# The Role Of Social Media Influencers In Shaping Customer Brand Engagement And Brand Perception

**Lelasari Sijabat [1], Danny I. Rantung [2], Deske W. Mandagi[3]**
*Magister Manajemen Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis,*
*Universitas Klabat, Manado, Indonesia*

**A R T I C L E   I N F O**

**A B S T R A C T**

*In today's digital age, social media has emerged as a powerful tool that may reach a larger group. In order to reach current and potential customers, it is essential to employ the appropriate medium when marketing a product. The company's message will be effectively communicated to current and potential clients using social media influencers (SMI). The three primary questions underlying the issues raised are the focus of this investigation. (1) What is the effect of SMI on customer brand engagement (CBE) and customer brand perception (CBP)? (2) What is the effect of CBE on CBP? (3) Does CBE mediate the relationship between SMI and CBP? Setting the context of exploration of the Big Cola brand, a survey was conducted on the customer of Big Cola in West Java, Indonesia. The quantitative data were collected from 154 respondents from three regions: Bekasi, Bogor, and Depok, using purposive sampling technique, Structural equation modeling (SEM) utilizing SPSS and SmartPLS statistical software were then performed to analyze the data. The result revealed that SMI positively and significantly impacted CBE and CBP. Furthermore, CBE significantly and positively influences brand perception. Finally, CBE is found to be a significant mediator between SMI and brand CBP. Utilizing social media influencers in this promotion brand will enhance brand perception and consumer engagement, and as customer engagement rises, so will brand perception. These findings can help businesses make informed decisions on choosing the best promotional media.*

## INTRODUCTION

The existence and development of social media are continuously revolutionizing people's lives. According to Sheth (2018), technology is pervasive and impacts society at every rapid stage of social change. For instance, television used to be the most innovative technological advancement decades ago, revolutionizing society in unimaginable ways. Nowadays, television technology, although still used, are considered obsolete. Nowadays, the landscape of technology is switched to the digital and internet era. In today's online environment, face-to-face interactions no longer require a shared geographic space but are generated in a digital environment. The rise of social media has allowed billions of people to

share their content, influencing and being influenced by others (Remco & Helms, 2014). This virtual environment provides a fresh look at current theories of social influence.

In the business context, the rise of social media has opened up new channels for brands to engage with consumers more direct and organically. Businesses must recognize that to stand out in the fast-changing digital freedom, proper planning and social media strategy is necessary (Mandagi, 2023; Siddik et al., 2022). If marketing communication can be done in natural or original ways of consumer interaction in the online platform, the companies can take the lead in social media marketing (Saravanakumar & Suganthalaksmi, 2012).

As businesses nowadays face pressure in controlling brand conversation online, SMI plays a critical role in conveying the message and shaping the online conversation topic. SMI can be viewed as micro-celebrities with large social media followings that can potentially engage consumers and drive customer-brand relationships across multiple product categories (Jin et al., 2019; Saima & Khan, 2020). SMI is considered to be an important group of social media leaders whose online authority and credibility are instructive (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). SMI has established a relationship of trust with consumers, who turn to create content for valuable information and advice (Delbaere et al., 2020). The firm may not have a direct voice on social media right now and have a strong need to jump into the conversation and catch up (Booth & Matic, 2019). Hence, SMI serves as a dynamic third party, spreading the brand message to a global audience. Consumers who have a favourable attitude toward social media credibility, built by the SMI, are drawn to social media advertising (Gautan, 2021).

SMI has recently emerged in academic and professional discussions. Glucksman (2017) argued that if your brand is not using SMI marketing to increase engagement with your target audience, it may be time to evaluate your advertising strategy. SMI has been recognized as a significant determinant of customer behaviour and effective branding strategy (e.g., Jin et al., 2019; Andreani et al., 2021; Nurhandayani, 2019; Jun & Yi, 2020; Lim et al., 2017; Masuda et al., 2022). For instance, SMI is a found to be a significant determinant of purchase intention (Andreani et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2017; Masuda et al., 2022; Nurhandayani, 2019; Saima; Khan, 2020; Waworuntu et al., 2023). Social media influencers are one of the most widely used promotional tools today to influence consumer brand awareness (Andreani et al., 2021). Recent studies also documented the significant role of SMI in shaping brand image (Hermanda et al., 2019; Nurhandayani, 2019; Waworuntu et al., 2022); brand equity (Jun & Yi, 2020).

The present study focuses on the Big Cola brand as the context of exploration. The challenge faced by Big Cola is to determine whether using social media influencers as marketing media has an impact on increasing customer engagement and brand perception (Jaitly & Gautam, 2021). The company is expected to utilize the power of SMI as an effective branding strategy in accelerating customer engagement and brand perception. By doing so, it aims to retain existing customers and convince new consumers by using social media influencers to convey better-targeted information.

Despite the mounting interest of researchers and practitioners in SMI, empirical work integrating SMI, CBE, and CBP is still scarce and needs to be explored. Therefore, the present study aims to analyze whether SMI is the independent variable of CBE and CBP is the dependent variable. In particular, the problem formulation is as follows (1) What is the effect of SMI on CBE? (2) What is the effect of SMI on CBP? (3) What is the effect of SMI on CBP? (4) Does CBE mediate the effect of SMI on CBP?

**LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

*Effectiveness of Social Media Influencer*

SMI has become an essential aspect of marketing strategies due to the exponential growth of social media marketing popularity over the past several years. SMI refers to a new breed of independent third-party endorsers that utilize blogs, tweets, and other social media to influence audience opinions (Freberg et al., 2011). According to Saima and Khan (2020), SMI is a new emerging digital marketing tool that shapes consumer perceptions of brands and products through photos, videos, and other updates on social media platforms are known as social media influencers. Similarly, Shan et al. (2019) also recognize the power of SMI as an effective branding strategy for endorsing the product to consumers.

SMI is growing in popularity these days since it is an updated kind of celebrity endorsement that is also reasonably priced. Choosing the right influencers is critical for brand consistency (Hanaysha, 2022). According to Guruge (2018), celebrity-related endorsements, such as source credibility and attractiveness models, can be tailored to identify characteristics associated with social influencers. Similarly, the study by Balaban & Racz (2020) indicates that marketers and brand owners prefer to use social media influencer ads instead of or in addition to promoting their social media brand accounts. The findings also confirmed that brand trust mediates the relationship between two social media marketing attributes (interactivity and awareness) and consumer purchasing decisions.

Previous studies have highlighted the critical role of SMI in brand and branding activities. For example, the research of Liu (2021) demonstrated that the parasocial dimensional relationship between SMI and followers attracts followers' attention to information about the product. The study then concluded that influencers in social media enrich customer engagement. Similarly, the study of Booth & Matic (2011) revealed that SMI is one of the comprehensive strategies to optimize brand awareness. Furthermore, SMI has been recognized as a significant determinant of important brand variables such as brand awareness (Andreani et al., 2021), brand image (Hermanda et al., 2019; Nurhandayani, 2019; Waworuntu et al., 2022), and brand equity (Jun & Yi, 2020).

*Customer Brand Engagement*

The concept of consumer brand engagement (CBE) reflects the nature of consumers' specific interactive brand relationships compared to traditional concepts involving participation (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Research by Argyris et al. (2020) explain how influencers use visual matching to build strong bonds with their followers to represent a shared interest in a specific field. This close affinity catalyzes the positive effects of visual matching on brand engagement for followers. Furthermore, the study of Zhang et al. (2017) provides empirical results showing that customer engagement has a direct and positive impact on customer retention, as well as an indirect impact through customer acquisition. Meanwhile, Hudson et al. (2014) found that social media use was positively correlated with the quality of brand relationships and that the effect was more pronounced as anthropomorphism was perceived to be higher (the extent to which consumers associate human characteristics with the brand). Consequently, this is reasonable for researchers to expect that SMI can develop customer

engagement with a particular brand. That is, when SMI engages with the Big Cola brand, the more likely for the customer to establish engagement with the brand. A hypothesis is therefore put forth as follows:

**H₁**: SMI positively influences customer brand engagement (CBE).

*Customer Brand Perception*

Brand perception refers to the sum of consumers' sentiments, experiences, and opinions about a good or service combined to form their brand perception (Wänke et al., 2007). It represents the totality of brand multi-dimensionality described holistically and perceptually (Mandagi et al., 2021). Because consumers might perceive parallels between themselves and the influencers through social media, social media users implicitly see social media influencers as role models in terms of lifestyle (Choi & Rifon, 2012).

Previous studies documented the link between SMI and brand perception. According to the study of Kim & Ko (2012), the meaning of influencer-generated content, as well as the influencer's credibility, attractiveness, and similarity to followers, have a positive impact on followers' trust in the influencer's branded posts, which shapes their perception. A study by Zafar and Rafique (2012) reported results that support the hypothesis that celebrity endorsements influence customer perceptions. Based on this empirical evidence, it is expected that perceptions of social media influencers may influence customer perceptions of Big Cola brands. Therefore, the following hypotheses are developed:

**H₂**: SMI positively influences customer brand perception (CBP).

The interplay between customer brand engagement and brand perception has been well-documented in the marketing literature. Customer shapes their perception of a particular brand based on their previous brand encounter or engagement (Mandagi et al., 2021). Therefore, it can be conjectured that the more favorable customer brand engagement, the higher their tendency to have a positive brand perception, leading to the following hypothesis:

**H₃**: CBE positively influences customer brand perception (CBP).

H1 states that SMI directly influences CBE. H2 states that brand SMI directly affects CBP. Therefore, it is reasonable to predict that CBE mediates the SMI-CBP relationship. Hence, the following hypothesis was introduced:

**H₄**: CBE mediates the relationship between SMI and CBP

Taken together, the relationship among variables in this study and the corresponding hypotheses is summarized in Figure 1.
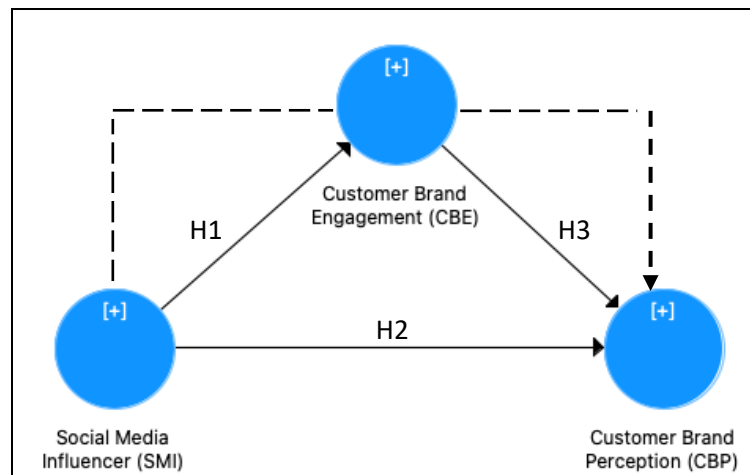
**Figure 1. Research Framework**

*Source: Authors' elaboration*

## RESEARCH METHOD

*Research Design*

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, a descriptive quantitative design was chosen to measure the hypotheses and answer the research questions. Leavy (2017) explains that these approaches depend upon deductive designs to refute or build evidence in favor of specific theories and hypotheses. Meanwhile, Kaur et al. (2018) state that a descriptive study aims at explaining the relationship between variables in a sample or population. Furthermore, a quantitative survey was conducted to obtain the respondents' primary data, and structural equation modelling (SEM) was used in the data analysis.

*Sample and Sampling Technique*

The samples in this study consists of customers of Big Cola in province of West Java. This area was chosen because of its culinary tourism which is widely known as Sundanese Kitchen. The development of the food and beverage industry at this time must have a strong strategy to position beverage product brands, especially soft drinks.

The purposive sampling technique was chosen in this study to determine the sample, which refers to research. According to Etikan (2016), this sampling technique refers to a nonprobability sampling used by researchers to select a sample of persons or units from a population who meet certain criteria. The sample of this study comprised domestic customers of Big cola who meet the following criteria: (1) familiar with Big Cola products and have consumed this drink at least once. (2) followed any influencers on the social media platforms they used and were able to identify one or two of their favorite social media influencers whom they followed.

The respondents were recruited from all regions in West Java, namely Bekasi, Bogor, and Depok. Only those aged 15 years and over who have consumed soft drinks will be included.

*Data and Instrumentation*

This research used a seven-point Likert Scale questionnaire as a measuring tool for all variables. The scale ranges from 1, which means strongly disagree, to 7 means strongly agree. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part pertained to respondents' demographic information, such as age, gender, occupation, and living area. The second part covers all three variables being measured with a total of 24 item indicators.

The measure of SMI effectiveness and customer engagement was adapted from (Chen et al., 2021). SMI was measured by seven items, while CBE has eight items. Variable CBP was adapted from Hutter et al. (2020) and consisted of 9 items of measurements. A pilot study was conducted to assess the face validity of the statements for the measurement items (Hair et al., 2014). The pilot study involved 20 sample respondents, satisfying the same criteria as the main sample. Questions items were clarified and revised based on the respondent's feedback in the pilot study.

*Data Collection Procedure*

After the pre-test study, the questionnaire was then re-checked for the validity and reliability of the chosen variable indicators. Then the questionnaire is distributed to the main respondents online via Google form. In the Google form, the researcher indicated the goals and objectives of disseminating the questionnaire. The responses were then organized in the spreadsheet and exported to SPSS and smart PLS for further analysis.

*Data Analysis*

The first step in the data analysis is evaluating respondents' demographic profiles consisting of age, gender, and area. Subsequently, a descriptive statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (i.e., mean, max, standard deviation, etc.) to ensure that the data were inputted correctly and to examine the normal distribution of the data.

Furthermore, the structural equation modelling was done using SmartPLS (SEM). This system of linear equations unifies several components into a single model (Hair et al., 2014). SEM has an advantage over conventional multivariate approaches in that it may concurrently test and estimate correlations between several complex constructs (latent variables) in the measurement model (Fornell, 1982).

Multiple steps of data analysis using the SEM technique were completed. Test the concept in the study's convergent and discriminant validity first. If all of the variable's indicators have loading factors greater than or equal to 0.7, convergent validity is fulfilled (Hair et al., 2014). Utilizing cross-loading and the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, the discriminant validity test was run. When the square root of the AVE (average variance extracted), which measures discriminant validity, is larger than the correlation between various variables, the Fornell-Larcker criterion is satisfied. Furthermore, if the correlation between the variables and their indicators is greater than the correlation between these variables and the indicators of other variables, then the cross-loading criterion for discriminant validity are satisfied.

The reliability test is conducted as the following step and involves evaluating the values of Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), and AVE (Average Variance Extracted). If a variable's CA, CR, and AVE values are all greater than 0.7, it is considered dependable. The model is structurally tested once all indicators of validity and reliability have been satisfied. By examining the significance of the path coefficients with the help of the

Bootstrapping feature of the SmartPLS statistical program, one may test a structural model or test a hypothesis. If the route coefficient is statistically significant, the link between the model's variables is significant (Hair et al., 2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Respondent Demographics*

Data in table 1 shows that there were 154 respondents, 44 of whom were men (28.6%) and 110 women (71.4%). The age group with the highest percentage of respondents was 22-29 years, with 99 (64.3%), followed by 15-21 years, with 48 (31.2%), 30-40 years, with 6 (3.9%), and beyond 40 years, with just 1 (0.6%). Fifty-four respondents (35.1%) who resided in Bekasi comprised most of the respondents' domicile-based composition, followed by 50 respondents (32.1%), each from Depok and Bogor. The study's respondents had to be familiar with Big Cola products and have purchased and consumed them at least once. The respondents chosen must also be social media users who follow several musicians who advertise big cola goods. It is clear from the demographics of the respondents that major cola customers are primarily women, with a maximum average age of 22–29 years.

**Table 1 Demographics Data of Respondent**

| Variable | Level | n | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 44 | 28.6 |
| | Female | 110 | 71.4 |
| Age | 15-21 | 48 | 31.2 |
| | 22-29 | 99 | 64.3 |
| | 30-40 | 6 | 3.9 |
| | Above 40 | 1 | 0.6 |
| Domicile | Bekasi | 54 | 35.1 |
| | Depok | 50 | 32.5 |
| | Bogor | 50 | 32.5 |
| Familiar with Big Cola | | 154 | 100 |
| Ever bought Big Cola | | 154 | 100 |
| Ever consumed Big Cola | | 154 | 100 |
| Active on social media | | 154 | 100 |
| Followed SMI | El Rumi | 50 | 32.5 |
| | Idgitaf | 29 | 18.8 |
| | Rebecca Clooper | 37 | 24 |
| | Rey Mbayang | 38 | 24.7 |

*Descriptive statistics*

Table 2 shows that variable SMI has a range of values from 1 to 7, with a mean value of 5.17 and a standard deviation of 0.96. This result implies that the standard deviation is low, and the values are distributed evenly since the mean value is higher than the standard deviation. Meanwhile, variable CBE has a minimum value of 1, a maximum value of 7, a mean value of 4.44, and a standard deviation of 1.61, meaning that the mean value is greater than the

standard deviation and that the values are distributed evenly. Lastly, variable CBP ranges from 1 to 7, with the minimum value being one and the maximum being 7. The mean value for this third variable is 4.87, with a standard deviation of 1.59, meaning that the mean value is greater than the standard deviation and that the values are distributed evenly.

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics**

|  | N | Min | Max | Mean | Std. Dev | Var |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SMI | 154 | 1 | 7 | 5.17 | 0.96 | 0.93 |
| CBE | 154 | 1 | 7 | 4.44 | 1.61 | 2.58 |
| CBP | 154 | 1 | 7 | 4.87 | 1.59 | 2.53 |

*Measurement Model*

A measurement model is first run before verifying the structural model or the hypothesis. The measurement model evaluation aims to ensure the validity and reliability of the third construct in this study. With the use of SmartPLS 3.2, the measurement model for this investigation was examined using the Partial Least Square (PLS) technique.

Most of the 24 initial indicators employed in this study have loading factor values above the recommended minimum cut value of 0.7. However, there are six indicators of variable SMI with a loading factor value of less than 0.6. (SMI1, SMI3, SMI4, SMI5, SMI7, SMI8, SMI9). Figure 2 and table 3 summarize the result of the measurement model after removing the indicator with factor loading less than the cut of value. The figure shows that all indicators for variables with loading factors more than 0.70, indicating a high standard of validity.
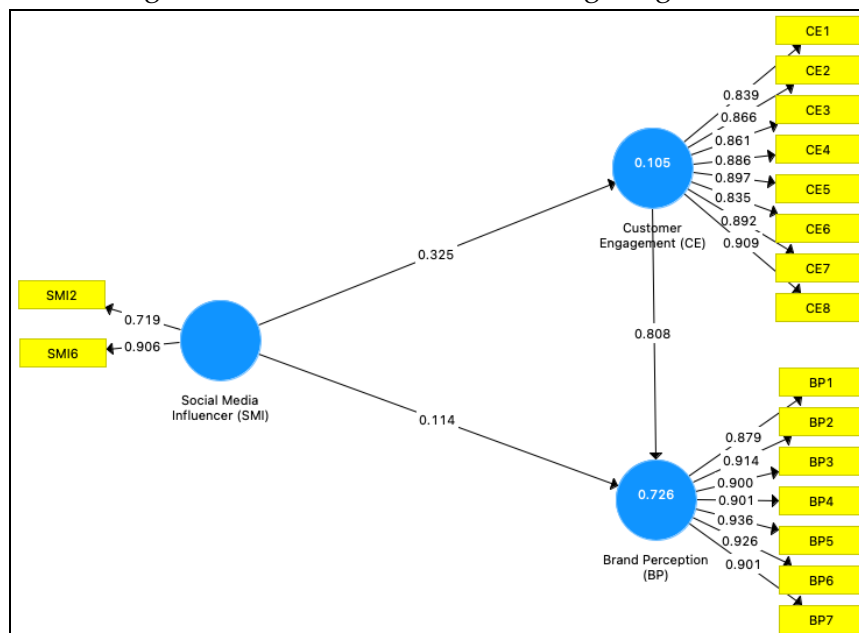


**Figure 2**

**Results of the Measurement Model Test**

*Source: SmartPLS output*

**Table 3. The value of the Loading Factor Measurement Model**

| Variabel | Indicator | Factor Loading |
|---|---|---|
| SMI | SMI2 | 0.719 |
| | SMI6 | 0.906 |
| CBE | CE1 | 0.839 |
| | CE2 | 0.866 |
| | CE3 | 0.861 |
| | CE4 | 0.886 |
| | CE5 | 0.897 |
| | CE6 | 0.835 |
| | CE7 | 0.892 |
| | CE8 | 0.909 |
| CBP | BP1 | 0.879 |
| | BP2 | 0.914 |
| | BP3 | 0.900 |
| | BP4 | 0.901 |
| | BP5 | 0.936 |
| | BP6 | 0.926 |
| | BP7 | 0.901 |

Furthermore, the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, cross-loading, and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio were examined during the discriminant validity testing for this study. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion validity test was performed by comparing the correlation between the model's variables and the square root value of each variable's AVE (Average Variance Extracted). The square root of the AVE must be greater than the correlation between the various variables for the variable discriminant validity to be satisfied. Table 4 below depicts the validity test used in this study based on the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. The correlations between the variables and the square root of the AVE are shown by the values listed in the table's diagonal.

**Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion**

| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| CBP | 0.908 | | |
| CBE | 0.845 | 0.874 | |
| SMI | 0.377 | 0.325 | 0.818 |

Based on the Fornell-Larcker Criterion test, it can be seen that AVE's square root is greater than all other variables. As a result, it can be concluded that all variables and

indicators utilized in this study meet the Fornell-Larcker Criteria for good discriminating validity.

A second discriminant validity test Was performed to detect any cross-loading of each indicator. The cross-loading value depicts the relationship between a variable and its indicators. The cross-loading value in the outer model is anticipated to be more than 0.7. Table 5 shows that the correlation between the variable and the indicator is larger than the correlation between the variable and the indicators of other variables. In that case, the discriminant validity is said to be good.

**Table 5. Cross-loading Test Results**

|  | CBP | CBE | SMI |
|---|---|---|---|
| BP1 | 0.879 | 0.699 | 0.315 |
| BP2 | 0.914 | 0.794 | 0.357 |
| BP3 | 0.900 | 0.768 | 0.348 |
| BP4 | 0.901 | 0.739 | 0.360 |
| BP5 | 0.936 | 0.799 | 0.343 |
| BP6 | 0.926 | 0.778 | 0.341 |
| BP7 | 0.901 | 0.789 | 0.329 |
| CE1 | 0.783 | 0.839 | 0.419 |
| CE2 | 0.651 | 0.866 | 0.179 |
| CE3 | 0.644 | 0.861 | 0.202 |
| CE4 | 0.788 | 0.886 | 0.285 |
| CE5 | 0.700 | 0.897 | 0.218 |
| CE6 | 0.737 | 0.835 | 0.262 |
| CE7 | 0.773 | 0.892 | 0.288 |
| CE8 | 0.788 | 0.909 | 0.359 |
| SMI2 | 0.211 | 0.211 | 0.719 |
| SMI6 | 0.378 | 0.307 | 0.906 |

The reliability of the construct in this study was evaluated using composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha (CA), and AVE. The variable is deemed reliable if the CR and CA are greater than 0.7 and AVE is greater than 0.5. The result in Table 6 indicates that each indicator has a value over the suggested minimum. It displays that the value of all indicators is beyond 0.7. Thus, it can be said that all of the study's construct have high reliability.

**Table 6. Variable Reliability Test**

|  | CA | Rho A | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CBP | 0.965 | 0.966 | 0.971 | 0.825 |
| CBE | 0.956 | 0.959 | 0.963 | 0.763 |
| SMI | 0.826 | 0.809 | 0.799 | 0.669 |

*Structural Model*

A measurement model is first run before verifying the structural model or the hypothesis. The measurement model evaluation aims to ensure the validity and reliability of

the third construct in this study. With the use of SmartPLS 3.2, the measurement model for this investigation was examined using the Partial Least Square (PLS) technique.

Testing the structural model comes next after measurement model testing has satisfied all validity and reliability indications. This phase aims to test each of the study's hypotheses. Examining the importance of the path coefficients with the PLS Boothstrapping feature of the statistical program SmartPLS, one can test a structural model or hypothesis. In Figure 3 and Table 7 below, the results of the structural model testing are displayed.
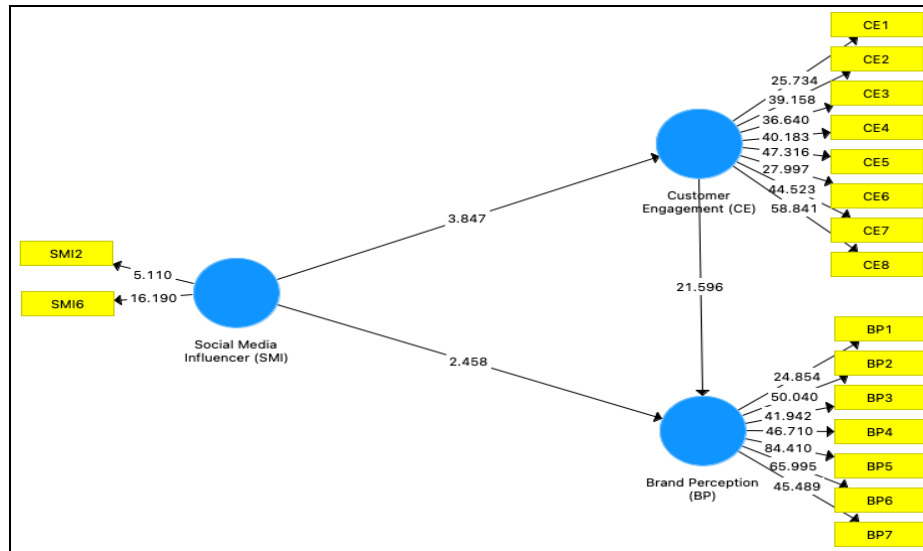


**Figure 3**

**Test Results of the PLS Bootstrapping Structural Model**

Source: SmartPLS Test Result

**Table 7. Structural Model Testing Results**

| Path Relation | Estimate | STDEV | P Values | Significant |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SMI -> CBE | 3.85 | 0.084 | 0.000 | Yes |
| SMI -> CBP | 2.46 | 0.047 | 0.014 | Yes |
| CBE -> CBP | 21.60 | 0.037 | 0.000 | Yes |

The result in table 7 confirms all of the study's hypotheses. Regarding the first hypothesis (H1), the findings demonstrate that SMI positively and significantly impacts CBE ($\beta$= 3.85, p-value 0.001). Results concerning the second hypothesis (H2) also show that SMI has a positive and significant impact on CBP ($\beta$= 2.46, p-value 0.001). The third hypothesis (H3) test results demonstrate that CBE has a positive and significant impact on CBP ($\beta$= 21,60, p-value 0.001). Finally, further evaluation of the mediating effect of CBE on the SMI-CBP relationship (H4) yielded a significant and positive result ($\beta$= 4.01, p-value 0.001), implying that CBE is a significant mediator of the SMI-CBP relationship.

## Table 8. Mediating Analysis Results

| Path Relation | Estimate | STDEV | P Values | Significant |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SMI -> CBE | 3.84 | 0.084 | 0.000 | |
| SMI -> CBE-> CBP | 4.01 | 0.065 | 0.000 | Yes |

The following step involves evaluating the model using the goodness of fit. The Q-Square number provides information on the goodness of fit evaluation. Similar to the coefficient of determination (R-Square) in regression analysis, the Q-Square value indicates how well the model fits the data. The greater the Q-Square number, the better (Sivaram & Ali, 2019).

Each goodness of fit indicator has certain requirements, like SRMR being less than 0.08, and NFI the more appropriate it will be, the nearer the value is to 1 (Hair et al., 2014). Based on the findings in table 9, it is concluded that the structural model has a high level of suitability with the data included in the research sample because the majority of the goodness of fit indicators are within the range of suggested values (SRMR = 0.062; d ULS= 0.59; d G = 0.56; NFI = 0.83), shows that the research sample's input data and the structural model are highly compatible.

## Table 9. Test the Goodness of Fit Model

| | Saturated Model | Estimated Model |
|---|---|---|
| SRMR | 0.062 | 0.062 |
| d_ULS | 0.596 | 0.596 |
| d_G | 0.562 | 0.562 |
| Chi-Square | 497.663 | 497.663 |
| NFI | 0.835 | 0.835 |

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study is to analyze the interplay between SMI, CBE, and CBP. In order to achieve this objective and to test numerous hypotheses, quantitative survey-based data was gathered using a questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 26 and SmartPLS version 3 software.

The result shows confirmed all the hypotheses. First, the analysis' findings demonstrate that SMI positively and significantly impacts customer engagement. This finding is corroborated by earlier research (e.g., Booth & Matic, 2011; Jun & Yi, 2020; Nurhandayani et al., 2020), which claimed that SMI is one of the significant determinants of brand engagement. In other words, consumer engagement behavior on social media demonstrates that customers have specific emotional preferences for the products, improving satisfaction and relationship with the product.

Second, prior research has shown that social media influencers have a favorable and significant impact on brand perception. According to previous research (Booth & Matic, 2011; Jin et al., 2019), customers' favorable perception of social media is influenced by the social media influencer.

Third, the analysis's findings indicate that consumer engagement has a favorable and significant impact on brand perception. This is consistent with the assertion made by Booth &

Matic, 2011 that consumer involvement is influenced by enjoyment and passion, whereas dominance alters the perception of a brand. The engagement of the customer and the brand's reputation also influence purchasing decisions favorably.

Finally, the result also confirms the prediction of H4 that consumer brand engagement mediates the link between social media influencers and brand perception. In this sense, when customer brand engagement is favorable, it will lead to a stronger impact of SMI on brand perception.

There are a few limitations that future researchers can address in addition to the research's positive and substantial contribution. To identify demographic disparities, select a sample from a different region. The information gathered during the questionnaire's data collection may not always reflect the respondents' genuine opinions. A significant number of ideas can still be produced, even if this study just uses a few theories from the listed factors.

The model examined in this study, which included social media influencers, consumer interaction, and brand perception is likely to be developed in further research by integrating more factors that may be related to the variables in this study. These empirical findings can also be used as a source of information for developing hypotheses about the connections between the same factors examined in this research

## Reference

Andreani, F., Gunawan, L., & Haryono, S. (2021). Social media influencer, brand awareness, and purchase decision among generation z in Surabaya. *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Kewirausahaan*, *23*(1), 18-26.

Argyris, Y. A., Wang, Z., Kim, Y., & Yin, Z. (2020). The effects of visual congruence on increasing consumers' brand engagement: An empirical investigation of influencer marketing on instagram using deep-learning algorithms for automatic image classification. *Computers in Human Behavior, 112*(1), 1-15. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243782019004

Balaban, D. C., & Racz, G. R. (2020). Scial mdia ifluencer avertising vrsus avertising on social media account of a brand, evicence from an perimental dsign. *Journal of Media Research, 13*(3(38)), 45-54. doi:DOI: 10.24193/jmr.38.3

Booth, N., & Matic, J. A. (2011). Mapping and leveraging influencers in social media to shape corporate brand perception. *Corporate Cumunications: An Internationl Journal, 16*(3), 184-191.

Chen, K.-J., Lin, J.-S., & Shan, Y. (2021). Influencer marketing in China: The roles of parasocial identification, consumer engagement, and inferences of manipulative intent. *J Consumer Behav, 20*(6), 1-13.

Delbaere, M., Michael, B., & Philips, B. J. (2020). Social Media Influencers: A route to Brand Engagement for Their Followers. *Psychology & Marketing*, 1-12.

Etikan, I. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5*(1), 1-4.

Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the socialmedia influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality.Public Relations Review,37(1), 90–92

Fornell, C., & Bookstein, F. L. (1982). Two structural equation models: LISREL and PLS applied to customer exit-voice theory. *Journal of Marketing Research, 19*(4), 440-452. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243782019004

Gautan, O. (2021). Impact of social media influencers on customer Impact of social media influencers on customer. *Int. J. Internet Marketing and Advertising, 15*, 220-242.

Glucksman, M. (2017). The Rise of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Lifestyle Branding: A Case Study of Lucie Fink. *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications, 8*, 77 - 87.

Guruge, M. (2018). Comparison Between Attributes Related to Celebrity Endorsement and Social Media Influencer Marketing: A Conceptual Review. *Sri Lanka Journal of Marketing, 4*(1), 17-37.

Hair Jr, J. F., Sarstedt, M., Hopkins, L., & Kuppelwieser, V. G. (2014). Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM): An emerging tool business research. *European Business Review, 26*(2), 106-121. doi:https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-10-2013-0128

Hanaysha, J. R. (2022). Impact of social media marketing features on consumer's purchase decision in the fast-food industry: Brand trust as a mediator. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insight, 2*(1), 1-10. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jjimei.2022.100102

Hermanda, A., Sumarwan, U., & Tinaprillia, N. (2019). The effect of social media influencer on brand image, self-concept, and purchase intention. *Journal of Consumer Sciences*, *4*(2), 76-89.

Hollebeek, L. D., Glynn, M. S., & Brodie, R. J. (2014). Consumer brand engagement in social media: Conceptualization, scale development and validation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 28*(1), 149-165. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2013.12.002

Hudson, S., Huang, L., Roth, M. S., & Madden, T. J. (2014). The influence of social media interactions on consumer-brand relationships: A three-country study of brand perceptions and marketing behaviors. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 1-48. doi:10.1016/j.ijresmar.2015.06.004

Hutter, K., Hautz, J., Denhardt, S., & Fuller, J. (2013). The impact of user interactions in social media on brand awareness and purchase intention: the case of MINI on Facebook. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 342-353.

Jaitly, R. C., & Gautam, O. (2021). Impact of social media influencers on customer engagement and brand perception. *Internationl Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising, 15*(2), 220-242.

Jin, S. V., Muqaddam, A., & Ryu, E. (2019). Instafamous and social media influencer marketing. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*.

Jimenez-Castillo, D., & Sanchez-Fernandez, R. (2019). The Role of Digital Influencers in Brand Recommendation: Examining Their Impact on Engagement, Expected Value and Purchase Intention. *International Journal of Information Management*, 366-376.

Jun, S., & Yi, J. (2020). What makes followers loyal? The role of influencer interactivity in building influencer brand equity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*.

Kaur, P., Stoltzfus, J., & Yellapu, V. (2018). Descriptive statistics. *Int J Acad Med, 4*(1), 60-63.

Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business Research, 65*(1), 1480-1486. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.10.014

Larkin, Y. (2013). Brand perception, cash flow stability, and financial policy. *Journal of Financial Economic*, 1-22. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1710367

Leavy, P. (2017). *Quantitative, qualitative, mixed method, art-based, and community-based participatory research approach.* London: The Guilford Press.

Lim, X. J., Radzol, A. M., Cheah, J., & Wong, M. W. (2017). The impact of social media influencers on purchase intention and the mediation effect of customer attitude. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, *7*(2), 19-36.

Liu, S. (2021). The impact of influencer marketing on brand engagement: a conceptual framework. *Advance in social science, education and humanities research, 615*(4), 2219-2224.

Mandagi, D. W. (2023). Pemasaran Media Sosial, Gestalt Merek Dan Loyalitas Pelangan: Studi Empiris Pada Tomohon International Flower Festival. *Manajemen Dewantara*, *7*(1), 32-45.

Mandagi, D. W., Centeno, D. D., & Indrajit (2021). Brand gestalt scale development and validation: A takeoff from tourism destination branding. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *19*, 100539.

Masuda, H., Han, S. H., & Lee, J. (2022). Impacts of influencer attributes on purchase intentions in social media influencer marketing: Mediating roles of characterizations. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *174*, 121246.

Nurhandayani, A., Syarief, R., & Najib, M. (2019). The impact of social media influencer and brand images to purchase intention. *Jurnal Aplikasi Manajemen*, *17*(4), 650-661.

Remco, S., & Helms, R. (2014). Analyzing Social Media Influence Through Social Media, A Structured Literature Review . *Proceedings of the 7th IADIS International Conference on Information Systems*.

Saima, & Khan, A. M. (2020). Effect of social media influencer marketing on consumers' purchase intention and the mediating role of credibility. *Promotion Management*, 1-26. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2020.1851847

Saravanakumar, M., & Suganthalaksmi, T. (2012). Social Media Marketing. *Life Since Journal*, 4444-4451.

Siddik, A. S., Mandagi, D. W., & Lelengboto, A. L. (2022). Pemasaran Sosial Media Dan Gestalt Merek Pada Perusahaan Indoor Theme Park. *SEIKO: Journal of Management & Business*, *4*(3), 462-479.

Shan, Y., Chen, K.-J., & Lin, J. S. (2019). When Social Media Influencers Endorse Brand: The Effect of Self-Influencer Congruence, Parasocial Identification, and Perceived Endorser Motive. *International Journal of Advertising*, 1-21.

Sheth, J. N. (2018). How Social Media Will Impact Marketing Media. *Social Media Marketing*, 3-18.

Sivaram, M. H., & Ali, H. (2019). Building purchase and purchase decision: Analysis of brand awareness and brand loyalty (case study of private label products at Alfamidi stores in Tangerang City). *Dinasti Publisher, 1*(2), 2686-6358.

Srihadi, F. T., Hartoyo, Sukandar, D., & Soehadi, A. W. (2016). Segmentation of the tourism market for Jakarta: Classification of foreign visitor's lifestyle typologies. *Tourism Management Pespectives*, 32-39.

Subandriyo, B. (2020). *Analisis korelasi dan regresi.* Badan Pusat Statistik.

Uzunoglu, E., & Kip, S. M. (2014). Brand Communication Through Digital Influencers: Leveraging Blogger Engagement. *International Journal of Information Marketing*, 592-602.

Wänke, M., Herrmann, A., & Schaffner, D. (2007). Brand name influence on brand perception. *Psychology & Marketing*, 24(1), 1-24.

Waworuntu, E. C., Mandagi, D. W., & Pangemanan, A. S. (2022). 'I See It, I Want It, I Buy It': The Role of Social Media Marketing in Shaping Brand Image and Gen Z's Intention to Purchase Local Product. *Society*, *10*(2), 253-271.

Zafar, Q. U., & Rafique, M. (2012). Impact of celebrity advertisement on customers' brand perception and purchase intention. *Asian Journal of Business and Management Sciences, 1*(11), 53-67.

Zhang, M., Guo, L., Hu, M., & Liu, W. (2017). Influence of customer engagement with company social networks on stickiness: Mediating effect of customer value creation. *International Journal of Information Management, 37*(1), 229-240. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2016.04.010