

EXPLORING YOUNG CONSUMERS' BRAND ENGAGEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA: THE CASE OF SOCIOLLA THROUGH SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh motivasi konsumen berdasarkan Self-Determination Theory (SDT) terhadap brand engagement dan loyalitas merek di media sosial, dengan studi kasus pada pengguna Sociolla di Jabodetabek. Survei dilakukan terhadap 130 perempuan muda yang aktif berinteraksi dengan konten Sociolla di Instagram, TikTok, dan platform lainnya. Pengolahan data menggunakan PLS-SEM melalui SmartPLS 4. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa autonomy, competence, relatedness, serta motivasi intrinsik dan ekstrinsik berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap brand engagement. Selanjutnya, brand engagement juga terbukti berpengaruh signifikan terhadap loyalitas merek. Nilai R^2 menunjukkan daya jelas model yang kuat, yaitu 0,656 untuk brand engagement dan 0,673 untuk loyalitas merek. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya pemenuhan kebutuhan psikologis dalam strategi konten digital. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi teoretis terhadap literatur branding berbasis SDT dan menawarkan implikasi praktis bagi brand kecantikan dalam membangun keterlibatan dan loyalitas konsumen secara berkelanjutan.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of consumer motivation, based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), on brand engagement and brand loyalty on social media, with a case study on Sociolla users in Greater Jakarta. A survey was conducted with 130 young female respondents who actively interact with Sociolla's content on Instagram, TikTok, and other platforms. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that autonomy, competence, relatedness, along with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, have significant positive effects on brand engagement. Furthermore, brand engagement significantly affects brand loyalty. The model shows strong explanatory power, with R^2 values of 0.656 for brand engagement and 0.673 for brand loyalty. These findings emphasize the importance of fulfilling consumers' psychological needs in digital content strategies. This study contributes to SDT-based branding literature and offers practical implications for beauty brands aiming to foster sustained engagement and loyalty in competitive social media environments.



INTRODUCTION

Social media has become a vital arena in modern marketing strategy. Companies no longer merely disseminate product information; they now actively foster two-way interactions through content designed to stimulate emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement, commonly referred to as *brand engagement* (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Within this context, young consumers, particularly women aged 18–30, represent a key segment, as they are among the most active social media users and exert significant influence on digital consumption trends, especially in the beauty and personal care categories.

One platform that has effectively identified this potential is Sociolla, a beauty-focused e-commerce and digital ecosystem based in Indonesia that not only sells products but also emphasizes education and personalization. Through its presence on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, Sociolla cultivates interactive and visually appealing communication, often partnering with beauty influencers to amplify its messaging. However, amidst the overwhelming flow of digital content and the presence of competing brands such as Sephora, Watsons, Female Daily Studio, and BeautyHaul, not all of Sociolla's campaigns have succeeded in generating deep and sustained consumer engagement.

A notable phenomenon emerging in this context is the gap between high content exposure and low meaningful audience participation. Many users act as “passive scrollers,” merely viewing content without engaging through likes, comments, or shares. Yet, strong engagement is essential for fostering long-term brand loyalty and advocacy. This issue leads to a critical question: What motivates young consumers to truly engage with brand content on social media? Understanding the psychological motivations behind brand engagement has therefore become increasingly relevant. To address this, the present study adopts the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Ryan and Deci (2000), which posits that human behavior is driven by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy (the desire for self-direction), competence (the need to feel effective and capable), and relatedness (the desire for social connection). In the context of brand engagement, these three needs may explain why some individuals choose to actively participate in brand content while others remain passive observers.

Through this study, the researcher aims to explore the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that influence brand engagement participation among Sociolla users in the Jabodetabek area, particularly young women aged 18 to 30. The findings of this

research are expected to offer theoretical contributions to the development of motivation-based engagement models, while also providing practical implications for beauty brand managers in designing more relevant and effective content strategies in the digital era.

Although the use of social media by beauty brands such as Sociolla has expanded significantly, and the core audience, young women aged 18 to 30 in the Jabodetabek region are among the most active social media users, deep and sustained brand engagement is not always achieved. Many digital campaigns may go visually viral, yet fail to generate meaningful interactions or foster long-term consumer loyalty.

This phenomenon is reflected in recent studies and reports. According to the *Social Media Statistics Indonesia 2024* report by Meltwater (2024), there is a noticeable decline in the average time users spend browsing brand content, despite the continued high penetration of social media use. This suggests that users have become increasingly selective and do not always respond actively to brand-generated content. These trends highlight a growing challenge for marketers: building and maintaining sustainable consumer engagement in a saturated and attention-fragmented digital environment. A study by Pasaribu and Suyanto (2022) found that although Sociolla's Instagram content is capable of generating engagement, the depth of interaction and the sustainability of customer loyalty remain limited, particularly among younger audience segments.

This raises a critical question: What motivates young consumers to actively engage with brand content on social media? Understanding the psychological motivations behind brand engagement has thus become increasingly relevant. To address this, the present study adopts the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposed by Ryan and Deci (2000), which posits that human behavior is driven by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy (the desire for self-direction), competence (the need to feel capable and effective), and relatedness (the need for social connection and belonging). Within the context of brand engagement, these elements may explain why some individuals choose to actively participate in brand content, while others remain passive observers.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study seeks to address the following research question: "How do consumer motivations, as conceptualized within the Self-Determination Theory framework, influence brand engagement on Sociolla's social media platforms among young women aged 18-30 in the Jabodetabek region?"

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Brand Engagement

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a motivational theory developed by Deci and Ryan (1985; 2000), which emphasizes that human behavior is driven by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the individual's need to feel in control of their own actions and choices, acting out of personal volition. Competence involves the need to feel effective and capable of achieving goals or overcoming challenges. Relatedness represents the need to feel connected, accepted, and to experience meaningful social relationships.

In the context of brand engagement, particularly in social media environments, consumer motivation is not solely determined by external incentives such as discounts or rewards. It is also shaped by intrinsic drivers, including the feeling of being appreciated, the freedom to select content, and emotional connectedness with the brand and its community (Sheldon et al., 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000). To comprehensively understand consumer behavior, it is crucial to consider the underlying motivations that drive individuals to engage with particular brands. Self-Determination Theory provides a valuable framework for analyzing these motivations, as it posits that individuals are intrinsically driven to seek autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Giang et al., 2024). These three psychological needs can significantly influence an individual's relationship with a brand, affecting their motivation, well-being, and overall engagement (Lyness et al., 2013). When these needs are satisfied within the context of a brand relationship, consumers are more likely to exhibit enhanced self-motivation and mental health, leading to stronger brand engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Brand engagement, therefore, can be understood as a psychologically driven outcome, influenced by the extent to which a brand successfully fulfills consumers' three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Accordingly, SDT offers a strong theoretical lens through which to explain the engagement behavior of young consumers toward brands on social media, especially in a digital environment that demands more authentic and personalized interactions.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Brand Engagement

Within the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) framework, human motivation is classified into two primary types: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation and understanding these two forms of motivation is essential for explaining the dynamics of consumer involvement in digital brand interactions (Ryan & Deci,

2000). This paper explores the multifaceted interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as drivers of brand engagement.

Understanding these motivational factors can provide companies with a deeper understanding of consumer behavior and strategies for cultivating stronger brand-consumer relationships (Li & Li, 2014). Intrinsic motivation arises from the inherent satisfaction of engaging with a brand, while extrinsic motivation stems from external rewards or pressures associated with brand interaction (Brief & Aldag, 1977). When individuals are intrinsically motivated, they engage with a brand for the pure enjoyment and challenge it offers, rather than for external gains (Zeng et al., 2022). Conversely, extrinsic motivation drives engagement through tangible benefits such as discounts, loyalty points, or social recognition (Elamalki et al., 2024). Intrinsic motivation is rooted in personal needs and the satisfaction derived directly from the activity itself (Engidaw, 2021). Extrinsic motivation, conversely, involves performing an action to attain a separate outcome (Bénabou & Tirole, 2003). The interplay of both motivations can significantly impact the depth and longevity of brand engagement (Delaney & Royal, 2017). Individuals often participate in activities for enjoyment or because they find them interesting and motivational processes greatly contribute to human experiences, and deficiencies in motivation are frequently seen in psychiatric conditions (Morris et al., 2022). Both types of motivation can contribute to enhancing brand engagement, either as initial triggers for participation or as reinforcements of emotional connection that sustain long-term brand relationships.

Brand Engagement and Brand Loyalty

Brand engagement is defined as the degree of a consumer's psychological and behavioral involvement in building a relationship with a brand through an interactive process that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Brodie et al., 2011). In the context of social media, brand engagement may be manifested through various activities such as liking, commenting, sharing content, following the brand's official accounts, or even co-creating content with the brand.

Intensive engagement with a brand can lead to increased brand loyalty, which refers to a consumer's tendency to consistently choose and repurchase the same brand, as well as to recommend it to others (Oliver, 1999). Brand engagement fosters emotional attachment and perceived value, both of which strengthen loyalty. This has been supported by studies such as Dessart et al. (2016) and Vivek et al. (2012) which highlight that active social media engagement contributes to long-term consumer-brand relationships. This study tested eleven hypotheses regarding the

effects of psychological needs and motivational factors on brand engagement and, subsequently, on brand loyalty.

A. Direct Effects

H1: Autonomy has positive influence on Brand Engagement.

H2: Competence has positive influence on Brand Engagement.

H3: Relatedness has positive influence on Brand Engagement.

H4: Intrinsic Motivation has positive influence on Brand Engagement.

H5: Extrinsic Motivation has positive influence on Brand Engagement.

H6: Brand Engagement has positive influence on Brand Loyalty.

B. Indirect Effects (Mediation via Brand Engagement)

H7: Autonomy has positive influence on Brand Loyalty (mediated by Brand Engagement).

H8: Competence has positive influence on Brand Loyalty (mediated by Brand Engagement).

H9: Relatedness has positive influence on Brand Loyalty (mediated by Brand Engagement).

H10: Intrinsic Motivation has positive influence on Brand Loyalty (mediated by Brand Engagement).

H11: Extrinsic Motivation has positive influence on Brand Loyalty (mediated by Brand Engagement).

The research objectives are to understand and analyze the influence of consumer motivation, as conceptualized by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), on brand engagement on social media, using Sociolla as a case study among young women aged 18–30 in the Jabodetabek region. Specifically, the objectives of this research are to: 1) Identify the types of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) that drive young consumers to engage with Sociolla's content on social media, 2) Examine the influence of the three basic psychological needs in SDT, autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the level of brand engagement on social media, 3) Measure the extent to which consumer motivation affects the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of brand engagement toward Sociolla, 4) Develop strategic implications for brands in designing social media content that aligns with the psychological needs of young consumers. Through these objectives, the study is expected to offer theoretical contributions to the literature on motivation-based consumer engagement and provide practical insights for local brands seeking to build more meaningful relationships with their audiences through social media platforms.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative explanatory approach, aiming to explain the causal relationship between psychological variables based on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and consumer participation in brand engagement on social media. This approach is appropriate for testing hypotheses and assessing the extent to which SDT constructs autonomy, competence, and relatedness, influence consumer engagement with Sociolla's brand content, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions.

The population for this study consists of female social media users aged 18–30 years residing in the Jabodetabek area, who have previously interacted with Sociolla's brand content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, or other social media channels. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling approach, applying the following criteria: 1) Female, 2) Aged between 18 and 30, 3) Residing in Jabodetabek, 4) Having engaged with Sociolla content on any social media platform. The minimum sample size was determined based on the guideline by Hair et al. (2010), which suggests a ratio of 5 to 10 respondents per indicator. Given the estimated number of indicators is approximately 24, the minimum target sample is 120 respondents. To ensure adequate reliability and statistical power, this study aims to collect data from at least 130 respondents.

Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, with the survey link shared through various social media platforms and relevant online communities. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, to measure respondents' level of agreement with each statement. Before the full-scale distribution, a pre-test involving 30 respondents was conducted to assess the clarity of the questions and the content validity of the instrument. Feedback from the pre-test was used to refine the wording and structure of the questionnaire to ensure comprehension and reliability.

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS version 4. PLS-SEM is a variance-based structural modeling technique that is particularly suitable for exploratory research, small-to-medium sample sizes, and complex models with multiple constructs and indicators (Hair Jr et al., 2021). Given the sample size of 130 respondents and the presence of both reflective constructs and latent variables, PLS-SEM was deemed appropriate for this study.

The analysis was conducted in two stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation. In the first stage, the reliability and validity of each construct were assessed through Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). In the second stage, the structural model was assessed by examining the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values using the bootstrapping method with 5,000 resamples. This resampling technique allows for robust estimation of the statistical significance of hypothesized relationships, especially in non-normally distributed data. The R-squared (R^2) values were used to evaluate the explanatory power of endogenous constructs, while f-squared (f^2) was employed to assess the effect size of each exogenous construct. In addition, Q-squared (Q^2) values were calculated through blindfolding to determine the predictive relevance of the model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All respondents in this study were female, aged between 18 and 30 years, aligning with the defined target population. The majority of participants were university students (40.8%), followed by full-time employees (29.2%). In terms of preferred social media platforms, Instagram emerged as the most frequently used (36.9%), followed by TikTok (31.5%), Twitter/X (18.5%), and YouTube (13.1%).

The reliability and validity of the constructs were evaluated using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), performed with SmartPLS 4 software. To assess internal consistency and convergent validity, three key statistical measures were examined: Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results are presented in Table 1: Construct Reliability and Validity. All constructs demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair Jr et al., 2021). Specifically, Brand Loyalty exhibited the highest Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.935, followed by Intrinsic Motivation (0.903), Extrinsic Motivation (0.902), and Competence (0.900), indicating strong reliability of the measurement items within each construct.

Composite Reliability (CR) values also confirmed the robustness of the measurement model, with all constructs scoring above 0.90, well beyond the minimum acceptable level of 0.70. This suggests that the latent variables were measured consistently across multiple indicators. Notably, Brand Loyalty again showed the highest CR value (0.959), further reinforcing the strength of its measurement. In terms of convergent validity, all constructs recorded AVE values above the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating that a substantial portion of

the variance in the observed variables was captured by the respective constructs. The AVE values ranged from 0.756 (Brand Engagement) to 0.886 (Brand Loyalty), providing strong evidence of convergent validity across the measurement model. Taken together, the results affirm that all constructs in this study exhibit satisfactory levels of internal consistency and convergent validity, thereby supporting the reliability and validity of the research instrument for further analysis using structural equation modeling. The structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values obtained through the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. Table X summarizes the results of hypothesis testing, including the standardized path coefficients (β), t-values, and significance levels.

Tabel 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Autonomy	0.888	0.931	0.817
Brand Engagement	0.838	0.903	0.756
Brand Loyalty	0.935	0.959	0.886
Competence	0.900	0.937	0.833
Extrinsic Motivation	0.902	0.939	0.836
Intrinsic Motivation	0.903	0.939	0.837
Relatedness	0.900	0.938	0.834

Hypothesis Testing Result indicated that all hypothesized relationships were statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). Specifically, Brand Engagement was significantly influenced by Autonomy ($\beta = 0.231$, $t = 4.030$, $p < 0.001$), Competence ($\beta = 0.205$, $t = 3.769$, $p < 0.001$), Intrinsic Motivation ($\beta = 0.212$, $t = 3.629$, $p < 0.001$), Extrinsic Motivation ($\beta = 0.229$, $t = 4.000$, $p < 0.001$), and Relatedness ($\beta = 0.225$, $t = 3.764$, $p < 0.001$). Meanwhile, Brand Loyalty was significantly predicted by Brand Engagement ($\beta = 0.772$, $t = 12.465$, $p < 0.001$), and also showed significant total effects from Autonomy ($\beta = 0.178$, $t = 3.895$), Competence ($\beta = 0.158$, $t = 3.675$), Intrinsic Motivation ($\beta = 0.163$, $t = 3.576$), Extrinsic Motivation ($\beta = 0.176$, $t = 3.871$), and Relatedness ($\beta = 0.174$, $t = 3.724$), indicating both direct and mediated influences.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the psychological and motivational factors that influence brand engagement and brand loyalty among young consumers in

Indonesia, particularly those engaging with the beauty platform Sociolla on social media. Grounded in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the research investigated how basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), as well as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, contribute to consumer engagement, and how this engagement subsequently affects brand loyalty. The findings reveal that all three basic psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, significantly influence brand engagement, confirming the relevance of SDT in digital consumer behavior contexts. Furthermore, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were found to positively affect engagement, indicating that consumer participation is driven not only by internal satisfaction and personal interest, but also by external incentives such as rewards or recognition. Importantly, brand engagement emerged as a key mediating variable that channels the influence of motivational factors toward brand loyalty. Consumers who feel autonomous, competent, socially connected, and motivated, whether intrinsically or extrinsically are more likely to engage actively with the brand on social media, and in turn, develop a stronger sense of loyalty.

These findings contribute to the growing literature on consumer engagement by validating the role of psychological needs and motivation in shaping brand relationships in digital environments. They also offer practical insights for marketers aiming to foster meaningful and lasting brand loyalty in a highly saturated and fast-moving social media landscape. For practitioners, particularly digital marketing teams at Sociolla and similar platforms, this study suggests that designing engagement strategies should go beyond promotional content. Brands should focus on creating experiences that foster autonomy (e.g., personalized content), competence (e.g., beauty tutorials, quizzes), and relatedness (e.g., community-based campaigns or influencer interaction). Additionally, combining intrinsic appeal with extrinsic rewards may enhance both short-term interaction and long-term loyalty.

In an increasingly competitive digital landscape, creating momentary engagement with consumers is no longer sufficient. The findings of this study underscore that impactful and sustained brand engagement is built upon the fulfillment of fundamental psychological needs and a deep understanding of consumer motivation. For brands like Sociolla, which operate predominantly in the social media space and target younger demographics, a strategy grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is not only relevant but also highly strategic.

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