



The influence of brand authenticity and open communication on social media on brand trust and brand loyalty: a case study of UINSU students in the era of digital marketing

Tia Nava Utari Tanjung¹, Imsar², Faisal Umardani Hasibuan³

^{1,2,3}Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received Jul 09, 2026 Revised Jul 17, 2026 Accepted Aug 06, 2026	This study aims to analyze the influence of brand authenticity and communication openness on social media on brand trust, as well as its implications for brand loyalty among students at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU). The background of this study is based on the growing use of social media as a primary tool in digital marketing activities, which serves not only as a promotional medium but also as a space for interaction between brands and consumers. The research approach used was quantitative, with data collected through a questionnaire distributed to UINSU students who actively use social media. The data obtained were then analyzed using SPSS to test the relationships between variables. The results show that brand authenticity and open communication on social media have a positive and significant effect on brand trust. Furthermore, brand trust was found to have a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty. These findings indicate that honesty, brand consistency, and open and responsive communication are important factors in building consumer trust, which ultimately fosters brand loyalty.
Keywords: Brand Authenticity; Openness of Communication; Brand Trust; Brand Loyalty; Social Media.	
Corresponding Author: Tia Nava Utari Tanjung, Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, alan Willem Iskandar Pasar V, Sumatera Utara, 20353, Indonesia. Email: tanjungtiagi91@gmail.com	

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology in recent years has brought about fundamental changes in modern marketing practices. Companies no longer rely solely on conventional media to introduce their products but have begun to shift toward using social media as the primary means of building relationships with consumers. Social media now functions not only as a one-way communication tool but has evolved into an interactive space that enables a more dynamic exchange of information, experiences, and perceptions between brands and consumers. This makes social media a strategic element in shaping a brand's image and value in the eyes of consumers (Kim & Ko, 2012).

In practice, social media marketing activities do not merely focus on conveying product information but also encompass efforts to build ongoing consumer experiences and engagement. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of messages; rather, they actively seek out, compare, and even share information about a brand. This has led to an increased role for consumer perception in determining the success of a marketing strategy. Therefore, companies are required to deliver communication that is not only engaging but also relevant and trustworthy. Marketing activities conducted through social media have been shown to influence brand awareness, brand image, and consumer loyalty (Bilgin, 2022; Godey et al., 2021).

In line with this, the success of a marketing strategy is determined not only by the ability to attract consumers' attention but also by the ability to maintain long-term relationships with them. Consumer-oriented business development strategies are a critical factor in ensuring business sustainability amid increasingly fierce competition. The ability to manage relationships with consumers and maintain customer interest is key to creating sustainable competitive advantage (Imsar, 2018).

As the intensity of social media use increases, modern consumers especially younger generations such as college students are showing a more critical tendency when evaluating a brand. Their assessments are no longer limited to a product's functional aspects but also encompass how a brand presents its identity and the nature of its communication in the digital space. In this context, brand authenticity has become a factor that consumers are paying increasing attention to. Brand authenticity reflects the extent to which a brand is able to demonstrate honesty, consistency in values, and alignment between the messages it conveys and the experiences felt by consumers (Morhart et al., 2023; Napoli et al., 2014).

On the other hand, open communication on social media is also an equally important aspect. Open communication is demonstrated through transparency of information, clarity of messages, and a brand's ability to respond to consumers quickly and appropriately. This type of communication enables more intense two-way interaction, making consumers feel closer to and more engaged with the brand. The interactions that develop are not only informative but also emotional, which can ultimately influence consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward the brand (Men & Tsai, 2013).

From an Islamic economic perspective, openness and honesty in communication are fundamental values in business activities. Transparency is viewed not only as a marketing strategy but also as a form of moral responsibility in conveying information to consumers. Business practices that prioritize openness are believed to foster stronger and more sustainable relationships between businesses and consumers (Nawawi, 2021). Thus, brand authenticity and open communication have not only marketing dimensions but also hold significant ethical value in building trust.

Brand trust is one of the key factors in the relationship between consumers and a brand. Trust is formed when consumers feel that a brand is capable of fulfilling its promises and delivering consistent quality. In situations where consumers are faced with a variety of product choices, trust serves as a factor that can reduce uncertainty and risk in decision-making (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Therefore, trust does not arise instantly but is formed through a process of repeated interactions and experiences. The trust that has been established will develop into brand loyalty. Loyalty reflects a consumer's commitment to continue using a particular brand and not easily switch to another brand, even though various alternatives are available. Loyal consumers not only make repeat purchases but also tend to recommend the brand to others. This indicates that loyalty is not merely related to purchasing behavior but also reflects a strong emotional bond between the consumer and the brand (Bilgin, 2022).

From an Islamic economic perspective, trust and loyalty are closely linked to the values of amanah and responsibility in economic activities. Transparent and consistent business practices will strengthen consumer trust, which ultimately contributes to the formation of long-term loyalty (Syahbudi, 2021). Furthermore, trust is also viewed as a crucial element in economic relationships because it influences overall consumer decisions and behavior (Nasution, 2020).

College students are a relevant group in this study because they have a high level of social media usage and are active in engaging with various forms of digital content. Students at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU) serve not only as consumers but also as individuals who help shape opinions and perceptions of a brand in the digital environment. Their perceptions of brand authenticity and open communication have significant potential to influence their level of trust and loyalty toward a brand.

Although various studies have discussed the role of social media in marketing, research that specifically links brand authenticity and communication transparency to brand trust and brand

loyalty in the context of UINSU students remains limited. Therefore, this study is important to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between these variables. [Revisi 2 – Research Gap] Although previous studies have examined social media marketing, brand authenticity, communication, trust, and loyalty, these variables are often analyzed separately. Limited research has integrated brand authenticity and open communication on social media in explaining the development of brand trust and brand loyalty, particularly among university students. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining the relationships among these variables within a digital marketing context.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating brand authenticity and open communication on social media as key factors in explaining brand trust and brand loyalty among UINSU students. Unlike previous studies that generally examine social media marketing or brand loyalty separately, this study emphasizes the combined role of authenticity and communication openness in building consumer trust and fostering long-term loyalty in the digital marketing context.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach in the form of explanatory research, as it aims to examine the influence of brand authenticity and communication openness on social media on brand trust and brand loyalty among students at UIN Sumatera Utara (FEBI). According to (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016), a quantitative approach is used to objectively test relationships between variables through numerical data and statistical analysis. This study uses a cross-sectional design, in which data collection is conducted once during a specific period to determine respondents' perceptions at the time of the study. [Revisi 2 – Theoretical Contribution] This study contributes to the development of Relationship Marketing Theory in the digital age by demonstrating that brand authenticity and open communication on social media strengthen brand trust and foster long-term brand loyalty. It also highlights social media as an interactive platform for developing and maintaining relationships between brands and consumers. Based on the figure above, it can be explained that: (a) Brand Authenticity (X_1) influences Brand Trust (Z). The higher the brand authenticity, the higher the consumers' trust in the brand. (b) Openness of Communication on Social Media (X_2) influences Brand Trust (Z). Open and transparent communication can increase consumers' trust in the brand. (c) Brand Trust (Z) influences Brand Loyalty (Y_1). High trust encourages consumers to remain loyal to the brand. (d) Brand Trust (Z) acts as a mediating variable that links the effects of Brand Authenticity (X_1) and Openness of Communication on Social Media (X_2) on Brand Loyalty (Y_1).

The population in this study consists of active students at the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEBI) of UIN North Sumatra (UINSU). Population data was obtained from the official FEBI UINSU website, which indicates that there are 4,523 active students (FEBI UINSU, 2026). The sampling technique used in this study is random sampling, given the relatively small number of respondents, with the sample size determined using the Slovin formula. [Revisi 1 – Rationale for Using a 10% Margin of Error] A 10% margin of error was used because the study is exploratory and aims to obtain a representative overview of UINSU students' perceptions within the available time and resource constraints. This margin was considered appropriate for determining an adequate sample size while maintaining the feasibility of data collection. The Slovin formula is: $N/(N(d))^2 + 1$. Based on this formula, using a standard error of 10%, the calculation yields $4,523/(4,523 \times 10\%)^2 + 1 = 4,523/46.23 = 97$ respondents (Syahbudi et al., 2023).

Data collection was conducted via an online questionnaire (Google Form) using a 1–5 Likert scale, as follows:

1 = Strongly Disagree (STS), 2 = Disagree (DS), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA).

The research instrument consisted of 4 variables with a total of 8 indicators, with each variable having 2 main indicators. The brand authenticity variable was measured using the indicators

of information honesty and brand consistency. The variable of communication openness on social media was measured using response speed and clarity of information. The brand trust variable was measured using product reliability and sense of security, while brand loyalty was measured using repurchase intention and willingness to recommend. Data Collection Techniques:

a. Validity Test

A validity test is used to determine whether each statement item in the questionnaire is able to measure the research variable effectively. Testing Criteria: If the calculated r value $> r$ table, the statement item is deemed valid. (Husna et al., 2022) Conversely, if the calculated r value $< r$ table, the item is deemed invalid.

b. Reliability Test

The reliability test aims to determine the consistency of the measurement instrument in the study. An instrument is considered reliable if it can produce stable results. Testing Criteria: The instrument is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is > 0.70 .

c. Classical Assumptions Test

a. Normality Test

The normality test is used to determine whether the research data are normally distributed or not. The test is conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method. Criteria: If the significance value is > 0.05 , the data are normally distributed.

b. Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test aims to determine whether there is unequal variance among the residuals in the regression model. The test is conducted using the Glejser test. Criteria: If the significance value is > 0.05 , there is no heteroscedasticity.

c. Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test is used to determine whether there is correlation among the independent variables (brand authenticity and communication openness). Criteria: Tolerance > 0.10 , VIF < 10 . If both conditions are met, then there is no multicollinearity.

d. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to determine the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. This study uses two regression models:

Model 1 : To test the effect of Brand Authenticity (X_1) and Communication Openness (X_2) on Brand Trust (Z). Regression equation:

$$Z = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e. \quad [1]$$

Model 2 : To test the effects of Brand Authenticity (X_1), Communication Openness (X_2), and Brand Trust (Z) on Brand Loyalty (Y_1). Regression equation:

$$Y_1 = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 Y_1 + e. \quad [2]$$

e. Hypothesis Testing

a. Test (Partial)

The t-test is used to determine the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable individually. If the significance level is < 0.05 , the null hypothesis is accepted.

b. F-Test (Simultaneous)

The F-test is used to determine the combined effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. If the significance level is < 0.05 , the independent variables have a simultaneous effect.

c. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination is used to determine the extent to which the independent variables explain the dependent variable. (Ghozali, 2021). An R^2 value that approaches 1 indicates that the independent variables have a stronger influence on the dependent variable.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Instrument Validation

a. Validity Test

A validity test was conducted to determine the extent to which the items in the research instrument were able to measure the variables in question, namely Work Discipline (X_1), Openness of Communication on Social Media (X_2), Brand Trust (Z), and Brand Loyalty (Y_1). The test was conducted on the respondents. Based on the distribution of the r value with degrees of freedom (df) = $n - 2 = 97 - 2 = 95$ and a significance level of 5%, the critical r value (r_{table}) was obtained as 0.1996. The results of the instrument validity test are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	Rvalue	Rtable	Description
Brand Authenticity (X_1)	1	0,702	0,1996	Valid
	2	0,733	0,1996	Valid
	3	0,607	0,1996	Valid
	4	0,657	0,1996	Valid
	5	0,719	0,1996	Valid
Kompensasi (X_2)	1	0,734	0,1996	Valid
	2	0,726	0,1996	Valid
	3	0,579	0,1996	Valid
	4	0,687	0,1996	Valid
	5	0,687	0,1996	Valid
Brand Trust (Z)	1	0,669	0,1996	Valid
	2	0,760	0,1996	Valid
	3	0,687	0,1996	Valid
	4	0,660	0,1996	Valid
	5	0,691	0,1996	Valid
Brand Loyalty (Y_1)	1	0,758	0,1996	Valid
	2	0,792	0,1996	Valid
	3	0,630	0,1996	Valid
	4	0,643	0,1996	Valid
	5	0,696	0,1996	Valid

The validity test results show that all statement items for each variable have a calculated r value greater than the table r value (calculated $r >$ table r). This indicates that each statement item in the instrument has a significant relationship with the total score of its respective variable. Thus, all items in the instrument are deemed valid and can be used in this study.

b. Reliability Test

A reliability test was conducted to determine whether the statements in the questionnaire for each variable were consistent. The results of the calculations using SPSS software are as follows.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
X_1	5	0,704	Reliable
X_2	5	0,702	Reliable
Z	5	0,714	Reliable
Y_1	5	0,738	Reliable

The table shows that the Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables are greater than 0.70 ($\alpha > 0.70$). This means that all items for each variable are reliable and trustworthy, making them suitable for use in this study.

Tests of Classical sAssumptions

a. Normality Test

Before conducting further analysis, a normality test was first performed on the research data to determine whether the data are normally distributed. This normality test is important as one of the prerequisites for parametric statistical analysis.

Table 3. Normality Test Results for Model 1 (X₁ and X₂ against Z)

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			Unstandardized Residual
N			97
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean		.0000000
	Std. Deviation		1.61249070
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute		.072
	Positive		.040
	Negative		-.072
Test Statistic			.072
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c			.200 ^d
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^e	Sig.		.246
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.235
		Upper Bound	.257

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
e. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 605580418.

Based on the table of results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test on the residual values from the regression model between the independent and dependent variables, a significance value of 0.200 was obtained. Since the significance value is greater than 0.05 ($0.134 > 0.05$), it can be concluded that the residual data are normally distributed. This means the data can be used for further analysis using parametric regression tests because it meets the normality assumption.

Table 4. Normality Test Results for Model 2 (X₁ and X₂ versus Y₁)

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			Unstandardized Residual
N			97
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean		.0000000
	Std. Deviation		1.71617927
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute		.045
	Positive		.045
	Negative		-.043
Test Statistic			.045
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c			.200 ^d
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^e	Sig.		.908
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.900
		Upper Bound	.915

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

e. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 1978014291.

Based on the table of results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test on the residuals from the regression model between the independent and dependent variables, a significance value of 0.200 was obtained. Since the significance value is greater than 0.05 ($0.134 > 0.05$), it can be concluded that the residual data are normally distributed. This means that the data can be used for further analysis using parametric regression tests because they meet the normality requirement.

b. Multicollinearity Test

A multicollinearity test was conducted to determine whether there is any correlation among the independent variables in the regression model. This test was performed using the Tolerance and VIF values. The test results are presented in the following table.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test Results for Model 1 (X₁ and X₂ versus Z)

Coefficients ^a		Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Tolerance	VIF
1	Brand Authenticity	.677	1.476
	Open Communication on Social Media	.677	1.476
	a. Dependent Variable: Brand Trust		

Based on the results of the multicollinearity test in Model 1, it can be seen that the Tolerance values for the Brand Authenticity (X₁) and Openness of Communication on Social Media (X₂) variables are both 0.677, which is greater than 0.10 (> 0.10). Furthermore, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for both variables is 1.476, which is below the threshold of 10 (< 10). Thus, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity in Model 1, and the regression model is suitable for further analysis.

Table 6. Multicollinearity Test Results for Model 2 (X₁ and X₂ on Y₁)

Coefficients ^a		Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Tolerance	VIF
1	Brand Authenticity	.677	1.476
	Open Communication on Social Media	.677	1.476
	a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty		

Based on the results of the multicollinearity test in Model 2, it can be seen that the Tolerance values for the Brand Authenticity (X₁) and Openness of Communication on Social Media (X₂) variables are both 0.677, which is greater than 0.10 (> 0.10). Furthermore, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for both variables is 1.476, which is below the threshold of 10 (< 10). Thus, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity in Model 2, and the regression model is suitable for further analysis.

b. Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted using the Glejser test. The test results are presented in the following table.

Table 7. Heteroscedasticity Test Results for Model 1 (X₁ and X₂ versus Z)

Coefficients ^a				
Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
2.313	1.021		2.265	.026

-.019	.050	-.048	-.386	.700
-.029	.055	-.067	-.535	.594

a. Dependent Variable: ABS_RES1

Based on the results of the Glejser Model 2 test in the table above, the significance values for the Brand Authenticity (X₁) variable were 0.700 and for Open Communication on Social Media (X₂) were 0.594. All of these significance values are greater than 0.05 (> 0.05), so it can be concluded that there is no evidence of heteroscedasticity in Model 1. Thus, the residual variance is constant (homoscedasticity), making the regression model suitable for further analysis.

Table 8. Heteroscedasticity Test Results for Model 2 (X₁ and X₂ versus Y₁)

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.478	1.102	-.222	3.157	.002
Brand Authenticity	-.097	.054	-.009	-1.821	.072
Open Communication on Social Media	-.004	.059		-.072	.943

a. Dependent Variable: ABS_RES2

Based on the results of the Glejser Model 2 test in the table above, the significance values for the Brand Authenticity (X₁) variable were 0.072 and for Open Communication on Social Media (X₂) were 0.943. All of these significance values are greater than 0.05 (> 0.05), so it can be concluded that there is no evidence of heteroscedasticity in Model 2. Thus, the residual variance is constant (homoscedasticity), making the regression model suitable for further analysis.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to determine the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. In this study, two regression models were used: Model 1 to test the effects of Brand Authenticity (X₁) and Openness of Communication on Social Media (X₂) on Brand Trust (Z), and Model 2 to test the effects of Brand Authenticity (X₁) and Openness of Communication on Social Media (X₂) on Brand Loyalty (Y₁).

Table 9. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results for Model 1 (X₁ and X₂ on Z)

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.678	1.758		2.092	.039
Brand Authenticity	-.383	.085	.396	4.487	.000
Open Communication on Social Media	-.435	.095	.405	4.588	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Trust

The multiple linear regression equation in Model 1 can be expressed as follows:

$$Z = 3.678 + 0.383 X_1 + 0.435 X_2 + e \quad [3]$$

Based on the multiple linear regression equation in Model 1, the following results were obtained: (a) The constant term of 3.678 indicates that if the variables Brand Authenticity (X₁) and Openness of Communication on Social Media (X₂) are assumed to be zero, then the value of Brand Trust (Z) is 3.678. (b) The regression coefficient for Brand Authenticity (X₁) of 0.383 indicates that every 1-unit increase in Brand Authenticity will increase Brand Trust by 0.383. The positive direction of the coefficient indicates that the higher the Brand Authenticity, the higher the Brand Trust will be.

A significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05) indicates that Brand Authenticity has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust among FEBI UINSU students in the Digital Marketing Era. (c) The regression coefficient for Openness of Communication on Social Media (X_2) of 0.435 indicates that a 1-unit increase in Openness of Communication will increase Brand Trust by 0.435. The positive direction of the coefficient indicates that as Openness of Communication increases, Brand Trust also increases. A significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05) indicates that Openness of Communication on Social Media has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust among FEBI UINSU students in the era of digital marketing.

Table 10. Results from Multiple Linear Regression Test for Model 2 (X_1 and X_2 on Y_1)

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.741	1.871		2.000	.048
Brand Authenticity	.566	.091	.548	6.226	.000
Open Communication on Social Media	.275	.101	.240	2.72	.008

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

The multiple linear regression equation for Model 2 can be expressed as follows:

$$Y_1 = 3.741 + 0.566 X_1 + 0.275 X_2 + e \quad [4]$$

Based on the multiple linear regression equation in Model 2, the following results were obtained: (a) The constant term of 3.741 indicates that if the variables Brand Authenticity (X_1) and Openness of Communication on Social Media (X_2) are assumed to be zero, then the value of Brand Loyalty (Z) is 3.741. (b) The regression coefficient for Brand Authenticity (X_1) of 0.566 indicates that every 1-unit increase in Brand Authenticity will increase Brand Loyalty by 0.566. The positive direction of the coefficient indicates that the higher the Brand Authenticity, the higher the Brand Loyalty will be. A significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05) indicates that Brand Authenticity has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty among FEBI UINSU students in the Digital Marketing Era. (c) The regression coefficient for Openness of Communication on Social Media (X_2), at 0.275, indicates that a 1-unit increase in Openness of Communication will increase Brand Loyalty by 0.275. The positive direction of the coefficient indicates that as Openness of Communication increases, Brand Loyalty also increases. A significance value of 0.008 (< 0.05) indicates that Communication Openness on Social Media has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty among FEBI UINSU students in the Digital Marketing Era.

Hypothesis Testing

a. t-Test

The t-test is used to test the partial effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. This test aims to determine whether each independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable. The test results are presented in the following table.

Table 11. t-Test Results for Model 1 (X_1 and X_2 on Z)

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.678	1.758		2.092	.039
Brand Authenticity	.383	.085	.396	4.487	.000
Open Communication on Social Media	.435	.095	.405	4.588	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Trust

Based on the results of the t-test for Model 1, with a critical t-value of 1.985, the following results were obtained: (a) The Brand Authenticity variable (X_1) has a calculated t-value of 4.487, which is greater than the critical t-value ($4.487 > 1.985$), with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that Brand Authenticity has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust among FEBI UINSU students in the Digital Marketing Era. (b) The Social Media Communication Openness variable (X_2) has a calculated t-value of 4.588, which is greater than the critical t-value ($4.588 > 1.985$), with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that Openness to Communication on Social Media has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust among FEBI UINSU students in the Digital Marketing Era.

Table 12. Results for Multiple Linear Regression Test, Model 2 (X_1 and X_2 on Y_1)

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.741	1.871		2.000	.048
Brand Authenticity	.566	.091	.548	6.226	.000
Open Communication on Social Media	.275	.101	.240	2.727	.008

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Based on the results of the t-test for Model 2, with a critical t-value of 1.985, the following results were obtained: (a) The Brand Authenticity variable (X_1) has a calculated t-value of 6.226, which is greater than the critical t-value ($6.226 > 1.985$), with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that Brand Authenticity has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty among FEBI UINSU students in the Digital Marketing Era. (b) The Social Media Communication Openness variable (X_2) has a calculated t-value of 2.727, which is greater than the critical t-value ($2.727 > 1.985$), with a significance level of 0.008 (< 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that Openness to Communication on Social Media has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty among FEBI UINSU students in the era of digital marketing.

b. F-Test (ANOVA)

The ANOVA or F-test is used to test the significance of a regression model simultaneously that is, to determine whether all variables collectively influence the dependent variable. The test results are shown in the following table.

Table 13. F-Test Results for Model 1 (X_1 and X_2 on Z)

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	t	Sig.
Regression	253.110	2		47.659	.000 ^b
Residual	249.612	94	126.555		
Total	502.722	96	2.655		

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

b. Predictors: (Constant), Open Communication on Social Media, Brand Authenticity

Based on the F-test results for Model 1, the calculated F-value is 47.659 with a significance level of 0.000. Since the significance level is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), it can be concluded that the variables Brand Authenticity (X_1) and Openness of Communication on Social Media (X_2) simultaneously have a significant effect on Brand Trust (Z).

c. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to measure the proportion of the dependent variable's variance that can be explained by the independent variables in the regression model. The coefficient of determination values are shown in the following table.

Table 14. Coefficient of Determination Test Results for Model 1 (X_1 and X_2 on Z)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.710 ^a	.503	.493	1.630
a. Predictors: (Constant), Open Communication on Social Media, Brand Authenticity				

Based on the results of the coefficient of determination test for Model 1, an R value of 0.710 was obtained, indicating that the relationship between the variables Brand Authenticity (X_1) and Openness of Communication on Social Media (X_2) and Brand Trust (Z) falls into the "strong" category. The R-squared value of 0.503 indicates that the variables Brand Authenticity and Openness of Communication on Social Media account for 50.3% of the variation in Brand Trust, while the remaining 49.7% is influenced by other factors outside the research model that were not examined in this study.

Table 15. Coefficient of Determination Test Results for Model 2 (X_1 and X_2 on Y_1)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.712 ^a	.507	.497	1.734
a. Predictors: (Constant), Open Communication on Social Media, Brand Authenticity				

Based on the results of the coefficient of determination test for Model 2, an R value of 0.712 was obtained, indicating that the relationship between the variables Brand Authenticity (X_1) and Openness of Communication on Social Media (X_2) and Brand Loyalty (Y_1) falls into the "strong" category. The R-squared value of 0.507 indicates that the variables Brand Authenticity and Openness of Communication on Social Media account for 50.7% of the variation in Brand Loyalty, while the remaining 49.3% is influenced by other factors outside the research model that were not examined in this study.

Discussion

The indicators were selected to represent the main dimensions of each variable. Brand authenticity was measured through information honesty and brand consistency, while communication openness was measured through response speed and information clarity. Brand trust was represented by product reliability and consumers' sense of security, whereas brand loyalty was measured through repurchase intention and willingness to recommend. These indicators were selected because they reflect the role of authenticity and open communication in building consumer trust and loyalty.

a. The Effect of Brand Authenticity on Brand Trust

The results of this study indicate that brand authenticity has a positive effect on brand trust. This suggests that the higher the level of brand authenticity perceived by consumers, the higher their level of trust in that brand. Brand authenticity reflects a brand's ability to present a clear, consistent, and honest identity that aligns with the values promised to consumers. This finding can be explained through the Relationship Marketing Theory proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994).

Theoretically, Morhart et al. (2023) explain that brand authenticity relates to a brand's ability to demonstrate honesty, consistency, and alignment with its values. This is reinforced by Napoli et al. (2014), who state that consistency of experience is a key factor in shaping the perception of a brand's authenticity. This finding is consistent with the research by Hidayat and Setiawati (2021), which states that brand authenticity can strengthen the relationship between consumers and brands through the building of trust.

b. The Effect of Brand Authenticity on Brand Loyalty

The research findings indicate that brand authenticity has a positive effect on brand loyalty. This suggests that consumers tend to maintain relationships with brands they perceive as honest, consistent, and having a clear identity. Brand authenticity fosters an emotional connection, thereby encouraging consumers to continue using and recommending the brand. According to Relationship Marketing Theory, loyalty is the result of long-term relationships built through trust, commitment, and consumer satisfaction. Brands that are able to maintain their authenticity will find it easier to build strong relationships with consumers, thereby fostering sustainable loyalty. These research findings align with by Hidayat and Setiawati (2021), who state that consumers tend to be more loyal to brands they perceive as authentic and aligned with their expectations. Additionally, Dewi and Julian (2022) found that positive perceptions of a brand's authenticity can increase consumer engagement, which ultimately fosters loyalty toward that brand.

c. The Effect of Brand Authenticity on Brand Loyalty through Brand Trust

The research findings indicate that Brand Trust mediates the effect of Brand Authenticity on Brand Loyalty. This suggests that brand authenticity influences loyalty not only directly but also through the trust that develops within consumers. According to Relationship Marketing Theory, trust is a key element linking the relationship between a company and its consumers. Trust formed as a result of positive perceptions of brand authenticity will increase consumers' confidence in maintaining a long-term relationship with that brand. Therefore, trust serves as a bridge between brand authenticity and brand loyalty. These findings are consistent with the research by Martin and Yenita (2022) and Pratiwi et al. (2021), which states that trust has a significant effect on consumer loyalty. Consumers who already trust a brand are more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend it to others.

d. The Impact of Open Communication on Social Media on Brand Trust

Research findings indicate that open communication on social media has a positive impact on brand trust. This suggests that open, transparent, and responsive communication can enhance consumer trust in a brand. Consumers tend to trust brands more when they provide clear and easily accessible information. Relationship Marketing Theory explains that communication is a key factor in building long-term relationships with consumers. Open communication can reduce uncertainty, increase consumer confidence, and strengthen the relationship between the brand and consumers. These findings are consistent with the research by Men and Tsai (2013), which explains that open communication can increase consumer trust in an organization or brand. Additionally, Kim and Ko (2012) also found that communication activities conducted through social media can strengthen the relationship between consumers and brands. The results of the study by Dewi and Julian (2022) further indicate that open communication contributes to increasing consumer trust in a brand.

e. The Effect of Open Communication on Social Media on Brand Loyalty

The research results show that open communication on social media has a positive effect on brand loyalty. This indicates that open and interactive communication can create a closer relationship between consumers and brands, thereby fostering loyalty. Based on Relationship Marketing Theory, effective communication serves as a means to maintain and strengthen long-term relationships with consumers. When consumers feel they are receiving clear information and positive

responses from the brand, a sense of attachment emerges that fosters loyalty. These findings align with the research by Kim and Ko (2012), which states that communication via social media can increase consumer loyalty through sustained interaction. Research by Men and Tsai (2013) also explains that open communication can strengthen the relationship between brands and consumers. In addition, Dewi and Julian (2022) found that good communication quality can increase consumer loyalty to a brand.

f. The Effect of Open Communication on Social Media on Brand Loyalty via Brand Trust

The research results indicate that brand trust mediates the effect of open communication on social media on brand loyalty. This suggests that open communication first builds consumer trust, and that trust subsequently fosters brand loyalty. According to Relationship Marketing Theory, communication and trust are two key elements in building long-term relationships with consumers. Effective communication fosters trust, while trust leads to commitment and loyalty. Therefore, brand trust serves as a bridge between open communication on social media and brand loyalty. These findings align with the research by Julian (2022) also indicate that effective communication and high levels of trust can enhance consumer loyalty toward a brand.

The findings contribute to social media-based digital marketing strategies by showing that social media should function not only as a promotional platform but also as a medium for building trust and long-term consumer relationships. Therefore, digital marketing strategies should emphasize authentic and consistent brand messages, transparent information, responsive communication, and active consumer interaction. Practically, brand managers should ensure consistency between brand promises and consumer experiences, respond promptly to consumer feedback, and use consumer input to improve communication quality. These efforts can strengthen brand trust, encourage repeat purchases and recommendations, and support sustainable consumer loyalty.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, this study shows that brand authenticity and open communication on social media have a significant influence on shaping brand trust among UINSU students. Brand authenticity, reflected through the honesty of information and consistency of identity, can increase consumer confidence in a brand. On the other hand, open communication manifested through transparency of information and responsiveness to consumers also plays a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between the brand and consumers.

The research findings also indicate that brand trust has a positive influence on brand loyalty. The trust that has been established encourages consumers to continue using the same brand, make repeat purchases, and recommend it to others. This reaffirms that trust is a key factor in fostering long-term consumer loyalty. Overall, this study demonstrates that brand authenticity and open communication on social media are important factors in building brand trust, which in turn leads to increased brand loyalty among UINSU students.

This study contributes to the development of brand authenticity and digital communication concepts by demonstrating that authenticity and open communication are complementary factors in building brand trust and loyalty. Companies should maintain consistency between brand promises and consumer experiences, provide transparent information, respond promptly to consumer feedback, and encourage two-way interaction on social media.

The findings imply that customer loyalty-oriented digital marketing strategies should prioritize authentic, transparent, interactive, and responsive communication rather than focusing solely on promotional content. This study is limited to FEBI UINSU students, uses a cross-sectional design, and examines only selected variables. Future research should involve broader respondent groups, apply longitudinal methods, and include additional factors that may influence brand trust and loyalty.

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