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THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND ENGAGEMENT AND BRAND SELF-CONGRUENCE TOWARD BRAND ATTACHMENT IN THAI COSMETIC BRANDS

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Abstract—This study examines the effect of brand attachment through Thai cosmetic brands on brand advocacy, emphasizing the role of personal branding strategies increasingly utilized in online marketing. Data were collected from 400 valid consumer responses from individuals with prior experience using brands that employ personal branding strategies. Utilizing structural equation modeling (SEM), confirmed that self-expansion theory can be used to analyze consumer-based brand advocacy within a hypothesis-driven framework. The results reveal that brand engagement and self-congruence impact brand attachment and enhance brand advocacy. The present study has a new perspective on Thai cosmetic brands' personal branding strategies, consumer attachment, and advocacy. The research could examine additional factors influencing these relationships in other industries. The findings have allowed marketers in the Thai cosmetics industry to design and implement effective personal branding that attracts consumer attachment and advocacy behaviors. This research identifies key brand attachment and advocacy drivers in the Thai cosmetics market and how personal branding strategies can build stronger consumer relationships. It contributes to both academic literature and practical understanding of consumer behavior.

Keywords— **brand engagement, brand self-congruence, brand attachment, brand advocacy.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Brand engagement is important to correlate through brand attachment in encouraging the brand's community [1]. The traditional transactional and brand communities are opportunities to engage with the brand continuously. This ensures that relationships with the purchases or consumption. Brand engagement creates a deeper connection between consumers and the brand as an aspect of brand attachment between the consumer's identity and the brand [2]. It has positive evaluations of the brand, which can be considered a brand attachment [3]. Through correlation with brand advocacy. Online consumer experiences, both directly and indirectly, impact brand advocacy via brand engagement, an important channel for brand support [4]. It can have effects, increased brand advocacy, loyalty, and dedication. Brand advocates through various channels, such as positive online word-of-mouth. The customer-brand connection is impacted by brand engagement and improved brand advocacy behaviors. Brand advocates actively connect with and publicly praise brands in forums through positive word-of-mouth communication [5]. Self-congruence is a psychological and motivational process that involves consumers' identity and personality [6]. Consumers should be allowed to transact both goods and services. Recent studies have shown that self-congruence perception impacts brand attachment [7]. Consumers feel a relationship with brands that align with their self-concept [8].

Companies have adopted concepts of consumers' current and ideal self-concepts in their communication strategies to attract consumer interest in their brands [9]. Brand self-congruence promotes brand advocacy because consumers perceive as an expression of their identity through the brand [10]. Consumers who identify as aligned with a brand are more likely to exhibit supportive behaviors, such as positive word-of-mouth and recommending the brand to others [11]. The cosmetics sector is increasing in users' lives, confidence, and appearance. In Thailand, cosmetics are produced and distributed under Thai-owned brands, with distribution channels available to consumers [12]. The cosmetics industry is rapid growth, with large-scale and small-scale producers globally [13]. The Thai cosmetics market has experienced an annual growth rate of 1.5 times that of

2022 [14]. Expanding resulted in a broader range of product options, including brands, quality, packaging, pricing, and quantity, designed to meet consumers' purchasing preferences and requirements.

Personal branding is the process by which individuals develop and market themselves. While branding refers to products, services, or organizations, marketing has that an image and identity can also serve as a brand [15]. It can become brands themselves. Personal branding integrates attributes, image, and uniqueness [16]. Consumers with a clear image, such as artists, athletes, and leaders, can benefit from their identifiable characteristics [17]. It is essential in society, culture, and the economy. Online audiences create and consume the intentional and tangible presentation of identity. Compared to face-to-face communication, online self-presentation tends to be more positive. Personal branding is significant in various industries, including cosmetics [18].

The cosmetics industry in Thailand served as a case study for an ongoing investigation. For Thai consumers, cosmetics are not products but applications intended to improve their confidence and appearance. Various consumers and brands fuel the industry's consistent annual growth. Companies have strategies, such as personal branding, for this competition. Despite the tradition with public figures, personal branding is an effective strategy in this sector. Through can establish trust and consumer relationships by utilizing the CEO or founder as the brand's spokesperson. For instance, brands such as La Glace Thailand and Love Potion used personal branding to achieve loyalty.

Despite the growing adoption of personal branding, there are a few studies on approaches that influence consumer behavior in competitive-specific markets. Where brand differentiation is essential, the impact of personal branding on brand attachment and advocacy lacks examination in this area. This gap is a new paradigm for evidence-based to guide branding strategies in this market. Although brand engagement and self-congruence have been thoroughly studied in the past, these studies frequently ignore how these elements interact within the context of personal branding.[19].

There is fewer investigation into the impact of personal branding on brand attachment and advocacy behaviors, in culturally specific sectors like Thai cosmetics. This discrepancy has the potential to offer a more profound comprehension of the methods by which brands establish and sustain meaningful consumer relationships. In the Thai cosmetics industry, how do brand engagement and self-congruence impact brand attachment and brand advocacy in the context of personal branding?

This study's objective will concern between brand engagement, self-congruence, and brand advocacy through brand attachment as follows:

1. To analyze the impact of brand engagement through brand attachment.
2. To examine the role of self-congruence in brand attachment.
3. To analyze how brand attachment drives brand advocacy behavior.
4. To provide information for Thai cosmetic brands to enhance their personal branding strategies.

This research will be given in detail and test a conceptual framework to understand the influence of personal branding toward consumer behavior. The study will utilize Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine how brand engagement and self-congruence contribute to brand attachment and advocacy behaviors in the Thai cosmetics industry. The research uses the Self-Expansion Theory to give several steps how personal branding strengthens consumer-brand relationships by aligning with consumers' identities. The findings give Thai cosmetic brands critical and practical applications for building trust and encouraging advocacy behaviors. The study will also contribute to the academic literature by extending the understanding of branding strategies and the groundwork for future studies in other industries and regions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The foundation of self-expansion is mutual dependency, connectedness, and reciprocal conduct that signify interpersonal closeness [20]. The dimension of self to frame self-expansion [21]. It suggests that the self-concept intersects in intimate relationships, with the intersection by the cognitive inclination to incorporate oneself. When consumers maintain a dialogue friendship, tend to overlook the negative perspective of the friend [22]. They perceive their partners' successes as accomplishments and take responsibility for them. Self-expansion is reciprocal trust and confidence, enhancing the sensation of intimate closeness [23].Marketing research is consumers' self-expansion with brands is the alignment of consumer and brand imagery [24]. A deeper level of

congruence relationship between the consumer and the brand [25]. We propose that the self-expansion theory links brand personality fit (i.e., brand self-congruence) to brand advocacy via brand love and attachment.

A. Brand engagement

Brand engagement is a multifaceted concept that includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral elements [26]. It implies an elevated degree of consumer psychological and behavioral engagement with a brand or firm, exceeding essential consumption [27].Brand engagement is developing, strengthening customer relationships, and business outcomes [28]. It offers various advantages for companies, creating long-term connections with customers, boosting purchase frequency, augmenting customers' readiness to pay a premium price, and promoting customer involvement in co-creation and product development [29].

Business process outsourcing and value congruity affect brand engagement among members, influencing brand attachment and purchase intentions [30]. Brand attachment serves as a mediator in the interaction between brand engagement and purchase intentions. This study examines the role of brand involvement in cultivating brand attachment, substantiated by existing literature [31], [32]. Emotional attachment to a brand favorable influence on customer loyalty than simple satisfaction with the brand [33]. Consumer-brand relationships include brand resonance, love, commitment, loyalty, involvement, and relationship [34]. The correlation of brand attachment is critical to consumer-based brand equity [35]. Building brand equity involves connecting a brand to customers' lifestyles, aiming to create a connection between the brand and its customers. Brand attachment drives customers to actively promote the brand, learn more about it, and exhibit consistent usage behavior [36]. Several articles on brand management recommend strategies to encourage customers to develop attachments to specific brands. Subsequently, a strong attachment to one brand may also increase forming attachments to other goods and services in branding.

B. Brand engagement and brand attachment

Brand engagement enhances the self-brand connection [37] and recognition of brand ownership, which aligns with two elements of brand attachment: self-brand connection and brand prominence [38]. The connection to one's self-brand confirms that brand attachment and identity are based on the brand. Attachment is characterized as a consequence of earlier participation in existing literature. Engagement was the pleasant brand-related connections and assessments, called brand attachment. Community will engage with a brand, incorporating the brand into their self-concept, rendering it an important aspect of their identity. This identity-centric affiliation, propelled by involvement, members' loyalty to the brand. The literature has a potentially significant recommendation of correlation between brand engagement and brand attachment.

H1. The brand engagement influences brand attachment.

C. Brand engagement and brand Advocacy

The relationship between brand engagement and brand advocacy is an area of marketing research, and its relevance to brand loyalty and growth [39]. Brand engagement is a category that involves emotional, cognitive, and behavioral investments in consumers' deeper consumer-brand relationships. This connection encourages behaviors beyond transactions, such as brand advocacy [40]. The importance of self-expression in driving these behaviors. In Thailand, cosmetic brands appeal to consumers who use these products for personal expression, individuality, and preferences.

The consumers will communicate positive word-of-mouth, sharing opinions about the brands with their peers. Those who associate with brands for social expression, such as luxury cosmetic brands, often view their attachment as aligning with social or cultural values [41]. Such consumers demonstrate greater tolerance for perceived brand shortcomings, such as premium pricing, because their connection with the brand reinforces their desired social image [42]. These behaviors, including advocacy and support, exemplify the significant influence of brand engagement on consumer actions.Self-expression, whether internal or social, occurs consumers and brands. Internal self-expression with personal, brand love, and advocacy [43], [44]. Meanwhile, social self-expression leads to supportive actions, such as defending the brand against engagement and advocacy criticism. Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. The brand engagement influences brand advocacy.

D. Brand self-congruence and brand attachment

Brand self-congruence is the alignment between a brand's image and a consumer's perception. This alignment is critical in strengthening the emotional connection between consumers and brands [45]. Consumers will have relationships with brands that support their motivations for self-verification and self-development [46]. When a brand's image aligns with a consumer's self-concept, it reflects its current identity, and its emotional attachment intensifies [47]. Brand self-congruence is on social media platforms, where brands' role in consumers' expression [48]. Consumers are interested in forming brand attachments when the brand image aligns with their actual or ideal self-concept. Brands reflect a consumer's self-fostered authenticity and validation, while those representing the ideal self inspire personal growth and aspiration.

In the Thai cosmetics industry, self-congruence is evident in the current market. Their brand identity, with distinct consumer self-concepts, has emotional connections [49]. It is cheaper and practical for consumers to prioritize functional beauty. With every alignment with consumers' self-concept, the brand is a reliable choice that supports their daily needs and sense of authenticity [50]. A Thai cosmetics brand embodies sophistication, exclusivity, and sustainability. It attracts consumers whose ideal self-concept involves a premium lifestyle. By offering high-quality, environmentally friendly products, consumers will align with a socially responsible image.

For example, a consumer using products may perceive the brand as a practical part of their daily routine, their current identity [51]. Consumers have an aspiration and a desired lifestyle for self-development goals. How aligning with consumers' ideal self-concepts can improve brand attachment emotionally. However, the consumers are drawn to view the brand as an aspiration for environmental mindfulness, creating an aspirational connection that deepens brand attachment. Social media and these connections allow consumers to express their alignment with these brands through posts, interactions, and personal and social identity. Based on these findings, this study proposes:

H3. Brand self-congruence influences brand attachment.

E. Brand self-congruence and brand advocacy

Brand self-congruence connects to the perception of a brand and its identity, important for brand advocacy. It impacts brand love and attachment, advocacy [52]. When consumers perceive a brand as their self-concept, theyhave emotional connections to behaviors such as the brand, resisting criticism, or remaining loyal over the long term. The relationship between brand self-congruence and advocacy is the emotion created when a brand aligns with a consumer's aspirations. This alignment encourages consumers to support the brand actively. Advocacy behaviors include, social media endorsements, or repeat purchases, which the brand's visibility and reputation.

A cosmetic local brand in Thailand aligns its brand identity with consumers' self-concepts, emotional connections, and supportive behaviors. The company is known for its practical and affordable beauty solutions to consumers who value accessibility [53]. These consumers are always reliable and budget-friendly in their daily lives [54]. This alignment with the actual self-concept strengthens the emotional bond, providing the bridge between the brand and its customers. Consumers actively share their positive experiences with cosmetic products through social media, and cosmetic products have a reputation.Cosmetic products' affordability for consumers looking the beauty products that balance practicality and self-expression. Its positioning as a quality-driven yet affordable brand resonates with consumers who aspire to enhance their appearance without exceeding their budgets. This dual appeal stronglyadvocates for behaviors, including product endorsements, within digital networks [55].

However, a premium Thai cosmetic brand aligns with the ideal self-concept of consumers to a sophisticated lifestyle. The commitment to luxury and sustainability prioritizes ethical consumption and exclusivity. These consumers advocate for the brand through its environmentally friendly practices and high-quality offerings, sharing their experiences through online platforms, reviews, and endorsements [56].These examples show how brand self-congruence through advocacy andemotion. Advocacy, such as endorsements, impacts brand awareness. The hypothesis is formulated based on these recent studies:

H4. Brand self-congruence influences brand advocacy.

F. Brand attachment and brand advocacy

Brand attachment is connected to consumers, signifying its importance in their lives. This connection is widely regarded as a consumer loyalty and advocacy behavior. Brand self-congruence, love, and attachment in brand support through a mediation model. It contributes to positive communication and active brand promotion, as consumers who feel emotionally connected to a brand recommend and endorse it. Brand attachment has been shown to influence the relationship between a brand's environmental practices and consumer perceptions. Young consumers are concerned that attachment enhances how environmentally conscious consumers perceive a brand's green [57]. Emotional connections and brand advocacy are aligned with shared values of sustainability.

Brand-self connection is a brand with a consumer's identityof self-expression. For example, consumers may perceive an extension of personality. Brand prominence is the brand's salience in the consumer's mind, characterized by the frequency and intensity of associated thoughts and feelings [58]. These components create a strong emotional bond that motivates consumers to maintain long-term relationships with the brand and advocate for their community.Brand attachment is a concern to consumers who value premium, eco-friendly products [59]. These consumers will guidethe brand's quality and commitment. Hence, cosmetic brands'ability could create attachment through reliability and interact with offline and online peers.These indicate that brand attachment is the driver of brand advocacy. When consumers form strong emotional bonds with a brand, they engage in behaviors such as recommending it. The following hypothesis is proposed:

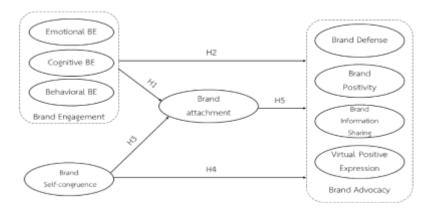*H5. Brand attachment has a positive influence on brand advocacy.*

Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework, Source created by author

III. METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a quantitative approach to examineThai cosmetic brands' branding in marketing. Quantitative methods are structured and generalizable attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. Hypotheses were developed to assess between personal branding and consumer engagement. The initial sample of 431 participants was recruited through Facebook. After excluding respondents who had no prior engagement with Thai cosmetic brands employing personal branding strategies, the final sample comprised 400 cases. The sample size was established based on a population with a 95% confidence and a 5% margin of error. Data has been evaluated using SEM through hypothesis testing.

A. Sampling Technique

The sampling was stratified [60], a representation of individuals familiar with Thai cosmetic brands that emphasize personal branding. Participants have been categorized by their gender, age, and degree of involvement with the businesses' marketing process in the innovation. The final dataset had 400 legitimate respondents, the intended population. Thesample size is targeted to achieve 80% power with a 5% margin of error.

B. Instrument

The component demographic data encompasses age, gender, and education, while the subsequent section assesses constructs pertinent to personal branding and consumer behavior. Participants utilized a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). A pilot study was conducted with 30 participants to validate the reliability and clarity, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 for internal consistency.

C. Data Analysis

Path analysis was performed within the framework of SEM to evaluate the proposed correlations among variables.[61]. Descriptive statistics, comprising means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were computed using SPSS to encapsulate individuals' demographic attributes and principal replies. AMOS was utilized to conduct inferential statistical analysis and evaluate the structural model due to its appropriateness for investigating correlations among many latent variables [62], [63].

The model's fit, such as R^2, capacity, and Q^2, is predictive relevance. Supplementary fit indices, the Chi-square/df ratio, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were employed to validate the model's adequacy. The constructs' reliability was confirmed via Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), surpassing the acceptable level of 0.7. Convergent Validity was established by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of 0.5. Discriminant Validity was the Fornell-Larcker criterion for each construct's AVE. The analyses confirmed the reliability and validity of the results.

IV. RESULT

This study utilized a dataset of 400 valid respondents across diverse demographics. Table 1 presents a demographic analysis. The participants, 370 (92%) identified as female, 10 (5%) as male, and 20 (3%) as LGBTQ. The age distribution revealed that 374 respondents (93%) were aged 18–27 years (Gen Z), 24 (6%) were aged 28–44 years (Gen Y), and 2 (1%) were aged 45–59 years (Gen X). Regarding educational attainment, 327 participants (82%) had university degrees, 56 (14%) had completed high school, 9 (2%) had attained a master's degree, and 8 (2%) had vocational degrees. The sample's demographic characteristics ensure analysis for the research model.

TABLE I
FONT SIZES FOR PAPERS

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	10	5
Female	370	92
LGBTQ	20	3
Age (years)		
18 - 27 (Gen Z)	374	93
28 - 44 (Gen Y)	24	6
45 - 59 (Gen X)	2	1
Education		
College/University	327	82
High School	56	14
Master or Higher	9	2
Vocational Training	8	2
Total	400	

Notes:Data valid from the present study.

A. *Measurement Model*

The constructs' reliability and validity were evaluated through loadings, and CR and AVE established norms. Cronbach's α values varied from 0.834 to 0.94, indicating internal consistency of the constructs. Except for certain items inside the aiding framework, CR values surpassed the suggested level of 0.7 dependability. All constructs had AVE values beyond 0.5, indicating convergent validity.

TABLE 2
MEASUREMENT ITEMS

Measurement items		Loading	α	C.R.	AVE
Brand engagement (Emotional)[64], [65]			0.834	0.844	0.578
EBE1	I feel excited about this brand	0.602			
EBE2	I am heavily into this brand	0.805			
EBE3	I love this brand	0.844			
EBE4	Using the X website makes me happy	0.769			
Brand engagement (Cognitive) [64], [65]			0.855	0.840	0.574
CBE1	I will learn more about this brand X	0.549			
CBE2	I have pay attention to anything about this brand	0.848			
CBE3	I think about brand X a lot	0.822			
CBE4	Using the X website gets me to think about this brand	0.775			
Brand engagement (Behavioral) [64], [66]			0.896	0.895	0.682
BEB1	I spend time using X website, compared to the other online service brands' websites	0.792			
BEB2	I am using online service brand websites.	0.882			
BEB3	X website is one of the online service brands' websites.	0.863			
BEB4	I spent much time using Brand X compared with other brands	0.76			
Brand self-congruence [67]			0.92	0.914	0.780
BSC1	The image of a typical resident of the city is similar to who I would like to be	0.877			
BSC2	The image of a typical resident of the city is like how I would like to see myself	0.9			
BSC3	The image of a typical resident of the city is like how I would like to be seen by others	0.872			
Brand Attachment [68]			0.907	0.892	0.734
BATT1	To what extent is a brand part of you, and who are you?	0.826			
BATT2	To what extent do you feel personally connected to the brand?	0.863			
BATT3	To what extent are your thoughts and feelings towards brands often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own?	0.881			
Brand advocacy (Brand Defense)[69]			0.94	0.932	0.821
BD1	I defend the brand when others speak it down	0.902			
BD2	I stand up for the brand when others talk negatively about it	0.923			
BD3	I defend the brand if I hear someone speaking poorly about it	0.893			
Brand advocacy (Brand Positivity)[69]			0.872	0.853	0.659
BP1	I give positive things about the brand	0.775			
BP2	I mention about I am happy to use the brand	0.816			
BP3	I talk about the brand favorably	0.843			
Brand advocacy (Brand Information Sharing) [69]			0.934	0.918	0.789

Measurement items		Loading	α	C.R.	AVE
BIS1	I provide about upcoming promotions discounts for the brand	0.882			
BIS2	I give about the brand (e.g., price, location promotions, and discounts)	0.888			
BIS3	I share about upcoming promotions (discounts) for the brand	0.895			
Brand advocacy (Virtual Positive Expression) [69]			0.829	0.815	0.594
VPE1	I provide lengthy explanations as to why this brand is better than other brands	0.763			
VPE2	I use symbols (e.g., emoticons, emoji, capital lettering for the brand).	0.794			
VPE3	I used smileys for this brand	0.755			

Notes.Data valid from the present study.

B. Construct Validity

The variables' latent have a loading factor of 0.6. The following are the CR values (Table 2). AVE has determined the constructs that explain most of the variance. This confirms the reliability and relevance of the study's findings to the current research issue.To assess construct validity, we performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The CFA results corroborated the preliminary exploratory factor analysis (EFA) findings, demonstrating a robust correspondence between the theoretical constructs and the measurement model. Discriminant Validity has been evaluated utilizing the Fornell-Larcker criterion. This assessment evaluates each construct's square root of theAVE and its relationships with other constructs. Discriminant Validity is confirmed when the AVE square root for each construct surpasses the correlation coefficients associated with that construct. Table 3 findings of the discriminant validity analysis and the relationships between the constructs.

TABLE 3
DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY AND CORRELATIONS AMONG THE CONSTRUCTS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1: BSC	.833								
2: EBE	.686**	.76							
3: CBE	.651**	.720**	.758						
4: BBE	.569**	.659**	.719**	.826					
5: BATT	.586*	.622**	.678**	.565**	.857				
6: BD	.460**	.504**	.540**	.493**	.655**	.906			
7: BP	.597**	.674**	.590**	.551**	.567**	.576**	.812		
8: BIS	.501**	.564**	.564**	.527**	.602**	.588**	.578**	.888	
9: VPE	.591**	.606**	.615**	.540**	.661**	.591**	.650**	.746**	.771
Note(s): *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01									

Notes.Data valid from the present study.

The findings in Table 3 demonstrate discriminant Validity. The diagonal values of each construct (square root of AVE) surpass their corresponding correlations with other vertical and horizontal constructs. The square root of AVE for "Brand Self-Congruence (BSC)" is 0.833, maximum correlation with another construct, which is 0.686 with "Emotional Brand Engagement.". The findings confirm that each construct indicates that the model has discriminant Validity.

C. Assessment of the Structural Model

The structural model has evaluated the hypothesized relationships between constructs. Table 4 provides each hypothesis's path coefficients (β), t-values, and significance levels (p-values). The results demonstrate strong support for all proposed hypotheses, as detailed below.

TABLE 4
RESULTS OF THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

Hypotheses and path	β	T	P	Supported
H1: BE -> BATT	0.683	11.07	***	Yes
H2: BE -> BADV	0.486	6.806	***	Yes
H3: BSC -> BATT	0.208	3.428	0.002**	Yes
H4: BSC-> BADV	0.167	3.143	***	Yes
H5: BATT-> BADV	0.386	6.384	***	Yes

*Note(s): *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*
R2BATT =0.509, R2BADV =0.696
Source(s): Table created by author

The empirical results substantiate all five hypotheses as correct and statistically significant. Table 4 highlights the evidence supporting each path in the structural model. Hypothesis 1 (H1) confirms a substantial and statistically significant positive effect of brand engagement (BE) on brand attachment (BATT) ($\beta = 0.683$, t = 11.07, $p < .001$). These consumers who engage with a brand emotionally and cognitively are likely to develop an attachment to the brand.In addition, H2 establishes a significant positive relationship between BE and brand advocacy (BADV) ($\beta = 0.486$, t = 6.806, $p < .001$), indicating that higher engagement encourages customers to advocate for the brand. H3 has provided brand self-congruence (BSC) impacts BATT ($\beta = 0.208$, t = 3.428, p = .002). This finding shows that consumers who perceive congruence between their identity and the brand feel attached.

Similarly, H4 has had an impact on brand self-congruence (BSC) through brand advocacy (BADV) ($\beta = 0.167$, t = 3.143, $p < .001$), that consumers may be inclined to endorse the brand due to their self-congruent perceptions. In H5, the mediating function of attachment in promoting advocacy behaviors is demonstrated by a positive correlation between BATT and BADV ($\beta = 0.386$, t = 6.384, $p < .001$). The variance in BATT and BADV is explained by the R² values of the endogenous variables in the conceptual framework, which are 50.9% and 69.6%. These results have supplementary practical and theoretical implications.An SEM analysis evaluated the model and tested the proposed hypotheses. Table 5 shows the detailed values that indicate the adequacy of the model fit.

TABLE 5
STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL ANALYSIS (SEM)

Name of index	Criteria	Index value
X2/df	X2/df < 3	1.941
GFI	GFI ≥0.90	.901
CFI	CFI ≥0.90	.963
RMSEA	RMSEA < 0.05	.049

Notes.Data valid from the present study.

The results demonstrate that the SEM are fits the data, all exceeding the recommended thresholds. Therefore, X²/df value of 1.941 falls below 3, indicating a good fit with the data. Both the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI = 0.901) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.963) approve criteria of ≥ 0.90, further adequacy. The RMSEA = 0.049 is below the threshold of 0.05, indicating a minimal discrepancy between the hypothesized model and the observed data.

The SEM analysis revealed the hypothesized relationships, all supported by the data. Below is a detailed discussion of each hypothesis:

H1: Brand engagement influences brand attachment ($\beta = 0.683$, t = 11.07).

This correlation shows that customers who actively interact with a brand on an emotional, cognitive, or behavioral level form a strong bond with the brand. A personal connection is engagement activities, including communicating with brand content, sharing pleasant experiences, or emotionally connecting with the company's values. These results are consistent with studies showing that emotional ties between customers and brands are essential for long-term partnerships and brand loyalty.

H3: Brand engagement affects brand advocacy (β = 0.486, t = 6.806).

This result indicates that engaged customers are likelier to act as brand advocates by promoting the brand to others, defending it against criticism, or recommending it to their networks. Engaged consumers feel invested in the brand's success, motivating them to share their experiences in person and publicly. The strategic importance of engagement to amplify word-of-mouth marketing and enhance brand reputation.

H3: Brand self-congruence impacts brand attachment (β = 0.208, t = 3.428).

The relationship between brand self-congruence and brand attachment emphasizes the psychological connection that consumers feel when the brand aligns with their self-image. When a brand considers a consumer's aspirations of personal relevance, the brand becomes more powerful. This attachment is competitive markets, where brands with consumers' identities have a distinct advantage in building loyalty.

H4: Brand self-congruence impacts brand advocacy (β = 0.167, t = 3.143).

The effect of brand self-congruence on advocacy behaviors is that when consumers perceive a brand as congruent with their self-concept, they support and promote it. People act this way because their values and the brand's identity align. This makes them want to defend the brand, share their thoughts, and suggest it. These results show how important it is for branding strategies to connect with the identities and beliefs of the people they want to reach.

H5: Brand attachment influences brand advocacy (β = 0.386, t = 6.384).

This outcome shows that emotional attachment is advocacy behavior. Consumers havean attachment to ambassadors, positive experiences, andtheir reputation. Brand attachment will lead to emotional engagement in mere transactions, resulting in behaviors that promote the brand's growth. The involvement and self-congruence in improving brand loyalty and advocacy. These findings are theoretically based on our comprehension of the impact of emotions on consumer behavior. They emphasize that brands should use techniques that augment engagement with consumers' identities and emotional connections. Brands can cultivate devoted champions who enhance long-term profitability and competitive advantage.

V. DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between brand engagement, brand self-congruence, and their impact on brand attachment and brand advocacy within Thai cosmetic brands. The role of brand engagement and self-congruence in consumer-brand and advocacy behaviors. The theoretical and practical implications of the results, limitations, and suggestions for future research.Enhancing consumer-brand linkages was the primary emphasis of this study on Thai cosmetic brands. Incorporating the brand into the consumer's self-concept and emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement greatly enhances brand attachment. These results are consistent with prior studies [70]which brand engagement with brand advocacy and highlights the importance of self-expression in driving word-of-mouth recommendations.

Brand self-congruence has been identified as a factor in forming consumer-brand relationships. Alignment between a brand's image and a consumer's actual or ideal self-concept promotes motivations for self-verification and self-development. This alignment improves attachment and promotes advocacy behaviors. Additionally, brand attachment was recognized as a significant factor impacting brand advocacy. The findings in this study are for long-term advocacy. The results of attachment impact environmental behaviors and the brand's image with Gen Z consumers.

This research demonstrates that brand engagement and self-congruence impact brand attachment and advocacy in the Thai cosmetic sector: engagement and the behavioral relationship between consumers and consumption behaviors. Self-expansion theory emphasizes the role of trust, confidence, and intimacy in enhancing consumer-brand relationships and emotional attachment in sustainable brand equity within the framework of consumer-based brand equity.

Brand involvement and self-congruence also affected advocacy actions. This study's results corroborate previous research, showing that brand interaction increases premium pricing, loyalty, and co-creation. When people feel an emotional connection to and affinity for a brand, their actions align with self-expansion. There is a correlation between brand attachment and advocacy and the emotions that affect customers and brand advocates. The value of a brand is when strong consumer-brand interactions lead to persistent advocacy behaviors.

A. The Theoretical Implications

This study validated existing theories of Thai cosmetics. This research is relevant to self-expansion in consumers. How consumers incorporate brands into their self-concept engagement alignment, refining the theory's applicability in marketing contexts, and emphasizing its role in deeper consumer-brand connections. The idea that emotional attachment is a component of consumer-based brand equity. Generational and cultural nuances include Gen Z's focus on environmental responsibility.The scope of traditional brand equity models is relevant to modern consumer behaviors. The research shows that cultural values in Thailand include collectivism and social, consumer-brand relationships. Gen Z is concerned with the sustainability of theoretical frameworks that account for these emerging preferences in consumer behavior.This study emphasizes that brand engagement involves transactional behaviors, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. The contribution is long-term attachment, advocacy, and loyalty for the future in investigating consumer-brand relationships in different cultures and industries, a foundation for cross-cultural comparisons.

B. Practical Implications

Digital tools such as augmented reality makeup trials and personalized consultation services can enhance consumer engagement by creating immersive experiences. Collaborating with influencers who align with the brand's identity can give a perception of brand self-congruence. Influencers emphasize shared values such as sustainability and self-expression for a stronger consumer brand. Market research can improve brand commitment and help the company improve its sales performance. The brand can connect with consumers if the company has a value innovation. Community-building and aspirational content that aligns with consumers' values are effective. Thai cultures, such as traditional ingredients, can improve the brand's relationship with consumers.

C. Limitations

This study has limitations due to focusing on one industry sector. Future studies can encourage concern about brand engagement, self-congruence, and other potential aspects, such as brand authenticity and experience, which may affect consumer-brand interactions. The research is limited to Thai cosmetic brands, perhaps constraining the applicability of findings to other industries. The quantitative methodology is the emotional capacity of consumer-brand connections. It is necessary to examine brands' authenticity, engagement, and trust. These variables can be the antecedents and consequences of consumer-brand relationships. In-depth interviews can reveal the emotive and psychological factors impacting consumer behavior. The suggestion for conducting a comparative study is to examine other sectors to provide different perspectives on paradigm self-congruence and attachment. Comparing collectivists and individualists can provide information about the preferences of consumers. Research should expand variations in brand advocacy behaviors. Focusing on sustainability and the environment among younger consumers could enhance their understanding of their unique consumer priorities.

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