



Driving Brand Engagement: Exploring Brand Touchpoints and Self-Congruity in Local Furniture Retail

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Abstract—This study investigates the relationships between brand touchpoints, self-congruity, and brand engagement in Indonesia's local furniture market. A quantitative approach focused on customer touchpoints and self-congruity as independent variables, with brand engagement as the dependent variable. The sample comprised 100 respondents who had made multiple purchases from various furniture stores, both online and offline, located in the Greater Jakarta area. Data collection involved questionnaires utilizing a Likert scale to measure relevant indicators. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used for data analysis, specifically confirmatory SEM and SmartPLS as tools to assess causal relationships among the variables. The study's results present significant relationships between customer touchpoints and self-congruity with brand engagement. The path coefficients show that customer touchpoint has a positive and significant impact on brand engagement, with a t-statistic value of 4.694, more than 1.96 (P-value lower than 0.05). Then, self-congruity has a positive and significant impact on brand engagement, with a t-statistic value of 3.737, more than 1.96 (P-value lower than 0.05). Effective customer touchpoints enhanced customer engagement significantly, while self-congruity contributed to a deeper emotional connection between customers and brands. The findings suggest that consumers are likelier to engage with brands that reflect their personal styles and identities, fostering loyalty and commitment. This research highlights the importance of creating meaningful brand interactions and aligning brand messaging with consumer identities to enhance engagement within brand touchpoints.

Keywords: Customer Touchpoint; Self-Congruity; Brand Engagement; Local Product; Furniture

1. INTRODUCTION

The growth of local furniture retail in Indonesia has been remarkable in recent years, driven by increasing consumer demand for personalized, high-quality, and locally made products. In 2020, The World Bank Group recorded that 56.3% of the population in Indonesia lived in urban settlements. The growing urbanization in Indonesia is boosting the growth of residential and commercial buildings. People residing in residential buildings are increasingly focusing on buying innovative and trendy furniture to enhance the aesthetics of their houses.

The trend of furniture gross domestic product (GDP) fluctuates from year to year. In 2018, the GDP contribution reached 1.36 percent, then strengthened to 1.41 percent in 2019, and decreased slightly in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic to 1.40 percent. However, it then increased to 1.43 percent in 2021. In the Opening Ceremony of the International Furniture Expo (IFEX), the Director General of Small, Medium, and Miscellaneous Industries (IKMA) at the Ministry of Industry, the furniture industry is targeted to increase further in 2024. The increase in the furniture industry can occur due to several factors. The first factor is the availability of abundant raw materials in Indonesia. The second factor is the support of the policy prohibiting the export of raw materials of wood and rattan; the third factor is the increasingly diverse technology of engineered wood and alternative wood, as well as the supply chain system of raw materials and the availability of adequate labor.

The success of the furniture industry is also supported by export activities. In the Furniture Industry Gathering IFFINA 2024, the Minister of Cooperatives and SMEs of the Republic of Indonesia stated that over the past five years (2018-2022), there has been a fairly consistent increase in furniture product exports, with the export value in 2022 reaching 2.9 billion US dollars or around Rp46.4 trillion. The United States is the largest export destination market for Indonesian furniture products. In 2021, the portion of Indonesian furniture exports to the United States reached 60 percent of Indonesia's total furniture. Followed by exports to Japan at 6.1 percent, the Netherlands at 4.34 percent, and Germany at 3.35 percent.

The rising demand for furniture in Indonesia is driven by the recovery of tourism and hospitality sectors, alongside the increasing income levels that boost housing demand. As a result, the demand for furniture products is expected to grow annually. In response to this trend, the number of furniture businesses in Indonesia is expanding, including both local and international brands like IKEA. Local manufacturers must compete in both quantity and quality to address market demands effectively.

Branding is key in this developing market since it helps to build an emotional relationship between the consumer and the brand. Branding is increasingly about having a purpose beyond profit, as consumers, especially the younger purpose-driven generation, expect brands to address societal needs and make a positive impact. This shift encourages brands to create meaningful emotional connections and engage stakeholders, enhancing their competitive edge and influencing consumer behavior (Fernandes et al., 2024). Branding is a competitive advantage that influences how consumers perceive the quality of products or services. Historically, branding is focused on consumer markets, identifying critical components of brand equity such as brand awareness, loyalty, perceived value, and brand associations (Lin et al.,

2019). In the case of local furniture brands, brand engagement is critical in repositioning and retaining customers against the threats posed by foreign market players and competing in the global market.

Consumers are no longer passive recipients of brand messages. Instead, they actively interact with brands, playing a role in creating and consuming valuable products. However, some experts define it as customer involvement in various brand activities, while others see it as a company's efforts to connect with consumers (Obilo et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Kumar (2020) defined brand engagement as the positive thoughts, emotions, and behaviors customers experience during interactions with a brand.

A strong emotional attachment between consumers and brands is essential amid these dynamics. Verma (2021) stated that engagement reflects motivation, resulting from an individual's interactive experiences with a focal object, and increases brand awareness. The high level of engagement reflects a deeper emotional connection that will induce customer willingness to develop and sustain a relationship. Cheung et al., (2021) define brand engagement as the level of a customer's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions. For instance, cognitive engagement indicates consumers' focus and attention on the primary brand, emotional engagement signifies consumers' fondness and enthusiasm, and behavioral engagement indicates consumers' intent to remain loyal to the brand. In the end, engaged consumers have been shown to buy more from a brand than unengaged consumers, and engaged consumers advocate more for the brand, thus leading to more brand patronage (Obilo et al., 2021). Ultimately, brand engagement reflects the positive emotions and behaviors customers experience during their interactions with a brand.

A robust marketing strategy should prioritize enhancing positive interactions between brands and consumers across diverse physical or digital touchpoints. This strategic focus enables businesses to strengthen brand engagement, extend customer relationships, and cultivate enduring loyalty in the highly competitive contemporary market. Brand touchpoints are one of the most important signs of keeping the brand promise and identity that the customer touches and based on that, recognizes the brand identity and personality (Mansourimoayyed et al., 2020). Touchpoints are interactions between a customer and a brand, initiated by the customer (e.g., through search engines, websites, or social media). They are essential parts of the customer journey. According to Sahara & Windasari (2022). There are different types of touchpoints, including functional (i.e. websites and emails), social (i.e. social media), and community (i.e. online forums). The many different of brand touchpoints enable brands to better communicate and interact with consumers, achieve brand value transmission, and enhance brand awareness, possessing significant marketing significance (Lan, 2024). Brand touchpoints are crucial interactions between a brand and its customers that help reinforce the brand's identity. The consistently nurturing these interactions, brands can adapt and thrive amidst evolving consumer preferences and market dynamics, ensuring long-term success and resilience.

Creating positive brand experiences and reinforcing the emotional connection between the brand and its consumers is important to develop brand engagement. Positive brand experiences can reinforce self-congruity, while negative experiences can weaken it. Understanding this relationship helps marketers target the right target market, develop strong brand personalities, and create positive brand experiences. Self-congruity refers to the alignment or match between a consumer's real self and a brand's personality. When consumers perceive a brand's personality to be similar, they are likelier to develop a strong emotional connection or attachment to that brand. This concept is rooted in the idea that humans naturally desire self-actualization, meaning they are motivated to develop their abilities and maintain a positive self-image. As a result, consumers are more inclined to purchase products that align with their identity and values (Lee et al., 2020). Consumers aim for consistency between their beliefs and behaviors, which manifests as self-congruity with brands. They hold beliefs about themselves (their self-concept) and act accordingly, identifying and forming attachments with brands that align with their self-concept (Rabbane et al., 2020). When consumers feel a connection between their own identity and a brand's image, they are more likely to trust the brand and believe it will provide value. This positive emotional attachment can influence their loyalty and intentions towards the brand. The impact of social media interactions on brand reliability and customer intentions may vary depending on how well the brand's image aligns with the customer's self-image (Sung & Lee, 2023).

While previous research highlights the importance of brand engagement, brand touchpoint, and self-congruity in brand engagement, limited studies have explored how these factors interact specifically in the local furniture retail sector. Existing literature, such as Cheung et al., (2021) and Verma (2021), emphasizes brand engagement and touchpoints but lacks focus on how self-congruity influences consumer loyalty in niche markets like local furniture. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the relation of brand touchpoints, self-congruity, and brand engagement within the context of Indonesia's growing local furniture market.

Brand touchpoints refer to any interaction between a brand and its customers across various channels, such as advertisements, social media, customer service, packaging, and in-store experiences. These touchpoints shape customer perceptions and play a significant role in fostering brand engagement. Brand engagement is defined as a customer's emotional and psychological connection with a brand, resulting in their active involvement, whether through consumption, advocacy, or interaction. Numerous studies have examined the impact of brand touchpoints on brand engagement, illustrating that well-crafted touchpoints can enhance customer experience, satisfaction, and loyalty.

Consumers today interact with brands through myriad touchpoints, and improving the customer experience throughout the stages of customer journey (Demmers et al., 2020). Brand touchpoints form the customer journey, and each touchpoint contributes to building or deteriorating the brand relationship. Positive and consistent touchpoints are crucial in creating a favorable brand experience, which fosters higher engagement levels. These touchpoints represent specific interactions or moments where customers engage with the brand, influencing cognitive, emotional, behavioral,

sensorial, and social responses. They argue that touchpoints which deliver value and align with customer expectations, and build trust are more likely to drive deeper engagement.

The research of Towers & Towers (2022), categorizes touchpoints based on various stages of the consumer decision-making process, such as awareness, consideration, purchase, and post-purchase. The findings indicate that touchpoints serve as critical interaction points where consumers form perceptions, develop trust, and build emotional connections with a brand. Effective touchpoint management at each stage is essential for fostering brand engagement, as each interaction can either strengthen or weaken the customer's relationship with the brand. The study emphasizes that strategically planned touchpoints enhance customer experience and increase the likelihood of positive brand engagement throughout the entire journey.

In the service industry, it maps out various customer touchpoints across the customer journey, such as website interactions, customer service calls, and in-person consultations, to understand how these points of contact influence customer satisfaction and loyalty. The findings suggest that well-managed touchpoints are crucial for effective CRM, as each interaction can enhance or detract from the customer experience. By identifying and optimizing these touchpoints, the company can strengthen customer engagement, build trust, and foster long-term relationships, ultimately driving customer retention and brand loyalty (Kumar et al., 2024). Similarly, in the fashion industry, it finds that as customer expectations and digital trends evolve, fashion brands increasingly focus on creating personalized and immersive experiences across all touchpoints. The various touchpoints, such as social media, in-store experiences, and online interactions, to understand how these channels influence customer perception and loyalty (Bhalla et al., 2024).

Self-congruity refers to the alignment between a customer's self-concept and the perceived personality or image of a brand. Consumers tend to prefer brands that reflect their self-image or the ideal image they aspire to achieve. This psychological match between a brand and the self-concept significantly impacts brand engagement, leading to higher customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy.

Consumers tend to favor brands with personalities that mirror their self-concept, which creates a positive self-brand connection, enhancing engagement and loyalty. Self-congruity is essential in fostering strong customer engagement brands. Self-congruity leads to a sense of psychological ownership, where customers feel a personal attachment or ownership of the brand. This feeling of ownership strengthens engagement by making the brand part of the customer's identity. By enhancing psychological ownership, brands can build deeper emotional connections with customers, leading to higher engagement (Bhattacharjee et al., 2023). Furthermore, self-congruity positively impacts customer engagement, which subsequently fosters customer advocacy. The findings suggest that maintaining an image that resonates with customers' self-perceptions can strengthen customer relationships and encourage advocacy behaviors (Teng et al., 2024). When customers perceive the brand as reflecting their personal identity, they are more likely to develop a strong affective commitment (Saxena et al., 2023).

Brands perceived as supportive of the consumer's self-concept foster not only loyalty but also a sense of brand attachment and emotional investment. When consumers see brands as reflective of their actual or idealized self-image, this connection often drives positive brand attitudes and encourages ongoing engagement, where the brand essentially becomes an extension of the consumer's self-concept in social or personal contexts. Self-congruity, the alignment between a consumer's self-concept and a brand's perceived personality, plays a significant role in shaping brand engagement by fostering emotional bonds and a sense of identity reflection. This alignment strengthens customer loyalty, satisfaction, and advocacy, as consumers view the brand as an extension of their own self-image, leading to deeper and more sustained engagement (Changani & Kumar, 2024).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study aims to explore the relationship between customer touchpoint and self-congruity on brand engagement of local furniture products in Indonesia. A quantitative approach is employed to test the relationships among the variables. The independent variables are represented by customer touchpoint and self-congruity, while the dependent variable is represented by brand engagement.

The sample size is determined using the Lemeshow formula where the z-score for a 95% confidence level, the p-score represents the maximum estimation at 0.5, and the d-score indicates the alpha or sampling error at 10%. Based on this formula, a sample size of 96 is obtained, which is rounded up to 100 samples. The sample consists of 100 respondent who have made purchases of products more than once at furniture stores (both online and offline): Fabelio, Rupa-rupa (ACE, Informa), Dekoruma, Nagaray, Vivere; respondents reside in the Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to respondents who met the specified criteria. The questionnaire includes indicator statements measured on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, indicating a range from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The data is analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM methodology is a statistical technique used in data analysis to examine cause-and-effect correlations between variables in model. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is defined as a variance-based approach within SEM that is more flexible regarding data distribution and sample size requirements. PLS-SEM is particularly suited for exploratory research and theory development, as it emphasizes the prediction of endogenous (dependent) variables (Dash & Paul, 2021). Confirmatory analysis is the kind of SEM used, which tests previously proposed theoretical models based on specific hypotheses about

the causal relationships between variables. This study has a well-defined hypothesis and aims to evaluate the alignment between the theoretical model and the data collected.

SmartPLS provides a range of statistics to evaluate model fit. PLS represents a causal-predictive approach to SEM, focusing on prediction when estimating models structured to provide causal explanations. Measurement model validation is another use for PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2021). Bootstrap, a technique for determining confidence intervals for path coefficients and evaluating statistical significance. PLS is a more adaptable technique that can handle small sample numbers and deviations from the normality assumptions. The use of valid and reliable measurement instruments is crucial to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Additionally, control mechanisms are put in place to reduce bias and ensure reliable research findings.

Table 1. Research Construct

Variable	Indicators	Operationalization	Code
Customer Touchpoints	Company-created touchpoints	The store has advertisements (through TV, online, magazines, banners) related to the products offered.	Q1
		The store has a website for searching information about the products offered.	Q2
		The store has a physical building (in-store) that makes it easy for me to shop.	Q3
		The store has an online site (online store) that makes it easy for me to shop.	Q4
	Intrinsic touchpoints	The store (offline/online) provides various information I need when shopping.	Q5
		The store has a wide range of product categories that attract me to shop.	Q6
	Unexpected touchpoints	I receive recommendations or reviews from my family or friends about the store's products.	Q7
		I receive recommendations or reviews from celebrities or influencers about the store's products.	Q8
		I receive reviews or testimonials from other people (unknown) about the store's products (through comments on social media or e-commerce platforms).	Q9
Self-congruity	Actual Self	The design or model of the product reflects the style I like.	Q10
		The material used in the product reflects my self-image in choosing product quality.	Q11
		The color of the product reflects my personal taste.	Q12
	Ideal Self	The products offered can meet my needs to create my ideal home design.	Q13
		The products offered can fulfill my desire to inspire others with home decoration ideas.	Q14
	Social Self	The products offered can fulfill my needs to showcase my social status.	Q15
Brand Engagement	Cognition	I always think about products from that store when I want to buy furniture.	Q17
		Purchasing products from that store inspires me to explore more about the store.	Q18
	Affective	I feel proud when using products from that store.	Q19
		Shopping at that store makes me feel happy.	Q20
Activation	I spend more time shopping at that store compared to other stores.	Q21	

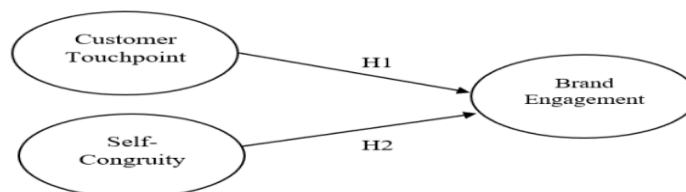


Figure 1. Hypothesis Model

- H1 : Customer Touchpoints has significant and positive relationship on brand engagement.
- H2 : Self-congruity has significant and positive relationship on brand engagement.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted by distributing questionnaire to the respondent. Based on data collected, it revealed respondent identity is described in table 2. The top five furniture retail stores identified as Dekoruma, Rupa-rupa (ACE & Informa), Fabelio, Nagarey, and Vivere indicate a competitive landscape where brands must continually innovate to attract customers. The demographic profile reveals a predominant female customer base (65.5%) and a majority of respondents aged between 26 to 35 years (58.1%), highlighting the target market for furniture retailers. Geographically, a significant portion of respondents resides in Tangerang (29%) and DKI Jakarta (25.8%), suggesting these areas are critical for market penetration. Moreover, with an average monthly income of IDR 5-15 million (54.8%), the pricing strategies should be tailored to accommodate this income bracket. The preference for shopping channels is notably diverse, with 38.7% opting for online platforms, indicating a growing trend towards digital shopping, while 35.3% still prefer offline experiences. Notably, a majority of respondents (45.2%) spend more than three hours shopping, which indicates a strong engagement with the shopping process. Furthermore, the data reveals a clear preference for bedroom products (71%), followed by toilets (35.5%) and living rooms (32.3%), guiding retailers in prioritizing inventory and marketing efforts.

Table 2. Respondent Description

Description	Result
Top 5 furniture retail store in Indonesia	Dekoruma Rupa-rupa (ACE & Informa) Fabelio Nagarey Vivere
Gender	65.5% Female 35.5% Male
Age	58.1% 26-35 years old 25.8% 19-25 years old 22.6% 36-45 years old
Domisili	29% Tangerang 25.8% DKI Jakarta 16.1% Depok 16.1% Bogor 12.9% Bekasi
Average of income per month	54.8% IDR 5-15 mio 45.2% < IDR 5 mio
Shopping media	38.7% Online (website, app, social media) 35.3% Offline 25.8% Both
Average of shopping time	45.2% > 3 hours 38.7% 2-3 hours 16.1% < 1 hours
Product most wanted	71% Bedroom 35.5% Toilet 32.3% Living room 32.3% Kitchen 29% Dining room 29% Teracce & garden

3.1 Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test is considered practically significant if the loading factors have values greater than 0.5. Based on the statistical test, all the indicators are valid to reflect the variable. Cronbach's alpha values over 0.7 are generally considered reliable. The criteria value for the suitability of composite reliability is greater than 0.70. AVE is more than 0.5, convergent validity is satisfactory (Kamranfar et al., 2023). The results of the reliability test, all indicators are deemed reliable for forming a construct variable.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test

Construct	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Customer Touchpoints	Q1	0.830	0.026	0.832	0.933	0.935	0.653
	Q2	0.786	0.032	0.788			
	Q3	0.836	0.020	0.836			

Construct	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Self-congruity	Q4	0.747	0.039	0.750	0.933	0.935	0.607
	Q5	0.860	0.022	0.862			
	Q6	0.826	0.027	0.828			
	Q7	0.817	0.020	0.818			
	Q8	0.698	0.038	0.701			
	Q9	0.843	0.024	0.846			
	Q10	0.812	0.021	0.813			
	Q11	0.739	0.031	0.741			
	Q12	0.747	0.033	0.750			
	Q13	0.766	0.027	0.767			
Brand Engagement	Q14	0.783	0.031	0.786	0.862	0.864	0.646
	Q15	0.796	0.023	0.797			
	Q16	0.791	0.033	0.795			
	Q17	0.760	0.032	0.763			
	Q18	0.800	0.023	0.800			
	Q19	0.826	0.025	0.827			
	Q20	0.757	0.033	0.759			
	Q21	0.864	0.020	0.865			

3.2 R-square and Hypothesis Testing

The results of the research, analysed using Smart PLS, indicate an R-squared value of 0.944. This means that 94.4% of the variance in the dependent variable (brand engagement) can be explained by the independent variables (customer touchpoint and self-congruity). An R-squared value this high suggests a very strong relationship between these variables, indicating that the model effectively captures the dynamics influencing brand engagement. In other words, customer touchpoints and self-congruity significantly contribute to how consumers engage with the brand. This high explanatory power underscores the importance of both customer interactions and personal alignment with the brand in fostering deeper brand engagement among consumers.

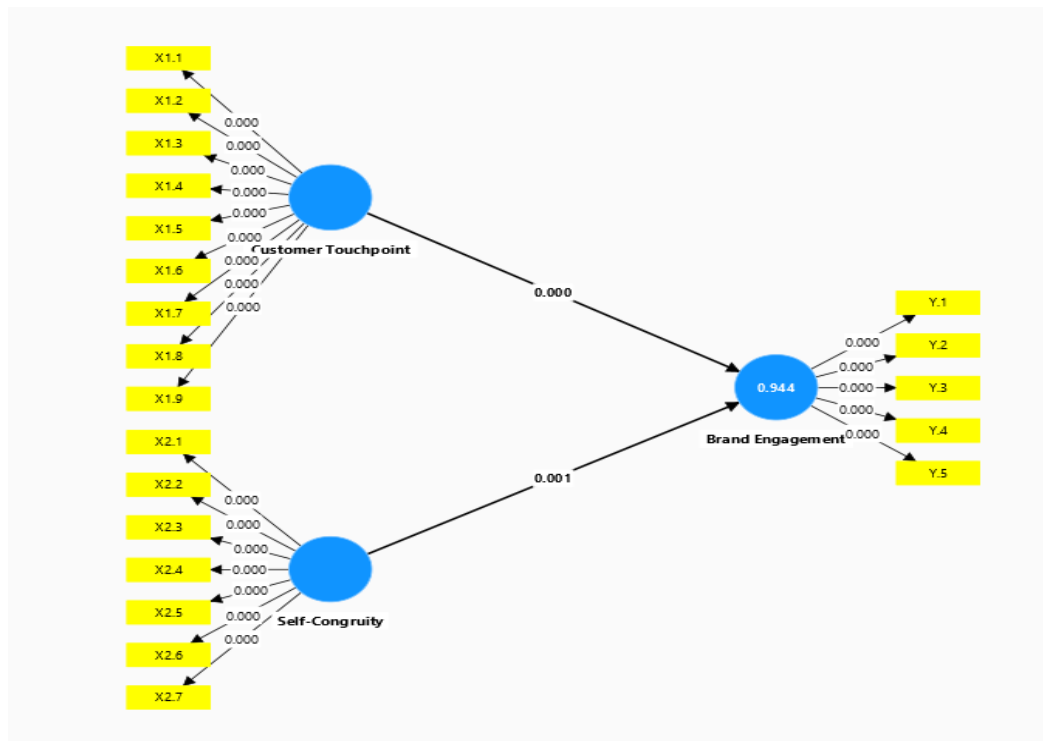


Figure 2. SmartPLS Bootstrapping Result

Hypothesis testing was conducted through the examination of the inner model, which aimed to measure the relationships between latent variables. A relationship between variables is deemed significant if the T-Statistic value exceeds 1.96 with a P-Value less than 0.05 (alpha level of 5%). The results of the path coefficients are presented in Table 4 present that customer touchpoint has positive and significant impact on brand engagement, it can be seen t-statistic value 4.694 more than 1.96 (P-Value lower than 0.05). Then, self-congruity has positive and significant impact on brand engagement, it can be seen t-statistic value 3.737 more than 1.96 (P-Value lower than 0.05).

Table 4. Test of Hypothesis

Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
Customer Touchpoints → Brand Engagement	4.694	0.000	Accepted
Self-congruity → Brand Engagement	3.377	0.001	Accepted

3.2 Discussion

Based on the analysis conducted through statistical testing using SmartPLS, the results indicate that all independent variables significantly influence the dependent variable. This research focused on the relationships among customer touchpoints, self-congruity, and brand engagement, revealing critical insights into how these factors interact within the retail environment.

The findings demonstrate that customer touchpoints have a substantial impact on brand engagement, as evidenced by the importance of providing relevant information during shopping experiences. When stores, whether online or offline, offer various information that customers need, it not only enhances their shopping experience but also fosters a deeper emotional connection with the brand. This interaction empowers customers, making them feel valued, which ultimately contributes to higher levels of brand engagement. Key indicators contributing to this impact include the availability of store advertisements across multiple channels (i.e TV, online, magazines, and banners), which capture customer attention and reinforce brand familiarity and recall. Additionally, having a dedicated website and online store offers a convenient platform for customers to search for product information and make purchases. The physical store itself serves as a critical touchpoint, providing the option for an in-person shopping experience that builds tangible connections with the brand. A wide variety of product categories encourages customers to explore and select items that match their unique tastes, strengthening brand interest. Social proof, through recommendations and reviews from family, friends, celebrities, or even unknown people on social media and e-commerce platforms, further enhances brand engagement. Together, these touchpoints enhance brand accessibility, guide customer choices, and establish trust, deepening customers' emotional and psychological ties with the brand (Bhalla et al., 2024; Demmers et al., 2020; Jaakkola & Alexander, 2024; Y. Kumar et al., 2024; Towers & Towers, 2022).

Using data-driven insights, brands can further engage customers through tailored recommendations and personalized shopping experiences, making customers feel recognized and understood. Personalized product suggestions via the website, app, or email marketing could boost engagement, while immersive in-store experiences, like room setup simulations or furniture customization options, make store visits memorable. Staff trained to offer consultations based on individual style preferences can also enrich the shopping experience. Showcasing customer stories and testimonials creates a sense of community and trust, highlighting real-life product applications. ACE, Informa, and Dekoruma have already established strong touchpoints with an omnichannel approach that integrates online platforms with physical stores, social media, and influencer partnerships, providing a flexible, credible, and engaging brand experience in Indonesia's furniture market.

Similarly, the analysis reveals that self-congruity plays a vital role in influencing brand engagement. Customers are more likely to engage with brands whose product designs reflect their personal style. This alignment between a brand's image and the consumer's self-concept creates a psychological bond, enhancing their emotional investment in the brand. When consumers perceive the brand's products as an extension of their identity, it cultivates a sense of belonging and loyalty, prompting deeper interaction with the brand (Bhattacharjee et al., 2023; Changani & Kumar, 2024; Saxena et al., 2023; Teng et al., 2024).

The study found that customers exhibit a heightened level of brand engagement when the design or model of a product reflects their personal style. Respondents reported that products resonating with their individual tastes encourage them to invest more emotionally in the brand. When a furniture piece's design aligns with a customer's aesthetic preferences, it reinforces their self-identity, leading to a stronger emotional connection. Furthermore, the material quality of the products emerged as a crucial factor; respondents noted that high-quality materials reflect their self-image and signify their commitment to quality. This suggests that brands should prioritize high-quality materials in their offerings, as this can enhance consumer trust and satisfaction. Additionally, the color choices of products play a significant role. When consumers perceive colors that match their personal preferences, it further deepens their connection to the brand, making them more likely to engage and interact with it.

The findings also reveal that consumers are more likely to engage with brands that offer products fulfilling their aspirations for an ideal home design. Participants expressed a strong desire for products that meet their functional needs and align with their vision of a perfect living space. This ideal self-congruence fosters a sense of belonging and emotional investment, as consumers see the brand as a facilitator in creating their dream environment. Moreover, the potential for the offered products to inspire others in home decoration emerged as a significant factor; when customers believe they can impress or inspire their social circles through their purchases, their emotional commitment to the brand intensifies. This illustrates the importance of brands curating collections that resonate with aspirational lifestyles, encouraging customers to envision their ideal living spaces through their products.

The research highlights the critical impact of social self-congruity on brand engagement. Consumers indicated that products' ability to fulfill their social status needs is a significant motivator for engagement. Customers who perceive that a brand's offerings can enhance their social standing are more inclined to invest emotionally in those brands. Additionally, products that draw attention from others play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions of social identity. The study

reveals that when customers feel their purchases attract positive attention, they experience a stronger emotional connection to the brand. This connection fosters loyalty and long-term engagement, as consumers desire to showcase products that reflect their social aspirations.

In enhancing brand engagement for a furniture store, several strategies can be implemented across three key factors: cognition, affective, and activation. Cognition can be bolstered through targeted awareness campaigns highlighting products' unique qualities, complemented by educational content informing customers about features and benefits. Moving to the affective aspect, sharing customer testimonials fosters emotional connections and pride in ownership. Additionally, visually appealing marketing materials can evoke positive feelings, while customer appreciation initiatives, such as loyalty programs and personalized, enhance the overall emotional experience associated with the brand. Lastly, creating an engaging in-store atmosphere is essential for activation, encouraging customers to spend more time exploring. Implementing gamification elements on the website or app can incentivize deeper engagement, while personalized shopping assistance helps customers find products that resonate with their tastes and needs. Collectively, these strategies will cultivate a deeper emotional and psychological connection with the brand, fostering loyalty and further engagement.

This research establishes a clear relationship between customer touchpoints, self-congruity, and brand engagement. The significant influence of touchpoints on brand engagement underscores the necessity for brands to optimize their marketing strategies across various channels. By enhancing touchpoints, such as advertisements, online presence, physical stores, and social proof, brands can create a more engaging and familiar shopping experience for customers. This study aligns with Jaakkola & Alexander (2024), that touchpoints are a crucial part of the customer journey and play a key role in creating brand engagement. Touchpoints serve as moments of interaction between customers and the brand, influencing customer perceptions, emotions, and decisions. Each interaction at a touchpoint allows the brand to build closer relationships with customers, enhance satisfaction, and strengthen their engagement with the brand.

Additionally, brands should focus on aligning their product offerings with customers' self-concepts, ensuring that the design, quality, and aesthetics resonate with their actual and ideal selves. This alignment fosters a sense of belonging and encourages emotional investment in the brand, ultimately leading to increased loyalty and deeper customer interactions. Therefore, brands should implement a holistic approach that integrates effective touchpoints and self-congruity into their engagement strategies to strengthen their connections with customers in the competitive furniture market. The results of this study support previous research conducted by Bhattacharjee et al., (2023)

4. CONCLUSION

In summary, this study has successfully demonstrated the significant relationships between customer touchpoints, self-congruity, and brand engagement. The findings indicate that effective customer touchpoints significantly enhance customer engagement. Additionally, self-congruity contributes to this engagement. Customers are more likely to invest time and energy in brands that reflect their personal style and identity, leading to stronger emotional connections and increased loyalty. Overall, the research underscores the importance of creating meaningful interactions and aligning brand messaging with consumer identities to foster deeper engagement and commitment. Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, there are certain limitations that must be acknowledged. The research sample may not be fully representative of the entire consumer population, this limitation might affect the generalizability of the findings. The dynamic nature of consumer preferences and market trends may lead to changes in the relevance of touchpoints and self-congruity over time, meaning that the findings may not remain applicable in the long run. Based on the findings and limitations identified in this study, several recommendations can be made for brands aiming to enhance customer engagement. First, brands should prioritize the optimization of their customer touchpoints by ensuring that they provide clear and relevant information across all platforms, both online and offline. This could involve training staff to be knowledgeable and responsive in-store and enhancing digital content to address customer inquiries effectively. Second, brands should strive to understand and reflect their target audience's self-concept through personalized marketing strategies and product designs. Engaging in market research to gather insights into consumer preferences can help brands tailor their offerings to better align with their customers' identities. Finally, brands should continuously monitor and adapt their strategies to stay attuned to evolving consumer behaviors and preferences. For future research, expanding the research sample to cover a broader demographic range could help improve the representativeness and generalizability of the findings to the larger consumer population. Considering the evolving nature of consumer preferences and market trends, longitudinal studies would be valuable in capturing how the relevance of touchpoints and self-congruity shifts over time. Future studies could also investigate specific industry sectors to explore how different types of brands might vary in their approach to optimizing touchpoints and aligning with customer self-concept.

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