

An Empirical Investigation of Promotional Effectiveness for National Language Publications: The Case of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: A Conceptual Paper

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper examines the determinants of promotional effectiveness for national language publications published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), Malaysia's principal institution responsible for the preservation, development, and promotion of the Malay language. The study explores how promotional effectiveness is influenced by the integration of promotional mix strategies, customer engagement, digital transformation, and language policy within the context of state-supported cultural publishing. Drawing upon major theoretical perspectives, including the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Hierarchy of Effects Model, and Customer Engagement Theory, the paper proposes a conceptual framework linking promotional mix elements to promotional effectiveness through the mediating role of customer engagement. The study highlights the challenges faced by DBP in adapting traditional publishing and promotional practices to contemporary digital environments characterized by social media, e-commerce platforms, and algorithm-driven consumer behavior. In addition, the paper synthesizes recent empirical literature related to promotional effectiveness, digital marketing, customer engagement, and consumer behavioral outcomes between 2018 and 2025. A positivist research paradigm with a quantitative methodological approach is proposed, utilizing survey questionnaires among primary school students and civil servants in Malaysia. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically by integrating language policy, publishing transformation, and digital marketing perspectives into a multidimensional promotional effectiveness framework. Practically, the study is anticipated to provide strategic insights for optimizing DBP's promotional strategies while preserving linguistic and cultural integrity in both domestic and international markets.

Keywords: Promotional Effectiveness, Customer Engagement, Promotional Mix, National Language Publications, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP)

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The nexus between state-led language planning and commercial publishing economics represents a critical frontier in contemporary cultural sociology and media management. Within post-colonial and multilingual societies, national language agencies are frequently tasked with dual, often conflicting mandates: preserving linguistic heritage while maintaining operational viability in a highly competitive, globalized media marketplace. In the context of Malaysia, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) serves as the premier statutory body established under the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Act 1959 to preserve, develop, and intellectualize the Malay language (Bahasa Melayu).

The determinants governing the promotional effectiveness of DBP's diverse product portfolio—spanning print monographs, translated literature, educational materials, and digital publications—can be structurally understood through two primary institutional vectors:

- Policy-Driven Language Promotion & Identity Construction: The structural alignment of the Malay language as the official national language (Bahasa Kebangsaan) and an institutional symbol of multi-ethnic national unity.
- Institutional Translation & Publishing Mechanisms: The operational deployment of rigorous editorial, translation, and distribution practices designed to maximize the reach of DBP products both across the domestic landscape and within strategic international markets.

Historically, the centrality of the Malay language to Malaysian education policy and macro-political identity has been extensively documented. Scholars conceptualize language not merely as a passive medium of communication, but as an active community-building resource and an essential vehicle for domestic knowledge transfer (Mohamad et al., 2022; Soon & Loi, 2019; Salehuddin, 2018).

Consequently, DBP’s publishing and translation divisions do not operate as conventional commercial enterprises; rather, their outputs are intrinsically imbued with state-sanctioned promotional objectives. These initiatives extend far beyond linguistic standardization, serving as structural mechanisms for broader cultural diplomacy, regional soft power, and the global amplification of Malaysian literary heritage (Anwar, 2014; Haroon & Majid, 2015). The promotional effectiveness determinants for Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) products operate at the intersection of sociolinguistic mandate and commercial publishing dynamics. This mechanism can be understood through two primary vectors: (a) policy-driven language promotion and socio-cultural identity-building (positioning Malay as the national language and a symbol of national unity), and (b) institutional translation and publishing practices designed to expand DBP’s product reach across both domestic and international markets.

The centrality of the Malay language to national identity and education policy is a recurrent theme in contemporary literature, which frequently conceptualizes language as a community-building resource and a primary vehicle for knowledge transfer (Mohamad et al., 2022; Soon & Loi, 2019; Salehuddin, 2018). Consequently, DBP’s publication and translation practices are intrinsically imbued with promotional goals. These initiatives extend far beyond mere linguistic standardization, serving as active instruments for cultural outreach and mechanisms to elevate the global visibility of Malaysian literature (Anwar, 2014; Haroon & Majid, 2015).

Theoretical Foundations of the Phenomenon

To map how an institutional agency converts a sociolinguistic mandate into measurable market reach, DBP’s promotional ecosystem can be analyzed through a multidimensional matrix.

Core Determinant Domain	Institutional Vector	Strategic Objective	Key Literatures
Socio-Political Policy	Language-Promotion Alignment	Leverages national identity and education policy to drive public sector and institutional consumption.	Mohamad et al. (2022); Soon & Loi (2019)
Operational Execution	Translation & Editorial Strategy	Broadens market reach by translating foreign intellectual assets into Malay, and local literature into global languages.	Anwar (2014); Haroon & Majid (2015); Quah (2002)
Market Adaptation	Digital Transformation & Marketing Mix	Utilizes e-publishing, online catalogs, and algorithmic social media targeting to engage contemporary readers.	Adnan & Rahamad (2014); Bakar et al. (2020)

In the contemporary era, the traditional distribution networks that DBP historically relied upon—such as physical bookstores, public school libraries, and state academic institutions—are facing profound disruption. The modern consumer landscape is heavily dictated by digital-first consumption patterns, multi-channel e-commerce, and algorithmic discovery engines.

As a result, DBP's promotional effectiveness is no longer guaranteed solely by its legal mandate or policy frameworks. Instead, its success depends on how dynamically the agency modernizes its marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) and embraces digital transformation without diluting its core cultural and linguistic integrity (Bakar et al., 2020; Adnan & Rahamad, 2014). This study isolates, unpacks, and evaluates these complex, intersecting determinants to provide an empirical model of contemporary state-supported cultural publishing.

Problem Statement

Despite its historically codified mandate to publish, translate, and promote the national language (Bahasa Melayu), Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) operates in a modern, highly globalized book industry where traditional institutional frameworks no longer guarantee market success. The problem animating this study is three-fold, encompassing empirical, operational, and theoretical gaps in how promotional effectiveness is determined for state-supported cultural publications.

There is currently a lack of a consolidated, empirical understanding of the specific determinants that drive the promotional effectiveness of DBP products in contemporary markets. While past scholarship has separately lauded DBP's historical contributions to national literacy and literature, there is a severe shortage of quantitative and qualitative data mapping how policy, translation initiatives, linguistic identity, and commercial strategies interact to influence actual product uptake. Specifically, DBP lacks a unified framework to measure how its marketing and promotional efforts resonate across highly fragmented stakeholder segments—ranging from general readers, students, and educators to institutional librarians, commercial retailers, and international publishing partners (Chin & Subramaniam, 2015; Haroon & Majid, 2015; Salehuddin, 2018). Furthermore, empirical data regarding how these promotional determinants diverge between domestic distribution channels and international avenues (such as regional book fairs and cross-border rights exchanges) remains largely unexamined (Saimon et al., 2021).

Furthermore, operationally, the rapid acceleration of digital media, multi-channel e-commerce platforms, and algorithm-driven content discovery has profoundly disrupted traditional book industry supply chains. DBP has historically relied heavily on structural institutional advantages, such as mandated public school textbook adoptions, public library distribution networks, and brick-and-mortar state retailers. However, in a marketplace increasingly dominated by digital-native consumers who prioritize e-books, open-access repositories, and social media-driven marketing campaigns, DBP's legacy promotional frameworks struggle to maintain optimal market visibility and reach (Adnan & Rahamad, 2014; Bakar et al., 2020).

The institution faces a critical operational friction: how to rapidly modernize its digital marketing mix and upgrade its online catalogs while still preserving the strict linguistic, cultural, and academic integrity required by its statutory charter. At a broader conceptual level, an unresolved debate persists within scholarly literature regarding how national language planning successfully translates into commercial viability for cultural products.

One theoretical school of thought emphasizes the primacy of state-led branding, national sentiment, and institutional translation activities as the primary drivers of consumption for national literature (Mohamad et al., 2022; Soon & Loi, 2019). Conversely, modern media management literature argues that state protections mask structural inefficiencies, asserting that long-term sustainability can only be achieved through consumer-centric, market-driven mechanisms and aggressive technological adaptation (Adnan & Rahamad, 2014; Quah, 2002). This theoretical dichotomy leaves a vital gap in the literature.

There is an urgent need to synthesize these opposing views into a holistic framework that demonstrates how a subsidized, policy-bound cultural apparatus can successfully negotiate market commercialization without diluting its foundational, socio-political mission.

Research Objectives

The primary objectives guiding this study are:

- RO1: To identify the relationship of promotional mix to the promotional effectiveness.
- RO2: To examine effect of promotional mix to the customer engagement.
- RO3: To assess the mediating effect of customer engagement to the promotional mix and promotional effectiveness.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following fundamental research questions:

- RQ1: What are influence of promotional mix to the promotional effectiveness.
- RQ2: What are the effect of promotional mix to the customer engagement.
- RQ3: How the customer engagement will influence the promotional mix and promotional effectiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature related to promotional effectiveness from 2018 to 2025. It synthesizes relevant theories, key constructs, dimensions, empirical findings, and research gaps associated with promotional effectiveness. In addition, this chapter develops a conceptual framework and hypotheses to guide the current study.

Promotional effectiveness has evolved significantly due to digital transformation, shifting from traditional advertising evaluation to engagement- and data-driven performance measurement. Therefore, understanding how promotional activities influence consumer responses remains important for academic researchers and marketing practitioners.

Concept of Promotional Effectiveness

Promotional effectiveness refers to the extent to which promotional activities achieve desired marketing outcomes such as brand awareness, customer engagement, purchase intention, and sales performance. It is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses.

In the digital era, promotional effectiveness is no longer limited to immediate sales outcomes but also includes long-term relational outcomes such as customer loyalty, brand equity, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments are increasingly used to measure effectiveness.

Inclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance, quality, and academic rigor of the literature included in this review, a clear set of inclusion criteria was applied during the selection process. First, only studies published between 2018 and 2025 were considered. This timeframe was selected to ensure that the review captures recent developments and current trends in promotional effectiveness, particularly within the context of rapid digital transformation, changing consumer behavior, and the increasing use of artificial intelligence in marketing communication.

Second, only peer-reviewed journal articles were included, with priority given to studies indexed in Scopus. This criterion was used to ensure that the selected literature met high academic standards in terms of methodology, validity, and reliability. Peer-reviewed sources are considered more credible because they have undergone rigorous evaluation by experts in the field before publication, thereby enhancing the overall quality of the literature review.

Third, studies included in this review were required to specifically focus on promotional effectiveness, advertising, or marketing communication. This included studies examining how promotional strategies influence consumer behavior, brand perception, engagement, and purchase intention. Studies not directly related to promotional effectiveness, such as those focusing solely on general marketing theories without empirical or conceptual links to promotion, were excluded to maintain focus and consistency.

Finally, this review incorporates a combination of empirical, conceptual, and review studies. Empirical studies are important for providing data-driven evidence regarding promotional effectiveness, while conceptual studies contribute to theoretical understanding and framework development. Review articles were included to provide broader syntheses of existing knowledge and to identify emerging trends and research gaps in this field. The combination of these three types of studies ensures a comprehensive and balanced understanding of promotional effectiveness from multiple academic perspectives.

Theoretical Foundations

Several major theories explain how promotional effectiveness influences consumer responses. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) states that individuals process persuasive messages through two routes: the central route, where highly involved consumers carefully evaluate message content, and the peripheral route, where less involved consumers rely on simple cues such as attractiveness, credibility, or the popularity of the message source. In contrast, the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) explains that consumers are not passive recipients of marketing messages; instead, they possess knowledge about persuasive tactics and use it to critically evaluate messages, especially in more implicit digital marketing and influencer environments.

The Hierarchy of Effects Model explains that consumer responses occur progressively from awareness, interest, desire, and finally action. This model suggests that promotional activities gradually guide consumers through various psychological stages before making purchase decisions. Meanwhile, Customer Engagement Theory emphasizes the interactive and relational nature of modern marketing, where effective promotions not only convey information but also build active engagement, emotional connections, and ongoing interactions between consumers and brands, ultimately enhancing behavioral outcomes such as loyalty and purchase intention.

The Hierarchy of Effects Model also explains that consumers go through a structured process from awareness to purchase action. At the awareness stage, consumers are introduced to products or brands through advertising, social media, or other promotional tools. At the interest stage, promotional messages must be attractive enough to encourage consumers to seek additional information such as product features and benefits. During the desire stage, consumers begin to form positive attitudes through emotional and rational evaluations, while at the action stage, consumers make purchasing decisions. This model highlights the importance of systematic promotional strategies in influencing consumers progressively.

Dimensions of Promotional Effectiveness

Cognitive Dimension

This dimension refers to the level of consumer awareness, knowledge, and perception toward a brand.

Affective Dimension

This dimension includes emotional responses such as attitudes, trust, and attachment toward a brand.

Behavioral Dimension

This dimension reflects actual consumer behaviors such as purchase intention, purchase decisions, and loyalty.

Engagement Dimension

Customer engagement includes interactions such as likes, shares, comments, and online reviews, which significantly influence promotional outcomes.

Determinants of Promotional Effectiveness

Promotional effectiveness is influenced by several key determinants, beginning with message characteristics. These characteristics refer to how promotional content is designed and delivered to the target audience. Messages that are clear, creative, and emotionally appealing are more effective in attracting attention, improving understanding, and creating stronger psychological connections with consumers.

In addition, source credibility is an important factor related to the trustworthiness and expertise of the message deliverer. Promotional content delivered by trusted sources such as established brands, industry experts, or credible influencers tends to increase consumer trust and influence purchase intention.

Audience characteristics also play an important role in determining promotional effectiveness. Different consumers respond differently depending on their age, preferences, lifestyle, and level of involvement with the product. For example, younger consumers are generally more attracted to visual and interactive content on social media.

Finally, platform characteristics also influence promotional outcomes. Digital platforms differ in terms of interactivity, algorithmic reach, content format, and user engagement features. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook offer unique advantages in delivering promotional content.

Empirical Findings (2018–2025)

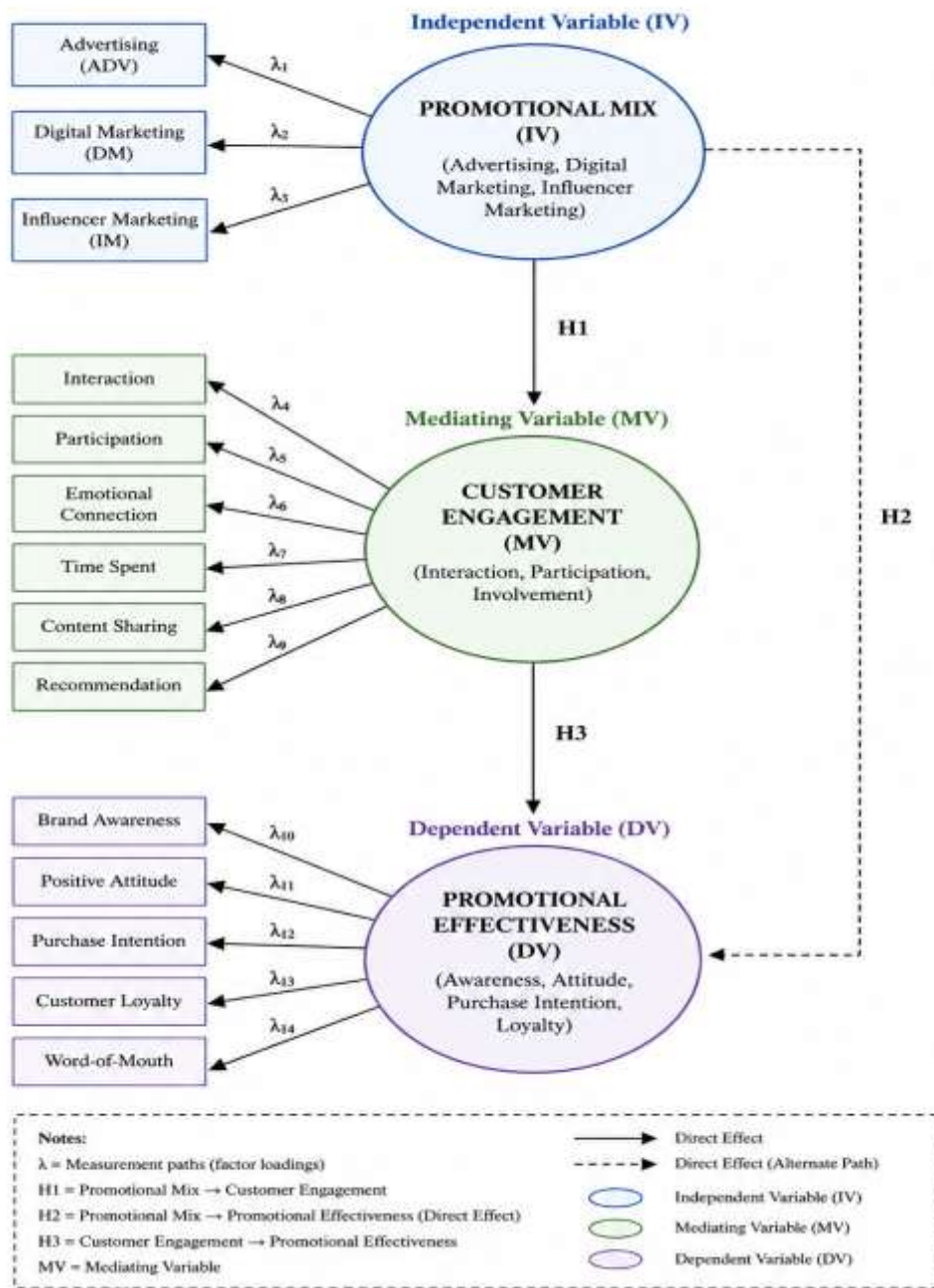
Recent studies indicate that digital marketing and social media significantly improve promotional effectiveness. Influencer marketing has been found to be highly effective among younger consumers when the content is perceived as authentic. Customer engagement has also been identified as an important predictor of purchase intention, brand loyalty, and promotional success. Furthermore, engagement often acts as a mediating variable between promotional activities and consumer behavioral outcomes.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework proposed in this study was developed based on theories and empirical literature related to promotional effectiveness. This framework identifies three major variables: independent variables, mediating variables, and dependent variables. The independent variable in this study is the promotional mix, which includes advertising, digital marketing, and influencer marketing. The mediating variable is customer engagement, which reflects the level of interaction, participation, and emotional involvement of consumers with promotional content.

Meanwhile, the dependent variable is promotional effectiveness, which refers to the extent to which promotional activities achieve outcomes such as brand awareness, positive attitudes, purchase intention, and customer loyalty. Overall, this framework proposes that the promotional mix influences promotional effectiveness both directly and indirectly through customer engagement as a mediating variable.

Conceptual Framework



The Mediating Role of Customer Engagement

Introduction

Understanding how consumer engagement operates within the marketing mix (4P or extended variants) is important in explaining how marketing programs are translated into effective outcomes such as purchase decisions, satisfaction, loyalty, or acceptance. The literature reviewed here analyzes how elements of the marketing mix influence consumer outcomes, how mediator constructs (particularly consumer engagement or health awareness/consciousness) transmit these effects, and the contexts in which engagement functions as a mediator between marketing effectiveness and marketing mix-related outcomes.

Engagement as a Mediator Between the Marketing Mix and Purchase-Related Outcomes

Several studies identify the 4P components (product, price, place, and promotion) as important predictors of consumer purchase decisions or marketing effectiveness, with mediating variables often used to explain the

transmission mechanism. For example, health awareness or health consciousness has been shown to mediate the effects of the marketing mix on purchase decisions in health-related contexts (sanitary products) and online food retailing during the COVID-19 period (Alsheikh & Alsheikh, 2024; Wulansari et al., 2024). In these studies, health consciousness partially mediated the relationship between marketing mix elements and purchase decisions, implying that consumer-state mediators channel marketing exposure into behavior. Related evidence from service settings shows that marketing mix variables positively influence patient satisfaction, which subsequently affects patient loyalty, with satisfaction functioning as a mediator (Budiman & Achmadi, 2023). This pattern reflects findings in healthcare marketing where perceived value operates as a mediator between the marketing mix strategy (4P) and physician satisfaction (Murshid et al., 2016).

Within the context of consumer services and retail environments such as those offered by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, customer satisfaction and loyalty frequently emerge as downstream outcomes partially mediated by engagement- or value-related constructs. For example, a study on Rejuve cold-pressed beverages found that the marketing mix influenced satisfaction and loyalty, with satisfaction mediating the effect on loyalty, consistent with processes mediated through consumer affect or evaluative states (Mustaqimah et al., 2019). A study involving hospital patients also reported mediation pathways where the marketing mix influenced satisfaction, which subsequently affected loyalty (Budiman & Achmadi, 2023). In addition, within online food delivery platforms, the service mix (a broader set, sometimes referred to as 7P) shapes perceived value, which in turn influences satisfaction and switching intentions. These studies emphasize utilitarian and hedonic value perceptions as mediators of service mix effects on satisfaction and switching intentions, reinforcing the mediating role of value-centered constructs between marketing actions and behavioral outcomes (Sözer et al., 2023).

Engagement-Specific Constructs and Their Mediating Role

In service industries, constructs such as health awareness or health consciousness frequently function as mediators between the marketing mix and purchase decisions in health-related consumer markets (sanitary products and online food purchases during COVID-19) (Alsheikh & Alsheikh, 2024; Wulansari et al., 2024). In these contexts, health consciousness partially mediates the relationship between the marketing mix and purchase decisions, with nuanced outcomes across dimensions (e.g., place effects may be mediated differently from promotional effects) (Wulansari et al., 2024). However, in the e-wallet context, the evolution toward an “e-marketing mix” (4P with digital extensions) demonstrates that consumer engagement factors (e.g., personalization, privacy, trust) become essential in interpreting the effects of marketing mix strategies on adoption and usage. This aligns with broader literature in which the marketing mix evolves into digitalized and personalized configurations, with engagement-related factors acting as channels or moderators of marketing mix effects (Hartati et al., 2024).

Furthermore, across service-oriented environments such as pharmacies and healthcare, engagement with service processes or perceived service quality interacts with the marketing mix to shape customer loyalty or dedication. Nitadpakorn and related studies emphasize that engagement mediates the effects of the marketing mix on customer dedication/loyalty, sometimes with engagement emerging as the strongest predictor of loyalty (Nitadpakorn, n.d.). Although not all studies statistically tested formal mediation, these patterns suggest engagement as a plausible mediator or critical mechanism. In terms of contextual patterns across domains, several studies support the mediating role of consumer engagement. The literature summary is as follows:

a. Tourism and Post-COVID Travel Recovery

Tay et al. demonstrated that marketing mix strategies influence travel intention after restrictions were lifted, with travel fear mediating the effects of product- and promotion-based strategies on travel intention; conventional price/place strategies were less relevant during the COVID era (Tay et al., 2023). This indicates that consumer engagement with risk, fear, and confidence mediates marketing mix effects on behavioral intentions, with product-related cues (e.g., perceived safety) becoming more prominent than traditional price/place mechanisms.

b. Health-Related Consumer Goods

Studies involving hygiene products and health-oriented online food purchases indicate that the 4P has significant effects on purchase decisions, while health consciousness acts as a mediator, although certain dimensions may weaken or negate mediation depending on the pathway (e.g., place effects) (Alsheikh & Alsheikh, 2024; Wulansari et al., 2024).

c. Online Food Delivery and Service Platforms

Sözer et al. and related studies argue that service mix and value-based benefits influence customer switching and satisfaction, with perceived value mediating service encounter outcomes. This aligns with engagement-focused theories that view perceived value and satisfaction as proximal outcomes within marketing mix pathways, ultimately influencing loyalty and switching behavior (Sözer et al., 2023).

d. Healthcare Services and Patient Loyalty

Budiman and Achmadi (2023) reported that the 4P influences patient satisfaction and loyalty, with satisfaction functioning as a mediator. This is consistent with engagement-based perspectives in service marketing where customer engagement and satisfaction serve as pathways linking the marketing mix to loyalty outcomes.

e. Green/Ethical Marketing and Sustainability

Studies on the green marketing mix indicate that product, place, and promotion strongly predict green purchase intentions, with environmental attitudes moderating the effect. This supports a customer-centered engagement perspective in which consumer values and attitudes shape how marketing mix activities translate into green purchase intentions, often through pathways mediated by attitudes or perceived benefits (Kaur et al., 2022).

This literature uses various mediator concepts (health consciousness, perceived value, customer engagement, loyalty expectations, and satisfaction) that conceptually map onto engagement but are not always measured in the same way. This diversity complicates cross-study synthesis but highlights the central role of consumer-state or value-based processes as mediators. Furthermore, the strength and significance of mediation pathways appear to depend on context (industry, product category, COVID-era dynamics, and service type). For example, promotion-based marketing mix strategies may reduce fear in travel contexts but increase engagement in product-centered health contexts, illustrating nuanced, domain-specific mediation patterns (Tay et al., 2023; Wulansari et al., 2024). Therefore, for this study, within the context of products and services provided by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), there is a significant need to analyze the mediating impact of consumer engagement on the relationship between the marketing mix and marketing effectiveness.

Hypothesis Development

This section develops hypotheses based on the relationships between the promotional mix, customer engagement, and promotional effectiveness. These hypotheses are grounded in major theories such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Customer Engagement Theory, and the Hierarchy of Effects Model.

Promotional Mix and Customer Engagement

The promotional mix, which includes advertising, digital marketing, and influencer marketing, plays an important role in attracting consumer attention and encouraging interaction. According to Customer Engagement Theory, interactive and value-based promotional content can increase consumer participation, thereby enhancing engagement levels.

Recent studies indicate that digital promotions and social media significantly influence engagement behaviors such as likes, shares, and comments. These interactions reflect consumers' cognitive and emotional engagement with brands.

H1: The promotional mix has a significant positive effect on customer engagement.

Promotional Mix and Promotional Effectiveness

The promotional mix directly influences promotional effectiveness by shaping consumer awareness, attitudes, and behavioral responses. Traditional models such as the Hierarchy of Effects suggest that well-planned promotional strategies can enhance brand recognition and purchase intention.

Empirical evidence shows that integrated promotional strategies can improve marketing outcomes such as sales performance and brand equity.

H2: The promotional mix has a significant positive effect on promotional effectiveness.

Customer Engagement and Promotional Effectiveness

Customer engagement is increasingly recognized as a major determinant of promotional effectiveness. Consumers who are actively engaged are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward brands, thereby increasing purchase intention and loyalty.

From the perspective of Customer Engagement Theory, engagement acts as a mechanism linking promotional activities to consumer behavioral outcomes.

H3: Customer engagement has a significant positive effect on promotional effectiveness.

The Mediating Role of Customer Engagement

Although the promotional mix can directly influence promotional effectiveness, recent literature suggests that this relationship is often mediated by customer engagement. Promotional activities first stimulate engagement, which subsequently leads to desired marketing outcomes.

This is consistent with the Elaboration Likelihood Model, where engagement reflects deeper processing of promotional messages.

H4: Customer engagement mediates the relationship between the promotional mix and promotional effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm

A research paradigm represents a shared worldview informed by philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of reality and knowledge (Schwandt, 2014). A paradigm is a way of describing a worldview informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality, which consists of ontology and epistemology. First, ontology concerns the nature of reality (Patton, 2014). The nature of reality refers to something relatively constant across time and settings. Epistemology, on the other hand, refers to ways of knowing, meaning knowledge that can be empirically tested and generalized facts (Patton, 2014). Therefore, a paradigm leads to the use of an appropriate approach, namely methodology.

According to Creswell (2013), paradigms can generally be categorized into quantitative (positivist) and qualitative (constructivist) paradigms. This study adopts the positivist paradigm, which is characterized by empirical studies and statistical testing to establish relationships between variables. Therefore, this study implies a positivist ontology, empirical epistemology, and a quantitative methodological approach.

In addition, the positivist paradigm uses quantitative methods to collect numerical data that can be tabulated and statistically analyzed. Creswell (2009) stated that the positivist paradigm aims to explain variable relationships. Therefore, the objective of this study is to determine the relationship between marketing mix factors (advertising, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion) and the mediating factor (consumer engagement) on the effectiveness of the marketing mix.

Research Constructs

The variables or constructs selected in this study include marketing mix factors (advertising, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion) and the mediating factor (consumer engagement), both theoretically and empirically related to marketing effectiveness and the marketing mix. Collectively, these variables provide a multilevel perspective encompassing personal and relational influences on the effectiveness of the marketing mix among primary school students and civil servants in Malaysia.

Measurement Scale

A self-administered questionnaire will be used in this study to collect data from primary school students and civil servants in Malaysia. The survey will be distributed using an online Google Form. The questionnaire will be divided into two sections: Section A for demographic information and Section B for variable measurement. Section A consists of survey items related to respondents' demographic information, including gender, age, marital status, institution, and education level. The type of scale used for all variables in this section is the nominal scale, as it allows researchers to assign subjects into specific categories or groups (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Data obtained from nominal scaling include percentage (or frequency) calculations of respondents. The rating scale techniques used are dichotomous scales and category scales. Dichotomous scales will be used for the gender variable, while category scales will be used for gender, age, marital status, institution, and education level.

Section B focuses on surveys related to independent and dependent variables. This study will use measurement items adapted from previous studies according to the suitability of the current study. A five-point Likert Scale is appropriate for studies involving several variables because it simplifies the overall testing process and does not burden respondents, while reliability remains acceptable according to psychological testing standards (Chomeya, 2010). In Section B, the questionnaire focuses on independent variables, mediating variables, and dependent variables. All measurement items are obtained from well-established and validated instruments used in previous studies.

Research Population

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the term population refers to the entire group of people, events, or items that researchers wish to study. In this study, the research population consists of primary school students and civil servants in Malaysia. This population was selected because primary school students represent a fundamental segment in the language development ecosystem, as they are in the early literacy formation stage. Furthermore, from the perspective of educational policy in Malaysia, the Malay language functions as the national language and the primary medium of instruction within the education system. Therefore, strong mastery at the early stage will have long-term impacts on students' academic competency and communication skills. In addition, civil servants were selected as the target segment because they are the primary users of the Malay language in official contexts. Proficiency in language use among this group not only enhances administrative communication effectiveness but also influences the standards and image of the national language as a whole.

Research Sample

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), selecting an appropriate sampling design and determining an adequate sample size are critical aspects in ensuring sample representativeness for generalizability purposes. This study estimates the minimum sample size required to assess sample representativeness using the table proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Based on the table, the minimum sample size required for this study is 384 respondents.

Sampling Technique

Sampling technique refers to the method used to select groups from the target population. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), sampling techniques are categorized into probability and non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling can produce valid results when managed carefully (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

It is appropriate when the research objective focuses on theoretical generalization rather than sampling generalization, when the sampling frame is incomplete, and when the study objective requires flexibility (Mumtaz et al., 2017). Due to limited information availability for this study, a non-probability sampling approach is considered appropriate.

Therefore, this study will use Purposive Sampling Technique. Unlike random sampling methods, purposive sampling allows researchers to select respondents who are truly relevant to the constructs being studied, particularly in evaluating relationships between promotional elements (advertising, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion) and consumer engagement as a mediator toward marketing mix effectiveness.

Data Collection Method

Primary Data

Primary data for this study will be obtained using structured survey questionnaires distributed through face-to-face interactions. The questionnaire consists of various types of questions, including dichotomous items, categorical items, and five-point Likert scale items designed to evaluate relationships between promotional mix elements (advertising, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion) and consumer engagement as a mediator toward marketing mix effectiveness.

Considering the large number of respondents among primary school students and civil servants in Malaysia, the data collection process requires high coordination and flexibility to ensure sufficient and transparent participation.

Secondary Data

To support this study, researchers collected information from various sources, including books, journal articles, internet resources, and newspapers. Electronic journals were accessed through the UiTM Library website using databases such as Emerald, ScienceDirect, Scopus, SpringerLink, and ProQuest, among others.

Pilot Study

The instrument used to determine the relationships between variables involving promotional elements (advertising, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion) and consumer engagement as a mediator toward marketing mix effectiveness must first be evaluated before administration. This can be conducted through a pilot study.

Generally, all studies should be tested before the actual study is conducted. This is supported by Oppenheim (1996), who stated that “almost anything related to social surveys can and should be piloted.” Although pilot studies may appear repetitive, it is very important to test the validity, reliability, and practicality of instruments before the questions can be used in the actual study (Cohen et al., 2007). After the pilot test is conducted, the questions will be revised according to feedback from respondents whenever weaknesses, errors, irrelevant questions, or unrelated issues to significant relationships are identified. Therefore, a pilot study will be implemented in this study to ensure that only reliable and valid construct measurements are used before evaluating the relationships within the overall model. As suggested by Johanson and Brooks (2010), this study will involve fifty (50) respondents consisting of primary school students and civil servants in the pilot study. For content validity, the reliability of individual constructs will be assessed by examining the respective item loadings on their latent constructs (Hulland, 1999). To confirm content validity, Hair et al. (2012) recommended that standardized loading estimates should be 0.5 or higher and ideally 0.7 or higher.

Discriminant Validity

Hair et al. (2017) define discriminant validity as the extent to which a construct differs from other constructs according to empirical standards. As a result, assessing discriminant validity demonstrates that a construct is unique and captures phenomena not represented by other constructs in the model. Traditionally, researchers have

relied on two measures of discriminant validity, namely cross-loadings and the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Hair et al., 2017).

As argued by previous researchers regarding the performance of cross-loadings and the Fornell-Larcker criterion for assessing discriminant validity, Henseler et al. (2015) proposed the use of the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) to assess discriminant validity. It is recommended that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct should exceed its correlations with any other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and the HTMT threshold is suggested to be 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015).

For cross-loading measures, the outer loading of an indicator on its associated construct should be greater than any of its cross-loadings on other constructs (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, to assess discriminant validity, all three techniques will be used in this study, namely the Cross-Loading Criterion, the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Structural Model (Significance of Structural Paths and Hypothesis Testing)

After researchers confirm that the data quality or construct measurements are reliable and valid, the next step is evaluating the structural model results. This involves examining the predictive capability of the research framework and the relationships between constructs (Hair et al., 2017).

In evaluating the structural model, Hair et al. (2014) suggested that the indicators to be examined include Path Coefficients, R^2 values, effect size (f^2), and Stone-Geisser's Q^2 values. Path coefficients are used to test possible relationships between latent variables in the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach. Through the bootstrapping technique, t-values will be generated. If the t-value is greater than the critical value, the path coefficient is considered significant.

In addition, the R^2 value is also used in this study. The R^2 value, also known as the coefficient of multiple determination in multiple regression, measures how well the data fit the corresponding regression line.

R^2 values for endogenous variables are categorized as 0.00–0.25 (weak), 0.26–0.50 (moderate), 0.51–0.75 (substantial), and 0.76–1.00 (strong) (Cohen, 1988).

Another criterion used to evaluate path coefficients and hypothesis testing is effect size (f^2). The f^2 effect size measures the impact of predictor variables (exogenous variables) contributing to the R^2 value of endogenous variables. Therefore, to determine whether independent variables have an important effect on dependent variables, the f^2 effect size should be used. The thresholds for f^2 effect size are: more than 80% (large effect), 20% to 79% (moderate effect), and below 19% (small effect). Furthermore, this study also uses the predictive relevance technique Q^2 proposed by Hair et al. (2014) to test the structural model. Exogenous variables are considered to have predictive relevance for endogenous variables if the Q^2 value is greater than zero, where values of 0.02 indicate small relevance, 0.15 indicate moderate relevance, and 0.35 indicate large relevance.

Common Method Variance

Data in this study will be collected using an online survey (Google Form) and answered by individuals (primary school students and civil servants) representing their organizations. Therefore, Podsakoff et al. (2003) recommended conducting a common method variance assessment. A widely used method for assessing common method variance among researchers is Harman's Single Factor Test. This procedure will be conducted by performing principal component analysis on all studied items. If the result exceeds 50%, it indicates that method bias is a serious issue. Therefore, it is recommended that the common method variance value should remain below 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Mediation Analysis

A mediation effect occurs when a third variable or construct intervenes between two related constructs (Memon et al., 2019; Nitzl et al., 2016). To test mediation effects, Hair et al. (2022) recommended using the bootstrap method. This is because bootstrapping does not make assumptions regarding the shape of variable distributions

or statistical sampling distributions and can be used more confidently with small sample sizes. Therefore, this approach is highly suitable for the PLS-SEM method and has been implemented in SmartPLS software.

Recent advancements in mediation literature strongly advise researchers against using the Baron and Kenny method due to its significant limitations (Aguinis et al., 2016). Given these constraints, applying the Baron and Kenny methodology may produce misleading results, weaken potentially important theoretical relationships, and hinder future theory development (Rungtusanatham et al., 2014).

Consequently, as suggested by Memon et al. (2018) and Rungtusanatham et al. (2014), this study adopts a segmentation strategy to conduct mediation analysis, which requires the formulation of three segmented hypotheses.

The first segment involves the mediating variable influencing the dependent variable. Specifically, the researchers propose one hypothesis (H1):

H1: Customer engagement overall has a significant and positive relationship with promotional mix effectiveness among primary school students and civil servants in Malaysia.

The second segment involves the independent variables influencing the mediating variable. Specifically, the researchers propose four hypotheses (H2, H4, H6, H8):

H2, H4, H6, H8: There will be a significant and positive relationship between the independent variables (advertising, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion) and customer engagement among primary school students and civil servants in Malaysia.

The third segment concerns the mediation effect (the mediating variable mediates the relationship between independent and dependent variables). Specifically, the researchers propose four hypotheses (H3, H5, H7, H9):

H3, H5, H7, H9: There will be a significant and positive relationship between the independent variables (advertising, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion) and marketing mix effectiveness mediated by customer engagement among primary school students and civil servants in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This section synthesizes the anticipated theoretical and practical contributions of the study on the determinants of promotional effectiveness for publications by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP). Drawing from integrated literature on language policy, translation history, publishing transformation, and digital marketing, the study is expected to contribute both to scholarly discourse in language planning and to practical strategies for enhancing DBP's promotional activities in domestic and international markets. The discussion also highlights areas of convergence and continuing debate within the literature.

The study is expected to demonstrate that national language promotion can align with market objectives when translation programs and publishing strategies simultaneously address national educational needs and international audiences. Nevertheless, tensions may emerge between state-driven branding objectives and commercial or digital dissemination goals. The findings are anticipated to identify conditions under which policy-oriented branding enhances market performance, as well as situations where market-driven strategies and digital promotional channels are more effective in increasing global reach and accessibility.

Also, digital transformation is expected to significantly enhance the visibility and accessibility of DBP publications. Digital editions, online catalogues, social media campaigns, and international collaborations are likely to complement traditional promotional channels by extending market reach beyond physical bookstores and libraries. Furthermore, the integration of digital marketing strategies with translation initiatives and language policy positioning is anticipated to increase engagement among educators, libraries, researchers, and international partners.

In term of theoretical contribution, this study is expected to advance understanding of the interaction between language policy, translation activities, and publishing transformation in shaping promotional effectiveness within a national language agency. The research proposes a multidimensional framework of promotional determinants that integrates state-led branding, market-oriented dynamics, and digital disruption. The study therefore contributes to the literature on language planning, translation studies, publishing management, and digital marketing by providing a DBP-specific perspective on promotional effectiveness.

From a practical perspective, the findings are expected to provide DBP with strategic guidance for optimizing its promotional mix, including product development, pricing strategies, distribution networks, and strategic partnerships, while maintaining linguistic and cultural integrity. The study is also expected to support decision-making regarding translation priorities, digital transformation initiatives such as digital editions and online catalogues, and collaborative marketing efforts involving universities, libraries, and international publishing networks. As implications for future research, this study is expected to identify opportunities for future longitudinal research examining how promotional determinants evolve alongside DBP's digital transformation and shifting language policies within regional and global contexts. Additionally, the findings may encourage comparative studies involving other national language publishers to assess the broader applicability of the proposed determinants model across different linguistic, cultural, and publishing environments.

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