"Consumer engagement on Facebook: modelling its antecedents and consequence"

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# CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT ON FACEBOOK: MODELLING ITS ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCE

## Abstract

The rapid growth of social media has transformed consumer-brand interactions, making the study of attachment and consumer engagement highly relevant for emerging markets such as the Philippines. This research aims to examine how higher-order constructs of attachment (identity-based attachment and bonding-based attachment) influence consumer engagement with local brands on Facebook and, subsequently, how this engagement shapes purchase intention. To achieve this, a structured online survey was conducted among 386 Filipino Facebook users who actively followed at least one local brand page. Data collection took place between August and October 2024, employing purposive sampling to ensure the representativeness of engaged local brand consumers. The survey method was chosen to capture consumers' psychological attachment and behavioural responses within an authentic digital setting. Using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the findings reveal that bonding-based attachment exerts the strongest influence on consumer engagement ($\beta = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$), while identity-based attachment also demonstrates a significant but comparatively weaker effect ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$). Both attachment dimensions indirectly enhance purchase intention through consumer engagement ($\beta = 0.302$ for bonding-based attachment, and $\beta = 0.186$ for identity-based attachment), with consumer engagement itself emerging as a robust predictor of purchase intention ($\beta = 0.542$, $p < 0.001$). Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and income showed no significant moderating effects on the consumer engagement-purchase intention relationship. These results provide empirical support for the mediating role of consumer engagement in attachment-intention pathways, extending attachment theory into social media marketing and offering practical insights for brand managers in emerging economies.

| **Keywords** | attachment, engagement, intention, brands, Facebook, Philippines, SEM |
|---|---|
| **JEL Classification** | M31, M37, D12 |

## INTRODUCTION

The accelerated growth of social media has reshaped the nature of consumer–brand relationships by creating highly interactive and participatory digital environments. Unlike traditional marketing channels that operate through one-way communication, platforms such as Facebook enable consumers to directly engage with brands, co-create content, and influence peer networks (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). This transformation is particularly relevant in emerging economies where social media penetration outpaces traditional infrastructure, positioning digital platforms as primary spaces for commerce, identity formation, and community building (Appel et al., 2020).

In the Philippines, Facebook usage is nearly universal, with 99% of internet users maintaining active accounts and spending significantly more time on the platform than the global average. This makes the Philippine context uniquely valuable for examining digital consumer

psychology, especially given its collectivist cultural orientation and strong reliance on social ties in shaping consumption behavior (Yeo et al., 2017; Suhartanto et al., 2023). Despite this, a scientific problem persists: while research confirms that consumer engagement consumer engagement in online brand communities drives loyalty, advocacy, and purchase behaviors (Brodie et al., 2013; Dessart et al., 2015), the antecedent mechanisms that stimulate such engagement remain underexplored in culturally specific, non-Western markets.

Attachment theory provides a promising lens for addressing this gap by explaining how consumers' emotional bonds with brands motivate engagement behaviors (Bowlby, 1980; Malär et al., 2011). Yet, empirical studies have not sufficiently tested how identity-based and bonding-based attachments influence consumer engagement and purchase intention purchase intention on platforms like Facebook, nor how demographic variations might alter these effects. This unresolved problem highlights the need to investigate attachment as a driver of consumer engagement within online communities in emerging markets.

# 1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

In the evolving landscape of digital marketing, understanding the psychological mechanisms that drive consumer engagement has become increasingly vital. Social media platforms, particularly Facebook, have transformed from mere communication tools into dynamic marketing ecosystems. Within this context, attachment theory offers a compelling framework for exploring how emotional bonds influence consumer behavior, brand loyalty, and online engagement. This review synthesizes key theoretical and empirical contributions to establish a foundation for examining brand attachment and social media marketing (SMM) through Facebook.

Attachment theory, originally developed by Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) and expanded by Ainsworth (1973), posits that individuals form enduring emotional connections that influence their behavior and decision-making. While initially applied to interpersonal relationships, the theory has been adapted to consumer contexts, where attachment manifests in brand loyalty and product preference (Matzler et al., 2011). Riger and Lavrakas (1981) further conceptualized attachment in terms of social structure, bonds, and identity – dimensions that resonate with how users interact with brands on social media. For this study, the focus is on bonding and identity, as Facebook's architecture does not inherently promote structural attachment to brands.

Brand attachment has emerged as a critical predictor of consumer loyalty, with emotional ties driving repeat purchases and advocacy behaviors (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011). In digital environments, these attachments are often mediated by social media usage patterns. VanMeter et al. (2015) introduced the concept of Attachment to social media, emphasizing that ASM reflects the depth of psychological connection rather than mere attitudes. Their findings suggest that higher ASM correlates with increased consumer interaction, a notion supported by VanMeter et al. (2018), who demonstrated that ASM predicts meaningful online engagement behaviors. However, Kim et al. (2010) caution that superficial metrics like Facebook likes may not translate into offline loyalty, underscoring the need for deeper analytical models.

The role of Facebook in social network marketing is multifaceted. As Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe, social networks enable users to create profiles, share content, and interact, functions that marketers leverage to build brand communities. The platform's accessibility and customization options make it a fertile ground for targeted advertising and consumer engagement. Marketers can tailor content to align with user preferences, thereby enhancing the utility of the network as a promotional tool.

Consumer behavior on social media is not monolithic. Shoa (2009) and Schlosser et al. (2006) distinguish between passive observers and active contributors. Initially, the majority of users were

passive, but this dynamic has shifted over time. Ngai et al. (2015) note a growing trend of active participation, which amplifies the potential for brand interaction and advocacy. Recent studies have also explored how motivations for social media use, such as entertainment, information seeking, and social connection, affect brand attachment and eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) behaviors (Vander Schee et al., 2025).

Moreover, qualitative research has illuminated the mechanisms through which social attachment develops in social media contexts. Yang et al. (2021) found that platforms like TikTok and WeChat foster emotional bonds through repeated interactions, personalization, and community-building features. These insights reinforce the relevance of attachment theory in explaining consumer-brand relationships in digital spaces.

Consumer engagement is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Patterson et al., 2006; Hollebeek et al., 2014). It reflects the depth of a consumer's involvement with a brand, extending beyond transactional interactions to include advocacy, co-creation, and sustained loyalty (Bowden, 2009). Scholars have emphasized its dynamic nature, describing it as a psychological process that begins with satisfaction and culminates in brand loyalty (Sorenson & Adkins, 2014). As media fragmentation intensifies, businesses must innovate their marketing strategies to foster deeper emotional connections and reduce consumer churn (Schultz & Peltier, 2013).

Identity-based attachment offers a compelling lens through which to examine consumer engagement. Rooted in symbolic interactionism, this form of attachment reflects the integration of brand attributes into the consumer's self-concept (Clayton, 2003; Low & Altman, 1992). Consumers increasingly seek products that resonate with their lifestyle, values, and aspirations, using brands as tools for self-expression and social signaling (Khoo-Lattimore & Prayag, 2016). The concept of self-image congruence, where consumers perceive alignment between their identity and brand image, has been shown to positively influence engagement behaviors (Sirgy et al., 1997; Loureiro et al., 2017).

Social media platforms amplify these dynamics by offering spaces for curated self-presentation and peer validation. Studies have found that ideal social self-image significantly drives engagement with luxury brands on platforms like Facebook and Instagram (Bazi et al., 2018). Motivations such as self-expression, social belonging, and the desire for recognition fuel active participation, including likes, shares, and comments. These behaviors are not merely superficial; they reflect deeper psychological investments in brand relationships.

Brand identification, a key dimension of identity-based attachment, is grounded in social identity theory. It refers to the extent to which consumers perceive a brand as part of their self-definition (Kuenzel & Vaux Halliday, 2008). Brands serve as symbolic categories through which individuals express and reinforce their identities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). When consumers experience congruence between their self-perception and brand attributes, they are more likely to engage in brand communities and advocacy behaviors (Islam et al., 2017; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Online platforms facilitate these interactions, enabling consumers to publicly align with brands and participate in community-driven content (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Algesheimer et al., 2005).

Bonding-based attachment reflects the emotional and social ties consumers form with brands, often rooted in trust and interpersonal connection. The concept of "bondedness," introduced by Riger and Lavrakas (1981), emphasizes the role of social ties in shaping behavior. Wright and Perrone (2008) further suggest that trustworthiness is foundational to relationship formation. In online contexts, social interaction ties have expanded beyond physical boundaries, enabling consumers to connect with brands and communities they have never encountered offline (Park & Chung, 2011; Zhang et al., 2017). These ties, defined by frequency, intensity, and emotional resonance, are central to virtual engagement (Chiu et al., 2006; Dessart et al., 2015).

The strength of brand communities significantly influences consumer involvement. Scholars have shown that perceived community strength fosters deeper engagement (Shan & King, 2015; Phua et al., 2017). However, the nuances of online interac-

tion propensity remain underexplored (Dessart, 2017). Emotional, cognitive, and behavioral relationships between consumers and brands on platforms like Facebook suggest that bonding-based attachment plays a pivotal role in shaping engagement.

Brand trust, defined as the belief in a brand's reliability and integrity (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003), is another critical driver of engagement. A lack of trust can hinder communication and reduce purchase intent (Lee & Turban, 2001). In sectors like banking, both economic and service-based trust impact engagement (Kosiba et al., 2018). Online, trust acts as a behavioral construct that encourages interaction and loyalty (Chahal & Rani, 2017).

Consumer engagement itself is a dynamic process encompassing emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. It influences purchase intention, a key metric in consumer behavior studies. Engagement is shaped by factors such as perceived value, risk, and usability (Faqih, 2013). Online purchase intent is also affected by attitudes and social influence (Thamizhvanan & Xavier, 2013; Rose et al., 2012). Highly engaged consumers tend to spend more and exhibit stronger loyalty, enhancing lifetime value and advocacy (Magneto, 2015).

Age has long been recognized as a determinant of online behavior. Younger consumers tend to be more digitally fluent, perceiving online platforms as efficient tools for information gathering and transactions (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004). Studies show that individuals aged 15-25 are the most active users of social media, engaging frequently with brands and peers (Ernst & Young, 2014). This group values convenience and immediacy, which enhances their responsiveness to digital marketing efforts. Conversely, older users often struggle with digital interfaces and may undervalue online retail channels due to limited exposure (Trocchia & Janda, 2000). Age also influences luxury consumption patterns and attitudes toward online shopping (Schade et al., 2016), suggesting that generational differences shape engagement intensity and purchase behavior. Recent research confirms that age moderates the impact of social media marketing on brand

engagement and loyalty, particularly in fashion and lifestyle sectors.

Gender plays a pivotal role in consumer motivation and online behavior. Gender differences manifest in how men and women process information, respond to social cues, and make purchasing decisions (Huang & Yang, 2010). Women are generally more influenced by peer reviews and social validation, which enhances their engagement with brand communities (Bae & Lee, 2011). Men, on the other hand, may prioritize functionality and efficiency. Gender also moderates the relationship between brand perception and purchase intention, with women showing stronger emotional responses to brand warmth and competence. Studies in sustainable fashion and green consumption reveal that women exhibit higher purchase intention when aligned with environmental values, although some findings suggest men may be more proactive in green buying behaviors (Chekima et al., 2016). These insights underscore the complexity of gender as a moderating variable in consumer engagement-purchase intention dynamics.

Income reflects both purchasing power and risk tolerance. Higher-income consumers are less sensitive to perceived risks and more likely to engage in online transactions. They also demonstrate greater brand loyalty and preference for premium products, which enhances their engagement levels. Income influences how consumers perceive value and price sensitivity, particularly in eco-conscious purchasing decisions (Wang et al., 2020). However, findings on income's moderating role are mixed; others report no significant moderation effect (Chekima et al., 2015). Nonetheless, income remains a relevant factor in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors in digital contexts.

In summary, consumer engagement on Facebook is a psychologically rich phenomenon shaped by emotional attachment, identity integration, trust, and community dynamics, all influenced by demographic factors. These interrelated constructs underscore the need to examine brand attachment through bonding and identity dimensions in the context of social media marketing.

This study aims to investigate how these dimensions of brand attachment influence consumer

engagement and purchase intention on Facebook, considering the moderating roles of age, gender, and income. Addressing these gaps, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

*H1(a):* *Identity-based attachment positively influences consumer engagement.*

*H1(b):* *Identity-based attachment positively influences purchase intention.*

*H2(a):* *Bonding-based attachment positively influences consumer engagement.*

*H2(b):* *Bonding-based attachment positively influences purchase intention.*

*H3:* *Consumer engagement positively influences purchase intention.*

*H4(a):* *Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between IBA and purchase intention.*

*H4(b):* *Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between bonding-based attachment and purchase intention.*

*H5(a):* *Age moderates the relationship between consumer engagement and purchase intention.*

*H5(b):* *Gender moderates the relationship between consumer engagement and purchase intention.*

*H5(c):* *Income moderates the relationship between consumer engagement and purchase intention.*

Following previous research based on attachment theory variables, this study seeks to explain the following: first, how antecedents of consumer engagement might affect consumer engagement on Facebook; second, how consumer engagement might affect purchase intention; third, how consumer engagement might mediate between is antecedents and purchase intention; and fourth, how demographic variables like age, gender, and income might moderate between is antecedents and purchase intention (Figure 1).

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a predictive–causal design to examine how identity-based attachment and bonding-based attachment influence consumer engagement with local brands on Facebook, and how consumer engagement subsequently affects purchase intention purchase intention. Predictive designs allow estimation of dependent outcomes from independent constructs, while causal designs
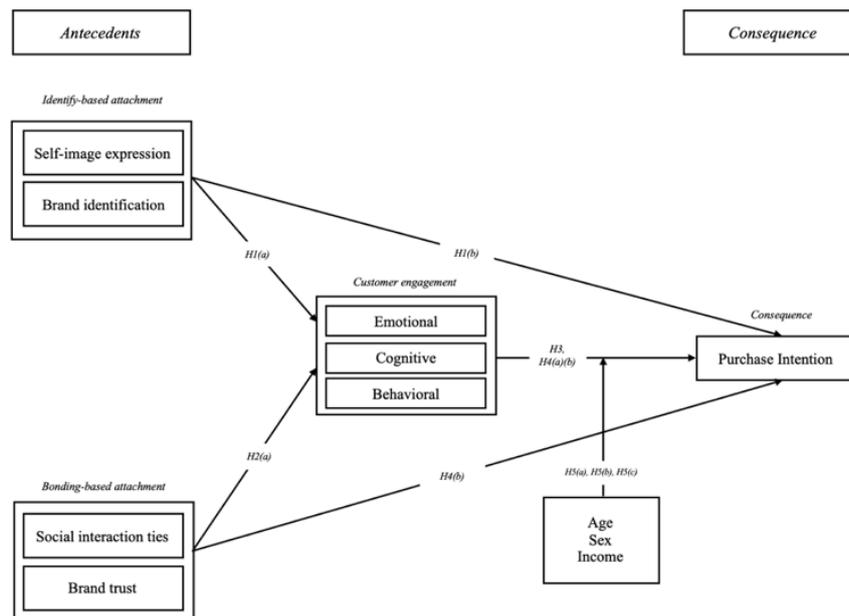


**Figure 1.** Proposed conceptual framework

uncover explanatory mechanisms underlying observed relationships (Dudovskiy, 2018). Variance-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was selected as the primary analytical approach, given its suitability for mediation and moderation testing in complex models with small-to-moderate sample sizes (Roldán & Sánchez-Franco, 2012; Hair et al., 2017). WarpPLS 7.0 software was used for path modeling, moderation analysis, and indirect effect estimation (Kock, 2020).

The research was conducted in the Philippines between August and October 2024. The choice of setting was justified by the country's exceptionally high Facebook penetration rate and intensive platform usage, making it an ideal context to study consumer–brand interactions in emerging markets. Data were gathered through an online, self-administered survey distributed via Google Forms. This mode was chosen to match the digital nature of the study's focus, Facebook engagement, and to maximize access to diverse respondents across geographic regions.

The questionnaire items were adapted from validated scales: self-image expression by Kim et al.,(2011); brand identification by Mael and Ashforth (1992); social interaction ties by Chiu et al. (2006); brand trust by Gurviez and Korchia (2003); engagement via emotional, cognitive, and behavioral by Solem and Pedersen (2016); and purchase intention by Kim and Ko (2010). Items were refined for clarity and cultural appropriateness, with minor contextual modifications for the Philippine setting. Only constructs relevant to the conceptual model were included to ensure brevity and respondent focus. A five-point Likert scale was used consistently to capture attitudes and behavioral intentions.

The target population consisted of Filipino residents aged 18 years and older who actively followed at least one local brand page on Facebook. This criterion ensured that respondents possessed relevant experience with the research context. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants from online communities and networks of local brand pages. A total of 386 valid responses were obtained. Sample adequacy was assessed using the inverse square root method and gamma-exponential approach (Kock & Hadaya, 2016). Both techniques suggested minimum requirements of 146-160 cases for the proposed model ($\beta$ = 0.197; $\alpha$ = 0.05; power = 0.80). The achieved sample size therefore exceeded statistical thresholds and provided sufficient power for model estimation.

Prior to data analysis, the responses were screened for their internal consistency and validity. PLS-SEM was employed due to its flexibility in estimating latent constructs, handling non-normal data, and simultaneously testing mediation and moderation effects (Hair et al., 2017; Ali & Suleiman, 2018). Demographic factors (age, gender, income) were modeled as moderators to explore subgroup differences in the consumer engagement-PI relationship. Path significance was evaluated using bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples.

The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained electronically before the start of the survey. Respondents were assured of anonymity, with no personally identifying information collected. Data confidentiality was preserved through password-protected files accessible only
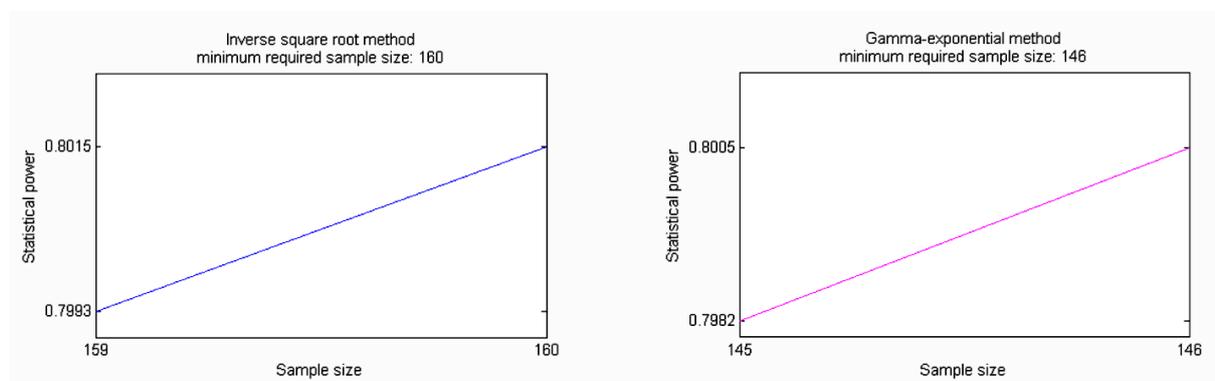


**Figure 2.** Minimum sample size required using inverse square root and gamma-exponential methods

to the research team. These procedures ensured compliance with established ethical standards for research involving human participants.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants. The majority were female (73.3%), aged 18-26 years (97.4%) and reported a monthly income of PHP 10,000 or less (86.3%). Income sources were primarily employment or business activities (76.9%). Respondents reported following a variety of local brand categories on Facebook, including clothing and apparel (80.1%), food, health, and wellness (61.4%), and beauty-related products (57.3%), reflecting diverse consumer interests within the digital marketplace.

**Table 1.** Profile of respondents

| Category | Subcategory | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 103 | 26.7 |
| | Female | 283 | 73.3 |
| Age | 18-26 | 376 | 97.4 |
| | 27-42 | 7 | 1.8 |
| | 43-58 | 1 | 0.3 |
| | 59-68 | 1 | 0.3 |
| | 69-77 | 0 | 0.0 |
| | 78≥ | 1 | 0.3 |
| Monthly income | Php 10,000 or less | 333 | 86.3 |
| | Php 10,001-20,000 | 30 | 7.8 |
| | Php 20,001-30,000 | 13 | 3.4 |
| | Php 30,001-40,000 | 4 | 1.0 |
| | Php 40,001-50,000 | 2 | 0.5 |
| | Php 50,001 or more | 4 | 1.0 |
| Source of income | Work/business | 297 | 76.9 |
| | Allowance | 66 | 17.1 |
| | Both | 23 | 6.0 |
| Local brands respondents follow on Facebook* | Clothing and apparel | 309 | 80.1 |
| | Food-related, health and wellness | 237 | 61.4 |
| | Personal hygiene and beauty-related | 221 | 57.3 |
| | Technology-related | 124 | 32.1 |

*Note:* *multiple response.

## 3. RESULTS

The internal consistency of the first-order components was assessed in this study using the composite reliability (CR). Table 2 showed that all constructions had strong internal consistency, with CR values above the recommended cutoff of 0.7. It indicates that the study's measurements of the targeted constructs are accurate and consistent. According to the results, every construct had a factor loading of larger than 0.70. All the items were

at least 0.50, according to the Average Variance Extracted results. These findings show that the measuring model has a strong correlation with each of its constructs and a good convergent validity. This indicates that the scale is accurate and dependable for measuring the desired constructions.

**Table 2.** Quality criteria of the reflective first-order constructs

| Construct | Factor loading | AVE | CR |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Self-image expression (SEI)** | | | |
| SIE1 | 0.79 | | |
| SIE2 | 0.84 | 0.70 | 0.90 |
| SIE3 | 0.85 | | |
| SIE4 | 0.85 | | |
| **Brand identification (BI)** | | | |
| BI1 | 0.85 | 0.72 | 0.84 |
| BI2 | 0.85 | | |
| **Social interaction ties (SIT)** | | | |
| SIT1 | 0.87 | | |
| SIT2 | 0.93 | 0.82 | 0.93 |
| SIT3 | 0.92 | | |
| **Brand trust (BT)** | | | |
| BT1 | 0.89 | | |
| BT2 | 0.92 | 0.83 | 0.94 |
| BT3 | 0.92 | | |
| **Emotional engagement (EE)** | | | |
| EE1 | 0.92 | 0.85 | 0.92 |
| EE2 | 0.92 | | |
| **Cognitive consumer engagement** | | | |
| CE1 | 0.89 | | |
| CE2 | 0.92 | 0.79 | 0.92 |
| CE3 | 0.86 | | |
| **Behavioral (BE)** | | | |
| BE1 | 0.88 | | |
| BE2 | 0.91 | 0.81 | 0.93 |
| BE3 | 0.92 | | |
| **Purchase intention** | | | |
| PI1 | 0.74 | | |
| PI2 | 0.82 | | |
| PI3 | 0.78 | 0.58 | 0.89 |
| PI4 | 0.73 | | |
| PI5 | 0.67 | | |
| PI6 | 0.82 | | |

Table 3 displays correlations between variables using square roots of AVE coefficients to scale the discriminant validity of the latent components. All of the AVE square roots were higher than the inter-correlation values between the constructs, as shown in Table 3, indicating that the discriminant validity of the constructs is acceptable. Furthermore, the validity and reliability of the constructs have been established. It suggests

**Table 3.** Discriminant validity of the first-order constructs

| Construct | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Self-image expression | 0.83 | | | | | | | |
| 2. Brand identification | 0.62 | 0.85 | | | | | | |
| 3. Social interaction ties | 0.60 | 0.55 | 0.91 | | | | | |
| 4. Brand Trust | 0.51 | 0.39 | 0.58 | 0.91 | | | | |
| 5. Emotional | 0.59 | 0.48 | 0.66 | 0.64 | 0.92 | | | |
| 6. Cognitive | 0.58 | 0.48 | 0.63 | 0.62 | 0.74 | 0.89 | | |
| 7. Behavioral | 0.60 | 0.56 | 0.63 | 0.50 | 0.66 | 0.65 | 0.90 | |
| 8. Purchase Intention | 0.55 | 0.44 | 0.64 | 0.63 | 0.66 | 0.66 | 0.70 | 0.76 |

*Note*: Square roots of Average Variances Extracted (AVEs) shown on diagonal.

that the metrics employed were successful in differentiating between various constructs. We can be confident in the quality and consistency of the data collected if discriminant validity tests to determine whether statements associated with one variable do not conflict with statements associated with other variables (Kock, 2017).

Because the researcher is interested in second order estimations, like the path coefficient to and from the second order constructs, the two-stage technique was employed. The two-stage method consists of two stages. Stage 1 primarily uses the endogenous and exogenous variables of the first-order constructs, without including the higher-order construct (HOC) in the route model (Figure 3). Since the first-order components in the study's model were reflective, the traditional evaluation of the measurement model, which incorporates fac-

tor loadings, AVE, CR, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion, was applied. The formative indicators (Mode B) for the second-order construct in Stage 2 are the latent variable scores from the first-order constructs in Stage 1. Collinearity and the importance and applicability of the weights were evaluated for formative constructs.

The accuracy of the estimations is the main reason why the two-stage technique is superior to the repeated indicator approach. The simulations carried out by Becker et al. (2012) showed that, primarily when Mode B with the path weighing scheme was used, estimates produced using the two-stage approach were more accurate than those obtained using the repeated indicator approach. Furthermore, by concentrating solely on higher-order variables, the two-stage method streamlines the model. This prevents overspecifi-
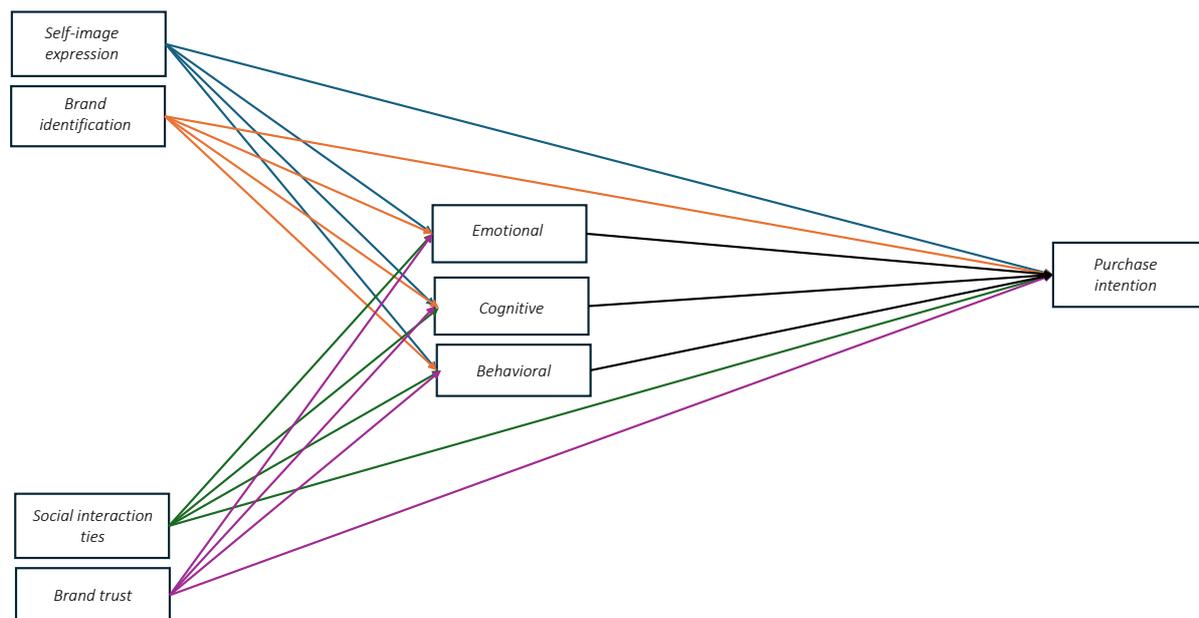


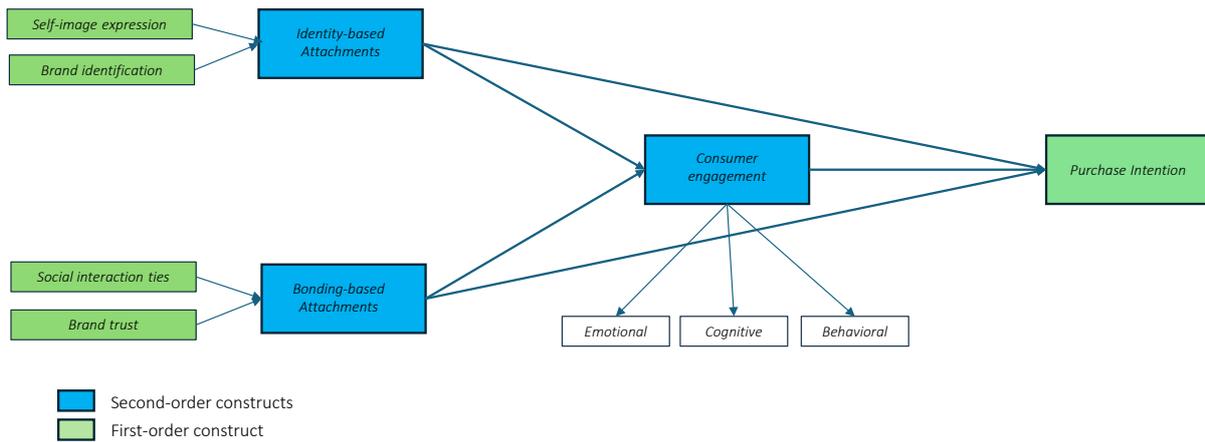**Figure 3.** Second stage of the two-stage approach of PLS SEM model

**Figure 4.** The two-stage approach of PLS-SEM model

cation by avoiding the requirement to include all higher-order constructions and lower-order indicators (Becker et al., 2012).

The assessment of formative indicators collinearity is presented on Table 4. An analysis of the collinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) assures that the regression results are not skewed before the assessment of the structural relationships. Considering that all the collinearity scores for indicators of the formative second order constructs fall within the maximum accepted value of 10 means that collinearity is not an issue at all.

**Table 4.** Collinearity test for indicators of the formative second order constructs

| Indicators | VIF |
|---|---|
| **Identity-based attachment (IBA)** | |
| SEI | 1.61 |
| BI | 1.61 |
| **Bonding-based attachment** | |
| SIT | 1.50 |
| BT | 1.50 |
| **Consumer engagement** | |
| EE | 2.53 |
| CE | 2.48 |
| BE | 1.95 |
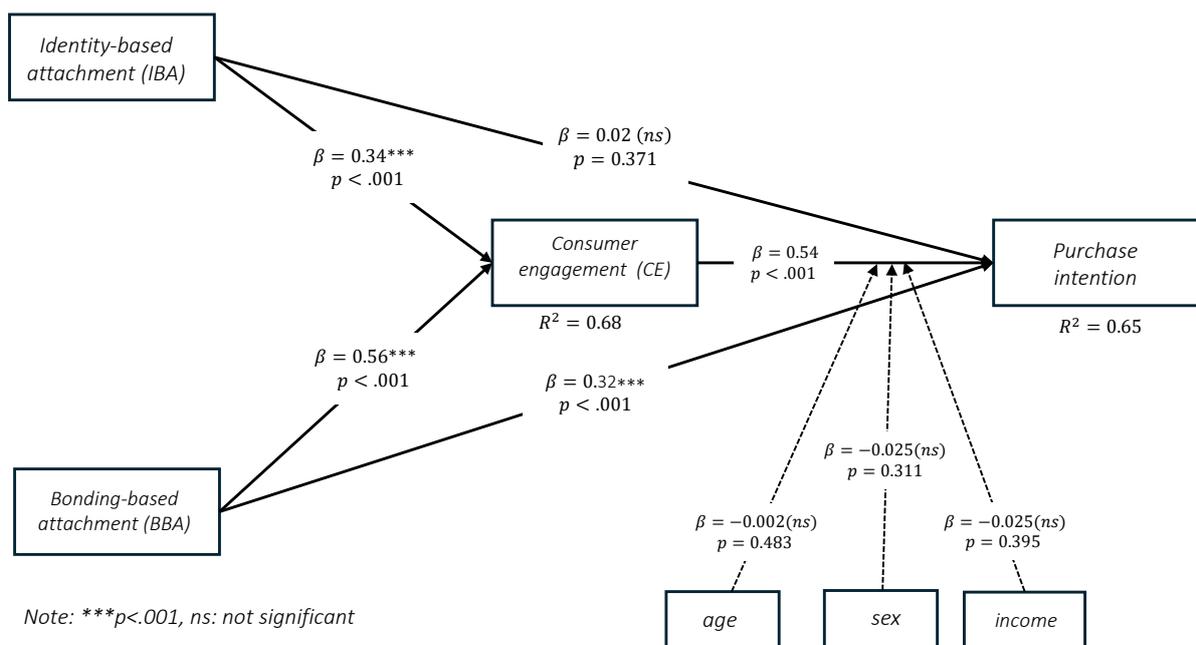


Note: ***p<.001, ns: not significant

**Figure 5.** Structural model with standardized path loading

**Table 5.** Path analysis and hypothesis testing

| H | Path | Path coefficient | SE | p-value | Effect size | Decision/interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Direct effect** | | | | |
| 1(a) | IBA → CE | 0.343 | 0.049 | <.001 | 0.244 | Supported |
| 1(b) | IBA → PI | 0.017 | 0.051 | 0.371 | 0.009 | Not supported |
| 2(a) | BBA → CE | 0.557 | 0.047 | <.001 | 0.437 | Supported |
| 2(b) | BBA → PI | 0.320 | 0.049 | <.001 | 0.231 | Supported |
| 3 | CE → PI | 0.542 | 0.047 | <.001 | 0.414 | Supported |
| | | **Mediating effect** | | | | |
| 4(a) | IBA → CE → PI | 0.186 | 0.035 | <.001 | 0.105 | Supported (full mediation) |
| 4(b) | BBA → CE → PI | 0.302 | 0.035 | <.001 | 0.218 | Supported (partial mediation) |
| | | **Moderating effect** | | | | |
| 5(a) | age×CE → PI | −0.002 | 0.051 | 0.483 | 0.001 | Not supported |
| 5(b) | gender×CE → PI | 0.025 | 0.051 | 0.311 | 0.011 | Not supported |
| 5(c) | income×CE → PI | −0.014 | 0.051 | 0.395 | 0.003 | Not supported |

Figure 5 and Table 5 present the final structural model with standardized path loading. They display that the final model provides support for the six (6) out of the ten (10) hypotheses in this study.

The direct effects revealed the following results: identity-based attachment has significant effect consumer engagement with β = 0.34***, p < .001; bonding-based attachment to consumer engagement with β = 0.56***, p < .001 and purchase intention with β = 0.32***, p < .001; consumer engagement to purchase intention with β = 0.54***, p <. 001, while no significant effect (β = 0.02; p = 0.371) was recorded between identity-based attachment and purchase intention. The full mediating effect of consumer engagement between identity-based attachment and purchase intention (β = 0.186), and partial mediating effect between bonding-based attachment and purchase intention (β = 0.302) are both evident.

When exogenous factors are unable to substantially affect endogenous variables without passing via the mediator variable, full mediation takes place (Hair et al., 2017). In this study, the indirect effect of including intervening variables became significant, however the direct effect value between identity-based attachment and purchase intention was not significant (β = 0.02). The findings of this study showed that the indirect effect between identity-based attachment and purchase intention had a positive (β = 0.186) and significant (p = 0.105) relationship, whereas the direct effect had a positive (β = 0.02) but not significant (p = 0.371). The result presents that age (β=-0.002), gen-

der (β=0.025), and income (β=0.014-) were not significant moderators of the moderating effects of the three demographic variables between CE and PI.

# 4. DISCUSSION

The study is pioneering in simultaneously examining the indirect effects of consumer engagement consumer engagement as a mediator and demographic variables as moderators on purchase intention purchase intention, within the specific cultural and digital landscape of the Philippines.

Consistent with previous research, the findings establish that both identity-based attachment and bonding-based attachment positively influence consumer engagement among Filipino consumers. This aligns with Coelho et al. (2018) who emphasize the critical role of brand identification in driving engagement and loyalty. Similarly, the significance of bonding-based attachment on consumer engagement confirms earlier work by Nambisan and Baron (2009) and Harrigan et al. (2018), supporting the perspective that emotional and social bonds foster stronger community attachment and participation. These results affirm that Filipino users' psychological investment in brands on Facebook parallels global trends, confirming Attachment Theory as a useful framework in this context.

However, the study reveals a nuanced distinction in the roles of identity-based attachment and bonding-based attachment on purchase in-

tention. While bonding-based attachment significantly affects purchase intention, supporting findings from Phua et al. (2017) and Hinson et al. (2018) about the power of social connection and positive bonding experiences to drive purchasing behaviors, identity-based attachment's lack of a direct effect on PI diverges from recent studies (Yoon & Nam, 2024; Zheng et al., 2022). This divergence may reflect cultural specificities within the Philippine market, where expressions of self-identity related to brands may not directly translate into purchase decisions, perhaps due to socio-economic factors or a collective emphasis on community and relational bonds over individual identity signals.

Further reinforcing established literature, this study confirms a strong positive effect of consumer engagement on purchase intention, echoing conclusions from Brodie et al. (2011). This suggests that Filipino consumers who actively engage with brands online are more likely to convert engagement into purchasing actions, emphasizing the importance of fostering deep, interactive relationships rather than relying solely on traditional marketing efforts

The mediation analysis demonstrates that consumer engagement serves as a bridge between both forms of attachment and purchase intention, corroborating Lim and Rasul (2022). This mediating role highlights consumer engagement as the psychological mechanism transforming emotional and identity attachments into tangible purchase behaviors, a finding particularly relevant to marketers aiming to enhance brand effectiveness on social media.

Interestingly, demographic variables (age, gender, and income) were found not to moderate the consumer engagement-purchase intention relation-ship in the Philippine setting. This contrasts with certain global studies (Benson et al., 2015) but supports other findings arguing for more context-specific consumer behavior patterns (Suman et al., 2019). The results suggest a digital homogenization effect among Filipino Facebook users, likely due to widespread platform familiarity across demographic groups, reducing traditional variations in online purchasing behavior and engagement.

This study offers several theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it validates Attachment Theory's applicability to Filipino consumers' online brand engagement, establishing identity-based attachment and bonding-based attachment as foundational constructs influencing consumer engagement and purchase intention in this market. It also challenges assumptions about demographic moderators, suggesting local cultural and digital environment factors may diminish their traditional influence. Practically, marketers, both domestic and foreign, are encouraged to prioritize strategies that strengthen emotional bonding and community participation to boost engagement and purchase intentions on Facebook.

For local brands in the Philippines, fostering consumer engagement through proactive collaboration, participative content, and reward-based engagement systems could enhance consumer interaction and subsequently drive sales. Encouraging user-generated content and social connectivity within brand communities can cultivate strong bonding, encouraging repeat purchase behavior. Incentive mechanisms such as loyalty programs, exclusive content, and opinion leadership opportunities can further sustain engagement and influence purchase decisions, leveraging the high digital literacy and social media saturation in the Philippines.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the role of consumer engagement in enhancing purchase intention purchase intention among Filipino consumers of local brands on Facebook, using attachment theory as the guiding framework. The findings demonstrate that both identity-based attachment and bonding-based attachment significantly influence consumer engagement, which in turn positively affects purchase intention. Notably, bonding-based attachment also has a direct impact on purchase intention, while demographic factors such as age, gender, and income do not moderate the consumer engagement-pur-

chase intention relationship in the Philippine context. These results suggest that emotional and social bonds within online brand communities are critical drivers of consumer purchasing behavior, regardless of demographic differences.

From these outcomes, it can be concluded that fostering strong emotional connections and community bonds should be central to digital marketing strategies for local Philippine brands on social media platforms. The absence of demographic moderation highlights the potential homogenizing effect of widespread Facebook use across diverse Filipino populations, emphasizing engagement's universal importance. Moreover, the mediating role of consumer engagement underscores its function as a conduit transforming attachment into actionable purchase decisions.

Future research should explore industry-specific factors, such as brand maturity and sector characteristics, to determine their influence on consumer engagement and purchase intention. Employing qualitative methodologies, such as in-depth interviews or ethnographic studies, could provide richer insights into the nuanced experiences and subjective dimensions of attachment and engagement. Additionally, examining perspectives from brand managers and companies would deepen the understanding of attachment dynamics from the supply side, offering a more comprehensive view of consumer-brand relationships in digital environments.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Wilmark Ramos.
Data curation: Wilmark Ramos.
Formal analysis: Wilmark Ramos.
Investigation: Wilmark Ramos.
Methodology: Wilmark Ramos.
Project administration: Wilmark Ramos.
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Writing – review & editing: Wilmark Ramos.

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