



## The Role of Brand Awareness as A Mediator in the Relationship Between Entertainment and eWOM on Brand Loyalty: An Analysis of Social Media Marketing Content.

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examines the influence of social media marketing activities, specifically entertainment and eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth), on brand loyalty, with brand awareness as a mediating factor. The main objective of this study is to explore how entertainment and eWOM influence brand loyalty through brand awareness in the context of fashion product marketing on TikTok social media. This study used a quantitative method with purposive sampling, involving 120 respondents who were surveyed through questionnaires. Results show that entertainment and eWOM significantly increase brand awareness, which in turn has a positive impact on brand loyalty. In addition, brand awareness fully mediates the relationship between entertainment and eWOM regarding brand loyalty. Entertainment on TikTok can create an emotional attachment with consumers, while eWOM serves as organic marketing that influences consumer decisions. Therefore, to increase brand loyalty, brands should create entertaining content and encourage consumers to share their positive experiences through eWOM. In conclusion, brand awareness plays an essential role in building brand loyalty, and engaging content marketing and strong social interaction can increase brand awareness and consumer loyalty on social media platforms such as TikTok.

**Keywords:** Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, E-WOM, Social Media Marketing, Entertainment



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## INTRODUCTION

In this digital era, the internet has significantly impacted consumer behavior, especially in brand awareness, brand loyalty, and the influence of eWOM (electronic Word-of-Mouth) or online recommendations. Social media marketing is the fastest way to increase growth, and it is currently unmatched in its ability to build a brand (Malarvizhi et al., 2022; Zarei et al., 2022). Today, the internet and social media are primary sources of information and interaction between consumers and brands. Indiscriminate or inappropriate use of social media is a source of problems, such as customer dissatisfaction (Zarei et al., 2022).

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In the rapidly growing digital era, the role of social media as a marketing platform is becoming increasingly significant. According to Seo & Park (2018), social media makes buying and searching for product information traditionally outdated, so new economic impacts also appear. TikTok is one of today's famous social media sites, and it has become a significant highlight for various brands to expand their reach and increase brand awareness. TikTok is one of society's most popular social media platforms, especially for Gen Z; TikTok also contributes to increasing brand awareness (Genoveva, 2022). With marketing content on TikTok, consumers have greater access to information about products and brands when they buy goods in the Tiktok shop.

Tiktok shop is a feature that allows users to buy products on Tiktok, offers low prices and shipping costs, and helps businesses that use Tiktok as a promotional platform increase their sales (Hasim & Sherlina, 2022). TikTok e-commerce uses an interest-based strategy by using the “FACT” operation matrix to make customers connect with products through interesting content, and the goal is to increase customer value and sales (G.-J. Zhou, 2022). TikTok Shop enables the purchase of products directly on TikTok, helping businesses expand their promotional reach and increase sales through interest-based strategies with the “FACT” operation matrix.

TikTok social media is ranked 4th out of 10 social media apps according to new data from databooks.katadata.co.id. In early 2024, 73.5% of Indonesian internet users aged 16-64 used the app (Annur, 2024). In the first place, from the existing data, WhatsApp is at the top of the standings, with 90.9%, and Instagram is below, with 85.3% of users. There is a fairly old social media, namely Facebook with 81.6% users, then below Facebook is Tiktok, then down there, telegram with 61.3%, x (Twitter) 57.5%, and the bottom of the data is the LinkedIn application with 25% users of Indonesian internet users aged 16 to 64 years, and a total of 139 million recorded social media users when summed up is equal to or equivalent to 49.9% of the national population. With such a wide range of social media users, a company can utilize it for various marketing purposes, such as to increase brand awareness.

However, despite its positive potential, the use of social media can also pose reputational risks for brands. As highlighted by Lockton, high exposure to social media increases the likelihood of brands being exposed to harmful content, which can negatively impact consumer perceptions of the brand (Schlesinger, 2024). One example of this phenomenon can be seen in the Snoop Dogg-related viral incident reported by FandomWire, where marketing efforts to increase brand awareness negatively impacted the brand image. In this context, it is important to understand how content marketing on social media influences consumers' perceptions of brands and how it can affect consumer loyalty to these brands.

Although previous research has highlighted the relationship between eWOM and brand loyalty, there are differences of opinion in the literature regarding the extent to which eWOM affects brand loyalty. According to a researcher (Serra-Cantallops et al., 2018), eWOM positively influences brand loyalty, while Kim & Hyun (2019), eWOM has no significant influence on brand loyalty. This is where a research gap needs to be explored further. In the context of consumers making purchases through the TikTok Shop marketplace, further understanding how marketing content, eWOM, brand awareness, and brand loyalty interact can provide valuable insights for brands in managing their reputation in today's digital era. Therefore, my research aims to fill this knowledge

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gap and contribute to developing marketing theory and practice. This study will use a quantitative approach to address this gap by distributing questionnaires to respondents. This study aims to measure and understand the statistical relationship between these variables by analyzing the collected data. Thus, this study seeks to fill this knowledge gap and help develop marketing theory and practice. Based on the purpose, the authors have drawn the hypothesis as shown in the figure below:

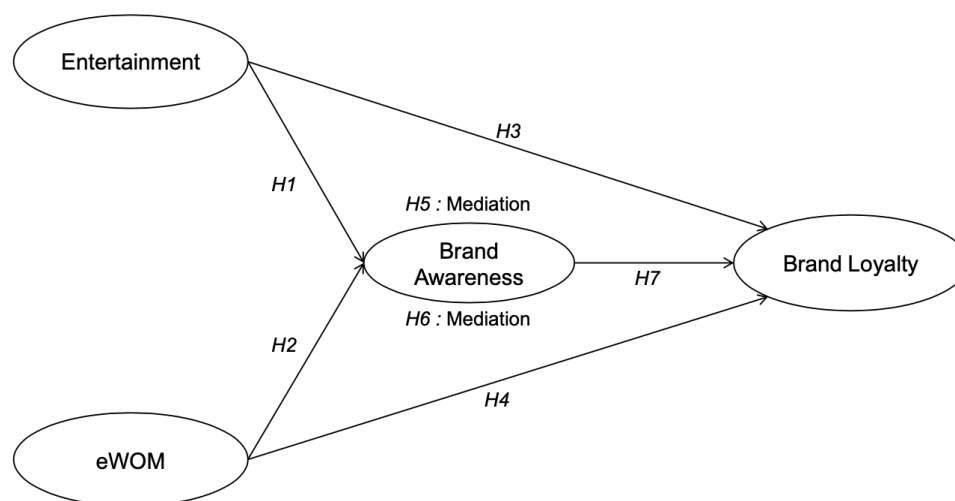


Figure 1. Conceptual Model for the Study

## METHOD

This research will quantitatively explore the influence of brand awareness as a mediator between entertainment and eWOM on brand loyalty in the context of fashion purchases on the TikTok Shop marketplace among young Indonesians. At least 34% of Indonesians are millennials, and there was a significant decline from 42.28 million agricultural workers to 39.96 million between 2011-2012 (Sumartono et al., 2019). TikTok has rapidly become one of the most popular social media among teenagers, especially in Indonesia, making it an appropriate research choice. TikTok has an algorithm that supports the rapid spread of eWOM (electronic Word-of-Mouth) and interactive entertainment features that can influence users to buy something from it and become brand loyal. Certain age groups, such as millennials and Gen Z, were chosen because they are the main users of TikTok and are more open to online shopping experiences, including TikTok Shop. The sample of this study will use purposive sampling, often referred to as a nonprobability method, because the existing sample cannot be known with certainty. For this study, the sample that will be used is the number of indicators multiplied by 5. The survey will be conducted online using Google Forms. Respondents will be sent a link to the online survey via social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and WhatsApp. Everyone who answers will indicate their willingness to participate.

Based on the results of previous researchers, this study modified and adapted the instrument tested and validated by earlier researchers. The questionnaire was designed with simple and impartial wording so that respondents could easily understand all the questions. The entertainment items were measured by researchers (Cunningham & Craig, 2019; Hanaysha, 2022; M. Huang et al., 2024; Malarvizhi et al., 2022; Sohail et al., 2019). The next adopted item, eWOM, was carried out by (M. Huang et al., 2024 Kim & Hyun, 2019 Malarvizhi et al., 2022 and Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018). Brand awareness as mediation was adopted by researchers such as (Febriyantoro, 2020 Malarvizhi et al., 2022; Ndolo Mutua & Mwikya Reuben, 2022; Sesar et al., 2022), and the last item, brand loyalty, was taken and adopted by researchers such as (Hasan & Sohail, 2020; Kim & Hyun, 2019; Mim et al., 2022; Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018). All items were measured using a Likert scale.

This research uses PLS-SEM as a way to analyze data. PLS-SEM is the analysis method chosen for this research due to its outstanding ability to study causal relationships between variables, especially in complex models. PLS-SEM handles many latent constructs, including entertainment, eWOM, brand awareness, and brand loyalty. In addition, PLS-SEM is very flexible in handling smaller samples than those typically used by researchers. Moreover, since this method allows researchers to investigate direct and indirect relationships, the role of brand awareness as a mediator between entertainment and eWOM on brand loyalty is particularly relevant. This method is useful for investigating complex relationships between observed and hidden variables (J. F. Hair et al., 2021a). PLS-SEM is known for its ability to handle complex models and flexibility in meeting data needs and measurement specifications (J. F. Hair et al., 2021b). Several standards are used to evaluate the validity and reliability of constructs, such as the R Square Value, (R<sup>2</sup>) is a measure of the proportion of variation in endogenous variables that can be explained by an exogenous variable (influencing variable) (Praswati et al., 2024).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Table of respondents' demographic characteristics**

The 120 respondents who made up the sample of this study resulted in an almost equal gender distribution, with 49% male and 51% female. Most of these respondents were in the younger age bracket, with 51% aged 21-25 years old, followed by 31% aged 26-30, suggesting that this study focused more on younger respondents. Only 10% of the respondents were above 30, 31-35 years old, and 3% were aged 36-40. Regarding education, most respondents were high school graduates, with 47% graduating from high school, 46% graduating from undergraduate school, and only 5% having a postgraduate degree, followed by 2% having a doctoral degree. The respondents' monthly income shows significant variation, with around 40% earning less than IDR 2,500,000, suggesting that many of them may be just starting out in their careers. Around 26% earn between IDR 5,000,001 and IDR 7,500,000, and only 3% earn above IDR 12,500,000. So the majority of the sample in this research demographic profile are young people with a relatively high level of education. However, most are still in the lower middle-income group. This may reflect that the young people in Indonesian society in this respondent's sample are starting their careers.

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Table 1 Demographic data of the respondents

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	59	49%
female	61	51%
Age		
<21	7	6%
21-25	61	51%
26-30	37	31%
31-35	12	10%
36-40	3	3%
Last Education		
Smp	1	1%
Sma	56	47%
S1	55	46%
S2	6	5%
S3	2	2%
Average monthly income (IDR)		
< IDR 2.500.000	48	40%
IDR 2.500.001 - IDR 5.000.000	20	17%
IDR 5.000.001 - IDR 7.500.000	31	26%
IDR 7.500.001 - IDR 10.000.000	17	14%
> IDR 12.500.000	4	3%

Source: Individual processing data, 2024

## Outer Model Assessment

Convergent validity, internal consistency, multicollinearity, and indicator validity were all well demonstrated in this outer model evaluation. All items have an outer load of above 0.7, which indicates strong indicator validity (J. F. Hair et al., 2021a), with the lowest value being BL2 (0.721) and the highest value being EWM6 which has a value of (0.870). The VIF value of these results

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ranges between 1.214 and 1.590, indicating no significant multicollinearity problem between indicators (Sarstedt et al., 2020). In addition, internal consistency is also maintained, with Cronbach's Alpha results above 0.6, which is considered well acceptable, according to (Henseler & Schuberth, 2023). Brand Awareness, in this case, also has the highest value, namely (0.679), and eWOM is the lowest, with a value of (0.630). All constructs show excellent reliability, with composition values having to exceed 0.8 (Benitez et al., 2020a), with the highest value in eWOM (0.844) and the lowest value in Brand Loyalty (0.824). Convergent validity in these results is also proven to be good, with AVE values for all constructs showing above 0.5, with eWOM having the highest AVE (0.730) and Entertainment the lowest (0.584); this following the criteria (J. F. Hair et al., 2021b).

Table 2 Construct Validity

Constructs	Items	Validity		Reliability		
		Outer Loadings	VIF	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Entertainment	ET2	0,781	1,313	0,644	0,808	0,584
	ET3	0,742	1,233			
	ET6	0,769	1,251			
eWOM	EWM5	0,839	1,269	0,630	0,844	0,730
	EWM6	0,870	1,269			
Brand Awareness	BA1	0,737	1,214	0,679	0,824	0,610
	BA3	0,777	1,430			
	BA6	0,827	1,590			
Brand Loyalty	BL1	0,833	1,445	0,679	0,824	0,610
	BL2	0,721	1,253			
	BL6	0,785	1,340			

Source: SmartPLS Version 3 application data processing results, 2024

One method, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), to assess the discriminant validity of this study is the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The results of this analysis are shown in Table 4 below. Each HTMT value is below the 0.9 threshold, indicating acceptable discriminant validity between the constructs (Henseler et al., 2015). This suggests that each of the existing empirical constructs is distinct.

Table 3 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Brand Awareness	Brand Loyalty	Entertainment	eWOM
Brand Awareness				
Brand Loyalty	0,884			
Entertainment	0,744	0,888		
eWOM	0,745	0,880	0,623	

Source: SmartPLS Version 3 application data processing results, 2024

### Inner Model Assessment

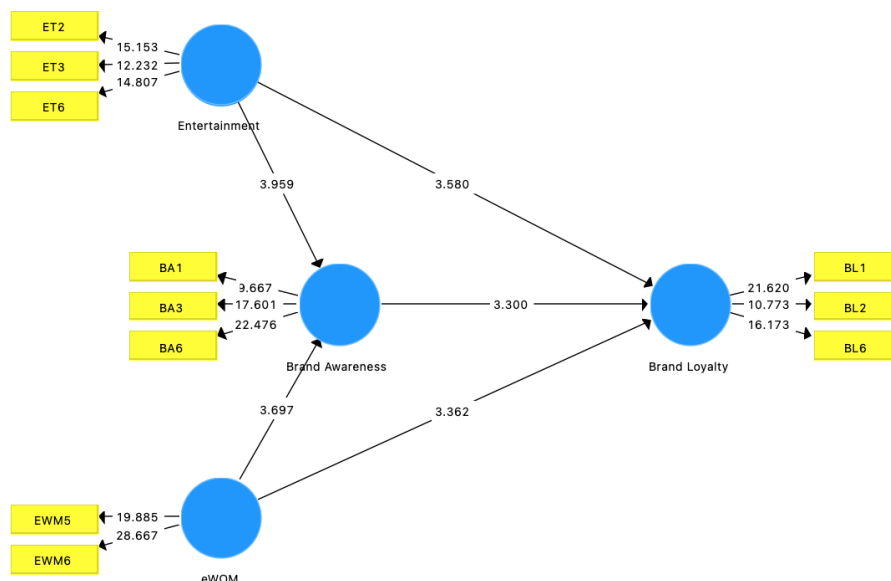
The inner model assessment in this research shows that significant results support all hypotheses because all values are included in all criteria. In this case, Entertainment significantly positively influences Brand Awareness (H1:  $\beta = 0.356$ ,  $T = 4.024$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), and then Brand Loyalty obtained results (H3:  $\beta = 0.310$ ,  $T = 3.537$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Likewise, eWOM also has a positive and significant influence on Brand Awareness due to its value (H2:  $\beta = 0.346$ ,  $T = 3.951$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and Brand Loyalty (H4:  $\beta = 0.309$ ,  $T = 3.145$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Brand Awareness also positively influences Brand Loyalty (H7:  $\beta = 0.306$ ,  $T = 3.327$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). In addition, there are also full mediation results from Entertainment and also Brand Loyalty through Brand Awareness with the following values (H5:  $\beta = 0.109$ ,  $T = 2.360$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ) and eWOM and also Brand Loyalty through Brand Awareness has the following results (H6:  $\beta = 0.106$ ,  $T = 2.473$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ). These results align with the theory that the eWOM and entertainment components in social media marketing significantly impact purchase intention and brand loyalty, both directly and through brand awareness. Then, the data processing results follow the criteria of the theory (Benitez et al., 2020b; J. Hair et al., 2020; Henseler & Schubert, 2020). For more detailed results, see Table 5 as follows:

Table 4 Construct hypothesis

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	T Value	P Values	Decision
H1 ET -> BA	0,356	0,089	4,024	0,000	Supported
H2 EWM -> BA	0,346	0,088	3,951	0,000	Supported
H3 ET -> BL	0,310	0,088	3,537	0,000	Supported
H4 EWM -> BL	0,309	0,098	3,145	0,002	Supported
H5 ET -> BA -> BL	0,109	0,046	2,360	0,019	Full mediated
H6 EWM -> BA -> BL	0,106	0,043	2,473	0,014	Full mediated
H7 BA -> BL	0,306	0,092	3,327	0,001	Supported

Source: SmartPLS Version 3 application data processing results, 2024

Figure 2. PLS Output of the Structural Model



Source: SmartPLS Version 3 application data processing results, 2024

This study provides a better understanding of how entertainment and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) function on social media platforms such as TikTok, especially regarding how brand awareness and loyalty increase. The findings are also highly relevant in today's digital age, as social media is essential in influencing customer behavior and strengthening relationships between customers and brands.

The research shows that entertainment has a significant positive effect on brand knowledge and brand loyalty. This confirms the findings of previous studies showing that entertaining content is critical to driving greater consumer engagement. Entertainment content on a platform like TikTok can distract users from their daily routines and create an emotional connection between users and brands. Past research shows that fun and entertaining content makes users remember brands more easily (Cunningham & Craig, 2019; Lou & Xie, 2021). To increase engagement and brand awareness, marketers should focus on creating entertaining content on platforms like TikTok, as fun content is more memorable and creates an emotional connection with customers. This will allow brands to reach a wider audience, especially Gen Z and millennials. These results support the theory of user engagement, which states that entertainment increases user understanding and loyalty to a brand and increases awareness of the role of interactive content in forming user memories and engagement on social media.

In the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model, the entertaining content acts as a stimulus (Stimulus) that affects consumers' emotional and cognitive states (Organism), including increasing their brand awareness. This process results in increased consumer loyalty to a brand. When customers feel entertained, they are more likely to have a positive impression of the brand, which motivates them to repurchase the item or suggest others to buy it. In other words, entertainment content increases brand awareness and loyalty through positive experiences. These findings align



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with previous research using the S-O-R theory to examine consumer behavior in the digital age (Ming et al., 2021; Song et al., 2022). By the principles of the S-O-R model, entertaining content can be used by marketers as a stimulus to influence customer emotions and perceptions. Ultimately, content that creates a positive experience will encourage customers to continue buying and recommending products to others. These findings reinforce the S-O-R theory in the digital age by demonstrating that entertainment content effectively influences customers' emotional and cognitive states. It also strengthens the relationship between entertainment, brand awareness, and loyalty in the digital age.

In addition, this study found that eWOM significantly affects brand awareness and brand loyalty. eWOM is a digital recommendation from customers who have used goods or services and is spread through social media. Previous studies show that positive reviews provided by users, such as TikTok, can increase brand awareness and trust (Azer & Ranaweera, 2022; Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018). In this situation, eWOM is a form of organic marketing that influences customer perceptions and purchasing decisions through recommendations from friends, family, or other customers who have had positive or negative experiences. However, remember that the influence of eWOM is not always favorable. Some previous studies have shown that harmful content adversely affects brand reputation (Malarvizhi et al., 2022). Marketers should leverage positive eWOM to increase consumer awareness and loyalty, encouraging customers to share their experiences on platforms like TikTok. However, they should also be prepared to respond to negative eWOM to protect their brand reputation and prevent negative impacts. These results support the theory that eWOM plays a significant role in determining consumer brand awareness and loyalty. In addition, these findings enhance our knowledge of the positive and negative impacts of consumer reviews on brand image in the digital media era.

A critical finding of this study is that brand awareness serves as a key link or mediation between entertainment and brand loyalty, as well as eWOM and brand loyalty. This result supports previous research on brand awareness as an essential component in building brand loyalty (Putra et al., 2023; Zafira & Hartono, 2023). Not only does brand awareness make products more recognizable, but it also fosters consumer trust and preference, which in turn increases consumer loyalty to a brand. In such a situation, brand awareness links the impetus (such as entertainment and eWOM) and the result (brand loyalty). Since brand awareness has been shown to play a significant role in increasing customer trust and loyalty, marketers should focus on increasing brand awareness through entertainment content and eWOM. Increasing brand awareness will strengthen the relationship between customer loyalty and marketing strategies. These results support the theory that brand awareness is an important mediator in forming consumer loyalty. In addition, these findings indicate a relationship between consumer loyalty and eWOM and entertainment.

This study also fills the gap of previous research on how eWOM impacts brand loyalty. Before this, there were differing opinions on whether eWOM directly affects brand loyalty. For example, research by (Kim & Hyun, 2019) found that eWOM has no significant influence on brand loyalty, while research by (Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018) found that eWOM affects brand loyalty indirectly through brand awareness, providing a different perspective on how brand loyalty. In TikTok Shop, where peer recommendations and entertaining content heavily influence customers, brand awareness is crucial in building customer loyalty. Since peer recommendations and entertainment

content have been shown to influence buyer decisions, brands operating on TikTok Shop should drive positive eWOM and increase brand awareness to boost customer loyalty. Marketing strategies should center on increasing brand awareness to build customer loyalty. These findings shed light on the debate about the impact of eWOM on brand loyalty by showing that eWOM indirectly influences loyalty through brand awareness, supporting the view that brand awareness acts as an essential mediator.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study explores how Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA), which focuses on entertainment and eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth), influence brand loyalty with the role of brand awareness as a mediator in the context of marketing content on TikTok. The results have found that entertainment and eWOM significantly increase brand awareness, which in turn has a positive impact on brand loyalty. In addition, brand awareness fully mediates the relationship between the variables, namely entertainment, eWOM, and brand loyalty. The study also shows that consumers are more likely to purchase fashion products directly through TikTok Shop when they engage with entertaining and informative content. Brand awareness regulates the relationship between customer loyalty and social media marketing campaigns. This shows how important a good content strategy is to drive engagement and direct purchases on the platform. Therefore, brands should concentrate on engaging content that entertains, makes customers more loyal, and encourages them to purchase further goods.

For future research, it is recommended that the scope of the study be expanded to include other social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and X (formerly known as Twitter). Each platform has different characteristics and audiences, so expanding the scope of the research will provide a more holistic insight into consumer behavior across various digital ecosystems. In addition, these platforms may have different interaction mechanisms and content consumption patterns than TikTok, which may ultimately influence brand loyalty and purchase decisions in unique ways. Beyond expanding the platforms analyzed, future research should also consider using additional mediating variables such as brand trust and emotional attachment. Brand trust is essential in building long-term relationships between consumers and brands, especially amidst intense market competition. Similarly, emotional attachment to the brand can trigger stronger loyalty, as consumers buy products based on quality and their emotional connection to the brand.

Future research incorporating these factors may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics between social media marketing, brand loyalty, and purchase behavior. Moreover, by expanding the study to different types of products and industry sectors, such as technology, beauty, or automotive, this research can offer more relevant and applicable recommendations across different business sectors. Thus, marketers can be more careful in designing content strategies that are entertaining, able to build deep trust and attachment with consumers and encourage sustainable brand loyalty.

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