

The Influence Social Media and Brand Equity on Purchase Intention towards Zalora Indonesia

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Abstract

The rapid growth of e-commerce in Indonesia, particularly in the fashion sector, has positioned Zalora Indonesia as a key player. However, its social media marketing strategies remain underutilized in driving brand equity and purchase intention, especially in digitally active regions like Bandung. This study investigates the influence of social media engagement on purchase intention toward Zalora, with brand equity as a mediating variable. Using a quantitative approach and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), data were collected from 400 social media users in Bandung familiar with Zalora. The study examines five dimensions of social media engagement: surveillance, social interaction, remuneration, information sharing, and entertainment. The results indicate that all five dimensions positively and significantly affect brand equity, with social interaction being the most influential. Additionally, brand equity significantly impacts purchase intention and mediates the relationship between social media and consumer behavior. These findings emphasize the importance of emotional engagement and brand value in social media marketing. The study offers both theoretical insights into digital consumer behavior and practical strategies for Zalora, including enhancing interactivity, offering loyalty incentives, enriching content quality, and streamlining the purchase process to improve conversion rates.

Keywords: Social Media, Brand Equity, Purchase Intention, Zalora Indonesia, PLS-SEM

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has significantly transformed consumer behavior, particularly in how individuals discover, assess, and purchase products. A large number of consumers now rely on social media for product reviews and recommendations (Guoqiang & Bhaumik, 2024). Despite these dynamics, Zalora, a specialized fashion e-commerce platform, has struggled to secure a position among the top three brands, raising questions regarding its competitive strategies particularly its social media engagement and brand equity efforts (SocialInsider, 2024; iPrice Group, 2023; Majeed et al., 2021). Based on the Top Brand E-Commerce data (2024), the following platforms have emerged as the top players:

1. Shopee: Leading in the market with its wide range of products, competitive pricing, and aggressive marketing strategies.
2. Lazada: Known for its comprehensive marketplace model, which caters to a variety of consumer needs beyond just fashion.
3. Blibli: Another major competitor, focusing on providing a diverse range of products and services.

These platforms have successfully capitalized on Indonesia's growing digital engagement, offering a variety of product categories from electronics to beauty and fashion. However, despite the increasing competition, the fashion e-commerce sector continues to thrive, with significant growth expected in the coming years.

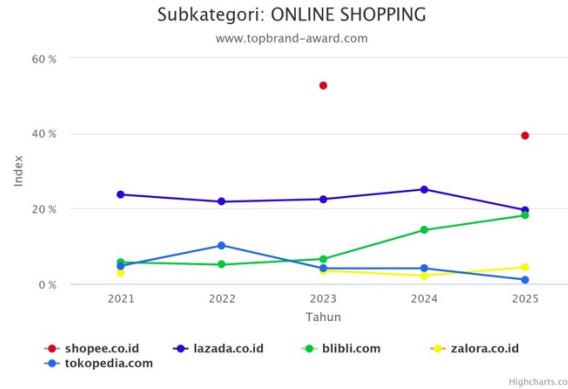


Figure 1.1 Market Share of Top E-Commerce Platforms in Indonesia (2024)

Source: Topbrand-award.com (2024)

This leads us to an interesting phenomenon: despite the overall success of fashion e-commerce, Zalora Indonesia, a prominent player in the region, is not listed among the top three e-commerce brands according to recent market data (iPrice Group, 2023; Statista, 2023; SocialInsider, 2023). Social media has become a key component of Zalora's marketing strategy. According to Rashid et al. (2022), Instagram serves as a powerful tool for engaging with younger, fashion-conscious consumers. Zalora has leveraged Instagram not only as a platform for promoting its products but also to build brand equity and foster consumer relationships (Sheldon et al., 2021). With its visual appeal and large user base, Instagram offers Zalora an ideal space to showcase its products, collaborate with influencers, and interact directly with customers (as emphasized by Hapsari & Astuti, 2022).

Table 1.1 Engagement Rate of Zalora Instagram (2021-2025)

Post Date	Likes	Comments
21 June 2021	1,201	133
28 May 2022	314	6
28 June 2023	227	10
15 Dec 2024	122	4
1 Jan 2025	45	4

Source: Author (2025)

This decline in engagement can be attributed to several factors. One potential issue is the perception of Zalora's social media presence. According to Rashid et al. (2022), consumers' attitudes and perceptions toward a brand are shaped by the content they encounter on social media platforms. In Zalora's case, while the company maintains a high volume of posts, the content relevance and interaction quality may not align with the evolving preferences of its audience.

Brand equity remains a crucial factor in establishing a brand's value and significantly influences consumer behavior. For Zalora, brand equity has been built through extensive marketing campaigns, partnerships with influencers, and a consistent presence on social media platforms. However, despite Zalora's efforts, there are some key areas where the company's brand equity could improve. According to Majeed et al. (2021), however, there are key areas where Zalora's brand equity could still be strengthened, particularly in adapting to shifting digital engagement trends. Additionally, Hapsari and Belgiawan (2024) highlight that brand awareness softens strengthened through surveillance and remuneration has a direct positive effect on purchase intention in Indonesia's textile and fashion sectors. This reinforces the idea that gratifications derived from Instagram can influence deeper marketing outcomes through the mediation of brand equity.

Zalora's performance data highlights significant areas of concern regarding sales growth and social media engagement, particularly when compared to its competitors. As observed in the data, Zalora's Instagram engagement

has seen a sharp decline in recent years, while its sales growth has stagnated, significantly affecting its purchase intention. Zalora's sales growth is a critical factor contributing to purchase intention. According to the Instagram Industry Benchmark Report (SocialInsider, 2024), business accounts saw a 28% year-over-year decline in overall engagement. The average engagement rate dropped from 0.60% to 0.43%, and carousel posts previously the top performing content format, saw a 15% drop. Even Reels, which had temporarily driven higher interaction, also began to plateau or decline in 2024. 3. Number of Visits: Zalora's website traffic has experienced a steady decline, with total only 2,9 million, as shown below.

This reduction is evident when comparing Zalora's traffic to competitors such as Shopee and Tokopedia, which consistently maintains over 100 million visits. This indicates that Zalora is losing consumer interest over time, which is directly correlated with the drop in purchase intention. While Zalora has achieved strong brand awareness and positive brand associations, the challenge remains in converting this initial recognition into sustained loyalty and a stronger market position. These findings underscore the importance of refining social media engagement and consistently delivering on the expectations set by the brand's image. According to Rashid et al. (2022), by addressing these areas, Zalora can further enhance its overall brand equity, which is essential for encouraging repeat purchases and building lasting consumer relationships.

In understanding how Zalora can adapt to these challenges, it is crucial to explore strategies that directly address the gaps in brand equity and social media engagement. By focusing on these critical areas, Zalora has the potential to enhance its brand equity and, in turn, increase purchase intention. This analysis will also reveal how personalized marketing, loyalty programs, and consumer interaction strategies can be fine-tuned to foster stronger consumer relationships. Based on the findings, it is evident that Zalora's purchase intention is influenced by the brand equity dimensions, and social media engagement. As indicated by Majeed et al. (2021), strengthening brand equity and social media is essential for increasing purchase intention. The study suggests that when brand equity show positive results, they contribute to increased purchase intention. Conversely, when any variable, such as brand equity or social media engagement, produces negative results, it indicates an issue that must be addressed. Their study highlights the importance of consistent social media engagement in cultivating a deeper emotional connection with the brand, ultimately leading to higher purchase intention.

Ramadhan and Millanyani (2024) also found that effective social media marketing strategies can significantly boost consumers' intention to make a purchase. Although Zalora has a strong presence on social media platforms such as Instagram, data indicates a significant decline in social media engagement over recent years. This decrease has impacted Zalora's ability to effectively leverage social media as a tool for strengthening brand loyalty and brand associations, both of which are crucial for enhancing purchase intention. Therefore, in the context of this research, it is essential to examine whether Zalora's brand equity is aligned with purchase intention. If the variables related to brand equity, and social media engagement show positive outcomes, it would validate the assertion that brand equity drives purchase intention. Conversely, any negative indicators would point to areas that require improvement. Hence, Zalora has been chosen as the object of study, as it presents a valuable case for investigating how brand equity influences purchase intention and identifying strategies to improve its performance in the competitive fashion e-commerce market.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Marketing

In modern business, marketing is a dynamic process of delivering and exchanging value with customers and stakeholders (Kotler et al., 2021). The contemporary marketing paradigm emphasizes a customer-centric approach, where understanding and fulfilling consumer needs are the main priorities. Rather than focusing solely on transactions, marketing now aims to build long-term relationships and brand loyalty, utilizing both traditional and digital tools to reach diverse audiences effectively (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

B. Marketing Mix

Consists of all a company can do to influence demand for the goods and services it produces. The marketing mix refers to essential internal components that shape and guide a company's marketing program (Hurriyati, 2018; 42).

C. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a strategic method that combines all marketing communication tools, channels, and messages to maintain consistency and achieve the greatest impact across different customer touchpoints (Kliatchko et al., 2021).

D. Digital Marketing

According to Chaffey & Smith (2022), Digital marketing involves leveraging digital channels, platforms, and technologies to promote offerings, engage consumers, and support business growth.

E. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing entails strategically utilizing social media platforms to engage target audiences while promoting brands, products, and services, generating brand awareness, and ultimately driving consumer actions (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Recent developments in digital marketing have highlighted social media marketing as a critical driver of business growth, customer relationship management, and brand equity, particularly in industries that rely heavily on digital engagement such as fashion e-commerce (Rashid et al., 2022). Prasetio et al. (2022) suggest that marketers utilize social media primarily as a tool to reinforce their brand, with the ultimate goal of increasing brand equity.

F. Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), originally developed by Katz et al. (1974), is a foundational framework in communication and media studies that explains how and why individuals actively seek out specific media to satisfy various psychological and social needs. In the context of digital and social media marketing, UGT has gained increasing relevance, as consumers now play an active role in selecting, engaging with, and even creating content that aligns with their personal gratifications (Sheldon et al., 2021; Majeed et al., 2021).

1. Entertainment: Consumers seek enjoyable, fun, or emotionally satisfying content from brands' social media channels. Creative and visually appealing campaigns, interactive stories, or humorous posts are examples of how brands fulfill this gratification (Sheldon et al., 2021).
2. Surveillance: This refers to the need to stay informed about trends, new products, promotions, or industry updates. Brands leverage this by sharing timely news, product launches, or market insights, thereby reinforcing their image as a trusted source of information (Majeed et al., 2021).
3. Social Interaction: Social media marketing allows users to interact with both brands and other consumers, enabling community building and conversation. Engagement features such as comments, direct messages, and branded hashtags foster a sense of belonging and connection (Sheldon et al., 2021).
4. Information Sharing: Users often share useful or interesting brand content with their own networks, increasing the brand's reach and credibility. This is especially effective when brands create content designed to be easily shareable and relevant to current conversations (Majeed et al., 2021).
5. Remuneration: This dimension involves tangible incentives such as discounts, rewards, giveaways, or exclusive offers provided by brands through their social media channels. These strategies directly encourage users to follow, engage with, and convert on brand campaigns (Majeed et al., 2021).

G. Brand Equity

Brand equity refers to the value that a brand adds to a product or service, as perceived by consumers. This value is reflected in customer awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty, which collectively enable brands to command premium pricing, foster customer retention, and achieve sustained competitive advantage (Aaker, 1991). Recent studies emphasize that brand equity is multi-dimensional. The most commonly accepted dimensions include:

1. Brand Awareness
2. Brand Associations
3. Perceived Quality
4. Brand Loyalty

H. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to the consumer's willingness to buy a product or service, shaped by their attitudes, perceptions, and evaluations (Martins et al., 2019; Rashid et al., 2022). It serves as a key predictor of actual purchasing behavior and remains a central construct in contemporary marketing research, particularly in digital and social media contexts. According to Ajzen (1991), purchase intention is influenced by three main factors: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Akbar et al. (2022) revealed that strong brand equity enhances purchase intention by fostering consumer trust and positive brand perception.

Framework of Thoughts

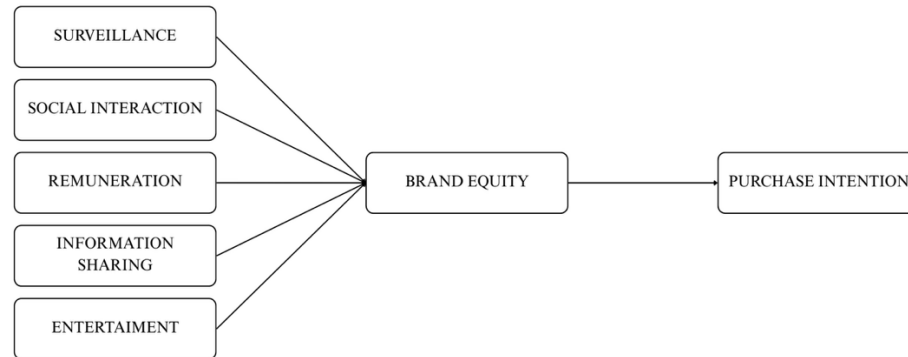


Figure 2.1 Framework of Thoughts

Source: Adapted from Majeed et al. (2021)

Based on the framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Surveillance on social media has a significant positive effect on brand equity.
- H2: Social interaction on social media has a significant positive effect on brand equity.
- H3: Remunerative activities on social media have a significant positive effect on brand equity.
- H4: Information sharing on social media has a significant positive effect on brand equity.
- H5: Entertainment on social media has a significant positive effect on brand equity.
- H6: Brand equity has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

III.METODOLOGI PENELITIAN

A. Types of Research

This research adopts a causal quantitative method to investigate the link between specified independent and dependent variables. Following the positivist paradigm (Indrawati, 2015), it applies structured questionnaires and statistical techniques to evaluate how social media marketing influences brand equity and purchase intention. Data were collected cross-sectionally at a single point in time without researcher intervention (non-contrived), reflecting natural conditions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The unit of analysis is the individual, and the research strategy follows a survey method (Sugiyono, 2021).

B. Measurement Scale

In this study, interval data are applied using the Likert Summated Ratings scale. According to Sugiyono (2019), the Likert scale is used to measure opinions, attitudes, and perceptions toward social phenomena.

C. Population and Sampling

This study targets a population defined as individuals residing in Bandung who meet specific criteria: active Instagram users, those who have interacted with Zalora Indonesia's content, and those interested in purchasing fashion products ensuring relevance to digitally literate consumers aware of Zalora's presence. According to Sugiyono (2021), population refers to a group of subjects or objects sharing particular characteristics relevant to a study. Since the exact number of Zalora Indonesia's potential Instagram consumers in Bandung is unknown, the study employs a non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, based on accessibility, availability, and willingness to participate (Indrawati, 2015). To ensure relevance, screening criteria include: (1) using Instagram at least three times per week, (2) having seen or interacted with Zalora Indonesia's Instagram content, (3) having purchased fashion items online within the past three months, and (4) residing in Bandung. Following Hair et al. (2017), the minimum sample size is determined by multiplying the number of research indicators (55) by 10, resulting in 550 respondents to ensure statistical reliability.

D. Data Analysis Technique

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is applied in this study to examine the interrelationships between the variables. PLS-SEM is suitable for small samples, complex models, and non-normal

data distributions (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023; Sholihin & Ratmono, 2020). The analysis includes outer model evaluation, inner model assessment, and hypothesis testing using bootstrapping with 550 samples (Rahadi, 2023).

IV.RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Determination Test (R^2)

Table 2.2 Determination Test (R^2)

Variabel	R-square	R-square adjusted	Results
Brand Equity	0,546	0,542	Moderate
Purchase Intention	0,433	0,432	Moderate

Based on the table above, the R-square values indicate the explanatory power of the independent variables on their respective dependent constructs. The Brand Equity variable has an R-square value of 0.546, which indicates a moderate level of explanatory power. Similarly, the Purchase Intention variable shows an R-square value of 0.433, which is also considered moderate, suggesting that 43.3% of the variation in Purchase Intention is accounted for by the model, with the remaining 56.7% explained by external factors not included in this study.

Effect Size (F^2)

Table 3.3 Effect Size (F^2)

Variabel	Effec Size (F^2)	Results
Surveillance -> Brand Equity	0,428	Large
Social Interaction -> Brand Equity	0,529	Large
Remuneration -> Brand Equity	0,214	Moderate
Information Sharing -> Brand Equity	0,040	Small
Entertainment -> Brand Equity	0,048	Small
Brand Equity -> Purchase Intention	0,763	Very Large

Source: Author (2025)

Based on the data presented in the table above, the effect of Social Media Activity dimensions on Brand Equity ranges from moderate to large. Social Interaction to Brand Equity shows an effect size of $f^2 = 0.529$ (> 0.35) and Surveillance to Brand Equity has $f^2 = 0.428$ (> 0.35). In addition, Remuneration to Brand Equity yields $f^2 = 0.214$ (> 0.15 , while Information Sharing to Brand Equity ($f^2 = 0.040 > 0.02$ and < 0.15) and Entertainment to Brand Equity ($f^2 = 0.048 > 0.02$ and < 0.15). The strongest effect in the model is observed in the relationship Brand Equity to Purchase Intention, with $f^2 = 0.658$ (> 0.35).

Hypothesis Test

Table 4.4 Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Information
H1 : Surveillance -> Brand Equity	0,442	0,441	0,028	15,665	0,000	Accepted
H2 : Social Interaction -> Brand Equity	0,493	0,492	0,029	16,734	0,000	Accepted
H3 : Remuneration -> Brand Equity	0,313	0,313	0,024	12,867	0,000	Accepted
H4 : Information Sharing -> Brand Equity	0,147	0,148	0,028	5,355	0,000	Accepted
H5 : Entertainment -> Brand Equity	0,136	0,139	0,027	5,093	0,000	Accepted
H6 : Brand Equity -> Purchase Intention	0,658	0,658	0,025	26,533	0,000	Accepted

Source: Author (2025)

First Hypothesis (H1), The results show that surveillance activities on social media exert a positive and statistically significant effect on brand equity. With a T statistic of 15.665, a P value of 0.000, and a path coefficient of 0.442, H1 is accepted. This indicates that when consumers passively observe brand-related content such as promotions, reviews, or influencer endorsements over time, it shapes their perceptions and enhances their familiarity and trust toward the brand.

Second Hypothesis (H2), The hypothesis testing for social interaction yielded a T statistic of 16.734, a P value of 0.000, and a path coefficient of 0.493, confirming that H2 is accepted. This strong and significant relationship suggests that when users engage in dialogue or comment on brand content either with the brand itself or within their network it strengthens their emotional connection and sense of community around the brand.

Third Hypothesis (H3), The test results support that remuneration-based engagement has a meaningful role in building brand equity, with a T statistic of 12.867, P value of 0.000, and path coefficient of 0.313, leading to the acceptance of H3. This implies that reward mechanisms such as giveaways, loyalty points, or referral incentives positively influence how consumers evaluate and relate to the brand.

Fourth Hypothesis (H4), The influence of information sharing on brand equity is found to be positive and statistically significant, with a T statistic of 5.355, P value of 0.000, and path coefficient of 0.147, therefore H4 is accepted. This result indicates that when consumers receive or distribute informative content such as product details, brand news, or educational posts, they become more informed and engaged. The dissemination of credible and relevant content enhances consumers' perceptions of the brand's expertise and reliability.

Fifth Hypothesis (H5), The entertainment dimension also has a positive and significant impact on brand equity, with a T statistic of 5.093, a P value of 0.000, and a path coefficient of 0.136. Therefore, H5 is accepted. Entertaining content such as humorous posts, challenges, or viral videos can humanize the brand and make it more relatable and enjoyable.

Sixth Hypothesis (H6), Among all tested relationships, the link between brand equity and purchase intention demonstrates the strongest and most significant effect, with a T statistic of 26.533, P value of 0.000, and path coefficient of 0.658. Thus, H6 is accepted. This finding underscores the critical role of brand equity as a key driver of consumer behavior.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that all five dimensions of social media—surveillance, social interaction, remuneration, information sharing, and entertainment—positively and significantly influence brand equity. Among these, social interaction has the strongest effect, highlighting the importance of emotional connection and community engagement. Surveillance and remuneration also contribute substantially by building trust and consumer satisfaction. Although information sharing and entertainment have relatively lower effects, they remain essential in enhancing brand credibility and emotional appeal. Furthermore, brand equity significantly influences purchase intention, confirming its critical mediating role in translating social media engagement into consumer behavior. These findings underscore the importance of comprehensive and engaging digital strategies to strengthen brand value and drive purchasing decisions.

SUGGESTIONS

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the theoretical development of digital consumer behavior by empirically examining how different dimensions of social media engagement influence brand equity and, subsequently, purchase intention in the fashion e-commerce sector. Notably, social interaction emerged as the most influential factor, suggesting the need to reconsider models that treat all social media dimensions as equally impactful. The validated measurement instruments further reinforce the robustness of the constructs used. Future research is encouraged to integrate moderating variables such as digital literacy or platform preference and conduct cross-platform or cross-cultural studies to enhance generalizability.

Practical Implications

For Zalora Indonesia, the findings highlight key areas for improvement. Social interaction and surveillance require more engaging and consistent content to foster emotional connections and build trust. Reward systems need long-term incentives to strengthen brand loyalty. Informational content should be more educational and value-driven, while

entertainment content must better align with Gen Z and Millennial preferences. Despite high brand awareness, low purchase intention suggests a need to simplify the checkout process and offer personalized, time-sensitive promotions. Implementing these strategies can significantly enhance both brand equity and consumer conversion rates.

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