

THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER BRAND ENGAGEMENT IN MEDIATING THE EFFECT OF BRAND EXPRESSIVENESS AND BRAND COMMUNITY IDENTIFICATION ON BRAND LOYALTY



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Abstract

This study aims to determine the role of Customer Brand Engagement in mediating the effect of Brand Expressiveness and Brand Community Identification on Brand Loyalty. The research used a quantitative research method by distributing questionnaires to 180 consumers in Cirebon City who used an iPhone smartphone. The quantitative data was analyzed using validity tests, reliability tests, R-square tests (R^2), and hypothesis tests processed using SEM with Smart PLS 4.0 tool. The results of this study indicate that Brand Expressiveness does not have a positive and significant effect on Customer Brand Engagement. Brand Community Identification has a positive and significant effect on Customer Brand Engagement. Brand Expressiveness has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty. Brand Community Identification has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty. Customer Brand Engagement does not have a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty. Customer Brand Engagement does not mediate the effect of Brand Expressiveness on Brand Loyalty. Customer Brand Engagement also does not mediate the effect of Brand Community Identification on Brand Loyalty.

Keywords: Customer Brand Engagement, Brand Expressiveness, Brand Community Identification, Brand Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, due to globalization and the increasing bilateral and regional free trade relationships between countries, various companies compete and strive to develop global brands. It is possible for the same brand to be used in many countries (Kim et al., 2019). The advancement of internet technology is progressing rapidly year by year, and the flow of information in society is changing rapidly. Especially for those who are open to current information and keep up with technological developments. The function of today's mobile phones is not only limited to making calls and sending SMS messages but also serves as entertainment options for their owners, especially with internet access support. Due to its mobile nature, the number of mobile phone users is increasing day by day. This is because society interacts through various social media and has created various social networking applications such as Facebook and Twitter as a means of communication and support for all activities carried out through technology such as telephone and WhatsApp.

Young people, especially students, are often categorized as a group of consumers who are more open to new products entering the market. This group also tends to follow the latest lifestyle trends, regardless of whether they need the products or will benefit from the products they consume.

Consumers typically go through a testing phase when selecting a brand or product. During this phase, consumers often try various brands. Brand loyalty is a value that can generate higher sales and prevent competition with other brands (Matzler et al., 2013). When consumers are looking for a relevant brand that meets their expectations, price also plays a crucial role in determining which product they want to purchase. Many companies are now competing to produce phones with great and attractive features at prices ranging from cheap to relatively expensive. Therefore, in the mobile communication world, we compete to attract consumers and affect their product purchasing decisions. Many Android users are switching to iPhones, and essentially, Apple CEO, Tim Cook, claims that iPhones have been adopted by many Android users in recent years. The CEO of Apple acknowledges data from the StockApp report on many users. The popularity of Google's operating system is reported to have declined in recent months. Over the past four years, Android's market share has decreased from 77.32% to 69.74%. Although smartphone sales have decreased significantly this year, Samsung and Apple still dominate the market share of sales. Particularly for Apple,

the company grew by about 3% in the first quarter of 2022. Apple's market share has increased from 15% to 18%, indicating that many Android users are leaving the Android system and switching to the iPhone. According to the report, iPhone users were more loyal compared to Android users last year and tended not to switch to Android. A similar trend is also occurring at Apple. According to the latest US consumer survey conducted by 451 Research, iPhone customer satisfaction reached 98%, showing double-digit annual growth for Apple in June 2022 (Liputan6.com).

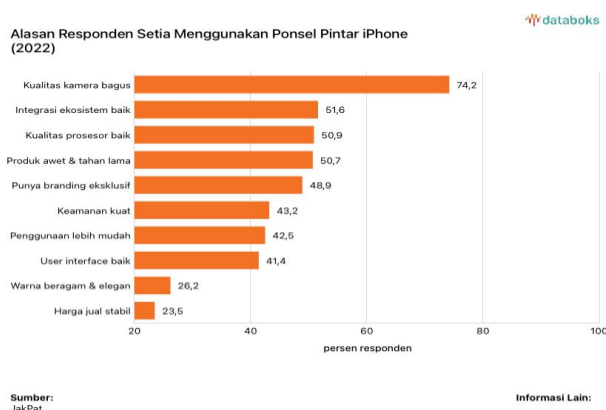


Figure 1
Reasons Respondents Remain Loyal to Using iPhone (2022)
Source: Databoks.co.id

Apple has just released the iPhone 14 in early September (August 9, 2022). The latest iPhone series quickly became a hit among its loyal customers. Based on a public opinion poll (JakPat), the majority, or 74.2% of respondents stated that they would remain loyal to their iPhone in the future because of its excellent camera quality. Furthermore, 51.6% of respondents use the iPhone faithfully because they believe in the well-integrated Apple ecosystem, and 50.7% of respondents use the iPhone because of its high-quality processor. Secondly, 48.9% of respondents perceive the iPhone as having exclusive and cool branding. This is followed by a lower security breach risk at 43.2%, lower ease of use at 42.5%, and easier client interface at 41.4%. Additionally, 26.2% of respondents say the iPhone has a wide and elegant color variety. On the other hand, 23.5% of respondents stated that the selling price of Apple smartphones is likely to remain stable. The survey also found that 49.3% of respondents are interested in replacing their old smartphones with the iPhone 14. The survey was conducted on September 5, 2022, among 442 iPhone users in Indonesia. The survey was

conducted through the Jakpat application where respondents could choose multiple answers (Source: Databoks.co.id, 2022).

Customer loyalty cannot be easily achieved but requires a lengthy process to convince consumers that Apple is the best smartphone. Apple, the smartphone company, plays a part in building consumer trust, as evidenced by the innovations introduced to provide the best to consumers. However, consumers are connected to the brand leads to repeat purchases of the brand, thus making consumers loyal to the brand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Self-Expressiveness

Brand Self-expression is the consumer perception of how a brand reflects oneself and enhances their social identity. Expressive brands are portrayed as brands that make consumers feel happy, proud, successful, and confident. Brands enable consumers to discover themselves and enrich their experiences (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). According to Carroll & Ahuvia (2006), the dimensions and indicators to measure brand self-expressive are: 1) Mirrors Real Me (Reflecting one's true self), where a brand can reflect a person's true nature; 2) Social Role, a situation where a brand can play a social role in society, 3) Sociative Role (Society's Perception), situations that can enhance society's perception of the brand itself; 4) Positive Impact, situations where your brand can provide a positive impact on yourself and others.

Brand Community Identification

Brand Community Identification or Brand Community is a community that is not specifically bound by geography but is based on structured social relationships among brand enthusiasts. One of the main characteristics of brand communities is the lack of entry barriers for anyone who wants to become a new member of the community (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; as cited in Aruman, 2015).

According to Muniz and O'Guinn as cited in LaRoche, M. et al. (2013: 77) mentioned that:

"A brand community as a "specialized, non-geographically bound community based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand." The context of these communities revolves around the consumption of goods or services. Like any other community, a brand community comprises its entities, including its members, their relationships, and the sharing of essential resources, whether emotional or material."

Based on this opinion, it is stated that a brand community is a community that is not bound geographically and has a social structure that regulates relationships among brand enthusiasts. The context of this society is the consumption of goods or services. Like other communities, brand communities consist of their members, their relationships, and important resources together, both emotional and material.

According to Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), the important dimensions and indicators in a community are: 1) **Consciousness of kind**: a) Legitimization & b) Oppositional Brand Loyalty; 2) **Rituals and Tradition**: a) Celebrating the History of the Brand & b) Sharing Brand Stories; 3) **Moral responsibility**: a) Integrating and retaining members & b) Assisting in the use of brand.

Customer Brand Engagement

Customer Brand Engagement is a varied paradigm, yet related to various marketing concepts such as participation, affinity, interactivity, and flow, which are considered as precursors to brand experience, brand ownership, and brand loyalty. Involvement, trust, and customer value are considered as its predecessors. Brand Engagement potential of customers (Hollebeek, 2011). Brand Engagement is the personal relationship between customers and the brand manifested in cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses beyond purchase (So et al., 2014).

Menurut So et al. (2014), there are 5 dimensions and indicators of Customer Brand Engagement, as follows: 1) Enthusiasm; 2) Attention; 3) Absorption; 4) Interaction; 5) Identification

Brand Loyalty

Brand Loyalty is a state of commitment when customers decide to continue choosing a particular brand or purchasing a suitable brand regularly, thus increasing their loyalty to that brand. Brand loyalty is synonymous with purchase decisions based on internal motivations for repeated purchases or long-term relationships (Kim, Lee, and Lee, 2020).

Brand Loyalty Dimensions

According to Kotler and Keller (as cited in Illahi, Sinta, and Sonja Andariani, 2022: 1689) it is stated that brand loyalty can be measured by three dimensions, as follows: 1) Word of mouth (communication from mouth to mouth), is a promotional activity carried out through conversation or known as word-of-mouth communication; 2) Reject Another

(rejecting another company), is an activity to reject another company's offer to choose a product from another company; 3) Repeat Purchasing (repeating purchases), is the activity of consistently making purchases or repurchasing products that will be consumed.

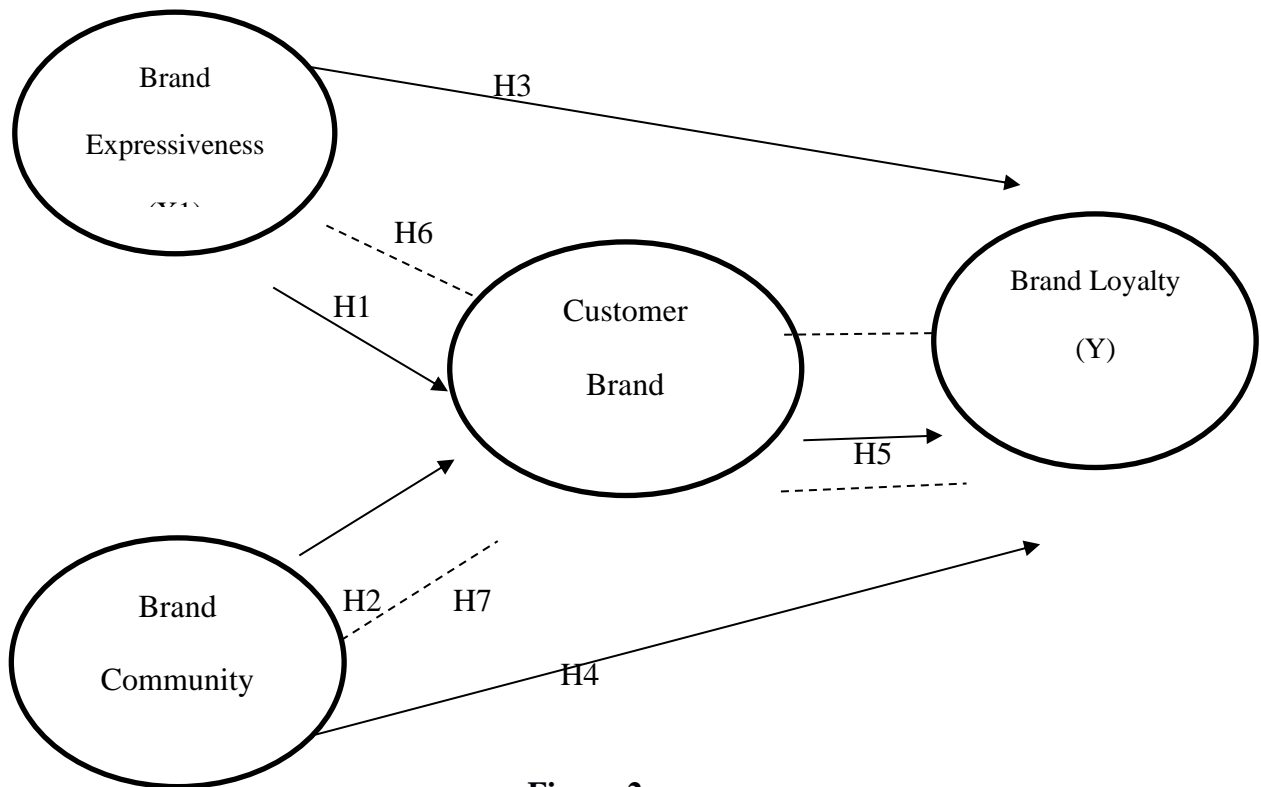


Figure 2
Framework of Thought

The Relationship between Brand Expressiveness and Customer Brand Engagement

Brand Self-Expressiveness affects Customer Brand Engagement. It can be argued that when consumers express themselves towards a brand, the higher their engagement with a brand is. Therefore, companies or managers need to foster Brand Self-Expressiveness because when consumers have confidence in using a particular brand, they will be more engaged with it. This hypothesis suggests that Brand Expressiveness affects Customer Brand Engagement.

The Relationship between Brand Community Identification and Customer Brand Engagement

Brand Community Identification is one of the factors affecting Customer Brand Engagement. Brand community identification always involves interacting in brand-related activities proactively with the aim of supporting and strengthening the brand. This can

increase customer engagement with the brand. Because of brand community identification, community members are always involved in activities related to the company, both in purchases and outside purchases; therefore, Brand Community Identification can encourage customers to be involved with the brand in the long term. This hypothesis suggests that Brand Community Identification affects Customer Brand Engagement.

The Relationship between Brand Expressiveness and Brand Loyalty

Ruane and Wallace (2015) discovered that brand self-expression has a direct effect on brand loyalty. Ramadhania (2017) also identified that consumers who use brand self-expression are more loyal to the brand. This suggests that brand self-expression significantly affects brand loyalty. This is because consumers who opt for brand self-expression are those who aspire to distinguish their identity positively from others. As indicated by Ruane and Wallace (2015), brands that provide benefits for self-expression will lead to increased loyalty as they can fulfill consumers' expressive needs. This hypothesis implies that Brand Expressiveness affects Brand Loyalty.

Relationship Between Brand Community Identification and Brand Loyalty

Anderson, as cited in Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), stated that measuring brand communities involves three main dimensions: Consciousness of Kind, Shared Rituals and Traditions, and Sense of Moral Responsibility. According to Maftesoli as cited in Purbaniyatyas (2009), consciousness of kind affects brand loyalty. This includes legitimization, which is the process of distinguishing between community members and non-members and granting different rights. This can lead to brand loyalty among community members, as they receive more benefits from the producer. Oppositional brand loyalty, through competition with rival brands, allows brand community members to gain significant experiences within their community and important components of the brand's meaning.

The Relationship Between Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Loyalty

Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie (2014) view customer engagement as "the level of an individual's motivation, which is related to the brand and the state of mind that depends on the context characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity in interaction with the brand." In their journal, Hollebeek et al. (2014) propose three dimensions of customer engagement: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral traits of involvement. Therefore, consumers who interact with a brand they use will be cognitively,

emotionally, and behaviorally engaged. Consequently, the stronger the customer engagement, the more loyal they will be to the brand they use. This hypothesis states that customer brand engagement affects brand loyalty.

The Relationship Between Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Expressiveness on Brand Loyalty

Customer Brand Engagement is of strategic importance in branding because it can affect consumer behavior in branding and create value for companies and their customers (Moreira & Silva, 2017). Self-brand-expressiveness indicates that products and brands connect emotionally with consumers' perceptions of themselves and their desire to share these perceptions with others (Matzler, 2011; Wallace, 2014). According to Atulkar (2020), brand loyalty is conceptualized as attitudinal loyalty, defined as the attachment of customers to a brand as a function of psychological processes. Brand loyalty is the result of a deep emotional relationship that affects customers' repeat purchase behavior (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011, as cited in Atulkar, 2020). This hypothesis suggests that Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Expressiveness affect Brand Loyalty.

The Relationship Between Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Community Identification on Brand Loyalty

Brand community identification is a community built on the closeness with a product or brand. Recent developments in marketing research and consumer behavior stem from the relationship between brands, identity, and culture. Hussein (2016) states that customer engagement is one of the constructs emerging in marketing that creates customer participation and emotional feelings toward a brand. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2012), brand loyalty is the preference of consumers to purchase a specific product or category from the same brand. Brand loyalty is a strong commitment to continue to support or purchase a particular brand in the future. This hypothesis suggests that Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Community Identification affect Brand Loyalty.

Hypotheses:

Based on the framework outlined above, the research hypotheses are as follows:

- H1: Brand Expressiveness significantly affects Customer Brand Engagement.
- H2: Brand Community Identification significantly affects Customer Brand Engagement.
- H3: Brand Expressiveness significantly affects Brand Loyalty.
- H4: Brand Community Identification significantly affects Brand Loyalty.

- H5: Customer Brand Engagement significantly affects Brand Loyalty.
H6: Customer Brand Engagement mediates the effects of Brand Expressiveness on Brand Loyalty.
H7: Customer Brand Engagement mediates the effects of Brand Community Identification on Brand Loyalty.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is quantitative. Quantitative research is a deductive research method that uses measurement techniques and sampling to collect data (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The population consists of all the objects of research, including people, objects, animals, plants, phenomena, test results, and events that have certain characteristics in a research study, which are collected as a source of data and samples. The population is based on the sampling method (Alhayar, 2020). The population of this research consists of consumers who use iPhone smartphones in the city of Cirebon, with the total population size unknown.

The sample chosen for measurement consists of consumers who use iPhone smartphones in the city of Cirebon. The population size cannot be directly determined; therefore, in determining the sample size, it is discussed that the sample size should be at least 10 times the number of measurement items (Hair et al., 2017). This research used 180 samples derived from the manipulation of 18 measurement items by 10, thus exceeding the recommended minimum criteria.

The sampling technique, often referred to as sampling, is the process of selecting a subset of elements from the population under study to form a sample (Handayani, 2020). The sampling technique used in this research is non-probability sampling, specifically random sampling (Notoatmodjo, 2010).

To obtain accurate data, a data collection method is needed. The data collection method in this research utilizes a questionnaire. The type of questionnaire in this research is a closed-ended questionnaire, where the questionnaire is structured in the form of questions or statements; therefore, respondents only need to select one correct or suitable answer according to (Arikunto, 2010).

The research used quantitative research by using a questionnaire. Quantitative data underwent validation tests, reliability tests, R-square (R^2) tests, and hypothesis testing processed using SEM with Smart PLS 4.0 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted on iPhone smartphone users in the city of Cirebon. An overview of the respondents' characteristics is presented in Table 1. As follows:

Table 1
Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	< 20 years	54	42.5%
	20-25 years	61	48.0%
	> 25 years	12	9.5%
Gender	Male	61	31.4%
	Female	133	68.6%

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Based on the characteristics table above, there are 61 males and 133 females. The majority of respondents are aged 20-25 years, accounting for 48.0%.

Validity Test

The convergent validity test can be assessed from the outer loading values and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. An indicator is considered valid if it meets the criteria of an outer loading value > 0.7 and an AVE value ≥ 0.5 (Setiaman, 2023). The following table presents the outer loading values and AVE values for this study:

Table 2
Convergent Validity Test Values

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Explanation	
Brand (X1)	Expressiveness	X1.1	0.705	0.502	VALID
		X2.1	0.704	0.502	VALID
		X3.1	0.706	0.502	VALID
		X4.1	0.707	0.502	VALID
		X5.1	0.721	0.502	VALID
Brand Identification (X2)	Community	X2.1	0.744	0.551	VALID
		X2.2	0.712	0.551	VALID
		X2.3	0.761	0.551	VALID
		X2.4	0.760	0.551	VALID
		X2.5	0.734	0.551	VALID
Customer Engagement (Z)	Brand	Z.1	0.715	0.599	VALID

	Z.2	0.823	0.599	VALID
	Z.3	0.854	0.599	VALID
	Z.4	0.721	0.599	VALID
	Z.5	0.746	0.599	VALID
Brand Loyalty (Y)	Y.1	0.706	0.579	VALID
	Y.2	0.701	0.579	VALID
	Y.3	0.751	0.579	VALID
	Y.4	0.730	0.579	VALID
	Y.5	0.849	0.579	VALID
	Y.6	0.818	0.579	VALID

Source: SmartPLS 4, Processed Data, 2024

Based on Table 2, it can be concluded that the outer loading and AVE values above indicate that the indicators in this study are valid and can be used for further testing because they meet the specified criteria where outer loading is > 0.7 and AVE is ≥ 0.5 .

Table 3
Cross Loading

Indicator	Brand Expressiveness (X1)	Brand Community Identification (X2)	Customer Brand Engagement (Z)	Brand Loyalty (Y)
X1.1	0.705			
X1.2	0.704			
X1.3	0.706			
X1.4	0.707			
X1.5	0.721			
X2.1		0.744		
X2.2		0.712		
X2.3		0.761		
X2.4		0.760		
X2.5		0.734		
Z.1			0.715	
Z.2			0.823	
Z.3			0.854	
Z.4			0.721	
Z.5			0.746	
Y1				0.706
Y2				0.701
Y3				0.751
Y4				0.730
Y5				0.849
Y6				0.818

Source: SmartPLS 4, Processed Data, 2024

Based on the data in Table 3, it can be concluded that all indicator values from the variables Brand Expressiveness, Brand Community Identification, Customer Brand

Engagement, and Brand Loyalty yield values above 0.7. This proves that each variable test is declared valid.

Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values will be used to assess the reliability of indicators in measuring their latent variables. The criterion for Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values should be ≥ 0.7 (Setiaman, 2023). The following table presents Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values:

Table 4
Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

Variable	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>
Brand Expressiveness	0.762	0.768
Brand Community Identification	0.797	0.799
Customer Brand Engagement	0.833	0.849
Brand Loyalty	0.854	0.857

Source: SmartPLS 4, Processed Data, 2024

Based on Table 4, it can be concluded that in the reliability test, indicators of Brand Expressiveness, Brand Community Identification, Customer Brand Engagement, and Brand Loyalty obtained values above 0.7, thus they are considered reliable.

R-squared (R²) Test

The R-squared test results will indicate the strength of the endogenous variables in predicting the structural model. The amount of the R-squared value will determine the model's strength, categorized as weak, moderate, and strong, with R-squared values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 respectively (Setiaman, 2023). The R-squared values are shown in several tables below:

Table 5.
R-squared and Adjusted R-squared

Variable	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared
<i>Customer Brand Engagement</i>	0.526	0.521
<i>Brand Loyalty</i>	0.537	0.530

Source: SmartPLS 4, Processed data, 2024

Based on the results from Table 5, it can be concluded that the combined effect of x_1 , x_2 , and z on Y with an Adjusted R-squared value of 0.530 is considered moderate towards strong.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is observed from the T-statistics values and p-values. The T-Statistics test aims to determine the effect between variables in a model. The T-value used in this study is 1.96 with a significance level of 0.005. If the T-statistic value > 1.96 and the p-value ≤ 0.05 , then the hypothesis is accepted (Setiaman, 2023).

Table 6
Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistics	P-Value	Explanation
Brand Expressiveness (x_1) \rightarrow Customer Brand Engagement (z)	0.058	0.852	0.394	Rejected
Brand Community Identification (x_2) \rightarrow Customer Brand Engagement (z)	0.692	13.005	0.000	Accepted
Brand Expressiveness (x_1) \rightarrow Brand Loyalty (y)	0.190	3.009	0.003	Accepted
Brand Community Identification (x_2) \rightarrow Brand Loyalty (y)	0.485	5.797	0.000	Accepted
Customer Brand Engagement (z) \rightarrow Brand Loyalty (y)	0.161	1.619	0.105	Rejected

Source: SmartPLS 4, Processed data, 2024

Based on Table 6, the path coefficients towards the research hypotheses can be explained as follows:

Hypothesis 1

The T-statistic value and p-value between the variables Brand Expressiveness and Customer Brand Engagement are 0.852 and 0.394 respectively. The T-statistic value of 0.852 is greater than 1.96, and the p-value of 0.394 is greater than 0.05. Both meet the criteria; therefore, Hypothesis 1 is **rejected**. Considering the original sample value (O) is 0.058, indicating a positive value. Therefore, it can be concluded that **H1 is rejected: Brand Expressiveness does not have a positive and significant effect on Customer Brand Engagement**. The rejection of H1 indicates that Brand Expressiveness does not have an effect on Customer Brand Engagement among iPhone smartphone users. The insignificant relationship between brand expressiveness and Customer Brand Engagement implies that the

brand's expression towards iPhone users, as well as the perception of brand involvement among iPhone users, remains insignificant.

Hypothesis 2

The T-statistic value and p-value between the variables Brand Community Identification and Customer Brand Engagement are 13.005 and 0.000, respectively. The T-statistic value of $13.005 \geq 1.96$ and the p-value of $0.000 \leq 0.05$. Both meet the criteria; therefore, Hypothesis 2 is **accepted**. If we look at the Original Sample (O) value of 0.692, which indicates a positive value. Therefore, it can be concluded that **H2 is accepted: Brand Community Identification has a positive and significant effect on Customer Brand Engagement**. The acceptance of H2 indicates that Brand Community Identification has an effect on Customer Brand Engagement among iPhone smartphone users. The significant and positive relationship between Brand Community Identification and Customer Brand Engagement implies that the stronger the brand community's connection with iPhone smartphone users, the greater the perception of brand engagement among them.

Hypothesis 3

The T-statistic value and p-value between the variables Brand Expressiveness and Brand Loyalty are 3.009 and 0.003, respectively. The T-statistic value of 3.009 is greater than 1.96, and the p-value of 0.003 is less than 0.05. Both meet the criteria; therefore, Hypothesis 3 is **accepted**. If observed from the original sample value (O) of 0.190, it indicates a positive value. Therefore, it can be concluded that **H3 is accepted: Brand Expressiveness has a significant and positive effect on Brand Loyalty**. The acceptance of H3 indicates that Brand Expressiveness has an effect on Brand Loyalty among iPhone smartphone users. The relationship between Brand Expressiveness and Brand Loyalty occurs significantly and positively, suggesting that the stronger the brand expression towards iPhone users, the stronger the perception of brand loyalty among them.

Hypothesis 4

The T-statistic value and p-value between the variables Brand Community Identification and Brand Loyalty are 5.797 and 0.000, respectively. The T-statistic value of 5.797 is greater than 1.96, and the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Both values meet the criteria; therefore, hypothesis 4 is **accepted**. When observed from the original sample (O) with a value of 0.485, which indicates a positive value. Therefore, it can be concluded that

H4 is accepted: Brand Community Identification has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty. Acceptance of H4 indicates that Brand Community Identification has an effect on Brand Loyalty among iPhone smartphone users. The relationship between Brand Community Identification and Brand Loyalty occurs significantly and positively, implying that the stronger the brand community toward iPhone smartphone users, the stronger the perception of brand loyalty among them.

Hypothesis 5

The T-statistic value and p-value between the variables of Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Loyalty are 1.619 and 0.105, respectively. The T-statistic value of 1.619 is greater than 1.96, and the p-value of 0.105 is greater than 0.05. Both meet the criteria; therefore, Hypothesis 5 is **rejected**. Looking at the original sample value (O) of 0.161, which indicates a positive value. Therefore, it can be concluded that **H5 is rejected: Customer Brand Engagement does not have a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty.** The rejection of H5 indicates that Customer Brand Engagement does not have an effect on Brand Loyalty among iPhone smartphone users. The relationship between Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Loyalty is not statistically significant, meaning that brand engagement does not significantly affect brand loyalty among iPhone smartphone users.

Table 7
Specific Indirect Effect

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STEDV)	P values	Hasil
<i>Brand Expressiveness (x1) → Customer Brand Engagement (z) → Brand Loyalty (y)</i>	0.009	0.01	0.015	0.639	0.523	Rejected
<i>Brand Community Identification (x2) → Customer Brand Engagement (z) → Brand Loyalty (y)</i>	0.111	0.18	0.069	1.621	0.105	Rejected

Source: SmartPLS 4, Processed data, 2024

Based on Table 7, the values of the specific indirect effect can be explained for the research hypotheses as follows:

Hypothesis 6

The T-statistic and p-value between the variables Brand Expressiveness and Customer Brand Engagement on Brand Loyalty are 0.639 and 0.523, respectively. The T-statistic value of 0.639 is less than 1.96, and the p-value of 0.523 is greater than 0.05. Both values meet the criteria; therefore hypothesis 6 is **rejected**. If we look at the original sample (O), the value is 0.009, indicating a positive value. Therefore, it can be concluded that **H6 is rejected: Customer Brand Engagement does not mediate the effect of Brand Expressiveness on Brand Loyalty**. The rejection of H6 indicates that Customer Brand Engagement does not mediate the effect of Brand Expressiveness on Brand Loyalty among iPhone smartphone users. The relationship between Customer Brand Engagement not mediating the effect of Brand Expressiveness on Brand Loyalty occurs insignificantly, meaning that the expression of the brand and brand engagement towards iPhone users do not significantly affect brand loyalty perceptions among iPhone users.

Hypothesis 7

The T-statistic value and p-value between the variables Brand Community Identification and Customer Brand Engagement on Brand Loyalty are 1.621 and 0.523, respectively. The T-statistic value of 1.621 is greater than 1.96, and the p-value of 0.105 is greater than 0.05. Both values meet the criteria; therefore, hypothesis 7 is **rejected**. If we look at the original sample value (O), which is 0.111, indicating a positive value. Therefore, it can be concluded that **H7 is rejected: Customer Brand Engagement does not mediate the effect of Brand Community Identification on Brand Loyalty**. The rejection of H7 indicates that Customer Brand Engagement does not mediate the effect of Brand Community Identification on brand loyalty among iPhone users. The insignificant relationship between Customer Brand Engagement not mediating the effect of Brand Community Identification on brand loyalty implies that the brand community and brand involvement among iPhone users do not significantly affect the perception of brand loyalty among smartphone users.

CONCLUSION

Based on the conclusions drawn from this study, it is found that in the validity and reliability tests of variables Brand Expressiveness, Brand Community Identification, Customer Brand Engagement, and Brand Loyalty, they are considered valid and reliable

because all values exceed 0.7. Based on the results of hypothesis testing from the 7 presented hypotheses, 3 hypotheses are accepted and 4 hypotheses are rejected. The accepted hypotheses are as follows: Brand Expressiveness does not have a positive and significant effect on Customer Brand Engagement, Brand Community Identification has a positive and significant effect on Customer Brand Engagement, Brand Expressiveness has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty, Brand Community Identification has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty, Customer Brand Engagement does not have a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty, Customer Brand Engagement does not mediate the effect of Brand Expressiveness on Brand Loyalty, Customer Brand Engagement does not mediate the effect of Brand Community Identification on Brand Loyalty.

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