relationships are statistically significant. Brand experience has a positive and significant effect on brand equity ($\beta = 0.591$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Brand experience also has a positive and significant effect on brand engagement ($\beta = 0.754$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2. Furthermore, brand engagement has a positive and significant effect on brand equity ($\beta = 0.392$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. Brand engagement mediated the relationship between brand experience and brand equity, as indicated by the significant indirect effect ($p < 0.001$). The direct path coefficient from brand experience to brand equity was 0.591, while the indirect effect through brand engagement was 0.295. The VAF (Variance Accounted For), calculated as the ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect, was 0.333, indicating that approximately one-third of the effect of brand experience on brand equity is transmitted through brand engagement.

DISCUSSION

Brand Experience and Brand Equity

The significant positive effect of brand experience on brand equity ($\beta = 0.591$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that consumers' experiences with a brand constitute an important basis for developing favorable evaluations of the brand among social commerce users in Indonesia. The results of this study strengthen those of previous studies by Sang and Cuong (2025) and Jeon and Yoo (2021), who also found that brand experience influences the formation of brand equity. The consistency of these findings confirms that brand experience acts as a sensory, affective, and cognitive stimulus that strengthens consumer perceptions of quality, brand associations, and loyalty—key components in building brand equity.

In the context of this research, these results expand the empirical evidence that brand experience is a strategic determinant of brand differentiation in increasingly competitive, information-rich markets. Positive brand experiences not only activate emotional responses but also strengthen consumers' rational evaluations of brands, as previous research has also demonstrated. Thus, the result extends prior evidence by highlighting the relevance of brand experience as a strategic mechanism to strengthen brand equity in the context of social commerce in Indonesia.

Brand Experience and Brand Engagement

Brand Experience also demonstrated a positive and significant effect on brand engagement ($\beta = 0.754$, $p < 0.001$), with a stronger coefficient than its direct effect on brand equity. This result suggests that experiential interactions may be particularly important in stimulating consumers' active involvement with brands in social commerce environments. These findings are consistent with those of Amin and Nika (2022), Prentice et al. (2019), and Yasin et al. (2019), who discovered that the brand experience dimension influences engagement in the studies conducted in India, Palestine, and Europe. These findings demonstrate that the positive sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual experiences the social commerce user has influence the levels of cognitive processing, affection, and activation, helping maintain high engagement among users and brands.

Nonetheless, these findings differ from those of Merdiaty and Aldrin’s (2022) study, which discovered that brand experience had no direct effect on brand equity.

According to Merdiaty and Aldrin (2022), the influence of brand experience on new brand engagement is mediated by service quality. These differences may be attributed to differences in respondent characteristics between the research by Merdiaty and Aldrin (2022) and this research. This research is dominated by social commerce users aged 18-24 who have been using it longer. At the same time, the characteristics of respondents in the research by Merdiaty and Aldrin (2022) are dominated by those aged 23–30 who shop online.

Based on our findings, the more sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual elements a social commerce page can maintain, the higher the engagement level. The social commerce ecosystem enables an integrated consumer shopping experience across all purchase stages, from product selection to sales, on a single platform. Optimizing the consumer brand experience on social commerce platforms primarily involves delivering hedonic stimuli that engage senses, evoke thoughts and feelings, and prompt direct actions users can take within the platform.

Brand Engagement and Brand Equity

This study also found that brand engagement significantly enhances brand equity. The positive and significant effect of brand engagement on brand equity ($\beta = 0.392$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that active consumer involvement with a brand is associated with stronger brand evaluations. These findings support the findings of Rather et al. (2024), Rungtrakulchai (2022), Xi and Hamari (2020), and Meirani and Abror (2019). These findings demonstrate that consumer engagement with a brand strengthens the growth of brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. The more consumers are interested in, willing to interact with, and involved in the social commerce ecosystem through the website, the higher the perceived brand equity. Consumer engagement with a brand can be predicted by consumer involvement, participation, and self-expression, which ultimately relate to brand loyalty as one of the dimensions of brand equity (Algharabat et al., 2020). It is essential for brand owners who use social commerce as a marketing and sales channel to strive to engage and interact with their consumers in the digital ecosystem.

Brand Engagement as a Mediating Mechanism

The mediation analysis showed that the relationship between brand experience and brand equity was partially and significantly mediated by brand engagement. This study clarifies the differences between our study and Sohaib et al. (2023), which also examined engagement and brand equity. However, despite similarities in the variables used, neither study investigated them in the context of social commerce. This study addresses this gap by examining the mediating mechanisms of brand engagement among social commerce users in developing countries. This study's findings demonstrated the importance of brand engagement in mediating the relationship between brand experience and brand equity, and supported the theory of brand engagement. Brand engagement has been shown to significantly and positively mediate the relationship between brand experience and brand equity among consumers in developing countries who engage in social commerce. This finding is unique to this study and has not been reported in many previous studies. Based on these findings, marketers should consider fostering engagement after consumers have been stimulated by the brand experience to maximize consumer brand equity.

Brodie et al. (2011) explained that customer engagement plays a key role in creating co-creation value and interactive experiences for businesses, and that these experiences are essential to creating consumer satisfaction, which ultimately has a positive impact on brand equity. These results indicate that brand marketing efforts should incorporate customer engagement elements and strategies to create a favorable brand experience on social media and maximize desired brand equity.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the relationships among brand experience, brand engagement, and brand equity and tested four hypotheses concerning their direct and indirect relationships. Overall, the findings provide support for all proposed hypotheses. Specifically, H1 is supported, indicating that brand experience has a positive and significant effect on brand equity. H2 is supported, demonstrating that brand experience positively influences brand engagement. H3 is also supported, showing that brand engagement has a positive and significant effect on brand equity. Finally, H4 is supported, indicating that brand engagement significantly mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand equity.

The findings of this study enrich the empirical literature on brand equity and its relationships with brand experience and brand engagement, which remains limited compared to other marketing studies. This study also provides the most recent findings on the role of brand engagement in mediating the relationship between brand experience and brand equity. This topic has received little attention in previous studies, particularly in the context of social commerce in developing countries.

Theoretical Contributions

This research contributes to theoretical branding studies by offering empirical evidence on the integration of brand experience, brand engagement, and brand equity in the context of social commerce in a developing country, where such research remains limited. By validating this model in Indonesia's online commerce, this study provides empirical evidence relevant to social commerce. It enriches the current understanding of the role of brand experience stimuli in developing theoretical perspectives on digital brand engagement and the formation of consumer-based brand equity in socially interactive online environments.

The findings of this study can be used by academics researching brand equity and engagement to provide empirical support for their studies. For practitioners, the findings of this study have contributed to the understanding that consumers' sensory, affective, behavioral, intellectual, and engagement experiences can influence their perceptions of brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty.

Managerial Implications

The findings offer several practical insights for managers operating in social commerce environments. First, the study found a significant influence of brand experience on brand engagement and brand equity. These results underscore the need for companies to design comprehensive experience strategies that stimulate consumers' sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual responses. Marketing managers can continually strive to improve the quality of visual and interactive elements in digital storefronts, use emotionally resonant narratives, and incorporate features such as live-streamed demonstrations or gamified interactions to create more immersive brand experiences.

Second, the study confirmed the partial mediating role of brand engagement, suggesting that engagement is an essential mechanism by which brand experience contributes to brand equity. Therefore, marketing managers can adopt content strategies that foster consumer engagement and encourage active participation in social commerce. These efforts can include facilitating user-generated content, fostering online brand communities, and leveraging social commerce functionality that allows consumers to interact with brands and other users in real time.

Third, this study's findings highlight the importance of implementing engagement-centered relationship management to strengthen key dimensions of brand equity, including brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Marketing managers can design loyalty programs and value propositions that reward engagement and foster long-term relationships with consumers. Personalized communications and tailored content based on engagement patterns can further enhance perceived brand relevance and attachment.

Finally, because this study was conducted in an emerging-market context, marketing managers need to consider the unique cultural, technological, and behavioral characteristics of these markets. Localized content strategies, mobile-first design, and collaboration with micro-influencers may be particularly effective in increasing consumer engagement and strengthening equity-building experiences. Collectively, these implications provide actionable guidance for practitioners seeking to leverage social commerce platforms to enhance engagement and develop sustainable brand equity.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this research has made a significant contribution to the literature and practical studies, it still has limitations that future research will address. First, future research could extend the model by incorporating constructs such as brand love and brand satisfaction to provide a more comprehensive explanation of brand equity. Second, the HTMT results indicated potential empirical overlap between brand equity and brand experience, as well as between brand equity and brand engagement. However, brand experience and brand engagement remained below the 0.90 threshold. Future research could refine the measurement items and conduct additional assessments of discriminant validity to further establish construct distinctiveness. Third, the use of non-probability purposive sampling limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of social commerce users. Future studies could employ probability-based sampling or replicate the model across different consumer segments. Finally, qualitative or mixed-method approaches could complement the quantitative findings by providing deeper insights into how consumers experience, engage with, and evaluate brands in social commerce environments.

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