

The Mediating Role of Brand Trust in Brand Loyalty on Indonesia's Local Women's Fashion

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Abstrak

Industri fesyen di Indonesia berkembang pesat, ditandai oleh meningkatnya pengeluaran konsumen. Tingginya impor fesyen memunculkan kekhawatiran terhadap persepsi merek lokal dibanding asing, sehingga penting mengkaji pendorong loyalitas konsumen perempuan pada fesyen lokal di Semarang di tengah meningkatnya pendapatan dan daya beli. Studi ini menganalisis hubungan social media marketing, brand awareness, dan brand image terhadap brand loyalty dengan menempatkan brand trust sebagai mediator. Studi ini merupakan studi kuantitatif eksplanatori terhadap 180 responden purposive non-probability, mengikuti pedoman Hair dan skala Likert lima poin, yang dianalisis menggunakan PLS-SEM. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa social media marketing, brand awareness, dan brand image berpengaruh signifikan terhadap brand trust. Social media marketing dan brand image memengaruhi brand loyalty, dengan social media marketing muncul sebagai prediktor yang paling dominan. Sebaliknya, brand awareness tidak berpengaruh langsung terhadap brand loyalty. Selain itu, brand trust memediasi pengaruh social media marketing, brand awareness, dan brand image terhadap brand loyalty. Fesyen lokal perlu memperkuat awareness untuk membangun kepercayaan dan mempertahankan loyalitas.

Kata Kunci: Social Media Marketing; Brand Awareness; Brand Image; Brand Trust; Brand Loyalty; Local Women Fashion

Abstract

Indonesia's fashion industry is growing rapidly, as indicated by increasing consumer spending on fashion products. High fashion imports raise concerns about consumer perceptions of local versus foreign brands, underscoring the need to examine loyalty drivers among female consumers of local fashion in Semarang amid rising income and purchasing power. This study assesses the impact of social media marketing, brand awareness, and brand image on brand loyalty with brand trust acts as mediator. A quantitative explanatory study with 180 non-probability purposively sampled respondents, following Hair's sample size guideline and employing a five-point Likert scale, was analyzed the measurement and structural models with PLS-SEM. The findings indicate that social media marketing, brand awareness, and brand image significantly impact brand trust. Social media marketing and brand image influence brand loyalty, with social media marketing emerging as the most dominant predictor. In contrast, brand awareness does not affect directly on brand loyalty. Furthermore, brand trust mediates the influence of social media marketing, brand awareness, and brand image on brand loyalty. Local fashion should strengthen awareness to build trust and sustain loyalty.

Keyword: Social Media Marketing; Brand Awareness; Brand Image; Brand Trust; Brand Loyalty; Local Women Fashion.

1. Introduction

The fashion business industry forms part of the creative sector that has shown significant growth in recent years. As reported by CNBC Indonesia (2025), the proportion of fashion spending increased to 8.2% in 2025 compared to 7.9% the previous year. This rise in fashion spending is indicated by a shift in consumption patterns toward lifestyle-oriented spending. The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the change in consumer patterns and service from conventional to digital, marked by a significant increase in e-commerce usage. The Internet Penetration and Internet Usage Behavior Survey indicated that clothing and accessories are the most purchased product categories by the Indonesian, accounting for 43.84% of all product categories in online transaction on e-commerce platforms in 2025 (APJII, 2025), suggesting that digitalization has promoted fashion consumption. Additionally, the frequency of fashion shopping is influenced by demographic factors, particularly gender (Kimemia, 2024). This study specifically focuses on women's local fashion because several types of local fashion products in almost all domestic markets still face the challenge of being overshadowed by imported goods (Sugestiani *et al.*, 2024), especially from China. The sharp increase in imports of used clothing is seen as disrupting the domestic market balance and undermining the position of the local fashion industry. The volume of imported used clothing entering Indonesia is projected to reach 1.242,8 tons in 2025, with the highest volume of 3.865,4 tons expected in 2024 (Katadata, 2025). The high volume of imported fashion goods highlights the gap between domestic market demand and the ability of local fashion products to meet that demand, while creating a consumerist mindset and reinforcing the perception of imported goods as a symbol of high economic status (Sugestiani *et al.*, 2024). The relatively higher economic well-being of the people of Semarang City compared to other regions indicates a relatively strong purchasing power, thereby increasing the potential for consumption of local women's fashion. A stable income level can motivate consumers' intention to make repeat transaction (Gao *et al.*, 2024). Given these conditions, further empirical examination in Semarang City becomes relevant, as the city offers a strategic urban context in which female consumers significantly influence market dynamics and the evolution of the local women's fashion industry. Brand loyalty is crucial (e.g., the local women's fashion industry) for driving sustainable growth and market share success (Yazdi *et al.*, 2024). Loyalty of brand is not established instantaneously, but rather emerges through a developmental process. The factors driving brand loyalty include social media marketing, brand awareness, brand image, and brand trust. Empirical researches have shown that social media marketing plays a key function in building brand trust (Alrwashdeh, 2025; Alrwashdeh *et al.*, 2025; Haudi *et al.*, 2022). Previous findings by Uzir *et al.* (2025) and Sugiarti *et al.* (2023) also show the positive influence of brand awareness on brand trust. The characteristics embodied by a brand are widely recognized as a vital tools in gaining consumer trust (Ghorbanzadeh, 2024). Wang *et al.* (2024) revealed that brand trust is influenced by brand image.

Social media platforms have emerged as essential channels to engage brands with their audiences, build connections, and create loyalty (Ebrahim, 2020). Previous study (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023) has proven social media marketing is giving rise to brand loyalty. Meanwhile, brand awareness contributes to building loyalty due to the likelihood of consumers to choose a product driven by their familiarity of the brand. This is supported by existing literature (Hyun *et al.*, 2024; Malarvizhi *et al.*, 2022). Brand image also has a positive effect on brand loyalty (Liu *et al.*, 2025; Nguyen, 2025). Consumers whose perception of a brand is favorable tend to exhibit a strong degree of loyalty because of a brand's value, which comes from the quality and excellence of its products. Brand trust fosters long-term bonds by cutting uncertainty and fear, which helps maintain loyalty of the brand. This accords with earlier empirical evidences (Ebrahim, 2020; Uzir *et al.*, 2025; Wang *et al.*, 2024) that confirm brand trust has a positive and significant on brand loyalty. However, other studies have actually shown results that contradict the empirical findings previously mentioned. A contrary study by Tatinggulu *et al.* (2025) argued that social media marketing fails to have any effect on building brand trust—even result in a negative effect (Hamdi *et al.*, 2025)—and brand loyalty (Abdullah & Faisal, 2022; Chandra & Tjokrosaputro, 2025). Hidayat *et al.* (2024) and Madadi *et al.* (2021) also discovered that brand awareness does not play a part in developing brand trust or brand loyalty (DENG *et al.*, 2024). The relationship of brand image on brand trust and brand loyalty was not

validated within the studies by Modi *et al.* (2024) and Wardhana & Yulia (2021). The issue is further compounded by the study's finding that brand trust does not have a positive influence on brand loyalty (Modi *et al.*, 2024), thereby causing it to fail in its role as a mediator between social media marketing, brand awareness, and brand image on brand loyalty (Ekinci *et al.*, 2023; Mandasari *et al.*, 2024). These inconsistencies are particularly relevant to local women's fashion brands. Social media shapes how consumers interpret brand value, especially when negative perceptions, such as overpriced products or inconsistent sizing, exist. Consumers may recognize one local brand, but they often prefer imported fashion due to stronger credibility and familiarity. This weakens local brand image, particularly against product from countries like Thailand, China, or Vietnam. As a result, even with good material quality, consumers may hesitate if brand lacks perceived modernity, fit suitability, or value for money. Based on the above issues, this study was carried out to determine the impact of social media marketing, brand awareness, and brand image on brand loyalty toward local women's fashion brands, where brand trust acting as a mediator that explains the mechanism of the relationship between these constructs. This study advances the conceptual model by examining and re-conceptualizing brand awareness and brand image as independent stimuli alongside social media marketing. Unlike existing literature either excludes the simultaneous use of brand awareness and brand image as independent variables or places them within the organism component of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Brand Image's Effect on Brand Trust

Social media channels have reshaped the landscape of the e-commerce environment by creating social networking sites among purchasers, opinion leaders, and specialists in their fields (Mason *et al.*, 2021). Social media is widely utilised in businesses' marketing strategies because of its important role in building public relations to consumers (Pranata *et al.*, 2023). Relationships built through social media enable engagement and two-way communication among businesses and consumers (Islam & Sheikh, 2024). Social media provides organizations with the opportunity to build personalized interactions with consumers (Bilgin & Kethüda, 2022). Consumer attitudes toward social media media help shape attitudes toward brands (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021). Social media marketing involves the utilization of written and visual content on virtually-based platforms to influence consumer preferences toward products and brands as part of a marketing strategy (Bilgin & Kethüda, 2022). Interactions between consumers and brands build trust and address uncertainty, which can otherwise act as a barrier to consumer engagement linked to the brand (Khadim *et al.*, 2018) and lead to digital transaction (Chahal & Rani, 2017). Trust, in e-commerce, helps lower perceived risks among consumers regarding negative interaction outcomes by simplifying the complexity of information (Althuwaini, 2022). Several previous studies (Alrwashdeh, 2025; Alrwashdeh *et al.*, 2025; Haudi *et al.*, 2022; Puspaningrum, 2020) have confirmed that social media marketing contributes positively and significantly to brand trust.

Haudi *et al.* (2022) explains that a brand that delivers social media communications has the capacity to establish solid connections and achieve value through long-lasting individuals interactions, leading users to perceive the brand as trustworthy and desirable. Brand awareness represents a factor that strongly in building brand trust. It is described as strong when consumers consistently recall a brand or business name. The priority consumers attach to brand status reflects their level of confidence (Sugiarti *et al.*, 2023). Consumers have a tendency to stick with familiar and trusted brands or products rather than experimenting with new ones with unfamiliar names (Upadana & Pramudana, 2020). Brand trust can decrease the uncertainty consumers' feelings toward a product when encountering difficulties throughout the purchase decision-making process (Charton-Vachet & Lombart, 2018). The relationship between brand awareness and brand trust has undergone study by multiple researchers, including Uzir *et al.* (2025); Ekinci *et al.* (2023); Ledikwe (2020); and Sugiarti *et al.* (2023), who found that brand awareness has a positive effect on brand trust. Ledikwe (2020) notes that higher levels in brand awareness are associated with increased familiarity and lowers perceived risk related to a brand. A positive level of

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awareness and the sustainability of the relationship can generate trust (Ebrahim, 2020). Brand image portrays consumers' perceptions of a brand, which helps them process information about that brand, generate a positive image or emotion regarding the brand in their minds, and develop trust in the brand (Uzir *et al.*, 2025; Wu & Liu, 2022). Image towards a brand comes from information related to the brand that consumers receive, while brand trust builds a deeper emotional connection with the brand (Wu & Liu, 2022). A favourable image can enhance the level of confidence in business and its brand (Cham *et al.*, 2022). Consumers perceiving a favorable image of a brand are increasingly inclined to trust about repurchasing products from that brand, even if there are many other alternatives on offer. Empirical researches have proven that brand image has a positive effect on brand trust (Ghorbanzadeh, 2024; Uzir *et al.*, 2025; Wang *et al.*, 2024; Wu & Liu, 2022; Xu *et al.*, 2021). Uzir *et al.* (2025) explain that consumer perceptions and trust in a brand are psychological in nature, as this stems from the acceptance of brand values, thereby leading them to believe in and accept the brand image. Based on these studies, the hypotheses are stated as follows:

H₁: Social Media Marketing (SMM) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust (BT)

H₂: Brand Awareness (BA) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust (BT)

H₃: Brand Image (BI) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust (BT)

2.2 Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Brand Image's Effect on Brand Loyalty

Social media marketing has changed how customers find, analyse, and make purchasing decisions. Social media marketing is generally cost-effective and easy for businesses to implement to boost sales and enhance brand value. Market opinion leaders are leveraged in brand value building to enhance consumer perceptions of a brand relative to its alternatives (Mason *et al.*, 2021). Social media platforms that encourage active interaction among consumers can reduce the risk of customers switching to other brands due to negative experiences that cause discomfort on social media. The positive relationship in which social media marketing affects brand loyalty has been evidenced in the extant literature by Haudi *et al.* (2022); Alwashdeh *et al.* (2025); Ebrahim (2020); and Mandagi & Aseng (2021). This is reflected in the goal pursued by social media marketing (SMM) to strengthen communication across a company's marketing departments in order to foster long-term relationships with consumers (Ebrahim, 2020). Brand loyalty refers to consumer's commitment to carrying out repeat purchasing activities, along with a continued interest in the product (Azhar *et al.*, 2023). Brand-loyal customers often spread favorable comments about the brand through social media (Zailskaitė-Jakstė & Minelgaite, 2021). To increase the company's brand recognition, enhancing brand awareness is an essential move (Claudia & Sofiani, 2023). High levels of brand awareness yields advantages to the purchasing decision-making process. Brand awareness helps a brand to meet the company's expectations, makes customers feel familiar with a brand, and conveys commitment to that brand (Supiyandi *et al.*, 2022). When consumers compare a particular brand with a competitor's brand, brand awareness comes to mind (Çelik, 2022). Demand for a specific brand increases as customer brand awareness rises (Sürücü *et al.*, 2019), leading to an increase trust in brand (Bernarto *et al.*, 2020). Malarvizhi *et al.* (2022) found a direct positive relationship between brand awareness and brand loyalty, consistent with other findings (Çelik, 2022; Hyun *et al.*, 2024; Sugiarti *et al.*, 2023). It was discovered that the more consumers trust in a brand within a platform-based digital community, the stronger their positive brand associations tend to become, leading to increased trust, commitment, and brand loyalty (Chavadi *et al.*, 2023). Brand image is conceptualized as the perception of a brand characterized by brand associations engraved in consumers' minds (Keller, 1993). Çelik (2022) mentions that brand image provides a key perception that enhances a brand's chances of being distinguished from its competitors in the eyes of consumers. Most customers intend to use specific brands that offer ideal compatibility, which conveys added value to customers (Dananjoyo & Udin, 2025). Philip *et al.* (2023) stated that consumers tend to choose brands with a positive image that matches their values. Companies with a strong brand image, aligned with consumer perceptions, often find it easier and more successful to implement brand communication promotion strategies, thereby driving consumers to repeatedly purchase those brands, which strengthens consumer (Yu *et al.*, 2021), while a negative brand image has the opposite effect (Dash *et al.*, 2021).

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Brand loyalty increases due to result of consumers' tendency to readily accept brands with a favourable image (Savitri *et al.*, 2022). Previous research findings by Nguyen (2025), Liu *et al.* (2025), and Xu *et al.* (2022) indicate that brand image positively contributes to brand loyalty. Brand image contributes to the establishment of a positive attitude about the brand, which subsequently strengthens loyalty. Brand trust is interpreted as the eagerness of consumers to depend on ability possessed by the brand to deliver on its promised functionality (Azhar *et al.*, 2023). Uzir *et al.* (2025) mentioned that trust in a brand gives certainty for repurchasing a particular brand. Trust is determined by the shared values between the company and consumers (Vuong *et al.*, 2024). Consumers perceive a brand as trustworthy if it meets their needs and its brand identity aligns with their personal choices and opinions. Consumers tend to repurchase brands they trust because of the value they place on the brand's reliability from both cognitive and emotional perspectives (Anaya-Sánchez *et al.*, 2020). Brands perceived as trustworthy are more likely to easily retain loyal customers even when products face unexpected issues, which enhances the likelihood that a product or service will be developed, sold, and promoted in the (Kazemi *et al.*, 2025). Ultimately, trust in a brand leads to brand loyalty or commitment (Azhar *et al.*, 2023). This aligns with previous research finding that brand trust has an influence on brand loyalty (Ebrahim, 2020; Uzir *et al.*, 2025; Wang *et al.*, 2024). Uzir *et al.* (2025) argue that consumer certainty regarding a brand can encourage a positive attitude toward that brand (attitudinal approach) and boost repeat purchases (behavioral approach). Based on these findings, the following hypotheses are also proposed:

H₄: Social Media Marketing (SMM) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty (BL)

H₅: Brand Awareness (BA) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty (BL)

H₆: Brand Image (BI) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty (BL)

H₇: Brand Trust (BT) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty (BL)

2.3 Brand Trust Mediates Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Brand Image on Brand Loyalty

Brand trust can act as a mediating contracts between two (or more) variables, as follows social media marketing, brand awareness, and brand image in terms of brand loyalty (Ekinci *et al.*, 2023; Marliawati & Cahyaningdyah, 2020; Srivastava *et al.*, 2022). These findings reveal that brand trust successfully mediates brand loyalty factors in a positive manner. Brand trust symbolizes the security gained through better interactions with the brand's customers (Uzir *et al.*, 2025). The relationship with customers formed via social media marketing can lead to loyalty of customer, eventually resulting in high sales and profits. This reinforces evidence established in previous research by Puspaningrum (2020), which demonstrates that brand trust succeeds in mediating the correlation whereby social media marketing activities affects brand loyalty. The higher the customer's trust in preferred brand, supported by social media marketing information that aligns with the quality of the products offered, the higher the loyalty that customers have to one brand, even if that brand's prices are higher than those of other brands. Brand trust reflects the belief that a brand acts in accordance with its commitments, which is built on previous consumer experiences and interactions (Bilgin & Kethüda, 2022). Trust becomes a core element in forming desirable brand associations and awareness, as well as long-term relationships (Ebrahim, 2020). Trust serves as a driving force for building and maintaining long-term relationships, and acts as a catalyst leading to unique and distinctive brand values that are deeply ingrained in consumers' minds. Differences in levels of customer trust can influence consumers' tendency to repurchase or reconsider a brand (Azhar *et al.*, 2023). Most consumers prefer to choose brands that are well-known and have a good reputation in the market (Akarawita, 2022). Brand trust contributes significantly in shaping its value, either by strengthening or weakening it, while also creating a feeling of belonging among consumers (Puspaningrum, 2020).. Empirical evidence from previous literature indicates that the effect of brand awareness and brand loyalty is potentially mediated by brand trust (Fauzi & Evanita, 2024). Increasing brand awareness contributes significantly to building brand trust and encouraging continued purchasing tendency (Bernarto *et al.*, 2020) Brand knowledge includes brand image and trust (Villagra *et al.*, 2021). Brand image refers to consumers' general perception of a brand, which is grounded by prior information and experiences and is linked to their beliefs and attitudes regarding brand preferences (Marliawati & Cahyaningdyah, 2020). If consumers

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recognize a brand as having a positive image, they are more likely to make a purchase (Rahmadhani *et al.*, 2022). Brand image forms an impression together with functions as a symbol of credibility and reliability in the minds of consumers. A great brand image that isn't balanced with trust results in loyalty being purely superficial/transactional. Brand trust transforms admiration for the brand image into a relational connection. Marliawati & Cahyaningdyah (2020) found that the relationship between brand image and brand loyalty is mediated through brand trust. The findings show once consumers perceive a brand favorably, brand image improves, and it enhances brand loyalty. The tendency toward customer loyalty will grow more rapidly and sustainably when customers feel safe, secure, and confident in using a product (Uzir *et al.*, 2025). The foregoing arguments provide the foundation for proposing the following three hypotheses:

H₈: Brand Trust (BT) mediates the effect of Social Media Marketing (SMM) on Brand Loyalty (BL)

H₉: Brand Trust (BT) mediates the effect of Brand Awareness (BA) on Brand Loyalty (BL)

H₁₀: Brand Trust (BT) mediates the effect of Brand Image (BI) on Brand Loyalty (BL)

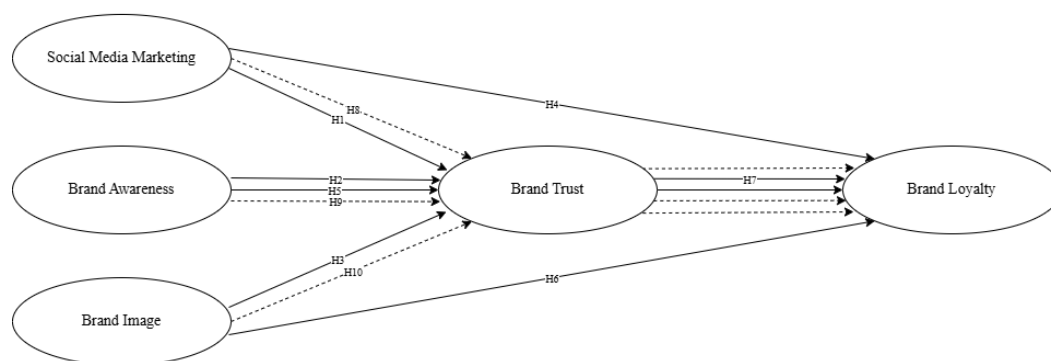


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. Research Methodology

A quantitative method is deemed well-suited for this study, given its reliance on data collection and analysis grounded in a logical method with an emphasis on testing theory, influenced by empiricism and positivism, thereby allowing the generalizability of the research findings to wider populations (Ghanad, 2023). An explanatory research approach was adopted as it employs a cause-and-effect model that facilitates the identification of the relationships among variables and provides a comprehensive understanding of why phenomena occur (Ghanad, 2023).

The population used in this study consists of female consumers of local fashion from Semarang City, the exact number of whom is unknown. The sample size was determined using the rule-of-thumb approach, following the recommendation of Hair *et al.* (2019), who suggest that a sample ranging from a minimum of 100 to a maximum of 200 respondents is adequate. Therefore, the sample of 180 valid respondents is considered more than sufficient to yield stable and reliable parameter estimates in alignment with this guideline.

Data were collected using a non-probability purposive sampling approach, distributed online through the Google Forms. The sample selection criteria were defined as women aged 17 or older, residing in Semarang City, actively using social media, and having purchased local women's fashion products at least twice in the preceding six months. To ensure respondents fulfilled the established criteria, screening questions were included in the questionnaire. Moreover, the study applied a five-point Likert scale as the measurement instrument, from 1-5 ((strongly disagree-strongly agree).

The data were processed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling, supported by Smart PLS 4 software, to examine the proposed hypotheses. The analysis began with an evaluation of

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measurement model, in which validity and reliability were evaluated through factor loadings, average variance extracted, cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability, followed by a structural model analysis to assess both direct and indirect effects among the variables using bootstrapping (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Respondent Characteristics

This study focused solely on 180 female respondents individuals from various areas in the Semarang City. Most of the respondents (92.2%) were between the ages of 17 to 25, representing young adult demographic that is trend-conscious and digitally connected. In terms of educational background level, a large proportion of the respondents were high school graduates or equivalent (60%). Regarding occupation, almost all of respondents were students (82.2%) reported monthly incomes within the range of Rp1.500.001 to Rp3.500.000 (45,6%).

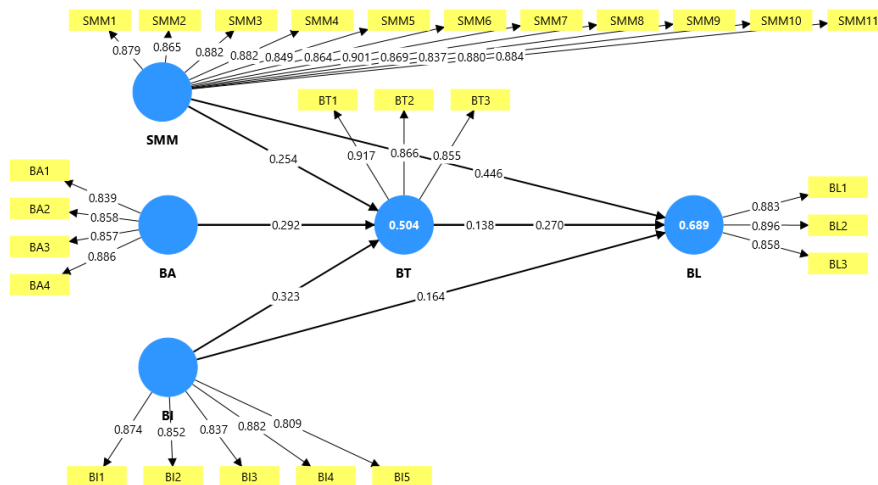


Figure 2. Outer Model

This study verified the validity and reliability of the research model constructs through the assessment of outer loadings. All measurement items were examined to determine how well each indicator represented its respective construct under study. The result indicated that all items have value above 0.70, implying that the outer loadings satisfy the accepted standards of convergent validity (Cheung *et al.*, 2024; Hair & Alamer, 2022). All items demonstrated valid result, no items needed to be excluded.

Table 1. Outer Loadings, AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability

Variable	Code	Outer Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
SMM	SMM1	0.879	0.761	0.968	0.969
	SMM2	0.865			
	SMM3	0.882			
	SMM4	0.882			
	SMM5	0.849			
	SMM6	0.864			
	SMM7	0.901			
	SMM8	0.869			
	SMM9	0.837			
	SMM10	0.880			

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	SMM11	0.884			
	BA1	0.839			
	BA2	0.858			
BA	BA3	0.857	0.740	0.884	0.896
	BA4	0.886			
	BI1	0.874			
	BI2	0.852			
BI	BI3	0.837	0.724	0.905	0.909
	BI4	0.882			
	BI5	0.809			
	BT1	0.917			
BT	BT2	0.866	0.774	0.853	0.856
	BT3	0.855			
	BL1	0.883			
BL	BL2	0.896	0.773	0.853	0.855
	BL3	0.858			

In addition to outer loadings, the constructs were further tested for convergent validity using Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All AVE values were greater than 0.50, suggesting evidence of convergent validity for the research constructs (Cheung *et al.*, 2024). Reliability, tested using Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR), yielded both results exceeding 0.70, showing an adequate internal consistency and confirming the construct's reliability (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

Table 2. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variable	BA	BI	BL	BT	SMM
BA					
BI	0.652				
BL	0.646	0.706			
BT	0.662	0.695	0.804		
SMM	0.428	0.510	0.792	0.577	

Discriminant validity was assessed employing the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach to ensure those constructs were conceptually distinct from one another. The HTMT results in Table 4 show all values below 0.85, indicating that there is no overlap in variance among the indicators within the constructs (Hair & Alamer, 2022). Each construct reflects adequate discriminant validity, and the questionnaire items present ease of response for respondents.

4.1.2 Hypothesis Test

To assess the certain contribution of each construct to endogenous constructs, the effect size (f^2) results show that Social Media Marketing ($f^2=0.097$), Brand Awareness ($f^2=0.108$), and Brand Image ($f^2=0.121$) have a moderate effect on Brand Trust. In relation to Brand Loyalty, Social Media Marketing shows a large effect ($f^2=0.436$), Brand Awareness shows a moderate effect ($f^2=0.035$), Brand Image'effect is moderate ($f^2=0.044$), and Brand Trust shows a moderate effect ($f^2=0.116$). Based on the criteria of f^2 value of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.30 represent small, moderate, and large effect (Legate *et al.*, 2023), Social Media Marketing is proven to contribute most significantly to driving Brand Loyalty compared to the other constructs.

Table 3. Effect Size

Variable	BT	BL
SMM	0.097	0.436

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BA	0.108	0.035
BI	0.121	0.044
BT		0.116

Table 4. Direct and Indirect Effect

Variable	Path Coefficient	T-stats	P-value	Result
H1. SMM → BT	0.254	3.577	0.000	Accepted
H2. BA → BT	0.292	4.396	0.000	Accepted
H3. BI → BT	0.323	4.199	0.000	Accepted
H4. SMM → BL	0.446	4.903	0.000	Accepted
H5. BA → BL	0.138	1.949	0.051	Rejected
H6. BI → BL	0.164	2.043	0.041	Accepted
H7. BT → BL	0.270	3.302	0.001	Accepted
H8. SMM → BT → BL	0.068	2.250	0.024	Accepted
H9. BA → BT → BL	0.079	2.374	0.018	Accepted
H10. BI → BT → BL	0.087	2.301	0.021	Accepted

Path coefficient analysis was conducted using the bootstrapping technique to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationships between latent constructs in the model. The significance criteria used were based on a T-statistic value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Legate *et al.*, 2023). The results of the study indicate that Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.254$; $p = 0.000$; H1); Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.292$; $p = 0.000$; H2); dan Brand Image has a positive and significant on Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.323$; $p = 0.000$; H3). Social Media Marketing ($\beta = 0.446$; $p = 0.000$; H4), Brand Image ($\beta = 0.164$; $p = 0.041$; H6), and Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.270$; $p = 0.001$; H7) each have a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty. However, there is no significant effect of Brand Awareness on Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.138$; $p = 0.051$; H5). The mediation test results confirm that Brand Trust mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Brand Loyalty ($p = 0.024$; H8), Brand Awareness and Brand Loyalty ($p = 0.018$; H9), or Brand Image and Brand Loyalty ($p = 0.021$; H10).

4.2 Discussion

The outputs from the hypothesis testing confirm that social media marketing plays a big role in building brand trust, supporting that Hypothesis 1 is accepted. This result implies that well-executed social media marketing will promote greater consumer trust in a local women's fashion brand. The information provided in marketing is considered trustworthy by consumers. Social media marketing is able to ensure brand reliability, thus minimizing consumers' perceived risk. This finding converges with prior research that provide empirical support for the arguments (Alrwashdeh *et al.*, 2025; Haudi *et al.*, 2022; Puspaningrum, 2020). Brand awareness positively and significantly affects on brand trust, thus confirming Hypothesis 2. A higher consumer awareness of a local women's fashion brand corresponds to a enhanced state of brand trust. This finding is underpinned by empirical evidence from Uzir *et al.* (2025), Ekinci *et al.* (2023), and Sugiarti *et al.* (2023). Brand Image was also found to have significant positive contribution on strengthening brand trust in local women's fashion products throughout Semarang City, supporting Hypothesis 3. This indicates that the local women's fashion brand chosen by consumers is perceived to have a positive impression in consumers' minds. Brand image acts as one of the determinants capable of developing consumer trust toward the brand, supported by earlier research by Ghorbanzadeh (2024), Wang *et al.* (2024), and Wu & Liu (2022). Hypothesis 4 is accepted, indicating that social media marketing contributes substantially to the enhancement of brand loyalty for a local women's fashion brand. The better the marketing activities conducted by local women's fashion businesses through social media, the greater the likelihood that a consumer will continue to choose, reuse, and even recommend a specific local women's fashion brand over competing brands. Through social media as a vital tool, businesses

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build stronger relationships with consumers, thereby reinforcing loyalty among them to the brand. This finding is congruent with previous papers that view social media marketing as a factor influencing brand loyalty (Alrwashdeh *et al.*, 2025; Ebrahim, 2020; Haudi *et al.*, 2022; Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). Conversely, brand awareness was proven not to be a factor influencing brand loyalty, thus Hypothesis 5 is rejected. Consumers who are aware of the existence of local women's fashion brand have not yet been motivated to choose that brand. This finding contradicts the research findings by Malarvizhi *et al.* (2022), Çelik (2022), Hyun *et al.* (2024), and Sugiarti *et al.* (2023), but corresponds with prior research suggesting that brand awareness demonstrates no support for an influence over fostering loyalty of consumers toward the brand (DENG *et al.*, 2024). Meanwhile, Hypothesis 6 is accepted because the result demonstrates a positive and significant impact of brand image on brand loyalty. The local fashion brand for women is still perceived positively by female consumers in Semarang City. Brand image holds a pivotal role in establishing consumers' commitment to use the brand. When a local women's fashion brand is seen as having an appealing and trustworthy identity, consumers tend to maintain their preference for a brand by committing to repurchase and recommend it to others. This finding demonstrates similar outcomes with previous studies that consider brand image as a factor influencing brand loyalty (Liu *et al.*, 2025; Nguyen, 2025; Xu *et al.*, 2022).

A positive and significant influence on brand loyalty is generated by brand trust, confirming that brand trust is recognized as major antecedent of loyalty to a specific brand. Thus, Hypothesis 7 is accepted. Brand trust acts as a psychological bridge that helps consumers remain loyal to one local women's fashion brand. This finding is consistent with earlier studies proving that brand trust contributes as a factor influencing brand loyalty (Ebrahim, 2020; Uzir *et al.*, 2025; Wang *et al.*, 2024). Consumers' trust in one local women's fashion brand leads them to believe that the brand can meet their expectations. A positive mediating effect of brand trust is observed in the relationship between social media marketing and brand loyalty, confirming Hypothesis 8 (Accepted). It also aligns with studies that underscore the essential role of brand trust as a mediating mechanism linking the constructs between these two variables (Alrwashdeh *et al.*, 2025; Ebrahim, 2020; Srivastava *et al.*, 2022). Consumers who received marketing messages on local women's fashion social media platforms will be more interested in staying loyal to their chosen brand if their emotional state is influenced by brand trust. Brand trust as a mediating variable confirms how brand awareness influence brand loyalty. Hypothesis 9 is accepted, indicating that consumers' level of awareness of a local women's fashion brand can grow trust in that brand before ultimately contributing to consumer loyalty. Consumers with good brand recognition and recall can strengthen their confidence in a brand's quality and credibility. This is supported by findings from a previous study showing a positive mediating effect of brand trust in the relationship between brand awareness and brand loyalty (Fauzi & Evanita, 2024). Hypothesis 9 explains the significance of consumer trust toward a brand in guiding consumers who are aware of a local women's fashion brand but have not yet developed loyalty to a single brand (Hypothesis 5). Furthermore, the acceptance of Hypothesis 10 explains that the brand image formed in consumers' minds does not create loyalty, but first grows trust in the brand. A favorable brand image of local women's fashion helps consumers form an assessment of a brand's reputation. The assessment evolves into trust in the brand, which acts as the perception for consumers to sustain an ongoing relationship toward the brand. This corroborates prior empirical research that found that loyalty is influenced not only by brand image but also by the extent of consumer confidence in the brand's reliability, which is established through brand trust (Marliawati & Cahyaningdyah, 2020; Phan *et al.*, 2024; Tran, 2023).

5. Conclusion

This study highlight an integrated mechanism in Indonesia's local women's fashion industry, where Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Brand Image together shape Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty, but a direct impact on Brand Loyalty is not influenced by Brand Awareness toward local women's fashion brands. In a competitive market, familiarity alone cannot secure loyalty. Brand Trust becomes the

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key link that not only drives repeat purchases and recommendations but also transforms awareness and image into long-term loyalty, especially as consumers rely on reviews, social proof, and brand credibility. In managerial practice, local fashion businesses are urged to pay closer attentiveness to awareness strategies integrating with trust-building efforts, such as demonstrating brand credibility, testimonials, and proof of quality. Despite its contributions to practical perspectives and the existing literature, several limitations are acknowledged in this study. This study was performed within the Semarang City context, wherein the characteristics of fashion businesses and consumers may differ from those in other cities or even countries. Accordingly, future research may seek to replicate this study to examine the determinants of customer loyalty to a brand more comprehensively. Further research is recommended to specify consumer segments, such as age group, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of brand loyalty. Additionally, future research are encouraged to integrate emerging constructs, such as customer satisfaction, consumer engagement, brand experience, brand love, brand attachment, self-brand connection, perceived value, or brand authenticity. in order to capture fashion consumer behavior in a more comprehensive manner.

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