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THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AS MEDIATING VARIABLE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND IMAGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA TO CUSTOMER LOYALTY

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Abstract. The present study aimed at conceptual framework the impact of social media and brand image toward on customers' loyalty in indonesia, it also aimed at exploring the relationship between social media, customers' loyalty, brand Image, customer engagement from the perspectives of customers. In more precise, to measure the mediating effect of customer engagement in the causal relationship between social media and customers' loyalty toward. analysis and correlational coefficient were used for analysis purposive of the Theory that were collected through a self-designed from science direct. More than 200 reference was drawn from the the study. The major findings of the study were as follow: social media has a significant effect on customer's loyalty by customer engagement, and effect of brand image toward on customer loyalty by customer engagement. Customer engagement as mediating variable has a significant effect on the relationship between social media, brand image and customer's loyalty. Furthermore; marketing managers were found to be having positive beliefs that customer engagement increase brand image and social media toward effect on customers' loyalty.

Keywords *Brand Image, Customer Engagement, Social Media, Customer Loyalty*

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Introduction

The value of a company is built on a variety of factors, not only with modern technology, dense orders, and well-known brands but more than its customers and employees. With increasingly demanding requirements, the demand is increasingly diversified nowadays; businesses not only call for creativity and product innovation from the experts and employees but also from the customers, the user of the product. One factor contributing specifically to the success of every business cannot be ignored is the "God of business" - the customer. With the expansion not only in terms of scale but also in the number of enterprises, the level of competition among companies is getting fiercer. In this challenging new marketing context, consolidating and reinforcing the relationship between business and customers is an important task for all businesses.

How to retain existing customers while attracting new customers is, to this respect, an extremely important issue for businesses. Companies are calling customers to participate and engage in product design in order to obtain different perspectives. According to the definition mentioned in the literature of relationship inmarketing viewed as one of the key element marketing outcomes and maintaining customers engaged is essential strategically to raise the number of loyal customers, since loyal customers contribute to the value creation process in most organizations (Brodie et al. 2011 & Bowden 2009b) and could possibly provide enormous benefits such as market expansion (Gounaris

and Stathakopoulos 2004) and enhance business profitability (Kabiraj and Shanmugan 2011). By encouraging CE activities on social networking channels, companies can create their own advantages from enhancing brand loyalty (Brodie et al. 2013), stimulating sales (Doohwang et al. 2011). Similarly, CE's influence on customer loyalty has been examined and its identification as a critical component of relationship marketing's extended domain (Brodie et al. 2011; Bowden 2009a).

However, explored antecedents and consequences of CE in many researches are quite nebulous and is lack consensus. Furthermore, In addition to the issues of the ambiguous relationships among constructs known to be associated with the customer engagement, there are needs to make it sure the comprehensiveness of the focal construct (i.e., customer engagement). In order to do so, it would be attempted to introduce a new variables and/or modify current framework (Brodie et al. 2013; Hapsari 2015; So et al. 2014). To this respect, the inclusion of moderating factors into the model could also enhance the explanatory power of the model (Chin et al. 2003). There are three factors is suitable to explain the antecedent of CE including service quality, involvement and perceived value. Customer loyalty is also selected as a comprehensive construct for consequence of CE. In additional, the changing relationship between CE and customer loyalty related to brand image which are proposed as a moderating variable. Thus, this paper promotes a new integrated conceptual framework, looking for the role of customers' engagement in creating customer loyalty and examining the casual communication among CE with customer involvement, service quality, brand image, perceived value, and loyalty. In addition, this research also assesses the moderating role of brand image and income toward the relationship between CE and other related constructs The result of this research will assist companies in identifying that these factors are interactions. The study tries to achieve better insights into these marketing

constructs. Though, first of all, it is necessary to explore CE concepts.

Theoretical

Customer Engagement, Customer Engagement When we come up to a new issue or problem, the question "what it is" is always the first thing, the researcher need to be answer. Although the paper does not focus on definition of engagement, we need to have overview as a background for the study. However, there was a lack of consistency in the conceptualization of engagement. This is because this concept was used in different contexts, resulting in many "engagement" terms as student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004), customer engagement (Hollebeek, 2012), brand engagement (Hollebeek, 2011) programme and the Platform 7 research funding programme. The below extract gives an example of the policy trend being pursued by the EU Commissioni; employee engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001), consumer engagement (Brodie et 2013), a media engagement (habibi et al., 2014)and civic engagement (Jennings &Zeitner, 2003) is defined quite extensively, but with customer engagement being perhaps the foundation of all the engagement concepts (van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al. 2011). Inconsistency also occurs with its object, specifically, subject of engagement is diverse from specific products (mobiphone, luxury products), specific services such as public transportation and health care to customer-brand relationship. Thus, defining CE concept and encourage the further researches about its structure and interaction is also significant. Based on previous studies, CE could be classified into five main types.
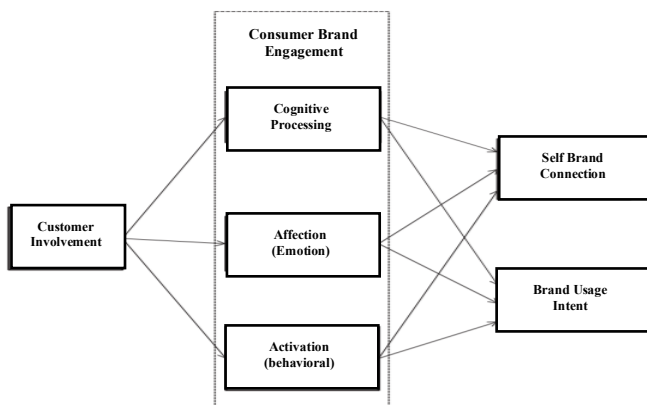
Figure 1. Customer Engagement Concept

In marketing disciplines, Van-Doorn et al. (2010) defined CE as "customer's behavioral manifestations".In recent years, CE is viewed as a psychological state (Zainol et al. 2016); or a process (Yang et al., 2016) or motivational psychology (Brodie et al. 2011; Wallace et al. 2014) or combination of psychological and behavioral dimensions (Hollebeek 2011; So et at. 2014). Given in this study, CE is defined as an attitude of customer toward a specific brand by combining of physical and emotional experience aspects and "active mental state" of cognition to promote behavioral intention. CE has obtained a plenty attention and become a novel phenomenon in the marketing perspective. However, there is a lack of consensus regarding its dimensionality (Cheung et al. 2011). While cognitive, emotional & behavioral dimensions are conceptualized and have a high agreement between researchers, others have altered the engagement dimension in their paper which illustrates its distinct perspectives. Several studies shown that unidimensional conceptualizations are mainly focusing on behavioral aspect of CE (Kumar et al., 2010; Doorn et al., 2010;). while Guthrie and Cox (2001), Kilger&Romer (2007), Malthouse& Peck (2010) emphasis the cognitive aspect of engagement, Heath (2007) highlights the emotional aspects.

However, according to the point of Brodie (2011), this author suggests that unidimensional conceptualization approaches do not reflect the diverse nature of customer engagement. Therefore, the reviewed conceptualizations share a multidimensional perspective of engagement, which appears dominant in the literature (May et al. 2004). Particularly, from two-dimensional perspective, Marks and Printy (2003) tender a two-dimensional engagement conceptualization including cognition and emotion, meanwhile Bejerholm and Eklund (2007) propose cognitive and behavioral dimensions. Norris et al. (2003), by contrast, propound emotional and behavioral aspects. The dominance of cognitive, emotive and behavioral dimensions was maintained in the studies of So et al. (2016), Cheung et al. (2014), Greve (2014), Chan et al. (2014). Furthermore, Dwivedi (2015) and Patterson et al. (2006) advocate a multidimensional approach of customer engagement, combined dimensions including vigor, dedication, and absorption, in contrast, Hollebeek and Chen (2014) . incorporate activation, passion and immersion, which were acknowledged to match with the dimensions (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive) of engagement (May et al. 2004). Ili´c (2008) expands this viewpoint by combining two dimensions (additional aspirational and social-engagement), Vivek et al. (2014) and Cabiddu et al. (2014) spread by combining with conscious attention & social connection, which may also be considered as particular sub-constituents of the emotional aspect of customer engagement. Obviously, Brodie et al. (2011) overview forward engagement revealed the context-specific nature and emphasize multidimensional concept of customer engagement. In short, the threedimension view, have widely found acceptance in the literate review.

Social Media and Branding

Social media is a "group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Although social media is often defined as a combination of Web 2.0 and user-generated content (Sinclaire

& Vogus, 2011; Thevenot, 2007), Web 2.0 refers to a platform in which content is continuously developed by users in a collaborative way, and usergenerated content refers to all the different ways people produce content and use social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012). Social media is characterized as being interactive and participative (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Leung, Bai, & Erdem, 2017; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Ye, Barreda, Okumus, & Nusair, in press). It has facilitated online interaction and engagement and changed the way people interact and communicate with each other and with companies and brands (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). It directly connects companies and brands with consumers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Laroche et al., 2012) in a bidirectional way. Consumers are not only receivers of content but also active creators of brand information (Thevenot, 2007) and brand value (Merz, Yi, & Vargo, 2009) and influencers. Therefore, power has shifted from brands to consumers (Tsai & Men, 2013), with brand owners no longer having full control over the content of their brand messages (Fournier & Avery, 2011). This switch leads to several challenges and opportunities for companies. Social media implies opportunities for brand building (Correa, Hinsley, & De Zúñiga, 2010; Merz et al., 2009), brand equity creation, including brand image and brand loyalty (Laroche et al., 2012; Leung et al., 2017; Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000), and brand management (Godey et al., 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Users are now relying more than ever before on online reviewers (Dijkmans, Kerkhof, & Beukeboom, 2015); thus, brand reviews are an important source of information that can influence brand preferences and purchase intentions (Morra, Ceruti, Chierici, & Di Gregorio, 2018). Furthermore, scholars acknowledge challenges such as measuring the influence of social media marketing activities on brand success (Schultz & Peltier, 2013), dealing with the increasing amount of customers' brand information (Harrigan, Evers, Miles, & Daly, 2017), and identifying mechanisms of improving the brand pages to engage consumers and improve consumer–brand relationships (De Vries & Carlson, 2014). Social media facilitates brand engagement, understood as the level of interaction and connections between consumers and the brand (Hanna et al., 2011; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Tsai & Men, 2013; Vivek et al., 2014; Ye et al., in press). Thus, companies use social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter to engage with consumers (So et al., 2014). Despite the increasing interest and body of research on consumer engagement within the marketing domain, there is no widely agreed-on definition of the construct.

A complete review of the definitions of engagement is beyond the scope of this study. Brodie et al. (2011), Dessart, Veloutsou, and Morgan-Thomas (2015), Gambetti and Graffigna (2010), Harmeling, Moffett, Arnold, and Carlson (2017), Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2014), Kumar et al. (2010), Mollen and Wilson (2010), Pansari and Kumar (2017) and Sprott, Czellar, and Spangenberg (2009) all provide reviews of the engagement concept up to that point in time, respectively. This section aims to identify the main fields of research that have addressed this construct and to focus on the marketing approach to this term. Engagement has been analyzed from different disciplinary perspectives including marketing, management, organizational behavior, education, sociology, psychology, information systems, and political science. While different terminology has been used to refer to different engagement subjects (e.g., customer engagement, consumer engagement, employee engagement) or different engagement objects (e.g., brand engagement, organizational engagement), all refer to a similar concept that is applied to different entities (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The interest in this construct within the marketing discipline has developed mainly from 2005 (Brodie et al., 2011), given that it is a relational construct (Schultz & Peltier, 2013)

that reflects the interactive nature of the consumer–brand relationship (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Three main approaches can be identified in the conceptualization of the engagement construct in the marketing literature. While some researchers (e.g., Sprott et al., 2009; Van Doorn et al., 2010) adopt a narrow approach and treat engagement as a unidimensional construct (cognitive, affective, or behavioral), some scholars (e.g., Mollen & Wilson, 2010) extend it by capturing two dimensions within the concept. The third approach includes studies (e.g., Brodie, Ilić, Jurić, & Hollebeek, 2013; Dessart et al., 2015; Hollebeek, 2011) that adopt a broader approach and treat engagement as a multidimensional construct (including cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions). For example, Hollebeek (2011, p. 6) defines customer brand engagement as "the level of a customer's motivational, brand-related, and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity in brand interactions." Likewise, Brodie et al. (2011, p. 9), after analyzing the definitions of engagement in the marketing literature, recognize the multidimensional nature of the construct and also conclude that it is "a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, cocreative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships. It (…) exists as a dynamic, iterative process within service relationships that cocreate value." Cognitive activities refer, for example, to the level of engrossment in and concentration on the brand, affective activities imply the positive feelings generated when the consumer interacts with the brand (Harmeling et al., 2017), and behavioral activities refer to manifestations that go beyond direct transactions (e.g., referrals, word of mouth, blogging,

recommendations, writing reviews, providing customer ratings) (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Kumar et al., 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2010) that contribute to the company's marketing functions (Harmeling et al., 2017).cited again by Suwatno and Donni Juni Priansa (2011: 156).

Scholars acknowledge several antecedents of brand image, including involvement (Brodie et al., 2011, 2013; Harrigan et al., 2017; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012), commitment (Lacey & Morgan, 2009; Van Doorn et al., 2010), trust (Van Doorn et al., 2010), brand attachment, and brand communication (Manser Payne, Peltier, & Barger, 2017), as well as consequences, as explained subsequently. The importance of brand engagement lies in its number of benefits. Engaging with consumers plays an important role in building brand loyalty (Barger, Peltier, & Schultz, 2016; Correa et al., 2010; Dijkmans et al., 2015; Harrigan et al., 2017; Jahn & Kunz, 2012; Vivek et al., 2012), brand evaluations (Harrigan et al., 2017), brand attachment (Brodie et al., 2011; Dijkmans et al., 2015), trust (Brodie et al., 2011; Dijkmans et al., 2015; Harrigan et al., 2017; Vivek et al., 2012), brand relationship quality (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; Park & Kim, 2014; Pentina, Gammoh, Zhang, & Mallin, 2013), satisfaction (Brodie et al., 2011; Harrigan et al., 2017), involvement (Harrigan et al., 2017), and purchase intentions (Barger et al., 2016; Dijkmans et al., 2015), among others. The following sections aim to address a gap in the literature by focusing on two antecedents (social media brand involvement and social media brand communication) and one consequence (brand relations).

Model Developtment

The framework of thinking developed in this study refers to the literature review, the relationship of each variable and also the formation of hypotheses. Thinking framework intended to explain briefly about the research flow of researchers related to research, where the framework is the author's thoughts related to research variables such as *Brand Image, Customer Engagement, Social Media, Customer Loyalty.*
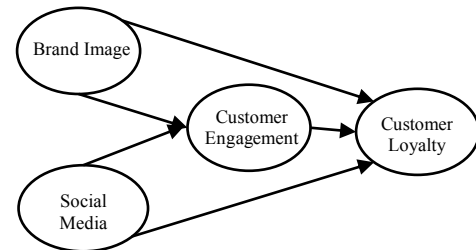

Figure 2. Model Development

Discussion & Future Research

The findings support research that indicates that communication with others in online brand image reinforces identity-based attachment to the customer loyality (Brodie et al., 2013; Ren et al., 2012), allowing like-minded travelers on tourism social media sites such as TripAdvisor to share information and experiences. This engagement with the other travelers online often then leads to a connection with the tourism brand and its virtual community. Customer Engagement is "involving turning on a prospect to brand ideas enhanced by the surrounding context" which, if interpreted means engagement is to connect with people emotionally and cognitively. When customers connect emotionally and cognitively with the content of a brand, they become more attentive and more like the brand. (Strauss & Frost, 2011: 39). Whereas Customer Engagement itself is developing customer portfolios (a set specifically for valuable customers) and maintaining relationships with these customers. (Kumar, 2013: 2). Bowden (2009: 65) defines customer engagement as "A psychological process that models the underlying mechanism of forming customer loyalty for new customers from brand services, as well as the mechanism by which loyalty can be maintained for customers repurchasing from brands" Vivek et al (2010: 127) defines customer engagement as: "The intensity of an individual's participation and individual relationship with the organization's offerings and / or organizational activities, be it the customer or the organization that started it". With Customer Engagement, the brand focuses on satisfying customers by giving them more or superior value than competitors to build trust and commitment to long-term relationships. (Sashi, 2012: 260). So it can be concluded that customer engagement is a process that involves the physical, cognitive and emotional presence of the customer in a relationship with the brand, where this relationship can be started either by the customer or the brand. Customer engagement will not be formed if the brand does not invite customers to engage in brand activities. Another thing is if the brand does not present social media content that is interesting and relevant to customers, then the customer will not see and interact with social media. According to Time, Inc. (in Strauss & Frost, 2011: 183), Customer Engagement has 3 pillars, namely Content Engagement, Media Engagement and Engagement Marketing Activities.

Content Engagement is how brands can manage their social media content so customers can be interested and want to join in

and interact, content for Customer Engagement in social media becomes important because social media content is the first thing that customers will see, even though customers are brand users but if the content on social media is not interesting and relevant to them, then the customer is unlikely to join and

want to interact with the content, so there is no relationship formed between the brand and the customer. The more interesting, entertaining and emotional the content that the brand has in its social media, the higher the possibility for customers to get involved.

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