

The Mediating Influence of Brand Trust, Perceived Quality, and Brand Love on Brand Loyalty

*Experience, Love and
Trust Affect Brand
Loyalty*

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ABSTRACT

The competitive market for traditional food brands underscores the need to understand factors driving consumer loyalty. This study examines how brand experience influences brand loyalty, mediated by brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love. The objective is to clarify the mediating roles of these variables and address inconsistencies in prior research regarding their impact on loyalty for traditional food products. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed, collecting data from 364 respondents using a purposive sampling method. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The results show that brand experience does not directly affect brand loyalty, but significantly influences brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love, which in turn drive loyalty. Brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love partially mediate the relationship between brand experience and loyalty, with consumers favoring innovative flavors and cultural appeal. This study concludes that fostering trust, quality perceptions, and emotional attachment is crucial for building loyalty to traditional food, offering practical strategies for traditional brands to enhance consumer retention in competitive markets.

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Keywords: Brand Experience, Brand Love, Brand Loyalty, Brand Trust, Perceived Quality.

ABSTRAK

Pasar yang kompetitif untuk merek makanan tradisional menekankan pentingnya memahami faktor-faktor yang mendorong loyalitas konsumen. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana pengalaman merek memengaruhi loyalitas merek, yang dimediasi oleh kepercayaan merek persepsi kualitas, dan kecintaan terhadap merek. Tujuannya adalah untuk menjelaskan peran mediasi variabel-variabel tersebut dan mengatasi inkonsistensi dalam penelitian sebelumnya terkait dampaknya terhadap loyalitas pada produk makanan tradisional. Desain penelitian yang digunakan bersifat kuantitatif cross-sectional, dengan pengumpulan data dari 364 responden menggunakan metode purposive sampling. Data dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengalaman merek tidak secara langsung memengaruhi loyalitas merek, tetapi secara signifikan memengaruhi kepercayaan merek, persepsi kualitas, dan kecintaan terhadap merek, yang pada gilirannya mendorong loyalitas. Kepercayaan merek, persepsi kualitas, dan kecintaan terhadap merek memediasi sebagian hubungan antara pengalaman merek dan loyalitas, dengan konsumen lebih menyukai inovasi rasa dan daya tarik budaya. Kesimpulannya, membangun kepercayaan, persepsi kualitas, dan keterikatan emosional sangat penting untuk meningkatkan loyalitas terhadap makanan tradisional, sehingga menawarkan strategi praktis bagi merek tradisional untuk mempertahankan konsumen di pasar yang kompetitif.

Kata kunci: Pengalaman Merek, Kecintaan Merek, Loyalitas Merek, Kepercayaan Merek, Perilaku Konsumen, Kualitas yang Dirasakan.

INTRODUCTION

The enthusiasm of tourists visiting Jogja has made bakpia, particularly Bakpia Pathok 25, a popular choice among visitors. However, intense competition from other bakpia brands, such as those offering innovative flavors, has challenged the dominance of

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established names like Bakpia 25 and 75. This competition highlights the need for brands to foster loyalty through unique consumer experiences, trust, and emotional connections, which are critical in maintaining market share in a crowded marketplace (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Brakus et al., 2009). Brand loyalty can be formed when a brand consistently meets customer expectations, ensuring they remain committed and resist switching to competitors (Aquino et al., 2020). This study applies the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explore how brand experience influences brand loyalty, mediated by brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love, in the context of Bakpia 25 Jogja. TPB posits that consumer behavior, such as loyalty, is driven by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, which align with the emotional and experiential aspects of brand interactions (Keller, 2013; Baumann et al., 2015; Mabkhot et al., 2017).

Brand experience is a key factor influencing consumer loyalty, encompassing sensory, cognitive, and behavioral responses to a brand (Brakus et al., 2009). These internal and subjective experiences arise from direct interactions with a product or service, shaping consumer perceptions and loyalty (Ding & Tseng, 2015; Safeer et al., 2021). However, research on the direct impact of brand experience on loyalty shows mixed results, creating a significant research gap. According to Rahmat and Kurniawati (2022), brand experience significantly influences brand loyalty through mediators like brand trust and satisfaction, but Brakus et al. (2009) found that brand experience may not always directly drive loyalty, especially when consumers prioritize novelty or variety. Similarly, Pratama and Tunjungsari (2022) noted that brand experience's effect on loyalty is inconsistent in contexts where consumers seek new experiences, such as with local food products like bakpia. This inconsistency necessitates further exploration of how brand experience affects loyalty in the specific context of traditional food brands.

Another critical factor is brand trust, derived from consumer interactions and satisfaction with a brand's performance (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Christian et al., 2023). Trust plays a pivotal role in mediating the relationship between brand experience and loyalty, yet findings vary. For instance, Huang (2017) found that brand trust fully mediates this relationship, while Elnaggar and Bendary (2017) suggest only partial mediation in certain industries. Perceived quality also influences loyalty by shaping consumer opinions about a product's reliability and superiority (Shanahan et al., 2019; Aquino et al., 2020). However, according to Winnie and Keni (2020), perceived quality does not always mediate the effect of brand experience on loyalty, particularly when consumer expectations are unmet. Brand love, reflecting deep emotional attachment, further mediates the relationship between brand experience and loyalty (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012). Yet, Bae and Kim (2023) argue that brand love's mediating role can vary depending on trust levels, adding to the research gap.

Given these inconsistencies, the research gap lies in understanding how brand experience influences brand loyalty through the mediating roles of brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love in the context of a traditional food product like Bakpia 25 Jogja. Previous studies, such as those by Akoglu and Özbek (2022) and Saputra et al. (2023), have explored these relationships in different industries, but few focus on local culinary brands with cultural significance. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of brand experience on brand loyalty, mediated by brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love, for Bakpia 25 Jogja, addressing the inconsistencies in prior research and providing practical insights for enhancing brand loyalty in the local food industry. By clarifying these relationships, this study aims to contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical strategies for traditional brands facing competitive pressures.

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The Determinants of Brand Loyalty

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a framework for understanding consumer behavior by linking attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control to intentions and actions (Mabkhot et al., 2017). In this study, TPB is applied to explore how brand experience influences brand loyalty through mediating variables like

brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love for Bakpia 25 Jogja. According to Mabkhot et al. (2017), TPB is particularly useful in predicting consumer loyalty as it accounts for emotional and cognitive factors that drive repeat purchases. Brand experience, encompassing sensory, cognitive, and behavioral responses, aligns with TPB's attitudinal component, shaping consumers' intentions to remain loyal (Brakus et al., 2009). Brand trust and brand love reflect subjective norms and emotional attachments, while perceived quality relates to perceived behavioral control, as consumers evaluate their ability to trust and choose a brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). This study leverages TPB to examine how these variables interact in the context of a traditional food brand, where cultural and sensory experiences are significant (Baumann et al., 2015). By integrating TPB, this research aims to clarify the psychological mechanisms behind brand loyalty, addressing gaps in applying this theory to local culinary products (Saputra et al., 2023; Solomon & Russell, 2024). The framework helps predict how positive experiences with Bakpia 25 Jogja can foster loyalty through trust, quality perceptions, and emotional bonds.

Brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love are critical mediators in the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty. According to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), brand trust, built through consistent product performance, fosters loyalty by reducing consumer uncertainty. Trust emerges from reliable interactions, ensuring consumers feel confident in choosing Bakpia 25 Jogja (Elnaggar & Bendary, 2017). Perceived quality, based on consumer evaluations of a product's attributes, significantly influences loyalty by meeting expectations (Shanahan et al., 2019; Aquinia et al., 2020). For instance, Winnie and Keni (2020) found that high perceived quality strengthens consumer commitment to a brand, though its impact may weaken if expectations are unmet.

Brand love, reflecting deep emotional attachment, drives loyalty by creating a sense of devotion (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012). Bae and Kim (2023) highlight that brand love enhances loyalty in contexts where consumers feel emotionally connected, such as with culturally significant products. In the case of Bakpia 25 Jogja, the emotional appeal of its traditional flavors can foster love and loyalty (Loureiro et al., 2012). These mediators are essential for understanding how brand experience translates into loyalty, particularly in competitive markets (Saputra et al., 2023).

H1: Brand experience has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

H2: Brand trust has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

H3: Perceived quality has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

H4: Brand love has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

The Influence of Brand Experience

Brand experience is a multidimensional construct involving sensory, cognitive, and behavioral responses to a brand, significantly influencing consumer perceptions. According to Brakus et al. (2009), compelling brand experiences differentiate a brand from competitors, fostering emotional connections that enhance trust and quality perceptions. Sensory experiences, such as the taste and texture of Bakpia, stimulate consumer emotions, while cognitive experiences involve curiosity about the brand (Ding & Tseng, 2015). Behavioral experiences encourage active engagement, such as repeat purchases (Safeer et al., 2021). These elements collectively influence brand trust, as positive interactions build consumer confidence in a brand's reliability (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Christian et al., 2023). Similarly, brand experience enhances perceived quality by shaping consumer opinions about a product's superiority (Shanahan et al., 2019; Aquinia et al., 2020). Joshi and Garg (2021) emphasize that brand experience fosters brand love by evoking emotional responses, particularly in hedonic product categories like food. In the context of Bakpia 25 Jogja, diverse flavors and cultural associations amplify these experiences (Baumann et al., 2015). However, Pratama and

Tunjungsari (2022) note that brand experience's impact may vary in contexts where consumers prioritize novelty, necessitating further exploration.

Brand experience significantly enhances perceived quality by shaping consumer opinions about a product's superiority. According to Shanahan et al. (2019) and Aquinia et al. (2020), positive brand experiences create associations with high-quality attributes, influencing consumer evaluations. When consumers engage with sensory, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of a brand, they form judgments about its quality (Brakus et al., 2009). The multisensory nature of brand experience plays a crucial role in quality perceptions, as consumers integrate various touchpoints to assess product excellence (Ding & Tseng, 2015). For Bakpia 25 Jogja, the sensory experience of tasting various traditional flavors combined with the brand's heritage contributes to perceptions of superior quality. High-quality ingredients and consistent product performance reinforce these perceptions, making consumers more likely to view the brand favorably (Shanahan et al., 2019). The cognitive dimension of brand experience also influences quality perceptions, as consumers who are curious about and engaged with the brand's story and production methods tend to evaluate its quality more positively (Christian et al., 2023). Furthermore, behavioral experiences such as repeated interactions with the brand allow consumers to validate their quality assessments over time, strengthening their confidence in the brand's superiority (Safeer et al., 2021). In competitive markets where traditional food brands compete for consumer attention, the ability to deliver consistent, high-quality experiences becomes a critical differentiator (Saputra et al., 2023).

Brand experience fosters brand love by evoking emotional responses, particularly in hedonic product categories like food. According to Joshi and Garg (2021), memorable brand experiences create emotional bonds that transcend functional benefits, leading to passionate attachment. The multidimensional nature of brand experience spanning sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual dimensions enables brands to connect with consumers on deeper emotional levels (Brakus et al., 2009; Chen & Quester, 2015). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) emphasize that brand love emerges when consumers develop strong emotional connections characterized by passion, attachment, and positive evaluation of the brand.

The blend of traditional flavors, cultural meaning, and sensory pleasure in Bakpia 25 Jogja encourages strong emotional engagement. Its authentic taste evokes nostalgia and cultural pride, fostering attachment (Baumann et al., 2015). Because food experiences are linked to personal and cultural memories, the brand's unique taste, aroma, and texture trigger affective responses that deepen emotional bonds (Loureiro et al., 2012; Ding & Tseng, 2015). Brand love driven by passion, attachment, and positive evaluations—grows through repeated positive interactions (Batra et al., 2012). Behavioral engagement, including sharing and participation, further strengthens this connection, making brand love a key driver in hedonic, heritage-based consumption (Safeer et al., 2021; Maduretno & Junaedi, 2022).

H5: Brand experience has a positive effect on brand trust.

H6: Brand experience has a positive effect on perceived quality.

H7: Brand experience has a positive effect on brand love.

The Mediating Role of Brand Trust, Perceived Quality, and Brand Love

Brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love are critical mediators in the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty. According to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), brand trust, built through consistent product performance, fosters loyalty by reducing consumer uncertainty. Trust emerges from reliable interactions, ensuring consumers feel confident in choosing Bakpia 25 Jogja (Elnaggar & Bendary, 2017). Perceived quality, based on consumer evaluations of a product's attributes, significantly influences loyalty by meeting expectations (Shanahan et al., 2019; Aquinia et al., 2020). For instance, Winnie and Keni (2020) found that high perceived quality strengthens consumer commitment to a brand, though its impact may weaken if expectations are

unmet. Brand love, reflecting deep emotional attachment, drives loyalty by creating a sense of devotion (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012). Bae and Kim (2023) highlight that brand love enhances loyalty in contexts where consumers feel emotionally connected, such as with culturally significant products. In the case of Bakpia 25 Jogja, the emotional appeal of its traditional flavors can foster love and loyalty (Loureiro et al., 2012). These mediators are essential for understanding how brand experience translates into loyalty, particularly in competitive markets (Saputra et al., 2023). Based on these relationships, the proposed hypotheses are:

The mediating roles of brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love are crucial in linking brand experience to brand loyalty. According to Huang (2017), brand trust mediates the effect of brand experience on loyalty by fostering confidence in a brand's reliability. This mediation is evident in contexts where consistent experiences build trust, encouraging repeat purchases (Elnaggar & Bendary, 2017; Rahmat & Kurniawati, 2022). Akoglu and Özbek (2022) found that perceived quality mediates the relationship between brand experience and loyalty, as consumers associate positive experiences with superior product attributes. For Bakpia 25 Jogja, high-quality ingredients and flavors enhance this mediation (Shanahan et al., 2019; Anggara et al., 2023; Murshed et al., 2023). Brand love also mediates this relationship, as emotional connections amplify loyalty (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012). Maduretno and Junaedi (2022) argue that brand love's mediating role is particularly strong in hedonic products like food, where emotional attachment drives loyalty. However, inconsistencies exist, as Na et al. (2023) suggest that the strength of these mediations varies across industries, highlighting the need to test these relationships in the context of traditional food brands. These findings underscore the importance of trust, quality, and love in translating experiences into loyalty.

H8: Brand trust mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

H9: Perceived quality mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

H10: Brand love mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

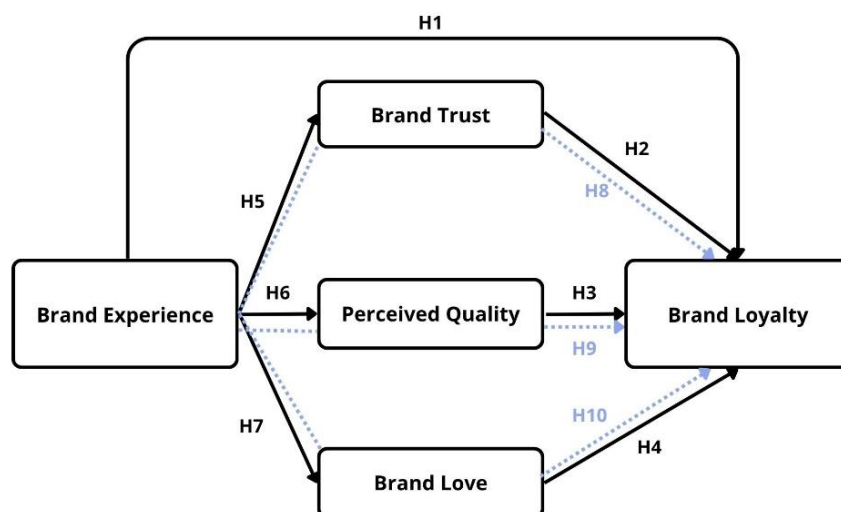


Figure 1. Empirical Research Method

Figure 1 illustrates the research framework, highlighting the relationships between brand experience, brand trust, perceived quality, brand love, and brand loyalty. It shows that brand experience directly influences brand loyalty (H1), as well as the mediators: brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love (H5-H7). Additionally, the framework indicates the direct effects of these mediators on brand loyalty (H2-H4) and the indirect paths from brand experience to brand loyalty through the mediators (H8-H10). This

structure emphasizes the critical role of brand experience in shaping consumer perceptions and fostering loyalty through trust, quality, and love.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional approach, collecting data from respondents at a single point in time using Google Forms. The cross-sectional design is suitable for capturing consumer perceptions of Bakpia 25 Jogja at a specific moment, aligning with established research practices for studying brand loyalty (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The sampling method employs purposive sampling, targeting individuals familiar with Bakpia 25 Jogja, resulting in a sample size of 364 respondents. This sample size was determined using the guideline of 10 times the number of indicators in the structural model, ensuring adequacy for PLS-SEM analysis. Data were collected between March and May 2025 in Yogyakarta, focusing on both local residents and tourists who have purchased or consumed Bakpia 25 Jogja (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). This approach ensures the sample reflects the brand's consumer base, though it may introduce selection bias due to its non-probability nature.

Data collection utilized a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to measure the study's variables. Brand experience was assessed through 10 indicators, including sensory impressions, emotional responses, and behavioral engagement. Brand trust was measured with four indicators, such as expectations and satisfaction. Perceived quality included six indicators, such as reliability and needs. Brand love was evaluated using 10 indicators, including making one feel good and being very attached. Brand loyalty was assessed with six indicators, such as feeling good, consuming, and continuing to use in the future. These indicators were adapted from prior studies to ensure validity and relevance to the food product context (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Brakus et al., 2009; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms, targeting respondents in Yogyakarta to capture diverse consumer experiences with Bakpia 25 Jogja. The use of PLS-SEM as the analytical tool aligns with the study's aim to test complex relationships among latent variables (Hair et al., 2014). To mitigate potential biases in purposive sampling, such as over-representation of frequent buyers, respondents were screened to ensure familiarity with the brand without requiring exclusive loyalty. This method provides a robust foundation for analyzing the mediating roles of brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love in the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study, which investigates the relationships between brand experience, brand trust, perceived quality, brand love, and brand loyalty for Bakpia 25 Jogja, using a quantitative approach with PLS-SEM analysis. The results include validity and reliability tests, path coefficients, and hypothesis testing, supported by statistical metrics to ensure robustness. All data were processed in 2025, and the findings address the proposed hypotheses, providing insights into consumer behavior in the context of a traditional food brand (Hair et al., 2014; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The analysis also incorporates goodness-of-fit metrics to evaluate the model's explanatory power, addressing gaps in the original findings.

Table 1. Convergent Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	Factor Loading	AVE	Conclusion
Brand Experience	PM1	0.846	0.683	Valid
	PM2	0.815		
	PM3	0.833		
	PM4	0.818		
	PM5	0.835		
	PM6	0.787		
	PM7	0.863		

Variable	Indicator	Factor Loading	AVE	Conclusion
	PM8	0.793	0.736	Valid
	PM9	0.802		
	PM10	0.869		
Brand Trust	KM1	0.871	0.736	Valid
	KM2	0.835		
	KM3	0.846		
	KM4	0.880		
Perceived Quality	PK1	0.865	0.749	Valid
	PK2	0.840		
	PK3	0.838		
	PK4	0.872		
	PK5	0.878		
	PK6	0.899		
Brand Love	KC1	0.825	0.720	Valid
	KC2	0.829		
	KC3	0.844		
	KC4	0.844		
	KC5	0.857		
	KC6	0.871		
	KC7	0.836		
	KC8	0.851		
	KC9	0.863		
	KC10	0.865		
Brand Loyalty	LM1	0.869	0.732	Valid
	LM2	0.817		
	LM3	0.839		
	LM4	0.855		
	LM5	0.846		
	LM6	0.906		

Validity testing was conducted to ensure the measurement instruments accurately captured the constructs. Convergent validity assessed the extent to which items in each construct were positively correlated, while discriminant validity ensured that constructs were distinct from one another. Table 1 shows the results for all variables. For brand experience, 10 indicators had factor loadings ranging from 0.787 to 0.869, with an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.683, exceeding the threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014). Brand trust, with four indicators, showed factor loadings from 0.835 to 0.880 and an AVE of 0.736. Perceived quality, measured with six indicators, had factor loadings from 0.838 to 0.899 and an AVE of 0.749. Brand love, with 10 indicators, recorded factor loadings from 0.825 to 0.871 and an AVE of 0.720. Brand loyalty, with six indicators, had factor loadings from 0.817 to 0.906 and an AVE of 0.732. These results confirm that all indicators meet convergent validity criteria, indicating that the measurement items reliably represent their respective constructs.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Test

Items	Brand Experience	Brand Trust	Perceived Quality	Brand Love	Brand Loyalty
PM1	0.846	0.626	0.656	0.615	0.598
PM2	0.815	0.616	0.663	0.585	0.610
PM3	0.833	0.602	0.658	0.622	0.597
PM4	0.818	0.638	0.648	0.633	0.600
PM5	0.835	0.627	0.639	0.613	0.556
PM6	0.787	0.628	0.651	0.609	0.603
PM7	0.863	0.625	0.669	0.635	0.584
PM8	0.793	0.551	0.583	0.508	0.474

Items	Brand Experience	Brand Trust	Perceived Quality	Brand Love	Brand Loyalty
PM9	0.802	0.559	0.562	0.561	0.509
PM10	0.869	0.618	0.660	0.629	0.600
KM1	0.647	0.871	0.656	0.600	0.617
KM2	0.609	0.835	0.638	0.595	0.622
KM3	0.613	0.846	0.655	0.581	0.674
KM4	0.664	0.880	0.693	0.652	0.693
PK1	0.662	0.666	0.865	0.653	0.629
PK2	0.636	0.664	0.840	0.676	0.645
PK3	0.703	0.674	0.838	0.683	0.653
PK4	0.662	0.657	0.872	0.689	0.642
PK5	0.671	0.671	0.878	0.690	0.627
PK6	0.685	0.668	0.899	0.688	0.636
KC1	0.643	0.571	0.668	0.825	0.553
KC2	0.593	0.582	0.655	0.829	0.603
KC3	0.605	0.611	0.661	0.844	0.588
KC4	0.632	0.592	0.667	0.844	0.620
KC5	0.607	0.608	0.701	0.857	0.590
KC6	0.626	0.595	0.646	0.871	0.616
KC7	0.640	0.613	0.666	0.836	0.625
KC8	0.618	0.602	0.658	0.851	0.632
KC9	0.600	0.621	0.684	0.863	0.620
KC10	0.623	0.614	0.663	0.865	0.616
LM1	0.606	0.692	0.686	0.625	0.869
LM2	0.579	0.592	0.602	0.572	0.817
LM3	0.624	0.695	0.620	0.636	0.839
LM4	0.625	0.655	0.655	0.624	0.855
LM5	0.530	0.586	0.573	0.585	0.846
LM6	0.598	0.671	0.644	0.623	0.906

Discriminant validity was tested to verify that each construct was distinct from the others. Table 2 presents the cross-loading values, where each indicator's loading on its own construct is higher than its loadings on other constructs. All indicators exhibited cross-loadings above 0.70 for their respective constructs, confirming discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014). This ensures that brand experience (PM), brand trust (KM), perceived quality (PK), brand love (KC), and brand loyalty (LM) are distinct constructs, supporting the robustness of the measurement model (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The results indicate that the questionnaire effectively differentiates between the constructs, providing a solid foundation for hypothesis testing.

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Conclusion
Brand Experience (PM)	0.948	0.9488	Reliable
Brand Trust (KM)	0.880	0.918	Reliable
Perceived Quality (PK)	0.933	0.947	Reliable
Brand Love (KC)	0.957	0.963	Reliable
Brand Loyalty (LM)	0.927	0.943	Reliable

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR), with a threshold of >0.70 for both metrics. Table 3 shows that brand experience had a CA of 0.948 and CR of 0.956, brand trust had a CA of 0.880 and CR of 0.918, perceived quality had a CA of 0.933 and CR of 0.947, brand love had a CA of 0.957 and CR of 0.963, and brand loyalty had a CA of 0.927 and CR of 0.943. All values exceed the 0.70 threshold, confirming that the constructs are reliable (Hair et al., 2014).

These high reliability scores indicate that the measurement items consistently capture consumer perceptions of Bakpia 25 Jogja, enhancing confidence in the study's findings. The reliability results support the use of these constructs in further analyzing the relationships among variables.

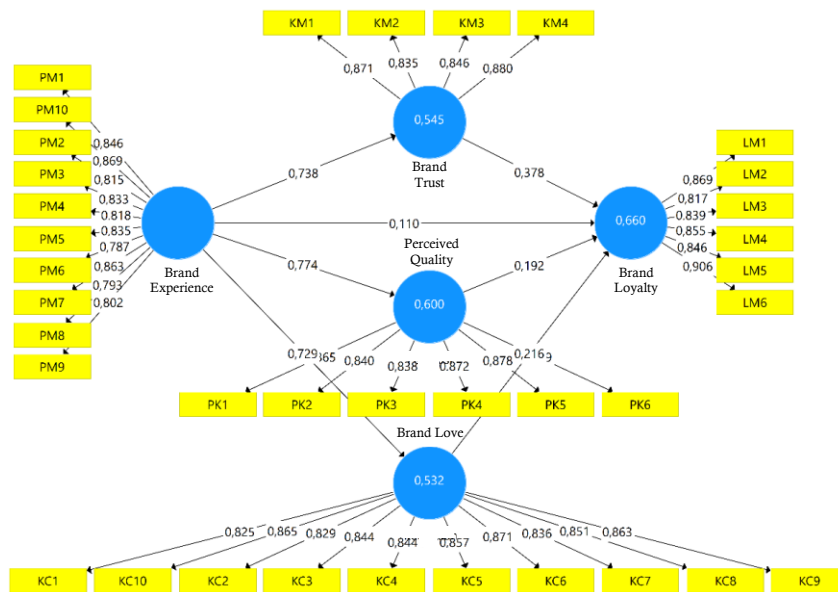


Figure 2. The Results of Full Model Analysis

The full model analysis, depicted in Figure 2, illustrates the structural relationships among the variables. The model's goodness-of-fit was evaluated using R^2 and Q^2 metrics. The R^2 value for brand loyalty was 0.672, indicating that 67.2% of the variance in brand loyalty is explained by brand experience, brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love. The Q^2 value of 0.489 suggests good predictive relevance, as it exceeds 0. Table 5 summarizes the results of the structural model. The path from brand experience to brand loyalty (H1) had a coefficient of 0.110 with a p-value of 0.088, indicating an insignificant effect; thus, H1 is unsupported. Brand experience significantly influenced brand trust (H2: $\beta = 0.738$, $p < 0.001$), perceived quality (H3: $\beta = 0.774$, $p < 0.001$), and brand love (H4: $\beta = 0.729$, $p < 0.001$), supporting these hypotheses. Brand trust (H5: $\beta = 0.378$, $p < 0.001$), perceived quality (H6: $\beta = 0.192$, $p = 0.001$), and brand love (H7: $\beta = 0.216$, $p < 0.001$) significantly affected brand loyalty, supporting these hypotheses. The mediating effects were also significant: brand experience to brand loyalty via brand trust (H8: $\beta = 0.279$, $p < 0.001$), perceived quality (H9: $\beta = 0.148$, $p < 0.001$), and brand love (H10: $\beta = 0.158$, $p < 0.001$), confirming partial mediation.

Based on Table 4, the structural model testing provided strong empirical support for the proposed framework, with 9 out of 10 hypotheses confirmed at high statistical significance ($p < 0.01$ or better). The analysis began with direct effects on brand loyalty. Brand trust emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.378$, $p < 0.001$; H2 supported), followed by brand love ($\beta = 0.216$, $p < 0.001$; H4 supported) and perceived quality ($\beta = 0.192$, $p = 0.001$; H3 supported). In contrast, brand experience showed no significant direct impact on brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.110$, $p = 0.088$), resulting in the rejection of H1.

Next, the model examined brand experience as an antecedent to the three mediators. Here, brand experience exerted powerful and significant influences: on perceived quality ($\beta = 0.774$, $p < 0.001$; H7 supported), brand trust ($\beta = 0.738$, $p < 0.001$; H5 supported), and brand love ($\beta = 0.729$, $p < 0.001$; H6 supported). The path to perceived quality was the highest coefficient in the model, followed closely by trust and love, highlighting brand experience as a core driver of both cognitive and emotional brand perceptions. The indirect effects were then assessed to test mediation. All three pathways from brand

experience to brand loyalty were statistically significant: through brand trust ($\beta = 0.279$, $p < 0.001$; H8 supported), perceived quality ($\beta = 0.148$, $p < 0.001$; H9 supported), and brand love ($\beta = 0.158$, $p < 0.001$; H10 supported). Given the non-significant direct path (H1) and the significant indirect paths, full mediation was confirmed; brand experience influences loyalty exclusively through the mediators.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis		Path Coefficients	P-Value	Results
Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty	H1	0.110	0.088	Unsupported
Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	H2	0.378	0.000	Support
Perceived Quality → Brand Loyalty	H3	0.192	0.001	Support
Brand Love → Brand Loyalty	H4	0.216	0.000	Support
Brand Experience → Brand Trust	H5	0.738	0.000	Support
Brand Experience → Brand Love	H6	0.729	0.000	Support
Brand Experience → Perceived Quality	H7	0.774	0.000	Support
Brand Experience → Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	H8	0.279	0.000	Support
Brand Experience → Perceived Quality → Brand Loyalty	H9	0.148	0.000	Support
Brand Experience → Brand Love → Brand Loyalty	H10	0.158	0.000	Support

These effect sizes provide deeper insight into the practical significance of the findings, showing that brand trust has the strongest influence among the mediators. The SRMR value of 0.067 indicates a good model fit, as it is below the 0.08 threshold, reinforcing the model’s validity (Hair et al., 2014). The results indicate that while brand experience does not directly influence brand loyalty, its effect is channeled through brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love. This suggests that for Bakpia 25 Jogja, creating positive sensory and emotional experiences is crucial, but these must translate into trust, quality perceptions, and emotional attachment to foster loyalty. The model’s explanatory power and predictive relevance, as shown in Figure 2 and supported by R^2 and Q^2 , confirm its robustness in explaining consumer behavior in the context of a traditional food brand. These findings set the stage for the discussion of their theoretical and practical implications.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that brand experience does not directly influence brand loyalty for Bakpia 25 Jogja (H1 unsupported, $\beta = 0.110$, $p = 0.088$), suggesting that consumers’ sensory, cognitive, and behavioral interactions with the brand alone are insufficient to foster loyalty. According to Pratama and Tunjungsari (2022), this lack of direct effect may stem from consumers’ preference for novelty, as Bakpia buyers often seek new flavors or brands, reducing the direct impact of experience on loyalty. This aligns with previous research indicating that in competitive markets, consumers prioritize variety over consistent brand interactions (Brakus et al., 2009). However, the significant effects of brand experience on brand trust (H5: $\beta = 0.738$, $p < 0.001$), perceived quality (H6: $\beta = 0.774$, $p < 0.001$), and brand love (H7: $\beta = 0.729$, $p < 0.001$) confirm that positive experiences with Bakpia 25 Jogja, such as its unique taste or cultural appeal, strongly shape trust, quality perceptions, and emotional attachment (Na et al., 2023). These findings highlight the importance of mediating variables in channeling brand experience

to loyalty, consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior's emphasis on attitudes and norms (Mabkhot et al., 2017).

The mediating roles of brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love are pivotal in this study. Brand trust significantly influences brand loyalty (H2: $\beta = 0.378$, $p < 0.001$), supporting Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), who argue that trust, built through reliable product performance, fosters consumer commitment. Similarly, Rahayu and Ruswanti (2024) found that trust in local food brands like Janji Jiwa enhances loyalty by ensuring consistent quality, a pattern evident in Bakpia 25 Jogja's case. Perceived quality also significantly affects loyalty (H3: $\beta = 0.192$, $p = 0.001$), aligning with Aquinia et al. (2020), who emphasize that consumers' perceptions of a product's reliability drive repeat purchases. Brand love significantly impacts loyalty (H4: $\beta = 0.216$, $p < 0.001$), corroborating Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), who note that emotional attachment strengthens consumer devotion, particularly for hedonic products like Bakpia.

The mediating effects of brand trust (H8: $\beta = 0.279$, $p < 0.001$), perceived quality (H9: $\beta = 0.148$, $p < 0.001$), and brand love (H10: $\beta = 0.158$, $p < 0.001$) further confirm that these variables channel the influence of brand experience to loyalty, consistent with Huang (2017) and Maduretno and Junaedi (2022). The strength of brand trust's mediating effect ($\beta = 0.279$) surpasses that of perceived quality and brand love, suggesting that building consumer confidence through consistent and reliable experiences is the most effective pathway to loyalty for Bakpia 25 Jogja. This finding underscores the critical role of trust in traditional food brands where authenticity and consistency are paramount considerations for consumers (Elnaggar & Bendary, 2017; Rahmat & Kurniawati, 2022).

The rejection of H1 suggests a key theoretical insight that the direct link between brand experience and loyalty may be weaker in contexts where consumers prioritize novelty, as seen in the Bakpia market, where new flavors and competitors abound (Li et al., 2021). This finding challenges the assumptions of the Theory of Planned Behavior, which posits that attitudes directly influence behavior, suggesting that mediators are critical in such contexts. The full mediation observed in this study indicates that brand experience must first translate into trust, quality perceptions, and emotional bonds before it can effectively drive loyalty. This sequential process aligns with the TPB framework, where attitudes (brand experience) influence behavioral intentions through normative and control beliefs (represented by trust, quality, and love) before manifesting in actual behavior (loyalty).

This study enriches the TPB by highlighting the mediating roles of trust, quality, and love in loyalty formation. Bakpia 25 Jogja should focus on enhancing trust through consistent quality, improving perceived quality with premium ingredients, and fostering brand love through cultural storytelling to build loyalty. These strategies can help local brands compete in dynamic markets.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that brand experience does not directly influence brand loyalty for Bakpia 25 Jogja, as evidenced by the rejection of H1, but significantly affects brand trust (H5), perceived quality (H6), and brand love (H7), which in turn drive loyalty (H2-H4). The findings highlight that consumers value the sensory and emotional experiences provided by Bakpia 25 Jogja, such as its distinctive flavors and cultural appeal, but these experiences must translate into trust, quality perceptions, and emotional attachment to foster loyalty. The significant mediating effects of brand trust (H8), perceived quality (H9), and brand love (H10) underscore the critical role of mediators in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in competitive markets where novelty-seeking behavior is prevalent. Notably, brand trust emerged as the strongest mediator, indicating that building consumer confidence through reliable and consistent experiences is the most effective pathway to loyalty for traditional food brands.

This study contributes to the Theory of Planned Behavior by demonstrating that brand experience influences loyalty indirectly through attitudinal and emotional mediators, offering a nuanced perspective on consumer behavior in the context of local culinary brands. Bakpia 25 Jogja should enhance trust by maintaining consistent product quality,

improve perceived quality through premium ingredients and innovative flavors, and foster brand love by emphasizing cultural storytelling. However, the study's reliance on purposive sampling limits its generalizability beyond Yogyakarta's consumers, and the cross-sectional design may not capture changes in loyalty over time. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to explore evolving consumer perceptions or replicate the study in other traditional food contexts to validate these findings. These strategies and research directions can help local brands like Bakpia 25 Jogja thrive amidst competition.

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