

# FROM LIKES TO LOYALTY: THE INTERPLAY OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN SHAPING EDUCATION INSTITUTION BRAND ATTITUDE AND LOYALTY

<sup>1</sup>Sandra J.R. Kainde, <sup>2</sup>Deske W. Mandagi

<sup>1</sup>Economic Education, Faculty of Education, Universitas Klabat, Manado, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Magister Management, Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Klabat, Manado, Indonesia

## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

Social media marketing,  
brand attitude,  
brand loyalty,  
education institution

## ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on brand loyalty of education institutions. With the rising utilization of social media platforms in higher education, comprehending the interconnection between social media marketing and brand loyalty has become increasingly crucial. The research employs a quantitative approach involving a sample of 250 senior high school students, utilizing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique in SmartPLS software to analyze the collected data. The study aims to examine the influence of SMM activities on students' attitude towards educational institutions brand and their loyalty. The findings reveal that SMM plays a vital role in shaping students' attitudes towards educational institutions and in building their loyalty towards those institutions. Furthermore, the influence of SMM on brand loyalty is mediated by brand attitude. The study concludes with practical implications for educational marketers to effectively utilize social media marketing strategies to establish brand loyalty and enhance the overall reputation of their institution.

### E-mail:

[sandrapasuhuk@unklab.ac.id](mailto:sandrapasuhuk@unklab.ac.id)  
[deskemandagi@unklab.ac.id](mailto:deskemandagi@unklab.ac.id)

Copyright © 2023 Economic Journal. All rights reserved.  
is Licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License \(CC BY-NC 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The interplay of social media marketing (SMM) and branding has been a growing area of research in recent years. Scholars have explored how social media platforms can be used to create and enhance brand gestalt (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021; Siddik et al., 2022), awareness (Anjel et al., 2022; Hutter et al., 2013; Dedeoğlu et al., 2020); brand image (Anjel et al., 2022; Waworuntu et al., 2022); brand loyalty (Mandagi, 2023; Mandagi & Aseng, 2021) and customer behavior (Hutter et al., 2013; Poluan et al., 2022; Waworuntu et al., 2022). SMM is a new form of marketing that involves the use of social media platforms refers to the use of social media platforms and social networks to promote products or services, to engage with customers and build relationships with them (Tuten and Solomon, 2017). Meanwhile, Kim and Ko (2012) argue that social media marketing involves creating and sharing content on social media platforms to engage with customers, build brand awareness, and drive website traffic. Kim and Ko also highlight the importance of using social media to create two-way communication with customers and to monitor and respond to customer feedback.

Branding is an important aspect for educational institutions as it helps to create a unique identity and reputation, differentiate from competitors, and attract prospective students and stakeholders. Mampaey et al., (2015) argue that branding is an essential element of institutional strategy, as it allows universities to differentiate themselves and compete in a crowded and complex higher education landscape. Meanwhile, Williams & Omar (2014) argue that the branding process is crucial for creating and maintaining a strong brand image and reputation, which in turn can enhance the perceived value and competitiveness of the institution. Furthermore, brand is an important factor in students' decision-making process, as it can help to differentiate institutions, communicate their unique value proposition, and create a sense of community and identity among stakeholders (Joseph et al., 2012).

In today's digital age, social media has become an integral part of our lives. Educational institutions are no exception to this trend, with a growing number of institutions utilizing social media platforms to promote their brand and engage with their target audience (Anjel et al., 2022). Social media marketing has become a vital tool for educational institutions to build brand loyalty and reputation (del Rocío et al., 2022). Zailskaitė-Jakstė & Kuvykaite (2012) highlight that social media plays a crucial role in promoting

*From Likes To Loyalty: The Interplay Of Social Media Marketing In Shaping Education Institution Brand Attitude And Loyalty. Sandra J.R. Kainde, et al*

education institutions and encourages education institutions to embrace social media as a valuable communication tool. Further, Thornton (2017) argues that social media has become a crucial factor in students' decision-making process, as it allows them to gather information, compare options, and interact with peers and institutions. Del Rocío et al., 2022 suggest that educational institutions should prioritize social media engagement as a key component of their marketing and communication strategies, in order to build stronger relationships with their target audiences and enhance institutional reputation and visibility (del Rocío et al., 2022). However, the relationship between social media marketing and education institution brand loyalty is complex and requires in-depth investigation. While there are numerous studies that explore the importance of branding in the context of education institution, there is a need for more research that examines the effectiveness of SMM on destination branding.

This research aims to explore the interplay of social media marketing in shaping education institution brand loyalty. With the increasing usage of social media platforms in higher education, understanding the impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty has become increasingly important. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain insights into the ways in which social media marketing activities shape students' perceptions of educational institutions and influence their loyalty. The findings of this study will provide educational marketers with practical implications on how to effectively use social media marketing strategies to establish brand loyalty and enhance the overall reputation of their institution.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Social Media Marketing**

In today's digital age, social media has become an integral part of our lives. Social media refers to 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, such as text, images, videos, and audio (Tuten and Solomon, 2017). Social media has become an important communication channel for individuals, businesses, and organizations of all sizes. Social media has evolved as the most popular online platform, where users can easily interact, communicate, or exchange information. According to Evans et al. (2021), social media itself is an online tool where users can easily participate, share and create content including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums or virtual worlds. Social media itself is currently a trend today which has an impact on the development of the human mindset, even today most of the world's population has made social media as an important part of their lives. Most of the world's population has made social media a necessity of life.

Social media marketing (SMM) in particular is the use of social media platforms to promote a product, service, or brand. It involves creating and sharing content on social media platforms, engaging with followers and customers, and running advertising campaigns targeted to specific audiences (Evans et al., 2021). It encompasses paid advertising, influencer marketing, and social media analytics to measure and improve campaign effectiveness which aims to increase brand awareness, drive website traffic, and ultimately, generate sales or leads for a business (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

SMM has a significant impact on consumer behavior by providing access to information about products and services that they may not have had access to otherwise (Evans et al., 2021). Additionally, social media enables consumers to connect with brands (Sijabat et al., 2022) that can influence their purchasing decisions (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021; Siddik et al., 2022; ). This can also lead to increased brand loyalty and advocacy (Mandagi, 2023). Another way social media impacts consumer behavior is by enabling them to research products and services before making a purchase, which can impact their decision-making process (Waworuntu et al., 2022; Furthermore, social media can lead to the formation of image, awareness attitude, expectations and satisfaction toward a brand (Dedeoğlu et al, 2020; Hutter et al., 2013; Poluan et al., 2022). It is therefore important for businesses to understand the impact of social media on consumer behavior and leverage it effectively to achieve their marketing objectives (Anjel et al., 2022).

Educational institutions are no exception to this trend, with a growing number of institutions utilizing social media platforms to promote their brand and engage with their target audience (Anjel et al., 2022). Social media marketing has become a vital tool for educational institutions to build brand loyalty and reputation (del Rocío et al., 2022). Zailskaitė-Jakstė & Kuvykaite (2012) highlight that social media plays a crucial role in promoting education institutions and encourages education institutions to embrace social media as a valuable communication tool. Further, Thornton (2017) argues that social media has become a crucial factor in students' decision-making process, as it allows them to gather information,

compare options, and interact with peers and institutions. Del Rocío et al., 2022 suggest that educational institutions should prioritize social media engagement as a key component of their marketing and communication strategies, in order to build stronger relationships with their target audiences and enhance institutional reputation and visibility (del Rocío et al., 2022). However, the relationship between social media marketing and education institution brand loyalty is complex and requires in-depth investigation. While there are numerous studies that explore the importance of branding in the context of education institution, there is a need for more research that examines the effectiveness of SMM on destination branding

### **SMM and Brand Attitude**

Brand attitude refers to a consumer's overall evaluation or assessment of a brand based on their beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions towards it Aaker & Jacobson (2001). Zeithaml (1988) noted that brand attitude is beliefs about product-related attributes and the functional and experiential benefits, consistent with work on perceived quality. In addition, research conducted by Rositter and Percy (1987) stated brand attitude as a belief about non-product-related attributes and symbolic benefits. Percy and Rossiter (1992) considered attitude as referring to a consumer's overall evaluation of a brand relating to its capacity to meet a currently relevant involvement/motivation, that is, brand attitude relies on the currently acceptable involvement/motivation. It is an important concept in marketing as it helps businesses understand how consumers perceive their brand, and how they may respond to marketing efforts which also essential factor developing a positive brand attitude and brand image to increase brand equity (Abin et al., 2022; Anjel et al., 2022; Faircloth et al., 2021; Foroudi, 2019). According to Aaker & Jacobson (2001) brand attitude is important because it often helps form consumers' brand choices. The authors observed that brand attitude is a function of the associated attributes and benefits that make the brand prominent.

SMM can be an effective tool for engaging with the community, providing information, and receiving feedback, leading to increased brand attitude (Poluan et al., 2022). Furthermore, the use of social media can enhance brand reputation and credibility by providing a platform for customers to share their positive experiences and recommendations with others in their network, thus amplifying the impact of the brand's marketing efforts. Based on this discussion, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

**H1:** SMM positively affects brand attitude of educational institutions.

### **SMM and Brand Loyalty**

Brand loyalty has become a crucial component of marketing strategy in the highly competitive corporate world of today. Brand loyalty is the degree to which consumers are loyal to a specific brand and regularly prefer it over competing products (Knox & Walker, 2001). It is a behavioral reaction that consumers display over time that is not random, incorporates cognitive, emotional, and conative processes, and expresses their inclination to stick with the same brand despite having alternative options. Tucker (1964). Brand loyalty is a crucial idea in marketing since it has several advantages for both the company and the brand. One of the main advantages of brand loyalty is that it encourages repeat purchases and a higher customer lifetime value because loyal customers are more likely to recommend the brand to others and are less likely to switch to competitors (Kotler et al., 2020). This results in higher sales and revenue for the company.

The link between SMM and brand loyalty is well documented in the marketing literature. SMM facilitates brand loyalty, as it allows organizations to create and maintain a consistent and engaging presence on social media platforms, which can enhance brand awareness, customer satisfaction, and loyalty (Poluan et al., 2022; Waworuntu et al., 2022; Wulus et al., 2022). Social media provides an opportunity for organizations to connect with their target audience on a more personal level, providing customers with a sense of community and connection with the brand. Mandagi et al., (2022) noted that social media enables online networking, information sharing, and brand community, leading to the formulation of brand loyalty. Recent studies in marketing also provide supporting evidence for the positive effect of SMM on customer' loyalty behavior, such as word of mouth (e.g., Mandagi & Aseng., 2021), intention to purchase (e.g., Waworuntu et al., 2022), and intention to recommend (e.g., Mandagi & Aseng., 2021). Consequently, the following hypotheses is formulated:

**H2:** SMM positively affects brand loyalty of educational institutions.

### Brand Attitude and Brand Loyalty

Recent scholarly articles provide evidence for a positive relationship between brand attitude and brand loyalty in the education institution context. For instance, a study by Hwang et al., (2021) found that brand attitude has a significant positive effect on brand loyalty among consumers. Similarly, a study by Chuenban (2021) found that a positive brand attitude is a strong predictor of brand loyalty among consumers:

**H3:** Brand attitude positively affects brand loyalty of educational institutions.

Since it has been hypothesis that SMM has a direct impact on brand loyalty and brand attitude, and at the same time directly affect brand loyalty. Hence, it is reasonable to develop introduce the following hypotheses:

**H4:** Brand attitude mediates the relationship between SMM and brand loyalty

The relationship between the research variables and their hypothesis pairs is summarized visually in figure 1.

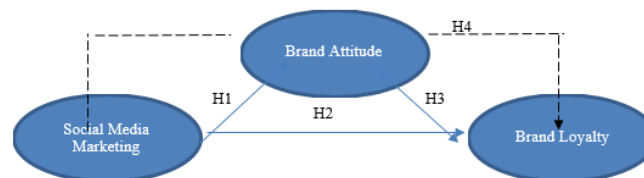


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

### 3. METHODS

#### Research Design

The research method has steps that must be followed correctly and systematically in order to get accurate results. So that it fulfills the objectives and can answer the problem formulation of the research problem of the research. In line with the research objectives, namely to analyze the effect of SMM on brand attitude and brand loyalty and to answer the problems in this study, the research design chosen is descriptive causal. Descriptive causal research design is a type of research design that aims to both describe and explain a phenomenon or relationship between variables (Sugiyono, 2021). More specifically, this research uses primary data obtained by using a quantitative survey as a method to collect data by using quantitative survey as a method for data collection. In this study, the data tested were the results of a questionnaire distributed via google forms and the respondents were students of one of the private high schools in North Sulawesi. The data was then processed with structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis techniques using the Smart PLS application.

#### Population and Sample

The study population was private high school students who were actively enrolled. This study uses probability sampling as a sampling strategy. In this particular probability sampling technique, this is simple random sampling. Because random sampling of all populations that take into account the absence of strata among members of the population (Sugiyono, 2012). The sample in this study was taken as many as 250 samples. This number is in accordance with the number of samples required for SEM analysis techniques. According to Hair et al. (2021) the minimum sample size for SEM analysis is 100.

#### Data and Instrumentation

This study employs a Google form questionnaire for primary data collection, as Sugiyono (2013) defines primary data as data obtained directly from the main source. The questionnaire is used as an instrument for gathering research data through a set of written questions provided to the respondents. The questionnaire consists of two parts: the first part entails questions related to the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the second part comprises questions that require respondents to indicate their level of agreement on a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

The second part of the survey will be measured using a multiple-item scale, specifically the Service Marketing Mix (SMM), which comprises of five indicators derived from previous studies (Kim & Ko, 2012; Waworuntu et al., 2022; Poluan et al., 2022). The brand attitude variable comprises of five questions

adopted from prior research (Foroudi, 2019; Abin et al., 2022), while the brand loyalty variable's indicators consist of questions adapted from Hwang et al. (2021) and Knox & Walker (2001).

To collect data, this research utilizes Google Forms links and distributes them online by sharing the questionnaire link with the respondents. The data collected were then analyzed and conclusions were drawn based on the results of questionnaire data calculation and processing using SPSS and Smart PLS software. SPSS was used to analyze respondent demographics, while SmartPLS was employed for hypothesis testing.

### Data Analysis

This study utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) utilizing SmartPLS to explore the interplay between social media marketing (SMM) in shaping the attitude and loyalty towards education institution brands. SEM is a potent analytical tool that can help identify the relationships between latent constructs and their observed indicators (Hair et al., 2021). SmartPLS, as a user-friendly SEM software, provides a sturdy method for conducting SEM analysis. The analysis of data in this investigation was conducted in multiple stages. First, the measurement model was assessed to determine the validity and reliability of the measurement instrument utilized in this study. The evaluation of the measurement model involved testing the convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability of the measurement instrument.

Convergent validity was determined by examining the factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR). The factor loadings for all indicators should be above the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021), indicating that the measurement items were valid indicators of their respective constructs. The AVE values should surpass the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), signifying that the measurement items explained a substantial portion of the variance in their respective constructs. The CR values should exceed the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021), indicating that the constructs were reliable.

Discriminant validity was evaluated by examining the AVE values and the square root of the AVE (SQRTAVE) values. The AVE values for each construct exceeded the inter-construct correlation values, indicating that each construct was distinct from the others (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Additionally, the SQRTAVE values for each construct surpassed the correlation values between that construct and other constructs, demonstrating that the constructs had discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2021).

The subsequent step was to explore the hypothesized relationships between the constructs in the research model. The assessment of the structural model involved analyzing the path coefficients. Afterwards, the goodness-of-fit model was evaluated to determine the adequacy or appropriateness of the model by comparing the theoretical and empirical models.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Respondent Demographics

The table 1 represents the descriptive statistical results for three variables in this study: social media marketing (SMM), brand attitude (BA), and brand loyalty (BL). Overall, these descriptive statistics provide a summary of the central tendency, variability, and range of values for each variable, which can be useful in understanding the distribution of the data and identifying any potential outliers (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 1. Summary of the Descriptive Statistic Result

	Mean	Median	Min	Max	St. Dev
SMM	6.11	6	1	7	1.02
BA	5.99	6	1	7	1.04
BL	5.65	6	1	7	1.24

Regarding the variable SMM, the mean value is 6.11, indicating that the average of the data points for this variable is near 6. The median value is also 6, suggesting that the distribution of data for this variable is approximately symmetrical. The minimum value is 1, indicating that there is at least one data point with a very low value, and the maximum value is 7, indicating that there is at least one data point with a very high value. The standard deviation is 1.02, indicating that the data points for this variable are somewhat dispersed around the mean value.

In the case of variable brand attitude, the mean is 5.99, which is slightly lower than the mean for SMM, indicating that on average, the data points for this variable are slightly lower than for SMM. The

median is again 6, suggesting that the distribution of data for this variable is also approximately symmetric. The minimum and maximum values are the same as for SMM, indicating that the range of values for this variable is the same as for SMM. The standard deviation is slightly higher at 1.04, which suggests that the data points for this variable are slightly more spread out around the mean than for SMM.

For variable brand loyalty, the mean is 5.65, which is lower than both SMM and BA, indicating that on average, the data points for this variable are the lowest among the three variables. The median is again 6, suggesting that the distribution of data for this variable is also approximately symmetric. The minimum value is 1, which indicates that at least one data point has a very low value, and the maximum value is 7, indicating that at least one data point has a very high value. The standard deviation is the highest among the three variables at 1.24, indicating that the data points for this variable are more spread out around the mean compared to SMM and BA

**Measurement Model**

Figure 2 and Table 3 The following are the results of testing the measurement model processed. This measurement model is based on the output of a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) software called SmartPLS. The output shows the factor loadings of the indicators on their respective constructs. The constructs in this model are SMM (Social Media Marketing), BA (Brand Awareness), and BL (Brand Loyalty). Each construct has multiple indicators (SMM1-SMM5 for SMM, BA1-BA5 for BA, and BL1-BL4 for BL).

The factor loadings show the strength of the relationship between each indicator and its respective construct. The factor loadings range from 0 to 1, where 1 indicates a perfect correlation between the indicator and the construct (Hail et al., 2021). For example, the factor loading for SMM2 on the SMM construct is 0.86, which means that SMM2 is strongly related to the SMM construct. Similarly, the factor loading for BA1 on the BA construct is 0.92, indicating a strong relationship between BA1 and the BA construct.

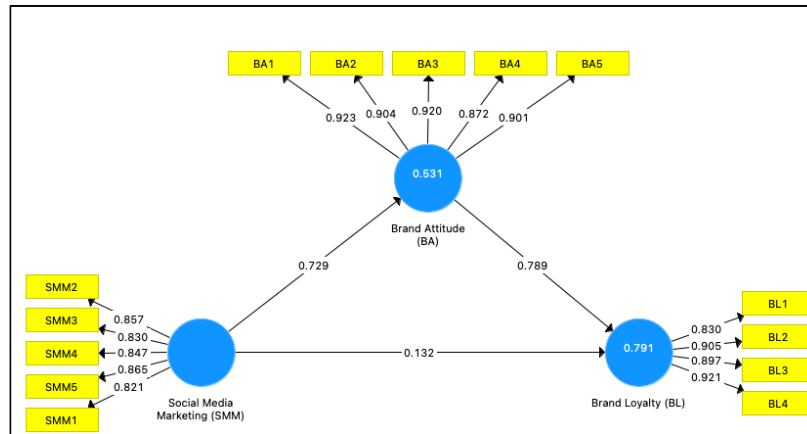


Figure 2. Measurement Model Testing Results

Table 2 Constructs, Indicator and Factor Loading

Constructs	Indicator	Factor Loading
SMM	SMM2	0.86
	SMM3	0.83
	SMM4	0.85
	SMM5	0.87
	SMM1	0.82
BA	BA1	0.92
	BA2	0.90
	BA3	0.92
	BA4	0.87
	BA5	0.90
BL	BL1	0.83
	BL2	0.91

BL3	0.90
BL4	0.92

The result of the discriminant validity evaluation based on Fornell-Larcker Criterion is shown in table 3, which assesses whether the constructs in a model are distinct from each other. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion is shown in a triangular matrix format, where the diagonal values represent the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct, and the off-diagonal values represent the correlations between the constructs (Hair et al., 2021).

Looking at the table, the diagonal values for each construct are above 0.7, which indicates that each construct has good convergent validity (i.e., the items within each construct are highly related to each other). Additionally, we can see that the correlations between the constructs are below the diagonal values, which indicates good discriminant validity (i.e., the constructs are sufficiently distinct from each other) (Hair et al., 2021).

More specifically, the correlation between brand attitude (BA) and brand loyalty (BL) is 0.89, which suggests a strong positive relationship between these constructs. However, the correlation between BA and SMM is 0.73, and the correlation between BL and SMM is 0.71, which indicates that BA and BL are more closely related to each other than to SMM.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BA	BL	SMM
Brand Attitude (BA)	0.90		
Brand Loyalty (BL)	0.89	0.89	
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	0.73	0.71	0.84

Table 4. Result of the Cross Loading

	BA	BL	SMM
BA1	0.92	0.77	0.65
BA2	0.90	0.78	0.64
BA3	0.92	0.82	0.64
BA4	0.87	0.79	0.68
BA5	0.90	0.83	0.68
BL1	0.84	0.83	0.67
BL2	0.80	0.91	0.66
BL3	0.73	0.90	0.55
BL4	0.76	0.92	0.61
SMM2	0.64	0.59	0.86
SMM3	0.58	0.59	0.83
SMM4	0.61	0.61	0.85
SMM5	0.65	0.61	0.87
SMM1	0.59	0.57	0.82

Table 4 displays the cross-loading results of the SmartPLS output for three constructs: and SMM, BA and BL. It can be observed that the indicators of each construct have the highest loading on their own construct compared to the other constructs. However, there are some cross-loadings present, where an indicator has a relatively high loading on a different construct than its own. For example, SMM2 has a loading of 0.64 on BA, which is higher than its loading on SMM (0.59). Similarly, BL1 has a loading of 0.83 on BL but also has a relatively high loading of 0.84 on BA.

Table 5. Result of the Reliability Test

	CA	rho_A	CR
Brand Attitude (BA)	0.94	0.94	0.96
Brand Loyalty (BL)	0.91	0.91	0.94
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	0.90	0.90	0.93

The result for the reliability test is shown in table 5. Reliability was assed using three indicators. First, the CR values for the three constructs, BA, BL, and SMM, are 0.96, 0.94, and 0.93, respectively. The

*From Likes To Loyalty: The Interplay Of Social Media Marketing In Shaping Education Institution Brand Attitude And Loyalty.* **Sandra J.R. Kainde, et al**

CR values are all above the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating high internal consistency of the measurement scales. Second, Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values for the three constructs, BA, BL, and SMM, are 0.94, 0.91, and 0.90, respectively. These values are also above the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating high internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021). Third and last, the Rho\_A values for the three constructs, BA, BL, and SMM, are 0.94, 0.91, and 0.90, respectively. These values are consistent with the CR and CA values and indicate high internal consistency. Overall, the reliability results for the SmartPLS output indicate that the measurement scales used in the analysis are reliable and have good internal consistency and convergent validity.

### 3.3 Result of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

The results of structural model testing are shown in figure 3 and table 6. First, the relationship between SMM and BA, with a sample mean of 0.73 and standard deviation of 0.05. The T statistic for this relationship is 16.03, which also indicates that the relationship between SMM and BA is statistically significant (at  $p < 0.001$ ). Second, result shows that the relationship between variable SMM and BL with a sample mean of 0.13 and standard deviation of 0.05. The T statistic for this relationship is 2.74, which indicates that the relationship is statistically significant (at  $p < 0.01$ ).

Third and last, the relationship between BA and BL with a sample mean of 0.79 and standard deviation of 0.04. The T statistic for this relationship is 19.94, which indicates that the relationship between brand attitude and brand loyalty is statistically significant (T stats= 19.94,  $p < 0.001$ ).

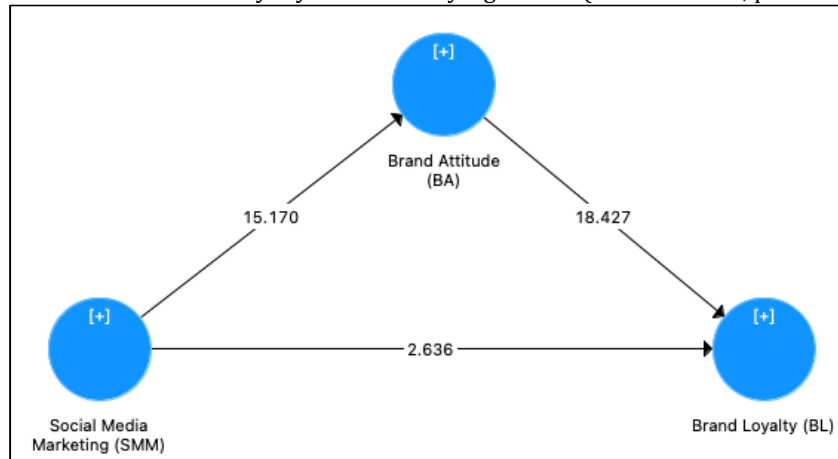


Figure 3 PLS Bootstrapping Structural Model Testing Results

Table 6 PLS Bootstrapping Structural Model Testing Results

	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
BA -> BL	0.79	0.04	19.94	0.000
SMM -> BA	0.73	0.05	16.03	0.000
SMM -> BL	0.13	0.05	2.74	0.006

### 3.3 Result of the Mediating Analysis

Table 7 presents the results of a mediating analysis that explores the indirect effect of social media marketing (SMM) on brand loyalty (BL) through brand attitude (BA). Overall, the results suggest that social media marketing has a significant impact on education institution brand attitude and loyalty. The findings also indicate that brand attitude mediates the relationship between SMM and BL, which confirm the prediction of H4. This findings highlights the importance of developing a positive attitude towards education institution brands in order to increase brand loyalty.

Table 7 Result of the Mediating (Indirect) Analysis

	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
SMM -> BA	0.73	0.05	16.03	0.000
SMM -> BA -> BL	0.57	0.045	12.849	0.000



Based on the results of the Goodness of Fit Model test in table 8, it was found that the SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual), which is a measure of the average discrepancy between the observed and predicted covariances, had a value of 0.06 for both the saturated and estimated models. This indicates that both models exhibit a favorable fit to the data. Additionally, the d\_ULS and d\_G indices, which are indicators of the inconsistency between the predicted and observed covariance matrices, also had values of 0.40 for both models, signifying that both models fit the data well. Finally, the NFI (Normed Fit Index) is a gauge of how well the model fits in comparison to a null model (a model with no relationships among variables). The value of 0.83 for both models suggests that they are a good fit to the data, and that the estimated model accounts for approximately 83% of the variance in the observed data. Overall, these findings suggest that both models have a good fit to the data and accurately represent the relationships among the variables.

Table 8. Result of the Goodness of Fit Model Result

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.06	0.06
d_ULS	0.40	0.40
d_G	0.47	0.47
Chi-Square	775.80	775.80
NFI	0.83	0.83

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study aims to provide information for important educational institutions on the importance of using social media as a tool for marketing. The results of this study show how effective the use of social media is on two important variables in marketing, namely brand attitude and brand loyalty.

The results of the data analysis show a number of significant results. First, the findings suggest that the promotional activities undertaken by educational institutions via social media channels can cultivate favorable perceptions of Generation Z towards the institutional brand. This suggests that academic institutions must be capable of generating captivating content regarding their educational offerings through social media platforms. This discovery holds vital implications for the management and administration of educational institutions who seek to enhance their institutional brand. By investing in social media marketing endeavors, academic institutions may be able to reach a more expansive target audience, and ultimately, influence consumers' positive perceptions of the institutional brand (Anjel et al., 2022).

The analysis also reveals that SMM has a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty. This means that when an education institution utilizes social media marketing strategies effectively, it can help to increase customer (i.e., students) loyalty towards the brand. This finding is in line with previous research that suggests that social media marketing can be an effective tool for improving brand loyalty (Mandagi, 2023, Mandagi & Aseng, 2021, Anjel et al., 2022; Poluan et al., 2022). Social media platforms offer brands the ability to engage with customers on a personal level, create unique and shareable content, and build a community around their brand (Anjel et al., 2022). The positive impact of SMM on brand loyalty also highlights the importance of developing and implementing effective social media strategies as part of a education institution brand's overall marketing plan. By understanding the specific needs and interests of their target audience, brands can create social media content that is engaging and resonates with their customers, ultimately leading to increased brand loyalty (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021).

Lastly, the results of the study indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between education institution brand attitude and brand loyalty. This suggests that individuals (e.g., the student) who have a favorable attitude towards an education institution are more likely to exhibit loyalty towards that institution. This finding has important implications for education institutions, as it suggests that building a positive brand attitude can have a positive impact on student retention and loyalty (Hwang et al., 2021). Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of focusing on brand management strategies to build a positive brand attitude among students and other stakeholders (Anjel et al., 2022). This may include strategies such as effective communication, creating a unique brand identity, and providing high-quality educational experiences (Wulus et al., 2022). By doing so, education institutions can increase the likelihood of students remaining loyal to the institution and contributing to the institution's overall success.

Apart from the significant contribution of this research, there are limitations that can be improved in future studies, which make it possible to examine the effectiveness of social media not only Instagram but other social media with a larger number of respondents and add other theories that provide different perspectives on the discussion under study with various variables that may be influenced. Further, this study focuses on the interplay of SMM on brand in the context of education institution. Results of the study may not be generalizable to different contexts. This is because SMM strategies and their impact on brand attitude and loyalty may vary depending on the institution, its target audience, and the social media platforms used. Lastly, the present study utilized quantitative survey to collect the data which relies on self-reported data from participants, which can be biased or inaccurate. Respondents may overestimate or underestimate their social media usage, brand attitudes, and loyalty levels, leading to biased results. Further studies may consider another data collection techniques or involve more participants in the survey

#### REFERENCE

- [1] Aaker, D. A., & Jacobson, R. (2001). The Value Relevance of Brand Attitude in High-Technology Markets. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38(4), 485-493. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.38.4.485.18905>
- [2] Abin, D. G., Mandagi, D. W., & Pasuhuk, L. S. (2022). Influence of Brand Image on Customer Attitude, Intention to Purchase and Satisfaction: the Case of Start-Up Brand Pomie Bakery. *Enrichment: Journal of Management*, 12(5), 3907-3917.
- [3] Anjel, C. C. P., Lengkong, B. L., Mandagi, D. W., & Kainde, S. J. (2022). Branding Institusi Pendidikan Melalui Media Sosial Instagram. *SEIKO: Journal of Management & Business*, 5(2), 44-58.
- [4] Chuenban, P., Sornsaruht, P., & Pimdee, P. (2021). How brand attitude, brand quality, and brand value affect Thai canned tuna consumer brand loyalty. *Heliyon*, 7(2), e06301.
- [5] Dedeoğlu, B. B., Van Niekerk, M., Küçükergin, K. G., De Martino, M., & Okumuş, F. (2020). Effect of social media sharing on destination brand awareness and destination quality. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 26(1), 33-56.
- [6] del Rocío Bonilla, M., Perea, E., del Olmo, J. L., & Corrons, A. (2020). Insights into user engagement on social media. Case study of a higher education institution. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 30(1), 145-160.
- [7] Evans, D., Bratton, S., & McKee, J. (2021). *Social media marketing*. AG Printing & Publishing.
- [8] Faircloth, J. B., Capella, L. M., & Alford, B. L. (2001). The effect of brand attitude and brand image on brand equity. *Journal of marketing theory and practice*, 9(3), 61-75.
- [9] Foroudi, P. (2019). Influence of brand signature, brand awareness, brand attitude, brand reputation on hotel industry's brand performance. *International journal of hospitality management*, 76, 271-285.
- [10] Hair, J. F., Astrachan, C. B., Moisescu, O. I., Radomir, L., Sarstedt, M., Vaithilingam, S., & Ringle, C. M. (2021). Executing and interpreting applications of PLS-SEM: Updates for family business researchers. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 12(3), 100392.
- [11] Hutter, K., Hautz, J., Dennhardt, S., & Füller, J. (2013). The impact of user interactions in social media on brand awareness and purchase intention: the case of MINI on Facebook. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*.
- [12] Hwang, J., Choe, J. Y. J., Kim, H. M., & Kim, J. J. (2021). Human baristas and robot baristas: How does brand experience affect brand satisfaction, brand attitude, brand attachment, and brand loyalty?. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 99, 103050.
- [13] Joseph, M., Mullen, E. W., & Spake, D. (2012). University branding: Understanding students' choice of an educational institution. *Journal of Brand Management*, 20, 1-12.
- [14] Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business research*, 65(10), 1480-1486.
- [15] Knox, S., & Walker, D. (2001). Measuring and managing brand loyalty. *Journal of strategic marketing*, 9(2), 111-128.
- [16] Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., Harris, L. C., & He, H. (2020). *Principles of marketing-Eight European edition*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- [17] Mampaey, J., Huisman, J., & Seeber, M. (2015). Branding of Flemish higher education institutions: A strategic balance perspective. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34(6), 1178-1191.

- [18] Mandagi, D. W. (2023). Pemasaran Media Sosial, Gestalt Merek Dan Loyalitas Pelanggan: Studi Empiris Pada Tomohon International Flower Festival. *Manajemen Dewantara*, 7(1), 32-45.
- [19] Mandagi, D. W., & Aseng, A. C. (2021). Millennials and Gen Z's Perception of Social Media Marketing Effectiveness on the Festival's Branding: The Mediating Effect of Brand Gestalt. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, 21(3).
- [20] Poluan, M. S., Pasuhuk, L. S., & Mandagi, D. W. (2022). The Role of Social Media Marketing In Local Government Institution To Enhance Public Attitude And Satisfaction. *Jurnal Ekonomi*, 11(03), 1268-1279.
- [21] Siddik, A. S., Mandagi, D. W., & Lelengboto, A. L. (2022). Pemasaran Sosial Media Dan Gestalt Merek Pada Perusahaan Indoor Theme Park. *SEIKO: Journal of Management & Business*, 4(3), 462-479.
- [22] Sijabat, L., Rantung, D. I., & Mandagi, D. W. (2022). The Role of Social Media Influencers in Shaping Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Perception. *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis*, 9(2), 280-288.
- [23] Sugiyono, D. (2013). Metode penelitian pendidikan pendekatan kuantitatif, kualitatif dan R&D.
- [24] Tucker, W. T. (1964). The development of brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing research*, 1(3), 32-35.
- [25] Tuten, T. L., & Solomon, M. R. (2017). *Social media marketing*. Sage.
- [26] Waworuntu, E. C., Mandagi, D. W., & Pangemanan, A. S. (2022). 'I See It, I Want It, I Buy It': The Role of Social Media Marketing in Shaping Brand Image and Gen Z's Intention to Purchase Local Product. *Society*, 10(2), 253-271.
- [27] Williams Jr, R. L., & Omar, M. (2014). How branding process activities impact brand equity within higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), 1-10.
- [28] Wulus, V. G., Mandagi, D. W., Lule, B., & Ambalao, S. S. (2022). Determinan Efektivitas Social Media Marketing Pada Insitusi Pemerintah Daerah. *SEIKO: Journal of Management & Business*, 4(3), 522-538.
- [29] Zailskaite-Jakste, L., & Kuvykaite, R. (2012). Implementation of communication in social media by promoting studies at higher education institutions. *Engineering Economics*, 23(2), 174-188.