Brand loyalty through engagement: Effects of content marketing and brand experience

Lealtad a la marca a través del compromiso: Efectos del marketing de contenidos y la experiencia de marca

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ABSTRACT

Digitization is changing consumer behavior from offline to online. Social Media can generate curiosity and interest among the audience, so it can generate sales volume and brand loyalty. Similarly, what happened to the FMCG industry, one of which is Wardah. But based on market share and TBI (Top Brand Index), Wardah can't be the first. This study aims to determine the effect of content marketing and brand experience on brand loyalty with customer engagement as an intervening variable. The type of this study is explanatory research with nonprobability sampling purposive sampling. Data analysis using SmartPLS4. The results of this study support the theory of consumer behavior. It can be applied in higher education curricula to enhance topics related to digital marketing strategies, consumer behavior, and brand management. The test results showed that content marketing, brand experience, and customer engagement significantly affect brand loyalty with a type of partial mediation. The recommendations of this study are fresh marketing in

TikTok Wardah content, highlighting the uniqueness of the brand, efforts to keep consumers always involved, and innovating to maintain and improve quality so that consumers remain loyal.

Keywords: Consumer behavior, content marketing on TikTok, brand experience, customer engagement, brand loyalty

RESUMEN

Las redes sociales pueden generar curiosidad e interés entre la audiencia, por lo que pueden generar volumen de ventas y lealtad a la marca. Lo mismo ocurre con Wardah. El objetivo de Wardah es aumentar la lealtad a la marca que se puede demostrar a través de la cuota de mercado. Pero según la participación de mercado y el TBI (Índice de Marcas Principales), Wardah no puede ser el primero. Este estudio tiene como objetivo determinar el efecto del marketing de contenidos y la experiencia de marca en la lealtad a la marca con el compromiso del cliente como variable intermedia. Análisis de datos mediante SmartPLS4. Los resultados se pueden aplicar en planes de estudio de educación superior para mejorar temas relacionados con estrategias de marketing digital, comportamiento del consumidor y gestión de marca. Los resultados muestran que el marketing de contenidos, la experiencia de marca y el compromiso del cliente influyen significativamente en la lealtad a la marca con tipos de mediación parcial. Las recomendaciones son nuevas ideas sobre el contenido de TikTok Wardah, destacando la singularidad de la marca y asegurando la participación del cliente para aumentar la lealtad a la marca.

Palabras clave*: comportamiento del consumidor, marketing de contenidos en Tiktok, experiencia de marca, compromiso con el cliente, lealtad a la marca*

INTRODUCTION

Digitalization in everyday life is much influenced by the COVID-19 Pandemic, everyone is required to self-isolate, maintain distance from humans to minimize the possibility of contracting COVID-19. Digitalization continues to expand and all daily activities seem to be affected by digital transformation, which can all be done completely online (Aripin & Nagara, 2021). According to Aripin & Nagara (2021) modern lifestyles have also influenced changes in consumer behavior from offline to online that make it easier for humans to make purchases. Digitalization is able to have a direct or indirect impact on the business world, one of these impacts is the increasingly competitive level of business competition.

There are 126.8% of the Indonesian population connected to a cellular connection with 49.9% as social media users. Based on these data, it is possible for one individual to have more than one social media. In the business sector it can be an opportunity for Indonesia to improve its economy through the digital or e-commerce sector and can be a challenge if Indonesian people prefer to shop in e-commerce. Mobile connection becomes a tool to access e-commerce, social media, and all things related to the internet. This is in line with the rise of various social media applications that can be used by the public to feel the ease of socializing, transacting, looking for entertainment, educating, and so on.

In addition to social media applications that are a favorite of Indonesian people, the length of time of use or duration of accessing social media must also be taken into account. This is because social media has transformed into a more integral part of the daily lives of modern society in general (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016), making it possible for users to interact and influence each other both individually and individually with brands (Qin, 2020). TikTok is the choice of the Indonesian people to spend their time which is 38 hours 26 minutes, then followed by YouTube with 31 hours 26

minutes, and WhatsApp with 26 hours 13 minutes. TikTok introduces a new dynamic in the realm of social media (Martini et al., in Lisboa, 2024). TikTok makes it easy for its users to become famous or "go viral" because of the platform's algorithm (Davis in Hart, 2022) so that it allows users to know what is currently viral. Everything on social media can generate curiosity and interest among the audience, which can lead to higher sales volume and brand loyalty (Ajina, 2019).

Understanding the importance of brand experience in building customer loyalty and engagement, the concept will also be very relevant in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry. Customers have more choices when shopping thus requiring a unique value proposition to offer (Mittal & Jhamb, 2024). Intense competition leads companies to develop business strategies that provide value and customer satisfaction, including customer engagement (Javornik and Mandelli in Senachai & Julagasigorn, 2024). Likewise, in Indonesia, where FMCG products compete with each other to be in the top position.

The competition of various sectors to be the top. The online crawling method was used in research conducted on three e-commerce sites, namely Shopee, Tokopedia, and Blibli for the period 1 January-31 December 2023. Compas divides them into four main categories. The care and beauty category was recorded at Rp28.2 trillion (49%). Then food and beverages as much as Rp11. 8 trillion (20.4%), health category as much as Rp10. 7 trillion (18.7%) and the last category of mothers and babies as much as Rp6. 8 trillion (11.9%).

In relation to the care and beauty categories that dominate the FMCG market. Databoks calculates the estimated income of people from Beauty and personal care products in Indonesia which will continue to increase every year. From 2020 to 2027 people's income from Beauty and skincare products is predicted to continue to increase. This can be an opportunity for manufacturers or companies engaged in care and beauty, but it can also be a challenge for the product to continue to live in society and not be forgotten.

Developments in the beauty business are accompanied by innovations from various beauty companies in the form of variations and new types of beauty products. One of them is micellar water, according to Day et al., (2017) micellar water is a rapidly growing popularity format of facial cleanser for general cleansing and light makeup removal. The widespread use of social media on facial care education, makes many people begin to realize the importance of caring for the skin, especially the face. Global micellar water sales market size projected at USD 0.19 billion by 2024 and expected to reach USD 0.23 billion by 2033, recording a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 8.2% over the forecast period from 2025 to 2033. Growth opportunities in the global market show positive trends that can be utilized by industry players. One of these industry players is Wardah, with many variations of micellar water tailored to the needs of the skin and halal labels, it is expected that wardah can be the choice of the community for micellar water products. Wardah is a brand of care and beauty in Indonesia. Wardah operates under PT. Paragon Technology and Innovation (PT. PTI), where Wardah is a local halal cosmetics brand established since 1995. Reporting from the Top Brand Award ranks with three variable criteria mind share, market share, and commitment share. The Top Brand Index (TBI) of Wardah is as follows.

Wardah is in 4th position with the rate of change in the TBI value in 2023 falling by 1.5% and in 2024 falling again by 2%. The decline that continues to occur can't be allowed, if the decline continues to occur can make micellar water Wardah products out of the market so it must be followed up seriously. Wardah should improve its position as a TOP brand with a high TBI score. An example of content marketing carried out by Wardah is to post videos about its products Through the content in the post, customers can make interactions that allow their involvement in the product. In the comments column of Wardah's TikTok account, many consumers leave reviews related to Wardah's micellar water products related to their experience using the brand. The reviews given are also diverse, many are positive as well as some are negative. In the reviews submitted by consumers in the TikTok comments column, on several variants of Wardah micellar water Products. Some consumers complain about information from the content provided regarding claims

to be safe for sensitive skin and listed on the "gentle for sensitive skin" packaging but in fact consumers feel discomfort such as burning on the face when used. There are also some consumers who are not suitable to use the product after reformulating the product. The problems indicated that content marketing and brand experience can affect customer engagement and brand loyalty.

Similar to how business education has been found to mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and product innovation by equipping individuals with strategic decision-making skills and resource management (Massoudi, 2025). This study emphasizes the importance of education in strengthening the link between content marketing, brand experience, and brand loyalty. By offering insights into how these marketing strategies influence customer engagement, this research contributes to business education, particularly in marketing and management. The findings have educational implications for improving higher education curricula in areas such as consumer behavior, digital marketing, and brand management. This study supports the role of education in preparing future entrepreneurs and marketers for sustainable brand development and long-term business success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Behavior
Consumer behavior involves an understanding of external influences, namely marketing stimuli and other stimuli such as economics, technology, politics, and culture. The Stimulus will affect consumer preferences from two factors, namely psychological aspects (motivation, perception, learning, memory) and consumer characteristics consisting of cultural, social, and personal (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Brand Loyalty
Brand loyalty is a commitment made to make consistent purchases of goods or services over time, which results in consistent purchases from the same customers despite the potential negative impact of situational and marketing efforts (Wisnawa, 2019).

Content Marketing
Content marketing serves as an ongoing conversation between brands and consumers. Creating value-rich information that breaks through the noise and that can accelerate brand building has been a challenge for many brands (Lou & Xie, 2021).

Brand Experience
Brand experience is conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses that arise due to brand-related stimuli, whether in the form of brand design or identity, packaging, communication, and environment. This means that the brand experience is the real response from the entire process of purchase to after use (Brakus et al, 2009).

Customer Engagement
Customer engagement is a bond between consumers and brands that is realized through cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses beyond purchasing behavior (So et al., 2014).

METHODOLOGY

Method
This study uses the type of explanatory research, sampling techniques in this study is the technique of NonProbability sampling with purposive sampling sample type. The number of

samples was determined using the Lemeshow formula with a sampling error of 5%, so that the sample of this study as many as 384 consumers of micellar water Wardah in Semarang. The criteria for the respondents of this study are (1) aged 17 years and above, (2) domiciled in Semarang, (3) using the TikTok application, (4) purchasing Micellar water Wardah products within the last 3 years. Using Likert measurement scale 1-5 to measure attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of respondents to social phenomena that occur. Data analysis in this study using SmartPLS 4 software. The tests used in this study are measurement model test (outer model), structural model test (inner model), and mediation test. Alternative hypotheses:

H1. A positive and significant of Content marketing on the Customer engagement

H2. A positive and significant of Brand experience on the Customer engagement

H3. A positive and significant of Customer engagement on the Brand loyalty

H4. A positive and significant of Content marketing on the Brand loyalty

H5. A positive and significant of Brand experience on the Brand loyalty

H6. A positive and significant of Content marketing on the Brand loyalty mediated by Customer engagement.

Participants

The study population consisted of 384 consumers of micellar water wardah in semarang city spread across 16 sub-districts. in terms of length of use of tiktok, 3% of participants have used tiktok for less than a year, while 28% have used tiktok for 1-2 years, and 69% have used TikTok for more than 2 years. Gender distribution showed a higher proportion of female participants (78.39%) compared to male participants (21.61%). the majority of respondents were in the class of 20-24 years, with an age range between 17 to 62 years.

Instruments

For this study, used a questionnaire consisting of 36 questions. Brand loyalty with 4 dimensions consists of 8 questions, then content marketing with 4 dimensions consists of 8 questions, then brand experience with 4 dimensions consists of 8 questions, and customer engagement with 5 dimensions consists of 10 questions. The questionnaire was based on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with responses adjusted for each variable. The scale ranges from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

Statistical techniques and procedures

Before administering the instrument, a draft questionnaire is submitted to the supervising lecturer for approval. Data collection is done through Google Form which is spread through various social media. Once collected, the data is encoded, filtered, and analyzed using SmartPLS4.

Limitations of the design

This study presents some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, because of its passenger design, data is collected at a single point in time, preventing analysis of changes or trends over time. This limits the ability to infer causal relationships between content marketing, brand experience, customer engagement, and brand loyalty, since only correlations at specific moments can be observed.

This research focuses on content marketing on Tik Tok only. Though social media is not only TikTok that is used to market products and many things that make customers remain loyal to their choice.

RESULTS

Outer Model

The results showed that loadings of all the items were greater than 0.7, Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the suggested value of 0.70, and average variance extracted (AVE) was found to be above 0.50. Thus, the reliability of the constructs was confirmed (Hair et al., 2019). Further, the discriminant validity was established as the square root of AVE for each construct was higher than the correlations amongst the constructs (Hair et al, 2019).

Table 1. Outer loadings

	Content Marketing (X1)	Brand Experience (X2)	Brand Loyalty (Y)	Customer Engagement (Z)
CM1	0.791			
CM2	0.751			
CM3	0.741			
CM4	0.785			
CM5	0.752			
CM6	0.737			
CM7	0.742			
CM8	0.751			
BE1		0.765		
BE2		0.776		
BE3		0.750		
BE4		0.750		
BE5		0.747		
BE6		0.703		
BE7		0.774		
BE8		0.760		
BL1			0.738	
BL2			0.722	
BL3			0.752	
BL4			0.752	
BL5			0.734	
BL6			0.758	
BL7			0.759	
BL8			0.767	
CE1				0.751
CE2				0.744
CE3				0.740
CE4				0.735
CE5				0.754
CE6				0.756
CE7				0.755
CE8				0.747
CE9				0.719
CE10				0.797

Table 2. Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Content marketing (X1)	0.893	0.915	0.572
Brand experience (X2)	0.891	0.913	0.568
Brand loyalty (Y)	0.888	0.910	0.559
Customer engagement (Z)	0.914	0.928	0.563

Table 3. Fornell and Larcker criterion

	Content marketing (X1)	Brand experience (X2)	Brand loyalty (Y)	Customer engagement (Z)
Content marketing (X1)	**0.757**			
Brand experience (X2)	0.504	**0.754**		
Brand loyalty (Y)	0.525	0.507	**0.748**	
Customer engagement (Z)	0.499	0.478	0.464	**0.750**

After confirming the reliability and validity issues, the next is to test the suitability of the overall model looking at the Goodness of Fit Index and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMSR). According to Yamin & Kurniawan (2024) the interpretation of the GoF Index is as follows: 0.1 (low), 0.25 (medium), and 0.36 (high). The calculation results show the value of GoF model is 0.394 including high GoF category. This means that empirical data is able to explain measurement models and measurement models with a high level of fit. Furthermore the result shows that SRMR score is less than 0.1. Therefore, the model looks just right.

Table 4. Model Fit

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.057	0.057

Based on all goodness of fit tests, the model criteria are fulfilling the minimum requirement to conclude an overall fitness and we may proceed for further analyses

Table 5. Explanatory and predictive power

Independent	Dependent	F-square		R-Square		Q-Square	
		Score	Result	Score	Result	Score	Predictive Relevance
CM	CE	0.131	Low	0.318	Low	0.165	Yes
BE		0.101	Low				
CM	BL	0.094	Low	0.379	Low	0.205	Yes
BE		0.078	Low				
CE		0.039	Low				

According to the R-squared parameter, the content marketing and brand experience variables increased brand loyalty by 31%, and the content marketing, brand experience and customer

engagement variables increased brand loyalty by 37%. Q-square in this study above 0 and below 5 so it can be concluded that the model still has good predictive ability even though the relationship between the variables is not too strong.

Table 6. Direct effect hypothesis test

	Hypotheses	VIF	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Values	Result
H1	CM -> CE	1.340	0.346	6.303	0.000	Supported
H2	BE -> CE	1.340	0.304	5.391	0.000	Supported
H3	CE -> BL	1.467	0.188	3.707	0.000	Supported
H4	CM -> BL	1.516	0.297	4.983	0.000	Supported
H5	BE -> BL	1.476	0.268	4.355	0.000	Supported

Multicollinearity is not a significant problem if the VIF is less than 5 (Hair et al., 2019). According to calculations, all values are lower than 5. Therefore, multicollinearity is not a problem in this research model. Furthermore, none of the path shows the negative mean and all hypothesis relationships are considered statistically significant All the relationships according to the proposed hypotheses in the following way:

H1   Content marketing has a significant effect on customer engagement with a very strong p-value (0.000 < 0.05). There is a positive effect of content marketing on customer engagement shown by the path coefficient (0.346) and t-statistic of 6.303 which exceeds the t-table of one tile of 1.65. This means that any content marketing changes will increase customer engagement.

H2   Brand experience has a significant effect on customer engagement with a very strong p-value (0.000 < 0.05). There is a positive influence of brand experience on customer engagement is shown by the value of the path coefficient (0.304) and t-statistic of 5.491 which exceeds the t-table one tile is 1.65. This means that any change in the brand experience will increase customer engagement.

H3   Customer engagement has a significant effect on brand loyalty with a very strong p-value (0.000 < 0.05). There is a positive effect of customer engagement on brand loyalty shown by the path coefficient value (0.188) and t-statistic of 3.707 which exceeds the t-table of one tile of 1.65. This means that any change in customer engagement will increase brand loyalty.

H4   Content marketing has a significant effect on brand loyalty with a very strong p-value (0.000 < 0.05). There is a positive effect of content marketing on brand loyalty shown by the path coefficient value (0.297) and t-statistic of 4.983 which exceeds the t-table of one tile which is 1.65. This means that any content marketing changes will increase brand loyalty.

H5   Brand experience has a significant effect on brand loyalty with a very strong p-value (0.000 < 0.05). There is a positive influence of brand experience on brand loyalty is shown by the value of the path coefficient (0.268) and t-statistic of 4.355 which exceeds the t-table one tile is 1.65. This means that any change in the brand experience will increase brand loyalty.

Table 7. Indirect effect hypothesis test and mediation Test

Path	Direct Effect			Med	Indirect Effect			Result
	Path Coeff	T-Value	P-Value		Path Coeff	T-Value	P-Value	
CM -> BL	0.297	4.983	0.000	CE	0.065	2.770	0.003	Partial mediation
BE -> BL	0.268	4.355	0.000		0.057	2.714	0.003	Partial mediation

There is an indirect influence of content marketing variables on brand loyalty through customer engagement. There is a positive influence shown by the value of path coefficient (0.065) and t-statistic of 2.770 which exceeds t-table one tile is 1.65 and significant with p-value of 0.003 < sig 0.01. This study reveals that content marketing variables have a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty through customer engagement.

There is an indirect influence of brand experience variables on brand loyalty through customer engagement. There is a positive influence shown by the value of path coefficient (0.057) and t-statistic of 2.714 which exceeds t-table one tile is 1.65 and significant with p-value of 0.003 < sig 0.01. This study reveals that brand experience variables have a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty through customer engagement.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Content marketing (X1) has a positive and significant effect on customer engagement (Z). this means that the better content marketing will increase customer engagement. The results showed similarities with previous research that content marketing affects customer engagement (June et al., 2020; Lou & Xie, 2021). According to June et al (2020) advertising, promotion, and SNS content are important stimuli for customer engagement and must be managed properly. It is important to look broadly at the media controlled by companies and users because it is necessary to select and combine the optimal factors to achieve brand performance. Wardah's Content marketing on Tiktok has successfully invited consumers to continue to connect with Wardah's content.

Brand experience (X2) has a positive and significant effect on customer engagement (Z). this means that the better the brand experience will increase customer engagement. The results of the study prove various previous studies that show that brand experience plays an important role in increasing customer engagement (Brakus et al., 2009; Khan et al., 2020). Research by Brakus et al. (2009) emphasized that brand experiences that are interesting and enjoyable can form a deeper emotional connection with consumers, which in turn encourages active engagement with consumers the brand. Another study by Khan et al (2020) mentioned that providing experiences in terms of sensory, Affective, Behavioral, and intellectual engagement can affect customer engagement rates. Superior experience in question is a unique and memorable impression that is formed when a customer receives a brand stimulus. Such as services, products, ways of communication, and so on. This means that a strong brand experience creates an emotional attachment that can increase the level of consumer participation in interacting with the brand, whether in the form of repeated purchases, recommendations, or interactions on social media.

Customer engagement (Z) has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty (Y). this means that better customer engagement will increase brand loyalty. The results of this study prove various previous studies that confirm the close relationship between customer engagement and brand loyalty. Research conducted by So et al. (2014) states that customer engagement beyond purchasing behavior has a strong effect on brand loyalty. Another study by Hollebeek (2011) that

customers who feel involved with a brand tend to be more loyal because they have a stronger emotional attachment and perception of value to the products used.

Content marketing (X1) has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty (Y). this means that better content marketing will increase brand loyalty. The results showed similarities with previous studies that content marketing affects brand loyalty (Ajina, 2019; Ramadania et al., 2023). According to Ramadania et al. (2023), unique and useful content marketing can make a company a leader in the industry and differentiate it from other companies. Such differentiation will create brand loyalty among consumers. Research by (Ajina, 2019) states that content marketing strategies have a big effect on building a brand loyalty base compared to building trust and driving customer engagement.

Brand experience (X2) has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty (Y). this means that the better the brand experience will increase brand loyalty. This study reveals similarities with previous research that brand experience affects brand loyalty (Khan et al., 2019). According to Khan et al (2019), a positive brand experience leads to pleasant results. Consumers with a positive brand experience are more likely to re-purchase a brand, which means brand loyalty can be built.

Content marketing (X1) has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty (Y) through customer engagement (Z). this means that the better content marketing will increase customer engagement so that it can increase brand loyalty. This study reveals similarities with previous research that content marketing has an effect on brand loyalty mediated by customer engagement (Ajina et al, 2019). According to Ajina et al (2019), content marketing has been popular for many years because it has been proven to attract customer attention and create interest in brands at a relatively low cost. Content marketing has the ability to engage customers widely, especially through social media platforms. Therefore, content marketing can help in encouraging customer engagement which can accelerate customer loyalty.

Brand experience (X2) has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty (Y) through customer engagement (Z). this means that the better the brand experience will increase customer engagement so that it can increase brand loyalty. This study reveals similarities with previous research that brand experience affects brand loyalty mediated by customer engagement (Khan et al, 2020). According to Khan et al (2020) mentioning that companies should provide experiences in terms of sensory, Affective, Behavioral, and intellectual engagement can affect the level of customer engagement and can help build loyalty. A unique and memorable experience that is formed when customers receive brand stimuli. Such as services, products, ways of communication, and so on. Brand experiences that engage companies with consumers will build a loyal customer base to the brand.

IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations that can be submitted in this study are as follows. For Companies In content marketing variables, the entertainment value dimension has the smallest average value. The suggestions that can be considered and evaluated for use are that Wardah can create content marketing that can entertain and delight consumers with fresh marketing with a unique plot that can be packaged in Wardah TikTok content. Making it attractive and unique will entice consumers to make a purchase. Then in the brand experience variable, the intellectual experience dimension has the smallest average value. The advice that can be considered and evaluated for use is Wardah can emphasize the slogan and halal beauty product that makes it easier to remember by consumers. The unique content indicated in the packaging can also be introduced and emphasized. So consumers feel attracted to this unique formula. Next in customer engagement variables, the interaction dimension has the smallest average value. So the suggestion that can be considered and evaluated for use is that Wardah can provide an event with a gift away prize, which is a requirement by commenting in the social media comments column so that consumers are always

involved with the company. Last in brand loyalty variable, the dimension of conative loyalty has the smallest average value. So the advice that can be considered and evaluated for use is Wardah must be able to maintain and improve the quality of its products so that consumers remain loyal. Always sensitive to existing trends and adopting them into marketing will make the brand still exist and keep even invite consumers to remain loyal to the brand.

For further research, this research variable can be used for further research on the condition of adding other variables as well as on different research objects. The study also supports Blanco-González (2024) that aligning theoretical teaching with practical business applications is essential to improve the employability of graduates. As the business environment continues to evolve rapidly, education programs must adapt to reflect real-world changes and better prepare students for professional challenges. Implications for the world of Education: Curricula in the field of marketing management or marketing communications need to include deeper material on content marketing, customer experience, and customer engagement. Students are invited to not only understand the theory, but also analyze the practice of local brands in building long-term relationships with consumers. Also provide practical insights on how local brands can compete with international brands through content and engagement-based marketing strategies.

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