

**INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING, BRAND GESTALT AND BRAND
IMAGE OF LOCAL COFFEE SHOPS**

**MENGINTEGRASIKAN PEMASARAN MEDIA SOSIAL, GESTALT BRAND,
DAN CITRA BRAND KEDAI KOPI LOKAL**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide insights into building a strong brand image in the coffee shop business competition to win the Gen Z's heart. This study examines how social media marketing (SMM) shape brand image of a local coffee shop through brand gestalt dimensions. Quantitative data was collected through offline and online surveys from 170 coffee shop visitors in Manado, Indonesia aged 16-27 years (Gen Z). The data was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through the SmartPLS statistical application. The analysis results indicate a significant and positive influence of social media marketing on all dimensions of brand gestalt. However, the results differ in terms of brand gestalt in building Brand image. The dimensions of story and servicescape are considered to be less effective factors in building brand image. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for coffee shop owners when they develop marketing strategies through social media to build a strong brand gestalt and brand image among Gen Z.
Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Gen Z, Coffee Shop, Brand gestalt, Brand Image

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan wawasan tentang cara membangun citra merek yang kuat dalam persaingan bisnis kafe guna memenangkan hati Generasi Z. Penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana pemasaran media sosial (SMM) membentuk citra merek kafe lokal melalui dimensi gestalt merek. Data kuantitatif dikumpulkan melalui survei offline dan online dari 170 pengunjung kafe di Manado, Indonesia, berusia 16-27 tahun (Generasi Z). Data dianalisis menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) melalui aplikasi statistik SmartPLS. Hasil analisis menunjukkan pengaruh yang signifikan dan positif dari pemasaran media sosial terhadap semua dimensi gestalt merek. Namun, hasilnya berbeda dalam hal gestalt merek dalam membangun citra merek. Dimensi cerita dan layanan dianggap sebagai faktor yang kurang efektif dalam membangun citra merek. Temuan studi ini memberikan wawasan berharga bagi pemilik kafe saat mengembangkan strategi pemasaran melalui media sosial untuk membangun gestalt merek dan citra merek yang kuat di kalangan Gen Z.

Kata kunci: Pemasaran Media Sosial, Gen Z, Kafe, Gestalt Merek, Citra Merek

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, marketing practices have undergone a profound transformation. The integration of technology, online connectivity, and social interaction has created a new paradigm of sustainable digital marketing, in which businesses are expected not only to compete for consumer attention but also to cultivate long-term trust, authenticity, and social responsibility. Across the globe, consumers are increasingly value-driven and selective, seeking brands that reflect transparency, ethical awareness, and meaningful engagement. These

developments have prompted companies to move beyond conventional promotional activities and to adopt digital marketing strategies that integrate economic growth with sustainability and emotional connection (Rayo et al., 2024; Queenditya et al., 2024).

The rise of social media platforms has further accelerated this transformation. With billions of active users worldwide, social media has redefined the way information spreads, how brands are perceived, and how consumers form their identities. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter)

serve as interactive ecosystems where consumers no longer act as passive audiences but as active participants who co-create brand meaning through storytelling and engagement. This participatory environment has been shown to significantly influence brand perception and engagement (Sijabat et al., 2022), particularly among younger consumers such as Millennials and Generation Z (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021; Carundeng et al., 2024). Studies further reveal that effective social media marketing (SMM) can strengthen consumer-brand relationships by fostering emotional attachment, brand attitude, and loyalty across various sectors including education (Kainde & Mandagi, 2023; Pasuhuk & Mandagi, 2023), hospitality (Mandagi et al., 2024), tourism (Mandagi et al., 2024; Pongoh & Mandagi, 2025), and fast food (Wantah & Mandagi, 2024).

This digital revolution has also transformed the Indonesian business landscape, where entrepreneurial growth, particularly in urban areas such as North Sulawesi, has intensified competition across industries. One of the most dynamic and competitive sectors is the coffee shop industry, which has evolved beyond serving beverages to becoming a social and lifestyle phenomenon. For many consumers, visiting coffee shops represents a form of identity expression, creativity, and social belonging (Waworuntu et al., 2022). This cultural transformation compels coffee shop owners to compete not only in product quality but also in creating a strong and distinctive brand image (BI) that encapsulates the emotional and symbolic value consumers attach to the brand (Plumeyer et al., 2017; Mandagi et al., 2024).

Building and sustaining a strong brand image requires more than product differentiation. It involves a coherent and

creative communication strategy that connects the brand with consumers' values and aspirations. Social media marketing (SMM) plays a central role in achieving this objective, serving as a strategic bridge between business visibility and consumer engagement (Silalahi, 2019; Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). Empirical findings have confirmed that SMM can shape consumer attitudes, strengthen loyalty, and influence purchase intentions not only in commercial contexts (Poluan et al., 2022) but also in public and institutional sectors (Kainde & Mandagi, 2023; Pasuhuk & Mandagi, 2023). However, research exploring *how* SMM contributes to BI through the integrative perspective of brand gestalt remains limited.

The concept of brand gestalt, derived from Gestalt psychology, explains that consumers perceive a brand as an integrated whole rather than as separate components (Diamond et al., 2009; Wertheimer, 1945). This perception emerges from the interconnection among visual, emotional, and experiential brand elements that form a unified and memorable impression (Mandagi et al., 2021; Askaria, 2019). Recent studies have applied the brand gestalt framework across diverse sectors, highlighting its role in shaping satisfaction, loyalty, and behavioral intention (Walean et al., 2023; Walean et al., 2024; Rantung et al., 2025). Moreover, research demonstrates that brand gestalt effectively mediates the relationship between SMM and various branding outcomes such as brand attitude, image, and loyalty (Wantah & Mandagi, 2024; Queenditya et al., 2024; Rayo et al., 2024). Despite this growing interest, the empirical examination of brand gestalt within the coffee shop context remains scarce.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the role of brand gestalt in mediating the relationship between social media marketing and brand image in the coffee shop industry of Manado City, North Sulawesi. The research focuses on three main objectives. First, it seeks to identify the dimensions that construct brand gestalt in the coffee shop business. Second, it analyzes the effect of SMM on BI. Third, it examines whether brand gestalt mediates this relationship among Generation Z consumers, who represent a digitally native market segment that is highly responsive to social media content and digital experiences (Aseng et al., 2025).

Theoretically, this research contributes to the advancement of sustainable digital branding by integrating concepts from marketing communication, consumer psychology, and gestalt theory. It also extends the applicability of the brand gestalt construct beyond tourism and institutional contexts (Mandagi & Centeno, 2024; Pongoh & Mandagi, 2025) into small business marketing. Practically, the study provides insights for entrepreneurs and marketers on how to design cohesive and emotionally engaging social media strategies that enhance competitiveness in digital markets. By focusing on the coffee shop industry in Manado City, this research contextualizes global digital marketing trends within a local entrepreneurial ecosystem and proposes an evidence-based framework for building sustainable and meaningful brand images through social media.

1. Literature Review dan Hypothesis Development

2.1 Social Media Marketing

Social Media Marketing (SMM) represents a strategic form of marketing

conducted through social media platforms, designed to attract consumer attention in an effective and cost-efficient manner (Angela & Siregar, 2021). As a key component of digital marketing, SMM enables companies to reach broader and more diverse audiences, particularly among digital-native generations who are highly active across multiple online platforms. This aligns with Pitanatri et al. (2024), who highlight that SMM has evolved into a dominant trend, offering both large corporations and small enterprises valuable opportunities to promote their products and services.

According to Istanto et al. (2020), social media is not merely a communication medium but also a strategic instrument for strengthening promotional effectiveness and competitiveness in the digital marketplace. Through its interactive nature, SMM facilitates two-way engagement between companies and consumers, fostering stronger emotional connections, brand trust, and loyalty. This is consistent with Mandagi and Aseng (2021), who revealed that Millennials and Gen Z perceive social media marketing as a highly effective strategy for shaping brand image and influencing festival branding through the mediating role of brand gestalt. Similarly, Sijabat et al. (2022) found that social media influencers play a significant role in shaping customer engagement and brand perception, highlighting how online content creators have become integral to modern branding strategies.

Furthermore, Waworuntu et al. (2022) emphasized that SMM can effectively influence Gen Z's purchasing intentions toward local products by shaping brand image and desire through visual exposure, summarized in their phrase "I see it, I want it, I buy it." This

generational responsiveness underscores the emotional and impulsive nature of digital consumption among young audiences. In institutional contexts, SMM has also been found to enhance public attitudes and satisfaction in government sectors (Poluan et al., 2022), and build brand attitude and loyalty in educational institutions (Kainde & Mandagi, 2023; Pasuhuk & Mandagi, 2023).

Recent studies continue to confirm SMM's broad strategic impact across industries. Wantah and Mandagi (2024) demonstrated that brand gestalt mediates the relationship between SMM and brand loyalty in fast-food restaurant settings, while Carundeng et al. (2024) found that Gen Z perceives SMM as a crucial determinant of faith-based school branding effectiveness. Similarly, Rayo et al. (2024) identified SMM as a key antecedent of both brand gestalt and brand personality, suggesting its foundational role in shaping holistic brand experiences. In addition, Queenditya et al. (2024) reinforced this linkage by showing that brand gestalt mediates the influence of SMM on brand loyalty, confirming the psychological coherence between consumer perceptions and behavioral loyalty.

Beyond marketing and branding, the implications of digital adoption extend to other sectors. Aseng et al. (2025), for instance, highlighted that Gen Z's intention to adopt financial technologies such as neobanks is shaped by similar digital engagement factors found in social media contexts. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that social media marketing functions not only as a communication tool but also as a powerful strategic framework that shapes perceptions, loyalty, and behavioral intentions across different consumer segments and institutional settings. Therefore, the integration of

SMM into corporate strategies is essential for fostering sustainable engagement and long-term brand equity in the digital era.

2.2 Brand Gestalt

Gestalt is understood as a meaningful and unified pattern that reflects the human tendency to perceive objects as integrated wholes rather than as separate components (Askaria, 2019). Gestalt theory posits that perception emerges from the arrangement of interconnected elements such as shapes, patterns, or similarities that collectively form a coherent unity. In this sense, individuals tend to process stimuli as holistic configurations before interpreting their individual parts. Extending this psychological principle to marketing, brand gestalt refers to the unified perception that customers hold toward a brand, which is stored in their memory and subsequently influences their attitudes, emotional associations, and behavioral intentions (Mandagi et al., 2021).

Building on Gestalt theory, Diamond et al. (2009) introduced the concept of brand gestalt, defining a brand as a complex system of interrelated elements that collectively shape an overall impression. This approach views the brand not as a collection of isolated attributes but as an integrated perceptual whole, where the synergy among elements determines the strength and distinctiveness of the brand. Consequently, brand gestalt serves as an analytical lens for understanding how consumers form a unified and enduring perception of a brand through the dynamic interaction of its components.

Advancing this theoretical foundation, Mandagi et al. (2021) developed and validated the brand gestalt scale, which operationalizes the concept into four interrelated

dimensions: *story*, *sensescape*, *servicescape*, and *stakeholders*. The *story* dimension captures how a brand's narrative and symbolic meaning evoke emotional engagement and memorable experiences. The *sensescape* reflects consumers' multisensory interactions with a brand, encompassing visual, auditory, and tactile elements that create affective associations. The *servicescape* represents the tangible and environmental aspects of brand experience, such as design, layout, and ambiance, that shape consumer perceptions. Finally, *stakeholders* refer to the human and relational elements, including employees, partners, and customers, who co-create the brand experience. Collectively, these four dimensions explain how consumers perceive a brand holistically rather than through fragmented features.

Subsequent empirical studies have extended the application of brand gestalt across diverse contexts, reinforcing its theoretical robustness. For instance, Walean et al. (2023) demonstrated that brand gestalt significantly influences brand attitude and revisit intention in tourism destinations. Similarly, Mandagi et al. (2024) found that destination brand gestalt positively affects tourist satisfaction and loyalty, confirming its pivotal role in strengthening place-based branding. Pongoh and Mandagi (2025) further established a strong linkage between destination brand gestalt and brand equity in Bali, highlighting how cohesive brand perceptions enhance competitive positioning. In the healthcare sector, Mandagi et al. (2024) revealed that hospital brand gestalt enhances patient satisfaction and revisit intention, illustrating its versatility beyond tourism. Meanwhile, Walean et al. (2024) validated the mediating role of customer satisfaction in linking brand

gestalt to loyalty within the telecommunications sector.

Moreover, recent studies emphasize the sustainability and co-creative dimensions of the concept. Mandagi and Centeno (2024) conceptualized destination brand gestalt as a co-created process shaped by stakeholder collaboration and shared meaning-making, while Rantung et al. (2025) identified the 4S brand gestalt dimensions as key determinants of repurchase intention and customer citizenship behavior in sustainable traditional products. Similarly, Mandagi et al. (2024) found that the combined effects of brand gestalt, awareness, and image significantly drive word-of-mouth intentions in ecotourism. These findings collectively affirm that brand gestalt provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how consumers internalize, experience, and remain loyal to brands across various industries and cultural contexts. The four dimensions of brand gestalt are shown in Figure 1 below.

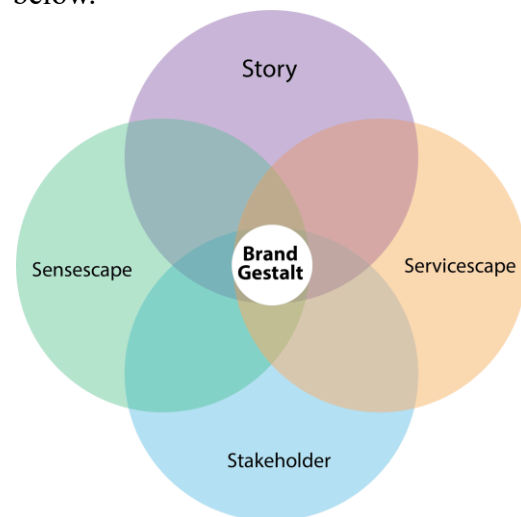


Figure 1. Brand Gestalt's Dimensions

Source: Mandagi dkk., 2021

2.3 Brand Image (BI)

Brand Image (BI) is defined as consumers' perceptions of a brand, reflected through the associations

embedded in their memory (Keller, 1993). BI represents how consumers view and believe in a brand, which is formed based on how the product or brand is recognized by them (Tjiptono, 2020). According to Kotler (2013), brand image is a distinctive marker that helps determine whether consumers have responded to the products and promotions of a brand. It measures the brand's ability to capture consumer responses and loyalty. Brand image refers to individuals' perceptions and beliefs, stored and recalled in their minds.

Sitorus et al. (2022) state that customers will repurchase a product if they hold a positive brand image. Conversely, if the brand image is negative, the product will fail to attract consumer interest for repeat purchases. The development of BI is influenced by several factors, one of which is Social Media Marketing (SMM). Işık (2024) explains that elements such as information quality and source credibility in SMM affect consumers' adoption of information, which in turn shapes brand image. It can be said that, in building brand image, business owners must focus on developing the brand's elements so that they form a unified whole that remains embedded in consumers' memory.

2.4 Generation Z & Media Sosial

Generation Z or Gen Z are individuals born after 1996. According to Zorn (2017), Gen Z is a generation that is very tech-savvy, as they were born in an era of technological development and have never known a world without social media. Wood (2013) emphasizes that there are several trends that characterize Generation Z as consumers, including an interest in new technology and a demand for ease of use. From this perspective, it can be said that Gen Z has a high interest

in technology, particularly social media. For Gen Z, social media is more than just a communication tool; it is part of their lives today (Pitanatri et al., 2024; Aseng et al., 2025). According to DataIndonesia.id (2023), 91.1% of social media users are from Gen Z. Generation Z often spends time on social media to communicate and even make online purchases. Given Gen Z's active presence on social media, there is significant potential for business owners to market their products through social media. The strong connection between Gen Z and social media creates greater opportunities for business owners to enter and understand this segment

2.5 Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

Social media marketing is a communication platform that enables direct interaction between consumers and brands (Kim & Ko, 2012). The use of social media marketing strategies has now become one of the main alternatives for companies to convey information about their products while simultaneously reinforcing efforts to build brand image. Marketing activities carried out by companies on social media platforms play a very important role in shaping consumer perceptions of the brand. When the information shared through social media is perceived positively by consumers, they are more likely to develop favorable views of the brand.

Previous studies have shown a positive relationship between social media marketing and the formation of brand image, particularly through the concept of brand gestalt. Positive marketing activities on social media can serve as a key factor in creating favorable brand perceptions. This finding is consistent with the study of Mandagi & Aseng (2021), which revealed that the unity or gestalt of a

brand—including aspirations, roles, and associations built by marketers—is closely related to the formation of brand image. Based on this, the present study analyzes how companies, as marketers, implement social media marketing strategies to build brand image through the unity of brand perceptions held by consumers.

The story dimension focuses on the narrative or storytelling experiences delivered by a brand. According to studies by Wibowo et al. (2024) and Kaur et al. (2024), there is a positive relationship between SMM and brand storytelling. Their findings indicate that authentic narratives, emotional engagement, consistency, and the use of strong visuals play an important role in the effectiveness of brand storytelling. This aligns with brand gestalt as the mediating variable in this study, where the storytelling element of SMM corresponds to the story dimension of brand gestalt. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

H_{1a}: SMM has a significant positive effect on Story.

The sensescape dimension focuses on the sensory and emotional experiences a brand provides to consumers. Through SMM, brands can deliver content that is visually appealing and interactive (Mandagi, 2023). Social media platforms allow products to be showcased in ways that evoke consumer emotions, create memorable experiences, and shape brand perceptions. Several studies show that brands utilizing sensory-rich content in their SMM strategies are more likely to generate positive brand perceptions and increase customer engagement (Rantung, 2023). However, this differs from the findings of Evelyn (2022), who stated that there is no direct relationship between SMM and

sensescape. Therefore, this study will analyze whether the two variables are indeed related. Based on this, the following hypothesis is developed:

H_{1b}: SMM has a significant positive effect on Sensescape

The servicescape dimension refers to the environmental aspects, both physical and digital, that serve as the context for interactions between consumers and a brand. SMM plays a strategic role in shaping consumer perceptions of this environment through visual elements, layout design, and consistent content presentation. A well-designed online representation of a brand through social media can create positive expectations toward its products and services, as well as influence consumer behavior in decision-making (Mandagi et al., 2024). In addition, other studies show that a cohesive digital environment can enhance perceptions of quality and comfort, ultimately fostering customer loyalty (Kim & Ko, 2012). Based on this, the following hypothesis is developed:

H_{1c}: SMM has a significant positive effect on Servicescape.

The stakeholder dimension describes how a brand builds relationships and interacts with various parties of interest, such as customers, employees, suppliers, and communities. SMM plays an important role in strengthening these connections through direct and interactive communication. Through social media platforms, brands can respond to feedback, address complaints, and build loyal digital communities (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). The participatory nature of social media enables companies to demonstrate transparency, which ultimately enhances brand image. Previous studies show that positive interactions between brands and stakeholders on social media have a

significant impact on improving brand perceptions (Wibowo et al., 2020). Based on this, the following hypothesis is developed:

H1a: SMM has a significant positive effect on Stakeholder.

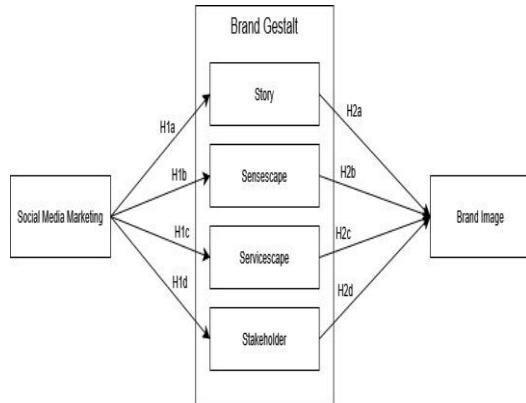


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Brand gestalt represents consumers' perceptions of the unity of elements within a brand, which can be observed through four dimensions: story, sensescape, servicescape, and stakeholder (Mandagi et al., 2021). The relationship between brand gestalt and BI in this study is explained through consumer perceptions of these dimensions, which have a positive influence on BI. In other words, if companies market their brands based on positive story, sensescape, servicescape, and stakeholder dimensions, it will result in a positive BI.

The concept of brand gestalt views a brand as an interconnected system, where storytelling plays an important role in building emotional connections with consumers. An engaging narrative can create a distinctive brand identity, making it easier for consumers to remember and recognize the brand, which in turn strengthens their emotional engagement and attachment to it (Mandagi, 2023; Rantung et al., 2023). Research shows that a good brand story can increase consumer trust and foster closer relationships between the brand and its consumers (Suryana, 2024).

Furthermore, research conducted by Andhini & Anadanawarih (2023) emphasizes the importance of brand storytelling in shaping brand perception and influencing consumer behavior, particularly among Gen Z. Based on this, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2a: Story has a significant positive effect on BI

The sensescape dimension represents the unity of sensory experiences (visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory) that can enhance consumers' emotional engagement (Mandagi, 2023). Several studies indicate that strategically designed sensescapes can create memorable brand experiences and evoke positive emotions (Toding & Mandagi, 2023). Thus, the sensescape dimension is a crucial component in building brand loyalty by fostering emotional connections and leaving lasting impressions. Based on this, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2b: Sensescape has a significant positive effect on BI

The servicescape dimension refers to the physical environment or setting of a brand that contributes significantly to the overall brand gestalt. A well-designed servicescape not only enhances the consumer experience but also creates positive emotional responses that foster attachment to the brand (Mandagi et al., 2022). Previous studies have revealed that servicescape has a positive and significant effect on brand image, which subsequently influences customer decision-making (Subroto et al., 2024). Based on this, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2c: Servicescape has a significant positive effect on BI

The stakeholder dimension explains the relationship between a

brand and its stakeholders, such as employees, customers, and business partners who support the business. This relationship shapes a brand identity that enhances consumers' emotional attachment and builds brand image (Mandagi et al., 2024). Several studies indicate that the active involvement of stakeholders in social networks can contribute to the formation of a strong brand image and reputation (Foroudi et al., 2020; Muthiah, 2024). Based on this, the following hypothesis is developed:

H_{2a}: Stakeholder has a significant positive effect on BI

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a descriptive and correlational quantitative approach. Descriptive analysis methods are used to understand a phenomenon systematically and accurately in the object being studied (Sugiyono, 2018). Meanwhile, correlational descriptive research aims to examine the current conditions of a group, object, situation, or system of thought, with the goal of describing the relationships, characteristics, and facts that occur factually and accurately (Sugiyono, 2018).

3.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

A population is a collection of objects or subjects that have certain characteristics and are designated as the focus of research, which will then be analyzed to draw conclusions (Sugiyono, 2018). The population used in this study consists of coffee shop visitors in the Gen Z age range. The sample size in this study was determined based on the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2018), whereby the sample size is

calculated by multiplying the number of indicators (N) by a number between 5 and 10. This study used a conservative approach, which is to multiply the number of indicators by 5. With 32 indicators, the required sample size is 32×5 , resulting in a total of 160 respondents.

The sample in this study was determined using purposive sampling, which is a method of selecting samples based on certain criteria that have been determined in advance (Ghozali, 2018). The criteria used in selecting respondents included: (i) having visited or currently visiting a coffee shop, (ii) being between 16 and 27 years old, and (iii) being willing to voluntarily fill out the research questionnaire without receiving any form of compensation.

3.3 Data and Instrumentation

The data used in this study is primary data. According to Sugiyono (2018), primary data is data obtained directly from the source. In this study, primary data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The questionnaire instrument used in this study is a data collection tool that involves questions asked to respondents. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts: the first part contained questions related to the demographics of the respondents, while the second part contained questions focused on the variables being studied, which were divided into several sections according to the number of elements and indicators of the variables. In completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to provide assessments using a Likert scale, with scores ranging from 1 to 7, as follows:

Table 1. Likert Scale Scores for Questionnaire Items

Sikap	Scale
Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Somewhat disagree	3
Neutral	4
Somewhat agree	5
Agree	6
Strongly agree	7

The variables used in this study were measured using several indicators adopted from various previous studies. Table 2 below presents a summary of the

research variables, the definition of each variable, and the indicators used in the measurement process.

Table 2. Research variable indicators

Variable	Definition	Indicator
Social Media Marketing	Social media marketing is a communication channel that enables direct interaction between consumers and brands (Kim & Ko, 2012).	Content Creation Content Sharing Connecting (Gunelius, 2011)
Storyscape	Storytelling is an important element in creating a strong brand, because by incorporating narratives into a brand, customers can have a more profound experience related to that brand (Huang et al., 2014).	Story Characteristic Information (Mandagi dkk., 2021)
Sensescape	Sensescape refers to how individuals perceive a brand (Mandagi et al., 2021). This concept describes how customers interpret and feel their experiences related to a brand.	Emotion Cognitive Behavior (Mandagi dkk., 2021)
Servicescape	Servicescape refers to the condition of the physical environment designed to support the availability of services to consumers (Lovelock et al., 2011).	Location Cleanness Layout (Mandagi dkk., 2021).
Stakeholder	Stakeholders are individuals or groups who have an interest and role in a business activity (Wheelen et al., 2018).	Employee Other Visitors Management (Mandagi dkk., 2021)
Brand Image (BI)	BI is the perceptions and beliefs held by customers, which are reflected in the associations embedded in their memories of a brand (Kotler & Keller, 2009).	Brand identity Brand personality Brand Association Brand behavior & Attitude Brand Competence & Benefit Vijaya, 2013)

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process in this study began with the preparation of questionnaire items, which were designed based on indicators from each research variable in accordance with relevant literature reviews. Next, the questionnaire was distributed to target respondents via the Google Form platform. The questionnaire was distributed both online via social media and in person. After the respondents filled out the questionnaire, the researchers verified it to ensure the completeness and suitability of the answers with the predetermined instructions. The collected data was then input into a spreadsheet and exported to SmartPLS software for analysis. The questionnaire distribution process was carried out from February to April 2025.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a stage in research that aims to compile and process data systematically so that the information contained therein can be understood and interpreted more easily, and produce findings that can be communicated to other parties (Hair et al., 2017). In accordance with the objectives of this study, which are to develop and test a theoretical model that includes several variables, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method was used as the data analysis technique. SEM is a multivariate analysis technique used to test the correlative relationships between variables simultaneously in an integrated model.

Data analysis in this study was conducted in a gradual, specific, and systematic manner using SmartPLS statistical software. The initial stage of the analysis was a validity test, which aimed to assess the extent to which the research instruments were able to

measure what they were supposed to measure (Ghozali, 2018). Instruments or questionnaires are considered valid if the questions are properly formulated to represent the intended construct (Hair et al., 2017). Next, a reliability test is conducted to evaluate the consistency of the indicators in measuring the variables under study repeatedly and stably (Ghozali, 2018).

The next stage, after all indicators are declared valid and reliable, is structural model testing or hypothesis testing. This process is carried out by analyzing the significance of the path coefficients using the PLS Bootstrapping feature in SmartPLS software. Structural model testing covers two main aspects, namely: (1) hypothesis testing carried out by assessing the significance level of the path coefficients between variables, and (2) goodness-of-fit evaluation to measure the extent to which the empirical model fits the theoretical model that has been designed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent demographic profile

Table 3 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. The data analysis shows that the majority of respondents identified themselves as male (64.6%). In terms of age, the largest percentage was in the 35–44 age group, which comprised 36.8% of the total respondents. Furthermore, individuals aged 25–34 years old comprise 21.2% of the sample. Regarding education level, 57.6% of respondents reported having obtained a bachelor's degree, making it the most dominant education category. Meanwhile, 62.3% of respondents stated that they worked as private employees, indicating that this category was the most common occupation and suggesting a diversity of job roles beyond those specifically mentioned.

Table 3. Demografi Responden

Variable	Level	n	%
Gender	Male	93	54.7
	Female	77	45.3
Age	17-20	82	48.2
	21-24	77	45.3
	< 27 Years Old	11	6.5
Education	Student/University		
	Student	139	81.8
	Private Employee	20	11.8
	Civil Servant	2	1.2
	Entrepreneur	7	4.1
	Freelancer	1	0.6
Place of residence	Unemployed	1	0.6
	Manado	123	72,4
	Bitung	19	11,2
	Minahasa	11	6,5
	North Minahasa	13	7,6
	Southeast Minahasa	2	1,2
	South Minahasa	1	0,6
	Other	1	0,6

4.2 Descriptive Statistic

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics of the six main variables studied, namely Social Media Marketing (SMM), Story, Sensescape, Servicescape, Stakeholder, and BI (BI). The results show that the SMM variable has the highest mean value of 6.57 with a standard deviation of 0.552, indicating that respondents generally have a very positive perception of marketing activities through social media, with relatively consistent answers. The variables Story, Servicescape, and

Stakeholder have the same average value, namely 5.46, with standard deviations of 0.591, 0.556, and 0.572, respectively. This shows that these three variables are rated positively by respondents with a fairly stable level of data dispersion. Meanwhile, the Sensescape and BI variables have an average value of 5.44, with standard deviations of 0.596 and 0.568, respectively, indicating positive perceptions but with slight variations among respondents.

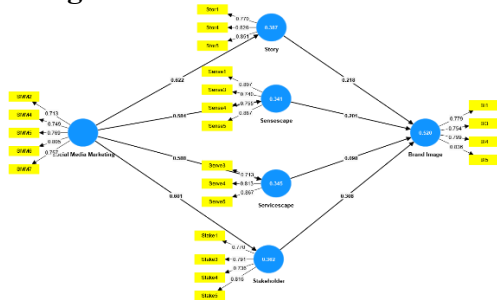
Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SMM	170	4	7	6.57	0.552
Story	170	4	7	5.46	0.591
Sensescape	170	4	7	5.44	0.596
Servicescape	170	4	7	5.46	0.556
Stakeholder	170	4	7	5.46	0.572
BI	170	4	7	5.44	0.568

4.3 Measurement Model

Evaluation of the measurement model shown in Figure 3 was conducted to assess the extent to which the model is valid and reliable. Convergent validity was analyzed by examining factor loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Figure 3. Measurement Model



In conducting model measurements, researchers performed measurements with multiple data runs to meet the factor loading threshold. Several indicator variables were removed from this calculation, namely

SMM2, Stor2, Stor3, Sense2, Serve1, Serve2, Stake2, and BI2. After removal and re-measurement, all factor loading values were met and the analysis could proceed to the next stage.

4.3.1 Convergent Validity

Factor loading values indicate the correlation between indicator scores and the underlying construct, with a recommended threshold of more than 0.7. The AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value, which is recommended to be above 0.5, indicates that at least 50% of the variance of the indicator can be explained by the construct (Hair et al., 2019). The results of the convergent validity analysis presented in Figure 3 and Table 5 show that all factor loading and AVE values exceed the recommended threshold, so it can be concluded that convergent validity has been achieved.

Table 5. Factor Loading

Variable	AVE	Indicator	Factor Loading
SMM	0.577	SMM2	0.713
		SMM4	0.749
		SMM5	0.769
		SMM6	0.805
		SMM7	0.757
Story	0.663	Story1	0.770
		Story4	0.820
		Story5	0.851
Sensescape	0.639	Sense1	0.807
		Sense3	0.740
		Sense4	0.755
		Sense5	0.887
Servicescape	0.640	Serve3	0.713
		Serve4	0.813
		Serve5	0.867
Stakeholder	0.606	Stake1	0.770
		Stake2	0.791
		Stake3	0.736
		Stake4	0.736

		Stake5	0.816
BI	0.628	BI1	0.779
		BI3	0.754
		BI4	0.799
		BI5	0.836

4.3.2 Discriminant Validity

Fornell Larcker Criterion

The evaluation of discriminant validity in this study was conducted using the Fornell-Larcker approach, which aims to compare the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct with the correlation value between that construct and other construct values in the model. In this context, a construct is considered to have sufficient discriminant validity if the AVE square root value (located on the diagonal of the table) is greater than the

correlation value between that construct and other constructs outside the diagonal. Based on the results listed in Table 6, all constructs in this study meet this requirement, where the AVE square root value for each construct is greater than the correlation value between existing constructs. Thus, from the above explanation, it can be concluded that the model used in this study meets the criteria for discriminant validity well, indicating that each construct in the model can be clearly and distinctly distinguished from other constructs.

Table 6. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BI	Sensescape	Servicescape	SMM	Stakeholder	Story
BI (1)	0,793					
Sensescape (2)	0,638	0,799				
Servicescape (3)	0,581	0,643	0,800			
SMM (4)	0,576	0,584	0,588	0,759		
Stakeholder (5)	0,648	0,681	0,695	0,601	0,779	
Story (6)	0,622	0,752	0,640	0,622	0,618	0,814

Based on Table 6 above, all constructs in this model show good discriminant validity results, with each AVE value greater than its highest correlation with other constructs. This indicates that each construct is conceptually distinct from one another, and there is no significant overlap between constructs.

Furthermore, in this study, cross loading analysis was also conducted to ensure

discriminant validity, and the results are presented in Table 7. The diagonal elements in the table show a strong relationship between the constructs and the corresponding indicators, while the elements outside the diagonal represent cross loading to other constructs. These results indicate that low cross-loading values indicate good discriminant validity, meaning that most constructs are distinct from one another.

Table 7. Cross loading

	BI	Sensescape	Servicescape	SMM	Stakeholder	Story
BI1	0,78	0,50	0,39	0,46	0,42	0,48
BI3	0,75	0,46	0,43	0,40	0,48	0,45

BI4	0,80	0,48	0,50	0,47	0,53	0,55
BI5	0,84	0,58	0,51	0,50	0,60	0,50
SMM2	0,46	0,40	0,40	0,71	0,42	0,46
SMM4	0,48	0,47	0,44	0,75	0,47	0,44
SMM5	0,43	0,41	0,48	0,77	0,45	0,47
SMM6	0,45	0,45	0,50	0,80	0,49	0,52
SMM7	0,37	0,48	0,41	0,76	0,44	0,46
Sense1	0,52	0,81	0,44	0,43	0,54	0,59
Sense3	0,44	0,74	0,41	0,46	0,48	0,58
Sense4	0,53	0,76	0,61	0,50	0,57	0,59
Sense5	0,54	0,89	0,58	0,48	0,58	0,64
Serve3	0,36	0,40	0,71	0,38	0,39	0,37
Serve4	0,53	0,57	0,81	0,53	0,61	0,55
Serve5	0,49	0,55	0,87	0,49	0,64	0,58
Stake1	0,54	0,53	0,58	0,38	0,77	0,47
Stake3	0,49	0,47	0,41	0,44	0,79	0,41
Stake4	0,49	0,56	0,67	0,47	0,74	0,54
Stake5	0,50	0,55	0,51	0,56	0,82	0,51
Stor1	0,43	0,53	0,47	0,51	0,48	0,77
Stor4	0,48	0,63	0,53	0,52	0,49	0,82
Stor5	0,60	0,67	0,56	0,50	0,54	0,85

4.3.3 Reliability

Reliability testing was conducted by examining Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability values. The results presented in Table 8 clearly confirm that the measured construct has achieved a high level of reliability. All reliability indicators exceed the

recommended threshold of 0.7, as stated by Hair et al. (2019). Strong evidence of this reliability shows that the measurement instruments used in this study are reliable and consistent, thereby increasing confidence in the accuracy and consistency of the data collected

Table 8. Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
BI	0,80	0,81	0,87
Sensescape	0,82	0,82	0,87
Servicescape	0,72	0,74	0,84
SMM	0,82	0,82	0,87
Stakeholder	0,78	0,79	0,86
Story	0,75	0,75	0,86

4.3.4 Goodness of Fit

The evaluation of the goodness-of-fit of the measurement model was

conducted using several standard indicators, namely Chi-Square, SRMR, d_ULS, d_G, and NFI. According to

Hair et al. (2019), the recommended threshold values for these indicators are as follows: the Chi-Square value should be less than 5, SRMR must be below 0.08, d_ULS greater than 2.00, d_G greater than 0.90, and NFI greater than 0.90. Based on the results presented in Table 9, based on the results of the analysis of several model fit indices, it is known that the Estimated Model shows a lower level of fit than the Saturated Model. These results indicate that the proposed model needs to be further refined in order to achieve an adequate level of fit to the empirical data.

Table 9. Goodness of Fit Model

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,069	0,134

Table 10. Blindfolding

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
BI	680,000	420,915	0,381
Sensescape	850,000	533,214	0,373
Servicescape	510,000	361,787	0,291
Social Media Marketing	850,000	545,824	0,358
Stakeholder	680,000	445,807	0,344
Story	510,000	345,564	0,322

The test results show that the quality of the structural model is in line with positive indicators, considering the measurement model that has been applied. The index values obtained show positive numbers for all endogenous constructs in the model. This study also produced good predictive model validity (fit model), because all latent variables have positive communality values greater than zero (0).

4.4 Structural Model

After assessing the measurement model and ensuring that all validity and reliability indicators have been met, the next stage in this study is to test the structural model. The main focus of this stage is to test the hypotheses that have been proposed, with the aim of

d_ULS	1,303	4,980
d_G	0,489	0,735
Chi-Square	459,043	592,218
NFI	0,769	0,702

4.3.5 Blindfolding

Blindfolding analysis is used to evaluate the predictive relevance of a construct model. The assessment is carried out by looking at the Q-Square value as the main indicator. Based on the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2018), if the Q-Square value is greater than 0.05, then the model can be said to have adequate predictive relevance. This indicates that the exogenous variables in the model have been able to accurately predict the endogenous variables under study

evaluating the extent to which each hypothesis is supported by the data. Structural model testing was conducted by assessing the significance of path coefficients through the PLS Bootstrapping feature in SmartPLS software. The results of the structural model testing can be seen in Figure 4, which provides an overview of the strength of the relationships between variables in the tested model.

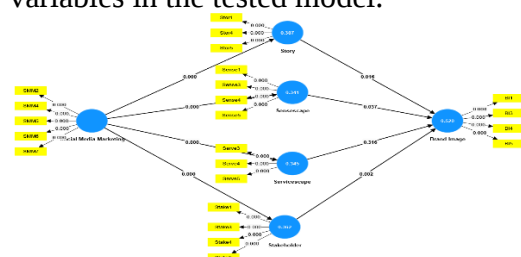


Figure 4. Structural Model Testing Results

4.4.1 Direct Effect

From the model calculations in Table 11 below, there are five accepted

hypothesis results, while there are two assessment results that do not support the existing hypothesis.

Table 11. Hypotheses Testing Result (Direct Effect)

	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	Significant?
Sensescape -> BI	0,25	0,10	2,40	0,017	Yes
Servicescape -> BI	0,09	0,10	0,89	0,376	No
Social Media Marketing -> BI	0,50	0,07	6,89	0,000	Yes
Social Media Marketing -> Sensescape	0,61	0,07	8,71	0,000	Yes
Social Media Marketing -> Servicescape	0,59	0,06	9,36	0,000	Yes
Social Media Marketing -> Stakeholder	0,60	0,07	8,26	0,000	Yes
Social Media Marketing -> Story	0,62	0,07	9,21	0,000	Yes
Stakeholder -> BI	0,30	0,10	3,07	0,002	Yes
Story -> BI	0,18	0,10	1,95	0,051	No

The results of the path analysis explain that several variables have a significant influence on the formation of BI and other variables in the model. Sensescape has a positive and significant effect on BI ($\beta = 0.25$, $p = 0.017$), which supports hypothesis H2b. However, no significant effect of servicescape on BI was found ($\beta = 0.09$, $p = 0.376$), so hypothesis H2c cannot be accepted.

In addition, social media marketing shows a strong and significant effect on BI ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$), sensescape ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$), servicescape ($\beta = 0.59$, $p < 0.001$), stakeholder ($\beta = 0.60$, $p < 0.001$), and story ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that social media marketing strategies play an important role in shaping consumer perceptions and experiences, thus accepting hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c, and H1d.

Furthermore, stakeholders were also found to have a significant effect on BI ($\beta = 0.30$, $p = 0.002$), supporting hypothesis H2d, thus accepting this hypothesis. Conversely, stories did not show a significant effect on BI ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.051$), because the p-value exceeded

the significance threshold of 0.05, so hypothesis H2a was not supported.

DISCUSSION

The results of the structural model testing shown in Table 8 explain that social media marketing has an effect on brand gestalt. Social media acts as an effective promotional tool, capable of disseminating information and creating attractive visual narratives that connect customer experiences with brands. For example, customers who see coffee-themed content may be reminded of previous visits to coffee shops, thereby forming an emotional attachment. The application of SMM strategies is considered capable of improving and building brand image, where a set of SMM elements is directly involved in brand formation (Amanda & Masnita, 2024). Mandagi and Aseng (2021) explain that narratives play an important role in the formation of brand gestalt because they are able to represent memorable moments and create connections between consumers and brands. This study found that three

aspects of the brand, namely sensory experience (sensescape), service environment (servicescape), and how the brand relates to all stakeholders, have a positive and tangible influence on BI Coffee Shop. This is in line with previous studies that say that information about products and perceived experiences are very important in forming a strong and positive brand image in the minds of consumers, meaning that it is the overall experience (gestalt) that consumers experience through various stimuli that ultimately shapes BI. (Schmitt, 1999).

Analysis of the first hypothesis (H1a), which tests the effect of Social Media Marketing (SMM) on brand story, shows that SMM has a significant and positive effect on brand story. This finding supports the hypothesis that marketing strategies through social media can strengthen brand story and create a stronger relationship between brands and consumers. Based on these results, the first hypothesis can be accepted. Promotional activities using social media as a marketing tool are considered to be able to help business owners promote their products to customers. The use of social media such as Instagram and TikTok makes it easier for business owners to market their products widely. The application of the concept of storytelling to marketed products will provide a unique experience for customers who see them. By seeing and feeling the story being told, it will indirectly shape perceptions of a brand and create memories and experiences of the product. This is consistent with research conducted by Mandagi and Aseng (2021), which identified that stories are a key element in brand gestalt that plays an important role in creating a deep experience and building an emotional connection between customers and a particular brand. The application of the storytelling concept is also in line with

the research by Wibowo et al. (2024) and Kaur et al. (2024), whose results show that authentic narratives, emotional engagement, consistency, and the use of strong visuals play an important role in the effectiveness of brand storytelling.

The analysis of the second hypothesis (H1b) relates to the influence of social media marketing on sensescape. The results of the analysis show that SMM has a significant and positive influence on brand sensescape, and the second hypothesis (H1b) is accepted. Sensescape relates to the experiences felt by customers. Sensescape is based on customers' perceptions of past experiences or known information about a brand. In line with the results of this study, it can be concluded that social media marketing plays an important role in sharing a brand's pleasant experiences with customers. The use of social media can help coffee shop owners share experiences in their coffee shops, for example by sharing video content about new experiences of enjoying a cup of coffee, or showing the atmosphere of live music performances in coffee shops. The results of this study are in line with the research by Setiawan et al. (2024), Mandagi & Aseng (2021), and Rantung et al. (2023), where social media helps provide exposure to existing experiences, which also has an impact on potential customers who have never visited. Thus, indirectly, potential customers can feel the experience and form a brand image through the content and visual experiences presented.

The third hypothesis (H1c) analysis relates to the effect of social media marketing on servicescape. The analysis results show that social media marketing has a significant and positive effect on servicescape. Based on these results, the third hypothesis (H1c) is accepted. Servicescape relates to the physical environment and services provided in

coffee shops. The better the servicescape offered, the greater the customer satisfaction and happiness with the services provided. Servicescape refers to the physical environment created to support services to consumers (Lovelock et al., 2011). Coffee shops must have a unique servicescape to meet the needs and desires of Gen Z. This is in line with the research by Tabari et al. (2024), which explains that the application of unique physical and atmospheric elements in shaping customer experiences through social media is one strategy that can be used to expand the market. In winning the competition between coffee shops, the use of social media greatly helps coffee shop owners to convince customers that their coffee shop is superior to competitors by showcasing its advantages. In addition to sharing stories and experiences, sharing the conditions of the coffee shop environment is also important in promotion. Coffee shop owners can showcase a clean and comfortable atmosphere and utilize social media features for customer service, such as comments and direct messages, which can be used as a means of communication.

The analysis of the fourth hypothesis (H1d) relates to the influence of social media marketing on stakeholders. The results of the analysis show that social media marketing has a significant and positive effect on stakeholders. Based on these results, the fourth hypothesis (H1d) is accepted. Stakeholders are individuals or groups who play an important role in business activities (Wheelen et al., 2018). The concept of stakeholders in brand gestalt includes customer perceptions of the role of stakeholders in building brand identity. In the context of coffee shops, in addition to coffee shop owners, baristas and employees also play an important role in business operations. The results of this

study are in line with the studies by Foroudi et al. 2020, Poluan et al. (2022), and Wulus et al. (2022), which explain that active involvement in social media platforms contributes to the formation of stronger relationships with stakeholders. Coffee shop owners must ensure that employees work according to standards and serve customers wholeheartedly to build positive perceptions.

Next, the results of the analysis of each dimension in brand gestalt on BI will be explained. Hypotheses H2b and H2d explore the influence of the brand gestalt dimensions, namely sensescape and stakeholders, on coffee shop BI. The results of the analysis state that sensescape and stakeholders have a significant and positive influence on BI. Therefore, both hypotheses are accepted. The Sensescape dimension is based on customers' perceptions of past experiences with a brand. This is in line with the results of research by Todiang & Mandagi (2023) and Subroto et al. (2024), which found that when sensescape is well designed, it creates a memorable experience and evokes positive emotions in shaping BI. It can be concluded that the experiences provided and displayed, as well as the atmosphere created by coffee shops, can build BI for coffee shops. This is especially true for the Gen Z segment, where members often gather and have fun at their coffee shops, indirectly shaping the experiences they have and storing them in their memories.

From the stakeholder dimension. In the context of coffee shops, employees who interact directly with customers, such as baristas and staff, play an important role in coffee shop operations. In addition to ensuring that employees work according to standards and serve customers, communication between customers and baristas has also become an important point in shaping BI. For example, a barista must be able to

communicate well with customers. Currently, Gen Z customers tend to enjoy communicating with baristas to ask about coffee blends, coffee origins, and other details about coffee that suit their tastes. Based on this phenomenon, their experience will indirectly be stored in their minds about a coffee shop brand and build a strong BI in the minds of customers. In Muthiah's (2024) research, he explains that one of the strategies for building a brand among Gen Z is that the brand must better represent and communicate itself to its target market. Nowadays, a coffee shop is not just focused on the logo or physical form of a brand. In this study, coffee shop owners must show that they are not just outlets that sell coffee, but more than that, they must represent the coffee shop brand as a communicative friend of Gen Z. This is in line with the results of research by Mandagi and Aseng (2021) and Sitorus et al. (2022), where brand gestalt represents a holistic perception of a brand, where a combination of stories, experiences, environments, and stakeholders form a complete image in the minds of consumers. This unity plays an important role in building and strengthening BI.

Furthermore, the results of Hypotheses H2a and H2c show that neither hypothesis has a significant and positive effect on BI in coffee shops. Both hypotheses indicate a lack of support for the story and servicescape dimensions in building BI in coffee shops. Previously, Analysis H1a explained that SMM has a role in promoting the story dimension of a coffee shop, but conversely, in this study, Hypothesis H2a states that brand story has no influence in building BI. The storytelling concept offered by coffee shops is considered ineffective in attracting Gen Z. This concludes that the story concept is not an important or sought-after aspect of a brand that will be offered to Gen Z. This is not in line with

the results of research by Andhini & Anadanawarih (2023), which states that story is important in shaping brand perception among Gen Z. This study, however, found different results. The findings of this study are in line with the research conducted by Ditsani et al. (2023), which states that storytelling marketing has no significant influence on BI among Gen Z. Even though storytelling is used in marketing strategies, it is not always effective in shaping BI, especially among Gen Z.

Furthermore, hypothesis H2c states that brand servicescape has no influence in building BI. This explains that elements in the servicescape, such as exterior design or physical atmosphere, are not always the main factors/points in shaping BI, especially among Gen Z. This is in line with the results of research by Verinanda et al. (2021), which found that servicescape has no significant influence on BI at the Filosofi Kopi Medan coffee shop. It can be concluded that even though the coffee shop atmosphere is supportive, it does not necessarily form a strong brand image among Gen Z; there are many factors that must support the formation of BI.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study explain that SMM has a significant influence on brand gestalt, particularly in building BI in coffee shops. The dimensions of sensescape, servicescape, and stakeholders have been proven to have a positive effect on brand perception, where social media serves as an effective tool for introducing customer experiences, the coffee shop environment, and interactions with various related parties. Through social media, coffee shop owners can share visual content that enriches the customer experience and strengthens their emotional attachment to the brand, as

reflected in brand gestalt theory, which emphasizes the importance of sensory experiences and interactions in forming a positive brand image.

However, the results of this study also reveal that two dimensions in brand gestalt, namely brand story and servicescape, do not have a significant influence on BI among Gen Z. Although storytelling marketing and the design and physical conditions of coffee shops are assessment points used in marketing strategies, neither has been proven effective in shaping BI, especially in the Gen Z segment. This study shows that emotional aspects and direct interaction with staff have a greater influence on Gen Z's perception in shaping BI, while story and physical elements tend to be less relevant in forming a strong brand image in the minds of Gen Z.

This study is not without limitations. Reliance on data self-reported by respondents may introduce bias, as each participant has a different level of engagement with social media or different perceptions of the brand gestalt of coffee shops. In addition, the focus on the coffee shop domain may limit the generalization of findings to other industries. Future research could expand the scope by exploring the influence of SMM in building BI through brand gestalt across various sectors and demographics. Furthermore, the application of longitudinal studies would provide deeper insights into how these relationships evolve over time and enable a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term impact of SMM in building BI.

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