

ABSTRACT

Technological advancements in the digital era have created new dynamics in an increasingly competitive business landscape. The ever-changing business environment compels companies to adapt and design marketing efforts capable of effectively handling competitive pressures. One commonly adopted strategy today is the use of social media as a means to reach and build relationships with consumers. Therefore, this study aims to explore in depth the role of social media in driving purchase decisions, taking into account the mediating roles of customer engagement and self-congruity, with a focus on users of the Traveloka application in Semarang City.

The research model is developed based on the relationship between four main variables: social media marketing, customer engagement, self-congruity, and purchase decisions, using Self Congruence Theory (SCT) as the foundational theory to explain how consumers perceptions of a brand image that aligns with their self-image can influence purchasing behavior, particularly in the context of digital interactions. Data collection was conducted using purposive sampling with specific criteria, namely respondents who are active users of the Traveloka application and reside in Semarang. A total of 173 respondents were deemed sufficient for analysis using the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) method, as it can test complex causal relationships among variables and provide accurate parameter estimates using AMOS version 24 software.

The results of the study show that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer engagement, and customer engagement positively and significantly influences both self-congruity and purchase decisions, in line with previous studies. However, self-congruity has a negative effect on purchase decisions, which contrasts with prior research findings and may be due to low brand identity awareness or a mismatch between consumers' self-perception and the Traveloka brand.

Keywords: Social media marketing, customer engagement, self-congruity, purchase decision, travel application products/services.