Engaging Customers on Twitter: The Role of Brand Identification and Brand Love

Chonlada Sajjanit

Lecturer

Kasetsart University

*Abstract***:** The objective of the study is to examine the influence of brand identification and brand love on customer engagement with specific brands on Twitter. To test research hypotheses, the study conducted a quantitative survey of 300 Twitter users in Thailand. Based on structural equation modeling analysis, the findings indicated that the major indicator of customer engagement in a social media site (Twitter) context is brand identification. It positively impacted brand love and customer engagement on Twitter. In addition, it was found that brand love did not significantly influence customer engagement. However, brand love influenced customer engagement and its three dimensions (i.e. cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioral engagement) on the Twitter platform when brand identification was not included in the model.

Keywords – **Brand identification, brand love, customer engagement, Twitter**

I. INTRODUCTION

Within the emerging Internet of Things (IoT) environment, consumers are increasingly active in virtual and interactive communication platforms including discussion forums, blogs, online community, boards, chat rooms, newsgroups, email, Web pages, and social networking sites (SNSs) (Brodi, Illic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013). In particular, SNSs or social media sites have transformed customer behavior beyond purchase and financial transactions (Ajiboye, Harvey, & Resnick, 2019). Non-transactional customer behavior (Busalim, Hussin, & Iahad, 2019) or interactions with brands include posting, commenting, sharing and liking (Van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nas, Pick, Pirner, & Berhoef, 2010) and these have positive and/or negative consequences for firms, products and brands (Ajiboye et al., 2019). Recent studies even suggested that consumer interactions with brands have a greater impact on individuals' decisions compared with traditional forms of communication, especially company advertising (Ajiboye et al., 2019; Azar, Machado, Vacas-de-Carvalho, & Mendes, 2016; Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). These forms of interactive consumer experiences and contributions lead to the development of customer engagement with specific brands (Brodi et al., 2013).

Customer engagement has become one of marketing research priorities in recent decades (Busalim et al., 2019) that aims to study the customer's behavior toward the interactions with brands (Vivek, Beatty, Dalela, & Morgan, 2014). It relies on the consumer experiences interacting with the brand, including possible customers (i.e., consumers who are not yet in the decision making process), potential customers or prospects (i.e., customers who consider and are likely to buy), or current customers (i.e., consumers who already bought) (Vivek et al., 2012). Customer engagement is considered to be one of the strategic competitive advantage for firms, as it relates to organizational performance (Brodie et al., 2013; Sarkar & Sreejesh 2014). Recent systematic review research indicated that the outcomes of customer engagement include product improvement, customer satisfaction, loyalty, commitment, trust, purchase intention, positive attitude towards brand, customer-brand relationship, and many forms of brand advocacy (Islam & Rahman, 2016b; Munjal, Mishra, & Shanker, 2019). Engaged customers play a major role in providing referrals for specific brands to other possible and potential consumers (Ajiboye et al. 2019). Consequently, it impacts sales growth, firm's profitability (Sarkar & Sreejesh 2014) and overall financial performance (Islam & Rahman, 2016b). For these reasons, customer engagement is strongly desired by firms.

Accordingly, firms encourage customer engagement and contributions by providing processes and online platforms to support specific customer expressions (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Social media is one of key communication channels for firms as a firm or a brand's actions on SNSs enables them to improve their image, and participate in the online discussion regarding their products and

activities (Statista, 2019). According to a survey of marketer worldwide on January, 2019, using social media benefits brands in that it enhances exposure, traffic, and lead generation respectively (Statista, 2019). These new media (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter) provide opportunities for firms to connect with customers and for customers to interact with each other (Sashi, Brynildsen, & Bilgihan, 2019).

This study focuses on exploring customer engagement on Twitter as Twitter is one of the three most popular social media worldwide (Sashi et al., 2019) and one of the fastest-growing platforms in Thailand and Southeast Asia (MarketingOops, 2018; Wiboonyasake, 2020). Twitter is a real-time micro-blogging service that users can type text messages up to 280 characters and post images, videos, and links. Twitter users can create their own tweets with or without some hashtags or share (retweet and/or quote) or react (mention and/or like) to information, news, thoughts, and stories that have been tweeted by others. According to Arvinder Gujral, Managing Director of Twitter in South-East Asia, Thailand is a key market for Twitter in Southeast Asia (Tech2thai.com, 2019). The number of Twitter active users in Thailand reaches 6.55 million in 2020, with regard to the Digital 2020 report (Kemp, 2020). Most Twitter audiences in Thailand are female (78.1%) and between 16-24 years of age (40.0%) (Wiboonyasake, 2020).

To take advantage of this real-time social tool, firms can use Twitter for customer referral or word of mouth communication as it influences consumer interactions and communication among consumers (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010; Sashi et al., 2019). Twitter can reach a wide audience who are interested in a particular topic via the hashtag and allows two-way communication with customers (nibusinessinfo.co.uk, 2021). Being on Twitter, firms can post promoted tweets and Twitter trends using the hashtag. Tweetdeck, a tool for real-time tracking and management on one dashboard, can be used to manage and monitor brands' tweets (Iqbal, 2021). According to Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003, Twitter showed twice as much as other social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram) to enhance customer engagement with a brand via affirmative feelings. It is important to note that tweeting about brands of Thai users increased by 124% and the number of total branded retweets increased by 101% from 2016 to 2017 (Leesa-Nguansuk, 2018). As such, many Thai brands try to engage their customers, build customer relationships, and create brand communities on Twitter. Leading brands on Twitter in Thailand (most tweeted about brand in 2020) include AIS, Shopee Thailand, Netflixth, Apple, and Lazada Thailand (Twitter Thailand, 2020). Since having a thorough understanding of engaging customers by exploiting the growth of social media provides a competitive advantage to most brands, this study focuses on examining two important drivers of customer engagement i.e., brand identification and brand love on a particular platform, Twitter.

Brands are considered as a key driver of customer behavior and a facilitator of long-term relationships with customers (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Brands construct personal and social identities, develop individuals' self-concept, and achieve self-fulfillment (Beck, 1998; Popp & Woratschek, 2017). Meaningful and strong relationships are based on how consumers identify with the firms that assist them satisfy self-definitional needs (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Brand identification or self-categorization into a brand can cause consumers to engage in that brand's activities (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thoma, 2015) and sustain long-term relationships (Popp & Woratschek, 2017). Therefore, firms make the effort to increase levels of brand identification among their prospects and customers (Popp & Woratschek, 2017).

Fournier (1998) firstly proposed that love is one key component of consumer-brand relationships (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). Brand love, grounded on psychological literature on interpersonal love, has become an important topic in marketing research since the 2000s (Alnawas & Altarifi, 2015; Batra et al., 2012). Based on the consumer-brand relationship paradigm, consumers can express a feeling of love for their brand and that consumer's love toward a brand influences willingness to maintain a relationship with it (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Previous research indicated that brand love is considered as an important driver of customer's active engagement (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). However, within the social media site context, more empirical research of relational constructs in enhancing customer engagement is needed.

Accordingly, the research objective is to examine the influence of brand identification and brand love on customer engagement with specific brands on Twitter. The research question is how the role that brand identification and brand love play in customer engagement development within a particular social platform (Twitter) context.

II. Literature review

2.1 Customer Engagement

The concept of engagement has been explored in many disciplines including education, organizational behavior, management, sociology, and social psychology (Fehrer, Woratschek, Germelmann, & Brodie, 2018; Munjal et al., 2019, Vivek et al., 2012). Within the expanded relationship marketing domain (Brodie et al., 2013; Vivek et al., 2012), the term and concept of customer engagement emerged since 2005 as one of significant research streams in the marketing discipline (Islam & Rahman, 2016b). According to Morgan & Hunt (1994), relationship marketing involves developing, enhancing and maintaining customer-company relationships. Incorporated within the relationship marketing paradigm, customer engagement focuses on consumers' interaction and connections with the brand and with each other experiences (Vivek et al., 2012). From the psychological perspective, the customer engagement concept has been drawn

on the service dominant (S-D) logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008) describing that customer behavior is the outcomes of interactive and co-creative customer experiences with particular brands (Busalim et al., 2019). Consequently, the theoretical basis for customer engagement lies with the relationship marketing theory (Fournier, 1998) and the S-D logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008) in that customers are proactive contributors to brand interactions through ongoing exchanges and participation that enhance relationships between firm/brand and customer (Islam & Rahman, 2016b).

Although the terms related to customer engagement are diverse in its scope and conceptualizations (e.g. customer engagement, consumer engagement, customer brand engagement, consumer brand engagement, brand engagement, and brand community engagement) (Kosiba, Boateng, Amartey, Boakye, & Hinson, 2018; Islam & Rahman, 2016b; Munjal et al., 2019), this study adopts the term customer engagement as an all-embracing term. Notably, the term customer engagement has already been widely used in practice (Vivek et al., 2012). Islam and Rahman (2016b) defined customer engagement as the readiness of a customer to actively participate and interact with the focal object (e.g. brand, firm) which varies in direction and magnitude, subject to the nature of a customer's interaction with various touch-points between a focal object and customer. Focusing on the behavioral perspective, Van Doorn et al. (2010, p. 254) described the meaning of customer engagement as the customers' behavioral expression toward a brand or business organization, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers while Brodie et al. (2013) indicated that this relational concept has three dimensions involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral facets and that it plays an important role in the process of relational exchange.

In the context of social networking sites and social media, Munjal et al. (2019, p. 57) described customer engagement from business perspective as "creating and posting brand related content on social media websites making sense for the users and drawing their attention by allowing them to like, comment, review, post and share content across connections." Focusing on online consumer experience, Mollen and Wilson (2010, p. 923) defines customer engagement as "a cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value." Vivek, Beatty, Dalela, and Morgan (2014, p. 406) highlighted the concept of going beyond purchase and defined customer engagement as "the level of the customer's (or potential customer's) interactions and connections with the brand or firm's offerings or activities, often involving others in the social network created around the brand/offering/activity."

Following the theoretical roots within the broaden domain of relationship marketing and S-D logic, this study conceptualizes customer engagement as the relational construct, focusing on the notion of interactive consumer experiences, beyond purchase, with an organization's offerings and activities in a specific online context (Brodie et al., 2013; Mollen & Wilson, 2010; Munjal et al., 2019; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Vivek et al., 2014).

2.1.1 Dimensions of customer engagement

Based on the extant literature, customer engagement was viewed as a multi-dimensional concept including cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects (Brodie et al., 2013; Dwivedi, 2015; Hollebeek, 2011). Some studies added the social element into the construct (Baldus, Voorhees, & Calantone, 2015; Gambetti, Graffigna, & Biraghi, 2012). The cognitive dimension relies on the psychological state a customer has in a focal object (Kosiba et al., 2018). The emotional aspect or affection relates to the feelings a customer has for an object (Islam & Rahman, 2016b). The behavioral (participation) and social (interaction and sharing of one's content) dimensions denote the interactive aspect of customer engagement (Islam and Rahman, 2016b). Based on the main stream of customer engagement research, this study adopts three major dimensions of cognitive (the consumer's interest in the firm's activities on Twitter), emotional (the positive feelings about the firm's activities on Twitter), and behavioral (participation in the firm's activities on Twitter) aspects (Busalim et al., 2019). In this regard, dialogue, interaction and content sharing behavior under the social facet (Gambetti et al., 2012) is included in the behavioral dimension.

2.2 Brand Identification

Consumer-brand identification has been emerged from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), indicating that one's positive self-esteem is related to his or her individual identity and/or social identity, two key parts of self-concept (Alanwas & Altarifi, 2015). Accordingly, social identity is the "part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1981, p. 225). According to this theory, people categorize themselves into social groups that reflect their social identity. In other words, self-categorization into a social group denotes a self-definitional role (Alanwas & Altarifi, 2015). Consumer identification with a specific brand means that the consumer can distinguish the brand from other brands and it indicates his or her sense of belonging to a specific brand or a specific firm (Aziz & Ngah, 2019). From firm perspective, brand identification is defined as how the brand wants to be perceived and is connected to the firm's marketing activities (Kang & Sharma, 2012; Aziz & Ngah, 2019). Brand identification is viewed as the strength level of the customer-brand relationship through the customer's expression of personal identity (Popp & Woratschek, 2017). It is important to note that brand identification is considered as a key marketing success factor (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003).

2.3 Brand Love

Building on Sternberg's (1987) love theory, brand love is viewed as love relationship (Alnawas & Altarifi, 2015). Specifically, a consumer's love feelings to a brand are consistent with the love feelings in the interpersonal domain. In the psychology context, love is an affectionate bond between two parties that encourages them to sustain a loving relationship (Shaver et al., 1987). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006, p. 81) defined brand love as the "degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied customer has for a particular trade name". Such love emotions involve liking, passion, intimacy, obsession, commitment, and dependency on particular brands within a consumption context (Ahuvia, 2005; Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2008; Fournier, 1998; Wallace, Buil, & de Chernatony, 2014). However, beyond the love emotions, a customer can develop and sustain a loving relationship with a brand as if it is with one individual (Alnawas & Altarifi, 2015).

2.4 Research Framework

Based on a review of related literature, this study combines contemporary marketing constructs (i.e. customer engagement, brand identification and brand love) in a social media site (Twitter) context and proposes the following conceptual framework (Figure 1).
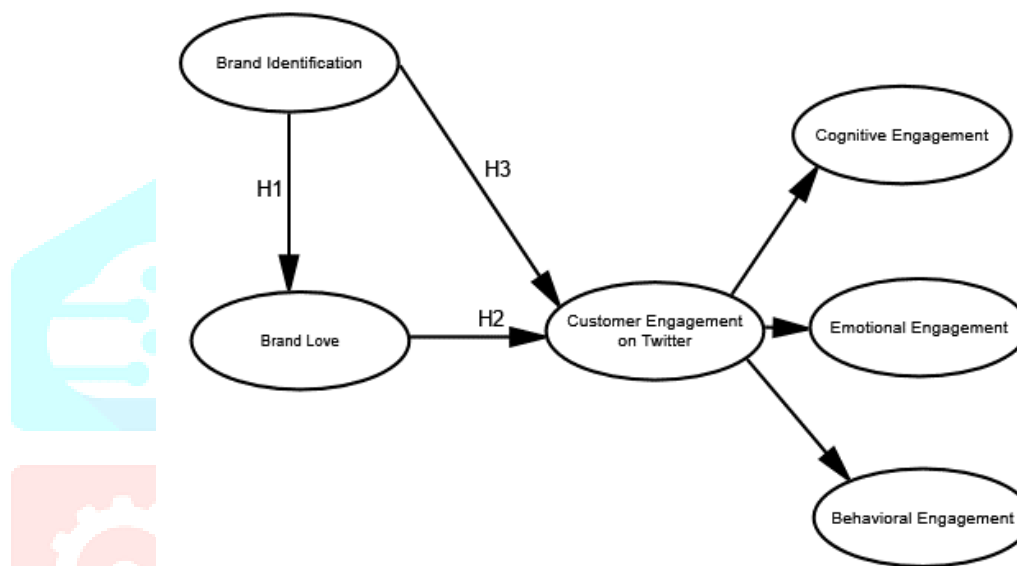

Figure 1: A Research Framework

2.5 Hypotheses Development

Brand Identification and Brand Love

Under social exchange theory and self-identity theory, which relate social interaction via a cost-benefit analysis (Homans, 1958; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals are supposed to express positive feelings and behaviors toward a focal object (i.e. brand) when they recognize their social identity and benefits from the social exchange and brand interaction (Alnawas & Altarifi, 2015; Islam & Rahman, 2016b). Therefore, if the customers' identities are confirmed in relational exchange with a brand, they will reveal positive emotions. It was found from the empirical investigation (Alnawas & Altarifi, 2015) that customer brand identification is positively associated with affection and passion to that brand. Accordingly, drawing on related theories and research, this study hypothesizes the following.

H1: Brand identification has a positive impact on brand love.

Brand Love and Customer Engagement

Brand love is considered as one key construct that drives individuals' engagement and the need of them to be a part of the brand community (Munjal et al., 2019). According to Van Doorne et al. (2010), emotional brand attachment can encourage customers to actively engage. Positive emotions and being passionate about the brand will trigger a state of mind that determines customers' intention to engage with that brand in social media (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Previous studies empirically found that brand love has a direct effect on active engagement (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Islam & Rahman, 2016a). Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010) even suggested that brand love is the most significant factor in building customer engagement. Notably, Twitter showed twice as much as other social media sites to enhance customer engagement with a brand via positive emotions (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). In addition, empirical research

found that favorable emotional appeals can positively affect customer engagement on Facebook (Gruss, Kim, & Abrahams, 2019) and YouTube (Kujur & Singh, 2018). Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis.

H2: Brand love has a positive impact on customer engagement on Twitter.

Brand Identification and Customer Engagement

Drawing on social identity theory, consumer brand identification depends on the perceived identity of the brand and the individual identity of the consumer (Alnawas & Altarifi, 2015). Customers tend to identify with a brand when that brand reflects their identity. Therefore, the consumer's identification with brand is supposed to be a substantial driver of customer engagement (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). In other words, via identification with their favorite brands, consumers are more likely to engage with those brands. Dessart et al. (2015) concluded in their qualitative research that brand identification is a key factor of customer engagement behavior in a social media context. Consequently, this study posits that brand identification positively relates to customer engagement on Twitter.

H3: Brand identification has a positive impact on customer engagement on Twitter.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs the quantitative survey to test the conceptual framework and research hypotheses. Questionnaire is the research instrument used in this survey. There are three parts in the questionnaire. Part 1 involves respondents' demographic profiles. Part 2 includes two screening questions. Firstly, respondents will be asked whether they are active users on Twitter in the past six months. Subsequently, given five successful brands on Twitter i.e. AIS, Shopee Thailand, Netflixth, Apple, and Lazada Thailand (Twitter Thailand, 2020), respondents are requested to identify one brand and answer if they have seen the chosen brand's activities in the previous six months. Part 3 involves respondents' evaluation of brand identification, brand love and customer engagement with particular brands on Twitter. In this regard, they are asked to think about their identified brand when responding to questions in Part 3. Items are by means of five-point Likert scale from 1 to 5 rating from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). All measures of the proposed constructs are adapted from existing literature as shown in Table 1. To ensure face validity, the researcher and an English expert back-translated the items between English and Thai.
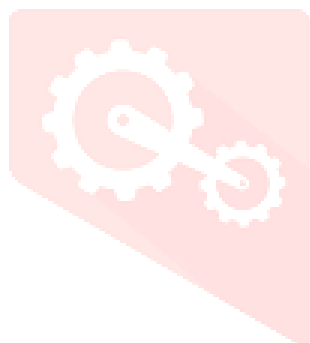
Table 1: The Measurement of Constructs

Constructs	Measurement items	Sources
Brand identification	BI1 When someone praises this brand, it feels like a person. BI2 This brand says a lot about the kind of person I am and I want to be. BI3 This brand's image and my self-image are similar in many respects. BI4 This brand embodies what I believe in.	Alnawas & Altarifi (2015); Popp & Woratschek (2017)
Brand love	BL1 This is a wonderful brand. BL2 This brand is a pure delight. BL3 This brand makes me very happy. BL4 I am passionate about this brand. BL5 I love this brand!	Sarkar & Sreejesh (2015); Wallace et al. (2014)
Customer engagement	Cognitive engagement: CE1 Brand's activities on Twitter stimulate my interest to learn more about this brand. CE2 When it comes to the product/service on Twitter, my mind is very focused on this brand. CE3 I focus a great deal of attention to this brand's marketing communications on Twitter.	Agyei et al. (2020); Hollebeek Glynn, & Brodie (2014); Kosiba et al. (2018)
	Emotional engagement: EE1 I'm proud to be the customers of this brand. EE2 I am enthusiastic in relation to using the product/service of this brand. EE3 I feel energetic in contact with this brand on Twitter. EE4 I feel very positive about this brand.	Kosiba et al. (2018); Hollebeek et al. (2014)
	Behavioral engagement: BE1 I exert my full effort in supporting this brand on Twitter. BE2 I always try to follow the news about this brand on Twitter. BE3 I frequently visit the brand's twitter account and its hashtag. BE4 I always tweet, retweet, quote, comment, review, post and share content about this brand across my connections.	Agyei et al. (2020); Kosiba et al. (2018); Hollebeek et al. (2014); Munjal et al. (2019); Sarkar & Sreejesh (2015)

3.2 Population, Sample and Data Collection

The target population of the study is the consumers who are active users on Twitter in Thailand. As suggested by Bentler and Chou (1987), the sample size is determined based on a ratio of 10 samples to 1 indicator. Therefore, given the total 20 measurable items, the sample size in this study would be 200 samples. To deal with unusable responses, 350 questionnaires will be distributed. According to Awang (2012), the minimum sample size of 200 is recommended for conducting structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. The sampling method is convenience sampling with screening questions to ensure that the respondents met the study requirement. Paper-based instrument and online survey via Google Form were conducted to collect data. Over the period, a total of 312 responses were collected. After accounting for incomplete responses, the final data used for the analysis were 300, of which 85.3% were female, 63.7% had Bachelor's degree, and 32.0% were employees. Respondents were in the range of 14-60 years of age. Of all respondents, 29.3% had monthly income between 20,001 – 40,000 baht. The majority of respondents (90.7%) reported that they were active on Twitter every day.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Measurement Model Results

This study adopts Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement model and test reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the constructs. CFA is appropriate to assess the contribution of each measurable item and how well the scale measures the concept (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2010). To assess a model fit, multiple fit indices including $\chi 2$/degree of freedom (df), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were examined.

An analysis of second-order model for customer engagement indicated that the model had a good fit. Model fit indices were $\chi2$ = 109.91, p-value = .00, $\chi2$/df = 3.14, GFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.98, and RMSEA = 0.08 (Table 2). According to Hair et al. (2010), values greater than 0.90 are considered good for GFI and CFI. RMSEA values up to 0.80 are acceptable (Hair et al., 2010). The analysis provided justification for combining dimensions of cognitive engagement (CE), emotional engagement (EE), and behavioral engagement (BE) into aggregates. Likewise, the measurement model results for brand identification ($\chi2$ = 33.83, p-value = .000, GFI = 0.96, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.00) and brand love ($\chi2$ = 6.58, p-value = .16, GFI = 0.99, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.05) showed the good fit for the model (Table 2).

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha and composite reliability (CR). The results from Table 2 indicated that reliability scores for all the proposed constructs were above the cut-off value of 0.70 recommended by Hair et al. (2010). Therefore, these results indicated high internal consistency. To assess convergent validity, average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded 0.5 and the standardized coefficients for all variables were large (> 0.5) and significant at $p < 0.01$ (Hair et al., 2010) as shown in Table 2. These values suggested high levels of convergence among the items measuring their underlying theoretical constructs.

In addition, the study conducted discriminant validity analysis using chi-square difference tests among the constructs (Zait & Bertea, 2011). The results in Table 3 presented that all three chi-square differences between the fixed and free correlation models were statistically significant at a level of $p < 0.05$, suggesting discriminant validity among independent and dependent variables.

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Constructs	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand identification (BI)		0.70	0.92	0.93
Model fit indices: $\chi2$ = 33.83, p-value = .000, GFI = 0.96, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.00				
BI1	0.85***			
BI2	0.90***			
BI3	0.82***			
BI4	0.84***			
BI5	0.82***			
Brand love (BL)		0.74	0.93	0.94
Model fit indices: $\chi2$ = 6.58, p-value = .16, GFI = 0.99, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.05				
BL1	0.79***			
BL2	0.93***			
BL3	0.88***			
BL4	0.85***			
BL5	0.86***			
Customer engagement (CE)		0.94	0.98	0.97
Model fit indices: $\chi2$ = 109.91, p-value = .00, GFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.08				
Cognitive engagement (CE)		0.76	0.90	0.88
CE1	0.84***			
CE2	0.81***			
CE3	0.83***			
Emotional engagement (EE)		0.77	0.93	0.94
EE1	0.91***			
EE2	0.88***			
EE3	0.94***			
EE4	0.83***			
Behavioral engagement (BE)		0.79	0.94	0.95
BE1	0.95***			
BE2	0.92***			
BE3	0.84***			
BE4	0.86***			

Table 3: Discriminant Validity of Constructs

Construct pair	No correlation (Model 1)		Free correlation (Model 2)		Δ in χ2	Δ in d.f.
	χ2	d.f.	χ2	d.f.		
BI vs BL	434.29	32	99.29	31	335**	1
BI vs CE	880.43	99	389.37	97	491.06**	2
BL vs CE	751.81	99	423.10	97	328.71**	2

4.2 Structural model assessment and hypotheses results

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized via AMOS to test proposed research hypotheses. SEM is the most efficient estimation technique to simultaneously test a series of multiple regression equations (Hair et al., 2010). The overall fit of the SEM model was acceptable (χ^2 = 483.50, P = .000, df = 161, GFI = 0.87, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.08). According to Figure 2 and Table 4, brand identification had a positive impact on brand love (β = 0.89, P-value = 0.00) and customer engagement on Twitter (β = 0.85, P-value = 0.00), thus supporting H1 and H3 respectively. The path between brand love and customer engagement on Twitter was found to be insignificant (β = 0.11, P-value = 0.19). Therefore, H2 was not supported.
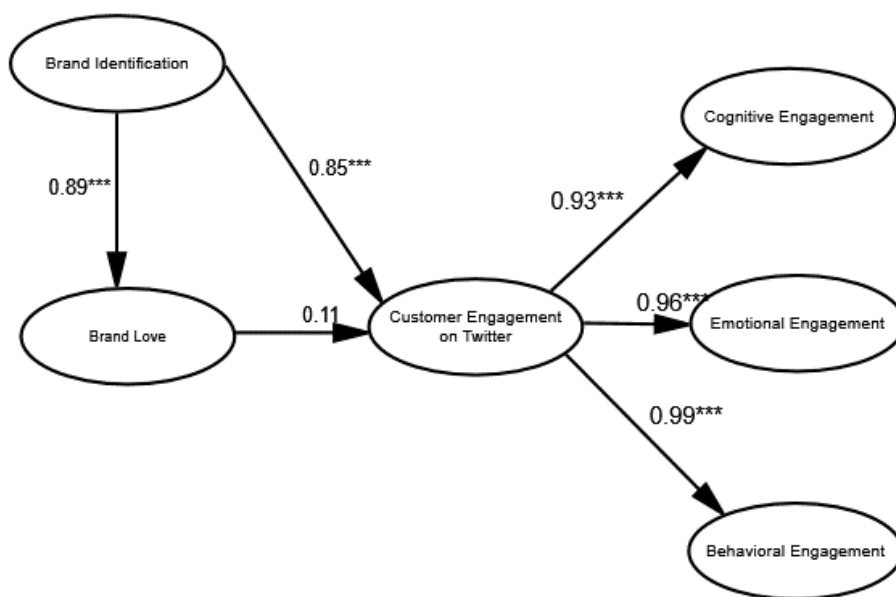
Figure 2: Structural Model Results

Table 4: Hypothesized Model Results

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	P-value	S.E.
H1: Brand identification has a positive impact on brand love.	0.89	.000	0.03
H2: Brand love has a positive impact on customer engagement on Twitter.	0.11	.19	0.12
H3: Brand identification has a positive impact on customer engagement on Twitter.	0.85	.000	0.10

Note. Model fit indices: χ^2 = 483.50, P = .000, GFI = 0.87, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.08

Since H2 was not supported by the data, the study further conducted two separate structural models (Model A and Model B) to test the proposed relationships between brand love and customer engagement (Figure 3 and 4). Model A tested the direct effect of brand love on customer engagement in Twitter context while brand identification was not introduced. The findings revealed that brand love had the positive impact on customer engagement on Twitter (β = 0.87, P-value = 0.00). Additionally, Model B results suggested that all three brand love dimensions significantly affected customer engagement on Twitter. Brand love had the largest positive effect on emotional engagement (β = 0.96, P-value = 0.00), followed by behavioral engagement (β = 0.92, P-value = 0.00) and cognitive engagement (β = 0.89, P-value = 0.00).
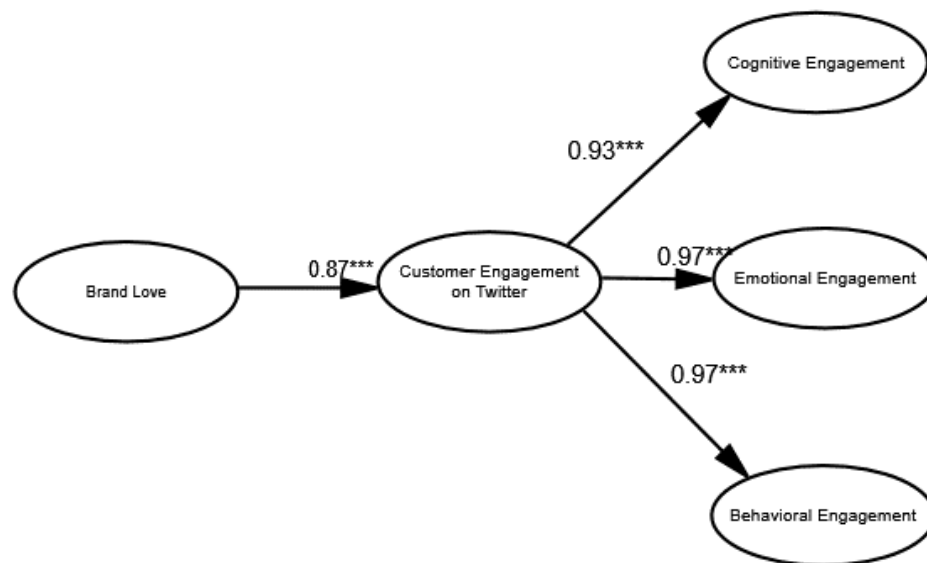
Figure 3: Structural Model Results of Model A

Note: Model A fit indices: $\chi^2 = 283.42$, P = .000, GFI = 0.90, CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.08
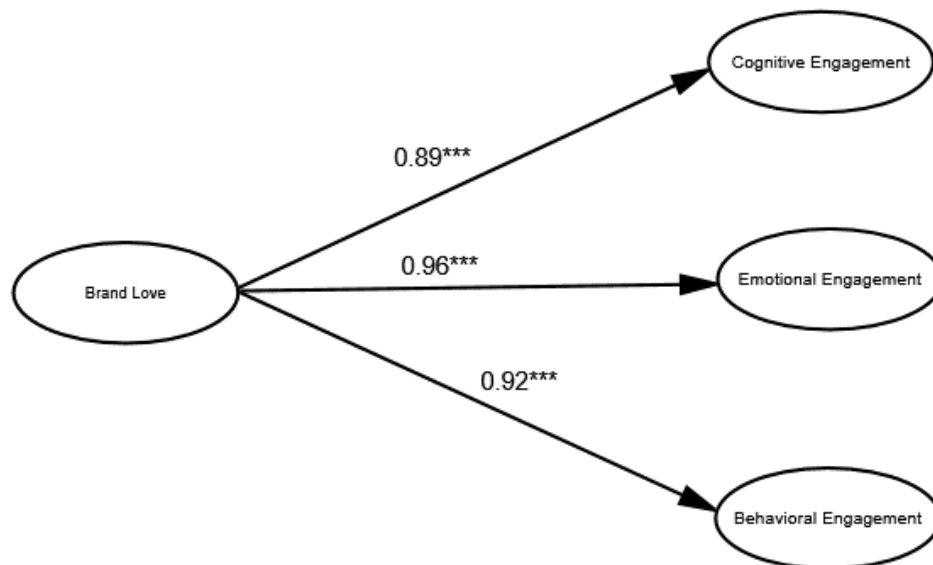

Figure 4 Structural Model Results of Model B

Note: Model B fit indices: $\chi^2 = 259.25$, P = .000, GFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.08

V. DISCUSSION, CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Discussion

This study exploits the growth of social media by proposing the research framework that explores two key antecedents of customer engagement i.e., brand identification and brand love on a particular platform, Twitter. It is important to note that this social tool can reach a wide audience and allows consumers' participation in the real-time discussion regarding the brands and their activities. Based on a review of related literature, the study suggests that firm can enhance customer engagement with a brand via emotional brand attachment and self-categorization into a brand. Accordingly, the objective of the current study is to investigate the effects of brand identification and brand love on customer engagement with specific brands on Twitter.

To test research hypotheses, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized. The full structural model results revealed that brand identification positively affected brand love and customer engagement on Twitter. However, it was found that brand love did not

significantly influence customer engagement. Therefore, the major driver of customer engagement in a social media site (Twitter) context is brand identification. It represents the match between the consumer identity and the brand's image and brand personality (Palusuk, Koles, & Hasan, 2019). The results are consistent with the social exchange theory and self-identity theory in that consumers will express favorable emotions when they distinguish their social identity and benefits from the social exchange via interactions with brands (Alnawas & Altarifi, 2015; Islam & Rahman, 2016b). Therefore, if the customers' social identities are established in relational exchange with a brand, they will reveal positive feelings and affection to that brand. Furthermore, this empirical study confirmed the findings of qualitative research conducted by Dessart et al. (2015) suggesting that brand identification is a substantial indicator of customer engagement in a social media setting. When the brand reflects their identity, consumers are more likely to actively engage with that brand.

Additionally, to further examine the proposed relationships between brand love and customer engagement in a particular platform, Twitter, two models (Model A and Model B) were tested. The findings from Model A indicated that the consumers' brand love had the direct effect on customer engagement on Twitter. Notably, while previous studies found that favorable emotional appeals can positively affect customer engagement on Facebook (Gruss, Kim, & Abrahams, 2019) and YouTube (Kujur & Singh, 2018), this study empirically revealed that affection to the brand influenced customer engagement on the Twitter platform when brand identification was not included in the model.

Particularly, according to Model B results, brand love significantly affected all three dimensions of active engagement. The findings demonstrated that brand love had the largest positive effect on emotional engagement, followed by behavioral engagement and cognitive engagement. Consumers who have great affection for the brand will express the positive feelings about the brand's activities. The emotional feelings that consumers hold towards brands also result in ongoing interests and active participation e.g. retweet, quote, like, mention to the firm's activities on Twitter. It is in line with the relationship marketing theory (Fournier, 1998) and the S-D logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008) in that these three aspects of customer engagement play a major role in the process of relational exchange and customers as proactive contributors to brand interactions can enhance relationships between brand and the customer (Islam & Rahman, 2016b).

5.2 Research contributions

The current study contributes to the marketing literature in the following ways. Despite the rapid increase in customer engagement research, the theoretical concept and its empirical investigation remain in the early stage (Busalim et al., 2019). Ajiboye et al. (2019) also posited that customer engagement research on social media hardly received empirical exploration. In particular, previous research highlighted a lack of identifying the drivers of customer engagement in social commerce (Sharma & Crossler, 2014; Busalim et al., 2019). Consequently, this study provides a greater understanding of the consumer's psychological drivers for influencing customer engagement and examination of their predictive power in explaining customer engagement in an online setting.

For managerial implications, the findings would benefit marketers in that they could develop and implement marketing strategies based on proposed antecedents to have deeply engaged customers than their competitors. Although the full structural model findings indicated that brand love did not significantly impact customer engagement on the chosen brands on Twitter, the effects of brand identification on brand love and customer engagement were found to be significantly positive. Accordingly, brand managers could focus on consumer-brand identification by communicating on Twitter that their brands' image and target groups' self-image are similar. Therefore, such brand image should reflect as if it is a person. For instance, a cosmetics brand can present itself as a charming girl. An automobile brand could be perceived as an energetic entertainer. Via identification with those brands, consumers would be likely to actively participate and interact with the brands in the social platform. Notably, Twitter showed twice as much as other social media platforms to increase the level of engagement with a brand via favorable feelings (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Given that other customers' experiences and reviews are more influential than traditional channels provided by firms (Vivek et al., 2012), the study encourages marketers for consideration of the opportunities for providing an effective and immediate social tool such as Twitter to facilitate interactions among current customers, potential customers and possible customers.

5.3 Limitations and future research directions

This empirical study has some limitations which should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings but which provide opportunities for future research. First, the current study explored customer engagement on a specific platform, Twitter. Further studies can include other contemporary SNSs such as Instagram and TikTok to compare the results and generalize the findings. Second, the proposed research framework in this study presented customer engagement as a dependent construct. Additional research might examine customer engagement on the social media platform as a predictor of actual behavior e.g. forwarding online content behavior and purchase behavior. Third, to gain better understandings of the effect of brand love on customer engagement in the social media context, further research might include some other variables such as brand loyalty or attitude valence as the mediators or as the moderators that impact the relationship between brand love and active engagement. Finally, the data were collected in a specific country, Thailand, thus future researchers might conduct the study in different countries to investigate whether there are significant differences across countries.

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