

# The Effect of Consumer Brand Involvement on Brand Advocacy: A Moderated Mediation Model of Brand Affect and Perceived Value in an Emerging Market Context

St. Rukaiyah<sup>1\*</sup>, Ilham Safar<sup>2</sup>, Abdul Samad Arief<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Management, Faculty Economics and Social Science, Universitas Fajar, Makassar, Indonesia, <sup>2</sup>Department of Management, Postgraduate Faculty, Universitas Fajar, Makassar, Indonesia. \*Email: rukaiyah@unifa.ac.id

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of consumer brand involvement on brand advocacy by examining the mediating role of brand affect and the moderating role of perceived value within the culinary industry in Makassar, Indonesia, as a representative of an emerging market context. Using a survey of 272 consumers, the data were analyzed with structural equation modeling–partial least squares (SEM-PLS). The results reveal that consumer brand involvement significantly enhances brand affect, which in turn fosters stronger brand advocacy. Moreover, brand affect mediates the relationship between brand involvement and advocacy, confirming the centrality of emotional mechanisms in driving consumer advocacy. Conversely, the moderating role of perceived value was not supported, suggesting that emotional attachment outweighs rational value considerations in shaping advocacy within hedonic and culturally embedded consumption contexts. This study extends the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) framework and Brand Equity Theory by demonstrating the dominance of affective mechanisms over cognitive evaluations in emerging markets. It also fills a research gap by examining brand advocacy in the culinary sector, which has been underrepresented compared to studies on luxury or durable goods. From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that culinary brands in emerging markets should prioritize strategies that strengthen emotional and cultural engagement—such as storytelling, experiential marketing, and community involvement—rather than relying solely on functional value propositions.

**Keywords:** Consumer Brand Involvement, Brand Affect, Perceived Value, Brand Advocacy

**JEL Classifications:** M3, L1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Brand marketing in emerging markets continues to undergo fundamental transformations, driven by accelerated digitalization and evolving consumer preferences post-pandemic (Kumar et al., 2020; Haryanto et al., 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2021). In this competitive landscape, a brand's ability to not only attract but also retain and convert consumers into Brand Advocates has become a strategic imperative (Iglesias et al., 2020; Hur et al., 2021; Rather and Sharma, 2020), given that brand advocacy, involving positive recommendations and brand defense, is one of the strongest indicators of long-term loyalty and brand success (Keller, 2020; Hur et al., 2021).

This phenomenon is particularly salient in the culinary industry, especially in cities rich in cultural and gastronomic heritage like Makassar, where local culinary brands are often an integral part of community identity and pride (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2023; Arumsari et al., 2022). Consumer brand involvement has long been recognized as a crucial antecedent of desired pro-brand behaviors (Sharma et al., 2022; Islam and Rahman, 2022; Rather and Sharma, 2020), with deeply involved consumers tending to show stronger attachment and pro-brand actions (Hossain et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, the specific mechanisms converting this involvement into brand advocacy still require a more nuanced understanding,

particularly in the unique context of emerging markets. Recent literature suggests that Brand Affect, defined as consumers' positive feelings and emotional attachment to a brand, plays a vital mediating role in the relationship between involvement and brand outcomes (Hossain et al., 2021; Rather and Sharma, 2020; Akter et al., 2021), where involved consumers tend to develop stronger affect, which then drives advocacy (Iglesias et al., 2020). However, the validity and strength of this model can vary across different cultural and market contexts (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In Makassar City, observations reveal a disparity in advocacy for local culinary brands: some popular brands receive less active defense or promotion, while others, with a not-dissimilar customer base, boast highly vocal "advocates" (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2023). This disparity indicates the presence of moderating factors influencing the effectiveness of the path from brand affect to advocacy, which remain underexplored in this dynamic local market context (Haryanto et al., 2023). While the mediating role of brand affect in the relationship between consumer brand involvement and brand outcomes is acknowledged (Hossain et al., 2021; Rather and Sharma, 2020), the literature is still limited in integrating Perceived Value as a moderator in this mediation pathway. Perceived Value, encompassing consumers' holistic assessment of benefits relative to costs (Sweeney and Soutar, 2021; Al-Debei et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2022), is a strong predictor of satisfaction and loyalty.

However, studies specifically examining how perceived value moderates the relationship between brand affect and brand advocacy within a mediation model involving consumer brand involvement are still scarce, especially in emerging markets (e.g., Junaid et al., 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2021, highlighting the need for more complex interaction research). The absence of research that tests a moderated mediation model with the configuration of the relationship between consumer brand involvement through brand affect and brand advocacy moderated by perceived value, especially in the context of the culinary industry in a developing market such as Makassar, creates a significant theoretical and research gap (Iglesias et al., 2020; Hur et al., 2021). Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by proposing and testing a moderated mediation model. Its primary novelty lies in the simultaneous examination of: (1) The mediating role of brand affect in the relationship between consumer brand involvement and brand advocacy, and (2) The moderating role of perceived value in strengthening the path from brand affect to brand advocacy, applied within the context of local culinary brands in Makassar.

Thus, the main research problem to be addressed is: "How does consumer brand involvement influence brand advocacy, mediated by brand affect, and how does perceived value moderate this mediation pathway in an emerging market context?" Theoretically, this research will make significant contributions by strengthening and clarifying existing empirical findings in brand management and consumer behavior literature. Although several studies have shown positive relationships between involvement, affect, advocacy, and the role of perceived value (Kumar et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2022; Akter et al., 2021), there is variation and even inconsistency in the strength of these relationships across different contexts (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Junaid et al., 2023). By

testing a moderated mediation model, this study will offer a deeper understanding of the conditions (through perceived value) and mechanisms (through brand affect) that explain when and why consumer involvement effectively drives brand advocacy. This will help to reconceptualize and confirm existing empirical findings, providing stronger evidence of the complex interactions among these variables in emerging markets (Iglesias et al., 2020; Hur et al., 2021). Managerially, these findings will provide practical insights for marketers of culinary brands (and other brands) in emerging markets on how strategies to enhance involvement and affect need to be balanced with strong value propositions to effectively foster brand advocacy in a competitive environment (Haryanto et al., 2023; Rather and Sharma, 2020). The remainder of this article is structured as follows: The next section presents the literature review and hypothesis development, followed by the research methodology, results of data analysis, and a discussion of findings, managerial implications, limitations, and future research directions.

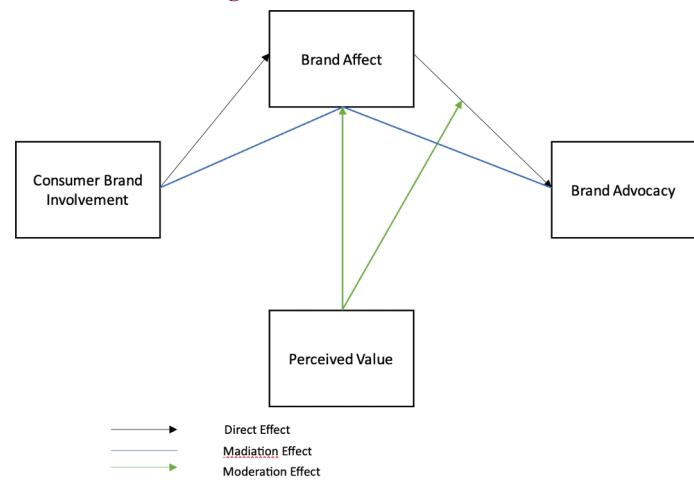
## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

This section lays the theoretical groundwork for the proposed moderated mediation model, defining key constructs and exploring their interrelationships based on extant literature. It culminates in the development of five specific hypotheses (Figure 1).

### 2.1. Theoretical Foundations

This study is primarily underpinned by two foundational theories: the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework and brand equity theory. The S-O-R framework, originating from environmental psychology (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), posits that external environmental stimuli (S) influence an individual's internal cognitive and affective states (O), which subsequently drive observable behavioral responses (R). In the context of consumer behavior, brand-related stimuli (e.g., brand communications, product attributes) act as "S", influencing consumers' perceptions and emotions ("O"), ultimately leading to behaviors such as purchase or advocacy ("R") (Haryanto et al., 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2021). This framework is particularly useful

Figure 1: Research framework



for understanding how brand involvement and perceived value (stimuli/perceptions) shape consumer affect (organism) and, in turn, brand advocacy (response).

Complementing the S-O-R framework, Brand Equity Theory (Keller, 2013, 2020) offers a comprehensive perspective on how brands create value for both firms and consumers. Brand equity is built upon consumer knowledge about the brand, which manifests through brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. At its highest level, brand equity culminates in brand resonance, characterized by deep psychological bonds and active brand advocacy (Keller, 2020). This theory provides the overarching context for understanding brand advocacy as a critical outcome of a strong brand-consumer relationship, driven by various brand-related constructs. Integrating these theories allows for a robust examination of the psychological mechanisms and value perceptions that drive consumers to become brand advocates, particularly in the unique context of emerging markets.

## 2.2. Consumer Brand Involvement (CBI)

Consumer brand involvement (CBI) is a psychological state reflecting the perceived personal relevance, interest, and importance a consumer attaches to a brand (Zaichkowsky, 1985; Laurent and Kapferer, 1985). This construct is multifaceted, encompassing both cognitive dimensions (e.g., perceived importance, knowledge acquisition) and affective dimensions (e.g., emotional attachment, passion for the brand) (Sharma et al., 2022). High CBI indicates that a brand occupies a significant position in a consumer's life, influencing their information processing, attitudes, and behaviors (Islam and Rahman, 2022). In the context of local culinary brands in emerging markets like Makassar, CBI can be exceptionally high due to deep-seated cultural ties, heritage value, and personal relevance derived from traditional consumption patterns (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2023). Consumers with elevated CBI are more prone to engaging deeply with brand-related content, leading to stronger brand relationships and more favorable brand outcomes (Rather and Sharma, 2020).

## 2.3. Brand Affect (BAF)

Brand affect (BAF) refers to the consumer's emotional responses and positive feelings towards a brand (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). These emotional states can vary in intensity and type, ranging from pleasure, warmth, and excitement to comfort and general liking (Batra and Ahtola, 1991). BAF is a critical component of building strong brand equity, as emotional connections often exert a more profound influence on consumer loyalty and engagement than purely rational or cognitive evaluations (Iglesias et al., 2020; Akter et al., 2021). In the culinary domain, BAF is frequently evoked by sensory experiences (taste, aroma), nostalgic associations with traditional dishes, or the overall satisfaction derived from a memorable dining experience (Sari et al., 2023). A strong brand affect fosters a deeper psychological bond, enhancing consumer resilience to competitive offerings and increasing their willingness to interact and engage with the brand (Hossain et al., 2021).

## 2.4. Brand Advocacy (BAD)

Brand advocacy (BAD) is conceptualized as the extent to which a consumer actively engages in positive word-of-mouth,

recommends a brand to others, and defends it against criticism (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Keller, 2013). It signifies the pinnacle of brand loyalty, transforming consumers from mere purchasers into active promoters and staunch defenders of the brand (Hur et al., 2021). BAD manifests through various behaviors, including offline recommendations to friends and family, online positive reviews and social media sharing, active encouragement for others to use the brand, and a strong intention to refer new customers (Brodie et al., 2011). In the contemporary digital landscape, social media platforms significantly amplify brand advocacy, enabling consumers to disseminate their positive experiences and exert influence over a broader network (Kumar et al., 2020). For local culinary brands in Makassar, robust brand advocacy is indispensable for organic growth, maintaining cultural relevance, and fostering a strong community presence (Arumsari et al., 2022; Pratiwi et al., 2024).

## 2.5. Perceived Value (PV)

Perceived value (PV) is defined as the consumer's holistic assessment of the utility of a product or service, based on a comprehensive evaluation of what is received (benefits) versus what is given (costs) (Zeithaml, 1988; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). This multi-dimensional assessment typically encompasses functional value (e.g., quality, utility, performance), emotional value (e.g., feelings evoked, pleasure), social value (e.g., social image, status enhancement), and economic value (e.g., price, value for money), weighed against various sacrifices (e.g., monetary cost, time, effort, risk) (Sweeney and Soutar, 2021; Al-Debei et al., 2020). High perceived value is a powerful predictor of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive behavioral intentions (Sharma et al., 2022). In the culinary sector, PV is intricately shaped by factors such as authentic taste, fresh ingredients, consistent quality, generous portion sizes, pleasant ambiance, attentive service, and fair pricing (Pratiwi et al., 2024).

## 2.6. Hypothesis Development

Building upon the theoretical foundations and conceptualizations, the following hypotheses are proposed to examine the relationships within the moderated mediation model.

### 2.6.1. Consumer brand involvement and brand affect ( $H_1$ )

Consumer brand involvement (CBI) reflects a deep psychological connection and personal relevance a brand holds for a consumer (Zaichkowsky, 1985). This profound engagement naturally predisposes consumers to develop stronger emotional bonds and positive feelings towards the brand. When consumers are highly involved, they dedicate more cognitive and emotional resources to their relationship with the brand, thereby fostering a richer and more intense affective experience (Rather and Sharma, 2020; Islam and Rahman, 2022). Empirical evidence consistently supports a positive association between higher brand involvement and more favorable emotional responses (Hossain et al., 2021; Akter et al., 2021). Therefore, we hypothesize:

$H_1$ : Consumer brand involvement has a positive effect on brand affect.

### 2.6.2. Brand affect and brand advocacy ( $H_2$ )

Brand affect (BAF) encapsulates the emotional attachment and positive sentiments consumers harbor for a brand (Chaudhuri

and Holbrook, 2001). These potent positive emotions serve as compelling motivators for consumers to engage in pro-brand behaviors, including active advocacy. When consumers experience joy, warmth, or excitement concerning a brand, they are more inclined to proactively share these positive sentiments, recommend the brand to their social circles, and even defend it against detractors (Iglesias et al., 2020; Hur et al., 2021). This emotional connection often transcends purely rational evaluations, establishing advocacy as a natural and robust outcome of strong brand affect (Keller, 2020). Thus, we propose:

$H_2$ : Brand affect has a positive effect on brand advocacy.

#### **2.6.3. Mediating role of brand affect ( $H_3$ )**

The stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework posits that internal organismic states mediate the relationship between external stimuli and behavioral responses (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). In the context of this study, consumer brand involvement (CBI) functions as a key stimulus, brand affect (BAF) represents an internal affective state, and brand advocacy (BAD) constitutes the behavioral response. High consumer involvement with a brand fosters positive emotional experiences (BAF), which subsequently directly drive advocacy behaviors (BAD). Existing literature frequently positions brand affect as a significant mediator in various brand-related relationships, particularly those originating from consumer involvement (Hossain et al., 2021; Akter et al., 2021). Therefore, we hypothesize:

$H_3$ : Brand affect mediates the relationship between consumer brand involvement and brand advocacy.

#### **2.6.4. Moderating role of perceived value ( $H_4$ )**

Perceived Value (PV) is a critical determinant of consumer behavior, significantly influencing satisfaction and loyalty (Zeithaml, 1988; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). While brand affect is a powerful driver of brand advocacy, the strength of this relationship may not be uniform across all consumers or contexts. When consumers perceive high value from a brand, the positive emotions (BAF) they experience are likely to be reinforced and objectively justified, instilling greater confidence and making them more vocal in their advocacy (Sharma et al., 2022; Al-Debei et al., 2020). Conversely, even strong affect might struggle to translate into robust advocacy if the perceived value is low or inconsistent. High perceived value thus acts as a catalyst, significantly amplifying the conversion of positive feelings into active brand promotion and defense. Thus, we hypothesize:

$H_4$ : Perceived value moderates the relationship between brand affect and brand advocacy, such that the positive effect of brand affect on brand advocacy is stronger when perceived value is high.

#### **2.6.5. Moderated mediation ( $H_5$ )**

Building upon the preceding hypotheses, this study proposes a moderated mediation model where perceived value (PV) influences the indirect effect of consumer brand involvement (CBI) on brand advocacy (BAD) via brand affect (BAF). This complex relationship suggests that the mechanism through which involvement leads to advocacy (i.e., via brand affect) is not constant but is contingent upon the level of perceived value (Junaid et al., 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2021). Specifically, a high level

of perceived value will strengthen the mediation path, making the indirect effect of CBI on BAD through BAF more pronounced. This implies that for culinary brands in Makassar, consumers' deep involvement fosters positive emotional connections, which in turn drive advocacy, but this entire process is significantly amplified when consumers also perceive the brand to offer superior value. This hypothesis provides a nuanced understanding of when and for whom the mediation process is most effective, thereby contributing to a more refined theoretical understanding of brand advocacy drivers. Therefore, we hypothesize:

$H_5$ : Perceived Value moderates the indirect effect of consumer brand involvement on brand advocacy via brand affect, such that the indirect effect is stronger when perceived value is high.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a quantitative, explanatory research design utilizing a survey method to investigate the causal relationships within the proposed moderated mediation model. The target population consists of consumers aged 18 years or older residing in Makassar City, Indonesia, who have consumed local culinary brands at least once in the past three months, reflecting Makassar's vibrant emerging market context and rich gastronomic heritage (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Saunders et al., 2019). A purposive sampling technique will be used to select 272 respondents, a sample size deemed adequate for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to achieve sufficient statistical power and reliable parameter estimates for complex models (Hair et al., 2020; Sarstedt et al., 2022; Kock, 2017).

Primary data will be collected via a structured questionnaire developed from established multi-item scales for each construct, ensuring content and construct validity. All variables—consumer brand involvement (5 indicators, adapted from Zaichkowsky, 1985; Laurent and Kapferer, 1985), brand affect (5 indicators, adapted from Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Batra and Ahtola, 1991), perceived value (5 indicators, adapted from Sweeney and Soutar, 2001, 2021; Zeithaml, 1988), and brand advocacy (5 indicators, adapted from Zeithaml et al., 1996; Keller, 2013)—will be measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire will undergo a pilot study with 30-50 respondents to pre-test its clarity, comprehensibility, and reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2022) before being administered online via digital platforms relevant to Makassar consumers. The collected data will be analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS software (version 4.0 or later), a robust approach for complex models focused on prediction and theory development (Hair et al., 2020). Data analysis will involve two stages: first, assessing the measurement model for reliability (Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability  $> 0.70$ ) and validity (convergent validity via AVE  $> 0.50$ ; discriminant validity via Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT  $< 0.90$ ) (Hair et al., 2020; Henseler et al., 2016). Second, the structural model will be assessed for path coefficients (bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples),  $R^2$  (explanatory power),  $Q^2$  (predictive relevance  $> 0$ ), and  $f^2$  (effect sizes). Mediation ( $H_3$ ) and moderation ( $H_4$ ) will be tested using bootstrapping (Hayes, 2018), with the moderated mediation hypothesis ( $H_5$ ) specifically examining how perceived value

significantly influences the indirect effect of consumer brand involvement on brand advocacy via brand affect (Hair et al., 2020; Henseler and Chin, 2010).

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis was conducted using the structural equation modeling—partial least squares (SEM-PLS) approach. This method was chosen because it is capable of testing complex causal relationships with a relatively moderate sample size and can be applied to models with latent variables measured through both reflective and formative indicators (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2020). In line with the standard procedure of SEM-PLS, the analysis was carried out in two main stages, namely measurement model evaluation (outer model) and structural model evaluation (inner model) (Henseler et al., 2016). The evaluation of the outer model aims to assess the validity and reliability of constructs through tests of convergent validity (using outer loading and average variance extracted/AVE), discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), as well as construct reliability using composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Hair et al., 2019).

The outer loading results in Table 1 show that all indicators meet the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019), indicating good convergent validity. Indicators for brand advocacy (0.758-0.923), Brand Affect (0.794-0.888), consumer brand involvement (0.772-0.905), and perceived value (0.833-0.889) all demonstrate acceptable loading values, with only a few items slightly lower but still within the acceptable range (Hulland, 1999). Therefore, all constructs in this study can be considered reliable measures of their respective latent variables and are suitable for further analysis in the structural model.

To further assess the quality of the constructs, reliability and validity tests were performed using Cronbach's alpha, rho\_A, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). As shown in the results in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs ranged between 0.866 and 0.896, exceeding the threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Composite reliability values were also high, ranging from 0.909 to 0.927, confirming strong construct reliability (Hair et al., 2019). In addition, AVE values ranged from 0.714 to 0.760, surpassing the recommended minimum of 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), thus establishing adequate convergent validity at the construct level.

Following the assessment of convergent validity and construct reliability, the discriminant validity of the constructs was evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion (Henseler et al., 2016). The results show that all HTMT values are well below the conservative threshold of 0.85 and the more liberal threshold of 0.90, with values ranging from 0.437 to 0.785. Specifically, the highest HTMT value is observed between brand affect and brand advocacy (0.785), while the lowest is between perceived value and brand affect (0.437). These findings indicate that each construct in the model is empirically distinct and possesses satisfactory discriminant validity (Table 3).

**Table 1: Outer loading test**

Indicators of variable	Outer loadings
BAD1 <- Brand advocacy	0.871
BAD2 <- Brand advocacy	0.923
BAD3 <- Brand advocacy	0.903
BAD4 <- Brand advocacy	0.758
BAF1 <- Brand affect	0.856
BAF2 <- Brand affect	0.794
BAF3 <- Brand affect	0.839
BAF4 <- Brand affect	0.888
CB12 <- Consumer brand involvement	0.845
CB13 <- Consumer brand involvement	0.905
CB14 <- Consumer brand involvement	0.864
PV1 <- Perceived value	0.889
PV2 <- Perceived value	0.885
PV3 <- Perceived value	0.880
PV4 <- Perceived value	0.833
CB11 <- Consumer brand involvement	0.772
Perceived value × consumer brand involvement ->	1.000
perceived value × consumer brand involvement	
Perceived value × brand affect -> perceived	1.000
value × brand affect	

**Table 2: Convergent validity and construct reliability**

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	rho_a	rho_c	AVE
Brand advocacy	0.887	0.894	0.923	0.750
Brand affect	0.866	0.872	0.909	0.714
Consumer brand involvement	0.869	0.882	0.911	0.719
Perceived value	0.896	0.921	0.927	0.760

**Table 3: Discriminant validity (HTMT)**

Correlation between constructs	HTMT
Brand affect <-> Brand advocacy	0.785
Consumer brand involvement <-> Brand advocacy	0.776
Consumer brand involvement <-> Brand affect	0.604
Perceived value <-> Brand advocacy	0.474
Perceived value <-> Brand affect	0.437
Perceived value <-> Consumer brand involvement	0.446

After confirming that the measurement model (outer model) satisfied the criteria for convergent validity, construct reliability, and discriminant validity through the HTMT analysis, the next step was to evaluate the structural model (inner model). This evaluation focuses on testing the hypotheses formulated earlier in order to assess the strength and significance of the relationships among the latent variables. The analysis was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SEM-PLS, which provides estimates of the path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), t-statistics, and P-values as the basis for hypothesis testing and decision-making.

The findings of this study highlight the central role of consumer brand involvement and brand affect in fostering brand advocacy within the culinary industry in Makassar, Indonesia. The results in Table 4 show that consumer brand involvement has a significant positive effect on brand affect ( $\beta = 0.427$ ,  $t = 8.322$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). This indicates that consumers who are more engaged with a brand, for instance by seeking information, interacting with the brand, or emotionally investing in it, are more likely to develop positive emotional responses. This result aligns with the argument of

**Table 4: Hypothesis test**

Effect	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	STDEV	T-statistics	P-values	Model effect
Consumer brand involvement -> Brand affect	0.427	0.428	0.051	8.322	0.000	Direct
Brand affect -> Brand advocacy	0.608	0.610	0.045	13.641	0.000	Direct
Consumer brand involvement -> Brand affect -> Brand advocacy	0.260	0.262	0.042	6.142	0.000	Mediation
Perceived value×Brand affect -> Brand advocacy	0.023	0.024	0.029	0.802	0.423	Moderation
Perceived value×Consumer brand involvement -> Brand affect -> Brand advocacy	0.041	0.043	0.023	1.806	0.071	Moderation

Zaichkowsky (1985), who posited that involvement with a brand enhances cognitive and affective evaluations, leading to stronger psychological connections with the brand.

Furthermore, the study finds that brand affect significantly influences brand advocacy ( $\beta = 0.608$ ,  $t = 13.641$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). This result demonstrates that consumers who feel emotionally attached to a brand are more likely to advocate for it, such as recommending it to others or defending it against criticism. The finding corroborates Keller's (2003) brand equity theory, which emphasizes the role of emotional responses in shaping positive consumer behaviors. It also resonates with prior studies that establish affective commitment as a key antecedent of advocacy (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001).

The mediating role of brand affect is also supported. Specifically, consumer brand involvement indirectly influences brand advocacy through brand affect ( $\beta = 0.260$ ,  $t = 6.142$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). This confirms that consumer involvement alone does not automatically result in advocacy; rather, it must first generate emotional attachment, which subsequently drives advocacy behavior. This finding is consistent with the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) framework (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), where involvement (stimulus) shapes affective states (organism), which in turn trigger behavioral outcomes such as advocacy (response).

On the other hand, the moderating effects of perceived value were not supported in this study. The interaction between perceived value and brand affect on brand advocacy was found to be insignificant ( $\beta = 0.023$ ,  $t = 0.802$ ,  $P = 0.423$ ). Similarly, the moderated mediation effect of perceived value on the indirect path from consumer brand involvement to brand advocacy through brand affect was also insignificant ( $\beta = 0.041$ ,  $t = 1.806$ ,  $P = 0.071$ ). These results suggest that while perceived value is theoretically important (Zeithaml, 1988), in this empirical context it does not significantly strengthen the relationship between involvement, affect, and advocacy. One possible explanation is that in the culinary market of Makassar, emotional attachment outweighs perceived value in shaping consumer advocacy, meaning that even when value perceptions are moderate, consumers with strong affective ties still engage in advocacy behaviors. Overall, these findings underscore the dominant role of emotional mechanisms—particularly brand affect—in driving consumer advocacy in emerging markets. While consumer involvement is a critical antecedent, its influence is effectively transmitted through affective attachment rather than being directly

moderated by perceptions of value. This insight highlights the need for marketers in the culinary industry to focus on strategies that enhance emotional engagement, such as storytelling, experiential marketing, and fostering cultural resonance, rather than relying solely on value-based appeals.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the importance of consumer brand involvement in shaping strong emotional bonds that ultimately drive brand advocacy behavior. Consumers who actively seek information, interact with, and emotionally invest in a brand are more likely to develop deep positive feelings toward it. This finding is consistent with the views of Zaichkowsky (1985) and Laurent and Kapferer (1985), who argue that consumer involvement is not merely a cognitive process but also a trigger for the formation of affective attachment. The study also expands the current understanding, as most prior research has been conducted in developed countries and focused on high-value or durable products (Park and Mittal, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1994). By contrast, the present findings demonstrate the relevance of consumer involvement in the culinary sector of an emerging market, where products are perishable and experience-based.

Brand affect emerges as a key factor driving consumers to recommend and defend the brands they cherish. This is in line with brand equity theory, which highlights the central role of emotional dimensions in shaping positive consumer behavior (Keller, 2003). The results also support the Commitment-Trust Theory (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), which underscores emotional commitment as a foundation of long-term consumer–brand relationships. Previous studies have further confirmed that affective commitment is a stronger predictor of advocacy than calculative commitment (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Fullerton, 2005). Accordingly, this study extends the literature on consumer advocacy, which has largely focused on luxury goods or global brands (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013), by demonstrating that local culinary brands in emerging markets can equally leverage emotional bonds to foster advocacy.

Moreover, the findings confirm that consumer involvement does not directly translate into advocacy but must first be mediated by emotional attachment. This mediating role of brand affect aligns with the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) framework proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), in which involvement functions as the stimulus that shapes affective states (organism), which in turn lead to advocacy behavior (response). While such

mechanisms have been widely examined in digital contexts (Hollebeek et al., 2014), this study reinforces the model within the offline context of the culinary sector in Indonesia. Thus, it not only strengthens the SOR framework but also addresses a theoretical gap by challenging rational-choice consumer behavior models (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), which emphasize cognitive evaluation, by showing the dominance of affective factors in driving advocacy. Conversely, the moderating role of perceived value was not supported in this study. Although perceived value has been theoretically identified as a determinant of loyalty and advocacy (Zeithaml, 1988; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Yang and Peterson, 2004), it did not prove significant in the present context. This finding reveals a contextual difference from prior research in developed markets, where consumers tend to be more price- and value-sensitive, making perceived value a strong moderator (Lam et al., 2004). In Makassar's culinary industry, however, consumption is more hedonically, socially, and culturally driven (Harrington et al., 2017), suggesting that emotional attachment plays a more dominant role than rational value considerations in shaping advocacy behavior.

The culinary phenomenon in Makassar further illustrates this point. Brand advocacy in this local context often manifests through social media sharing, community interactions, and cultural pride in local cuisine. Therefore, this study emphasizes that branding strategies in emerging markets, particularly in the culinary sector, should prioritize the creation of emotional and cultural resonance—through storytelling, experiential marketing, and community engagement—rather than relying solely on functional value propositions.

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