Customer Engagement and Brand Experience on Consumer Loyalty The Role of Brand Trust as A Mediating Variable

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine The influence of customer engagement, brand experience, and customer engagement on consumer loyalty through brand trust as a mediation variable. The sampling technique in this study uses non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method. Data was collected by distributing questionnaires in g-forms online to all Scientific skincare users. The respondents who filled in were 211, but only 201 were used according to the predetermined criteria. The sample in this study is comprised of Scientific skincare users. The requirements of this research are consumers who have made 3x purchases and have been using Scientific products for the last 3 months. The data analysis technique in this study is partial least square using SmartPLS 3.0. The results obtained in this study are as follows: (1) Customer engagement affects consumer loyalty, (2) Brand experience does not affect consumer loyalty, (3) Brand trust can mediate between customer engagement and consumer loyalty, (4) Brand trust does not mediate between brand experience and consumer loyalty.

Keywords: *Customer Engagement, Brand Experience, Brand Trust, Consumer Loyalty.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Loyalty is essential for the sustainability of a brand. Loyalty has become an interesting research topic. Various studies examine the relationship between customer engagement and brand loyalty [1]–[4]. Likewise, brand experience variables affect loyalty [2], [5]–[7] [3] Customer engagement affects product loyalty mediated by band attachment and band trust [4], [8]

Li et al.'s. research shows that customer engagement influences consumer loyalty [9][23]. Customer engagement is a strategy carried out outside the product sales process by focusing on the mindset and behavior of consumers [10][30] Meanwhile, according to [11]-[5]] customer engagement is a connection that arises because of the experience gained by consumers from a company. Therefore, nowadays, companies are focused on finding ways to sell products quickly and to build relationships or customer engagement.

Customer engagement can also arise because of a brand experience. The brand experience is a view that occurs in consumers through initial processes such as seeing a product advertisement, buying and selling products, and the services obtained after the process [11[5]]. The link between brand experience and customer engagement is that the better the brand experience obtained by a consumer, the stronger the customer engagement.

Creating a customer engagement and brand experience requires the same foundation: a sense of trust or brand trust. Brand trust is a feeling that arises because of the interaction between consumers and a brand, so it releases a view of the advantages of the brand [12]. The existence of this brand trust has a positive impact on companies and consumers. Namely, consumers will be more confident in having a good relationship with a company product, encouraging the realization of consumer expectations. If these expectations are realized, it provides a positive experience for consumers.

The Skintific company managed to get more than 29 billion in revenue within 2 weeks because the Skintific company carried out various strategies such as serving consumers more personally, describing product functions thoroughly, and offering a bundle; these various strategies were carried out to increase sales and consumer loyalty [1]–[4] [34]. The Scientific company is considered capable of creating and expanding a sense of consumer loyalty through a tangible

manifestation of the quality of the products issued so that not only a sense of loyalty arises but a sense of trust arises in consumers, but the company must continue to make innovations to attract new consumers and maintain a sense of loyalty of old consumers. Research conducted by [22] shows that consumer loyalty is not only a side aspect of the company but is one of the main aspects of the sustainability of a business. According to [12] consumer loyalty is a repeated purchasing activity carried out by consumers without coercion or internal or external influences. Therefore, consumer loyalty is essential to support a business's success and increase revenue growth.

In today's society, there is a lifestyle change, and people, especially women, are starting to pay more attention to the health and hygiene of their faces by using various unique facial products known as skincare products. Skincare is not just an additional product; it has become used in people's daily lives. Skincare companies in Indonesia grew by 29.6% in 2022 compared to 2021. One of the skincare product brands favored by Indonesians is Skintific from Canada.

2. LITERATURE RIVIEW

2.1. Customer Engagement

Koot [22] explains that customer engagement is a stage between consumers and companies, which is related to establishing a good relationship between the company and consumers. Kumar & Kumar, [19] explain that customer engagement is an effort made by companies to form and strengthen relationships between consumers and companies through various existing ways. Customer engagement is an assessment given by consumers of a product, and the evaluation is based on the consumers' purchase or direct interaction with the product [11]. Koot developed customer engagement parameters, namely (1) enthusiasm, (2) attention, (3) absorption, (4) interaction and (5) identification [22].

2.2. Brand Experience

Brand experience is a reaction caused by consumer feelings arising from a brand [2]. Brand experience is a view of consumers when making relationships with certain brands; these relationships, such as seeing advertisements offered and feeling the services [8] are obtained from these brands. Brand experience is an internal and individual experience and the response that arises from consumers when they have a sense of interest in a brand [7]. This variable will be measured based on the approach developed by Brakus et al.; there are four dimensions in sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual brand experience [27].

2.3. Brand Trust

Brand trust is a view from consumers about the advantages of a product obtained from experience, and the product has succeeded in providing satisfaction [[16]19]. Brand trust is the ability to be trusted by consumers to a company, which is generated by consumers' feelings of confidence in the company [8]. Song et al.,] explain brand trust is an optimistic view given by consumers of a product, where this positive view encourages consumers to repurchase a brand in the long term [32]. Delgado [4] [24] developed brand trust parameters, namely Achieving Results, Acting With Integrity, and Demonstrating Concern [22].

2.4. Loyalty

Loyalty is a commitment from customers to a brand, store, and even supplier, shown by a positive attitude [27]. Loyalty is a commitment to repeatedly buy a product or service and is not affected by a change that encourages customers to move to another [30]. Loyalty is an attitude of commitment where consumers consistently or continue to make repeated purchases of a product or service even though there are changes in the future [22]. Kotler [21] developed the loyalty construct, namely (1) Consumers make many purchases and are loyal in the long term, (2) Consumers do cross-selling or add-on selling, (3) Consumers are not influenced by price, (4) Consumers provide positive reviews, and (5) Consumers introduce goods or services to the company.

2.5. Hypothesis and Model Development

2.5.1. Customer engagement affects consumer loyalty

Companies that successfully create relationships or involve consumers in a product can get several positive benefits for the company itself. The relationship between consumers and the company can be called customer engagement. Customer engagement is a connection between consumers and a company and is formed from experiences consumers gain. This is also supported by research conducted by Larson [23] which found that customer engagement positively influences consumer loyalty.

2.5.2. Brand experience affects consumer loyalty

The experience gained by a consumer when interacting with a product plays a vital role in creating and building an attitude of loyalty. Without the experience consumers gain, making this loyalty won't be easy. Brand experience is an internal experience gained by each individual; this experience will give rise to a response from within the consumer [6]. According to the opinion, Brand experience is one of the main factors in increasing loyalty [21]. In addition, based on the results of research conducted by [9]-[21]-[23] provide results that show that brand experience influences consumer loyalty.

2.5.3. Brand trust mediates customer engagement on consumer loyalty

A relationship must be based on a sense of trust; therefore, if a consumer already trusts a product or brand trust, it can make it easier for companies to build a relationship or customer engagement. Ahmed et al. [2] explained that brand trust is a company's ability to be trusted by consumers. A consumer with good customer engagement and brand trust in a product will indirectly show loyalty to that product. Based on [20] it is found that the existence of consumer trust will indirectly build brand loyalty.

2.5.4. Brand trust mediates brand experience on consumer loyalty

When consumers have gained experience with a product, other factors are still needed to maintain consumer loyalty attitudes; one of the different factors is trust or brand trust. Brand Trust is an essential factor between brand experience and consumer loyalty because consumers will not understand loyalty or desire to make repeat purchases without a sense of trust. With this, brand trust also gives consumers more confidence about a product that will provide a positive experience, and consumers will not feel in vain or loyal to the product. This is supported by research by Khan et al. [38] which shows that trust can mediate brand experience on consumer loyalty.

Hypothesis Statement
Ha1: Customer engagement affects customer loyalty.
Ha2: Brand experience affects consumer loyalty.
Ha3: Brand trust mediates customer engagement on consumer loyalty.
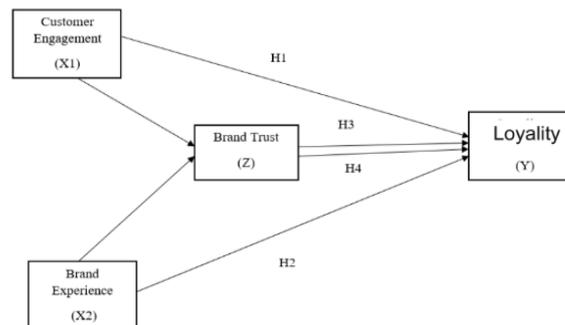Ha4: Brand trust mediates brand experience on consumer loyalty.

Figure 1 Research Model

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a quantitative method where the data to be processed and analyzed will be in the form of numbers the author collected. According to Creswell [13], quantitative research consists of a set of numbers that have a role as data and will be processed for analysis, and a quantitative approach is used if you want to know an influence on a particular subject. This study uses a type of casual research. This type of research aims to calculate a relationship between variables or analyze the effect between one variable and another [28].

The population in this study are consumers of Scientific skincare products, while the sample is the part that enters and matches the criteria or specifications of a population. This study uses purposive sampling, focusing on consumers who make repeated purchases of 3x and at least 3 months of use. This study uses two types of data: primary and secondary. The author collected Primary data using various data collection techniques [13]. Primary data in this study is a collection of answers to questionnaires that the author has distributed. Secondary data in this study are from previous research, journals, and books.

The testing technique carried out in this study uses the Smart Partial Least Square (PLS) application with calculations using Partial Least Square SEM (PLS SEM). Koot [22] developed customer engagement parameters, namely (1) enthusiasm, (2) attention, (3) absorption, (4) interaction and (5) identification. Brand Experience uses parameters

developed by Brakus et al. (2009); there are four dimensions: sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual brand experience. Brand Trust uses parameters from Delgado's (2017) developed brand trust parameters: Achieving Results, Acting With Integrity, and Demonstrating Concern. Brand Loyalty uses constructs developed by Kotler [27]

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 Respondent Characteristic

Ages Characteristics			
No	Age	Total	Percentage
1	< 17 Years	2	1%
2	17 Years – 30 Years	188	93,5%
3	>30 Years	11	5,5%

Characteristics by Employment			
No	Employement	Total	Percentage
4	Student	2	1%
5	Campus Student	123	61,2%
6	Employee	63	31,3%
7	Entrepreneurs	13	6,5%

Characteristics based on Income (Mounthly)			
No	Income	Total	Percentage
8	< Rp 599.999	3	1,5%
9	<Rp 600.000 – Rp 1.599.999	24	11,9%
10	Rp 1.600.000 – Rp 2.999.999	82	40,8%
11	>Rp 3.000.000	92	45,8%
	Total	201	100%

The data above shows that the characteristics of the respondents are mostly 17-30 years old, working as employees and students, with an income of IDR 1,600,000 - IDR 2,999,999.

4.2. Validity and Reliability Test

All tests have passed all validity and reliability tests. The reliability test uses outer loading, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test, and cross-loading. Removal of constructs: all constructs have met the outer loading requirement of more than 0.7. Two Customer Engagement variables do not pass out of eleven constructs. Brand Experience: all constructs have passed the test. Brand Trust is one of six constructs that are removed. Loyalty is one construct that does not pass the test. The AVE results show that all have exceeded the rule of thumb. This study uses a rule of thumb of more than 0.5. The cross-loading value obtained is> 0.7, so it can be said that all variable measurement items in this study meet the requirements and correlate higher than the correlation with other variables.

4.3. Inner Model

Tests are carried out to measure the level of variation between the independent variable and the dependent variable by looking at the R2 value.

Table 2 R² Value

Variabel	R Square	Percent
Brand Trust	0,154	15,4%
Loyality	0,561	56,1%

Brand trust is influenced by other variables in this study by only 15.4%, while 84.6% is influenced by other variables outside this study. The consumer loyalty variable is influenced by other variables in this study by 56.1%, while 43.9% is influenced by other variables outside this study.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

This research uses SmartPLS 3.0 through the bootstrapping procedure. P-value is one of the prerequisites. The requirements in this test are if the P-value $\leq$ 0.05 (α = 5%), then H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted, while if the P-value $\geq$ 0.05 (α = 5%), then H0 is accepted and Ha is rejected
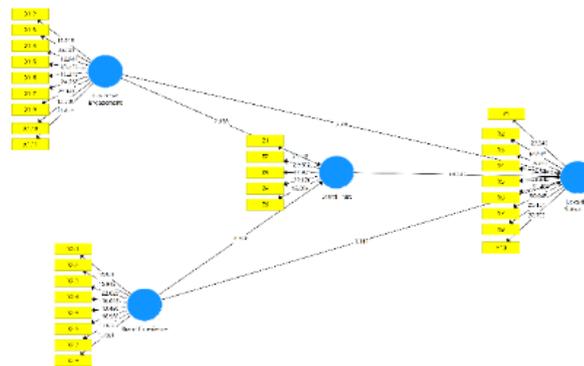

Figure 1 Boostrapping Model

Table 3 Path Coefficient (Direct Effect)

	Path Coefficients	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Value
X1> Y	0,263	3,111	0,002
X2 -> Y	-0,092	1,159	0,248

4.4.1. Hypothesis Test 1

The results of testing hypothesis 1 show that customer engagement affects consumer loyalty, as seen from the P-value of 0.002 $\leq$ 0.05. Based on path coefficients worth 0.263. This shows that the higher or lower the customer engagement, the higher or lower the level of consumer loyalty to Scientific products.

4.4.2. Hypothesis Test 2

The results of testing hypothesis 2 based on the path coefficient show that brand experience does not affect consumer loyalty, as seen from the P-value of 0.248 $\geq$ 0.05. In addition, judging from the path coefficient of -0.092, the presence or absence of brand experience in a person does not affect the sense of consumer loyalty to use Scientific products.

Table 4 Indirect Effect

	Path Coefficient	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Value
X1 -> Z -> Y	0,093	4,362	0,000
X2 -> Z -> Y	0,191	2,126	0,035

4.4.3. Hypothesis Test 3

The resulting P-value is $0.000 \leqslant 0.05$, so H0 is rejected, and Ha is accepted. However, there are differences in looking at the results from the direct effect to the indirect impact where the value decreases but remains significant, so H0 is rejected, and Ha is accepted with partial mediation. The results of testing hypothesis 3 based on the specific indirect effect results show that brand trust mediates customer engagement on customer loyalty. However, because the results of the direct effect to the indirect effect do not change or remain significant, brand trust only partially mediates customer engagement with customer loyalty. In contrast, other factors can mediate between customer engagement and loyalty.

4.4.4. Hypothesis Test 4

The resulting P-value is $0.035 \geqslant 0.05$, so H0 is accepted, and Ha is rejected. By looking at the results from the direct effect to the indirect impact, where the value decreases and remains insignificant, H0 is accepted, and Ha is rejected with no mediation. The results of testing hypothesis 4 based on the specific indirect effect show that trust does not mediate brand experience on consumer loyalty. So, it can be said that high or low brand trust cannot provide a brand experience for consumer loyalty.

Table 5 Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

No	Hipotesis	Hasil
1	H1	Supported
2	H2	Not Supported
3	H3	Supported
4	H4	Not Supported

4.5. Discussion

4.5.1. Customer engagement affects consumer loyalty

Based on the results of research that has been tested in PLS, it can be seen that customer engagement affects consumer loyalty as seen from the P-Value of $0.002 \leqslant 0.05$ and also seen from the results of path coefficients of 0.263 where these results indicate that high and low customer engagement also affects the high and low sense of consumer loyalty. Customer engagement is a relationship or relationship created by a company to create a sense of attachment in prospective consumers and maintain a sense of loyalty of old consumers to the company's products. One of the factors a company can survive for a long time is also due to customer engagement between consumers and a company. These results are in line with the results of research [19] that show that customer engagement affects consumer loyalty.

4.5.2. Brand experience has no effect on consumer loyalty

Based on the results of research that has been tested in PLS, it can be seen that brand experience does not affect consumer loyalty, as seen from the P-Value of $0.248 \geqslant 0.05$ and also seen from the results of path coefficients of -0.092 where these results indicate that the presence or absence of brand experience does not affect the sense of loyalty in consumers. This aligns with research conducted by Akoglu and Özbek [8]. Brand experience is a process of experience consumers gain from seeing an advertisement to buying and selling a product. This brand experience can be obtained in terms of products and services provided by a company. Brand experience does not affect brand loyalty but is not in line with research conducted by [29] which concluded that brand experience and brand image influence brand loyalty.

4.5.3. Brand trust mediates customer engagement on consumer loyalty

Based on the research results that have been tested in PLS, it can be seen that brand trust mediates customer engagement on consumer loyalty, as seen from the P-value of $0.000 \leqslant 0.05$. However, because the P-value value from the direct effect to the indirect effect has decreased but is still significant where in the direct effect, the P-value value gets a value of 0.002 while in the indirect effect, it gets a value of 0.000, it is concluded that brand trust partially mediates customer engagement on consumer loyalty. So, other variables can mediate between customer engagement and customer

loyalty. This study's results align with research conducted by Li [23] that shows that brand trust can mediate brand experience and brand image variables on brand loyalty.

4.5.4. Brand trust does not mediate brand experience on consumer loyalty

Based on the research results that have been tested in PLS, it can be seen that brand trust does not mediate brand experience on consumer loyalty, as seen from the P-value of $0.035 \leqslant 0.05$. The P-value value from direct effect to indirect effect has decreased, whereas, in the direct impact, the P-value value gets a value of 0.248 and is insignificant. In contrast, the indirect implications receive a value of 0.035 and remain insignificant. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by [7] where brand experience has no effect on brand loyalty through brand trust as its mediation but is not in line with research by Ahmed et al. [3] that brand trust can mediate brand experience and brand image variables on brand loyalty and a study conducted by [7] where brand trust has an important role in mediating between brand experience and brand loyalty.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results that have been explained, it can be seen that this research was conducted to know how customer engagement affects consumer loyalty, brand experience affects consumer loyalty, brand trust can mediate between customer engagement and consumer loyalty, and brand trust can mediate between brand experience and consumer loyalty. The author collects and obtains research data by distributing g-forms online, and then the results of the g-form answers are collected and processed using SmartPLS 3.0; the data is processed to go through the outer model, inner model, and hypothesis testing. Based on the processed data, the following results are obtained:
1. Customer engagement affects customer loyalty.
2. Brand experience has no effect on consumer loyalty.
3. Brand trust can mediate between customer engagement and consumer loyalty.
4. Brand trust cannot mediate between brand experience and consumer loyalty.

5.1. Suggestions and Limitation

Based on the results of research and data processing, it can be seen that the customer engagement that gets the lowest score is a statement containing "I feel satisfied with Scientific products" of 3.32. Companies can consider this to try to create and provide a sense of satisfaction to consumers in various ways, such as improving or adding to the formula used in skincare products that are sold so that the benefits are increasingly felt by users (product innovation) or providing an intensive or award such as promos or discounts to loyal consumers so that this program can add a sense of consumer loyalty and satisfaction.

The brand trust variable that gets the lowest score is "Skintific products always give positive results for me," with an average of 3.35. This means that Skintific companies must always strive to provide good results to their consumers so that consumers do not switch to other skincare products. In addition, companies can do this by providing precise and complete education or information about the benefits and functions of each product sold so that consumers do not choose the wrong product.

This research has limitations on data coverage that is still not broad enough. Besides that, it is necessary to expand the research area. That way, the research can get a wider picture. Future research can further discuss personality traits and online marketing.

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