

Exploring the Impact of Influencer Marketing on Brand Equity: A Mediation Analysis Involving Brand Awareness and Customer Brand Engagement

ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the influence of influencer marketing on overall brand equity, which is mediated by Brand Awareness and customer brand engagement. In this research, the population used is Indonesian people who are familiar with tourism. In this condition, people have visited or are visiting tourist destinations. The number of samples taken was 290 respondents. This research data was obtained using an online survey questionnaire via Google Form with a measurement scale using a 5-point Likert scale. This research is descriptive research using quantitative methods. The analysis tool used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), with data analysis techniques using the Smart-PLS version 3.0 application. All the hypotheses proposed in this study have a positive and significant impact. The research findings confirm the mediating role of variables such as brand awareness and customer brand engagement in the relationship between influencer marketing and overall brand equity. In this context, influencer marketing can influence overall brand equity both directly and through mediator variables. The results of this study are expected to serve as an alternative solution for stakeholders in the tourism industry to formulate marketing strategies in the digital era.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Brand Awareness, Overall Brand Equity, Customer Brand Engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital landscape, social media is a significant marketing tool, particularly with the surge in internet accessibility. For instance, Indonesia experienced a 17% increase in internet users from January 2019 to January 2020, totaling around 25 million people [1]. This growth reflects the Internet's role as an interactive medium, as highlighted by the Internet Survey Indonesia 2021-2022 (Q1) conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII). The survey indicates a rise in internet users and changes in online behavior, attributing some of these shifts to the impact of the pandemic. As of 2021, Indonesia boasts 210,026,769 internet users out of a total population of 272,682,600 [2].

Social media utilization, as highlighted by [3, 4], presents a pivotal opportunity for various business sectors, including Indonesia's tourism industry. It plays a crucial role in the information-intensive tourism sector, influencing travelers to shift from traditional methods to social media for travel-related activities. It includes seeking information, booking

accommodations and transportation, and sharing travel experiences [5]. Adaptation to social media is essential for tourism professionals to retain existing customers and attract new ones, offering an informative, interactive, and engaging marketing strategy.

Tourism in Indonesia plays a crucial role in national development, contributing to increased income at both national and regional levels. The Visit Indonesia program, initiated in 2008, has positively impacted tourism development. This study focuses on the multifaceted role of tourism in enhancing community welfare, mainly through activities such as cultural, educational, historical, natural, and culinary tourism in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Notably, Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu, nature-themed restaurants in Yogyakarta, have become attractive tourist destinations, offering unique culinary experiences against the backdrop of Menoreh hills. With Tumpeng Menoreh launching in May 2021, its name is inspired by the traditional tumpeng dish, reflecting its multi-tiered design.

"Tumpeng Ayu, a new addition to Tumpeng Menoreh, shares a similar tourism concept but distinguishes itself with a focus on Western cuisine. Notably, visitors reach Tumpeng Ayu via a gondola-shaped lift, adding excitement and a novel experience to their journey. The establishment of Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu coincided with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted the tourism industry. The unique destinations aim to positively impact the local community by creating job opportunities for those with a tourism background.

As a new tourist attraction in the era of rapid digitization, Tumpeng Menoreh must adopt digital marketing, focusing on social media and influencer strategies to compete with other destinations. Influencers, with their ability to impact purchasing decisions, play a crucial role by defining specifications and facilitating recommendations [6]. Brands commonly collaborate with influencers to promote products, leveraging the influencer's established image [7]. Through partnerships, influencers share brand offerings on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, influencing their followers' perceptions and travel decisions. However, understanding the impact of influencer marketing on brand equity, mediated by brand awareness and customer brand engagement, is crucial in the tourism context.

Implementing influencer marketing strategies is expected to impact a company's brand image positively. Selecting competent and highly credible influencers will influence the brand being promoted. According to [8], brand equity is generally defined as the unique effect marketing has on a brand over time. Brand equity is a valuable asset related to the image, reputation, and positive perception of a tourist destination or travel company. According to [9], Brand Equity is categorized into five categories: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand assets. According to [10], brand equity is crucial in increasing tourists' interest in visiting.

The effectiveness of influencer marketing is evidenced by a 2019 Linqia report, revealing that 86% of brand marketers utilized this strategy in 2017, with 92% deeming it effective. Furthermore, 89% of marketers found the return on investment (ROI) from influencer marketing comparable to or better than other channels in 2018 [11]. Influencer-created content was reported to be 6.9 times more effective than studio-generated content [12]. Given these impacts, 42% of marketers planned to incorporate influencer marketing as an ongoing strategy [11]. [13] stress the importance of selecting suitable influencers to maximize the benefits and impact brand equity. Considering influencers as key intermediaries and credible sources in consumer interest determination, brands should prioritize these factors when selecting influencers. In the modern era, heightened consumer brand awareness significantly influences preferences, extending beyond products and

services to personal brands. [14] defines brand awareness as "the ability and capability of a potential consumer to recognize a part of a brand or recall a brand as part of a certain category.

In brand awareness, the influential figure Erik Kristanto, widely recognized as Erix Soekamti, a prominent Indonesian musician with a significant public following, has been engaged as an influencer to promote the tourist destinations Tumpeng Ayu and Tumpeng Menoreh. "Erix Soekamti actively promotes Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu through his Instagram account @erixsoekamti, with 408 thousand followers, resulting in increased visibility and positive impacts on Brand Equity and customer brand engagement for these tourist destinations."

Several studies have explored the relationship between influencer marketing and overall brand equity. A study conducted by [15] found that influencer marketing has a significant impact on increasing brand equity. Through influencer promotions, consumers can form positive perceptions of the brand and develop an emotional attachment to it. The study also revealed that influencers considered credible and authentic in their content tend to influence brand equity significantly. Additionally, research by [16] investigated the influence of influencer marketing on brand equity in the tourism industry. They found that influencer marketing to promote tourist destinations can enhance brand awareness, improve brand image, and influence tourists' interest. This research indicates that influencer marketing can effectively strengthen brand equity in the tourism sector.

Some previous research results indicate a research gap showing the influence of influencer marketing on brand equity. Therefore, researchers are interested in conducting further research to understand the influence of marketing on overall brand equity through Brand Awareness and customer brand engagement. Thus, this research aims to examine the influence of influencer marketing on overall brand equity, mediated by Brand Awareness and customer brand engagement. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for businesses in the tourism sector, guiding them in optimizing digital promotions to boost tourist interest.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marketing Strategy

Marketing is an action, method, or process to promote products [17]. As defined by [17], marketing encompasses actions, methods, or processes aimed at promoting products. According to [18], the term 'marketing strategy' refers to a plan for developing market influence through activities such as market research, product planning, evaluation, promotion, and sales. This perspective emphasizes the role of marketing in society, with marketers aiming to enhance the quality of life for the general public [19]. In essence, marketing is a multifaceted activity that leverages various sales factors to foster positive customer relationships, boost sales, attract new customers, and facilitate ongoing buying and selling transactions.

2.2 Influencer Marketing

Influencers serve as intermediaries, leveraging social media platforms like blogs and tweets to shape audience behavior [20]. [21] notes that influencers aim to market brands by creating content, garnering followers, and validating the brand. According to [22], the influencer-agency relationship has rapidly evolved, with micro-influencers, celebrities, thought leaders, executives, content producers, and bloggers dominating the landscape.

Micro-influencers, identified as the primary force in social media influencer marketing, play a pivotal role.

Influencers, spanning micro-influencers, celebrities, and thought leaders, wield substantial influence over their audience, serving as intermediaries between customers and brands [23]. The success of the influencer phenomenon lies in their unparalleled ability to engage audiences, driven by their openness and rapport with customers. Businesses enlist influencers to enhance public awareness, inform potential customers, expand fan bases, and boost revenue.

[23] categorize influencers into three types: 1) Mega influencers, with over one million followers, are renowned celebrities enjoying recognition both online and offline; 2) Macro influencers, with 1,000 to 100,000 followers, leverage their authenticity and frequent evaluations to enhance credibility and brand influence.

[23] categorized influencers into three types:

1. Mega influencers, renowned celebrities with extensive offline and online recognition, requiring no additional brand development.
2. Macro influencers, with follower counts ranging from 100,000 to 1 million, are known for sharing focused aspects of their lives.
3. Micro-influencers, with 1,000 to 100,000 followers, are often referred to as buzzers due to their credibility enhanced by real experiences and a devoted follower base.

[24] identified factors contributing to influencers' effectiveness, including congruence, parasocial relationships, sponsorship disclosure, credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise. In conclusion, influencer marketing represents a digital content-based product campaign that signifies the transition into the digital era, utilizing influencers as a critical strategy on social media.

2.3 Brand Awareness

[25] posit that brand familiarity enables customers to describe its features autonomously. [26] define brand awareness as the ability of consumers to recall and recognize a brand within its category, influencing customer loyalty. In contrast, [8] characterize brand awareness as the capability to distinguish a brand across detailed categories, influencing purchasing behavior. In influencer marketing, companies prioritize brand recognition due to its significance in consumer decisions and purchasing behavior. [27] emphasize that brand awareness heavily influences brand loyalty. [28] finding supports that influencer marketing enhances brand image and buyer awareness through dominant social media marketing. Similarly, [29] in "The Influence of Influencer Marketing and Brand Awareness on Street Boba Purchasing Decisions" confirm the positive impact of Brand Awareness and influencer marketing on promoting and purchasing street boba.

2.4 Customer Brand Engagement

[30] state that brand engagement unfolds within consumer interactions. Conversely, [31] defines customer engagement as a concept aiming to amplify the time and attention of buyers through continuous interactions, bolstering emotional, psychological, and physical aspects. Four brand engagement types are delineated: customer experience, shopping habits, and brand conversations. In the contemporary marketing landscape, brand activities alone no longer solely drive customer engagement; collaboration with Social Media Influencers (SMI) plays a pivotal role in content development on social media.

With the rise of new media channels and the ubiquity of the internet, customers can easily interact through social media [32]. Customer engagement, defined as creating interactive relationship experiences [33, 34], is expected to mitigate negative opinions about company services [33]. [35] defines customer engagement as a company-initiated process influencing customer decisions and transactions.

Customer engagement with a brand enables companies to forge robust relationships [34]. In the digital era, brand engagement has shifted to online platforms, mainly social media, where the tourism industry employs supporting applications for customer communication with destination managers. Engagement is integral to brand building, shaping positive brand experiences, and providing value to customers and companies [36]. [37] research, "Influencer Marketing Strategy in Increasing Customer Engagement (Case Study: Bonvie. id Instagram)," supports this statement, demonstrating that Bonvie's implementation of influencer marketing significantly enhances customer engagement.

2.5 Overall Brand Equity

Social media is pivotal for establishing brand equity through enhanced customer engagement [38]. Customer interactions on social media signify increased brand investment, elevating its value [39]. A brand is a distinct identifier for goods or services, encompassing logos, symbols, names, and characters [40]. [41] define a brand as a symbol or name with associative meaning, incorporating six levels: attributes, benefits, value, culture, personality, and user [42]. Enhancing brand value benefits both the company and consumers [43]. [9] outline five components of brand equity: brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand association, brand awareness, and additional assets like patents. [44] provide detailed insights:

1. Brand Awareness: [45] emphasizes its potential to recognize and remember a brand, influencing overall brand equity. Higher awareness fosters emotional connections, influencing purchase decisions [46]. The levels of brand awareness according to [47]:
 - a. Unawareness: Lowest level, complete lack of brand knowledge.
 - b. Brand Recognition: Measure of response to a brand.
 - c. Brand Recall: Memory of a brand after initial mention.
 - d. Top of Mind: First brand that comes to mind.
2. Brand Association: Consumer knowledge shapes choices and influences brand loyalty, expressing lifestyle through brand usage.
3. Perceived Quality: Consumer perceptions impact lasting effects, emphasizing the importance of product quality. Schiffman and Kanuk define perceived quality as consumer value derived from information received. External and internal criteria shape quality assessments [48].

Customers frequently rely on the physical attributes of a product to gauge its quality, believing that internal signals offer a basis for product quality evaluations, aiding in maintaining decisions about its benefits. External criteria are also utilized for quality assessment. In the era of increasing online business competition through influencers, entrepreneurs can leverage influencer marketing to augment their brand's credibility.

Customer perceptions of a brand are multifaceted and influenced by various factors, including the company's marketing initiatives. This perception, in turn, shapes customers' inclination to purchase or visit establishments [49]. Moreover, brand equity amplifies the impact of marketing initiatives and enhances business value [43].

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Measurement

This research investigates causal relationships proposed in the hypotheses using a quantitative approach. Primary data are gathered through an online questionnaire, employing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). According to [50], this scale effectively gauges respondents' agreement or disagreement with the statements provided. The questionnaire focuses on influencer marketing, brand awareness, and Customer Brand Engagement with measurement items adapted from [51] and [52] for overall brand equity.

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

This research employs a combination of primary and secondary data sources. Primary data are gathered through an online questionnaire, while secondary data are drawn from previous research references. The study focuses on tourist destinations Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu in Indonesia. Sample selection employs the convenience sampling technique. [53] states that convenience sampling is a method of selecting respondents freely according to the researcher's preferences. Therefore, in this study, the sampling technique is aimed at Indonesian people familiar with tourism, either currently visiting or having visited. The sample size is determined using the [54] method, depending on the number of parameters used in this research. Based on this method, this study's minimum number of respondents is 290 samples, and the maximum is 580 samples. A pilot test is conducted as a questionnaire trial with 30 respondents to ensure that the indicators of variables on the questionnaire are valid and reliable for testing. The pilot test results show that the questionnaire is valid, reliable, and suitable for use with the respondents in this study. Finally, 290 sample respondents are successfully obtained for further analysis.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis methods used in this research are descriptive and statistical analysis. Through collected data, the descriptive analysis explains the characteristics of certain events, people, or situations [55]. This study will use descriptive analysis to delineate respondent characteristics based on gender, age, and income criteria. Meanwhile, the statistical analysis method involves SEM analysis using the PLS-SEM version 3.0 statistical tool. As [56] highlighted, PLS analysis exhibits advantages such as modeling multiple dependent and independent variables, handling missing data, and creating independent latent variables directly based on cross-products involving response variables, thereby enhancing predictive capabilities. [57] state that PLS can be applied to non-normally distributed data and yields unbiased analyses. PLS-SEM comprises the measurement model (Outer Model) and the structural model (Inner Model).

The outer model evaluation is used to test the validity and reliability of measurements in the study. This stage includes tests of convergent and discriminant validity, as well as data reliability tests. On the other hand, the inner model evaluation is used to test relationships between constructs. The evaluation at this stage includes tests of the coefficient of determination (R-square), goodness of fit model (GoF), path coefficient, and hypothesis testing. The hypotheses formulated in this research are:

H1: Influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness.

H2: Influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer brand engagement.

H3: Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on overall brand equity.

H4: Customer brand engagement has a positive and significant effect on overall brand equity.
H5: Influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on overall brand equity.
H6: Brand awareness has a positive and significant mediating effect between influencer marketing and overall brand equity.
H7: Customer brand engagement has a positive and significant mediating effect between influencer marketing and overall brand equity.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Profile

The study analyzes respondent classification based on gender, age, and monthly income. The results of respondent profiles are given in the following table (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents' Characteristics

Category	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	129	44.5
Female	161	55.5
Age		
< 25 years	183	63.1
26-35 years	91	31.4
36-45 years	10	3.4
>46 years	6	2.1
Income per Month		
< 5 million	233	80.3
5 - 10 million	39	13.4
> 10 million	18	6.2

Source: Primary data (2023)

Based on Table 1, the findings reveal a predominance of female respondents (55.5%) over male respondents (44.5%). Regarding age, those under 25 constitute the majority (63.1%). Additionally, a significant portion of respondents in this study report a monthly income of less than 5 million (80.3%).

4.2 Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The outer model establishes correlation relationships between indicators and their latent variables, connecting variables with their respective indicators [58]. Research model evaluation encompasses convergent validity, discriminant validity, and measurement reliability. The summarized results for convergent validity (loading values and AVE) and data reliability (Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR)) are presented below (Table 2).

Table 2. Convergent Validity and Data Reliability

Variabel	Item	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
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Influencer Marketing	IM1	0.920	0.956	0.965	0.821
	IM2	0.900			
	IM3	0.933			
	IM4	0.883			
	IM5	0.890			
	IM6	0.908			
Brand Awareness	BA1	0.794	0.947	0.957	0.759
	BA2	0.751			
	BA3	0.834			
	BA4	0.898			
	BA5	0.855			
	BA6	0.897			
	BA7	0.895			
	BA8	0.888			
Customer Brand Engagement	CBE1	0.929	0.962	0.971	0.869
	CBE2	0.920			
	CBE3	0.947			
	CBE4	0.950			
	CBE5	0.913			
Overall Brand Quality	OBE1	0.862	0.960	0.968	0.834
	OBE2	0.939			
	OBE3	0.942			
	OBE4	0.922			
	OBE5	0.921			
	OBE6	0.890			

Source: Primary data (2023)

*Notes: Brand Awareness (BA), Customer Brand Engagement (CBE), Influencer Marketing (IM), Overall Brand Equity (OBE)

In Table 2, the convergent validity test indicates that all loading values and AVE meet standard 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017), affirming convergent validity. Additionally, in the reliability test, where Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) values should exceed 0.7 [59], all constructs are deemed reliable as they surpass the threshold.

Next, discriminant validity, evaluated through cross-loading tests, ensures that the square root of the AVE for a construct surpasses the correlation between its latent variables or cross-loading values [60]. The results of Cross-Loading are given below (Table 3).

Table 3. Discriminant Validity: Cross-Loading

Item	BA	CBE	IM	OBE
BA1	0.794	0.624	0.667	0.637
BA2	0.751	0.608	0.768	0.598
BA3	0.834	0.650	0.669	0.655
BA4	0.898	0.833	0.719	0.738
BA5	0.855	0.775	0.689	0.727
BA6	0.897	0.812	0.745	0.751
BA7	0.895	0.789	0.737	0.744
BA8	0.888	0.767	0.761	0.778
CBE1	0.839	0.929	0.744	0.803
CBE2	0.785	0.920	0.713	0.737
CBE3	0.825	0.947	0.732	0.797
CBE4	0.815	0.950	0.719	0.799

CBE5	0.753	0.913	0.706	0.806
IM1	0.754	0.702	0.920	0.714
IM2	0.768	0.714	0.900	0.698
IM3	0.797	0.715	0.933	0.749
IM4	0.739	0.694	0.883	0.697
IM5	0.752	0.692	0.890	0.721
IM6	0.778	0.698	0.908	0.753
OBE1	0.700	0.702	0.738	0.862
OBE2	0.777	0.816	0.751	0.939
OBE3	0.765	0.785	0.760	0.942
OBE4	0.764	0.775	0.709	0.922
OBE5	0.758	0.773	0.687	0.921
OBE6	0.768	0.782	0.723	0.890

Souce: Primary data (2023)

*Notes: Brand Awareness (BA), Customer Brand Engagement (CBE), Influencer Marketing (IM), Overall Brand Equity (OBE)

Table 3 displays the cross-loading values, with each indicator exceeding 0.7, except BA2 (0.751). Consequently, BA2 is considered less effective in measuring brand awareness and is excluded from further analysis. The second-stage cross-loading results are given below (Table 4).

Table 4. Discriminant Validity: Cross-Loading II

Item	BA	CBE	IM	OBE
BA1	0.796	0.624	0.667	0.637
BA3	0.828	0.650	0.669	0.655
BA4	0.911	0.833	0.719	0.738
BA5	0.865	0.775	0.689	0.727
BA6	0.899	0.812	0.745	0.751
BA7	0.899	0.789	0.738	0.744
BA8	0.893	0.767	0.761	0.778
CBE1	0.842	0.929	0.744	0.803
CBE2	0.788	0.920	0.713	0.737
CBE3	0.826	0.947	0.732	0.797
CBE4	0.815	0.950	0.719	0.799
CBE5	0.754	0.913	0.706	0.806
IM1	0.732	0.702	0.920	0.714
IM2	0.746	0.714	0.900	0.698
IM3	0.771	0.715	0.933	0.749
IM4	0.714	0.694	0.883	0.697
IM5	0.727	0.692	0.890	0.721
IM6	0.758	0.698	0.908	0.753
OBE1	0.687	0.702	0.738	0.862
OBE2	0.776	0.816	0.751	0.939
OBE3	0.762	0.785	0.760	0.942
OBE4	0.766	0.775	0.709	0.922
OBE5	0.767	0.773	0.687	0.921
OBE6	0.768	0.782	0.723	0.890

Souce: Primary data (2023)

*Notes: Brand Awareness (BA), Customer Brand Engagement (CBE), Influencer Marketing (IM), Overall Brand Equity (OBE)

Table 4 presents the results of cross-loading analysis after eliminating the BA2 item. The results indicate that each indicator meets the standards. Therefore, these results are considered to have good discriminant validity.

4.3 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

In the inner model evaluation stage, tests were conducted for the coefficient of determination (R-square), goodness of fit model (GoF), path coefficient, and hypothesis testing. First, the analysis of the coefficient of determination (R Square) is based on [61] R-square categories. Second, the goodness of fit model (GoF) test is calculated from the average communality index and R-square's square root. The GoF values are categorized as 0.1 (small), 0.25 (medium), and 0.36 (large). The results of the R-square test and the GoF model are summarized in the following table (Table 5).

Table 5. R-Square dan Goodness of Fit Model

Variabel	R-Square	Communality
Brand Awareness	0.670	0.675
Customer Brand Engagement	0.601	0.790
Influencer Marketing		0.741
Overall Brand Equity	0.776	0.759
Average	0.682	0.741
GoF	0.711	

Souce: Primary data (2023)

Table 5 shows that the R-Square values for the brand awareness variable (67%) fall into the excellent category, the customer brand engagement variable (60.1%) falls into the moderate category, and the overall brand equity variable (77.6%) falls into the excellent category. Meanwhile, the GoF model value falls into the large category ($0.711 > 0.36$). It indicates that the empirical data fit the model (there is no difference between the model and the data, so the model is considered to fit the data) [62].

Finally, the path coefficient test and hypothesis testing were conducted to determine the direction and causality of the hypothesized variables. According to [63], the path coefficient test shows the strength of the relationships between constructs. The path coefficient results can be positive or negative. Meanwhile, in hypothesis testing, decision-making is based on T-statistic values > 1.96 and P-value < 0.05 . This study has mediating variables, namely brand awareness and customer brand engagement, mediating the relationship between influencer marketing and overall brand equity. The hypothesis testing and path coefficient results are summarized in Table 6 and Figure 1 below.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing and Path Coefficient

Hipotesis	β	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Value	Kesimpulan
IM \rightarrow BA	0.819	0.819	0.000	H1 Supported
IM \rightarrow CBE	0.775	0.775	0.000	H2 Supported
BA \rightarrow OBE	0.216	0.216	0.009	H3 Supported
CBE \rightarrow OBE	0.449	0.449	0.000	H4 Supported
IM \rightarrow OBE	0.272	0.272	0.000	H5 Supported
IM \rightarrow OBE	0.177	2.679	0.008	H6 Supported
IM \rightarrow BA \rightarrow OBE	0.348	5.642	0.000	H7 Supported

IM → CBE → OBE

Source: Primary data (2023)

*Notes: Brand Awareness (BA), Customer Brand Engagement (CBE), Influencer Marketing (IM), Overall Brand Equity (OBE)

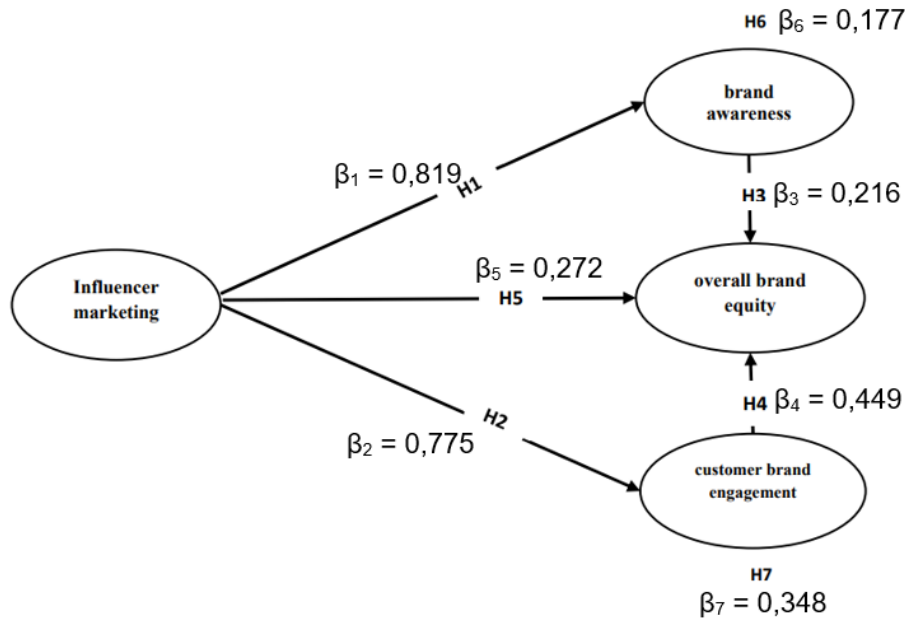


Fig. 1. Summary of the model results.

The symbol β indicates the direction of the hypothesis (original sample).

The research framework is adopted from Hussam Ali & Omar Mohammad Ali Alqudah (2022).

Table 6 shows the results of hypothesis testing, stating that all hypotheses in this study are accepted. It happens because the testing results of all hypotheses meet the criteria of a T value greater than 1.96 and a P value less than 0.05. In this case, the mediating role of brand awareness and customer brand engagement variables has been proven—furthermore, the path coefficient test results show positive β values. The overall results of this testing are then summarized in the research framework, as shown in Figure 1. This research framework is adopted from [51].

4.3.1 Effect of Influencer Marketing on Brand Awareness

The findings of this study support that influencer marketing has a positive and significant impact on brand awareness ($\beta = .819$, P value = .00), thus supporting H1. It identifies that the influence of content created by influencer marketing positively affects Brand Awareness for the tourist destinations Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu. In the digitalization era, influencer marketing stands out as a potent tool for brand communication [64]. The marketing landscape is progressively employing influencers to actively cultivate brand awareness within specific target demographics, drawing from within their circles [65]. Influencers have an effective impact on E-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) because they are highly trusted by their followers. Subsequently, through this, brand awareness will be formed. The results of this study align with the research conducted by [28], which shows that influencer marketing significantly influences brand awareness. It can be interpreted as influencers providing information about a product or service, aiming to significantly increase

sales and present a brand image that positively affects brand awareness in the eyes of consumers.

4.3.2 Effect of Influencer Marketing on Customer Brand Engagement

In this study, it is evident that influencer marketing positively and significantly impacts customer brand engagement ($\beta = .775$, P value = .018), thus accepting H2. It identifies that the perceived influence of companies using influencers as a promotional medium positively affects brand engagement with customers. It can be interpreted that the company's social media marketing efforts influence customer trust in the brand. Customer belief in the tourist destinations Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu will facilitate the brand in building a stronger relationship with them. Influencer marketing allows these tourist destinations to engage with customers directly. The use of influencers is not only seen as a means of actualization. However, it can also evolve into the business world, primarily through social media, serving as a marketing tool and for obtaining reviews or information about a product/service to be marketed, thus attracting customer interest and response in deciding to purchase or visit a place. Well-managed influencer marketing will lead to increased Customer Brand Engagement. This result aligns with the research conducted by [66], which found a significant positive relationship between influencer marketing and customer brand engagement.

4.3.3 Effect of Brand Awareness on Overall Brand Equity

This study proves that Brand Awareness has a positive and significant impact on overall brand equity ($\beta = .216$, P value = .026), thus accepting H3. The more trust customers have in a brand, the greater the likelihood they will buy products from it. A good brand image for Brand Awareness can be achieved by effectively managing influencer marketing. Brand equity is the result of variances in customer responses to a product and its marketing when recognizing the brand name as a results of brand awareness [67]. In this case, the brand equity of Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu tourist destinations will increase when visitors and potential visitors become aware of these tourist destinations. This finding aligns with the research conducted by [68], which found a significant influence of Brand Awareness on overall brand equity. For tourist destinations, beauty and comfort are essential parts of their overall marketing strategy.

4.3.4 Effect of Customer Brand Engagement on Overall Brand Equity

This study proves that Customer Brand Engagement has a positive and significant impact on overall brand equity ($\beta = .449$, P value = .00), and H4 is accepted. In the context of this research, marketing strategies employed by Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu, emphasizing the creation of brand engagement through content that stimulates interaction on social media, will enhance the overall brand equity from the audience's perspective. This aligns with the research conducted by [69], which shows a significant influence of Customer Brand Engagement on overall brand equity. Conversely, this finding contradicts [70], which refutes the influence of brand engagement on overall brand equity without the mediation of the variable brand love. Whereas, brand equity involves not only consumer preferences and choices but also results in a more favorable marketing response [71].

4.3.5 Effect of Influencer Marketing on Overall Brand Equity

In this study, it is proven that influencer marketing positively and significantly impacts overall brand equity ($\beta = .272$, P value .004), thus accepting H5. This finding aligns with the research conducted by [24] The findings explain that influencer marketing significantly

positively influences overall brand equity. It is crucial to emphasize that the attainment of a successful strategy can be attributed to the robust brand equity in place [15]. In this case, Influencers are individuals who can influence others in decision-making. It is utilized by companies to reach a broader market. People who follow influencers on social media are interested in the influencer's life. The influencer consistently shares their life, creating interactions between the influencer and their followers. This interaction makes followers or potential consumers trust the products used, reviewed, or promoted by the influencer. The shared values or experiences make followers trust the influencer, thus influencing the decision of potential consumers to visit the tourist destinations Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu.

4.3.6 Effect of Influencer Marketing on Overall Brand Equity Mediated by Brand Awareness

The results of this study prove that influencer marketing has a positive and significant impact on overall brand equity mediated by brand awareness ($\beta = .177$, P value = .008), thus accepting H6. The analysis results indicate that a marketing strategy using influencers can increase brand awareness and customer brand engagement at the tourist destinations Tumpeng Ayu and Tumpeng Menoreh, thus becoming a crucial consideration for consumers when planning a visit. The analysis results are also supported by the research conducted by [44] stating that influencers are a reliable choice for companies' online marketing strategies. One of the reasons business owners collaborate with influencers is to enhance brand awareness and increase sales according to the defined target market.

4.3.6 Effect of Influencer Marketing on Overall Brand Equity Mediated by Brand Awareness

The results of this study prove that influencer marketing has a positive and significant impact on overall brand equity mediated by customer brand engagement ($\beta = .348$, P value = .001), thus accepting H7. This result aligns with the research conducted by [72], where influencers impact overall brand equity mediated by customer brand engagement. The study conducted by [73] also explains that influencers impact overall brand equity for the product Scarlett Whitening. Influencers are individuals who exert influence and have the ability to change human behavior [74]. The persuasive ability of influencer marketing to followers regarding a brand product can build consumer brand awareness.

5. CONCLUSION

Influencer marketing is one of the strategies companies employ to achieve their strategic objectives by utilizing influencers as messengers for products or brands, thus reaching a broader market. A brand is a company's identity, where the company must build a good brand image so that potential consumers can remember, and a positive image can be attached to a product for potential consumers. Since the research related to the variables of influencer marketing, brand awareness, customer brand engagement, and overall brand equity at the tourist destinations Tumpeng Menoreh & Tumpeng Ayu has been analyzed and discussed, it can be concluded that in this study, all hypotheses show a positive and significant influence. The research confirms the mediating role of brand awareness and customer engagement in the relationship between influencer marketing and overall brand equity. In the context of this research, influencer marketing strategies can successfully influence overall brand equity if the tourism business has good brand awareness and customer engagement with social media users.

This study is based on theories that can consolidate research results based on real situations. The research provides new insights into the factors influencing tourists' interest in visiting new destinations. Additionally, this research contributes to enriching the literature to enhance knowledge and understanding and recognize the importance of using social media and the role of influencers as advertising media in shaping a company's brand values.

The results of this research are expected to provide input for the tourism industry, especially for Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu, in selecting marketing media. Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu can maximize their marketing efforts through influencers by paying more attention to the selection of content to be advertised, ensuring that engagement with the audience continues to increase, making marketing more effective.

This study has limitations related to the research sample, which is limited to visitors to tourist destinations. Therefore, future research is expected to distribute questionnaires more widely. Future research is also expected to add other variables that can influence the intention to visit, making the research more complex.

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APPENDIX

The item scale used to measure the construct of this study was adapted from [51, 52]. The following table is a description of the item scale of measurement in this study [Table 7].

Table 7. Item Scale

Construct	Item	Source
Influencer Marketing	IM1 I follow the influencer Erix Soekamti who shares posts with informative and interesting visuals or messages.	[51]
	IM2 I follow Influencer Erix Soekamti, who has good credibility and a close relationship with his followers.	
	IM3 Influencer Erix Soekamti can influence me to visit a tourist destination.	
	IM4 I learned about the tourist destinations Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu through Erix Soekamti's posts.	
	IM5 I often access social media to find information about the destinations Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu through Influencer Erix Soekamti.	
	IM6 Erix Soekamti's influencer reviews have an impact on me in visiting the destinations Tumpeng Ayu and Tumpeng Menoreh.	
Brand Awareness	<i>Recognition:</i>	[51]
	BA1 I am aware of the existence of Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu.	
	BA2 I understand about the destinations of Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu through Erix Soekamti's Instagram.	
	<i>Recall:</i>	
	BA3 I can easily remember the destinations of Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu.	
	BA4 I like the facilities and views offered by the destinations of Tumpeng Ayu and Tumpeng Menoreh.	
	<i>Purchase:</i>	
	BA5 I am willing to spend money to visit the destinations of Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu.	
	BA6 I prefer to visit the destinations of Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu compared to other similar destinations.	
	<i>Consumption:</i>	
	BA7 Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu always come to mind when I want to visit tourist	

		destinations.	
	BA8	Tumpeng Ayu and Tumpeng Menoreh are brands that I remember when I want to visit a tourist destination to unwind.	
Customer Brand Engagement	CBE1	I enjoy visiting the tourist destinations of Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu.	[51]
	CBE2	I had an interesting experience when visiting Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu.	
	CBE3	I had a satisfying experience when visiting Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu.	
	CBE4	I have an experience with these destinations that fosters a sense of belonging among customers.	
	CBE5	I have a continuous (not just a one-time) experience with Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu.	
Overall Brand Equity	OBE1	I often think about the destinations of Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu in various situations or contexts.	[52]
	OBE2	Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu fulfill my experiential needs.	
	OBE3	I trust the information conveyed by influencer Erix Soekamti about these destinationsTumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu depict the actual conditions.	
	OBE4	Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu offer different views and facilities compared to other destinations, making them easily memorable.	
	OBE5	Tumpeng Ayu and Tumpeng Menoreh are highly suitable choices for a visit due to their excellent photo spots.	
	OBE6	I had a good experience after visiting the destinations of Tumpeng Menoreh and Tumpeng Ayu.	