

# The Effect of Social Media Marketing Activities on Brand Loyalty Mediated by Brand Trust and Perceived Value

*Mediating Effect of Trust and Perceived Value on Loyalty*

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## ABSTRACT

*In the era of digital marketing, social media has become a crucial platform for companies to engage with customers and influence their purchasing behavior. This study uses the Stimulus-Organism-Response theory to examine the direct effect of social media marketing activities, brand trust, and perceived value on brand loyalty and the mediating roles of brand trust and perceived value. This study used a quantitative explanatory method with 250 samples through purposive sampling, analyzed using SEM-PLS 4.0. The testing covers the outer model, inner model, as well as hypothesis and mediation tests. The results show that social media marketing activities do not directly affect brand loyalty, but they do affect brand trust and perceived value. Brand trust and perceived value have been proven to influence brand loyalty. In addition, both also mediate the relationship between social media marketing activities and brand loyalty. These findings imply that companies should prioritize building trust and enhancing perceived value when designing social media campaigns. Strengthening these factors can lead to higher brand loyalty among customers.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The retail sector constitutes a key component of the national economy by functioning as a direct intermediary between producers and end consumers. Through the distribution of goods and services, it plays a strategic role in ensuring smooth product circulation, generating employment, and enhancing its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). During the last two decades, the Indonesian retail industry has shown substantial expansion, driven by rising income levels, accelerated urbanization, and shifts in consumer behavior toward more efficient consumption patterns. The growth of modern retail formats, including supermarkets, hypermarkets, convenience stores, and minimarkets, has significantly transformed the structure of domestic trade. The Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2021) states that retail trade is a major driver of national economic development because of its significant contribution to public welfare improvement and job creation.

Competition within the retail industry has become increasingly intense, extending beyond price and location to encompass service innovation and digital marketing approaches. Prior studies indicate that minimarkets operating in saturated markets need to enhance service quality and promotional efforts in order to maintain customer loyalty, as customer retention remains a critical challenge for all retailers (Kotler & Keller, 2022). In the current digital era, Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) have emerged as a vital strategy for strengthening relationships with customers and fostering long-term loyalty.

Digital transformation has become a crucial driver of development in the retail sector, marked by the integration of online and offline channels through the adoption of e-commerce, digital payment systems, big data analytics, and advanced logistics. This

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evolution has led to the emergence of the omnichannel model, enabling consumers to shop flexibly without temporal or spatial constraints and compelling retailers to continuously adapt to rapidly changing consumer behavior (Marsolisidiono et al., 2025). At the same time, the retail sector plays a strategic role in empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through policies that promote the use of domestic products and trade digitalization, in line with Indonesia's agenda for inclusive and sustainable economic growth (Setyawan et al., 2022; Antaranews.com, 2025). Nevertheless, the expansion of modern retail also poses challenges for traditional markets and small shops, which are required to innovate in order to remain competitive, prompting the government to implement empowerment programs to balance modernization and sustainability. A prominent example of modern retail development is Alfamart, established in 1989 and currently the largest minimarket chain in Indonesia with more than 17,000 outlets. Alfamart offers affordable daily necessities, ensures wide accessibility, and actively supports MSMEs through partnerships and the marketing of local products (Alfamart.co.id, 2024). Its growth is driven by extensive network expansion, efficient distribution systems, and continuous digital innovation, supported by strategic collaborations with institutions such as Askrindo, Universitas Padjajaran, Gojek, Grab, PT Bina Karya, and Jobseeker Company, as well as the Alfamart Partner Store (TMA) program, positioning the company as an adaptive and collaborative retail actor that contributes to national economic empowerment (Alfamart.co.id, 2023; finance.detik.com, 2023; Antaranews.com, 2024; Alfamart.co.id, 2024; Antaranews.com, 2025).

Although previous studies generally conclude that Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) have a positive effect on brand loyalty, either directly or indirectly through psychological mechanisms, several gaps remain evident in the existing literature. Puspaningrum (2020) and Fitriyana et al. (2025) found a direct relationship between SMMA and brand loyalty, while fewer studies comprehensively test whether this effect persists when mediating variables such as brand trust and perceived value are simultaneously examined within an integrated structural model. This creates ambiguity as to whether loyalty is formed directly through social media exposure or whether it primarily emerges through consumers' internal evaluations and relational perceptions.

This research that applies the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework in the context of modern retail, particularly minimarkets in emerging economies, is still limited, even though this sector is highly characterized by intense competition and frequent consumer-brand interactions via digital platforms. Most prior studies focus on large brands or e-commerce settings, leaving a contextual gap regarding convenience store chains such as Alfamart, whose customers combine online engagement with routine offline purchasing behavior. Therefore, there is a need for empirical investigation that simultaneously examines SMMA as a stimulus, brand trust and perceived value as organismic states, and brand loyalty as a response, in order to clarify the mediating mechanisms and provide context-specific evidence from the Indonesian modern retail industry. This study aims to examine the effect of social media marketing on brand loyalty mediated by brand trust and perceived value.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **The Effect of Social Media Marketing Activities**

Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) are widely recognized as a strategic tool for building and strengthening relationships between brands and consumers. Ibrahim (2022) conceptualizes SMMA as a stimulus that facilitates secure relational exchanges and reinforces social bonds between firms and their followers, while Kim and Ko (2012) describe it as brand communication efforts through social media that authentically present products, services, and brand identity while delivering interactive experiences. Through continuous interaction, informative content, and emotional engagement, social media enables the formation of brand communities that foster closeness and attachment. Empirical evidence supports this view, as Puspaningrum (2020) finds that social media

marketing positively affects brand loyalty by strengthening emotional connections within brand communities. Similarly, Fitriyana et al. (2025) demonstrate that SMMA has a significant direct effect on brand loyalty, indicating that consumers who actively engage with brand content on social platforms are more likely to develop long-term commitment.

Beyond loyalty, SMMA also plays an important role in shaping brand trust and perceived value. Murtiasih (2025) explains that high-quality content, responsiveness to feedback, and authentic storytelling on social media enhance positive brand perceptions and emotional bonds, which in turn build consumer trust. In line with this, Chafidon et al. (2022) report that social media marketing significantly influences perceived value, as greater exposure to relevant and useful information increases consumers' understanding of product benefits and strengthens their evaluation of the value received. The effective use of social media as a marketing medium allows consumers to obtain richer functional, social, and emotional benefits, thereby encouraging transaction intentions and reinforcing favorable value judgments (Ismail, 2017).

H1: Social media marketing activity has a significant effect on brand loyalty.

H2: Social media marketing activity has a significant effect on brand trust.

H3: Social media marketing activity has a significant effect on perceived value.

### **Factors Influencing Brand Loyalty**

Brand loyalty is a central concept in branding, reflecting the degree of consumers' attachment and commitment to a particular brand. Aaker (1997) states that loyalty represents the core strength of a brand because, without loyal customers, a brand becomes highly vulnerable and easily substituted by competitors. As loyalty increases, the susceptibility of consumers to competitive offerings decreases, thereby strengthening a brand's market position. In line with this, Ebrahim (2020) defines brand loyalty as a strong intention to repurchase a preferred brand in the future, regardless of situational influences. This definition emphasizes that loyalty is not merely repeated behavior, but also a psychological commitment that sustains long-term relationships between consumers and brands.

Brand loyalty is strongly influenced by brand trust, which is built through consistent and dependable interactions that foster consumers' sense of security and confidence in a brand. Evidence provided by Saktiana (2025) demonstrates that trust has a significant positive impact on loyalty, showing that customers who believe in a brand's reliability and integrity are more inclined to sustain their relationship and engage in repeat purchases. In addition to trust, perceived value represents another crucial determinant of loyalty. This concept reflects consumers' overall judgments of the benefits obtained in comparison with the costs they incur. According to Devi and Yasa (2021), perceived value emerges from evaluations of product performance, service quality, and brand image, and customers are likely to remain committed only when they experience adequate functional, emotional, and symbolic rewards. In line with this, Ajina (2019) reports that higher perceived value leads to stronger brand loyalty, indicating that brands that consistently deliver superior and meaningful benefits are better positioned to develop and retain loyal customers.

H4: Brand trust has a significant effect on brand loyalty.

H5: Perceived value has a significant effect on brand loyalty.

### **Mediating Effect of Brand Trust and Perceived Value**

Brand trust and perceived value play a crucial mediating role in explaining how SMMA influences brand loyalty. Delgado and Munuera (2005) define brand trust as consumers' confidence in a brand's reliability and intention, reflecting the belief that the brand is capable of fulfilling its promises and prioritizing customer interests. Similarly, Althuwaini (2022) views brand trust as consumers' willingness to rely on a brand based on perceptions of its integrity and consistency in delivering expected performance. In the

context of social media, interactive, informative, and emotionally engaging content can strengthen these beliefs, thereby transforming marketing exposure into a deeper psychological attachment. Empirical support for this mechanism is provided by Fitriyana et al. (2025), who demonstrate that brand trust significantly mediates the relationship between SMMA and brand loyalty. Their findings suggest that authentic and culturally relevant social media content, such as testimonials and tutorials, enhances credibility and emotional closeness, which in turn fosters loyal behavior. This mediating role is consistent with the view of Kim and Ko (2012) and Ibrahim (2022), who emphasize that SMMA builds relational bonds and meaningful brand experiences that nurture trust before loyalty is formed.

In addition to trust, perceived value also serves as an important mediating variable. Parasuraman et al. (1988) conceptualize perceived value as the consumer's evaluation of the trade-off between benefits received and sacrifices made, while Sweeney and Soutar (2001) define it as an overall assessment of a product's utility based on this comparison. Social media interactions that provide useful information, emotional engagement, and social recognition can enhance functional, emotional, and social value perceptions (Chafidon et al., 2022; Murtiasih, 2025). As value perceptions increase, consumers are more likely to develop favorable attitudes and sustained loyalty, positioning perceived value as a key pathway through which SMMA indirectly strengthens brand loyalty.

H6: Brand trust mediates the effect of social media marketing on brand loyalty.

H7: Perceived value mediates the effect of social media marketing on brand loyalty.

The theoretical foundation of this research is grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). This model explains how external stimuli influence internal psychological states, which subsequently shape behavioral responses, with the organism component functioning as a mediating mechanism between stimulus and response (Kihlstrom, 1987). In this study, social media marketing activities are positioned as the stimuli (S) representing the external environment encountered by consumers, while brand trust and perceived value are treated as the Organismic States (O) that reflect consumers' internal evaluations. Brand loyalty is conceptualized as the Response (R) resulting from these cognitive and affective processes. The relationships among these constructs are illustrated in the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.

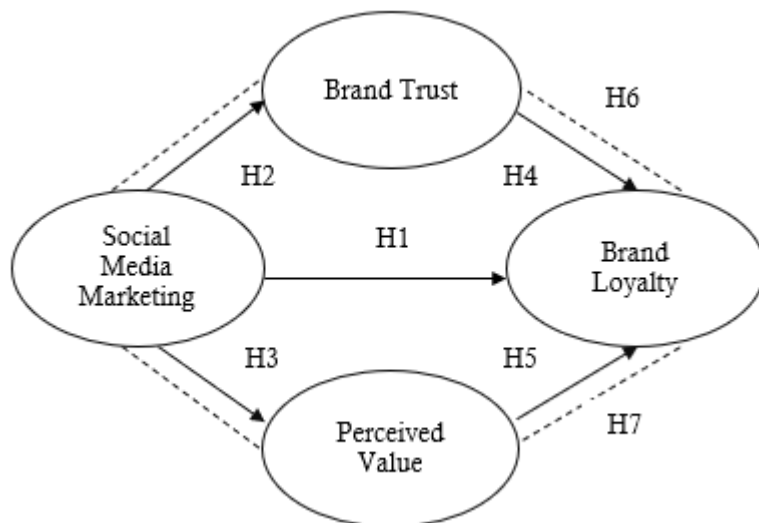


Figure 1. Research Framework

**RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employs a quantitative explanatory design to analyze the relationships between social media marketing, perceived value, brand trust, and brand loyalty. A total of 250 respondents were selected through a non-probability purposive sampling technique, consisting of individuals who had accessed Alfamart’s social media platforms and had made at least two purchases within the past three months. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire with closed-ended items, while secondary data were obtained from relevant literature and supporting sources. In this model, social media marketing functions as the independent variable, brand trust and perceived value act as mediators, and brand loyalty serves as the dependent variable.

Social media marketing was operationalized through five dimensions: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM). Perceived value was measured using four indicators, namely performance value, value for money, emotional value, and social value, whereas brand loyalty was assessed through repurchase intention, willingness to recommend, customer advocacy, and brand preference. All indicators were adapted from validated measurement scales and evaluated using a Likert scale to ensure reliability and comparability.

The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling based on the Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS software. The measurement model was evaluated through validity and reliability tests, including outer loadings, cross loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability, the Fornell–Larcker criterion, and the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The structural model assessment involved examining the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and overall model fit. Hypotheses were tested by evaluating path coefficients and their significance to identify both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs in the proposed model.

**RESULTS**

This section presents an overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in the study. Descriptive analysis is employed to describe the profile of Alfamart customers in Malang City in terms of gender, age, educational background, and occupation. This information provides an initial understanding of the respondents’ backgrounds and ensures that the sample appropriately represents the targeted consumer group. The summary of respondents’ characteristics is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Analysis

Category	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	67	26.8%
	Female	183	73.2%
	Total	250	100%
Age	18-24	61	24.4%
	25-34	114	45.6%
	35-44	65	26%
	>44	10	4%
	Total	250	100%
Education	High school/Equivalent	92	36.8%
	Diploma	47	18.8%
	Bachelor’s Degree	99	39.6%
	Postgraduate/Doctoral Degree	12	4.8%
	Total	250	100%
Occupation	Students	68	27.2%
	Civil Servants (PNS)/ASN	62	24.8%
	Private Employees	84	33.6%
	Entrepreneurs/Business Owners	36	14.4%
	Total	250	100%

Referring to Table 1, the sample is predominantly composed of female respondents, totaling 183 individuals or 73.2%, while male participants account for 67 individuals or 26.8%. This indicates that women represent the majority of respondents in the study. The largest proportion of respondents falls within the 25–34 age group, comprising 114 individuals or 45.6%. This is followed by those aged 35–44 years with 65 respondents (26%), the 18–24 age group with 61 respondents (24.4%), and participants aged over 44 years with 10 respondents (4%). These figures suggest that most participants are within the productive age range, particularly those aged 25–34 years. Respondents holding a bachelor’s degree form the largest educational group, with 99 individuals or 39.6%. This is followed by high school graduates or equivalent with 92 individuals (36.8%), diploma holders with 47 individuals (18.8%), and those with postgraduate or doctoral degrees with 12 individuals (4.8%). Accordingly, the majority of participants possess a relatively high level of education, mainly at the undergraduate level, indicating adequate critical thinking ability, comprehension of information, and the capacity to provide objective responses to the research questionnaire. The dominant occupational category is private-sector employees, totaling 84 respondents or 33.6%. This is followed by students with 68 respondents (27.2%), civil servants (PNS/ASN) with 62 respondents (24.8%), and entrepreneurs with 36 respondents (14.4%). These results show that most participants are employed in the private sector, with students representing the second-largest group.



Figure 2. Outer Model

The evaluation of the measurement model shows that all indicators demonstrate satisfactory convergent validity. As presented in Figure 2, each indicator exhibits an outer loading greater than the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that all items adequately represent their respective latent constructs and can be retained for subsequent analysis (Hair et al., 2022). In terms of reliability, the internal consistency of the measurement scales is also well established.

As shown in Table 2, cronbach’s alpha coefficients range from 0.822 to 0.907, while composite reliability values vary between 0.882 and 0.935. These figures are all above the acceptable cut-off value of 0.70, demonstrating that the indicators within each construct are measured consistently and possess high reliability (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values reported in Table 2 for all constructs exceed the minimum criterion of 0.50, confirming that each construct is able to capture more than half of the variance of its indicators and thus meets the requirement for convergent validity.

**Table 2.** Outer Loading

Variable	Item	Outer Loadings	AVE	CA	CR
Brand Loyalty	BL 1	0.848	0.652	0.822	0.882
	BL 2	0.768			
	BL 3	0.828			
	BL 4	0.784			
Brand Trust	BT 1	0.824	0.695	0.854	0.901
	BT 2	0.814			
	BT 3	0.860			
	BT 4	0.837			
Perceived Value	PV 1	0.888	0.782	0.907	0.935
	PV 2	0.883			
	PV 3	0.891			
	PV 4	0.877			
Social Media Marketing Activities	SMMA 1	0.896	0.724	0.905	0.929
	SMMA 2	0.856			
	SMMA 3	0.816			
	SMMA 4	0.844			
	SMMA 5	0.842			

Based on the results of discriminant validity testing using the cross-loadings method shown in Table 3, all indicators in this study have met the criteria recommended by Hair et al. (2022). These criteria require that each indicator must have a loading value that is greater on its original construct than on other constructs.

**Table 3.** Cross Loadings

Variable	Item	Brand Loyalty	Brand Trust	Perceived Value	Social Media Marketing Activities
Brand Loyalty	BL 1	0.848	0.426	0.386	0.116
	BL 2	0.768	0.314	0.328	0.098
	BL 3	0.828	0.426	0.289	0.194
	BL 4	0.784	0.355	0.336	0.331
Brand Trust	BT 1	0.391	0.824	0.303	0.387
	BT 2	0.417	0.814	0.299	0.316
	BT 3	0.403	0.860	0.367	0.366
	BT 4	0.372	0.837	0.349	0.389
Perceived Value	PV 1	0.422	0.358	0.888	0.334
	PV 2	0.370	0.389	0.883	0.408
	PV 3	0.324	0.321	0.891	0.357
	PV 4	0.352	0.327	0.877	0.423
Social Media Marketing Activities	SMMA 1	0.202	0.383	0.397	0.896
	SMMA 2	0.209	0.401	0.371	0.856
	SMMA 3	0.153	0.326	0.308	0.816
	SMMA 4	0.182	0.360	0.341	0.844
	SMMA 5	0.195	0.386	0.406	0.842

Referring to the discriminant validity assessment using the Fornell–Larcker Criterion presented in Table 4, all constructs in this study satisfy the standards suggested by Hair et al. (2022). This criterion stipulates that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct, shown on the diagonal of the matrix, must exceed its correlations with other constructs. Furthermore, the evaluation of discriminant validity based on the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) in Table 4 indicates that all pairs of constructs exhibit HTMT values below the recommended threshold of 0.90, as proposed by Hair et al. (2022).

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion & HTMT

Variable	Fornell-Larcker Criterion			Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations			
	Social Media Marketing Activities	Brand Trust	Perceived Value	Brand Loyalty	Brand Loyalty	Brand Trust	Perceived Value
Brand Loyalty	0.808						
Brand Trust	0.474	0.834				0.562	
Perceived Value	0.416	0.396	0.885			0.479	0.448
Social Media Marketing Activities	0.223	0.438	0.431	0.851	0.263	0.496	0.471

Referring to the criteria suggested by Hair et al. (2022), R<sup>2</sup> values between 0.19 and 0.33 indicate a moderate explanatory strength, whereas values below 0.19 reflect a weak level. In line with these benchmarks, the results reveal that the model has a moderate capacity to explain variations in brand loyalty, while its explanatory power for brand trust and perceived value remains in the weak category.

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination R-Square

Construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q Square
Brand Loyalty	0.291	0.282	0.130
Brand Trust	0.192	0.188	0.142
Perceived Value	0.186	0.183	0.182

The predictive relevance assessed through the Q<sup>2</sup> statistic shows values of 0.142 for brand trust, 0.182 for perceived value, and 0.130 for brand loyalty. According to the thresholds proposed by Hair et al. (2022), the first two values fall within the low predictive relevance range, whereas the Q<sup>2</sup> value for brand loyalty approaches the moderate level. The results show that the model has predictive power for all endogenous constructs. The predictive power for brand trust and perceived value is relatively low, while brand loyalty exhibits relatively stronger predictive power, approaching a moderate level. This finding indicates that the model is more effective in predicting brand loyalty than brand trust and perceived value, although overall, the model's predictive power can still be improved. The structural model exhibits adequate predictive relevance, particularly with respect to explaining and predicting brand loyalty.

The overall model fit is further evaluated using the Goodness of Fit (GoF) index, which represents the geometric mean of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the average coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>). Based on the previous results, the average AVE across all constructs is 0.734, and the mean R<sup>2</sup> is 0.223. Consequently, the GoF value is obtained by calculating the square root of the product of these two values using the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{GoF} &= \text{AVE} \times R^2 \\
 \text{GoF} &= \sqrt{(0.734 \times 0.223)} \\
 \text{GoF} &= \sqrt{0.1637} \\
 \text{GoF} &= 0.404
 \end{aligned}$$

A GoF value of 0.404 indicates that this research model has a strong level of Goodness of Fit, referring to the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2022), namely GoF small = 0.10, GoF medium = 0.25, and GoF large = 0.36. Thus, it can be concluded that this research model as a whole has a good ability to explain empirical data. The model is declared valid and has high predictive power at both the outer model and inner model levels, making it suitable for use in the next stage of structural analysis.

Based on the model fit assessment reported in Table 6, the SRMR values are 0.059 for the saturated model and 0.078 for the estimated model. Both values are below the threshold of 0.08, indicating that the model achieves an acceptable fit and that the implied

covariance matrix closely corresponds to the observed data. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) for both models reaches 0.875, which approaches the recommended standard of 0.90, suggesting that the overall fit of the model is adequate, although there is still room for further refinement to attain a more optimal level.

**Table 6.** Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)

Test	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.059	0.078
d_ULS	0.532	0.940
d_G	0.211	0.216
Chi-Square	319.344	317.500
NFI	0.875	0.875

Moreover, the d\_ULS values of 0.532 for the Saturated Model and 0.940 for the Estimated Model, along with the d\_G values of 0.211 and 0.216, indicate relatively minor differences between the model-implied and empirical correlation matrices, reflecting a satisfactory level of model precision. The Chi-square values of 319.344 and 317.500 for the saturated and estimated models, respectively, further confirm that the proposed structural model is well specified. Collectively, these indices demonstrate that the model meets the criteria for good overall fit and is appropriate for proceeding with structural relationship testing.

**Table 7.** Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-statistic	p-value	Result
H1	Social Media Marketing Activities on Brand Loyalty	-0.075	1.203	0.230	Not Accepted
H2	Social Media Marketing Activities on Brand Trust	0.438	9.829	0.000	Accepted
H3	Social Media Marketing Activities on Perceived Value	0.431	9.773	0.000	Accepted
H4	Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty	0.391	6.269	0.000	Accepted
H5	Perceived Value on Brand Loyalty	0.294	5.491	0.000	Accepted
H6	Social Media Marketing Activities → Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	0.171	5.010	0.000	Accepted
H7	Social Media Marketing Activities → Perceived Value → Brand Loyalty	0.127	4.974	0.000	Accepted

Based on Table 7, the empirical results indicate that SMMA do not exert a statistically significant direct effect on brand loyalty ( $\beta = -0.075$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ), leading to the rejection of H1. In contrast, SMMA demonstrates a strong and significant positive impact on brand trust ( $\beta = 0.438$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) as well as on perceived value ( $\beta = 0.431$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), thereby providing support for H2 and H3. In addition, brand trust ( $\beta = 0.391$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and perceived value ( $\beta = 0.294$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) are both found to significantly enhance brand loyalty, confirming H4 and H5. These results suggest that although social media marketing does not directly generate loyal behavior, it contributes indirectly by strengthening consumers' trust and value assessments of the brand. The mediation tests further show that SMMA affects brand loyalty through brand trust ( $\beta = 0.171$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and perceived value ( $\beta = 0.127$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), supporting H6 and H7. This pattern indicates that social media initiatives are effective in fostering loyalty only after they succeed in cultivating consumer trust and reinforcing favorable value perceptions, which subsequently lead to deeper commitment and sustained preference for the brand.

**DISCUSSION**

The results indicate that social media marketing activities do not have a direct effect on brand loyalty among Alfamart customers in Malang City. This outcome is consistent with the view that marketing efforts conducted through social media do not always

translate into immediate loyal behavior, as their influence often operates through intervening variables such as brand trust and perceived value (Fetais et al., 2023). Accordingly, loyalty is not formed solely through repeated exposure to promotional messages, but rather through deeper psychological processes, including confidence in the brand, favorable value perceptions, and positive consumption experiences.

Conversely, the analysis confirms that social media marketing activities significantly enhance brand trust among Alfamart consumers in Malang City. This finding aligns with Hafez (2021), who, in the context of the banking industry in Bangladesh, found that active and engaging social media marketing practices strengthen consumer trust toward brands. When companies provide informative, interactive, and relevant content, consumers tend to view them as reliable and committed to fulfilling their promises. This conclusion is also supported by Althuwaini (2022), who showed that elements of social media marketing, such as customization, entertainment, and promotional features, positively contribute to the development of brand trust and loyalty in Saudi Arabia. In general, brands that offer personalized communication, engaging digital experiences, and appealing promotions are more likely to cultivate stronger trust among their audiences (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019).

The results indicate that social media marketing activities have a significant impact on perceived value among Alfamart customers in Malang City. Through interactive engagement, the provision of useful information, and the delivery of attractive content, consumers develop more favorable evaluations of the benefits offered by the brand. This finding is in line with Harianti (2017), who suggests that social media platforms enable companies to enhance customer value by facilitating information accessibility, encouraging two-way communication, and strengthening emotional ties between brands and consumers. Consequently, more effective and consistent social media marketing practices are likely to elevate consumers' value perceptions. In support of this argument, Chen and Lin (2019) explain that interactions on social media provide functional, social, and emotional advantages, which in turn reinforce perceptions of brand value related to information quality, user experience, and the closeness of the relationship with the firm.

Furthermore, the study verifies that brand trust plays a significant role in shaping brand loyalty among Alfamart consumers in Malang City. This result is consistent with Akoglu and Ozbek (2022), who found that higher levels of trust increase consumers' willingness to sustain long-term relationships, make repeat purchases, and recommend the brand to others. Similarly, Althuwaini (2022) and Paulose and Shakeel (2022) emphasize that when consumers perceive a brand's social media initiatives, such as personalized messages, entertaining content, and promotional campaigns as credible, they are more likely to demonstrate loyal behaviors, including repurchase intentions and positive word of mouth.

The results indicate that perceived value significantly influences brand loyalty among Alfamart customers in Malang City. This finding is in accordance with the study by Cynthia and Keni (2023), which also reports a positive and significant association between perceived value and loyalty. Their investigation of fashion brand consumers in Jakarta shows that when customers judge the benefits received from a brand to outweigh or at least match the sacrifices made in terms of price, time, and effort, they tend to exhibit stronger and more enduring loyalty.

The analysis further confirms that brand trust functions as a mediating factor in the relationship between social media marketing activities and brand loyalty. This outcome is consistent with the work of Ibrahim and Aljarah (2023), who highlight brand trust as a crucial link through which social media marketing influences loyal behavior. The findings imply that firms seeking to cultivate loyalty via social media should focus on enhancing trust by providing reliable, consistent, and relevant content that strengthens consumer confidence and long-term commitment. Moreover, perceived value is also proven to mediate the effect of social media marketing activities on brand loyalty, supporting the results of Wang et al. (2024). Social media initiatives that deliver engaging and meaningful interactions can improve consumers' evaluations of the functional, emotional, and social benefits associated with a brand. As these value perceptions grow,

customers are more likely to remain loyal, repurchase, recommend the brand, and sustain long-term relationships.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study investigates how social media marketing activities affect brand loyalty, considering brand trust and perceived value as mediating factors among Alfamart customers in Malang City. The SEM-PLS results reveal that social media marketing does not exert a statistically significant direct impact on brand loyalty, indicating that mere exposure to or interaction with online brand content is not enough to generate loyal behavior in the short term. Nevertheless, these activities significantly enhance consumers' trust in the brand and their perceptions of value, and both of these constructs are found to play a decisive role in strengthening loyalty. The presence of significant indirect effects demonstrates that the influence of social media marketing on loyalty operates entirely through brand trust and perceived value. This suggests that loyalty emerges from internal cognitive and affective processes, whereby consumers must first feel confident in the brand and recognize meaningful functional, emotional, and social benefits before they are willing to repeatedly purchase, recommend, and prioritize the brand over competitors.

From a managerial perspective, these results imply that Alfamart should not merely focus on increasing the frequency or visibility of social media content, but should prioritize content strategies that strengthen credibility, transparency, and consistency to build trust, as well as messages that clearly communicate economic, functional, and emotional benefits to enhance perceived value. Interactive features, informative promotions, and user-generated content that reflect authentic customer experiences may further reinforce these mediating mechanisms and ultimately foster sustainable brand loyalty. This study has several limitations. First, this study was only conducted on Alfamart customers in Malang City, so the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other regions or retail brands with different consumer characteristics. Second, the variables studied were limited. Future researchers are advised to expand the scope of the study, use mixed methods, and add relevant variables to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the factors that influence brand loyalty in the context of social media marketing.

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