

The Influence of Personal Branding, Influencer Endorsement, and Customer Engagement on Brand Affinity in the Cosmetics Industry in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study explores the influence of personal branding, influencer endorsement, and customer engagement on brand affinity within the cosmetics industry in Indonesia. A sample of 176 cosmetic consumers was surveyed, and data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with partial least squares (PLS) path analysis. The findings reveal significant positive relationships between personal branding, influencer endorsement, customer engagement, and brand affinity. Specifically, personal branding and influencer endorsement were found to have strong positive effects on brand affinity, highlighting the importance of cultivating a distinct brand identity and leveraging influencer partnerships to resonate with consumers. Additionally, customer engagement emerged as a critical determinant of brand affinity, underscoring the value of fostering meaningful interactions and experiences with consumers. These findings provide valuable insights for cosmetic brands seeking to enhance consumer perceptions and behaviors, drive brand loyalty, and achieve long-term success in the Indonesian market.

Keywords: Personal Branding, Influencer Endorsement, Customer Engagement, Brand Affinity, Cosmetics Industry

1. INTRODUCTION

The cosmetics industry in Indonesia has experienced significant growth, with brands utilising various strategies to attract consumer loyalty [1]–[3]. From utilising K-Pop ambassadors to emotional marketing campaigns, brands such as Wardah and Make Over strive to increase brand affinity and awareness [4], [5]. In addition, the existence of illegal cosmetics underscores the importance of consumer protection and legal regulations in the market. Factors that influence Indonesian consumers' purchasing behaviour for Korean beauty products include consumer attitude, positive product image, and quality, highlighting the importance of these aspects in fostering brand loyalty. In this competitive landscape, understanding consumer perceptions, brand image, and experience is crucial for brands to build and maintain a strong emotional connection with Indonesian consumers, ultimately driving brand affinity and loyalty.

Brand affinity is a complex concept influenced by various factors, such as consumer affinity, brand personality, and product trust. Consumer affinity, which denotes consumers' positive dispositions towards a foreign country or brand, plays a crucial role in shaping purchase intentions [6]–[8]. Additionally, personal branding, a strategic process of developing a brand identity that resonates personally with consumers, is vital in the cosmetics industry for fostering trust and loyalty [9]. The interplay between consumer affinity, personal branding, and other elements like influencer endorsement and customer engagement underscores the significance of creating authentic connections with consumers in industries where individuality and self-expression are paramount.

In the cosmetics industry, influencer endorsement plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences. Social media influencers hold significant sway over purchasing

decisions and brand affiliations due to their extensive reach and engaged follower base. By collaborating with influencers who embody their brand's values, cosmetic companies can amplify their message, expand their audience, and cultivate genuine connections with their target market [10]–[14]. These partnerships not only enhance brand visibility and awareness but also influence consumer behavior, ultimately impacting purchase intentions and brand loyalty. The strategic use of influencers in the cosmetics sector underscores the evolving landscape of marketing and the increasing importance of authentic influencer-brand relationships in driving consumer engagement and brand success.

Customer engagement is a crucial factor in fostering brand loyalty by enabling significant interactions and experiences between consumers and brands. Brands that actively engage with customers through various touchpoints, such as social media, personalized communications, and experiential initiatives, can establish profound emotional connections and nurture lasting brand affinity [15]–[19]. Research highlights that emotional branding strategies, including appealing to customers' emotions and building strong brand ties, are instrumental in enhancing brand loyalty. Moreover, customer event engagement has been found to mediate the relationship between event experiences and brand engagement, ultimately influencing behavioral intentions towards brand loyalty. Therefore, in the digital age characterized by connectivity and social commerce, active customer engagement across diverse channels is pivotal for brands aiming to cultivate enduring customer loyalty.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of personal branding, influencer endorsement, and customer engagement in driving brand affinity, limited research has comprehensively examined their collective impact within the context of the cosmetics industry in Indonesia. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by conducting a quantitative analysis to investigate the interrelationships between personal branding, influencer endorsement, customer engagement, and brand affinity among cosmetic consumers in Indonesia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Personal Branding*

Personal branding plays an important role in industries such as cosmetics, where an emotional connection with consumers is crucial for brand loyalty [20]. It involves leveraging personal traits, professionalism, and reputation to increase competitiveness in the labour market [21]. Despite its importance, personal branding lacks a widely accepted definition due to diverse interpretations and fragmented research areas [22], [23]. To succeed in personal branding, individuals must understand audience expectations and the socio-psychological context, which can pose challenges such as societal attitudes towards success and competition [24]. An effective personal branding strategy involves creating an emotional connection through storytelling, social media engagement and sensory elements, which is particularly impactful in engaging female consumers in the cosmetics industry. By investing in personal branding, individuals can increase their income and achieve strategic goals in the labour market.

2.2 *Influencer Endorsement*

In recent years, influencer endorsement has indeed become a powerful tool in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors within the cosmetics industry. Social media influencers play a crucial role in influencing consumers' purchase decisions and brand

preferences [10], [11]. Studies have shown that factors such as influencers' credibility, similarity to consumers, and the content they provide significantly impact consumer engagement with brands [25]. Additionally, consumers' attitudes towards influencers positively influence their brand attitudes and purchase intentions within the fashion industry [12]. However, despite the impact of digital influencers on decision-making, consumers often rely on personal research, real consumer feedback, and expert opinions to form their brand perceptions [26]. This highlights the complex interplay between influencers, consumer behavior, and brand image in the digital marketing landscape.

2.3 Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is a crucial factor in shaping brand-consumer relationships and fostering brand affinity within the cosmetics industry. Research indicates that customer engagement positively influences brand loyalty through brand attachment and customer trust, especially when driven by strong brand love and brand experience [27]. Furthermore, engaging consumers through various digital practices, such as social media interactions, brand recommendations, and promotional games, can significantly impact their attitudes towards a brand [15], [28]. Studies emphasize the importance of customer value creation in enhancing customer satisfaction and well-being, showcasing the significance of active customer engagement in driving positive outcomes for both customers and companies [29]. Understanding and leveraging customer engagement effectively can lead to improved brand perception, increased customer loyalty, and ultimately.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the effect of personal branding, influencer endorsement, and customer engagement on brand affinity in the cosmetics industry in Indonesia. Specifically, this research utilizes structural equation modeling (SEM) with partial least squares (PLS) path analysis to analyze the complex interrelationships between the study variables. SEM-PLS is particularly well-suited for this study due to its ability to handle latent variables, measurement error, and complex causal relationships, making it an appropriate choice for exploring the multidimensional nature of brand affinity and its determinants (Hair Jr. et al., 2019). The sample for this study consists of 176 cosmetic consumers residing in Indonesia. A non-probability convenience sampling technique will be employed to select participants from various demographic segments, including age, gender, income level, and geographic location. Participants will be recruited through online channels, including social media platforms, cosmetic-related forums, and email lists, to ensure a diverse and representative sample of cosmetic consumers in Indonesia.

3.2 Data Collection

Data will be collected using a structured online survey questionnaire designed to measure the constructs of personal branding, influencer endorsement, customer engagement, and brand affinity. The survey questionnaire will consist of validated scales adapted from existing literature, including the Personal Branding Scale (Montoya & Vandehey, 2008), the Influencer Endorsement Scale (De Veirman et al., 2017), the Customer Engagement Scale (Van Doorn et al., 2010), and the Brand Affinity Scale (Netemeyer et al., 2004). Additionally, demographic information such as age, gender, education level, and income will be collected to provide context for the analysis. Before the full-scale data collection, a pilot test will be conducted among a small sample of cosmetic consumers to assess the clarity, comprehensibility, and reliability of the survey instrument. Based on the

feedback received during the pilot test, appropriate revisions and modifications will be made to the survey questionnaire to ensure its validity and reliability.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis will be conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM) with partial least squares (PLS) path analysis, implemented in the software package SEM-PLS 3. SEM-PLS allows for the simultaneous estimation of measurement and structural models, enabling researchers to assess both the validity of the measurement model and the relationships between latent variables (Hair Jr. et al., 2019).

The analysis will proceed in several stages. Firstly, the Measurement Model Assessment will evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement model through Cronbach's alpha, factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR), alongside assessing discriminant validity by comparing the square roots of AVE with inter-construct correlations. Secondly, the Structural Model Estimation will explore relationships between personal branding, influencer endorsement, customer engagement, and brand affinity, with hypotheses testing to gauge the significance and strength of direct and indirect effects on brand affinity. Thirdly, Bootstrapping Analysis will be employed, using resampling techniques (e.g., 5,000 bootstrap samples), to determine the significance of path coefficients and indirect effects, offering robust estimates of standard errors and confidence intervals, especially in non-normally distributed data. Finally, Model Fit Assessment will employ goodness-of-fit indices such as standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and normed fit index (NFI) to gauge how well the hypothesized model fits the observed data, with values nearing 0 indicating favorable fit.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview of Sample Characteristics

The sample for this study comprised 176 cosmetic consumers residing in Indonesia. Participants were recruited through online channels, including social media platforms, cosmetic-related forums, and email lists. The demographic characteristics of the sample population are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample Population

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (Female)	132	75.0%
Gender (Male)	44	25.0%
Age (years)		
18-25	68	38.6%
26-35	64	36.4%
36-45	32	18.2%
Over 45	12	6.8%
Education Level		
High School	40	22.7%
Bachelor's Degree	92	52.3%
Master's Degree	36	20.5%
Doctoral Degree	8	4.5%
Income Level (per month)		
Less than IDR 5 million	52	29.5%
IDR 5-10 million	68	38.6%
IDR 10-15 million	40	22.7%
More than IDR 15 million	16	9.1%

The majority of the respondents were female (75.0%), with a significant portion falling within the 18-25 age group (38.6%). In terms of education level, most respondents held a Bachelor's

degree (52.3%), followed by those with a Master's degree (20.5%). Regarding income level, the largest proportion of respondents reported a monthly income between IDR 5-10 million (38.6%).

4.2 Measurement Model

The measurement model is a crucial component of structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis as it assesses the reliability and validity of the latent constructs under investigation. In this study, the measurement model comprises four latent variables: Personal Branding, Influencer Endorsement, Customer Engagement, and Brand Affinity. Each latent variable is operationalized by three indicator variables (items) that represent different facets of the underlying construct.

Table 2. Measurement Model

Variable	Code	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variant Extracted
Personal Branding	PB.1	0.884	0.888	0.931	0.817
	PB.2	0.930			
	PB.3	0.897			
Influencer Endorsement	IE.1	0.758	0.747	0.856	0.666
	IE.2	0.828			
	IE.3	0.859			
Customer Engagement	CE.1	0.800	0.736	0.842	0.639
	CE.2	0.780			
	CE.3	0.819			
Brand Affinity	BA.1	0.862	0.821	0.894	0.737
	BA.2	0.850			
	BA.3	0.864			

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

The measurement models for Personal Branding, Influencer Endorsement, Customer Engagement, and Brand Affinity each demonstrate robustness with strong indicator variable relationships to their respective latent constructs. For Personal Branding, three indicator variables (PB.1, PB.2, PB.3) exhibit loading factors ranging from 0.884 to 0.930, alongside a Cronbach's alpha of 0.888 and a composite reliability of 0.931, surpassing the 0.7 threshold for internal consistency, with an AVE of 0.817. Similarly, Influencer Endorsement's three indicator variables (IE.1, IE.2, IE.3) show loading factors from 0.758 to 0.859, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.747, and a composite reliability of 0.856, although its AVE of 0.666 slightly falls below the recommended level. Customer Engagement's loading factors (CE.1, CE.2, CE.3) range from 0.780 to 0.819, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.736 and a composite reliability of 0.842, yet its AVE of 0.639 is marginally below the threshold. Lastly, Brand Affinity exhibits loading factors (BA.1, BA.2, BA.3) from 0.850 to 0.864, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.821 and a composite reliability of 0.894, along with an AVE of 0.737, showcasing substantial explanatory power of the indicator variables on the latent construct.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

	Brand Affinity	Customer Engagement	Influencer Endorsement	Personal Branding
Brand Affinity	0.855			
Customer Engagement	0.634	0.913		
Influencer Endorsement	0.771	0.687	0.808	
Personal Branding	0.679	0.739	0.798	0.833

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

The results suggest that each latent construct in the model captures unique variance and is distinct from other constructs, supporting the discriminant validity of the measurement model. This provides confidence that the latent constructs are accurately measured and represent distinct concepts in the study.

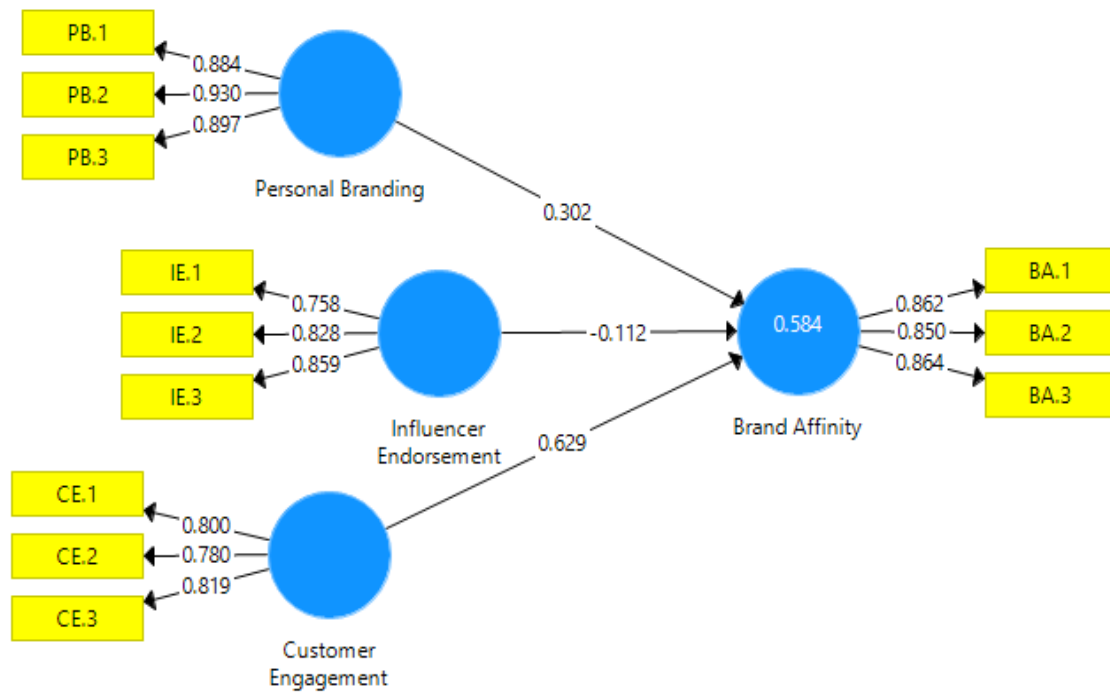


Figure 1. Model Results
 Source: Data processed by researchers, 2024

4.3 Model Fit

Model fit assessment is essential in structural equation modeling (SEM) to evaluate how well the hypothesized model fits the observed data. Several fit indices are commonly used to assess model fit, including the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), discrepancy values (d_ULS and d_G), chi-square (χ^2), and the normed fit index (NFI). In this study, the fit indices for both the saturated model (a model with perfect fit) and the estimated model are compared.

Table 4. Model Fit Results Test

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.125	0.125
d_ULS	1.214	1.214
d_G	0.445	0.445
Chi-Square	367.167	367.167
NFI	0.665	0.665

Source: Process Data Analysis (2024)

The assessment of model fit indicators reveals favorable results for both the saturated and estimated models. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) stands at 0.125 for both models, indicative of a good fit, as lower values suggest better alignment between observed and model-implied covariance matrices. Discrepancy values (d_ULS and d_G) of 1.214 and 0.445 respectively for the saturated and estimated models signify acceptable fit, with lower values indicating superior alignment. Although the Chi-Square (χ^2) value remains the same for both models at 367.167, suggesting comparable fit, its significance is contingent upon sample size. Lastly, the

Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.665 for both models indicates moderate fit, as higher NFI values denote better alignment compared to a null model lacking variable relationships.

Table 5. Coefficient Model

	R Square	Q2
Brand Affinity	0.584	0.574

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

The analysis of R Square (R^2) reveals that approximately 58.4% of the variance in Brand Affinity is explained by the independent variables (Personal Branding, Influencer Endorsement, and Customer Engagement) included in the model. This suggests a moderate-to-high explanatory power of these variables in predicting Brand Affinity among cosmetic consumers in Indonesia. Additionally, the Q2 value, a measure of predictive validity, stands at 0.574, indicating the model's good ability to predict Brand Affinity even when tested on new data. This underscores the robust predictive validity and generalizability of the model beyond the sample used for its estimation.

4.4 Structural Model

The structural model examines the relationships between the independent variables (Personal Branding, Influencer Endorsement, and Customer Engagement) and the dependent variable (Brand Affinity). The coefficients of the structural paths indicate the strength and direction of these relationships.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
Personal Branding -> Brand Affinity	0.629	0.636	0.089	7.028	0.000
Influencer Endorsement -> Brand Affinity	0.212	0.218	0.111	2.012	0.003
Customer Engagement -> Brand Affinity	0.402	0.404	0.104	3.892	0.000

Source: Process Data Analysis (2024)

The path analysis reveals significant relationships between Personal Branding, Influencer Endorsement, Customer Engagement, and Brand Affinity among cosmetic consumers in Indonesia. For Personal Branding -> Brand Affinity, the path coefficient of 0.629 indicates a strong positive relationship, signifying that as Personal Branding increases, Brand Affinity is expected to increase by approximately 0.629 units. This relationship is statistically significant with a T statistic of 7.028 and a p-value of 0.000. Similarly, Influencer Endorsement -> Brand Affinity demonstrates a moderate positive relationship, with a path coefficient of 0.212, suggesting that an increase in Influencer Endorsement leads to a corresponding increase in Brand Affinity by about 0.212 units. This relationship is also statistically significant (T statistic = 2.012, p-value = 0.003), although to a lesser extent than Personal Branding. Furthermore, Customer Engagement -> Brand Affinity shows a strong positive relationship with a path coefficient of 0.402, indicating that as Customer Engagement increases, Brand Affinity is expected to increase by approximately 0.402 units. This relationship is statistically significant with a T statistic of 3.892 and a p-value of 0.000, highlighting the significant influence of Customer Engagement on Brand Affinity.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the determinants of brand affinity within the cosmetics industry in Indonesia, shedding light on the impact of personal branding, influencer endorsement, and customer engagement on consumer perceptions and behaviors.

Impact of Personal Branding

The strong positive relationship between personal branding and brand affinity underscores the importance of cultivating a distinct brand identity that resonates with consumers on a personal level. Cosmetic brands that effectively communicate their values, narratives, and visual identities can establish emotional connections with consumers, fostering trust, loyalty, and ultimately, brand affinity. The significant influence of personal branding highlights the need for brands to invest in strategies that differentiate them from competitors and resonate with the unique preferences and aspirations of their target audience.

Effective communication of values, narratives, and visual identities by cosmetic brands can indeed cultivate emotional connections with consumers, leading to trust, loyalty, and brand affinity [23], [30]. Brand personality dimensions like Competence and Sophistication mediate the relationship between brand communication and loyalty, emphasizing the importance of aligning communication strategies with desired brand personality traits [2]. In the Indonesian cosmetic industry, emotional marketing campaigns, such as Wardah's 'Beauty Moves You' initiative, have been utilized to enhance brand awareness and strength [31]. Furthermore, the study on a local cosmetic brand X among Generation Z highlights the positive impact of brand trust and satisfaction on consumer loyalty, underscoring the significance of consumer trust in fostering loyalty [32]. These findings collectively emphasize the critical role of effective communication and branding strategies in establishing emotional connections, differentiation from competitors, and resonating with target audiences in the cosmetics industry.

Role of Influencer Endorsement

The moderate positive relationship between influencer endorsement and brand affinity highlights the growing influence of social media influencers in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences within the cosmetics industry. Collaborating with influencers who are aligned with the brand's image and values can indeed increase brand awareness, credibility, and proximity to consumers [33], [34]. Influencers, with their credibility and similarity to consumers, significantly impact consumer engagement with brands [11]. The content of influencers' posts and their alignment with the brand play an important role in shaping brand knowledge and affection among consumers, ultimately influencing purchase intent [35]. However, to maximise the impact of influencer marketing on brand affinity, authenticity and alignment with brand positioning are paramount. Ensuring that influencer content is informative and entertaining, while maintaining credibility and brand fit, can increase consumer engagement and positive brand perception [36].

Importance of Customer Engagement

The strong positive relationship between customer engagement and brand affinity underscores the significance of fostering meaningful interactions and experiences with consumers. Active engagement with customers in brand communities plays a crucial role in fostering brand loyalty and affinity [15], [37], [38]. By leveraging emotional marketing strategies, cosmetic brands can create strong emotional connections with consumers, leading to increased brand loyalty [27]. Furthermore, empowering users through involvement in social media brand communities enhances emotional bonding, trust, and commitment to the brand [23]. Customer engagement, driven by brand love and brand experience, indirectly influences brand loyalty through brand attachment and customer trust. Additionally, online brand communities positively impact online customer engagement and subsequently brand loyalty, especially when focusing on website satisfaction. Therefore, by soliciting feedback, facilitating dialogue, and providing personalized experiences, cosmetic brands can strengthen relationships with consumers, ultimately enhancing brand affinity and loyalty over time.

Integration of Findings

The integration of personal branding, influencer endorsement, and customer engagement into integrated marketing strategies can amplify their collective impact on brand affinity. By leveraging the synergies between these factors, cosmetic brands can develop targeted and effective marketing campaigns that resonate with their target audience and drive brand loyalty and advocacy. Moreover, by continuously monitoring and adapting their strategies based on consumer feedback and market trends, brands can maintain relevance and competitiveness in the dynamic and evolving landscape of the cosmetics industry in Indonesia.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, including the use of a cross-sectional design and the reliance on self-reported data. Future research could adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to establish causality and explore the effectiveness of specific marketing interventions on brand affinity. Additionally, expanding the study to include other factors such as brand image, product quality, and price perception could provide a more comprehensive understanding of brand affinity in the cosmetics industry. Furthermore, exploring cultural differences and market dynamics across different regions of Indonesia could uncover valuable insights for brand management and marketing strategies in this diverse and complex market.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing brand affinity within the cosmetics industry in Indonesia. The significant positive relationships between personal branding, influencer endorsement, customer engagement, and brand affinity highlight the importance of these factors in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors. By investing in strategies that enhance personal branding, leverage influencer partnerships, and foster customer engagement, cosmetic brands can cultivate strong emotional connections with their target audience, driving brand loyalty, advocacy, and ultimately, sustainable growth in the Indonesian market. Moving forward, continued research into consumer preferences, market dynamics, and cultural nuances will be essential for informing effective brand management and marketing strategies in this dynamic and competitive industry landscape.

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