

Social Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention: The Role of Brand Awareness and Brand Association

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ABSTRACT

New Balance is a well-known sports and lifestyle footwear brand recognized for its product quality, distinctive designs, and comfort. Although the brand has achieved strong global growth, its popularity in Indonesia remains lower than that of several competitors. Previous studies have examined the relationship between social brand engagement and purchase intention, but most have analyzed the mediating roles of brand awareness and brand association separately. This study addresses this gap by integrating both mediating variables into a single model. A quantitative approach was employed using purposive sampling with 140 respondents. Data were collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that social brand engagement significantly influences brand awareness and brand association. Both variables significantly affect purchase intention, while brand awareness also significantly influences brand association. Furthermore, social brand engagement indirectly affects purchase intention through brand awareness, brand association, and their sequential mediation. These findings provide managerial insights for strengthening New Balance's social media marketing strategy.

Keywords: social brand engagement, brand awareness, brand association, purchase intention, new balance.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, fashion has become an important part of everyday life. It is not only related to clothing but also reflects a person's identity, lifestyle, and self-expression. Among fashion products, sneakers are no longer viewed only as functional items but also as symbols of personal identity and social status. As consumer preferences continue to change, competition among global sneaker brands has become increasingly intense.

New Balance is a well-known sports and lifestyle footwear brand recognized for its high product quality, unique designs, and comfort. In recent years, the company has successfully transformed its image from a traditional sports brand into a popular lifestyle and streetwear brand through product innovation, creative collaborations, and marketing campaigns. Although New Balance has experienced strong global sales growth, its popularity in Indonesia remains lower than competitors such as Adidas, Nike, and Converse. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence Indonesian consumers' purchase intention is important.

This study focuses on four key variables: social brand engagement, brand awareness, brand association, and purchase intention. Social brand engagement encourages consumers to interact with brands through social media, helping to build stronger relationships with the brand. Higher brand awareness makes consumers more likely to recognize and consider a brand, while positive

brand association creates favorable perceptions and differentiates the brand from its competitors. These factors are expected to increase consumers' purchase intention.

Globally, New Balance has shown significant growth, reflected by an 18.3% increase in brand equity among Generation Z and sales growth of 23% in 2023 and 20% in 2024. However, according to a survey conducted by Katadata Insight Center (2023), the brand's performance in Indonesia has not matched its global success. New Balance ranked only sixth among consumers' preferred sneaker brands in Indonesia, with a preference rate of 22.6%, far behind Adidas and Nike. This gap between New Balance's global performance and its domestic performance provides the academic basis for examining the factors that influence consumers' purchase intention toward the brand in the Indonesian market.

Previous studies have extensively examined the influence of social brand engagement on purchase intention, as found in the research of Suryati et al., (2024) Ketut et al., (2025). However, these studies tend to examine the roles of brand awareness and brand association partially and separately as mediating variables, meaning no comprehensive study has yet integrated both intervening variables within a single research model. Furthermore, empirical research on the mediating role of consumer brand engagement in the context of Indonesian consumers particularly regarding the New Balance brand remains limited. These conceptual and contextual gaps form the basis for the significance of this study.

This study is based on the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) theory proposed by Keller (2001), which explains that brand equity is built through consumers' knowledge, experiences, feelings, and perceptions of a brand. Based on this theory, this research examines the influence of social brand engagement on purchase intention, with brand awareness and brand association acting as mediating variables in the context of New Balance footwear.

Social Brand Engagement

Social brand engagement refers to consumers' active interaction with a brand through social media, such as commenting, sharing content, and providing feedback. These interactions strengthen consumers' emotional and social relationships with the brand, improve brand equity, and increase purchase intention (Vo Minh, Nguyen Huong, and Dang Nguyen Ha 2022; Osei-Frimpong, McLean, and Famiyeh 2020). Social brand engagement also allows consumers to express their identity and lifestyle through their interactions with brands on social media (Giakoumaki and Krepapa 2020). Positive consumption experiences encourage consumers to engage more actively with brands and build stronger relationships in digital environments (Obilo, Chefor, and Saleh 2021).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to consumers' ability to recognize and remember a brand within a product category (Chen 2024; Barus, Fadhilah, and Cahyani 2024). Strong brand awareness is developed through consistent marketing efforts, product quality, and effective communication (Izaak et al. 2023). A high level of brand awareness helps consumers identify, consider, and choose a brand more easily during the purchase decision process (Febrianti et al. 2022). Frequent brand exposure across different communication channels also increases brand recognition and familiarity (Sánchez Garza et al. 2024).

Brand Association

Brand association is the set of thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that consumers connect with a brand (Valencia et al. 2020). Strong brand associations create emotional connections between consumers and brands, leading to greater trust, loyalty, and positive brand evaluations (Castro-González, Bande, and Fernández-Ferrín 2025). Positive brand associations also strengthen brand equity by improving consumers' perceptions and differentiating the brand from its competitors (Habib Dada, 2021). Therefore, companies should continuously evaluate brand associations to support effective brand-building strategies (Çifci et al. 2022; Koll, von Wallpach, and Uzelac 2023).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness or plan to purchase a product or service in the future (Dona Fitriani, Ida Bagus Nyoman Udayana, and Lusiana Tria Hatmanti Hutami 2023). It is influenced by consumers' attitudes toward a brand, previous experiences, and information received from others (Sheth 2021). Consumers with stronger purchase intentions are more likely to complete an actual purchase (Chetioui, Benlafqih, and Lebdaoui 2020). Therefore, purchase intention is widely used as an important indicator of future consumer buying behavior (Ruby Setiawan Vita Briliana 2021).

Based on the above discussion, the research hypothesis is as follows:

- H1: Social brand engagement has a positive effect and significant on brand awareness
- H2: Social brand engagement has a positive effect and significant on brand association
- H3: Brand awareness has a positive effect and significant on purchase intention
- H4: Brand association has a positive effect and significant on purchase intention
- H5: Brand awareness has a positive effect and significant on brand association

Research Framework

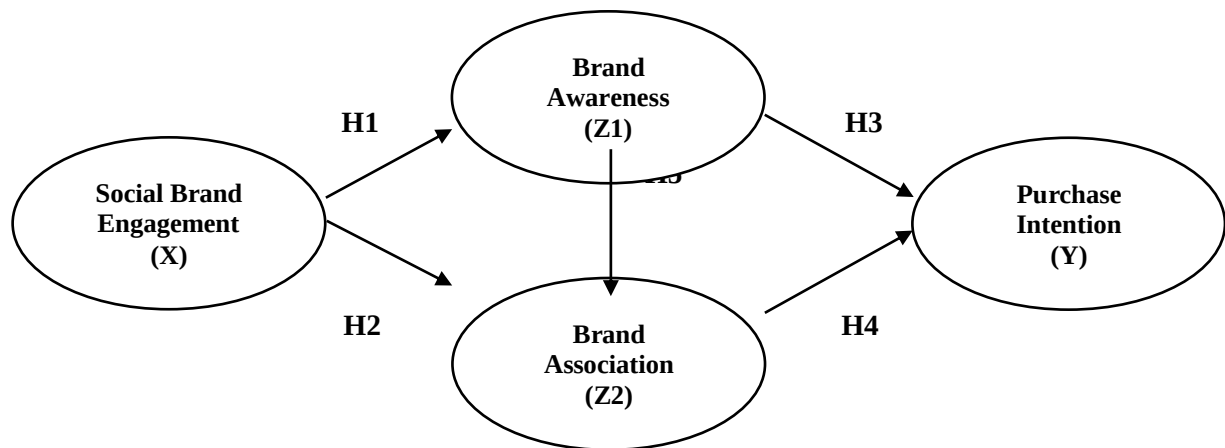


Figure 1. Research Framework

Source: (Vo Minh, Nguyen Huong, and Dang Nguyen Ha 2022)

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative survey-based approach to examine the relationships among the independent, dependent, and mediating variables. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of social brand engagement on purchase intention through brand awareness and brand association among New Balance customers.

The primary data used in this study was collected through an online questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed to measure the key variables involved in the research. Each question in the questionnaire is calculated using a 5-point Likert scale to assess the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the statements provided.

The population of this study consisted of consumers who have purchased or used New Balance products. A total of 140 respondents were selected using Hair's sample size guideline (Hair et al. 2014). This guideline was applied because the population size was unknown and recommends a minimum sample size of five to ten times the number of research indicators.

The study used a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling. Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms to respondents who had purchased or used New Balance products and were at least 17 years old.

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software to evaluate both the measurement model and the structural model. In addition, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted to interpret the research findings.

The questionnaire was distributed online to collect the data, covering questions about social brand engagement, brand awareness, brand association, and purchase intention. The data was obtained 140 respondents, as determined using the formula from Hair et al., (2014). In instrument measurement, validity testing is conducted to ensure that the instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Hair et al., 2014). The instrument is considered valid if the loading factor value is ≥ 0.50 . Reliability testing is performed to assess the consistency of the measurement results (Hair et al., 2014). The instrument is considered reliable if the composite reliability value is ≥ 0.70 and the AVE is ≥ 0.50 .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1) Respondent Profile

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Respondents

Characteristic	Classification	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	64	45,7%
	Female	76	54,3%
Age	17-22 years	48	34,3%
	23-28 years	87	62,1%
	29-34 years	0	0%
	35-40 years	5	3,6%
	> 41 years	0	0%
Occupation	Unemployed	17	12,1%
	Homemaker	6	4,3%
	Student	45	32,1%
	Entrepreneur / Self employed	15	10,7%
	Civil Servant	6	4,3%
Education Level	High School	51	36,4%
	Bachelor's Degree	85	60,7%
	Master's Degree	4	2,9%
	Doctoral Degree	1	0,7%
Monthly Income	< IDR 1 million	36	25,7%
	IDR 1,1-2 million	31	22,1%
	IDR 2,1-3 million	44	31,4%
	IDR 3,1-4 million	17	12,1%
	> IDR 4,1 million	12	8,6%

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0, 2026

Based on the respondents' characteristics, most respondents were female (76 respondents, 54.3%), while 64 respondents (45.7%) were male. This indicates that female consumers were more likely to use New Balance shoes and follow the brand's social media.

Most respondents were between 23 and 28 years old (87 respondents, 62.1%), followed by those aged 17–22 years (48 respondents, 34.3%). Only 5 respondents (3.6%) were aged 35–40 years, while no respondents were aged 29–34 years or over 41 years. These findings suggest that

New Balance is more popular among young adults who are generally more interested in fashion trends and social media.

Regarding occupation, the largest group of respondents were students (45 respondents, 32.1%), followed by unemployed respondents (17 respondents, 12.1%), entrepreneurs (15 respondents, 10.7%), and both homemakers and civil servants (6 respondents each, 4.3%). This indicates that most New Balance consumers who follow the brand's social media are students or individuals at the beginning of their careers.

In terms of education, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (85 respondents, 60.7%), followed by high school graduates (51 respondents, 36.4%). Only a small number had a master's degree (2.9%) or a doctoral degree (0.7%). This suggests that New Balance consumers generally have a relatively high educational background and are active users of digital media.

Based on monthly income, the largest group earned IDR 2.1–3 million per month (44 respondents, 31.4%), followed by those earning less than IDR 1 million (25.7%) and IDR 1.1–2 million (22.1%). These results indicate that New Balance products attract consumers from different income levels, especially middle-income consumers, showing that the brand's social media marketing reaches a wide range of economic groups.

2) Validity Test

Table 2. Outer Loading

	Social Brand Engagement	Brand Awareness	Brand Association	Purchase Intention
X.1	0.853			
X.2	0.883			
X.3	0.889			
X.4	0.840			
Z1.1		0.887		
Z1.2		0.878		
Z1.4		0.772		
Z2.1			0.864	
Z2.2			0.867	
Z2.3			0.859	
Y.1				0.864
Y.2				0.896
Y.3				0.810

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0, 2026

The convergent validity test for reflective indicators examines the correlation between indicator scores and the construct they represent. In reflective measurement models, changes in one indicator are expected to be reflected in changes in other indicators within the same construct. Therefore, convergent validity is evaluated by examining the outer loading values of each indicator. An outer loading value greater than 0.50 indicates that the indicator is considered valid and capable of measuring the intended construct.

Table 2 presents the results of the outer loading test for the constructs in this study: Social Brand Engagement, Brand Awareness, Brand Association, and Purchase Intention. Based on the results, all indicators have outer loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating that all indicators meet the requirements for convergent validity.

The Social Brand Engagement construct consists of four indicators with outer loading values of X.1 (0.853), X.2 (0.883), X.3 (0.889), and X.4 (0.840). These values indicate that all indicators make a strong contribution to measuring the Social Brand Engagement construct and can therefore be considered valid.

The Brand Awareness construct consists of three indicators, namely Z1.1 (0.887), Z1.2 (0.878), and Z1.4 (0.772). Since all outer loading values exceed 0.70, these indicators demonstrate satisfactory convergent validity and effectively represent the Brand Awareness construct.

Similarly, the Brand Association construct includes three indicators with outer loading values of Z2.1 (0.864), Z2.2 (0.867), and Z2.3 (0.859). These high loading values indicate that each indicator has a strong relationship with the Brand Association construct and is therefore considered valid.

Finally, the Purchase Intention construct consists of three indicators with outer loading values of Y.1 (0.864), Y.2 (0.896), and Y.3 (0.810). All indicators exceed the recommended threshold, demonstrating that they are reliable and valid measures of the Purchase Intention construct.

Overall, the results of the convergent validity assessment show that all indicators used in this study have outer loading values greater than 0.70. Therefore, all indicators are considered valid and suitable for measuring their respective latent constructs, indicating that the measurement model has achieved satisfactory convergent validity.

3) Reliability Test

Table 3. Composite Reliability

Variable	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Status
Social Brand Engagement (X)	0.898	0.745	Reliable
Brand Awareness (Z1)	0.896	0.742	Reliable
Brand Association (Z2)	0.893	0.736	Reliable
Purchase Intention (Y)	0.923	0.750	Reliable

Source: Primary data processed SmartPLS 4.0, 2026

Based on Table 3, the Social Brand Engagement construct has a Composite Reliability value of 0.898, which is higher than the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating that the construct is reliable and internally consistent. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is 0.745, exceeding the recommended minimum value of 0.50. This result demonstrates that the Social Brand Engagement construct has good convergent validity and can be considered a reliable measurement construct.

The Brand Awareness construct has a Composite Reliability value of 0.896 and an AVE value of 0.742. Since both values are above the recommended thresholds of 0.70 for Composite Reliability and 0.50 for AVE, the Brand Awareness construct is considered reliable and capable of explaining a substantial proportion of the variance of its indicators.

The Brand Association construct shows a Composite Reliability value of 0.893 and an AVE value of 0.736. These values indicate that the construct has strong internal consistency and satisfactory convergent validity. Therefore, the Brand Association construct can be regarded as a reliable measurement instrument.

The Purchase Intention construct has the highest Composite Reliability value of 0.923, indicating an excellent level of internal consistency among its indicators. In addition, the AVE value of 0.750 is well above the recommended threshold of 0.50, suggesting that the Purchase Intention construct has excellent convergent validity and measurement quality.

Overall, the results of the Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) analysis indicate that all constructs in this study meet the recommended criteria, with Composite Reliability values above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Social Brand Engagement, Brand Awareness, Brand Association, and Purchase Intention constructs are reliable and valid, demonstrating that the measurement model has satisfactory reliability and convergent validity.

4) Model Evaluation

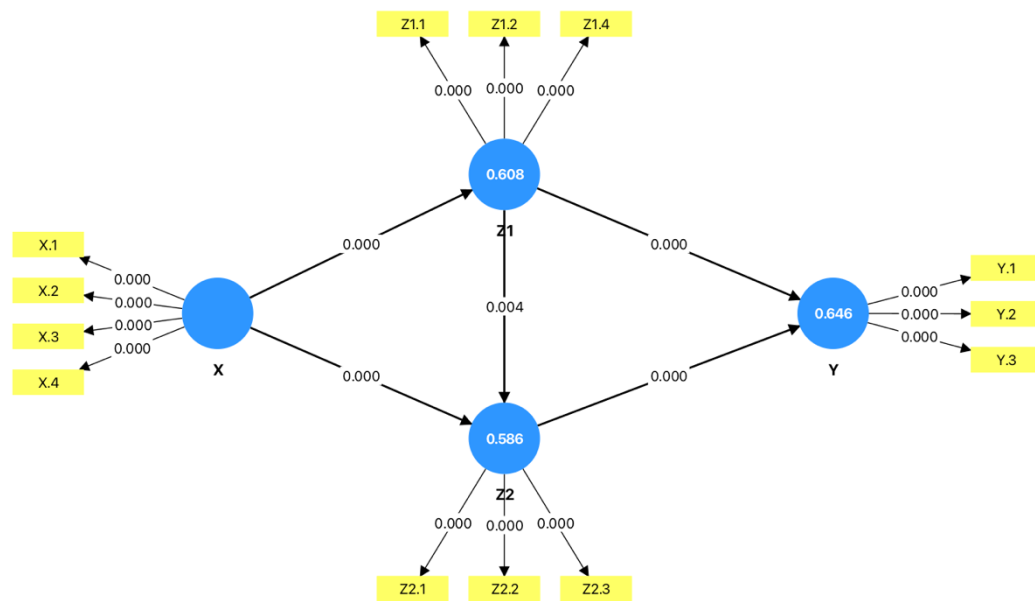


Figure 1. Inner model

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0, 2026

5) Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Path	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values
H1	(X) → (Z1)	19.324	0.000
H2	(X) → (Z2)	5.446	0.000
H3	(Z1) → (Y)	6.212	0.000
H4	(Z2) → (Y)	5.802	0.000
H5	(Z1) → (Z2)	2.853	0.004

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0, 2026

Based on Table 4, the hypothesis testing results are as follows.

H1: The effect of Social Brand Engagement (X) on Brand Awareness (Z1) has a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. This indicates that Social Brand Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Brand Awareness among New Balance shoe users. Therefore, H1 is accepted.

H2: The effect of Social Brand Engagement (X) on Brand Association (Z2) has a p-value of 0.000, which is below 0.05. This shows that Social Brand Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Brand Association. Therefore, H2 is accepted.

H3: The effect of Brand Awareness (Z1) on Purchase Intention (Y) has a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. This means that Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. Therefore, H3 is accepted.

H4: The effect of Brand Association (Z2) on Purchase Intention (Y) has a p-value of 0.000, which is below 0.05. This indicates that Brand Association has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. Therefore, H4 is accepted.

H5: The effect of Brand Awareness (Z1) on Brand Association (Z2) has a p-value of 0.004, which is lower than 0.05. This shows that Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Brand Association. Therefore, H5 is accepted.

Overall, all hypotheses (H1–H5) are supported because their p-values are below the significance level of 0.05. These results indicate that the proposed relationships among the variables are statistically significant.

6) Mediation Test

Table 5. Spesific Indirect Effect

Path	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values
(X) → (Z1) → (Y)	5.462	0.000
(X) → (Z2) → (Y)	2.760	0.006
(X) → (Z1) → (Z2) → (Y)	2.646	0.008

Source: Primary data processed SmartPLS 4.0, 2026

Based on Table 5, the results of the indirect effect (mediation) testing are as follows.

The indirect effect of Social Brand Engagement (X) on Purchase Intention (Y) through Brand Awareness (Z1) has a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. This indicates that the indirect effect is statistically significant. Therefore, Brand Awareness (Z1) significantly mediates the relationship between Social Brand Engagement (X) and Purchase Intention (Y).

The indirect effect of Social Brand Engagement (X) on Purchase Intention (Y) through Brand Association (Z2) has a p-value of 0.006, which is lower than 0.05. This result indicates that the indirect effect is statistically significant. Therefore, Brand Association (Z2) significantly mediates the relationship between Social Brand Engagement (X) and Purchase Intention (Y).

The indirect effect of Social Brand Engagement (X) on Purchase Intention (Y) through both Brand Awareness (Z1) and Brand Association (Z2) has a p-value of 0.008, which is lower than 0.05. This indicates that the indirect effect is statistically significant. Therefore, Brand Awareness (Z1) and Brand Association (Z2) jointly mediate the relationship between Social Brand Engagement (X) and Purchase Intention (Y).

7) R-Square Test

Table 6. The Average R-Square Value

Dependent Variable	R-Square
<i>Brand Awareness</i>	0.608
<i>Brand Association</i>	0.586
<i>Purchase Intention</i>	0.646

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0, 2026

Based on the R-Square values, Social Brand Engagement (X) explains 60.8% of the variance in Brand Awareness (Z1) ($R^2 = 0.608$), while the remaining 39.2% is explained by other factors outside the research model. This result indicates that Social Brand Engagement has a strong ability to improve Brand Awareness.

The R-Square value for Brand Association (Z2) is 0.586, meaning that 58.6% of the variance in Brand Association is explained by Social Brand Engagement, while the remaining 41.4% is influenced by other factors not included in this study. This suggests that Social Brand Engagement makes a substantial contribution to strengthening Brand Association.

Furthermore, the R-Square value for Purchase Intention (Y) is 0.646, indicating that Social Brand Engagement (X), Brand Awareness (Z1), and Brand Association (Z2) together explain 64.6% of the variance in Purchase Intention, while the remaining 35.4% is explained by other factors outside the model. This result suggests that the research model has strong explanatory power and that these variables make a significant contribution to increasing consumers' Purchase Intention.

The Effect of Social Brand Engagement on Brand Awareness

Based on the results of the first hypothesis (H1), Social Brand Engagement (X) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Awareness (Z1), with a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates that Social Brand Engagement positively and significantly influences Brand Awareness among New Balance shoe users. This finding is consistent with the study by Amanda and Siti Nurlaela (2025), which found that Social Brand Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Brand Awareness. Similar results were also reported by Reyvina and Tjokrosaputro (2024), Quenby and Azizah (2024), Rachmanu, Purnomo, and Hartini (2024), and Hutter et al. (2022).

The Effect of Social Brand Engagement on Brand Association

Based on the results of the second hypothesis (H2), Social Brand Engagement (X) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Association (Z2), with a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates that Social Brand Engagement positively and significantly influences Brand Association among New Balance shoe users. This finding supports the study by Chirica (2024), which also found a positive and significant effect of Social Brand Engagement on Brand Association. Similar findings were reported by Perera, Nguyen, and Nayak (2023), Kariappa (2020), Brodie et al. (2021), and Vo Minh, Nguyen Huong, and Dang Nguyen Ha (2022).

The Effect of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention

Based on the results of the third hypothesis (H3), Brand Awareness (Z1) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention (Y), with a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates that Brand Awareness positively and significantly influences Purchase Intention among New Balance shoe users. This result is consistent with the study by Darojat and Lestari (2024), which found that Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. Similar findings were also reported by Cahyani, Arifin, and Besari (2024), Tirtayoga and Wardana (2024), Patoding and Muzammil (2023), and Senalasari, Setiaji, and Khrisnamurti (2024).

The Effect of Brand Association on Purchase Intention

Based on the results of the fourth hypothesis (H4), Brand Association (Z2) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention (Y), with a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates that Brand Association positively and significantly influences Purchase Intention among New Balance shoe users. This finding is in line with the study by Prasetya and Hidayat (2021), which found that Brand Association has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. Similar results were also reported by Patoding and Muzammil (2023), Bagus Angga Primanda Kusuma and Putu Miartana (2023), Imaaduddin, Susan, and Tresnati (2022), and Yunus and Arief (2022).

The Effect of Brand Awareness on Brand Association

Based on the results of the fifth hypothesis (H5), Brand Awareness (Z1) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Association (Z2), with a p-value of 0.004 (< 0.05). This indicates that Brand Awareness positively and significantly influences Brand Association among New Balance shoe users. This finding is consistent with the study by Welsa and Setiawan (2025), which found that Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Brand Association. Similar findings were also reported by Hidayat, Widjaya, and Sutrisno (2024), Sugiarti et al. (2023), Indrayana (2024), and Šakytė-Statnickė (2024).

The Mediating Effect of Brand Awareness

Based on the mediation analysis, Brand Awareness mediates the relationship between Social Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention, with a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This result indicates that the indirect effect is statistically significant. Therefore, Brand Awareness significantly mediates the relationship between Social Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention.

The Mediating Effect of Brand Association

Based on the mediation analysis, Brand Association mediates the relationship between Social Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention, with a p-value of 0.006 (< 0.05). This result indicates that the indirect effect is statistically significant. Therefore, Brand Association significantly mediates the relationship between Social Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention.

The Sequential Mediating Effect of Brand Awareness and Brand Association

Based on the mediation analysis, Brand Awareness and Brand Association jointly mediate the relationship between Social Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention, with a p-value of 0.008 (< 0.05). This result indicates that the indirect effect is statistically significant. Therefore, Brand Awareness and Brand Association jointly serve as significant mediators in the relationship between Social Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that social brand engagement has a positive and significant influence on both brand awareness and brand association among New Balance consumers. In addition, brand awareness and brand association positively and significantly influence purchase intention, while brand awareness also has a positive effect on brand association. Furthermore, both brand awareness and brand association act as effective mediating variables in the relationship between social brand engagement with New Balance on social media can strengthen then brand awareness and brand association, which ultimately leads to higher purchase intention.

Based on the findings of this study, the authors hope that this research will contribute to the academic literature by providing a better understanding of the effects of social brand engagement, brand awareness, and brand association on purchase intention. Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to examine additional factors that may strengthen brand awareness, brand association, and purchase intention, such as greater brand exposure on social media and the development of a stronger brand identity.

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