THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON BEAUTY CLINIC BRAND EQUITY: THE CASE OF ZAP MANADO

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Purpose: Setting the context of exploration in beauty clinic industry, the present study aims to examine the influence of SMM on the four dimensions of brand equity: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. **Theoretical framework:** The scholarly community is witnessing a marked increase in interest regarding the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on brands. However, despite this trend, the literature concerning the effects of SMM on beauty clinic brands remains scant. **Design/methodology/approach:** A cross-sectional survey, facilitated through self-administered online methods, was executed among a sample of customers who had availed themselves of the beauty treatment services provided by the Zap beauty clinic within the past annum. The data gathered was subjected to analysis via the utilization of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) techniques, utilizing the software platforms SPSS and SmartPLS. **Findings:** The results indicate that SMM exerts a positive and significant impact on brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. **Research, Practical & Social implications:** The findings of this investigation are anticipated to provide valuable understandings into the effectiveness of SMM on brand equity within the beauty industry which can improve marketing and branding strategies and building competitive advantage. **Originality/value:** This study is an original attempt to propose and test a theoretical framework, explaining the relationships among SMM on the four dimensions of brand equity: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty in the beauty clinic context. Doi: https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i4.1389

O IMPACTO DO MARKETING NAS MÍDIAS SOCIAIS SOBRE O PATRIMÔNIO DA MARCA DA CLÍNICA DE BELEZA: O CASO DO ZAP MANADO

RESUMO
Objetivo: Estabelecendo o contexto da exploração na indústria de clínicas de beleza, o presente estudo visa examinar a influência da SMM nas quatro dimensões do brand equity: consciência da marca, associação da marca, qualidade percebida e lealdade à marca.

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Referencial teórico: A comunidade acadêmica está testemunhando um aumento acentuado do interesse em relação ao impacto do marketing de mídia social (SMM) sobre as marcas. Entretanto, apesar desta tendência, a literatura relativa aos efeitos do SMM sobre as marcas de clínicas de beleza permanece escassa.

Desenho/metodologia/abordagem: Uma pesquisa transversal, facilitada por métodos online auto-administrados, foi executada entre uma amostra de clientes que tinham aproveitado os serviços de tratamento de beleza prestados pela clínica de beleza Zap no último ano. Os dados coletados foram submetidos a análise através da utilização de técnicas de Modelagem de Equações Estruturais (SEM), utilizando as plataformas de software SPSS e SmartPLS.

Resultados: Os resultados indicam que a SMM exerce um impacto positivo e significativo no reconhecimento da marca, associação de marcas, qualidade percebida e lealdade à marca.

Pesquisa, implicações práticas e sociais: As conclusões desta investigação são esperadas para fornecer entendimentos valiosos sobre a eficácia da SMM na equidade da marca dentro da indústria da beleza que pode melhorar as estratégias de marketing e de marca e construir vantagem competitiva.

Originalidade/valor: Os resultados indicam que o número de publicações está crescendo, sendo a área de gestão e negócios a que mais contribui, sendo que os países que produzem em coautoria também fornecem mais publicações.

Palavras-chave: Marketing de Mídia Social, Patrimônio da Marca, Indústria da Beleza, Consciência de Marca, Associação de Marca, Qualidade Percebida, Fidelidade à Marca.

EL IMPACTO DEL MARKETING EN LAS REDES SOCIALES EN EL VALOR DE MARCA DE UNA CLÍNICA DE BELLEZA: EL CASO DE ZAP MANADO

RESUMEN

Propósito: Al establecer el contexto de exploración en la industria de las clínicas de belleza, el presente estudio tiene como objetivo examinar la influencia de SMM en las cuatro dimensiones del valor de la marca: reconocimiento de marca, asociación de marca, calidad percibida y lealtad a la marca.

Marco teórico: La comunidad académica está presenciando un marcado aumento en el interés por el impacto del marketing en redes sociales (SMM) en las marcas. Sin embargo, a pesar de esta tendencia, la literatura sobre los efectos de SMM en las marcas de clínicas de belleza sigue siendo escasa.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque: se ejecutó una encuesta transversal, facilitada a través de métodos en línea autoadministrados, entre una muestra de clientes que se habían beneficiado de los servicios de tratamiento de belleza proporcionados por la clínica de belleza Zap en el último año. Los datos recopilados se sometieron a análisis mediante la utilización de técnicas de Modelado de Ecuaciones Estructurales (SEM), utilizando las plataformas de software SPSS y SmartPLS.

Hallazgos: Los resultados indican que SMM ejerce un impacto positivo y significativo en el conocimiento de la marca, la asociación de la marca, la calidad percibida y la lealtad a la marca.

Implicaciones sociales, prácticas y de investigación: se prevé que los hallazgos de esta investigación proporcionen conocimientos valiosos sobre la eficacia de SMM en el valor de la marca dentro de la industria de la belleza, lo que puede mejorar las estrategias de marketing y de marca y generar una ventaja competitiva.

Originalidad/valor: este estudio es un intento original de proponer y probar un marco teórico que explica las relaciones entre SMM en las cuatro dimensiones del valor de la marca: conciencia de marca, asociación de marca, calidad percibida y lealtad a la marca en el contexto de la clínica de belleza.

Palabras clave: Marketing en Redes Sociales, Valor de Marca, Industria de la Belleza, Conocimiento de Marca, Asociación de Marca, Calidad Percibida, Fidelidad a la Marca.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of digital advancements has exerted a profound impact on the business landscape in recent times. In order to sustain competitiveness and fulfill clientele demands, corporations must augment their dependence on digital technology. As posited by Duan et al. (2020), enterprises that effectively harness digital technology are likely to attain higher rates of operational efficacy. A recent trend that has gained traction is the proliferation of digital

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channels and tools for marketing, sales, and customer service. According to a KPMG (2019) study, a vast majority (approximately 90%) of organizations utilize digital platforms as part of their marketing and customer engagement strategy, with an annual growth rate of around 10%. The manner in which businesses promote their products and services is undergoing a transformation due to the proliferation of digital business. The proliferation of e-commerce has destabilized conventional retail business models and has facilitated the transition from traditional channels to digital ones (Yang et al., 2021).

The utilization of social media for promotional purposes, commonly referred to as Social Media Marketing (SMM), has emerged as a rapidly expanding digital marketing strategy, continuously disrupting conventional marketing methodologies. SMM encompasses a process of establishing relationships with intended audiences through the generation, dissemination, and exchange of information, concepts, and materials of significant value to them (Kaikobad & Kaikobad, 2016). In simpler terms, it is the application of social media websites and platforms to market a product or service. The proliferation and accessibility of the internet and digital technology has enabled the widespread availability and use of social media, allowing for a more interactive and personalized marketing approach while reaching a broader target audience. This rapidly growing channel has redefined innovative ways for businesses to connect, engage, and interact with consumers (Ebrahim, 2019), ultimately enhancing sales and revenue.

SMM holds provides a remarkable potential for brand and branding. Research has indicated the crucial role of SMM in shaping brand perception (Siddik et al., 2022; Mandagi, 2023), increasing brand recognition (Waworuntu et al., 2022; Anjel et al., 2022), and enhancing brand loyalty and engagement (Kim & Ko, 2021; Kainde & Mandagi 2023; Mandagi & Aseng, 2021; Sijabat et al., 2022). SMM accomplishes this by facilitating communication and collaboration between the brand and its customers, as well as by revealing customer feedback about the company's marketing efforts on social media (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Despite its challenges, SMM is a vital influence on customer response, shaping customer intentions, behavior, and purchasing decisions (Chen & Lin, 2019). As its importance to business revenue becomes more evident, industries are turning to SMM for advertising, promotional events, customer relationship management, and internal employee interactions (Seo & Park, 2018). Moreover, Haudi et al. (2022) posit that increased product visibility on social media leads to increased product discussions and can boost word of mouth, allowing those who have not seen the product in person to learn about it. The findings of a previous study also showed that 93%

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of social media users believe all brands should have a presence on social media, demonstrating the widespread acceptance of SMM as a marketing strategy (Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

Brand equity is considered a pivotal asset for business and a fundamental component of the marketing mix (Molina et al., 2019). It refers to the extent to which a brand name commands influence over consumer perceptions and the value derived from having a recognizable and well-constructed brand. Consumers tend to solicit the opinions of other consumers to gauge brand performance (Jacobsen, 2020). Moreira et al. (2017) posit that organizations cultivate brand equity through the creation of positive consumer experiences, which prompt repeat purchases from the organization over competitors producing similar products. This is often achieved through campaigns that align with the target consumer's values, fulfilling promises and delivering a quality product, and retaining customer loyalty.

Indonesia boasts a substantial digital user population in Southeast Asia, with over 140 million internet users and over 120 million active social media users as of 2021. The proliferation of mobile devices and smartphones utilized for internet access has resulted in a substantial increase in digital adoption, particularly in the mobile sector. Projections by eMarketer (2021) predict a continued expansion of internet users in Indonesia due to the improved availability of reasonably priced internet services and the growing popularity of smartphones. The research highlights the expected growth of social media usage in Indonesia, particularly among the younger demographic, and how marketers view social media as a vital channel for consumer engagement.

The beauty sector holds substantial growth and progress prospects, owing to the escalating consumer proclivity towards personal grooming and beauty commodities, the pervasiveness of social media and influencer culture, and the burgeoning trend of wellness and self-care. Grand View Research analysis (2021) predicts that the worldwide beauty and personal care industry is expected to attain a valuation of USD 832.3 billion by 2025, exhibiting a compounded annual growth rate of 4.3% from 2020 to 2025. The research highlights that the ascension of the middle class in developing nations, the lure of natural and organic products, and the proliferation of e-commerce are the key market growth drivers. Zap is a reputed beauty service brand in Indonesia, with over 60 branches nationwide. Zap endeavors to constantly innovate and provide tailored solutions for Indonesian women and men. By incorporating the principles of exceptional hospitality and trusted medical care, Zap has established itself as a pioneer in hair removal treatments and laser-based treatments, emphasizing a star-studded

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service experience and unparalleled quality for all its technology, treatments, and products. Companies leverage social media as an instrumental tool in their marketing communications.

Although scholarly interest in the impact of SMM on brands is expanding considerably, yet there remains a dearth of literature regarding the interplay between these variables in the context of the beauty clinic sector. This research endeavors to bridge this theoretical void by analyzing the impact of SMM on brand equity within the beauty industry. By drawing upon the brand equity paradigm posited by Aaker (2021), this study endeavors to resolve the following inquiry: How does SMM impact the four constituents of brand equity, which are brand awareness, brand association, perceived equity and brand equity loyalty? The findings of this investigation are anticipated to provide valuable understandings into the effectiveness of SMM on brand equity within the beauty industry which can improve marketing and branding strategies and building competitive advantage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Marketing

Social media has become an essential part of marketing strategy. Social media has the capacity to encourage its user base to partake in value co-creation, fostering interactive connections between brands and consumers, monitoring brand-related discourse and sentiments, guiding consumer decision-making, promoting customer-to-customer interactions, and transforming consumers into brand ambassadors (Vinerean, 2017). In academic discourse, social media is frequently employed as a term that encompasses a wide spectrum of online platforms, such as blogs, business networks, collaborative endeavors, enterprise social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, product evaluations, social bookmarking, social gaming, video sharing, and virtual worlds. Social media operates as a means for individuals to communicate with each other by constructing, sharing, and exchanging information and ideas within online communities and utilizing networks (Gunelius, 2011). Currently, social media offers a vast array of features, including the most widely utilized websites among social media users, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok.

The pervasiveness of social media and the exponential growth in user numbers have drastically altered the marketing landscape, compelling companies to shift their focus towards social media marketing. Gunelius (2011) defines social media marketing as the utilization of digital marketing tactics, such as blogging, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, and content sharing, to enhance brand recognition and recall, raise awareness,

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and spur consumer action. Hence, social media marketing can be considered a promotional strategy that leverages online platforms to disseminate firm-generated content and promotions aimed at raising consumer awareness and elevating brand equity through social networks and websites.

SMM can bring several benefits to businesses. First, it Increases brand awareness and visibility by enabling businesses to reach a wider audience and increase brand exposure, mainly through tactics such as content creation and distribution, influencer marketing, and paid advertising (Anjel et al., 2022; Bilgin, 2018; Porto et al., 2022). Second, SMM allows businesses to improve customer engagement and loyalty by interacting with customers in a more personal and engaging manner, which can help build stronger relationships and increase customer loyalty (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021; Kaikobad & Kaikobad, 2016; Ebrahim, 2020; ; Puriwat, & Tripopsakul, 2022). Social media provides valuable insights into customer preferences and behaviors, which can help businesses better understand their target audience and make informed decisions about future marketing strategies. Furthermore, SMM is found to be a critical determinant of brand variables such as brand gestalt (e.g., Siddik et al., 2022; Mandagi, 2023), brand awareness (e.g., Waworuntu et al., 2022; Anjel et al., 2022), brand brand loyalty (e.g., Kim & Ko, 2021; Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). By promoting consumer engagement, cooperation, and communication, SMM helps to grow the brand (. It also includes client feedback on the company's various social media marketing initiatives (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Marketing managers have a dilemma with social media marketing. It can be a potent stimulator of consumer reaction, favorably affecting consumer intent, behavior, and purchase choices (Chen & Lin, 2019).

SMM has been demonstrated to offer a multitude of advantages for businesses. Firstly, it enhances brand awareness and recognition by affording businesses the ability to reach a wider audience and escalate brand exposure, mainly through content creation and dissemination, influencer marketing, and paid advertising (Bilgin, 2018; Anjel et al., 2022). Secondly, SMM enables businesses to cultivate customer engagement and allegiance by fostering a more personal and interactive connection with customers, thereby enhancing the formation of robust relationships and elevating customer loyalty (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021; Kaikobad & Kaikobad, 2016; Ebrahim, 2020). Social media platforms provide invaluable insights into customer inclinations and behaviors, thereby facilitating businesses to comprehend their target audience more effectively and make informed decisions regarding future marketing strategies. Moreover, SMM has been established as a critical factor in brand variables such as Brand gestalt (e.g.,

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Siddik et al., 2022; Mandagi, 2023), brand awareness (e.g., Waworuntu et al., 2022; Anjel et al., 2022), brand engagement, and brand loyalty (e.g., Kim & Ko, 2021; Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). By promoting consumer engagement, collaboration, and communication, SMM contributes to the growth of the brand and incorporates customer feedback on the company's various SMM initiatives (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Marketing managers face a quandary with SMM as it can be a potent catalyst of consumer reaction, positively impacting consumer intent, behavior, and purchase decisions (Chen & Lin, 2019).

Brand Equity

Brand equity is a concept that refers to the added value that a brand brings to a product or service. This value is comprised of a set of assets and liabilities that contribute to or detract from the perceived worth of the associated product or service (Keller, 1993). According to Aaker (2009), the significance of brand equity lies in the profound effect that brand awareness has on consumer reactions to the marketing efforts of a particular brand. Factors such as consumer perceptions, market share, pricing, and profitability are considered examples of brand equity (Aulia & Briliana, 2017). In essence, brand equity represents the potency of a brand in terms of its ability to influence customer perceptions of the products produced. This is a crucial aspect for the sustainability and longevity of a product, as it can impact factors such as brand recognition, acceptance, and usage. As such, companies must pay close attention to their brand equity in order to reap the numerous benefits it can offer, including promoting brand loyalty, enhancing perceived quality, and increasing profitability (Aaker, 1991). A strong brand equity can also lead to improved brand identification and recall, making the business more distinguishable from its competitors and fostering consumer loyalty (Keller, 1993). Furthermore, customers are often willing to pay a premium for products associated with reputable and well-established brands, giving companies an edge in the marketplace.

Building from the model introduced by Aaker (2009), this study conceptualizes brand equity by characteristics or dimensions that can be categorized into brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty.

SMM and Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the degree to which consumers are familiar with and can identify a specific brand. Brand awareness, which lays the groundwork for developing a strong brand image, is the first stage in generating brand equity (Keller, 1993). In the same vein, Aaker

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(1991) defines brand awareness as the consumer's capacity to recall or identify a brand under various circumstances, such as when they see the brand name or logo. High brand awareness may result in better brand recognition, which in turn can boost brand loyalty, perceived quality, and profitability.

Social media has grown in importance as a tool for connecting with customers and establishing business brand recognition. Companies now have access to a sizable and diversified audience that they may engage through focused marketing initiatives thanks to the growth of social media platforms and their user bases. Companies may contact new consumers and boost brand exposure by utilizing social media, which will ultimately increase brand awareness.

Previous studies have demonstrated the significant impact of SMM on brand awareness. For instance, Khan and Chaudhry (2015) found that SMM has the power to expand market share and boost brand awareness. The authors discovered that social media sites like Facebook and Twitter give businesses access to a sizable and varied target market that they may reach through focused marketing initiatives. Companies may efficiently promote brand awareness by utilizing these channels, eventually boosting brand awareness. Recent studies also have well-documented evidence on the critical role of SMM in shaping brand awareness (e.g., Waworuntu et al., 2022; Anjel et al., 2022; Bilgin, 2018; Ebrahim, 2020; Zollo et al., 2020; Koay, 2020). Thus, the first hypothesis is proposed:

H₁ : SMM has a significant and positive effect on brand awareness of beauty product.

SMM and Brand Association

Brand association describes consumers' cognitive and affective associations with a brand and its products. Brand connections, which may be either symbolic or practical, are crucial for influencing how customers view a brand as a whole (Aaker, 2009). Keller (1993) states that brand association refers to the characteristics, advantages, and values that customers identify with a particular brand. Strong brand associations help build brand equity by boosting brand awareness, loyalty, and perceptions of the brand and its goods and services (Aaker, 2009; Keller, 1993). It is a foundation for brand positioning in consumers' perceptions, among other things. Brand association is something connected to a brand that consumers remember in their minds or a group of brands that they associate with one another. It has the ability to develop

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good attitudes, powerful perceptions and justifications for utilizing the product are benefits of brand associations.

Brand association is considered an essential aspect of shaping a brand's overall image and perception in consumers' minds. Aaker (1991) asserts that strong brand associations can increase brand equity by fostering enduring links between the brand and its goods or services. As a result, there may be an improvement in brand loyalty, awareness, and perception of the company and its products. Strong brand connections, according to Keller (1993), may aid businesses in standing out from rivals and gaining the upper hand in the marketplace.

Recent empirical evidence shows that SMM can significantly impact brand associations (Bilgin, 2018; Ebrahim, 2020; Fan & Liang, 2020; Koay, 2020; Zollo et al., 2020). Fan and Liang (2020) found that SMM may be utilized to form brand associations by fostering and reinforcing favorable opinions of the brand. The authors discovered that businesses could utilize social media to improve the consumer's comprehension of the brand and its offers, ultimately establishing favorable brand associations. These associations help the business increase brand equity, awareness, and patron loyalty. Consequently, the following hypothesis is introduced:

H_2 : SMM has a significant and positive effect on the brand association of beauty products.

SMM and Perceived Quality

Brand perceived quality refers to how customers judge the value of a particular brand or product (Aaker, 1991). It is customers' perception of a brand concerning the quality of its goods or services (Zeithaml et al., 2013). Perceived quality is a crucial factor of customer happiness and loyalty, affecting customers' purchasing decisions and readiness to pay a premium price for a brand's goods (Aaker, 1991). A favorable view of quality may boost brand equity by improving brand awareness, boosting brand loyalty, and fostering a more favorable perception of the brand (Zeithaml et al., 2013).

Brand perceived quality has been shown to be a critical determinant of a strong brand and favorable customer behavior. According to Zeithaml et al. (2013), perceived quality strongly influences consumers' purchasing decisions and willingness to pay a premium price, which in turn leads to satisfaction and loyalty. The authors argue that a favorable perceived quality may boost brand equity by improving brand awareness, loyalty, and perception.

The interplay of SMM on brand perceived quality has been the subject of several studies in recent years. A study by Huang and Chen (2021) found that SMM exerts a significant impact

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on perceived quality through various mechanisms such as online reviews, brand reputation, and customer engagement. The authors found that online reviews, in particular, have a strong positive impact on perceived quality, as they can provide customers with valuable information about a brand's offerings and reputation. Furthermore, the authors found that brand reputation, as conveyed through social media, can also play a crucial role in shaping customers' perceptions of perceived quality.

Similarly, Kim and Lee (2021) demonstrated that SMM could improve perceived quality by raising consumer interaction and brand trust. The authors discovered that social media might aid in developing a strong brand image and reputation, which can influence consumers' perceptions of quality. Hence, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H₃ **:** SMM has a significant and positive effect on the perceived quality of beauty products.

SMM and Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty has become one of the most prominent marketing concepts. It refers to customers consistently buying the same product because they are delighted with its performance (Kotler & Keller, 2009). It describes a situation where customers consistently buy goods from the same brand because they strongly prefer it (Aaker, 1991). Numerous academic publications have recently examined the idea of brand loyalty and how it affects consumer behavior. Numerous scholarly works have examined the idea of brand loyalty and how it affects consumer behavior. Brand loyalty is a complex phenomenon that is impacted by various factors, including brand trust, brand image, customer satisfaction, customer value, personal values and beliefs, and customer experience. Kim and Ko (2017) discovered that several variables, such as brand trust, brand image, customer happiness, and consumer value, might impact brand loyalty. According to the writers, brand trust and customer happiness affect consumers' loyalty to a particular company. Wang, Fan, and Yang (2020) suggested that businesses should put a high priority on the customer experience in their branding efforts since it can improve brand loyalty.

Consumers' growing usage of social media platforms has changed marketing strategies, and more businesses are now using social media to promote their brands and interact with their target audiences. Social media marketing has several advantages, including better brand awareness, greater customer involvement, and the chance to establish a solid reputation for one's company. According to a study by Kaur et al. (2018), SMM may boost brand loyalty by

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creating a personal connection between the company and the consumer, encouraging customer participation, and offering a forum for customer feedback and discussion. Therefore, the study proposes that:

H₄   **:** SMM has a significant and positive effect on brand loyalty of beauty product.

Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework for this study that was developed based on the literature review along with the hypothesis developed above.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework
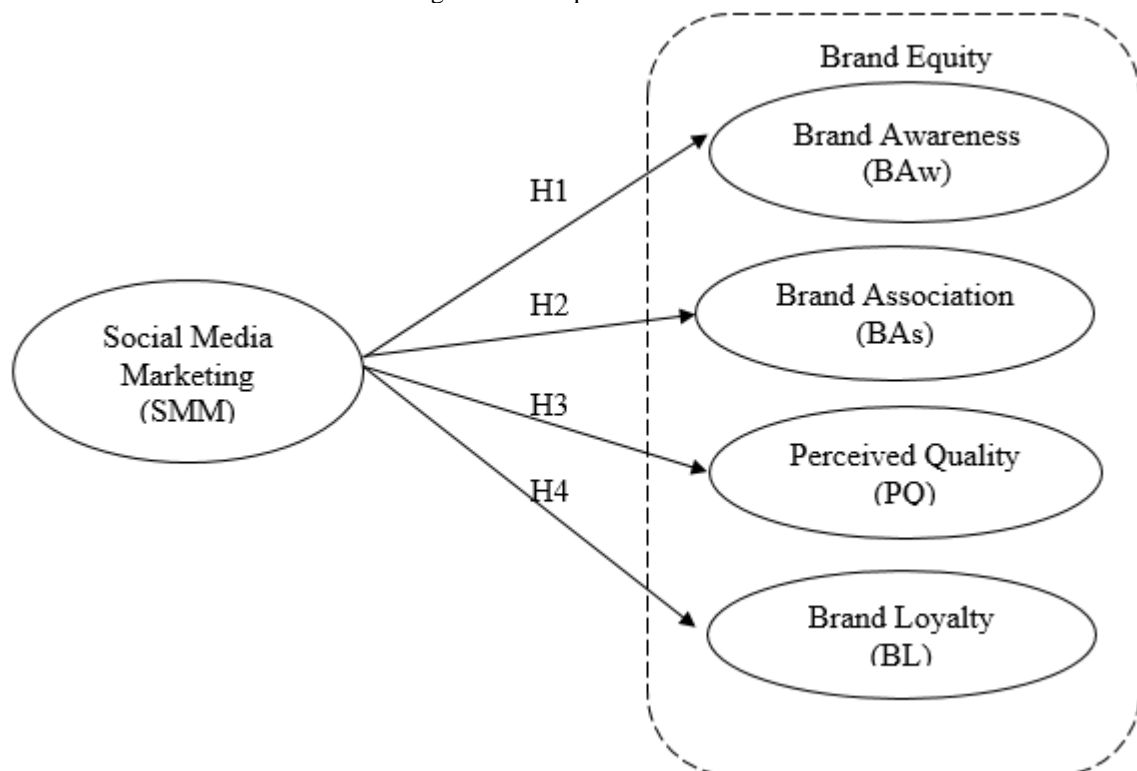
Source: Prepare by the authors (2023)

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive research design. When used to analyze populations or particular samples, quantitative design can be thought of as a positivist-based research technique (Sugiyono, 2018). The quantitative descriptive research approach utilizes statistical procedure and analysis to paint a picture or describe a condition. It begins with data collection, data interpretation, appearance, and outcomes (Arikunto, 2016). A quantitative survey was used to collect the quantitative data for this study, and structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to analyze the data.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The term sample refers to both the features of a population and a portion of the whole. The population size makes it impossible for these studies to be conducted on the population due to resource, time, and findings challenges. Due to these constraints, samples from the population must be used (Sugiyono, 2018). The population of this study consists of social media followers of ZAP. These followers are also customers and users of ZAP Beauty Manado. According to the social media platforms, the total number of Instagram followers of @zapmanado is more than 5.068, making it one of the beauty brand's social media pages with the highest number of followers.

Since the resources available for this research are constrained, a sample that should be representative of the population is utilized. The precision or mistake the researcher wants depends significantly on this sample size. On the other hand, due to time and cost limitations, this error rate was chosen. In Slovin's formula, an error rate of 10% can still be used (Umar, 2001). Thus, the researchers use a probability sampling technique to select the sample, which refers to a sampling method that gives each component (member) of the population an equal chance to join the sample (Sugiyono, 2018). In particular, this study used a simple random sample in which individuals of the population were selected randomly without considering the strata that exist within the population (Sugiyono, 2018). The sample size selected in this study was 111. This sample size is appropriate according to the Solvin formula with a degree of error of 10% calculated as $n= 5068/5068(0,1)^2 +1= 98,065$ rounded up to 100 samples.

Data and Instrumentation

The data in this study was collected using a questionnaire as the measurement instrument. Each variable is measured by statement items in a 5-point Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first part contains the respondents' demographics and some instructions, while the second covers the measurement items for the five variables. Using scales adjusted to fit this investigation's setting, well-respected and psychometrically sound instrument measures were used to measure all variables. There are 22 measurement items of questionnaires used as the measurement items in this study. Table 1 summarizes operational definitions and indicators of variables in this study.

Table 1 Operational Definitions of Research Variables

Variables	Operational Definition	Indicators
Social Media Marketing	A method of direct or indirect promoting and marketing tools from the social web such as blogging, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, and content sharing to help raise awareness, recognition, memory, and action for brands, businesses, products, people, or other entities (Kim & Ko, 2017).	• Online Groups • Interactions • Sharing of Content • Accessibility (As'ad & Al Hadid , 2014)
Brand Awareness	The ability of prospective customers to identify or recall a brand, including names, images, and picture (Aaker, 2009).	• Memorable • Likeable • Meaningful • Transferable • Adaptability • Protectability (Kotler & Keller, 2017)
Brand Association	The strongest link a consumer may make between a product and a concept, image, emotion, experience, person, interest, or activity (Aaker, 2009).	• Brand Attributes • Brand Advantages • Brand Attitude (Santoso & Cahyadi, 2014)
Perceived Quality	The overall perfection and quality of a product or service that pertains to its intended use and is based on actual client (Aaker, 2009).	• Product Performance • Benefits • Durability • Features • Reliability and quality (Garvin, 2009)
Brand Loyalty	Brand loyalty also depends on how the firms can serve a good quality of product of the brand itself, to build customer loyalty to a product or service produced by a business entity that takes a long time through a repeated purchase process (Kotler & Keller, 2017).	• Consistency • Referrals to others • Resistance to competing brands • Satisfied with the benefits provided (Ballester & Aleman, 2005)

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Data Collection Procedure

Researchers employed a closed questionnaire in this study that offered the research subject a choice of possible answers. Sugiyono (2018) claims that the questionnaire is a method of data gathering whereby the responder is given a list of questions and written statements to fill up. There were 111 questionnaires distributed using Google forms through social media. Following that procedure, the questionnaire was reviewed to ensure that all instructions were followed when filling it out. Once the respondents filled out the online questionnaires, the results were appropriately organised in a spreadsheet and exported to the SPSS and SmartPLS.

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Data Analysis

This study employed the Structural Equation Model (SEM) to determine the connections between the research variable stipulated in the conceptual framework and to test the hypotheses. SEM allows for the simultaneous assessment of several quite complex relationships and is a set of statistical tools (Ferdinand, 2002). SEM aims to estimate structural models based on robust rheological studies to test the causality between constructs or latent variables, measure model feasibility, and confirm it in accordance with empirical data. SEM is designed with strong theoretical support and data analysis techniques, and it must meet a variety of parametric assumptions and pass the model's fitness test (goodness of fit). According to Sofyan Yamin (2014), the SEM estimate approach often employs the two-step approach following Anderson's Gerber (1988). The process of simultaneously estimating the initial measurement model (CFA) and evaluating the measurement model is intended to test the degree of validity and reliability of latent variables derived from the theory of the proposed measurement model. The measurement model also illustrates the causal relationship between the latent variable and its indicators. If the measurement model and the structural model match well, the structural model will then be tested.

The data analysis was carried out using SPSS and SmartPLS statistical software. SPSS was used for demographic and descriptive analysis, while SmartPLS was utilized in assessing measurement and structural models. The SEM procedure for data analysis consists of several stages (Hair et al., 2014).

First, convergent validity testing was done by examining the loading factor value of each indicator of all variables after instrument validity. The loading factor represents the relationship between the measurement item or indicators and the relevant variable. If the loading factor value for all indicators is more than 0.7, convergent validity for that variable is attained (Hair et al., 2014).

The second stage involves evaluating the construct or variable's discriminant validity by evaluating the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio and cross-loading (Hair et al., 2014). The Fornell-Larcker Criterion validity test was conducted by comparing the square root value of each variable's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with the correlation between the variables in the model. When the square root of AVE is higher than the correlation between several variables, discriminant validity is achieved. The cross-loading of each indicator is examined in the second discriminant validity test. The cross-loading value reveals the strength of the relationship between each variable and its correlates. If there is a better correlation

between the variables and their indicators than between these variables and the indicators of other variables, the measurement model has good discriminant validity. The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio, an alternate approach that is advised, is utilized in this study to evaluate discriminant validity. If the ratio values for the variables fall below a threshold of 0.9, discriminant validity is said to be satisfied.

Stage three involves the evaluation of construct reliability, which was done by evaluating the significance of Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and EVA. If a variable has a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.7, composite reliability greater than 0.70, and EV greater than 0.50, it is considered reliable.

Fourth and last, structural testing of the model is done once all validity and reliability indicators have been satisfied. One can test a structural model or hypothesis by examining the importance of the path coefficients with the PLS Booth strapping feature of the statistical program SmartPLS. Two stages make up structural model testing: (1) Testing of hypotheses using the path coefficients' significance value. (2) The goodness-of-fit model compares the theoretical and empirical models to assess a model's applicability or fit. The data analysis procedure using SEM is summarized in figure 2.

Figure 2 Data Analysis Process
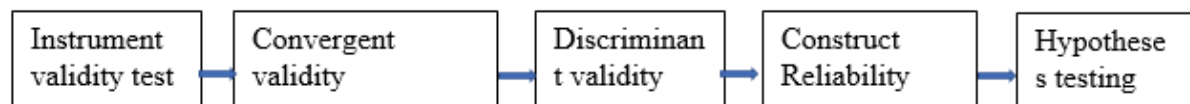
Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Description of Research Object

ZAP Clinic is one of the beauty clinics in Indonesia, which is now in Manado City. ZAP clinic tries to meet consumer needs by offering beauty treatments by favoring lasers for hair removal as an initial milestone in the ZAP Clinic business process. Established in 2009, ZAP always strives to achieve 100% customer satisfaction (internal or external) and continues to be committed to being a solution for society. ZAP beauty clinic has the vision to improve the quality of life in the community through health and beauty, and its mission is to provide the best possible care experience. Combining the best hospitality and trusted medical concepts, ZAP prioritizes star service experience and prioritizes the best quality for all of its technology, care materials, and products. All ZAP brands prioritize the timeliness and practicality of systems that are integrated online throughout Indonesia. The current treatments at the ZAP

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beauty clinic, namely ZAP Body Rejuvenation and ZAP Hair Removal Treatment, have the same process and can even be done simultaneously or immediately after the Hair Removal Treatment. Body Brightening Treatment offers treatments that focus on helping customers brighten their body's skin. ZAP combo technology, glowing solution, photo facial, and platelet-rich plasma.

Description of Respondent

Table 2 Respondent Demographic Data

Variables	Level	n	%
Gender	Male		
	Female	111	100
Age	15-25	101	91
	26-35	8	7.2
	36-45	2	1.8
Visit Frequency	1 Time	57	51.4
	2 Times	21	18.9
	3 Times	10	9
	>3 Times	23	20.7
Education	SMA/SMK	15	13.5
	S1	91	82
	Other	5	4.5
Occupation	Students	14	12.6
	Civil servant	2	1.8
	Employee	46	41.4
	Entrepreneur	17	15.3
	Others	32	28.8
Favorite treatment	Body brightening	13	11.7
	Face treatment	47	42.3
	Body rejuvenation	1	0.9
	Hair removal	47	42.3
	PRP treatment	3	2.7

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Based on the data in table 1, this study's respondents were all female. Most respondents were between 15-25 years old (91%). Regarding the number of visits, more than half of the respondents are first-time visitors (57%). These customers have done treatment and visited the ZAP beauty clinic Manado but are not regular customers at the ZAP beauty clinic Manado. Based on educational background, the most significant number of respondents were graduates, followed by high school graduates (13%). Almost half of the respondents are private employees (41%). The type of favourite treatment is dominated by face treatment and hair removal at 47% each.

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Descriptive Statistics

<div align="center">Table 3 Descriptive Statistic</div>

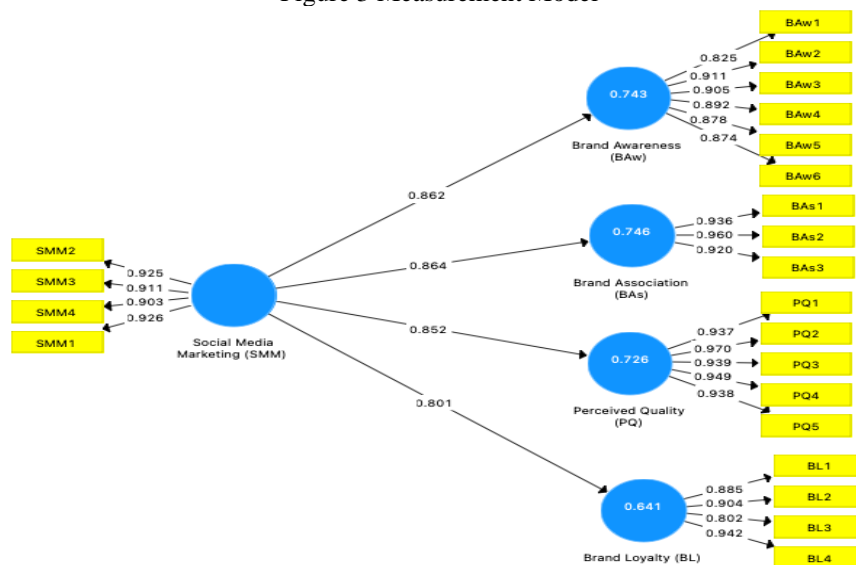|	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev	Var
SMM	111	1	5	4.29	0.70	0.49
Brand Awareness	111	1	5	4.18	0.71	0.51
Brand Association	111	1	5	4.19	0.75	0.56
Product Quality	111	1	5	4.23	0.75	0.56
Brand Loyalty	111	1	5	4.09	0.80	0.63

<div align="center">Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)</div>

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of variables in this study. Variable SMM has a mean value of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.70. The mean value is greater than the standard deviation, which implies that data distribution shows expected results and is free from bias. The same thing is valid with the brand equity variables (i.e., Brand awareness, brand association, product quality, and brand loyalty). These variables have almost the same average value in the 4.09-4.23, greater than the standard deviation (0.71-0.80).

Measurement Model

Testing the measurement model is conducted first before testing the structural model or the hypothesis. The goal of testing the measurement model is to evaluate each variable's reliability and validity. The SmartPLS 3.2 statistical program was used to assess the measurement model for this investigation using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method.

<div align="center">Figure 3 Measurement Model</div>

<div align="center">Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)</div>

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The results of the second stage of measurement model testing are summarized in figure 3 and table 3. The result reveals that the factor loading values for all indicators are above 0.7. Thus, convergent validity for all variables in this study has been fulfilled.

Table 3 The value of the Loading Factor Measurement Model

Variable	Indicator	Factor Loading
SMM	SMM1	0.926
	SMM2	0.925
	SMM3	0.911
	SMM4	0.903
Brand Awareness	BAw1	0.825
	BAw2	0.911
	BAw3	0.905
	BAw4	0.892
	BAw5	0.878
	BAw6	0.874
Brand Association	BAs1	0.936
	BAs2	0.96
	BAs3	0.92
Perceived Quality	PQ1	0.937
	PQ2	0.97
	PQ3	0.939
	PQ4	0.949
	PQ5	0.938
Brand Loyalty	BL1	0.885
	BL2	0.904
	BL3	0.802
	BL4	0.942

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Fornell-Larcker Criteria and Cross Loading were used to evaluate discriminant validity in this study. Table 4 displays the validity test result based on the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. The results show that the correlations between the variables and the square root of the AVE on the table's diagonal are greater than the correlation between variables. Thus, it can be stated that the variables and indicators used in this study have discriminant validity according to the Fornell-Larcker Criterion.

Table 4 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BAs	BAw	BL	PQ	SMM
Brand Association (BAs)	0.94				
Brand Awareness (BAw)	0.89	0.88			
Brand Loyalty (BL)	0.90	0.90	0.89		
Perceived Quality (PQ)	0.94	0.91	0.90	0.95	
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	0.86	0.86	0.80	0.85	0.92

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

The validity test result based on the cross-loading is shown in table 5. The cross-loading value reveals the strength of the relationship between each variable and indicators for other variables. The results of the cross-loading test, displayed in table 5, show good discriminant validity because the correlation between indicators on the parent variable is higher than the correlation value between variables with other variable indicators.

Table 5 Cross loading Test Results

	BAs	BAw	BL	PQ	SMM
BAs1	0.936	0.848	0.865	0.898	0.797
BAs2	0.96	0.862	0.858	0.89	0.822
BAs3	0.92	0.773	0.813	0.863	0.812
BAw1	0.731	0.825	0.734	0.764	0.727
BAw2	0.774	0.911	0.795	0.806	0.772
BAw3	0.802	0.905	0.81	0.851	0.835
BAw4	0.758	0.892	0.78	0.761	0.703
BAw5	0.716	0.878	0.791	0.759	0.687
BAw6	0.866	0.874	0.835	0.874	0.812
BL1	0.779	0.718	0.885	0.78	0.654
BL2	0.856	0.808	0.904	0.852	0.78
BL3	0.652	0.758	0.802	0.657	0.567
BL4	0.871	0.887	0.942	0.881	0.797
PQ1	0.869	0.823	0.828	0.937	0.76
PQ2	0.914	0.87	0.881	0.97	0.817
PQ3	0.881	0.919	0.883	0.939	0.855
PQ4	0.888	0.884	0.888	0.949	0.798
PQ5	0.905	0.822	0.795	0.938	0.799
SMM2	0.794	0.778	0.741	0.763	0.925
SMM3	0.785	0.79	0.74	0.799	0.911
SMM4	0.808	0.811	0.723	0.796	0.903
SMM1	0.777	0.779	0.73	0.764	0.926

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and EVA values were examined in order to determine the reliability of the study's variables. Table 6 shows that all variables have a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.7, composite reliability greater than 0.70, and EVA greater than 0.50, implying that reliability was satisfied.

Table 6 Variable Reliability Test

	CA	CR	AVE
Brand Association	0.932	0.957	0.881
Brand Awareness	0.942	0.954	0.777
Brand Loyalty	0.907	0.935	0.783
Perceived Quality	0.971	0.977	0.897
Social Media Marketing	0.936	0.954	0.84

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Structural Equation Model (Inner Model)

Structural model testing or hypothesis testing was done by looking at the significance of the path coefficients using the PLS Bootstrapping feature on the SmartPLS statistical software. The results of structural model testing are shown in Figure 4 and Table 7.

Figure 3 Test Results of the PLS Bootstrapping Structural Model
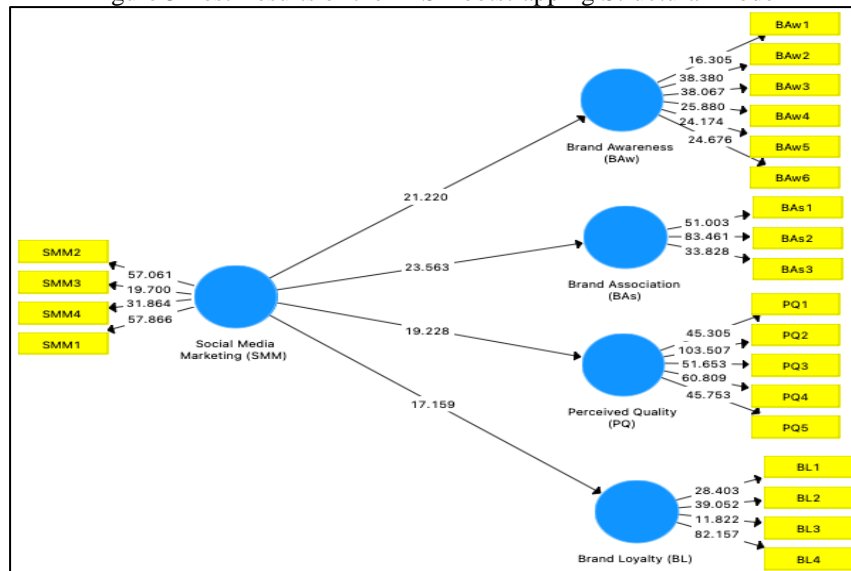
Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Table 7 Structural Model Testing Result

Path Relation	STDEV	Estimate	P Values	Label
SMM -> BAw	0.041	21.220	**0.000**	Significant
SMM -> BAs	0.037	23.563	**0.000**	Significant
SMM -> PQ	0.044	19.228	**0.000**	Significant
SMM -> BL	0.047	17.159	**0.000**	Significant

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

The result in figure 3 and table 7 shows that all of the study's hypotheses are supported by these findings. Related to the first hypothesis, the result reveals the positive and significant effect of the SMM variable on brand awareness (β=21.22, p-value <0.001). Results of the second hypothesis testing also show that SMM has a significant and positive influence on brand associations (β=23.56, p-value <0.001). The result also confirms the third hypothesis, which

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predicts that SMM has a significant and positive influence on perceived quality (β=19.23, p-value <0.001). Lastly, the analysis confirmed the fourth hypothesis, which predicts a significant and positive influence of SMM on brand loyalty (β=17.16, p-value <0.001).

Table 8 displays the results of the goodness of fit model test. The goodness of fit test determines whether a model is accepted or rejected statistically. If the model is accepted, the researcher will continue to interpret the path coefficient in the model. It is known that the criteria for each goodness of fit indicator are: SRMR must be less than 0.08, d_ULS must be greater than 2.00, d_G must be more than 0.90, chi-square is less than 5, and NFI is less than 0.9 (Hair, 2014). Based on the results presented in table 4.10, it was found that most of the goodness of fit indicators were in the range of recommended values (SRMR = 0.055; d_ULS= 3,774; d_G = 1,929; NFI = 0.7), indicating that the structural model has a high degree of suitability with the input data in the research sample.

Table 8 Goodness of Fit Test

	Saturated Model	*Estimated Model*
SRMR	0.055	0.122
d_ULS	0.778	3.774
d_G	1.262	1.929
Chi-Square	712.151	915.047
NFI	0.809	0.755

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

CONCLUSION

This study centers on the effectiveness of SMM on brand equity in the beauty clinic industry. To achieve the research objectives, hypotheses H1–H4 have been developed based on the intensive review of relevant literature. Set the context of exploration on Zap Manado, quantitative data was gathered through an online survey. The data analysis was then processed using SPSS and SmartPLS statistical software to evaluate the research assumptions and provide answers to questions posed during the development of the problem. The outcomes of the data analysis revealed several significant findings.

First, SMM has a positive and significant influence on brand awareness which is in line with the findings of several earlier study which demonstrates that there is a linear relationship between SMM and brand awareness (e.g., Waworuntu et al., 2022; Anjel et al., 2022; Bilgin, 2018; Ebrahim, 2020; Zollo et al., 2020; Koay, 2020). This finding also corroborates the study by Kim and Ko (2017), which demonstrates the ability of social media to increase brand honor by giving businesses a platform to interact with their target market and distribute material in

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real time. Organizations may boost their exposure, develop brand awareness, and eventually boost their bottom line by developing a strong online presence and interacting with people.

Second, SMM has a significant and positive influence on brand association. This result is consistent with recent studies revealing that SMM can significantly impact brand associations (Bilgin, 2018; Ebrahim, 2020; Fan & Liang, 2020; Koay, 2020; Zollo et al., 2020). By definition, SMM is using social media platforms to communicate with customers about product and service offerings. Social media marketing is using social media channels to promote companies and products. When people see ZAP beauty clinic starting from its logo, concept, and product name, they have a good impression that sticks in their minds and feels connected. Using social media by ZAP to improve the consumer's comprehension of the brand and its offers is effective in establishing favorable brand associations.

Third, SMM has a significant and positive influence on perceived quality. In this study, it was found that consumers' assessment of the excellence or superiority of ZAP beauty clinic products as a whole positively influenced the existence of social media marketing carried out by the ZAP brand. This result is in line with the previous studies that demonstrate the link between SMM and perceived quality. For instance, a study by Huang and Chen (2021) found that SMM exerts a significant impact on perceived quality through various mechanisms such as online reviews, brand reputation, and customer engagement. Meanwhile, Kim and Lee (2021) demonstrated that SMM could improve perceived quality by raising consumer interaction and brand trust. The authors discovered that social media aid in developing a strong brand image and reputation, which can then influence consumers' perceptions of quality.

Fourth and last, SMM is a significant determinant of brand loyalty. This result also supports previous research on the effect of SMM on brand loyalty (Cahyani, 2022; Wang et al., 2020). The influential social media marketing on brand loyalty can be seen through the highest mean value on the social media marketing variable in this research. With attractive and consistent social media marketing, it can increase brand loyalty from customers. They feel all the benefits offered through social media promotions from ZAP in every treatment used and following existing expectations.

This study contributes substantially, although several areas for improvement can be addressed in follow-up research. First, when information is collected from respondents through a questionnaire, it sometimes needs to reflect their genuine opinions because different respondents have different ideas, assumptions, and understandings. In addition, some questions

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do not reflect the respondents' intentions, such as asking about customers who, in this case, have performed routine maintenance or are the first to do so, depending on the circumstances.

Future research is expected to improve the model tested in this study regarding the relationship between social media marketing and brand equity by incorporating additional variables that may be related to both and conducting more research on perceived quality as endogenous variables. These empirical findings can be utilized as a starting point, and a source of information for future investigations into the relationships between the same factors examined in this study.

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