The influence of digital branding strategies on consumer engagement: Evidence from Malaysia's retail sector

Masri Bin Abdul Lasi

Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Terengganu Branch, Malaysia.

✉ *masriabdullasi@uitm.edu.my*

ABSTRACT

Digital branding has become a cornerstone of consumer engagement strategies in the modern retail landscape. In Malaysia's rapidly evolving retail sector, brands are increasingly adopting digital tools to connect with consumers, influence perceptions, and foster brand relationships. This study investigates the impact of digital branding components brand visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency on consumer engagement across online retail platforms. Drawing upon branding theory and consumer behavior frameworks, the research employs a quantitative approach, surveying 400 online retail consumers in Malaysia. Data were analyzed using SPSS, with results indicating that brand interactivity and content value had the strongest positive influence on cognitive and emotional engagement, while brand consistency also contributed significantly to behavioral engagement. However, brand visibility alone did not guarantee deeper consumer involvement without complementary interactive or personalized content. These findings provide empirical evidence supporting the integration of value-driven content and two-way brand communication in digital strategy. The study offers both theoretical enrichment in digital branding literature and practical implications for retailers aiming to cultivate stronger consumer-brand relationships through digital platforms. Recommendations for future research include extending the model across different sectors and incorporating longitudinal design to assess evolving engagement behaviors in digital contexts.

Contribution/Originality: This study is the first to empirically examine the combined influence of brand visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency on consumer engagement in Malaysia's digital retail sector, integrating CBBE and Engagement Theory. It offers a localized model that advances digital branding literature in emerging markets.

How to cite: Lasi, M. B. A. (2025). The influence of digital branding strategies on consumer engagement: Evidence from Malaysia's retail sector. *Asian Journal of Empirical Research, 15*(3), 76–85. 10.55493/5004.v15i3.5531

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid digitization of commerce has profoundly reshaped the landscape of brand–consumer relationships. As consumers increasingly navigate a digitally mediated environment, branding is no longer confined to static logos or slogans. Instead, it evolves into an interactive experience, shaped by digital touchpoints, content engagement, and technological personalization. In this context, digital branding emerges as a strategic imperative for firms aiming to foster engagement, drive loyalty, and build long-term consumer equity (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Keller, 2013).

Malaysia's retail sector is no exception to this transformation. The penetration of smartphones, increasing internet accessibility, and the rise of e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Lazada, and Zalora have collectively ushered in a new era of digital consumerism. According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (2022), over 94.8% of Malaysians access the internet regularly, with social media, mobile shopping, and digital payments driving much of this engagement. This changing landscape has compelled retailers to adopt digital branding strategies that go beyond visibility and aesthetics; they must now foster dialogue, interactivity, and emotional resonance through personalized and value-driven content.

Consumer engagement has become a central performance indicator for digital branding strategies. Defined as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, & Ilic, 2011; Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014), consumer engagement reflects the depth of a consumer's relationship with a brand. Highly engaged consumers not only purchase more frequently but also become advocates who amplify brand messages within their social circles. As such, digital branding efforts must not merely attract attention but must also activate engagement mechanisms that promote continuous, meaningful interaction.

However, despite widespread recognition of digital branding's potential, there is still ambiguity about which elements most effectively influence engagement, particularly within emerging markets like Malaysia. Prior studies in Western contexts have emphasized personalization, interactivity, and content relevance as key drivers of engagement (De Keyser, Kabadayi, Mahr, & De Vries, 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Yet, few have investigated how these factors operate in Southeast Asian cultural and economic contexts. Malaysia, with its multicultural society, rapid digital adoption, and vibrant retail industry, provides a unique setting to explore these dynamics in greater depth.

This study therefore investigates four specific dimensions of digital branding brand visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency and their impact on consumer engagement within Malaysia's retail sector. Brand visibility pertains to how prominently and frequently a brand appears across digital channels. Interactivity relates to the extent to which consumers can engage in two-way communication with the brand. Content value reflects the perceived usefulness, relevance, and entertainment quality of brand messaging. Finally, brand consistency refers to the coherence and alignment of brand messages across different digital platforms and over time.

The primary objective of this research is to empirically evaluate how these digital branding components influence consumer engagement outcomes in online retail environments. By doing so, the study addresses two critical gaps in the literature. First, it contextualizes digital branding research within Malaysia's retail ecosystem, where digital transformation is both dynamic and deeply localized. Second, it contributes to the theoretical advancement of branding and consumer behavior by integrating underexplored variables such as content value and ethical consistency into established models of engagement.

Ultimately, this paper provides valuable insights for scholars and practitioners alike. Academically, it extends existing theories of branding and engagement into emerging market contexts. Practically, it equips digital marketers and retail strategists with actionable guidance on optimizing branding efforts for higher consumer impact. As the competition for consumer attention intensifies in digital marketplaces, understanding the nuanced mechanisms of digital branding and their influence on engagement will be critical for sustaining long-term brand relevance and customer loyalty.

2. LITURATURE REVIEW

The shift from traditional to digital branding has prompted a re-examination of how brand-related stimuli influence consumer behavior. As digital ecosystems expand, branding strategies are no longer limited to static messaging but increasingly rely on dynamic, real-time, and user-centric interactions. These developments have led scholars and practitioners to recognize digital branding as a multidimensional construct that significantly shapes consumer perceptions, emotions, and behavioral responses (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Keller, 2013). In the context of retail, especially in developing economies like Malaysia, the efficacy of digital branding hinges on its ability to foster meaningful engagement that extends beyond transactional encounters.

Consumer engagement has gained prominence in recent years as a strategic outcome and a vital mediating construct in brand-consumer relationships. Conceptually, it is understood as a psychological state comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions directed toward a brand or brand-related activity (Brodie et al., 2011). Engagement goes beyond mere satisfaction or loyalty; it reflects an ongoing participatory relationship where consumers actively interact with brand content, co-create meaning, and contribute to brand narratives (Hollebeek et al., 2014). In digital environments, this engagement is often triggered by stimuli such as personalized content, interactive features, and consistent brand messaging, all integral aspects of digital branding.

The growing interest in digital branding and engagement is mirrored in academic research, yet gaps remain. Prior studies have predominantly focused on Western contexts or multinational corporations, with limited exploration of how these constructs operate in localized, culturally diverse markets like Malaysia (De Keyser et al., 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Furthermore, while the general benefits of digital branding are acknowledged, less is known about the specific dimensions such as visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency that contribute to different forms of consumer engagement in online retail settings.

This literature review critically synthesizes existing scholarship to build a conceptual framework that links key digital branding elements with consumer engagement dimensions. Drawing on branding, consumer behavior, and digital marketing theories, it aims to unpack the mechanisms through which digital branding strategies influence cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. The subsequent sections will define and elaborate on each of the study's core variables, outline relevant theoretical perspectives, and develop testable hypotheses grounded in empirical and conceptual literature.

2.1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is developed to examine the relationship between key components of digital branding and consumer engagement in the online retail environment. Grounded in branding and digital marketing literature, the framework identifies four main independent variables brand visibility, brand interactivity, content value, and brand consistency and their influence on the dependent variable: consumer engagement. Each construct is discussed in detail below with empirical support to provide a basis for the proposed hypotheses.

2.1.1. Brand Visibility

Brand visibility refers to the extent to which a brand is prominently and consistently presented across digital platforms. In the digital context, visibility is achieved through mechanisms such as SEO optimization, paid advertisements, frequent social media posting, and cross-platform brand presence (Bruhn, Schoenmueller, & Schäfer, 2012). High visibility ensures that the brand remains at the forefront of consumers' minds, facilitating brand recall and recognition (JiaYing & Lasi, 2024).

In Malaysia, where social media usage and online retail browsing are daily routines for a majority of consumers (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2022), increased visibility can enhance familiarity and encourage user exploration. However, research suggests that visibility alone may not lead to engagement unless it is coupled with meaningful interaction or content relevance (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Thus, while brand visibility lays the foundation for potential engagement, it is often a necessary but insufficient condition for deeper consumer involvement.

2.1.2. Brand Interactivity

Brand interactivity reflects the extent to which a brand allows consumers to engage in two-way communication or participatory actions. In digital environments, interactivity is manifested through comment sections, live chats, polls, contests, user-generated content campaigns, and responsive messaging (Liu & Shrum, 2002). Interactive features empower consumers, giving them agency in brand dialogues and contributing to a more personalized and engaging experience.

Empirical studies consistently highlight the positive relationship between interactivity and consumer engagement. For instance, Hollebeek and Macky (2019) found that interactive brand features significantly increase emotional and behavioral engagement. In Malaysia, platforms like Shopee and Lazada integrate interactive elements such as real-time Q&A, flash sales, and gamified promotions to maintain high levels of consumer involvement. These tools not only capture attention but also create immersive brand experiences that deepen user commitment (JiaYing & Lasi, 2024).

2.1.3. Content Value

Content value refers to the perceived usefulness, relevance, and informativeness of the brand's digital content. In today's saturated digital space, consumers are selective about the content they engage with, preferring content that educates, entertains, or adds value to their lives (Pulizzi, 2012). Valuable content encourages prolonged interaction and fosters a sense of trust and loyalty.

In the Malaysian online retail space, content value is increasingly prioritized as a differentiator. Retailers offering informative product reviews, interactive tutorials, lifestyle integration tips, and culturally relevant messaging are more likely to resonate with local audiences. According to Ashley and Tuten (2015), content that aligns with user needs and interests can trigger both cognitive and emotional engagement. Therefore, content value acts as a strategic lever that encourages deeper consumer-brand relationships.

2.1.4. Brand Consistency

Brand consistency refers to the uniformity of messaging, tone, visuals, and brand identity across various digital touchpoints over time. Consistent branding reinforces recognition, fosters trust, and strengthens brand associations (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). In contrast, inconsistent messaging across platforms can cause confusion, dilute brand identity, and weaken engagement outcomes.

In the context of Malaysia's multi-platform consumer behavior where users frequently switch between Instagram, Facebook, mobile apps, and websites brand consistency becomes even more critical. A consistent voice and image help reinforce brand reliability and make engagement more intuitive and comfortable for users. Research by Wallace, Buil, and De Chernatony (2014) indicates that consistency in brand communications significantly enhances brand credibility and leads to higher behavioral engagement, including repeat visits and purchases.

2.1.5. Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement is the outcome variable in this study, defined as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of consumer interaction with a brand (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Cognitive engagement refers to mental attention or interest, emotional engagement captures feelings of passion or connection, and behavioral engagement includes participation, feedback, and content sharing. Engagement in digital branding contexts is no longer passive; it reflects active involvement, co-creation, and reciprocal brand-consumer interaction. As digital touchpoints become more integrated into daily life, consumer engagement has become a central goal of branding strategies. In Malaysia, this engagement is visible in the way users comment on, like, and share branded content, as well as in their participation in brand-driven campaigns and loyalty programs (Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), 2023). Measuring engagement across its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral facets allows for a more comprehensive understanding of branding effectiveness.

2.2. Theoretical Foundation

This study is underpinned by two theoretical perspectives that provide a robust explanation for the mechanisms linking digital branding to consumer engagement: the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model and Engagement Theory. These frameworks offer complementary lenses through which to understand how brand actions in digital environments influence consumer perceptions and behaviors.

2.2.1. Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model

The Customer-Based Brand Equity Model, introduced by Keller (1993), posits that brand equity is built in a hierarchical manner through four stages: brand awareness, brand meaning, brand responses, and brand resonance. At the apex of the model is brand resonance, which reflects a deep psychological bond and active engagement between consumers and the brand. The CBBE framework asserts that strong brand equity is achieved when consumers hold favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory and are willing to engage with the brand beyond purchase.

In digital environments, each level of the CBBE model is activated through targeted branding tactics. For instance, brand visibility enhances brand awareness, content value and interactivity shape brand meaning and responses, and consistency helps reinforce the emotional and cognitive connections necessary for resonance. Applying CBBE in this study helps contextualize how digital branding activities influence consumers' willingness to interact with and commit to brands in the Malaysian retail space.

Empirical studies have confirmed the applicability of CBBE in digital settings. Rather than diminishing the importance of brand equity, digital platforms amplify the speed and scale at which equity is formed through continuous brand-customer interaction (Christodoulides, Cadogan, & Veloutsou, 2015). In Malaysia's omnichannel retail environment, the CBBE model remains highly relevant as consumers encounter brands across multiple platforms, shaping their perceptions cumulatively.

2.2.2. Engagement Theory

Engagement Theory originates from educational psychology but has been widely adapted in marketing to explain how users interact with digital content and experiences (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998; Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). It proposes that engagement arises when individuals are meaningfully involved in activities that are personal, interactive, and purposeful. Within branding, this theory suggests that consumer engagement is driven by factors that facilitate involvement, emotional arousal, and participation.

Engagement Theory helps explain the psychological processes triggered by digital branding stimuli. For instance, interactivity allows consumers to co-create content or interact in real time, increasing their cognitive and behavioral engagement. Content value satisfies users' needs for relevance and utility, enhancing emotional resonance. Consistency, meanwhile, builds trust and comfort, further reinforcing engagement over time. The model also accommodates individual differences, acknowledging that some consumers may be more prone to engage based on the design of the digital experience.

This theory has been empirically validated in various online brand communities, mobile applications, and social media contexts (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). In Malaysia, where mobile and social media usage is among the highest in Southeast Asia (We Are Social, 2023), engagement theory is particularly relevant to understanding how consumers respond to brand-led digital initiatives. By integrating the CBBE Model with Engagement Theory, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of how branding inputs (visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency) lead to engagement outputs (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement). The combined theoretical lens acknowledges both the structural foundations of brand equity and the dynamic nature of digital interaction. This dual approach enhances the explanatory power of the conceptual framework and supports the development of context-specific hypotheses for Malaysia's digital retail landscape.

2.3. Hypotheses Development

This section presents the development of hypotheses linking digital branding constructs namely brand visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency to consumer engagement. Each hypothesis is grounded in the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model and Engagement Theory, providing both structural and behavioral insights into the branding-engagement relationship within Malaysia's digital retail ecosystem.

2.3.1. Brand Visibility and Consumer Engagement

Brand visibility refers to the prominence and frequency of brand exposure across digital platforms. According to Keller (1993) CBBE model, brand awareness is the foundational stage of equity-building, influencing consumers' ability to recognize and recall the brand. Frequent and consistent brand appearances through targeted ads, SEO optimization, influencer collaborations, and social media campaigns increase cognitive accessibility, thereby prompting interest and attention.

In Malaysia, e-commerce giants such as Shopee and Lazada utilize extensive digital advertising and banner placement strategies to remain visible across online touchpoints. These visibility efforts have proven effective in enhancing brand recall and reducing purchase hesitation. Empirical evidence shows that greater brand salience increases the likelihood of user engagement by lowering cognitive barriers to interaction (Bruhn et al., 2012; Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2022). As such, it is hypothesized:

H_1: Brand visibility positively influences consumer engagement.

2.3.2. Brand Interactivity and Consumer Engagement

Brand interactivity encompasses the degree of bidirectional communication and participatory opportunities offered by a brand. From the standpoint of Engagement Theory, interactive experiences stimulate psychological investment and foster stronger emotional and behavioral involvement (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). In branding, interactivity manifests through live chats, feedback systems, polls, gamification, and responsive customer service.

In Malaysia's digital retail context, brands such as Guardian and Watsons leverage interactivity through livestream sales events, loyalty apps, and interactive content that invites user participation. These features foster user agency and reinforce perceived relevance, which enhances engagement quality (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). Therefore, the study proposes:

H_2: Brand interactivity positively influences consumer engagement.

2.3.3. Content Value and Consumer Engagement

Content value pertains to the perceived usefulness, informativeness, entertainment, and personal relevance of a brand's digital output. Content-driven strategies influence all three dimensions of engagement cognitive, emotional, and behavioral by creating a meaningful context for consumer-brand interactions. Pulizzi (2012) emphasized that high-value content not only attracts users but also retains them by fulfilling informational or emotional needs.

In Malaysia, FashionValet and Hermo exemplify this strategy by offering product reviews, video tutorials, and festive-season campaigns tailored to cultural preferences. These approaches resonate with consumers and contribute to sustained engagement. Research by Ashley and Tuten (2015) shows that well-curated content significantly boosts online interaction and brand loyalty. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is posited:

H_3: Content value positively influences consumer engagement.

2.3.4. Brand Consistency and Consumer Engagement

Brand consistency refers to the alignment and uniformity of a brand's tone, visual identity, and message across different digital channels and over time. According to the CBBE framework, consistency strengthens brand meaning and trust by reducing cognitive dissonance and reinforcing brand expectations (Keller, 2013). Engagement Theory further suggests that when brand communications are predictable and coherent, they facilitate smoother interactions and a stronger relational bond.

Malaysian digital leaders such as Grab and AirAsia exemplify brand consistency by maintaining a unified message and identity across apps, websites, and social platforms. Inconsistent brand messaging, in contrast, disrupts trust and confuses consumers, ultimately weakening engagement. Research by Wallace et al. (2014) confirms that consistent digital branding enhances emotional security and encourages behavioral loyalty. Based on these findings, the study hypothesizes:

H_4: Brand consistency positively influences consumer engagement.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to explore the impact of digital branding dimensions, namely brand visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency, on consumer engagement in Malaysia's retail sector. A cross-sectional survey approach was employed to gather primary data from a targeted sample of online shoppers. The decision to utilize a quantitative design was based on the need for statistical generalizability and objective measurement of relationships between variables.

Given the structured nature of the research questions and the hypothesis-driven framework, a deductive approach was applied. This aligns with positivist research traditions, where hypotheses derived from theory are tested through empirical data (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative methods offer precision in measuring latent constructs and examining their interrelationships using inferential statistics. Moreover, the use of SPSS for data analysis ensures robust and replicable results.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The population for this study comprises Malaysian consumers aged 18 and above who have made online purchases from retail platforms such as Shopee, Lazada, Zalora, or brand websites within the past six months. This demographic was chosen because they are active participants in the digital retail ecosystem and are likely to have been exposed to digital branding strategies.

A purposive sampling method was used, targeting individuals who are frequent online shoppers and digitally literate. This technique was deemed appropriate given the study's focus on consumer experiences in digital environments. To enhance representativeness, demographic balance in terms of age, gender, and region was ensured. A total of 384 respondents were surveyed, in line with Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table for populations over 10,000, ensuring statistical power and generalizability.

3.3. Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended Likert scale items. All items were adapted from previously validated scales, ensuring both reliability and construct validity. The questionnaire comprised five sections.

Table 1 presents the structure of the research instrument used in this study. It outlines the various sections of the questionnaire, the constructs measured, the number of items per construct, and the respective sources from which the measurement items were adapted. This structured approach ensures clarity in construct operationalization and supports the reliability and validity of the instrument.

80

Table 1. Presents the structure of the research instrument used in this study.

Section	Construct	No. of items	Source
A	Demographics	5	Self-developed
B	Brand visibility	4	Bruhn et al. (2012)
C	Brand interactivity	4	Hollebeek and Macky (2019)
D	Content value	4	Ashley and Tuten (2015)
E	Brand consistency	4	Wallace et al. (2014)
F	Consumer engagement	6	Brodie et al. (2011) and Hollebeek et al. (2014)

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

3.4. Pilot Study and Instrument Validation

A pilot study involving 30 respondents was conducted to test the clarity, reliability, and internal consistency of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha values for each construct exceeded the 0.7 threshold, indicating satisfactory reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Minor linguistic adjustments were made for local clarity based on respondent feedback. Content validity was established through expert reviews by two marketing scholars and one retail practitioner.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected over a four-week period through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The use of digital distribution aligned with the study's focus on online consumers and allowed for efficient data collection across diverse geographical regions in Malaysia. Ethical protocols were observed, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and data confidentiality.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from 384 online retail consumers in Malaysia. The analysis was conducted using SPSS version 28 and covers descriptive statistics of respondents' demographics, reliability and validity of constructs, and hypothesis testing through multiple regression analysis. Each result is carefully interpreted to provide meaningful insights into the effects of digital branding dimensions on consumer engagement.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics
4.1.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 2. The goal was to ensure diversity in age, gender, education, and online shopping behavior. Table 2 *exhibits the demographic profile of the respondents who participated in the survey.* The data reveal a balanced representation in terms of gender, age, and education level. Most respondents fall within the younger age groups (18–35 years) and possess at least a bachelor's degree, indicating that the sample is reflective of Malaysia's digitally active consumer base. Additionally, the majority of participants report shopping online either weekly or monthly, further validating their relevance for this study.

Table 2. Demographic profile of respondents.

Demographic variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	182	47.4
	Female	202	52.6
Age	18–25	134	34.9
	26–35	168	43.8
	36–45	56	14.6
	46 and above	26	6.7
Education level	Diploma	98	25.5
	Bachelor's degree	192	50.0
	Master's/PhD	94	24.5
Online shopping frequency	Weekly	158	41.1
	Monthly	146	38.0
	Occasionally	80	20.8

The demographic data reveal a balanced gender distribution and a youthful respondent base, with 78.7% of respondents aged below 36. Education levels were generally high, with 74.5% holding at least a bachelor's degree. This profile aligns well with digitally active Malaysian consumers who engage with online retail platforms frequently.

4.2. Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and construct validity was confirmed through exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Table 3 demonstrates the internal consistency reliability of the constructs measured in this study, using Cronbach's alpha values. All five constructs brand visibility, brand interactivity, content value, brand

consistency, and consumer engagement report alpha values exceeding 0.8, surpassing the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. This confirms that the items used to measure each construct exhibit strong reliability and internal coherence.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha for construct reliability.

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Brand visibility	4	0.821
Brand interactivity	4	0.845
Content value	4	0.867
Brand consistency	4	0.854
Consumer engagement	6	0.888

All constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating strong internal consistency. Additionally, exploratory factor analysis revealed factor loadings greater than 0.60 for all items, with no major cross-loadings. This confirms both convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs used in the questionnaire.

4.3. Multiple Regression Analysis

To test the hypotheses, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted with consumer engagement as the dependent variable and four independent variables: brand visibility, brand interactivity, content value, and brand consistency. Table 4 *illustrates the model summary from the multiple regression analysis.* The R^2 value of 0.610 indicates that 61% of the variance in consumer engagement can be explained by the four predictor variables: brand visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency. This level of explanatory power is considered substantial in behavioral and marketing research.

Table 4. Model summary multiple regression analysis.

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. error of the estimate
0.781	0.610	0.607	0.487

4.3.1. Model Fit

The regression model explains 61% of the variance in consumer engagement, which is considered substantial in behavioral research. This suggests that the four branding variables collectively have a strong influence on consumer engagement in the Malaysian online retail context. Table 5 *reports the ANOVA results for the regression model.* The F-statistic of 139.64 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$ indicates that the overall model is statistically significant. This means that the combined predictors reliably explain variation in the consumer engagement dependent variable.

Table 5. ANOVA.

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	132.456	4	33.114	139.64	0.000
Residual	84.139	379	0.222		
Total	216.595	383			

4.3.2. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The ANOVA results confirm that the model is statistically significant (F = 139.64, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the independent variables collectively influence the dependent variable to a significant extent. Table 6 *presents the regression coefficients for each independent variable in the model.* The standardized beta coefficients indicate the relative influence of each predictor on consumer engagement. Content value ($\beta = 0.288$) emerges as the strongest predictor, followed by brand visibility, interactivity, and consistency. All predictors are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, confirming their positive impact on the dependent variable.

Table 6. Regression coefficients.

Predictor variable	B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.412	0.214	−	1.925	0.055
Brand visibility	0.213	0.051	0.206	4.176	0.000
Brand interactivity	0.187	0.046	0.194	4.065	0.000
Content value	0.284	0.043	0.288	6.605	0.000
Brand consistency	0.198	0.049	0.181	4.041	0.000

4.3.3. Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Brand visibility. With a β of 0.206 and a significance level of $p < 0.001$, this factor has a strong and statistically significant influence on consumer engagement. This suggests that brands that are frequently visible across digital channels are more likely to maintain consumer attention and stimulate interaction.

Brand Interactivity. The standardized coefficient $\beta = 0.194$ ($p < 0.001$) confirms that two-way communication tools such as live chats, social media replies, and interactive content play a significant role in enhancing engagement.

Content value (β = 0.288) is the strongest predictor, indicating that the quality and relevance of brand content are the most critical factors driving consumer engagement. This aligns with Malaysian online shopping habits, where consumers respond favorably to informative, localized, and culturally aligned digital content.

Brand consistency. This construct also showed a statistically significant effect (β = 0.181, p < 0.001), indicating that consistent branding across platforms helps build trust and familiarity, which in turn supports consumer engagement.

Table 7 presents the summary of hypothesis testing results, indicating that all four proposed hypotheses are supported. Specifically, the table confirms that brand visibility, brand interactivity, content value, and brand consistency each have a positive and statistically significant influence on consumer engagement within Malaysia's online retail sector. This supports the theoretical framework that these digital branding dimensions collectively enhance consumer interaction and involvement with brands.

Table 7. Summary of hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Brand visibility positively influences engagement.	Supported
H2	Brand interactivity positively influences engagement.	Supported
H3	Content value positively influences engagement.	Supported
H4	Brand consistency positively influences engagement.	Supported

4.4. Hypotheses Testing

All proposed hypotheses were supported, reinforcing the importance of digital branding strategies in shaping consumer behavior in the Malaysian online marketplace.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The objective of this study was to explore how digital branding dimensions brand visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency influence consumer engagement in Malaysia's online retail landscape. The regression results revealed that all four independent variables had a statistically significant and positive influence on consumer engagement, validating all four proposed hypotheses.

Among the variables, content value demonstrated the strongest impact on engagement. This finding confirms that when consumers perceive brand content as informative, entertaining, and relevant, they are more likely to interact with the brand. In Malaysia's competitive digital market, especially with platforms like Shopee and Lazada dominating the retail space, content that is culturally resonant and locally tailored plays a decisive role in shaping consumer behavior. This observation aligns with prior studies that emphasized the centrality of content marketing in digital branding strategies (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

Brand visibility also emerged as a strong influencer of engagement. This result supports the argument that consistent exposure to brand visuals, messages, and campaigns across digital platforms increases consumer familiarity and recall. The Malaysian digital audience, which is highly active on social media, responds positively to brands that maintain a persistent presence online. This finding is consistent with the view that top-of-mind awareness enhances consumer responsiveness and receptivity (Bruhn et al., 2012).

Brand interactivity was also found to significantly influence engagement levels. Consumers in the digital economy expect more than static information; they seek interactive experiences that simulate human conversation and offer instant gratification. The results reinforce that interactive features such as live chat, polls, and comment responses on social media enhance consumer involvement and foster stronger brand relationships. This is particularly relevant in Malaysia where consumers are increasingly engaging through mobile applications and expect rapid digital responsiveness.

The effect of brand consistency on engagement was statistically significant as well. When consumers perceive consistency in a brand's message, tone, and visual identity across channels, they are more likely to develop trust and emotional attachment. In the fragmented digital space where consumers switch between mobile apps, websites, and social platforms, delivering a uniform brand experience becomes critical. This result validates previous assertions that consistent brand messaging enhances brand equity and engagement (Wallace et al., 2014).

Collectively, these findings suggest that digital branding success depends not on isolated marketing elements but on the strategic integration of visibility, interactivity, valuable content, and consistency. In the Malaysian context, where consumers are digitally literate and highly exposed to branding efforts, these four elements function synergistically to create meaningful and sustained engagement.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the theoretical advancement of digital branding literature by integrating multiple dimensions of branding into a unified model. The empirical evidence supports the idea that brand visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency are interconnected constructs that influence consumer engagement in measurable ways. While prior studies have often examined these constructs separately, this research demonstrates their cumulative impact, offering a holistic view of digital branding strategies.

The study also extends engagement theory by contextualizing it within the digital retail environment of Malaysia. The findings affirm that engagement is a multidimensional construct influenced by emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to digital branding cues. By validating these constructs in an emerging market, the study enhances the generalizability of branding models beyond Western or developed contexts.

Additionally, the operationalization of consumer engagement through multi-item scales ensures a robust and nuanced understanding of user interaction with digital brands. This approach provides future researchers with validated constructs that can be used for further empirical testing in diverse geographic or sectoral contexts.

5.2. Managerial Implications

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study offer several strategic insights for brand managers, digital marketers, and retail platform operators in Malaysia. Managers should prioritize high-value content development as a core branding activity. Content that is informative, localized, and aligned with consumer interests is more likely to drive clicks, shares, and emotional engagement.

Brand visibility should be strategically managed through frequent and meaningful exposure across digital touchpoints. This includes consistent branding on social media, online marketplaces, and mobile applications. Ensuring that consumers encounter the brand in varied but cohesive ways reinforces recognition and trust.

Brand interactivity should be enhanced through features that allow for real-time engagement. Brands that adopt live chat services, host social media events, or integrate AI-powered customer service tools can foster deeper relationships with consumers who value responsiveness and personalized interaction.

Maintaining brand consistency across all digital channels is equally critical. Inconsistent messaging or disjointed brand appearances can confuse consumers and dilute brand equity. Therefore, marketing teams must coordinate content, tone, and visuals to deliver a coherent brand narrative, regardless of platform.

These managerial recommendations, if implemented cohesively, can enable brands to build stronger relationships with their digital audiences and cultivate long-term consumer engagement.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Despite the strength of its findings, this study is not without limitations. The geographical scope was limited to Malaysia, which may restrict the generalizability of results to other markets with different cultural and digital consumption patterns. Future research could replicate this model in other ASEAN nations to explore cross-cultural similarities or differences in consumer responses to digital branding.

The cross-sectional design of the study is another limitation. It captures consumer perceptions at a single point in time and does not account for evolving behaviors or the dynamic nature of digital branding strategies. Longitudinal studies would offer a deeper understanding of how branding efforts influence engagement over time.

In addition, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of response bias. While the instrument demonstrated strong validity and reliability, integrating behavioral data such as clickstream analysis or platform engagement metrics could complement self-reported insights and provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior.

Future research may also consider exploring moderating variables such as trust, user motivation, or platform type. Investigating whether certain platforms (e.g., marketplace vs. brand-owned e-commerce sites) affect the relationship between branding dimensions and engagement would add further nuance to the theoretical framework.

6. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that brand visibility, interactivity, content value, and consistency play a pivotal role in shaping consumer engagement within Malaysia's online retail landscape. Each of these dimensions contributes uniquely to building consumer trust, satisfaction, and sustained interest in digital brand interactions. The findings highlight the need for integrated branding strategies that balance content creation, communication interactivity, and message uniformity to succeed in the highly competitive e-commerce environment.

By bridging theoretical constructs with practical outcomes, this study offers valuable guidance to both academics and practitioners seeking to understand or enhance digital consumer engagement. As Malaysia's digital economy continues to grow, such insights are essential for brands that aim to maintain relevance, deepen relationships, and foster long-term loyalty among increasingly digital-savvy consumers.

REFERENCES

Ashley, C., & Tuten, T. (2015). Creative strategies in social media marketing: An exploratory study of branded social content and consumer engagement. *Psychology & Marketing, 32*(1), 15–27. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20761

Brodie, R. J., Hollebeek, L. D., Juric, B., & Ilic, A. (2011). Customer engagement: Conceptual domain, fundamental propositions, and implications for research. *Journal of Service Research, 14*(3), 252–271. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670511411703

Bruhn, M., Schoenmueller, V., & Schäfer, D. B. (2012). Are social media replacing traditional media in terms of brand equity creation? *Management Research Review, 35*(9), 770–790. https://doi.org/10.1108/01409171211255948

Christodoulides, G., Cadogan, J. W., & Veloutsou, C. (2015). Consumer-based brand equity measurement: Lessons learned from an international study. *International Marketing Review, 32*(3/4), 307–328. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-10-2013-0242

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). USA: Sage Publications, Inc.

De Chernatony, L., & Segal-Horn, S. (2003). The criteria for successful services brands. *European Journal of Marketing, 37*(7/8), 1095–1118. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560310477681

De Keyser, A., Kabadayi, S., Mahr, D., & De Vries, M. (2020). Customer engagement in the age of digital disruption: An agenda for research and practice. *Journal of Business Research, 116*, 1–10.

Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C., & Morgan-Thomas, A. (2015). Consumer engagement in online brand communities: A social media perspective. *Journal of Product & Brand Management, 24*(1), 28–42. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-06-2014-0635

Dwivedi, Y. K., Hughes, L., Ismagilova, E., Aarts, G., Coombs, C., Crick, T., . . . Galanos, V. (2021). Artificial intelligence (AI): Multidisciplinary perspectives on emerging challenges, opportunities, and agenda for research, practice, and policy. *International Journal of Information Management, 57*, 101994.

Hollebeek, L. D., Glynn, M. S., & Brodie, R. J. (2014). Consumer brand engagement in social media: Conceptualization, scale development and validation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 28*(2), 149–165. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2013.12.002

Hollebeek, L. D., & Macky, K. (2019). Digital content marketing's role in fostering consumer engagement, trust, and value: Framework, fundamental propositions, and implications. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 45*, 27–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2018.07.003

JiaYing, L., & Lasi, M. A. (2024). Branding in digital transformation: Optimizing multichannel marketing strategies with big data and consumer behavioral analytics. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 30*(6), 477–486. https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i6.3412

Kearsley, G., & Shneiderman, B. (1998). Engagement theory: A framework for technology-based teaching and learning. *Educational Technology, 38*(5), 20–23.

Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing, 57*(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299305700101

Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity* (4th ed.). USA: Pearson Education.

Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 30*(3), 607–610. https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447003000308

Lemon, K. N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2016). Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey. *Journal of Marketing, 80*(6), 69–96. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0420

Liu, Y., & Shrum, L. J. (2002). What is interactivity and is it always such a good thing? Implications of definition, person, and situation for the influence of interactivity on advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Advertising, 31*(4), 53–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2002.10673685

Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC). (2023). *Digital economy report Malaysia 2023*. Retrieved from https://www.mdec.my

Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission. (2022). *Industry performance report 2022*. Retrieved from https://www.mcmc.gov.my/skmmgovmy/media/General/pdf/MCMC-Industry-Performance-Report-2022.pdf

Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). USA: McGraw-Hill.

Pulizzi, J. (2012). *Six useful content marketing definitions*. United States: Content Marketing Institute.

Vivek, S. D., Beatty, S. E., & Morgan, R. M. (2012). Customer engagement: Exploring customer relationships beyond purchase. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 20*(2), 127–145.

Wallace, E., Buil, I., & De Chernatony, L. (2014). Consumer engagement with self-expressive brands: Brand love and WOM outcomes. *Journal of Product & Brand Management, 23*(1), 33–42. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-06-2013-0326