

Translating Brand Authenticity and Brand Experience Into Brand Loyalty: The Mediating Role of Brand Trust in Starbucks

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Abstract: In this growing and highly competitive market, coffee brands needed to start building a trustworthy relationship with their customers. This is important to make sure that brand has loyal customers, which is a major part of having a successful business. This research is done to understand some key factors, for example, brand authenticity, brand experience, brand loyalty, and it relates. Brand trust is also used as the mediating factor for each connection. This research utilizes a quantitative approach by disseminating online questionnaires to 260 respondents across Java. Data were later processed through PLS-SEM where the result shows that brand authenticity and brand experience correlates positively with brand trust and loyalty. Brand trust is also seen to hold a positive effect on brand loyalty through its mediation role. These findings show that customers' trust is essential to deliver brand authenticity and experience to customers' loyalty. Overall, this study emphasized the relevance of building trust to enhance brand loyalty in terms of coffee brands around Java.

Keywords: Brand Authenticity, Brand Experience, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

The food and beverage (F&B) sector in Indonesia has become one of the most dynamic and rapidly changing industries. This advancement happened because of the changes of consumer lifestyles, the growing consumerism, and the growing number of coffee shops in major cities in Indonesia. According to BPS (2023), there are 4.854.311 F&B businesses all around Indonesia, with Java–Indonesia's most populated and economically dominant island, contributing 3,371,609 F&B businesses alone. This set of data has shown how Java has been the center of national F&B activity in Indonesia. In terms of revenue, the coffee industry generated 998.70 trillion rupiah in 2023, with Java contributing 680.62 trillion rupiah to said revenue. This number reflects Java's strong economic capacity and dense consumer market. However, the Food & Beverages business has been involved with the everyday life of Indonesian coffee lovers. Cafes have gone beyond its economic factor, in fact, it has become the key of social spaces in Indonesian everyday life, functioning as "third places" where people study, work, socialize, and build community (Ferreira et al., 2021).

The continuous growth that has been happening within the Indonesia coffee industry has created an intense and competitive market. As highlighted by United States Department of

Agriculture (2025), national coffee consumption in the year 2024 and 2025 is expected to reach 4.8 million bags, which approximately converts into around 288,000 tons. This shows how the coffee market is facing steady growth every year. Market studies also highlight how Indonesia's coffee industry is expanding at an estimated 11% CAGR until 2030 (Redseer, 2024). Signalling strong consumer demand. However this data shows the possibility of a strong competition amongst the market. This fact indicates that businesses needed to start competing beyond product quality, but also on differentiation and customer retention.

Based on the *World Coffee Portal's Project Café East Asia 2024*, as reported by Kompas (2024), Indonesia is expected to have approximately 9,500 branded coffee outlets by 2029, which indicates that the F&B industry is moving towards a more vibrant and competitive market. Various coffee brands have become widely popular among consumers in Indonesia. Some big brands that are familiar to Indonesian coffee consumers are namely Kopi Kenangan, Fore Coffee, Starbucks, Point Coffee, Kopi Janji Jiwa, Kopi Tuku, Excelso, Kopi Soe, and Tomoro Coffee. These coffee brands are frequently chosen as favorites by Indonesian customers (GoodStats, 2024). This competitive market is further indicated by consumer preference data. According to GoodStats (2024), Kopi Kenangan came first with 40% consumers choosing said brands as their favorite coffee brand, which was later followed by Fore Coffee at 33%, and Starbucks with 30% consumers choosing the international brand. This set of data shows that local coffee brands such as Kopi Kenangan and Fore Coffee have successfully captured the attention of coffee lovers in Indonesia and has built a successful market amongst coffee lovers. Moreover, this also shows that Indonesia's local coffee brands could stand against long-established international competitors.

Starbucks is one of the most well known coffee brands globally. This brand has been operating in Indonesia since 2002 (Starbucks Indonesia, 2026). Currently, Indonesia is known to be on the seventh place in terms of having the most Starbucks stores in a country. Indonesia is noted to have 478 Starbucks outlets back in 2021, where this number grows in 2023 with 523 outlets. This data that shows the increasing Starbucks outlet across Indonesia indicates that Starbucks has maintained its position as the top coffee brands in Indonesia and continues to expand, even with the rise of local coffee brands in Indonesia (Databoks, 2021; Databoks, 2023). Starbucks' marketing strategies and product quality have also been proven effective, as evidenced by its position as the leading coffee shop in the global top 10 coffee brands list in 2025 (Coffeeness, 2025). Starbucks' competitiveness is closely related to its localization and glocalization strategies, which include adapting the coffee flavors to local tastes, establishing stores so that it could reflect the local culture, and making sure to use premium Arabica coffee from Indonesia. Starbucks also shows how they took their coffee quality seriously by taking part in investing in the farmer support centers in North Sumatra. Starbucks has also implemented sustainability initiatives through a program called the Greener Nusantara program. These efforts are fully impaled into Starbucks' branding and marketing communications, which later strengthen their consumer engagement and loyalty (Starbucks, 2025; Starbucks, 2026; Cahyani et al., 2021).

Starbucks is not the only coffee brand existing and thriving in Indonesia. There are two other coffee shops that dominate the F&B industry. These two coffee brands are Kopi Kenangan, a local coffee brand founded in 2017 (Kopi Kenangan, 2026), and Fore Coffee, another local coffee brand established in 2018 (Fore Coffee, 2026). These two brands have shown amazing growth these past years and by expanding internationally. This demonstrates the strong and steady steady expansion of the Indonesian coffee market. Rivalry in the Indonesian coffee industry is not only determined by the number of outlets that each brand has, but also by how brands could effectively differentiate themselves through their value creation, community engagement, sustainability initiatives, and localized experiences. These values are some of the indicators of how Starbucks' programs, including its investment in sustainable coffee sourcing, environmental campaigns, and community stores, can stay relevant in the

Indonesia competitive local market (Starbucks, 2026; Wijaya & Mursitama, 2023). Given the intense competitive market, international coffee brands such as Starbucks need to learn to adapt in order to maintain loyal customers. This is necessary to remain competitive in the industry. Existing literature highlights customer satisfaction as a key determinant of customer loyalty. This happened because satisfied consumers would tend to repurchase products and remain loyal to a particular brand. This growth in sales through loyal customers would later support company performance and boost said brand (Hongdiyanto et al., 2023). Customer loyalty is influenced by several factors, including brand authenticity, brand experience, trust, as well as brands' sustainability efforts. These sustainable initiatives are called the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, a program focusing on environmentally positive movements done by brands to create unforgettable experiences for customers (Cahyani et al., 2021).

The Green Theory and the Triple Bottom Line approach also suggest that CSR activities integrating economic, social, and environmental efforts can help businesses improve their brand reputation, increase consumer awareness, and enhance long-term customer loyalty (Wijaya & Mursitama, 2023). One example on how the green theory and the triple bottom line is being carried out could be seen through a program by Starbucks called Starbucks' Greener Nusantara. This program successfully illustrates how sustainability-driven initiatives not only align with the global corporate values but also positively impact customer engagement and view in the local context (Cahyani et al., 2021; Starbucks, 2026). Brand authenticity is an aspect that reflects how genuine and sincere a brand appears to consumers. Several studies report a positive relationship or significant effect between the brand authenticity and brand trust (Oenica & Maulida, 2024; Hendri & Abror, 2023; Nabih & Alhosseiny, 2024; Ghaffar & Zaidi, 2023). While brand authenticity is important to show how each brand has its own identity and value, brand experience reflects consumers' responses and interactions with a brand. Studies indicate that brand experience could positively influence brand trust, as the stronger and the more memorable an experience with a brand is, the more it could increase consumers' confidence in said brand (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022; Iqbal et al., 2023). Moreover, brand trust is an aspect that indicates consumers' confidence in a brand. This focuses on brands' reliability and intentions. Previous research consistently show that brand trust positively affect brand loyalty (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022; Atulkar, 2020; Kwon et al., 2020; Iqbal et al., 2023; Hendri & Abror, 2023; Deng, Wang & Li, 2024). Research indicates that brand trust connects the effect of brand authenticity on brand loyalty, this happened because brand authenticity heavily relies on trust to achieve brand loyalty (Hendri & Abror, 2023). This suggests that brand trust serves as a mediator between brand experience and brand loyalty, making sure that the experience and loyalty for each brand is in balance. This happens because if customers' good experience in a particular brand could be carried out insistenty, said experience could form a brand trust that later turns into brand loyalty. Studies show that consumer trust strengthens the link between engagement or experience to loyalty, which highlights the indirect role of brand experience through trust (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022; Iqbal et al., 2023).

A set of data uploaded by Top Brand Index data show that Starbucks does experience a gradual decrease in the number of consumers from 51.90% in 2018 to 40.40% in 2025. However, Starbucks still remains the leading coffee shop brand in Indonesia, with a much higher score than its competitors, such as The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf (13.90%) and Fore Coffee (7.30%) (Top Brand Award, 2025). This fact shows that strong branding ability is still very important in an increasingly competitive coffee shop market. The previous branding studies have mostly examined brand authenticity, brand experience, brand trust, and brand loyalty separately (Riefler, 2020; Le et al., 2025; Bezbaruah et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2025). However, limited attention has been given to how brand trust mediates the effects of brand authenticity and brand experience on brand loyalty (Harjadi et al., 2023). To address these gaps, the present study examines the relationships among the selected variables using an integrated model, with Starbucks in Indonesia as the research context.

Hypothesis

H1: Brand authenticity has an effect on brand trust.

H2: Brand experience has an effect on brand trust.

H3: Brand authenticity has an effect on brand loyalty.

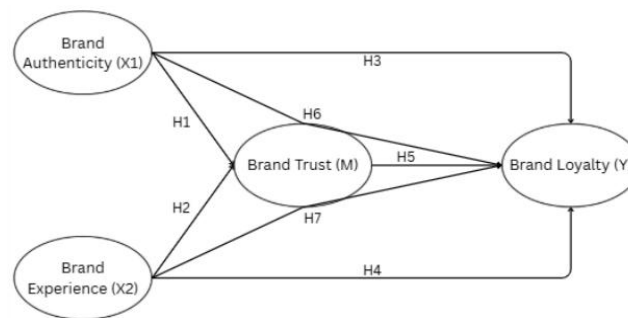
H4: Brand experience has an effect on brand loyalty.

H5: Brand trust has an effect on brand loyalty.

H6: Brand authenticity influences brand loyalty through brand trust.

H7: Brand experience influences brand loyalty through brand trust.

Drawing from the discussion and the hypotheses, this study is structured as follows:



Source: Researcher (2025)

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHOD

Quantitative research is a research method done by examining social phenomena using measurable variables and numerical data that can be analyzed statistically (Lim, 2025). The same research approach also employs structurally with instruments that can be measured to collect numerical data. This data is later assessed using statistical techniques to produce objective and generalizable findings. This study focuses on a population consisting of consumers who have made at least one purchase of a Starbucks coffee product, with the customers age from 18 to 44 and are residing in Java. The total number of individuals in the population remains unknown to the author. The age and demographic range was selected by the author because individuals within this age range (18 to 44) were shown to be the most active group in visiting coffeehouse chains and often engage with branded customer experiences. These facts make them suitable for this research that relates to brand authenticity, brand experience, brand trust, and brand loyalty.

This study uses the purposive sampling, which is a deliberate non-random technique where participants are selected based on specific qualities related to the criteria so that participants could address the research phenomenon (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). There are two criteria that need to be fulfilled in order to participate in research. The two criteria are: (1) must be a customer of Starbucks, meaning that participants must have an experience purchasing from Starbucks at least once, and (2) being within the targeted age of 18 to 44 and residing in the chosen location parameters. Data was gathered through an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms from September to December 2025. Each variables in this study were assessed using a four-point Likert scale that does not include a neutral midpoint, a point that represents the neutral answer such as (5). This was done to make sure that respondents are encouraged to choose a clear position on each question without any neutral answer. Previous studies suggest that when a neutral option is given, respondents would often choose a neutral answer because respondents feel tired, unsure, or unwilling to take a stance, and not because respondents actually feel accordingly. This can weaken the quality of the data (Koo & Yang,

2025; Kankaraš & Capecchi, 2025). Therefore, a four-point Likert scale was chosen to obtain more focused and meaningful responses that reflect respondents' actual evaluations.

The required sample size used in this research follows the guideline proposed by Hair et al. (2017). This method uses the "10-times rule." This rule stated that the minimum number of respondents should be ten times the total number of indicators used in the model. Remembering that this research uses 26 indicators, this means, there should be at least 260 participants participating in this research to meet said requirement. After data collection is done, the responses were later analyzed using SmartPLS 4. This is done to estimate the PLS-SEM model. PLS-SEM is a structural equation modeling method based on variance analysis that simultaneously evaluates the measurement models, which link indicators to latent constructs, and the structural model, which examines the relationships among constructs (Gudergan et al., 2025).

After the measurement model was confirmed to fulfill the required reliability and validity criteria, said measurement is later evaluated. Standardized path coefficients (β) are used to examine the earlier hypotheses. In which their statistical significance was assessed through a bootstrapping procedure, using t-values and p-values to determine the strength and significance of each structural path (Kante & Michel, 2023; Hair & Alamer, 2022). To examine how well the model explained the variance, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used. The coefficient of determination is used in order to indicate the proportion of variance in the original constructs explained by the predictor variables. When the R^2 shows values around 0.75, it indicates large or highly relevant explanatory power, while values around 0.50 reflect moderate explanatory power, and values close to 0.25 suggest a weaker explanatory level (Hair & Alamer, 2022). To provide a more careful estimation and reduce the risk of model overfitting, the adjusted R^2 was also considered in the evaluation of the structural model (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

Mediation analysis was also conducted to examine the relation between brand trust and brand authenticity, moreover, brand experience on brand loyalty. Mediation analysis is applied to examine how an independent variable influences a dependent variable through an intervening construct by separating the total effect into direct and indirect effects (Celli, 2022). The role of brand trust as mediation is later assessed through PLS-SEM. This could be done by pointing out the difference of specific indirect and direct effects, which was estimated through bootstrapping procedures. This method helps determine the identification of mediation types in three stages which are; full mediation, partial mediation, direct-only effects, or no mediation (Sarstedt & Moisesescu, 2024). This method is appropriate for examining complex relationships among variables and allows the examination of both direct and indirect effects within the structural model, which is suitable for this paper (Demir & Usak, 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Grand Theory

Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) explains customer satisfaction as a process in which individuals evaluate a product or service by comparing their initial expectations with its actual performance after use (Oliver, 1980; AlSokkar et al., 2024). Positive confirmation arises when actual performance meets or exceeds customers' expectations, resulting in customer satisfaction and repeat purchases. However, unmet expectations resulted in negative disconfirmation and dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1980; Yang et al., 2024). ECT consists of five core components: expectations, perceived performance, confirmation or disconfirmation, satisfaction, and continuance intention, which explain post consumer behavior and repurchase decisions (Obeid et al., 2024; Bhatnagar et al., 2024; Hien et al., 2024). In branding research, perceived performance can be reflected through brand experience, where authentic and consistent experiences confirm expectations and strengthen customer trust, thereby fostering brand loyalty, particularly in the coffee shop setting (AlSokkar et al., 2024; Leoparjo et al.,

2025). Therefore, Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) provides an appropriate grand theory for this study in explaining how brand experience and brand authenticity affect brand trust and ultimately shape brand loyalty

Brand Authenticity

Brand authenticity is related to how much consumers see a brand's honesty, realness, and how a brand maintains its character (Papadopoulou et al., 2023; Morhart et al., 2015). This means that the brand consistently acts according to its main values, keeps its promises, and maintains its heritage, quality, and originality even under any type of pressure (Bulmer et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2022). Authentic brands are also seen as brands with characters such as natural, sincere, unique, moreover are connected to cultural traditions and customer expectations (Park et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2022). This characteristic in a brand could build trust towards the customers, reduce customers' doubt, increase consumers' attachment to the brand, and increase loyalty and support (Bulmer et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2022). Brand authenticity is also reflected through several indicators, namely the brand's consciousness, endurance, and self-empowerment (Campagna et al., 2022).

Brand Experience

Brand Experience is defined as the total impression consumers have when engaging with a brand. This can be influenced by aspects such as the brand's packaging, or the way brands communicate with customers, and even how services are provided (Paramita et al., 2021; Hsu, 2023; Calderón-Fajardo et al., 2024). Brand experience includes how brands affect consumers in every way, beyond its functional and products. Brand experience influenced both consumers and non-consumers (Hsu, 2023). Findings from recent studies highlight that consumer experiences significantly affect how brands are assessed by consumers and how loyalty develops over time (Gao, 2024). This shows how strong and positive brand experiences are very important for a brand in order to manage repeated interactions with their consumers across all contacts (Calderón-Fajardo et al., 2024; Murshed et al., 2023). Brand experience is determined using four indicators namely sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual (Zha et al., 2020, as cited in Brakus et al., 2009).

Brand Trust

Brand trust represents the strength of belief and expectations which is placed by the consumers toward a brand. Through the eyes of the customers, trust could help reduce bad expectation or uncertainty when purchasing products or services (Bae et al., 2023; Li et al., 2026). It is shaped by both belief and intention: as a belief, trust arises from experience with a brand's competence, honesty, and value. These characteristics were expressed through consistent product performance, sincere communication, and responsible behavior toward stakeholders (Monfort et al., 2025; Bigné et al., 2023). As an intention, trust is reflected in consumers' readiness to trust a brand in uncertain situations. This characteristic could be a huge strength for brands when the brand's actions align with said good expectations, which include ethical and sustainable practices (Monfort et al., 2025; Uzir et al., 2025). In this context, brand trust is reflected through indicators associated to the brand's reliability and intentions (Li & Chen, 2025, as cited in Delgado-Ballester, 2004).

Brand Loyalty

In the F&B sector, brand loyalty is important role in determining business success. Brand loyalty is a characteristic that could be seen when a customer has strong intention and commitment to continue purchasing or engaging with the same brand over time, even when other alternatives or brands are available (Rather et al., 2022; Ragab et al., 2025). It reflects a consistent preference for one brand which is shown through repeated purchase and engagement (Casteran & Chrysochou, 2026; Tran et al., 2025). Brand loyalty emerges when consumers develop a sense of connection with a brand, as stronger brand identification increases the likelihood of continued loyalty and sustained relationships (Rather et al., 2022). Within the setting of business, loyal customers are prescribed as a person who tends to repurchase products repeatedly. This shows how brand loyalty is recognized as a key aspects for sustaining customers and lasting business success (Tran et al., 2025; Hongdiyanto & Liemena, 2021). In this study, brand loyalty is reflected through three indicators proposed by Vo and Mai (2024, as cited in Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996), namely behavioral loyalty, attitudinal loyalty, and willingness to pay a premium feature in said brand.

Table 1. Description of Survey Respondents

Age	Number of Respondent	Percentage
18–24	165	63.46%
25–34	69	26.54%
35–44	26	10.00%
Total	260	100%
Gender	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Female	163	62.69%
Male	97	37.31%
Total	260	100%
Occupation	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Student	81	31.15%
Employee	108	41.54%
Entrepreneur	62	23.85%
Homemaker	9	3.46%
Total	260	100%
Monthly Income	Number of Respondent	Percentage
< Rp 2,500,000	44	16.92%
Rp 2,500,000 – Rp 5,000,000	81	31.15%
Rp 5,000,001 – Rp 10,000,000	91	35.00%
> Rp 10.000.000	44	16.92%
Total	260	100%
Location	Number of Respondent	Percentage
East Java	108	41.54%
Central Java	17	6.54%
West Java	15	5.77%
DKI Jakarta	102	39.23%
Special Region of Yogyakarta	18	6.92%
Total	260	100%

The data shows the demographic result of Starbucks customers according to the online questionnaire. The data include age, gender, occupation, income level, and location of each respondents. There were 260 respondents who participated in this study. The results show that most respondents are between the age of 18–24 years (63.46%), followed by those aged 25–34 years (26.54%), indicating that the majority of respondents are young adults, where this group of people were the most actively engaged with the coffee shop culture and branded experiences. Looking through the gender aspect of said questionnaire, the table shows that female respondents are slightly higher in number with 62.69% in total, while male respondents reached 37.31% in total. When it comes to occupational factors, it is shown that 41.54%

respondents are stated to be employed, while 31.15% are students or unemployed. This shows that Starbucks is widely consumed by working individuals and young consumers. When it comes to monthly income, most people who participated confessed to be earning around Rp 5,000,001 to Rp 10,000,000 (35.00%), while 31.15% respondent earned Rp 2,500,000 to Rp 5,000,000 each month. This result indicates that most Starbucks customers come from the middle-income groups. Lastly, based on the respondents' location, most respondents claimed to be from East Java with 41.54%, while people who live in DKI Jakarta come second with 39.23%, reflecting Starbucks' strong presence in major urban and economic centers on the island of Java.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	Dimensions	Indicators	Item	Outer Loading	AVE	CR
Brand Authenticity	Conscious	The brand cares about its customers	BA1	0.762	0.651	0.841
	Longevity	The brand exudes a sense of tradition	BA4	0.781		
	Self-Empowerment	The brand adds meaning to people's lives	BA5	0.840		
		The brand connects people with what is important	BA6	0.842		
Brand Experience	Sensory	This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense	BE1	0.731	0.656	0.923
	Affective	This brand induces feelings	BE3	0.826		
		I have strong emotions for this brand	BE4	0.784		
	Behavioral	I engage in physical actions when I use this brand	BE5	0.744		
	Intellectual	This brand is action oriented	BE6	0.876		
		I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand	BE7	0.830		
Brand Trust	Reliability	This brand stimulates my curiosity	BE8	0.867	0.646	0.894
		[X]a is a brand name that meets my expectations	BT1	0.829		
		I feel confidence in [X] brand name	BT2	0.817		
	Intentions	[X] brand name guarantees satisfaction	BT3	0.767		
		[X] brand name would be honest in addressing my concerns	BT4	0.808		
		I could rely on [X] brand name to solve the problem	BT5	0.799		
		[X] brand name would make any effort to satisfy me	BT6	0.799		
Brand Loyalty	Behavioral	I am a loyal customer of brand X	BL1	0.859	0.629	0.882
	Attitudinal	I always choose the shopping platform of brand X whenever i have a shopping need	BL2	0.835		
		I will use brand X shopping platform in the future	BL3	0.760		
		I will recommend brand X to other consumers	BL4	0.716		
	Willingness to pay premium	Willing to buy if the price increases in the future	BL5	0.789		
		Willing to buy even if competitors offer lower prices	BL6	0.790		

Source: Researcher (2025)

Prior to testing the structural model, the measurement model is then evaluated to ensure the validity and reliability of the constructs. During this process, three indicators, BA2, BA3, and BE2 were removed from the model due to invalidity. This removal was important to be done in order to get the most accurate measurement and overall model fit. The remaining indicators were then reassessed, where the outcome are shown in Table 2. The result of further reassessment reveals that all remaining indicators have acceptable outer loading values, spanning from 0.716 to 0.876. These values indicate that each indicator is strongly related to its respective construct, confirming good indicator reliability.

Convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 2, all constructs have AVE values above 0.50, which include the Brand Authenticity (0.651), Brand Experience (0.656), Brand Trust (0.646), and Brand Loyalty (0.629). Each construct contributes to explaining more than 50% of the variance in its respective indicators, indicating that each variable is connected and related to the used indicators. Composite Reliability (CR) was used to evaluate internal consistency. All constructs are shown to be above the acceptable CR values of 0.70, varying between 0.841 to 0.923.

These outcome indicate that the indicators within each construct are consistent and reliable. More specifically, Brand Authenticity shows outer loading values between 0.762 and 0.842, with an AVE of 0.651 and a CR of 0.841, indicating good validity and reliability. Brand Experience demonstrates strong measurement quality, with outer loadings varying from 0.731 to 0.876, an AVE of 0.656, and a CR of 0.923. Brand Trust also shows satisfactory results, with outer loadings between 0.767 and 0.829, an AVE of 0.646, and a CR of 0.894. Likewise, Brand Loyalty has acceptable outer loadings covering from 0.716 to 0.859, along with an AVE of 0.629 and a CR of 0.882.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Result by Fornell Larcker Criterion

Variable	Brand Authenticity	Brand Experience	Brand Loyalty	Brand Trust
Brand Authenticity	0.807			
Brand Experience	0.519	0.810		
Brand Loyalty	0.598	0.573	0.793	
Brand Trust	0.438	0.387	0.494	0.804

Source: Researcher (2025)

In terms of discriminant validity, it was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion to ensure that each construct is different from the others. Under this criterion, discriminant validity is achieved if the square root of the AVE of a construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs. As presented in Table 3, the square root of the AVE values for all constructs are located on the diagonal and are higher than the corresponding inter-construct correlations. Brand Authenticity shows a square root of AVE value of 0.807, which is higher than its correlations with Brand Experience (0.519), Brand Loyalty (0.598), and Brand Trust (0.438).

This result indicates that Brand Authenticity is very distinct from the other constructs. Similarly, Brand Experience has a square root of AVE value of 0.810, exceeding its correlations with Brand Authenticity (0.519), Brand Loyalty (0.573), and Brand Trust (0.387). Brand Loyalty also demonstrates adequate discriminant validity, with a square root of AVE of 0.793, which is higher than its correlations with Brand Authenticity (0.598), Brand Experience (0.573), and Brand Trust (0.494). Lastly, Brand Trust shows a square root of AVE value of 0.804 and is greater compared to its correlations with the other constructs. Overall, these results confirm that all constructs meet the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Each construct measures a distinct concept and is significantly different from the other constructs in the model. Therefore, discriminant validity within the measurement model is confirmed.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis Path	Path Coefficient	t-statistics	p-value	Decision	Effect
H1 Brand Authenticity → Brand Trust	0.325	3.978	0.000	Supported	Direct
H2 Brand Experience → Brand Trust	0.219	3.755	0.000	Supported	Direct
H3 Brand Authenticity → Brand Loyalty	0.339	5.316	0.000	Supported	Direct
H4 Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty	0.310	5.118	0.000	Supported	Direct
H5 Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	0.225	3.838	0.000	Supported	Direct
H6 Brand Authenticity → Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	0.073	2.666	0.008	Supported	Indirect
H7 Brand Experience → Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	0.049	2.640	0.009	Supported	Indirect

Source: Researcher (2025)

The structural model was assessed to test the hypotheses developed in this study by analyzing the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. A hypothesis is considered supported when the p-value is below 0.05. The findings show that Brand Authenticity has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.325$, $t = 3.978$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. This indicates that the greater a brand authenticity is would lead to stronger brand trust amongst customers. Similarly, Brand Experience could be seen influencing Brand Trust positively ($\beta = 0.219$, $t = 3.755$, $p < 0.001$), which shows that hypothesis H2 is supported. Regarding Brand Loyalty, the findings indicate that Brand Authenticity has a high positive effect on Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.339$, $t = 5.316$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. Brand Experience also shows a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.310$, $t = 5.118$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H4. In addition, Brand Trust is found to have a significant positive influence on Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.225$, $t = 3.838$, $p < 0.001$), indicating support for H5.

The indirect effects were also examined to test the mediating role of Brand Trust. The results show that Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Brand Authenticity and Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.073$, $t = 2.666$, $p = 0.008$), supporting H6. Likewise, Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.049$, $t = 2.640$, $p = 0.009$), supporting H7. Through this calculation, it is safe to state that all proposed hypotheses are supported. These findings indicate that Brand Authenticity and Brand Experience influence Brand Loyalty through both direct effects and the role of Brand Trust, highlighting the important role of Brand Trust in terms of strengthening customer loyalty.

Table 5. R-Square

	R-Square Adjusted
Brand Trust	0.221
Brand Loyalty	0.486

Source: Researcher (2025)

Table 5 showcases the adjusted R-Square values for Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty. These values show how much of the variance in the dependent variables can be described through the research model used in this paper. The objective of PLS-SEM stays consistent, where the analysis focuses on maximizing the explained variance (R^2) of the dependent variables through the estimation of path coefficients (Abreu-Ledon et al., 2025). The adjusted R-Square value for Brand Trust is 0.221, indicating that 22.1% of the variation in Brand Trust is explained by Brand Authenticity and Brand Experience. In comparison, Brand Loyalty shows a higher adjusted R-Square value of 0.486, suggesting that 48.6% of its variation could be explained by Brand Authenticity, Brand Experience, and Brand Trust. The unexplained variance in both variables may be associated with factors that are not included in the present model. Based on the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2022) where R-Square values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 demonstrate strong, moderate, and weak explanatory power, the result shows

that brand Authenticity shows a low indicator with 0.221, while Brand Loyalty has a higher R-square value at around 0.486, it still shows a weak explanatory power. The relatively lower R-Square value for Brand Trust can be logically explained by the nature of trust that develops through cumulative and repeated interactions over time. Since the data collection was conducted at a single time point, the full effect of brand-related perceptions and experiences on trust may not be fully captured.

The first hypothesis shows that brand authenticity demonstrates a positive and significant effect on brand trust ($\beta = 0.325$, $t = 3.978$, $p < 0.001$). This result is relevant given that most participants are in the ages of 18–24 years (63.46%). This indicates a high amount of Generation Z who often experience brand trust in Starbucks. The data indicates that Gen Z would often develop trust in brands through brands' consistency, honesty, and their values. Gen Z chose to trust a brand with these characteristics because it shows how each brand communicates with their consumer sincerely. This also shows consistent brand behaviour is certainly important to form trust between customers and brands (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025). With the scope of Starbucks, consistent brand messaging and the direct view between brand values and actual practices strengthen consumers' confidence in the brand, which automatically would enhance brand's trust among customers. Therefore, the findings confirm that higher brand authenticity leads to stronger brand trust.

The second hypothesis confirms that brand experience shows a positive and significant impact on brand trust ($\beta = 0.219$, $t = 3.755$, $p < 0.001$). This finding aligns with the respondent profile, where most participants are employees and students (72.69%) with middle-income levels. This enables them to engage with Starbucks repeatedly and evaluate the brand based on direct experience. This repeated direct, especially positive experiences would later on help brands inflict trust on each customer. Positive experiences with brands could be seen through consistent product quality, comfortable store atmosphere, and reliable service. These could help consumers assess whether the brand is dependable, where dependency would later turn into brand trust. Previous studies suggest that enjoyable and consistent experiences play an important role in building trust, particularly among Generation Z consumers who prioritize overall experience and authenticity (Dang et al., 2025). Thus, the results indicate that better brand experience result in higher brand trust.

The third hypothesis regarding the relation between brand authenticity and brand loyalty is shown to be valid. This could be seen through the previous calculation where it shows that brand authenticity presents a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.339$, $t = 5.316$, $p < 0.001$). This calculation is relevant with how the sample is dominated by young consumers who tend to form loyalty based on value rather than transactional and economical factors. Previous studies stated that younger customers tend to see brands' authenticity through emotional connection, trust, and an emotional understanding with a brand rather than through price or availability (Rajput & Gandhi, 2025; Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025). When Starbucks stays loyal to their identity, consumers are more willing to initiate a stable repeated purchases, which shows customers' commitment to the brand. Overall, the findings confirm that brand authenticity directly strengthens brand loyalty.

The calculation also shows a positive result on the fourth hypothesis, indicating that brand experience has a positive and significant relation with brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.310$, $t = 5.118$, $p < 0.001$). This outcome is reliable with how the respondent distribution is concentrated in East Java and DKI Jakarta, which are the two highly competitive areas in Indonesia with lots of alternative coffee shop options. Remembering that Surabaya and DKI Jakarta are one of the most busy cities with an intensely competitive market, consumers rely more on past experiences to determine whether it is worth purchasing another product from the same brand. The calculation above shows brands should start focusing on experiences as positive experiences are important in order to create loyal customers. This claim is heavily supported as previous research also explains how enjoyable and memorable brand experiences increase

repeated visits and emotional attachment, which are key components of loyalty, especially to attract consumers living in a highly competitive F&B industry (Dang et al., 2025). Therefore, the findings confirm that positive brand experiences lead to stronger brand loyalty.

The fifth hypothesis confirms that brand trust also reports a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.225$, $t = 3.838$, $p < 0.001$). This result could be concluded given that most respondents are active and productive consumers who prefer reliable brands to reduce decision-making risk. Trust increases consumers' confidence in a brand and lowers the number of uncertainty for consumers, making them more willing to continue purchasing and even recommending the brand. Prior studies consistently identify trust as a central aspect in order to achieve customers' loyalty, especially among the customers aged 18 to 24 who often evaluate brands through credibility (Hana Ben, 2025). Thus, the results demonstrate that higher brand trust leads to stronger brand loyalty. Based on the mediation concept, this relationship can be classified as partial mediation, as brand authenticity influences brand loyalty both directly and indirectly through brand trust. Partial mediation is present when the independent variable continues to directly influence the dependent variable, while simultaneously having an indirect effect through the mediating variable (Ledermann et al., 2025).

The sixth hypothesis shows that brand trust significantly mediates the connection between brand authenticity and brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.073$, $t = 2.666$, $p = 0.008$). This result suggests that authenticity alone does not automatically create loyalty unless trust was built between customers and brands. Previous studies explain that authentic brand values are initially interpreted as trustworthy and honest. These values would then develop into trust before influencing loyal behavior (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025). This shows how brand trust needs to form through a brand authenticity before it finally turns into customers' loyalty. Therefore, the results do confirm that brand trust serves as a crucial factor in connecting brand authenticity into brand loyalty. This finding confirms a partial mediation effect, where brand authenticity influences brand loyalty both directly and indirectly via brand trust.

The final hypothesis also shows that brand trust significantly affects the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.049$, $t = 2.640$, $p = 0.009$). This relationship indicates a partial mediation, as brand experience continues to influence brand loyalty directly, while also having an indirect effect through brand trust. This indicates that positive brand experiences relate to loyalty when customers confidently hold a trust in a specific brand. Previous research suggests that consistent experiences help consumers evaluate brand reliability, which strengthens trust which later would encourage long-term customers loyalty. This is particularly important among Generation Z consumers who value experience quality and authenticity (Dang et al., 2025). In conclusion, the findings show that brand trust mediates the impact of brand experience on brand loyalty.

CONCLUSION

This study is done in the hopes to find out how brand authenticity and brand experience influence brand loyalty, with brand trust as a mediating variable. The focus of this study is a coffee brand called Starbucks, specifically the ones located in Java. The results show that both brand authenticity and brand experience significantly influence brand trust, indicating that consumers see brand honesty, consistency, and meaningful experiences as one of the most important aspects of their purchasing choices. According to these findings, trust emerges when consumers recognize Starbucks as a brand that repeatedly maintains its levels and offers fulfilling experiences. Although brand authenticity and brand experience directly improve brand loyalty, the results also show that trust plays an important role in strengthening the effect of brand authenticity on loyalty, and brand experience on customers' loyalty. This means that authenticity and experience are more effective in shaping loyalty when consumers feel the connection and trust in a certain brand. Through this research, it is known that trust has become the most major part in connecting consumers with brands such as Starbucks. This indicates that

Starbucks should continue on maintaining their brand identity through brand authenticity and experience. By doing this, Starbucks could build consistent trust amongst customers and brands, which would effectively boost the brand. This findings also encourages other Food and Beverage brands to start focusing on brand authenticity as product quality and discount alone wouldn't be as effective. This paper has successfully delivered useful insight for F&B brand managers and owners in order to build loyal and trustful customers.

This research is limited in various ways. One of the most specific limitations is how the respondents are concentrated in East Java and DKI Jakarta. It is heavily advised for future research to include other respondents from different regions, as respondents from West Java and Central Java are low in number. It is also important to involve a more diverse consumer profile in terms of occupation and age. Overall, this research results shows that brand loyalty is best developed when brands communicate in a clear and consistent way, allowing authenticity and trust to grow naturally through consumer experiences.

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