

Examining The Mediating Role Of Brand Satisfaction In The Relationship Between Brand Image, Brand Experience, And Brand Loyalty

Surnita Sandi Wiranata¹, Badawi², Agung Irawan³

^{1,2,3}Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon

E-mail: surnita.s@umc.ac.id; Badawi@umc.ac.id; agungirawan872@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of brand image and brand experience on brand loyalty mediated by brand satisfaction. The research was conducted quantitatively on 332 respondents drawn from a total population of 1,950 consumers using the Isaac sampling method. Data were collected through structured questionnaires consisting of 25 indicators measured using a five-point Likert scale. The analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach through SmartPLS software. The results reveal that brand image and brand experience significantly and positively affect brand satisfaction and brand loyalty. Moreover, brand satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between brand image, brand experience, and brand loyalty. These findings indicate that consumers' perceptions and experiences with a brand enhance emotional satisfaction, which in turn fosters long-term loyalty. The study contributes to filling the existing research gap by integrating perceptual and experiential branding dimensions within a mediated model. Practically, brand managers are encouraged to strengthen satisfaction through consistent brand image and engaging consumer experiences to build lasting loyalty. Future research is recommended to include moderating variables, such as brand trust or digital engagement, to enrich the current model.

Key words: Brand Image; Brand Experience; Brand Satisfaction; Brand Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital transformation and the creative economy has strengthened the strategic role of the fashion and cultural industries in supporting Indonesia's economic performance. Within this context, the batik industry holds dual importance as both a cultural heritage symbol and a commercial asset that contributes to regional employment and export growth (Lestari and Rachmawati 2025). Small and medium enterprises such as Batik Ninik Ichsan in Cirebon represent this creative capacity by preserving traditional craftsmanship while responding to contemporary consumer preferences and competitive pressures. These enterprises operate at the intersection of cultural authenticity and market adaptation, which requires careful brand management to sustain relevance.

Although Batik Ninik Ichsan benefits from historical reputation and product authenticity, the firm has experienced fluctuating sales and inconsistent levels of customer satisfaction in recent years. Preliminary observations suggest that while the enterprise maintains strong cultural positioning, it has not fully translated this identity into sustained customer engagement or memorable brand experiences that foster loyalty. This challenge reflects a broader issue faced by traditional SMEs in Indonesia, namely how to maintain brand loyalty through a compelling brand image and meaningful brand experience amid changing consumer behavior (Angelina and Nurlinda 2023; Philip, Pradiani, and Fathorrahman 2023).

Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) conceptualize brand experience as consumers' sensory, emotional, and cognitive responses to brand-related stimuli, which shape attachment and long-term loyalty. Subsequent empirical research confirms that brand experience and perceived quality influence loyalty indirectly through brand trust and customer satisfaction (Angeline 2023). Consistent with these findings, Lestari and Rachmawati (2025) and Prabawati and Handoyo (2023) demonstrate that brand image and brand experience enhance customer satisfaction, which in turn strengthens loyalty, particularly within competitive creative industries.

Despite this growing body of evidence, prior research has concentrated largely on large-scale or digitally oriented brands, leaving limited empirical attention to heritage-based SMEs such as batik producers (Hera and Fourqoniah 2023). Moreover, scholars have not extensively examined the mediating role of brand satisfaction in traditional sectors, where emotional attachment and cultural narratives significantly shape consumer loyalty (Saputra and Yulfiswandi 2023).

To address this gap, the present study investigates the influence of brand image and brand experience on brand loyalty, with brand satisfaction acting as a mediating variable, in the context of Batik Ninik Ichsan. This study contributes to the literature by focusing on a heritage-based SME within the creative economy and by integrating experiential and emotional branding perspectives with customer satisfaction theory. The findings aim to extend discussions on brand management in developing economies and to offer practical guidance for small creative enterprises seeking to build enduring customer relationships through culturally grounded and experience-driven branding strategies.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design to test the causal relationships among brand image, brand experience, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty among consumers of Batik Ninik Ichsan in Cirebon. The population consisted of approximately 1,950 customers. Using the Isaac sampling formula as cited by Hair et al. (2023), with a 5 percent margin of error, the study determined a sample size of 332 respondents. The researchers applied purposive sampling and included individuals aged 17 years or older who had purchased Batik Ninik Ichsan products at least once.

The researchers collected data through a structured questionnaire comprising 25 measurement indicators. Respondents evaluated each statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. To ensure measurement quality, the researchers assessed construct validity and reliability using Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted following the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2023), where Composite Reliability values above 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted values above 0.50 indicate satisfactory levels. The analysis employed SmartPLS 4.0. The researchers first evaluated the measurement model to confirm validity and reliability, and then tested the structural model by estimating path coefficients, R-square values, and statistical significance through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 demonstrates that all indicators fulfilled the validity criteria, with loading values between 0.709 and 0.815, exceeding the 0.70 threshold (Hair et al. 2023). This confirms adequate convergent validity across Brand Image (BI), Brand Experience (BE), Brand Satisfaction (BS), and Brand Loyalty (BL). BI3 showed the highest loading (0.815), while BL3 had the lowest (0.709), yet both remained within acceptable limits, indicating reliable measurement.

Table 1. Factor Loadings

Indicator	Loading Factors	Validity
BE1	0,745	Valid
BE2	0,812	Valid
BE3	0,794	Valid
BE4	0,798	Valid
BE5	0,788	Valid
BE6	0,797	Valid
BE7	0,747	Valid
BI1	0,778	Valid
BI2	0,787	Valid
BI3	0,815	Valid
BI4	0,779	Valid
BI5	0,782	Valid
BI6	0,768	Valid
BL1	0,722	Valid
BL2	0,760	Valid
BL3	0,709	Valid
BL4	0,753	Valid
BL5	0,765	Valid
BL6	0,727	Valid
BS1	0,797	Valid
BS2	0,781	Valid
BS3	0,785	Valid
BS4	0,791	Valid
BS5	0,763	Valid
BS6	0,775	Valid

(Source: SmartPLS, 2025)

As presented in Table 2, all constructs met the reliability and convergent validity criteria with Composite Reliability (CR) values ranging from 0.879 to 0.917 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. These results confirm that the measurement model possesses internal consistency and acceptable construct validity (Hair et al. 2023).

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Composite reliability (rho c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Experience	0,917	0,614
Brand Image	0,906	0,616
Brand Loyalty	0,879	0,547
Brand Satisfaction	0,904	0,611

(Source: SmartPLS, 2025)

The structural model results show that Brand Image and Brand Experience significantly affect both Brand Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty. Table 3 indicates that Brand Satisfaction has an R² of 0.334, categorized as moderate, while Brand Loyalty has an R² of 0.509, categorized as substantial (Hair et al. 2023). These results suggest that the proposed model has good predictive relevance, where brand perception and consumer experience significantly shape satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 3. R-Square Result

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Brand Loyalty	0,509	0,505
Brand Satisfaction	0,334	0,330

(Source: SmartPLS, 2025)

As shown in Table 4, all direct and indirect paths are positive and significant ($p < 0.001$). The strongest relationship occurs between Brand Image \rightarrow Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.441$, $T = 10.691$), followed by Brand Satisfaction \rightarrow Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.347$, $T = 8.603$), indicating that brand perception and emotional satisfaction have a dominant role in loyalty formation. Meanwhile, the indirect effect demonstrates that Brand Satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between Brand Image/Experience and Brand Loyalty, confirming that consumer satisfaction bridges cognitive and affective brand responses.

Table 4. Path and Mediation Result

Variable	Original sample	T statistics	P Values	Results
Brand Experience \rightarrow Brand Loyalty	0,259	5,730	0,000	H1 Supported
Brand Experience \rightarrow Brand Satisfaction	0,271	6,056	0,000	H2 Supported
Brand Image_ \rightarrow Brand Loyalty	0,294	7,320	0,000	H3 Supported
Brand Image_ \rightarrow Brand Satisfaction	0,424	9,662	0,000	H4 Supported
Brand Satisfaction \rightarrow Brand Loyalty	0,347	8,427	0,000	H5 Supported
Brand Experience \rightarrow Brand Satisfaction \rightarrow Brand Loyalty	0,094	5,486	0,000	H6 Supported
Brand Image_ \rightarrow Brand Satisfaction \rightarrow Brand Loyalty	0,147	5,964	0,000	H7 Supported

(Source: SmartPLS,2025)

The results reveal that both brand image and experience directly and indirectly contribute to consumer loyalty through satisfaction. This finding aligns with the empirical conclusion in the study of (Brakus et al. 2009 and Damayanti et al. 2024), which emphasize that consumer experience and perception synergize to strengthen brand–consumer emotional connections that foster loyalty. The role of satisfaction as a mediator also supports Hair et al. (2023), affirming its critical function in translating brand perception into behavioral commitment.

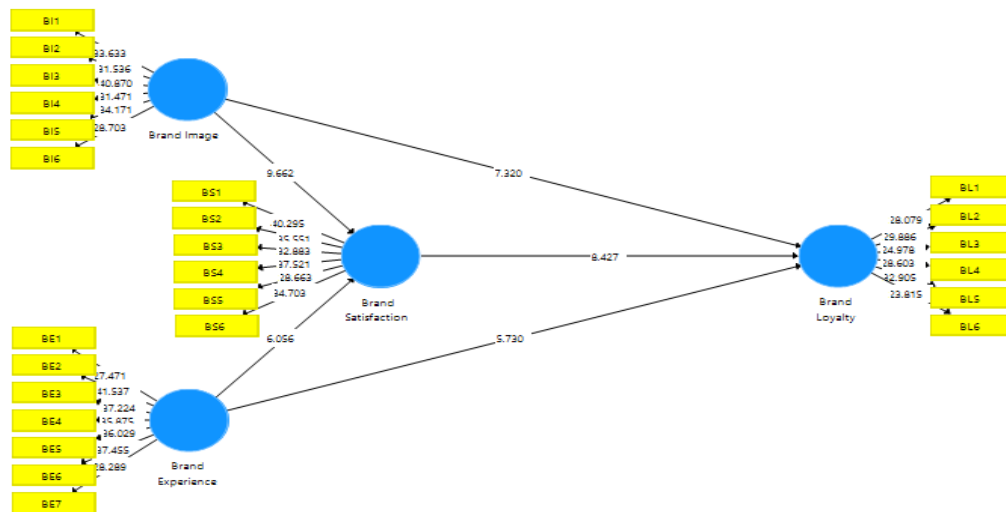


Figure 1. Hypotheses Measurement

Figure 1 presents the hypothesized measurement model illustrating the relationships among Brand Image (X1), Brand Experience (X2), Brand Satisfaction (Z), and Brand Loyalty (Y). Each construct is represented by reflective indicators (BI1–BI6, BE1–BE7, BS1–BS6, BL1–BL6), while the numeric values on the connecting paths indicate t-statistics derived from the bootstrapping analysis using SmartPLS. The results demonstrate that all paths are positive and significant, confirming that brand image and brand experience have direct effects on brand satisfaction and brand loyalty, with brand satisfaction also mediating these relationships. This figure visually supports the empirical validation of the research hypotheses, highlighting the strength and significance of each construct relationship within the proposed model.

The overall findings confirm that all indicators are valid and reliable, and the model exhibits strong explanatory power for Brand Loyalty. Brand Image and Brand Experience significantly influence Brand Satisfaction and Brand

Loyalty, while Brand Satisfaction acts as a partial mediator. This demonstrates that consumer perception and experience together enhance satisfaction, leading to stronger loyalty toward the brand.

CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that brand image and brand experience exert significant positive effects on brand satisfaction and brand loyalty, with brand satisfaction functioning as a partial mediator in these relationships. The findings demonstrate that when consumers hold favorable perceptions of a brand and engage with it at emotional and cognitive levels, their satisfaction increases and subsequently translates into behavioral loyalty. This result responds to the contemporary market condition in which firms must deliver not only functional benefits but also meaningful and memorable experiences to cultivate strong emotional bonds with consumers. In doing so, the study addresses a gap in prior research that has predominantly emphasized the direct link between brand image and loyalty, by integrating the mediating role of satisfaction and clarifying how consumer emotion connects perception and loyalty (Manyanga, Makanyeza, and Muranda 2022; Mostafa and Kasamani 2021; Urdea and Constantin 2021). Furthermore, the findings highlight that in increasingly competitive and experience-oriented markets, brand experience strengthens satisfaction and loyalty through affective engagement, supporting the shift from transactional branding toward experiential approaches in which emotional resonance and sensory interaction shape loyalty formation. By combining perceptual elements such as brand image with experiential dimensions within a mediated framework, this study advances experiential branding literature and offers practical implications for managers to prioritize satisfaction as a central mechanism for customer retention. Overall, the research contributes to theory and practice by demonstrating that satisfaction operates as an emotional mechanism linking perception and experience to loyalty, consistent with contemporary evidence on affective processes in consumer–brand relationships (Ahlbom et al. 2023; Alzoubi et al. 2022; ZAID and PATWAYATI 2021), and it encourages future research to examine moderating factors such as digital engagement, brand trust, and cultural influences to refine understanding of how satisfaction shapes loyalty across diverse market contexts..

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