

The Influence of Brand Congruity on Brand Evangelism through the Mediation of Brand Trust and Brand Commitment among Generation Z Shopee Users

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the influence of brand congruity on brand evangelism by examining the mediating roles of brand trust and brand commitment among Generation Z Shopee users. Brand congruity refers to the alignment between a consumer's self-image and the brand image, which plays a crucial role in shaping high-level consumer engagement in digital marketing contexts. This research adopts a quantitative approach utilizing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 145 Generation Z respondents who are active Shopee users. The findings reveal that brand congruity has a direct and significant effect on brand evangelism, as well as an indirect effect through brand trust and brand commitment as partial mediators. The mediation pathways suggest that trust and commitment toward the brand serve as critical psychological mechanisms bridging identity congruence and brand advocacy behavior. These findings underscore the importance for companies to develop brand images that resonate with consumer values and identities, while also strengthening trust and emotional attachment to drive brand evangelism behavior.

Keywords: brand congruity, brand trust, brand commitment, brand evangelism, Generation Z, Shopee

Introduction

The growth of the e-commerce industry in Indonesia has experienced a significant surge in recent years, with Shopee emerging as one of the most dominant platforms in the market. Brand congruity, defined as the alignment between a consumer's self-image and the brand image, has been shown to influence consumer perceptions and emotional engagement with a brand, which can ultimately lead to advocacy behaviors such as brand evangelism (Osmanova et al., 2023). Therefore, it is crucial for marketers to understand how psychological elements like brand congruity shape the loyalty and advocacy behaviors of Generation Z consumers on platforms like Shopee. When consumers perceive that a brand reflects their personal values or identity, they are more likely to form a strong emotional affiliation, which may result in extreme forms of loyalty such as brand evangelism (Osmanova et al., 2023). Brand evangelism does not merely reflect passive loyalty, but also entails active behaviors such as recommending the brand to others, defending it against criticism, and even rejecting competing brands (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). As a form of the highest level of consumer engagement, brand evangelism reflects a consumer's willingness not only to remain loyal but also to actively promote and defend the brand while resisting competitors (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

To foster brand evangelism, two key mediating factors that must be considered are brand trust and brand commitment. Brand trust refers to the consumer's belief in the brand's

reliability and integrity, while brand commitment captures the emotional attachment that motivates long-term engagement. A study by Rehman et al., (2022) demonstrated that the combination of trust and commitment significantly contributes to the formation of brand evangelism behaviors, especially among young consumers. The transition from brand congruity to brand evangelism is not a direct process. Prior research highlights that brand trust and brand commitment serve as critical mediating mechanisms in this relationship (Rehman et al., 2022). Consumer trust in a brand's credibility and integrity lays the emotional foundation for long-term engagement, whereas emotional commitment strengthens the bond between the consumer and the brand, prompting consumers to actively support and promote it (Shaari & Ahmad, 2016).

Despite the growing empirical evidence supporting the relationships among these variables, comprehensive research that integrates brand congruity, brand trust, brand commitment, and brand evangelism into a single theoretical framework remains limited, particularly within the context of Indonesian e-commerce and the Generation Z segment. This study aims to fill that gap by examining how brand congruity influences brand evangelism both directly and indirectly through the mediating roles of brand trust and brand commitment among Generation Z users of Shopee.

The primary objective of this study is to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms that drive brand evangelism behavior among young digital consumers. Additionally, it seeks to contribute theoretically to the literature on consumer behavior and offer practical implications for brand managers in designing communication and brand positioning strategies that resonate with the identity and values of Generation Z.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Brand Congruity Positively Influences Brand Trust

Self-congruity theory suggests that consumers prefer brands that mirror their self-image—actual or ideal (Sirgy, 1982). Perceived alignment between a brand and the consumer's personal values fosters emotional closeness and psychological resonance, laying the foundation for trust. Empirical evidence from Rehman et al., (2022) confirms brand congruity as a key antecedent of brand trust, particularly among young consumers. This is supported by Purwandani et al., (2023), who found that congruity shapes not only loyalty but also the psychological basis of trust. Osmanova et al., (2023) also observed that brand congruity significantly enhances brand trust, as consumers perceive congruent brands to be more authentic and consistent. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is;

H1: Brand Congruity Positively Influences Brand Trust

Brand Congruity Positively Influences Brand Commitment

According to self-congruity theory, consumers show stronger emotional attachment to brands that resonate with their self-concept (Boksberger et al., 2011). This alignment creates a sense of affiliation that leads to sustained commitment (Sirgy, 1982). Rehman et al., (2022) demonstrated this among Gen Z college students, with Osmanova et al., (2023) further confirming that congruity strengthens emotional attachment—a core element of brand commitment. In online communities, Shaari & Ahmad (2016) noted that emotional involvement is highly influenced by perceived identity congruence. For platforms like Shopee, aligning brand imagery with Gen Z lifestyles directly fosters emotional loyalty. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is;

H2: Brand Congruity Positively Influences Brand Commitment

Brand Trust Positively Influences Brand Evangelism

Brand evangelism reflects active consumer advocacy—including positive recommendations, brand defense, and rejecting competitors (Doss, 2014; Rabby et al., 2025). In digital and social platforms, such behaviors can create viral brand impact. Trust acts as a catalyst by fostering emotional responsibility, prompting consumers to share their positive experiences (Juhaidi et al., 2025). Becerra & Badrinarayanan (2013) established trust as a significant predictor of brand evangelism, with its three behavioral dimensions. Rehman et al., (2022) and Shaari & Ahmad (2016) both affirm that high brand trust translates into voluntary consumer engagement without financial incentives. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is;

H3: Brand Trust Positively Influences Brand Evangelism

Brand Commitment Positively Influences Brand Evangelism

Brand commitment—an affective and psychological bond—motivates consumers to maintain long-term relationships with brands (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Committed consumers not only repurchase but also become proactive brand advocates (Sharma & Khandeparkar, 2025). Brand evangelism includes positive referrals, defensive behaviors, and oppositional referrals (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). Numerous studies support commitment as a strong predictor of evangelistic behavior. Rehman et al., (2022) found significant effects among emotionally attached youth, while Shaari & Ahmad (2016) observed similar trends in online brand communities. Among Shopee's Gen Z users, such commitment often leads to expressive brand support on social media. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is;

H4: Brand Commitment Positively Influences Brand Evangelism

Brand Congruity Directly Influences Brand Evangelism

Brand congruity fosters deep emotional resonance with consumers, serving as a direct driver of brand evangelism (Sharma & Khandeparkar, 2025). Purwandani et al., (2023) demonstrated that value congruity significantly influences advocacy among young Indonesian consumers. Becerra & Badrinarayanan (2013) showed that high congruity leads to increased participation in evangelistic behaviors. Shopee's alignment with Gen Z identity through inclusive campaigns exemplifies this phenomenon, where congruity triggers voluntary advocacy as part of consumers' public and digital self-expression. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is;

H5: Brand Congruity Directly Influences Brand Evangelism

Brand Trust Mediates the Effect of Brand Congruity on Brand Evangelism

While brand congruity fosters emotional alignment, the path to evangelism often occurs through brand trust. Consumers perceive congruent brands as trustworthy, which in turn increases willingness to advocate publicly (Lorgnier et al., 2025). Osmanova et al., (2023) emphasized that trust mediates congruity's impact on brand engagement and evangelism. Rehman et al., (2022) also validated trust as a key intermediary linking congruity with advocacy behavior. Without trust, the emotional congruity lacks the strength to elicit active brand promotion. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is;

H6a: Brand Trust Mediates the Effect of Brand Congruity on Brand Evangelism

Brand Commitment Mediates the Effect of Brand Congruity on Brand Evangelism

Brand congruity evokes emotional attachment when consumers identify with brand values. This attachment leads to brand commitment, which serves as a psychological bridge toward brand evangelism (Sharma & Khandeparkar, 2025). Self-congruity theory and relationship marketing models highlight emotional commitment as a precursor to evangelistic behavior (Sirgy, 1982). Shaari & Ahmad (2016) found that commitment mediates the relationship between trust and community-based brand advocacy. Rehman et al., (2022) confirm that brand

congruity enhances brand commitment, which in turn fuels evangelism. For Gen Z Shopee users, who are expressive and digitally active, this process translates into social advocacy and loyal communication. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is;

H6b: Brand Commitment Mediates the Effect of Brand Congruity on Brand Evangelism

Research Method

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach using an explanatory research design. Data collection was carried out through the distribution of online questionnaires adapted from standardized instruments that had undergone content validation by experts. The sample was selected using purposive sampling with specific inclusion criteria: respondents aged 18–26 years who are active users of the Shopee online shopping application. A total of 145 respondents from Klaten Regency participated in the study. The minimum sample size followed the recommendations of Hair et al., (2019) for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The respondents in this study exhibited diverse demographic characteristics, as shown in the table below:

Measurement

In this study, all main constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), enabling the researcher to capture the nuances of respondents' perceptions in a structured and quantitative manner. The variable Brand Trust was measured using items developed by Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2002), which emphasize consumers' perceptions of a brand's reliability and integrity. Brand Congruity was assessed with a scale adapted from Che-Ha et al., (2014), focusing on the degree of alignment between the brand image and the consumer's actual or ideal self-concept. Brand Commitment was measured using indicators proposed by Morgan & Hunt (1994), reflecting consumers' psychological attachment and willingness to sustain a long-term relationship with the brand. Meanwhile, Brand Evangelism was measured using a scale developed by Doss (2014), which captures voluntary consumer behavior in recommending, defending, and promoting a brand in social contexts. These constructs were selected based on their conceptual clarity and empirical support in capturing the dynamics between consumer perceptions and advocacy-oriented brand behavior.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted using Smart PLS 4.0 software, encompassing the assessment of both the measurement model (construct validity and reliability) and the structural model (tests of direct and mediating relationships). Mediation analysis was performed using the bootstrapping approach. The analysis followed two main stages: the evaluation of the outer model and the evaluation of the inner model. In the first stage, construct validity was assessed through convergent validity (with Average Variance Extracted ≥ 0.50), indicator reliability (factor loadings ≥ 0.70), and construct reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values ≥ 0.70). In the second stage, structural relationships between variables were tested by examining path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values derived from the bootstrapping procedure. This analytical strategy ensured a robust examination of both measurement quality and the hypothesized causal relationships within the structural model.

Results and Discussion

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity refers to the loading factor values of latent variables with their respective indicators, which can be observed through the correlation between each indicator's item score and the construct score. According to Ghazali & Latan (2015), convergent validity is achieved when both the factor loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are greater than or equal to 0.50. The results of this study indicate that all factor loading values exceed 0.50 and the AVE values for each construct are also above the 0.50 threshold. Therefore, it can be concluded that all measurement items are valid in representing their respective constructs. These results are presented in below.

Table 1. Results of Hasil Convergent Validity

Variable	Indicator	Factor Loading	AVE	Remark
Brand Congruity	BCo1	0,841	0.705	Valid
	BCo2	0,845		Valid
	BCo3	0,833		Valid
	BCo4	0,834		Valid
	BCo5	0,827		Valid
	BCo6	0,856		Valid
<i>Brand Commitment</i>	BCom1	0,839	0,724	Valid
	BCom2	0,871		Valid
	BCom3	0,823		Valid
	BCom4	0,877		Valid
	BCom5	0,834		Valid
	BCom6	0,861		Valid
<i>Brand Trust</i>	BT1	0,863	0.787	Valid
	BT2	0,897		Valid
	BT3	0,893		Valid
	BT4	0,880		Valid
	BT5	0,899		Valid
	BT6	0,891		Valid
Brand Evangelism	BEv1	0,837	0,722	Valid
	BEv2	0,864		Valid
	BEv3	0,827		Valid
	BEv4	0,844		Valid
	BEv5	0,866		Valid
	BEv6	0,861		Valid

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity can be evaluated by comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct with the correlations between that construct and other constructs in the model, using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. The standard rule of thumb is that the square root of AVE for a given construct should be greater than its correlations with any other construct. Based on the table below, all Fornell-Larcker Criterion values exceed the 0.50 threshold, indicating that each manifest variable appropriately reflects its corresponding latent construct.

Table 2. Results of Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Brand Commitment	Brand Congruity	Brand Evangelism	Brand Trust
Brand Commitment	0,851			
Brand Congruity	0,656	0,839		
Brand Evangelism	0,835	0,670	0,850	
Brand Trust	0,660	0,510	0,674	0,887

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Discriminant validity in this study was also assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT), which has been proposed as a more sensitive method compared to conventional approaches. HTMT evaluates the extent to which a construct is empirically distinct from other constructs within the model. Discriminant validity is considered acceptable when the HTMT values between constructs are below the threshold of 0.90, indicating that each construct represents a unique concept and does not overlap significantly with others. The findings in this study support the conclusion that all constructs in the model possess sufficient distinction, thereby justifying the continuation to the structural model analysis.

Table 3. Ratio of Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)

	Brand Commitment	Brand Congruity	Brand Evangelism
Brand Commitment			
Brand Congruity	0,709		
Brand Evangelism	0,870	0,725	
Brand Trust	0,706	0,541	0,719

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Composite Reliability

Composite reliability was used in this study to assess the reliability of each construct. It evaluates the internal consistency of the indicators forming a construct by measuring the degree of shared variance among the observed variables (latent constructs). Reliability testing was conducted to confirm the accuracy, consistency, and precision of the instrument in measuring the intended constructs. Construct reliability was assessed using two methods: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). The results indicate that all variables in the model meet the required reliability criteria. The Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all four constructs exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70, suggesting that the indicators are consistent in measuring their respective constructs. Moreover, all values were found to be above 0.90, indicating a very high level of reliability. Thus, the constructs Brand Commitment, Brand Congruity, Brand Trust, and Brand Evangelism are considered reliable and can be validly employed for further structural analysis.

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

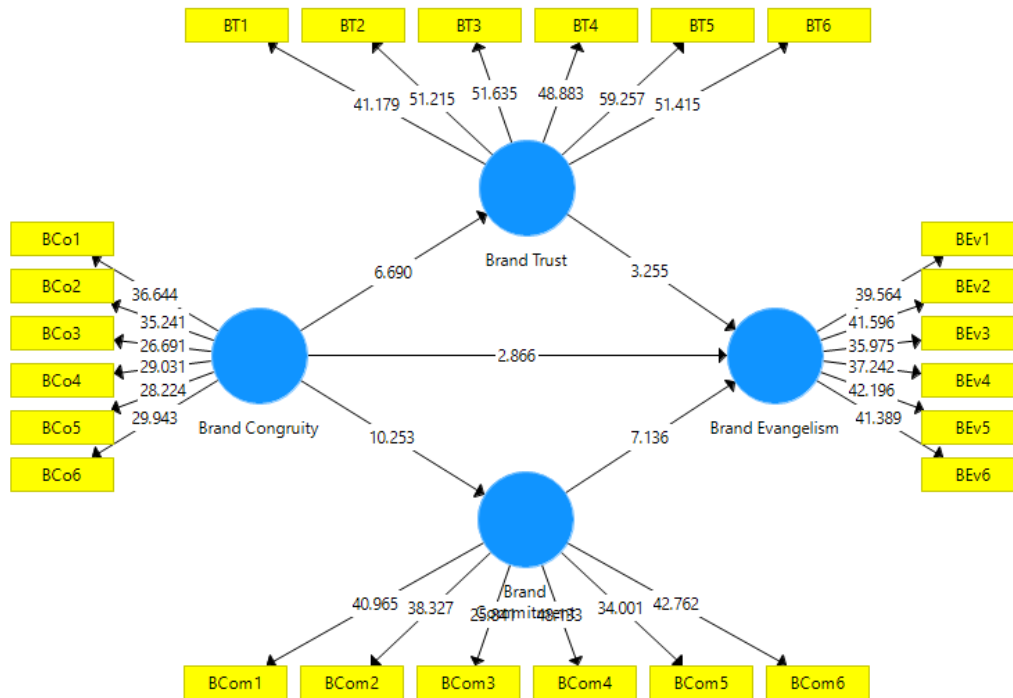
	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Remark
Brand Commitment	0,924	0,925	0,940	Reliable
Brand Congruity	0,916	0,918	0,935	Reliable
Brand Evangelism	0,923	0,924	0,940	Reliable
Brand Trust	0,946	0,947	0,957	Reliable

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

The evaluation of the structural model, or inner model, aims to predict the relationships between latent variables. The assessment of the structural model involves examining the

proportion of variance explained by the model, primarily through the analysis of R-Square (R^2) values, model fit test, and hypothesis testing.



Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Figure 1. Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

R-Square (R^2) Analysis

The coefficient of determination (R-Square) is used to explain the influence of specific exogenous latent variables on endogenous latent variables. It also serves to assess the explanatory power of the structural equation model. A higher R-square value indicates a stronger ability of exogenous variables to explain the variance in endogenous variables. The results of the R-square analysis for each endogenous variable are presented in table below:

Table 5. R^2 Values for Endogenous Variables

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Brand Commitment	0,431	0,427
Brand Evangelism	0,743	0,738
Brand Trust	0,260	0,255

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

The R Square test results indicate that the predictive power of the model varies across the three dependent variables examined. In this study, the R Square value shows that Brand Evangelism can be explained by Brand Congruity, Brand Trust, and Brand Commitment by 74.3%, indicating a very strong model. Brand Commitment is explained by 43.1%, suggesting a moderate level of predictive strength. Meanwhile, Brand Trust is only explained by 26%, reflecting a relatively weak model for this variable. Overall, the model is highly effective in explaining Brand Evangelism, adequately predictive for Brand Commitment, but less robust for Brand Trust.

Model Fit Test

Based on the model fit test results, it can be concluded that the saturated model demonstrates a better fit compared to the estimated model. The SRMR value for the saturated model is 0.048, which falls below the ideal threshold of 0.080, indicating a good fit. However, the SRMR increases to 0.110 in the estimated model, suggesting that the model does not fit the data well. The values of d_ULS and d_G also rise in the estimated model compared to the saturated model (d_ULS : 0.703 \rightarrow 3.620; d_G : 0.393 \rightarrow 0.458), indicating a decline in model quality. In addition, the Chi-Square value increases from 317.975 in the saturated model to 344.070 in the estimated model, further reinforcing the indication of poorer fit in the estimated model. Lastly, the NFI values for both models fall slightly below the ideal cut-off of 0.90—0.897 for the saturated model and 0.889 for the estimated model—although both remain relatively close to the acceptable range.

Table 6. The Model Fit Test Results.

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,048	0,110
d_ULS	0,703	3,620
d_G	0,393	0,458
Chi-Square	317,975	344,070
NFI	0,897	0,889

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is employed to determine the influence of each exogenous variable on the endogenous variable using the bootstrapping method. The criteria for hypothesis acceptance or rejection are based on the t-statistic value being greater than 1.96 and the p-value being less than 0.05 (5%). The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table below:

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values
Brand Commitment -> Brand Evangelism	0,584	7,136	0,000
Brand Congruity -> Brand Commitment	0,656	10,253	0,000
Brand Congruity -> Brand Evangelism	0,670	11,625	0,000
Brand Congruity -> Brand Trust	0,510	6,690	0,000
Brand Trust -> Brand Evangelism	0,192	3,255	0,001
Brand Congruity -> Brand Commitment -> Brand Evangelism	0,383	5,708	0,000
Brand Congruity -> Brand Trust -> Brand Evangelism	0,098	2,882	0,004

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Brand Congruity Positively Influences Brand Trust

The results indicate that brand congruity has a positive and significant effect on brand trust among Gen Z Shopee users, with a coefficient of 0.510, t-statistic of 6.690, and p-value of 0.000. This finding suggests that the more consumers perceive congruence between brand image and self-image, the greater their trust in the brand. This aligns with *self-congruity theory* (Sirgy, 1982), which posits that congruence between self-image and brand image fosters emotional closeness that forms the basis of trust. Prior studies, such as Rehman et al., (2022) and Purwandani et al., (2023), support this, highlighting that brand congruity is a key driver of brand trust, particularly among younger consumers, as it strengthens emotional connections and perceptions of brand authenticity. Therefore, Shopee should ensure that its brand identity aligns with Gen Z values to reinforce brand trust as a foundation for loyalty and advocacy.

Brand Congruity Positively Influences Brand Commitment

The findings show that brand congruity has a positive and significant effect on brand commitment, with a coefficient of 0.656, t-statistic of 10.253, and p-value of 0.000. This indicates that the greater the congruence between consumers' self-image and brand image, the stronger their commitment to the brand. *Self-congruity theory* Boksberger et al., (2011) and Sirgy, (1982) explains that such alignment fosters emotional attachment and affiliation, reinforcing long-term loyalty. Rehman et al., (2022) affirm that among Gen Z—particularly university students—brand congruity significantly enhances brand commitment due to alignment in values and brand character. Osmanova et al., (2023) further notes that perceived congruence strengthens emotional bonds that lie at the core of brand commitment. In digital platforms like Shopee, consumer engagement is also highly influenced by perceived identity alignment, as noted by Shaari & Ahmad (2016). Thus, brand congruity not only facilitates initial closeness but also serves as a critical foundation for building consumers' emotional commitment to the brand.

Brand Trust Positively Influences Brand Evangelism

The study finds that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on brand evangelism, with a coefficient of 0.192, t-statistic of 3.255, and p-value of 0.001. This suggests that consumers' trust in a brand encourages them to voluntarily engage in strong brand advocacy behaviors, including recommending, defending, and promoting the brand without external incentives. Among Gen Z Shopee users, trust in the brand fosters an emotional sense of responsibility, motivating them to share positive experiences—especially through social media and digital communities. The concept of brand evangelism, as described by Doss (2014), represents the highest level of loyalty, where consumers not only repeatedly purchase but also actively influence others' perceptions of the brand. Becerra & Badrinarayanan (2013) identified three key traits of this behavior: repurchase intention, positive word-of-mouth, and rejection of competitors. These results are further supported by Rehman et al., (2022), Shaari & Ahmad (2016) and (Rabby et al, 2025) who emphasize the central role of trust in transforming consumers into active brand advocates, particularly within online ecosystems. Thus, building brand trust not only strengthens loyalty but also serves as a strategic foundation for fostering brand evangelism among young consumers.

Brand Commitment Positively Influences Brand Evangelism

The findings reveal that brand commitment has a positive and significant effect on brand evangelism, with a coefficient of 0.584, a t-statistic of 7.136, and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that the stronger a consumer's emotional and psychological attachment to a brand, the more likely they are to engage in voluntary and active advocacy behaviors. As defined by Morgan & Hunt (1994), brand commitment reflects a consumer's strong intention to maintain a long-term relationship with the brand—an intention that goes beyond basic loyalty and forms the foundation for behaviors such as providing positive recommendations, defending the brand from criticism, and rejecting competitors. Among Gen Z Shopee users, brand commitment fuels active participation in digital communities, particularly via social media and review platforms. Prior research by Becerra & Badrinarayanan (2013) confirms that brand commitment is a key driver of brand evangelism, as it creates intrinsic motivation to support and promote the brand. This is further supported by Rehman et al., (2022), Shaari & Ahmad (2016) and Sharma & Khandeparkar (2025) who find that emotional attachment to brands among young consumers triggers strong and consistent advocacy behaviors. Therefore, brand commitment not only indicates loyalty but also serves as a crucial driver in cultivating brand evangelists who expand the brand's reach and image organically.

Brand Congruity Directly Influences Brand Evangelism

The results show that brand congruity has a positive and significant effect on brand evangelism, with a coefficient of 0.670, a t-statistic of 11.625, and a p-value of 0.000. This finding confirms that congruence between consumer self-image and brand image promotes the highest level of consumer engagement—brand evangelism. In this context, consumers not only feel emotionally connected to the brand but are also motivated to share positive experiences, defend the brand from criticism, and reject competing brands. Brand evangelism behavior is strongly influenced by value congruity—the alignment between brand values and individual values. The study by Purwandani et al., (2023) indicates that young consumers in Indonesia who perceive value congruity are more likely to become voluntary brand advocates. This is supported by Becerra & Badrinarayanan (2013), who found that high congruity perception increases the intention to provide positive and oppositional referrals. For Gen Z Shopee users, brand congruity developed through inclusive and culturally relevant campaigns strengthens emotional closeness and creates a deep psychological bond. Therefore, brand congruity serves as a direct trigger for evangelistic behavior, whereby consumers integrate the brand into their personal identity and narrative in digital spaces.

Brand Trust Mediates the Effect of Brand Congruity on Brand Evangelism

The findings indicate that brand trust significantly mediates the relationship between brand congruity and brand evangelism, with a mediation path coefficient of 0.098, a t-statistic of 2.882, and a p-value of 0.004. This suggests that the alignment between consumer self-image and brand image (brand congruity) does not directly result in brand evangelism, but rather operates through the establishment of trust. In other words, the perception that a brand “represents me” creates a sense of trust that the brand is safe, reliable, and worthy of public support. According to Osmanova et al., (2023), brand congruity fosters the development of trust, which in turn enhances emotional engagement and the desire to voluntarily defend and promote the brand. Trust acts as the psychological mechanism that enables consumers to feel comfortable and confident in publicly expressing their support (Lorgnier et al., 2025). Rehman et al., (2022) also affirm that brand trust is a vital intermediary that transforms positive perceptions of value and image congruence into brand evangelism. Without a strong foundation of trust, image congruity alone is insufficient to drive loyal, advocacy-based actions. Among Gen Z Shopee users, this mediation underscores the necessity for brands not only to align their identity with consumer values but also to establish robust trust. Therefore, brand trust functions as a critical bridge that converts perception into action, transforming consumers from passive users into active brand advocates in the digital realm.

Brand Commitment Mediates the Effect of Brand Congruity on Brand Evangelism

The study reveals that brand commitment significantly mediates the relationship between brand congruity and brand evangelism, with a mediation path coefficient of 0.383, a t-statistic of 5.708, and a p-value of 0.000. This finding emphasizes that the congruence between brand image and consumer self-image (brand congruity) does not directly lead to brand evangelism, but operates through the formation of emotional and psychological commitment (brand commitment). This bond subsequently evolves into brand commitment. *Self-congruity theory* Sirgy (1982) explains that alignment between self-image and brand image triggers emotional involvement, while *relationship marketing theory* suggests that such attachment is a prerequisite for advocacy behaviors like brand evangelism. Shaari & Ahmad (2016) affirm that in online communities, brand commitment serves as a key link between trust and active consumer engagement in promoting and defending a brand Rehman et al., (2022) and Sharma & Khandeparkar (2025) also highlight that brand identification and congruity significantly contribute to the development of brand commitment, which ultimately drives brand evangelism

behavior. In the context of Gen Z Shopee users, brand commitment serves as an essential foundation for their active involvement in disseminating brand values and strengths through social media and other digital platforms. Thus, brand commitment functions as a psychological bridge that transforms identity congruence perceptions into concrete advocacy actions. Without deep emotional involvement, the relationship between consumers and brands risks remaining at the level of passive loyalty, falling short of becoming active and sustained support.

Conclusion

This study reveals that brand congruity plays a fundamental role in shaping brand evangelism behavior among Gen Z Shopee users, both directly and through the mediating roles of brand trust and brand commitment. Directly, the alignment between brand image and consumer self-image significantly encourages voluntary brand advocacy behaviors. However, this influence becomes stronger and more meaningful when channeled through two critical psychological pathways: trust in the brand (brand trust) and deep emotional attachment (brand commitment). Brand trust serves as an initial bridge, enabling consumers to feel secure and confident in publicly supporting the brand. In contrast, brand commitment provides a more stable and profound emotional foundation that drives consumers to actively promote and defend the brand—even in highly competitive contexts or in the absence of external incentives. These two mediators reinforce the link between perceived value congruity and advocacy behavior, transforming consumers from passive loyalists into influential brand advocates.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations. First, the research employed a cross-sectional design with purposive sampling focused solely on Gen Z Shopee users in one regional setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the model did not incorporate other potentially influential variables such as brand identification, brand love, or perceived brand authenticity, which may further elucidate the psychological mechanisms driving brand evangelism. Future research is encouraged to expand the demographic scope and integrate these or other relevant constructs into the structural model, possibly employing longitudinal or experimental methods to better understand the causal dynamics of brand advocacy behavior in digital platforms.

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