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THE IMPACT OF TIKTOK MARKETING ON BRAND LOYALTY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND TRUST AND EQUITY IN HMNS PARFUME

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Abstract

Leveraging social media as a cornerstone of modern digital marketing has transformed the corporate communication landscape and the development of enduring customer relationships. Nevertheless, intensified promotional efforts and short-term sales responses do not automatically translate into long-term brand loyalty. Focusing on the HMNS fragrance customer base, this quantitative study examines the effect of TikTok social media marketing on brand loyalty, with brand trust and brand equity serving as mediating variables. Utilizing a causal research framework, data were collected from 150 Indonesian TikTok users through purposive non-probability sampling, with respondents required to have been exposed to HMNS marketing content and have knowledge or previous purchasing experience with HMNS. Measurement evaluation, structural testing, and non-parametric bootstrapping were performed using SmartPLS 4.0 under a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. The results indicate that social media marketing has positive and significant effects on brand trust, brand equity, and brand loyalty. Brand trust and brand equity also significantly affect brand loyalty and mediate the relationship between social media marketing and brand loyalty. These findings suggest that TikTok marketing should extend beyond stimulating immediate purchases by strengthening consumer trust, perceived brand value, and post-purchase engagement to support repeat purchasing and sustainable brand loyalty for HMNS products.

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INTRODUCTION

The growth of the digital economy has significantly changed consumer behavior, resulting in a transition from conventional purchasing methods toward digital transactions, driven by increased internet accessibility and continuous technological development (Amory et al., 2025). Given these dynamics, social media functions as a core strategic asset, allowing organizations to enhance customer touchpoints, inspire trust, and sustain long-term consumer relationships that ultimately reinforce brand allegiance (Ali et al., 2025; Haudi et al., 2022). Brand loyalty carries profound significance as committed customers do not merely engage in recurring transactions, but also exhibit deep brand attachment and a sustained inclination to remain dedicated over time (Sutomo et al., 2025).

TikTok has emerged as a prominent social media channel that holds a critical position in contemporary promotional strategies. This platform combines elements of entertainment, information, interaction, and, through the TikTok Shop feature, in-app transactions that allow consumers to purchase directly from the content they watch

(Liu, 2025; Rawangngam et al., 2025). The user base of TikTok in Indonesia experienced exponential growth, expanding from 127 million users recorded in April 2024 to 222.6 million by April 2026. This growth demonstrates that TikTok has strong potential as a digital marketing channel (Rizaty, 2026).

The proliferation of social platforms has fueled heightened commercial competition across the Indonesian perfume sector. According to 2025 market share data, YSL ranks first with a market share of 5.46%, followed by Saff & Co with 3.10% and HMNS with 2.95% (Wafa, 2025). HMNS's position indicates that the brand is quite competitive but continues to face competition from various local and international brands. HMNS was therefore selected as the object of this study for three reasons. First, it trails the second-ranked brand by only 0.15 percentage points, which makes it a close challenger whose standing relative to the two higher-ranked brands depends less on awareness than on its ability to retain the customers it acquires. Second, HMNS actively uses TikTok through visual content, live streams, and collaborations with influencers, so it is a representative case of promotion-driven growth on this platform. Third, fragrance is an experience good whose key attribute, scent, cannot be fully evaluated before use (Nelson, 1970); purchases triggered by online content therefore depend heavily on how far consumers trust the brand and how much value they attach to it, which is what brand trust and brand equity represent in this study. Yet, aggressive digital marketing efforts alongside rising transaction metrics fail to automatically translate into sustainable consumer allegiance (Yudha et al., 2025). According to Kalodata data for the period from February 26 to August 24, 2026 (HMNS Parfume, 2026), HMNS generated total revenue of 24,120 million rupees from 84,180 units sold. Nevertheless, following an initial sales surge during specific promotional campaigns, revenue trajectories plateaued, demonstrating that short-term transaction spikes do not inherently mirror sustainable customer loyalty.

This phenomenon was corroborated by a preliminary survey of 20 participants. The results showed that 80% of respondents had purchased the HMNS fragrance after being influenced by content or reviews on TikTok, but only 25% reported remaining loyal to HMNS and having no intention of switching brands. Furthermore, 75% of respondents had at some point doubted whether the product's scent matched the description provided in the TikTok content. This pattern points to a conversion problem rather than a reach problem: TikTok content is effective in triggering a first purchase, but the purchase does not mature into lasting commitment. It is consistent with evidence that digital stimuli can trigger impulsive buying without guaranteeing continued attachment (Kant & Chaturvedi, 2026), and with research showing that promotion-driven sales can increase consumers' sensitivity to deals and weaken brand equity (Mela et al., 1997; Yoo et al., 2000). The disparity between TikTok promotional drives aimed at stimulating immediate sales and the brand's capacity to foster long-term customer retention is therefore the phenomenon gap addressed in this study.

Existing evidence on this problem is inconclusive. Although TikTok marketing successfully elevates brand trust and image, it demonstrates no direct capacity to drive brand loyalty according to the empirical findings of (Yuanta et al., 2022). In contrast Ali et al (2025) found that social media promotional efforts cultivate both brand trust and brand equity, thereby driving sustained loyalty over time. Furthermore, Ahmada et al. (2026) underscored that mediating variables such as trust and perceived value play a crucial role in amplifying this relationship. These divergent findings define the research gap addressed here in three respects. First, it remains unclear whether TikTok

marketing builds loyalty directly or only through psychological mechanisms. Second, many studies concentrate on sectors such as courier services, hotels, and banking (Hafez, 2021; Yuanta et al., 2022; Yudha et al., 2025) or on a single mediator, typically brand trust, while the simultaneous roles of brand trust and brand equity as parallel mediators have mostly been tested on other platforms such as Instagram (Dani & Susanto, 2023). Third, evidence from the Indonesian perfume category, a typical experience-good market in which promotion-driven purchases and loyalty diverge, is still very limited. Assessing brand trust and brand equity as crucial mediating mechanisms, the present study examines how TikTok social media marketing impacts brand loyalty among HMNS fragrance consumers, an investigation directly prompted by these conflicting research outcomes and current market developments.

The investigation is anchored in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), which explains why exposure to the same marketing content does not necessarily lead to the same behavior. In this study, TikTok social media marketing (entertainment, interaction, trendiness, personalization, and word-of-mouth) acts as the *stimulus*; brand trust and brand equity represent the *organism*, namely the cognitive and affective evaluations that consumers form after being exposed to the stimulus; and brand loyalty is the behavioral *response* (Figure 1). This sequence implies that a sales spike generated by TikTok content, which is a response to the stimulus alone, is sustained only when the stimulus first changes how consumers evaluate the brand. Accordingly, the study contributes by (1) testing the S-O-R chain with two parallel organism variables in a TikTok context, (2) clarifying the direct versus indirect roles of social media marketing in forming loyalty, and (3) providing evidence from the Indonesian local perfume category.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), posits that individual behavior is governed by a three-stage sequential process: the stimulus, internal processes (organism), and the response. Within this framework, a stimulus represents an external input that undergoes internal cognitive and affective evaluation prior to evoking a behavioral outcome (Eroglu et al., 2001; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The framework was later refined to represent the organism as the set of internal states that connects stimuli to responses (Jacoby, 2002). In this research, TikTok social media marketing serves as the external stimulus that shapes consumers' psychological states operationalized through brand trust and brand equity as the "organism" dimensions which ultimately drives brand loyalty as the behavioral response. This approach explains how digital marketing activities can shape consumer loyalty through psychological processes (Ahmada et al., 2026).

The framework has been applied to TikTok in several recent studies. Yudha et al. (2025) positioned social media marketing activities on TikTok as the stimulus, and customer engagement and brand trust as the organism leading to hotel brand loyalty, while Rawangngam et al. (2025) and Liu (2025) used S-O-R to explain how TikTok content characteristics shape consumers' evaluations and purchase-related responses. Building on this stream, the present study specifies brand trust and brand equity as the organism, because trust reflects the confidence that a brand will deliver what it promises (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), whereas brand equity captures the value that consumers attach to the brand name (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993).

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Social Media Marketing

Transcending its primary role as an entertainment platform, social media serves as a fundamental marketing mechanism designed to foster strong, continuous engagement between consumers and brands. As Yuanta et al. (2022) note, social media marketing encompasses promotional strategies across digital platforms designed to facilitate interaction, engagement, and information sharing regarding products and brand identities. Capturing a brand's ability to produce engaging content, leverage trending topics, address individual user preferences, and spark organic advocacy is the core function of this model, which comprises five key dimensions: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, personalization, and word-of-mouth (Dani & Susanto, 2023). These dimensions were originally proposed by Kim & Ko (2012) and have been widely applied to study brand equity and consumer responses on social media (Godey et al., 2016; Koay et al., 2020).

Brand Trust

The willingness of consumers to depend on a brand's promised performance serves as the core of brand trust, capturing their underlying belief in the brand's reliability and capability (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). In modern digital marketing, establishing this trust hinges on consistent messaging, transparent information sharing, and favorable user experiences (Haudi et al., 2022). Trust is also regarded as the foundation of relationship commitment, because it reduces perceived risk and makes continued exchange more attractive (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This study operationalizes brand trust through four dimensions: trust, reliance, honesty, and safety (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Brand Equity

Characterized as the added utility embedded in a branded product, brand equity significantly influences how consumers perceive and react to a brand. From the consumer's perspective, it is the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand (Keller, 1993). Defining brand equity as a collection of brand-related assets and liabilities that either enhance or reduce a product's intrinsic value, the theoretical model of directly underpins this study's methodological setup. To establish brand loyalty as an independent end-point dependent variable, this study operationalizes brand equity strictly through brand awareness, brand associations, and perceived quality, which are the core dimensions of the consumer-based approach once loyalty is excluded (Aaker, 1996; Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

Brand Loyalty

A consumer's unwavering dedication to systematically choose a preferred brand manifests through habitual, long-term repurchase patterns, which serve as the core indicator of brand loyalty. Oliver (1999) explains that loyalty indicates a strong commitment on the part of consumers to continue purchasing a specific product in the future and to maintain their preference for that product. Loyalty is therefore not only repeat patronage but also a favorable attitude toward the brand relative to its alternatives (Dick & Basu, 1994). The measurement of brand loyalty in this research

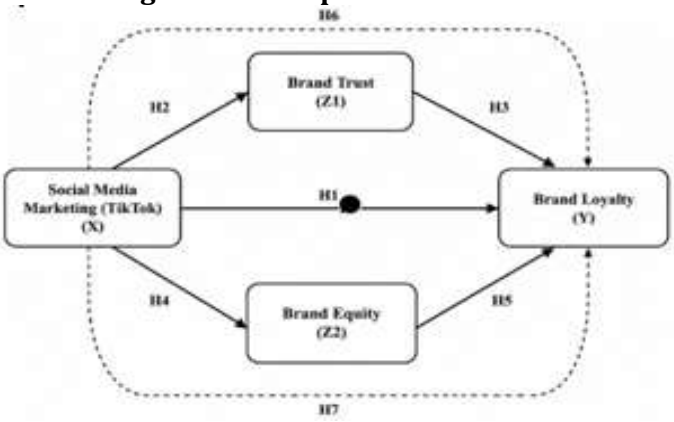
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relies on metrics encompassing repeat purchase intention, first choice (preference), and switching resistance.

Hypothesis Development

Based on the S-O-R framework and the preceding review, the conceptual model in Figure 1 positions social media marketing as the stimulus, brand trust and brand equity as the organism, and brand loyalty as the response. The seven hypotheses are developed as follows.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Social media marketing and brand trust. Interactive, entertaining, and personalized content gives consumers repeated opportunities to check a brand's claims and observe its responsiveness, which reduces uncertainty and builds trust (Haudi et al., 2022; Laroche et al., 2012). Evidence from TikTok settings points in the same direction (Rawangngam et al., 2025; Yuanta et al., 2022). Therefore, H1: social media marketing has a positive effect on brand trust.

Social media marketing and brand equity. Social media activity raises brand awareness and strengthens brand associations and perceived quality, which are the building blocks of brand equity (Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012; Koay et al., 2020). Therefore, H2: social media marketing has a positive effect on brand equity.

Social media marketing and brand loyalty. Engaging social media activity can foster commitment and repeat purchase (Ali et al., 2025; Puspaningrum, 2020), although TikTok-specific evidence is mixed because Yuanta et al. (2022) found that the platform lifted trust but not loyalty. Therefore, H3: social media marketing has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

Brand trust, brand equity, and brand loyalty. Trust reduces perceived risk and the need for further search, which is especially valuable for experience goods such as perfume, and thus encourages continued purchase (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Brand equity gives consumers reasons to prefer a brand and to resist alternatives (Aaker, 1996; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Therefore, H4: brand trust has a positive effect on brand loyalty, and H5: brand equity has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

Mediation. According to the S-O-R logic, a stimulus influences the response through the internal evaluations it creates. Prior studies report that brand trust and brand equity transmit part of the effect of social media marketing to loyalty (Dani & Susanto, 2023; Haudi et al., 2022; Sutomo et al., 2025). Therefore, H6: social media marketing has a positive indirect effect on brand loyalty through brand trust, and H7:

social media marketing has a positive indirect effect on brand loyalty through brand equity.

RESEARCH METHODS

Utilizing a quantitative causal research design (Sugiyono, 2019), this investigation analyzes the structural relationships connecting social media marketing (X), brand trust (Z1), brand equity (Z2), and brand loyalty (Y) within the HMNS perfume consumer base. The model positions TikTok marketing as the independent driver, brand trust and brand equity as dual intervening mechanisms, and brand loyalty as the final outcome. The study focuses on consumers exposed to HMNS content on TikTok who hold direct experience or familiarity with the brand.

The target population includes consumers who are aware of or have encountered HMNS perfume promotional content on TikTok. As the exact size of this population cannot be determined, it is classified as an infinite population. Data collection utilized a purposive non-probability sampling design, wherein respondents were deliberately selected based on qualifying attributes (Sugiyono, 2019). Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the study required respondents who had been exposed to the stimulus, namely HMNS content on TikTok, a condition that cannot be met through random selection from the general population. To be included, a respondent had to meet all of the following criteria: (1) be an Indonesian TikTok user; (2) have viewed or engaged with HMNS perfume marketing content on the platform, such as videos, live streams, or influencer reviews; (3) have knowledge of HMNS perfume products or previous purchasing experience with them; and (4) be at least 17 years old and willing to participate voluntarily. The third criterion sets the qualification boundary on brand familiarity: respondents who had never seen HMNS content or did not know the brand could not give meaningful answers on trust, equity, and loyalty and were therefore not eligible. These criteria were checked through screening questions at the start of the questionnaire.

The final sample comprised 150 respondents. Because the population is infinite and PLS-SEM does not require distributional assumptions, sample adequacy was assessed with PLS-SEM-specific guidelines instead of a population-based formula such as Slovin's. First, the ten-times rule requires a minimum sample of ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at any construct; brand loyalty receives three paths, so at least 30 observations are needed (Hair et al., 2019). Second, the inverse square root method requires $n > (2.486 / |p_min|)^2$, where p_min is the smallest path coefficient expected to be significant at the 5% level with 80% power (Kock & Hadaya, 2018); using the smallest significant path coefficient in this study (0.228), the minimum is 119 respondents. Third, a power analysis in G*Power for a regression with three predictors, a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), $\alpha = 0.05$, and power of 0.80 indicates a minimum of 77 respondents, or 119 respondents for power of 0.95 (Cohen, 1988; Faul et al., 2009). The sample of 150 respondents exceeds all three thresholds and is therefore adequate for the model estimated here.

The questionnaire measured four constructs through 15 indicators adapted from established studies. Social media marketing was measured through five dimensions (Dani & Susanto, 2023; Kim & Ko, 2012), brand trust through four dimensions (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001); brand equity through three dimensions (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Yoo & Donthu, 2001); and brand loyalty through three indicators (Dick & Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1999). Table 1 summarizes the operationalization of each variable.

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Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Indicator (code)	Operational definition	Source
Social Media Marketing (X)	Entertainment (SMM1)	HMNS's TikTok content is perceived as fun, interesting, and enjoyable to watch.	(Dani & Susanto, 2023; Kim & Ko, 2012)
	Interaction (SMM2)	TikTok allows two-way exchange of information and opinions between HMNS and its users.	
	Trendiness (SMM3)	HMNS's content presents up-to-date information and follows current trends.	
	Personalization (SMM4)	HMNS's content and offers are perceived as matching the user's own preferences and needs.	
	Word-of-mouth (SMM5)	Users are willing to share and recommend HMNS's TikTok content to others.	
Brand Trust (Z1)	Trust (BT1)	The consumer believes that HMNS can be trusted.	(Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001)
	Reliance (BT2)	The consumer feels able to rely on HMNS to deliver the promised performance.	
	Honesty (BT3)	The consumer perceives HMNS as honest about its product claims.	
	Safety (BT4)	The consumer feels safe when using HMNS products.	
Brand Equity (Z2)	Brand awareness (BE1)	The consumer can recognize and recall HMNS within the perfume category.	(Aaker, 1991, 1996; Yoo & Donthu, 2001)
	Brand associations (BE2)	The consumer links HMNS with distinctive images and associations.	
	Perceived quality (BE3)	The consumer judges HMNS products to be of good overall quality.	
Brand Loyalty (Y)	Repurchase intention (BL1)	The consumer intends to buy HMNS products again in the future.	(Dick & Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1999)
	First choice (BL2)	The consumer prefers HMNS as the first choice among perfume brands.	
	Switching resistance (BL3)	The consumer is unwilling to switch to other perfume brands.	

Source: Developed by the authors based on the studies cited.

Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree (SS)," "Agree (S)," "Neutral (N)," "Disagree (TS)," to "Strongly Disagree (STS)." A five-point format was chosen over a seven-point alternative for three reasons. It places a lower cognitive burden on respondents who complete the questionnaire on mobile devices, which is typical of TikTok users. Evidence suggests that scales with five and seven categories yield comparable data quality, whereas longer formats add respondent burden without a clear gain in measurement quality (Dawes, 2008; Revilla et al., 2014). Finally, a five-point scale keeps the response options distinct and easy to interpret, which reduces the risk of careless answering in a long multi-construct questionnaire.

Before wide distribution, the questionnaire was pretested to assess the readability of its statements. A pilot version was completed by a small group of respondents who met the sampling criteria, and they were asked to indicate any statement that was unclear, too long, or open to more than one interpretation. Wording was then simplified on the basis of their feedback, in line with recommendations for

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reducing ambiguity and response error in self-report instruments (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Data were collected online through a structured questionnaire. To limit perfunctory responses, several quality-control measures were applied: (1) screening questions at the beginning of the questionnaire allowed only respondents who had seen HMNS content on TikTok and were familiar with the brand to continue; (2) all items were mandatory and each respondent could submit the questionnaire only once; (3) the statements were grouped by construct and kept as short as possible to limit fatigue; and (4) submissions were checked before analysis, and responses with identical answers across all items or with implausibly short completion times were removed.

Convergent validity, discriminant validity, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability were rigorously checked to confirm outer model robustness, serving as the foundation for a broader PLS-SEM procedure in SmartPLS. This analytical workflow combined descriptive statistics across four distinct stages: measurement model assessment, structural model testing, mediation analysis, and final hypothesis evaluation. Following (Hair et al., 2021), inner model structural relationships were evaluated using path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), and effect sizes (f^2). Finally, non-parametric bootstrapping determined hypothesis significance using standard thresholds of $p < 0.05$ and $t > 1.96$ (Hair et al., 2019). The magnitude of f^2 was interpreted using the thresholds of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 for small, medium, and large effects, respectively (Cohen, 1988), and convergent validity was assessed with the AVE criterion of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the Descriptive Analysis of Respondents

Based on the demographic profile, a total of 150 participants completed the survey instrument. The majority of respondents were women, totaling 102 (68%), while men numbered 48 (32%). By age, the 17–21 age group (62 respondents, 41.3%) and the 22–26 age group (57 respondents, 38%) accounted for the majority, indicating that most respondents were young adults. Regarding income, 39 respondents (26%), representing a majority, earned between 2,000,000 and 3,999,999 rupiah.

By employment status, the majority of respondents were employees of private companies (68, 45.3%) and students (58, 38.7%). Meanwhile, by place of residence, the majority of respondents were from Jakarta (50 people, 33.3%) and Tangerang (48 people, 32%). Regarding purchase frequency, the majority of respondents had purchased the product 2–3 times (67 people, 44.7%), indicating that they had experience using the surveyed product.

Descriptive Analysis Results of Research Variables

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Indicator	Item	Number of Respondents	Mean Indicator	Mean	Description
		Social Media Marketing			
Entertainment	SMM1	150	3.847		
Interaction	SMM2	150	3.780		
Trendiness	SMM3	150	3.830	3.795	High
Personalization	SMM4	150	3.740		
Word-of-Mouth	SMM5	150	3.780		
		Brand Trust			

Trust	BT1	150	3.880	3.850	High
Rely	BT2	150	3.847		
Honest	BT3	150	3.813		
Safe	BT4	150	3.860		
Brand Equity					
Brand Awareness	BE1	150	3.827	3.811	High
Brand Associations	BE2	150	3.813		
Perceived Quality	BE3	150	3.793		
Brand Loyalty					
Repurchase Intention	BL1	150	3.767	3.794	High
First Choice	BL2	150	3.807		
Switching Resistance	BL3	150	3.807		

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 Data Processing Results

Descriptive statistical analysis reveals that all evaluated constructs achieved average scores corresponding to the "high" classification. The variable “Social Media Marketing on TikTok” (X) recorded a mean value of 3.795; the SMM1 indicator had the highest value (3.847), while the SMM4 indicator had the lowest value (3.740). These findings demonstrate that HMNS's TikTok promotional initiatives garnered favorable audience perceptions, particularly regarding content dissemination and social media consumer interaction. Furthermore, the “Brand Trust” variable (Z1) recorded the highest average score compared to the other constructs, at 3.850, with indicator BT1 achieving the highest score of 3.880. This indicates that the TikTok marketing strategy helps strengthen consumer trust in the HMNS brand.

The mean value for the “Brand Equity” (Z2) variable was 3.811, with indicator BE1 showing the highest value at 3.827. Meanwhile, the mean value for the “Brand Loyalty” (Y) variable was 3.794, with indicators BL2 and BL3 showing the highest values at 3.807. These results indicate that respondents hold positive views regarding the brand’s value and their level of loyalty toward HMNS products. Taken together, the descriptive results demonstrate favorable consumer reception toward HMNS's TikTok promotional strategies, laying a strong foundation for building brand trust and brand equity to strengthen long-term brand loyalty.

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

In this study, the measurement model (outer model) evaluation comprises three sequential stages:

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicator	*Loading Factor*	AVE	Description
“Social Media Marketing (X)”	SMM1	0.897	0.796	Valid
	SMM2	0.898		Valid
	SMM3	0.886		Valid
	SMM4	0.897		Valid
	SMM5	0.884		Valid
“Brand Trust (Z1)”	BT1	0.891	0.793	Valid
	BT2	0.891		Valid
	BT3	0.870		Valid
	BT4	0.910		Valid
“Brand Equity (Z2)”	BE1	0.908	0.840	Valid
	BE2	0.935		Valid
	BE3	0.907		Valid
“Brand Loyalty (Y)”	BL1	0.926	0.828	Valid
	BL2	0.910		Valid

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Variable	Indicator	*Loading Factor*	AVE	Description
	BL3	0.894		Valid

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 Data Processing Results

The necessary empirical requirements for construct validity were fully satisfied across all indicators, which consistently produced factor loadings well over 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) estimates exceeding 0.50. Consequently, these results confirm that every item met the required statistical thresholds to establish robust convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Test Results

Indicator	Social Media Marketing	Brand Trust	Brand Equity	Brand Loyalty	Description
SMM1	0.897	0.612	0.543	0.539	Valid
SMM2	0.898	0.572	0.511	0.509	Valid
SMM3	0.886	0.612	0.532	0.533	Valid
SMM4	0.897	0.541	0.479	0.489	Valid
SMM5	0.884	0.545	0.497	0.499	Valid
BT1	0.582	0.891	0.540	0.553	Valid
BT2	0.616	0.891	0.510	0.528	Valid
BT3	0.502	0.870	0.564	0.542	Valid
BT4	0.601	0.910	0.546	0.529	Valid
BE1	0.474	0.549	0.908	0.501	Valid
BE2	0.611	0.579	0.935	0.549	Valid
BE3	0.483	0.535	0.907	0.472	Valid
BL1	0.564	0.542	0.483	0.926	Valid
BL2	0.518	0.571	0.555	0.910	Valid
BL3	0.491	0.534	0.473	0.894	Valid

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 Data Processing Results

The standards for discriminant validity are fully met for this variable's indicators, as empirical findings reveal that loading values on their designated construct remain superior to all cross-loadings observed across other constructs in the model, demonstrating clear item specificity.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Description
"Social Media Marketing"	0.936	0.951	Reliable
"Brand Trust"	0.913	0.939	Reliable
"Brand Equity"	0.905	0.940	Reliable
"Brand Loyalty"	0.896	0.935	Reliable

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 Data Processing Results

Strong construct reliability is confirmed across the research model, as all latent constructs successfully reached or exceeded the required 0.70 threshold for Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Consequently, the measurement instrument displays high stability and internal consistency, proving suitable for subsequent structural model testing.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Upon validating the measurement model, empirical analysis advances to structural (inner) model evaluation. This procedure investigates hypothesized linkages between constructs aligned with the conceptual foundation. Within this framework,

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inner model testing serves to ascertain relationship significance, evaluate path coefficients, and measure variance explained via R^2 values. Furthermore, f^2 effect size calculations determine the magnitude of contribution that exogenous predictor constructs exert on targeted endogenous variables.

Table 6. R-Square Coefficient Test Results

Variables	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
"Brand Trust"	0.419	0.415
"Brand Equity"	0.331	0.327
"Brand Loyalty"	0.454	0.443

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 Data Processing Results

A moderate level of explanatory power is established for the framework, wherein 41.9% of the variance in brand trust (R^2 = 0.419) and 33.1% in brand equity (R^2 = 0.331) are captured by social media marketing, while the remaining shares (58.1% and 66.9%) are governed by exogenous factors outside this research.

Meanwhile, the R^2 score for brand loyalty reached 0.454, indicating that 45.4% of its total variance is jointly explained by social media marketing, brand trust, and brand equity, leaving 54.6% driven by unexamined factors. Furthermore, the close alignment between R^2 and Adjusted R^2 metrics highlights the structural stability and reliability of the model's predictive power.

Table 7. F-Square Effect Size Test Results

Variable	Effect Size	Description
"Social Media Marketing → Brand Trust"	0.722	Large
"Social Media Marketing → Brand Equity"	0.495	Large
"Social Media Marketing → Brand Loyalty"	0.059	Small
"Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty"	0.085	Small
"Brand Equity → Brand Loyalty"	0.055	Small

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 Data Processing Results

Social media marketing has large effects on brand trust (f^2 = 0.722) and brand equity (f^2 = 0.495), whereas its direct effect on brand loyalty (f^2 = 0.059) and the effects of brand trust (f^2 = 0.085) and brand equity (f^2 = 0.055) on brand loyalty fall in the small range (Cohen, 1988). Although small, all three exceed the 0.02 minimum for a meaningful contribution. This pattern shows that social media marketing works mainly by building the organism (trust and equity) and not by forcing loyalty directly. Among the three predictors of brand loyalty, brand trust makes the largest unique contribution.

The difference between f^2 and the path coefficient should not be read as a contradiction, because the two statistics answer different questions. The path coefficient (β) is the standardized estimate of how much brand loyalty changes when a predictor changes by one standard deviation while the other predictors are held constant, and its significance is judged through bootstrapping; it shows the direction, strength, and statistical reliability of a relationship. In contrast, f^2 expresses how much R^2 of the endogenous construct falls when a predictor is removed from the model, relative to the variance left unexplained (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2019), and therefore reflects the unique explanatory contribution of that predictor. Because social media marketing is strongly related to brand trust and brand equity (it explains 41.9% and 33.1% of their variance, Table 6), much of the variance it shares with brand loyalty is also captured by the two mediators. Once the mediators are in the model, removing the direct path therefore lowers R^2 only slightly even when the path itself is statistically

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significant. Statistical significance depends on the ratio of the estimate to its standard error, whereas effect size depends on the variance uniquely explained, so a significant path with a small f^2 is common in mediation models estimated on moderately large samples (Sullivan & Feinn, 2012). The direct path (β = 0.248) is accordingly interpreted as a modest effect, while most of the influence of social media marketing on brand loyalty is transmitted through brand trust and brand equity (Table 9).

Hypothesis Testing Results

Analyzing direct and indirect paths is essential to uncover how independent variables influence target outcomes through specified mediators. This analysis quantifies relationship strengths and directions, providing the foundational evidence required to test the conceptual hypotheses.

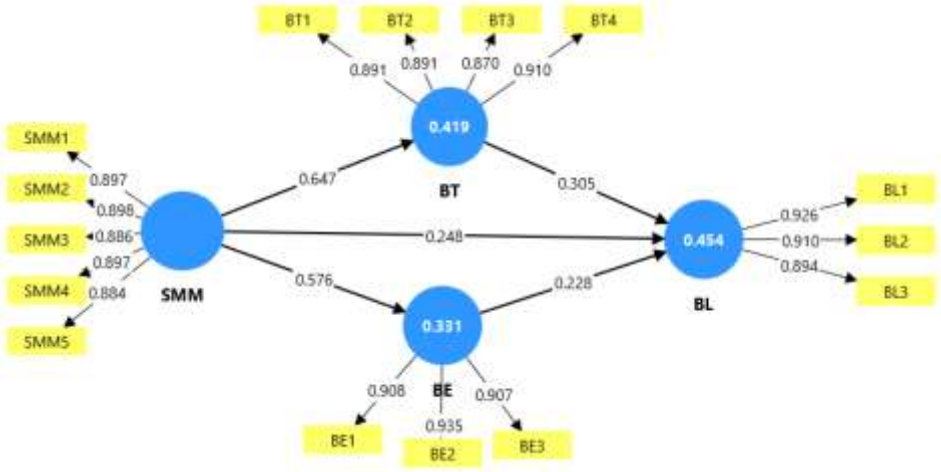


Figure 2. Data Testing Results

Achieving a t-statistic above 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05 satisfies the 5% alpha decision rule, providing the necessary empirical grounds to reject the null hypothesis (H0) and support the alternative hypothesis (Ha).

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing Results (Direct Effects)

Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standar Deviation	T Statistics	P Value
"Social Media Marketing → Brand Trust"	0.647	0.645	0.066	9.821	0.000
"Social Media Marketing → Brand Equity"	0.576	0.572	0.074	7.757	0.000
"Social Media Marketing → Brand Loyalty"	0.248	0.246	0.089	2.790	0.005
"Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty"	0.305	0.302	0.094	3.252	0.001
"Brand Equity → Brand Loyalty"	0.228	0.229	0.086	2.639	0.008

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 Data Processing Results

The crucial role of social media marketing in advancing key brand outcomes is empirically validated through its positive and significant direct relationships with brand trust, brand equity, and brand loyalty. Specifically, social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand trust with a path coefficient of 0.647 (T-statistic = 9.821, P-value = 0.000) and on brand equity with a path coefficient of 0.576 (T-statistic =

7.757, P-value = 0.000). Furthermore, social media marketing has a positive and significant direct effect on brand loyalty with a path coefficient of 0.248 (T-statistic = 2.790, P-value = 0.005). Brand trust also has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.305 (T-statistic = 3.252, P-value = 0.001). Meanwhile, brand equity has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty with a path coefficient of 0.228 (T-statistic = 2.639, P-value = 0.008). These findings indicate that social media marketing, brand trust, and brand equity each contribute positively to strengthening brand loyalty.

Table 9. Indirect and Total Effects of Social Media Marketing on Brand Loyalty

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standar Deviation	T Statistics	P Value
"Social Media Marketing → Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty"	0.198	0.195	0.066	3.010	0.003
"Social Media Marketing → Brand Equity → Brand Loyalty"	0.131	0.132	0.054	2.410	0.016
"Social Media Marketing → Brand Loyalty (Total Effect)"	0.577	0.573	0.075	7.658	0.000

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 Data Processing Results

Empirical support for the mediating roles of brand trust and brand equity is established, demonstrating that social media marketing influences brand loyalty both directly and indirectly through these internal brand mechanisms. The indirect effect through brand trust is 0.198 (T-statistic = 3.010, P-value = 0.003), indicating a positive and significant mediating effect. Similarly, the indirect effect through brand equity is 0.131 (T-statistic = 2.410, P-value = 0.016), also indicating a positive and significant mediating effect. The combined indirect effect is 0.329, while the direct effect of social media marketing on brand loyalty is 0.248, resulting in a total effect of 0.577 (T-statistic = 7.658, P-value = 0.000). Approximately 57% of the total effect is accounted for by the indirect effects through brand trust and brand equity. Since both the direct and indirect effects are positive and significant, the mediation pattern can be classified as complementary partial (Zhao et al., 2010).

All seven hypotheses are supported (Table 10). Their implications are discussed in the next section.

Table 10. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Decisions

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient	Decision
H1	Social Media Marketing → Brand Trust	0.647	Supported
H2	Social Media Marketing → Brand Equity	0.576	Supported
H3	Social Media Marketing → Brand Loyalty	0.248	Supported
H4	Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	0.305	Supported
H5	Brand Equity → Brand Loyalty	0.228	Supported
H6	Social Media Marketing → Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	0.198	Supported
H7	Social Media Marketing → Brand Equity → Brand Loyalty	0.131	Supported

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 Data Processing Results

TikTok social media marketing is a strong stimulus for both organism variables: it explains 41.9% of the variance in brand trust and 33.1% in brand equity (Table 6), and the corresponding effect sizes are the largest in the model (Table 7). This is consistent with studies reporting that social media activity builds trust and equity in Instagram-based consumer brands (Dani & Susanto, 2023; Haudi et al., 2022; Sutomo et al., 2025), in banking (Hafez, 2021), and in TikTok-based services (Yuanta et al., 2022; Yudha et al., 2025). The pattern is particularly plausible for fragrance. Scent is an

experience attribute that cannot be inspected through a short video, so consumers must infer product quality from indirect cues (Nelson, 1970). On TikTok such cues are supplied by creator reviews, live-stream demonstrations, and comment-section exchanges, which correspond to the interaction, entertainment, and word-of-mouth dimensions of social media marketing (Kim & Ko, 2012). The preliminary survey, in which three-quarters of respondents had doubted whether the scent matched the content description, shows that this uncertainty is real. The high mean for brand trust (3.850, the highest among the constructs) and its large effect size suggest that HMNS's content partly resolves it.

Prior evidence on the direct effect of social media marketing on loyalty is divided. Ali et al (2025) and Puspaningrum (2020) report that it supports loyalty, whereas Yuanta et al. (2022) found that TikTok marketing raised trust and image for a courier brand but did not build loyalty directly. The present results sit between these positions. The direct effect of social media marketing on brand loyalty is positive but small in effect size (f^2 = 0.059), and about 57% of its total effect (0.329 of 0.577) is transmitted through brand trust and brand equity. This suggests that the divergent findings in the literature are not necessarily contradictory: whether a direct effect is detected depends on how much of the stimulus effect is already absorbed by the organism variables and on the product context. In a service for which consumers may prioritize price and delivery performance, content has little room to build loyalty directly, whereas for a symbolic, experience-based product such as perfume the content carries more information about quality and identity. This interpretation should be tested in comparative designs.

Brand trust carried a larger share of the effect on loyalty than brand equity (β = 0.305 versus 0.228; indirect effects of 0.198 versus 0.131). Trust-based explanations have long argued that confidence in a partner's reliability reduces perceived risk and makes continued exchange the default choice (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In the Indonesian local perfume segment, where HMNS competes with various local and international brands and consumers can switch easily, reliability is likely to be a more decisive asset than awareness or associations, which were already the best-rated equity facets (Table 2). The descriptive results point in the same direction: repurchase intention (BL1) was the lowest loyalty indicator (3.767) and personalization (SMM4) the lowest stimulus indicator (3.740). Because loyalty requires both a favorable attitude and repeat patronage (Dick & Basu, 1994), a weak repurchase signal suggests that the favorable attitude created by content has not yet been fully converted into patronage, and that the content is less successful in tailoring the relationship to individual consumers.

These findings help to explain the pattern that motivated the study. A purchase triggered by a campaign is a response to the stimulus alone; it becomes durable only if the stimulus has first changed how consumers evaluate the brand. Research on marketing-mix effects shows that promotion-heavy strategies can raise short-term sales while weakening brand equity and increasing sensitivity to deals (Mela et al., 1997; Yoo et al., 2000). In the present data, the content-driven stimulus does build trust and equity, and these in turn predict loyalty, but the combined explanatory power for loyalty is moderate (R^2 = 0.454), so a substantial share of loyalty (54.6%) is shaped by factors outside TikTok marketing, such as product performance after purchase, price, and competing offers. The plateau in HMNS's revenue after campaign surges is therefore

consistent with a situation in which the stimulus is effective in generating trial but needs to be complemented by post-purchase experiences that sustain trust and equity.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how TikTok social media marketing influences brand loyalty among HMNS consumers through brand trust and brand equity, using the S-O-R framework. Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand trust and brand equity, and both mediators in turn support brand loyalty. The direct effect of social media marketing on brand loyalty is positive but small in effect size, indicating that a substantial proportion of its total effect is transmitted through the two mediators.

These results address the gap raised in the Introduction. The plateau in sales that followed TikTok campaigns is better understood as a problem of conversion than of attention: content that only triggers immediate transactions, without reducing uncertainty about scent and quality, may not be sufficient to activate the loyalty mechanism. To turn campaign-driven sales into sustainable customer loyalty and repeat purchases, HMNS needs to use TikTok not only to stimulate purchases but also to accumulate trust and brand value, because these two organism variables carry most of the influence of social media marketing on loyalty.

Theoretical Contribution

The study extends S-O-R theory to the TikTok context in three ways. First, it shows that the stimulus is not a single-step driver of the response but is largely processed through two parallel organism variables, one relational (brand trust) and one value-based (brand equity). Second, the relational organism carries a larger share of the transmitted effect than the value-based one. Third, the stimulus retains a modest direct effect, so the response is only partially mediated. Together, these findings help to reconcile divergent results on the direct effect of social media marketing on loyalty and demonstrate the importance of the organism stage in explaining how TikTok marketing is translated into brand loyalty.

Managerial Implications

For marketers of beauty and perfume products, four implications follow. First, content should reduce scent uncertainty through clear scent descriptions, fragrance comparisons, creator reviews, and interactive sessions. Second, brand trust should be strengthened through consistent claims, transparent information, and responsive complaint handling, as it contributes most to loyalty. Third, personalization should be improved by tailoring content to consumer segments and providing discovery options. Fourth, engagement should continue after purchase through follow-up content, reminders, and repurchase incentives without relying on heavy discounts. Therefore, campaign success should be evaluated not only through sales but also through trust, equity, and repurchase indicators.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be noted. The study uses a cross-sectional design and a purposive non Several limitations should be noted. The study uses a cross-sectional design and a purposive non-probability sample of 150 respondents, most of whom were young (79.3% aged 17–26) and lived in Jakarta or Tangerang (65.3%), which limits

generalization. The sample size may also limit the statistical power to detect relatively small effects on the loyalty paths. Loyalty was measured through self-reported intentions and not through actual repurchase behavior, so the link to sales is inferred. The study examines a single brand on a single platform and leaves 54.6% of the variance in brand loyalty unexplained, as price, satisfaction, product performance, and promotion intensity were not modeled.

Future research could (1) use longitudinal or panel designs that link content exposure to actual repurchase records; (2) compare several brands, product categories, and platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube; (3) add satisfaction, brand love, customer engagement, price sensitivity, or promotion intensity as additional mediators or moderators; (4) conduct multi-group analyses by age, gender, and purchase frequency; and (5) experimentally test the effects of specific content types. These approaches could provide stronger evidence of how TikTok marketing can move consumers from campaign-driven purchases toward sustainable brand loyalty and repeat purchasing.

Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The authors declare that generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were not used in the development of the research design, data collection, data analysis, or formulation of the scientific conclusions of this study. AI-assisted tools were only used in a limited manner for language refinement and proofreading to improve the clarity and readability of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Author Contributions

AS contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, data collection, data analysis, and preparation of the initial manuscript. MZS contributed to research supervision, validation, critical review of the manuscript, and final approval of the version to be published. Both authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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