Research Article

Brand Experience as a Driver of Consumer Loyalty:The Mediating Roles of Perceived Quality and Brand Trust in Digital Beauty Platforms

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Abstract. The high bounce rate of the SOCO by Sociolla app, reaching 57.8%, and the decline in user engagement indicate a serious challenge in maintaining consumer loyalty amidst highly dynamic digital platform competition. In an era when consumers have many alternatives and high expectations for digital experiences, building meaningful relationships through brand experience is crucial. Brand experience encompasses not only functional interactions but also emotional and sensory dimensions that shape consumer perceptions of service value and quality. This study aims to analyze the influence of brand experience on brand loyalty by including perceived quality and brand trust as mediating variables. A quantitative approach was used through the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method on 430 active SOCO app users. The results showed that brand experience significantly influences brand loyalty directly (t=2.195, p=0.014) and also indirectly through perceived quality (t=2.457, p=0.007) and brand trust (t=5.563, p=0.000). Overall, this model explains 62.7% of the variance in brand loyalty. These findings underscore the importance of experiential marketing strategies in increasing customer satisfaction, building trust, and maintaining long-term loyalty. A strong brand experience can create deep emotional connections, strengthen perceptions of service quality, and foster brand trust, particularly in the digital beauty sector, which relies heavily on image and user convenience. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of brand loyalty models in the digital environment. Practically, the results of this study provide guidance for digital beauty app managers like SOCO to design more immersive, personalized, and consistent user experience strategies to increase customer retention and strengthen their competitive position.

Keywords: Brand experience, brand loyalty, Brand Perception, Consumer Loyalty, perceived quality

1. INTRODUCTION

The cosmetic industry in Indonesia holds significant potential for continuous growth. This is supported by the demographic dominance of young generations who tend to be more concerned about appearance, presenting a promising market for economic development (Rahman & Rahayu, 2025) . Indonesia recorded a 7% increase in beauty product usage in 2021, following a 5.9% growth in 2020. This trend is expected to continue in line with product innovations and shifting consumer behavior. The shift to online shopping has been accelerated by the pandemic, changing consumer buying behavior to prefer digital platforms that offer convenience, efficiency, and a wider range of product information (Widodo et al., 2024). Increasing purchasing power and the rapid development of social media have also made digital platforms a powerful marketing tool for beauty brands to reach their audiences more effectively (Pancaningsih et al., 2022).

As the beauty industry continues to evolve, digitalization has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behavior, particularly shifting from offline to online shopping. The internet plays a major role in this transformation, enabling consumers to shop more efficiently (Rahayu & Syam, 2021). The rapid growth of ecommerce in Indonesia presents opportunities for businesses, including beautytech platforms, to adapt and thrive. As of mid 2023, there were more than 1,010 registered beauty companies in

the country (Limanseto, 2024), indicating heightened competition driven by lifestyle changes and consumer awareness of cosmetic products.

Social Bella Indonesia launched Sociolla in 2015 as a B2C beauty e-commerce platform that has partnered with over 150 domestic and international brands (Maulana, 2019). Sociolla not only operates online but also provides offline stores with unique features like the Wall of Mask, Makeup Bar, and Click & Collect services via the SOCO app. These innovations offer a seamless customer journey, enhancing the overall brand experience and fostering deeper consumer interaction.

A key issue in marketing and customer behavior is brand loyalty, reflecting the emotional attachment of customers to a brand (Wardhana, 2024). A successful brand can maintain longterm relationships by consistently meeting or exceeding customer (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022). Repeat purchases are a strong indicator of loyalty (Akbar, 2024) and brand experience is essential for fostering this kind of commitment. Brand experience, defined as consumers' past interactions with a brand, allows them to connect with the brand's personality (Aditya Revaldi, 2022) which significantly influences their perception of quality and trust (Aaker, Jacobson, 1994; Zeithaml, 1998).

The customer's overall assessment of the product's perfection is reflected in its perceived quality, often influencing loyalty through satisfaction and product differentiation (Yunaji & Dwiridotjahjono, 2023). Alongside perceived quality, brand trust is also crucial in shaping consumer decisions. Negative evaluations pertaining to inaccurate tracking systems and delayed answers may weaken brand loyalty by lowering brand trust (Samarah et al., 2021). Thus, maintaining trust through positive brand experiences is essential.

While brand experience has been increasingly studied in marketing literature, existing research has largely focused on general e-commerce or offline retail contexts. Only a few studies have specifically explored how brand experience operates in the setting of digital beauty applications, particularly in Indonesia. Moreover, there is limited understanding of how brand experience translates into brand loyalty through internal psychological mechanisms such as perceived quality and brand trust. This indicates an absence in the research concerning the intermediary routes that connect experience and loyalty within beautytech platforms.

This study makes use of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) to fill this gap theoretical model. This framework suggests that outside influences (like brand interaction) impact the internal mechanisms of the consumer (For example, brand trust and perceived value), which then result in actions taken by the consumer (e.g., brand loyalty). The S-O-R model offers a way to comprehend how individuals mentally process their experiences in digital environments and emotionally by users, and how these processes drive loyalty in highly competitive digital ecosystems.

Despite the growing attention to brand experience, few studies have investigated its role in beautytech applications with perceived quality and brand trust as mediators, particularly in Indonesia. This research examines the relationship between customer loyalty and brand experience, as well as the functions of perceived quality and brand trust as intermediary factors. Additionally, it seeks to reconsider whether brand trust actually mediates the connection between brand experience and brand loyalty, or whether specific conditions make the mediation effect significant. The findings are expected to enrich the current understanding of brand strategy, particularly in the increasingly digitalized beauty industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. Brand Experience

A consumer's internal reactions sensory, emotive, cognitive, and behavioral that are triggered by brand related stimuli including packaging, communication, and surroundings are referred to as brand experience (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022; Brakus et al., 2009). Longterm brand loyalty and customer happiness can both be impacted by a positive brand experience. Positive experiences enhance emotional bonds with the brand and encourage repeat purchases (A'la et al., 2020; Febrianti & Susila, 2025). Moreover, it is considered a key predictor of how customers perceive the brand and whether they will trust and remain loyal to it over time (Rahmadhany & Amalia, 2023).

2.2. Brand Loyalty

A customer's dedication to continuously repurchasing or using a preferred product or service is known as brand loyalty, driven by emotional attachment and satisfaction (Kassim et al., 2021).Dedicated customers are not as affected by fluctuations in prices changes and marketing efforts by competitors (Wiastuti & Sigar, 2021). This loyalty is often the result of favorable brand experiences and is reflected in repeated purchase behavior and positive word of mouth (Yolanda & Keni, 2022).Maintaining high levels of loyalty is crucial for sustaining competitive advantage and longterm profitability.

2.3. Perceived Quality

Consumers' personal assessment of a product's overall quality or supremacy regardless of its actual performance, is known as perceived quality (Febrianti & Susila, 2025; Zeithaml, 1998). It reflects the consumer's evaluation based on brand reputation, prior experience, and emotional impressions rather than technical specifications (Li et al., 2020). High perceived quality can increase brand preference, influence trust, and drive loyalty (Masitoh & Kurniawati, 2023). It also serves as a signal of value that distinguishes a brand from its competitors (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022).

2.4. Brand Trust

Customers' faith in a business's ability to consistently fulfill its commitments and put their needs first is reflected in brand trust (DAM, 2020). Trust minimizes the perceived risk of purchasing and plays a fundamental role in forming lasting brand relationships. A trustworthy brand enhances consumer satisfaction and encourages loyalty by reducing uncertainty (Rachmad & Martadilla, 2023). Moreover, trust is often built through consistent positive experiences and is reinforced by the brand's reputation and perceived integrity (Masitoh & Kurniawati, 2023).

2.5. The Relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Loyalty

Within the social marketing process, people or groups create offerings and trade valuable products with one another in an effort to fulfill their wants and demands (Kotler et al., 2022). Developing brand experience and brand loyalty requires effective marketing. The interaction between customers and brands through social media platforms allows users to gain deeper experiences with brands, which can significantly influence customer perceptions, trust, and loyalty (Widodo et al., 2025).A positive brand experience not only increases loyalty but also affects consumers' perceptions of product quality. Customers' perceptions of the brand's value increase with the quality of the encounter. Interactions that are consistent and satisfying enhance consumers' belief in the reliability and superiority of the product (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021). This supported by research from Gultom & Hasibuan (2021), R. Rahmat & Marso (2020) and W. M. Rahmat & Kurniawati, 2022) which discovered that brand loyalty is positively and significantly impacted by brand experience.

H1 Brand Experience has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty
The Relationship between Brand Experience and Perceived Quality

Brand experience includes the sensations, feelings, and interactions experienced by consumers when engaging with a brand. These experiences enrich the consumer's knowledge and contribute to their perception of quality (Farrellio & Djakasaputra (2025). A positive experience not only builds emotional attachment but also enhances perceived quality, even beyond the objective performance of the product Akoglu & Özbek (2022). Empirical studies by Febrianti et al. (2025), W. M. Rahmat & Kurniawati (2022), Nathasayana & Slamet (2023), and confirm that brand experience significantly influences perceived quality.

H2 Brand Experience has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Quality
The Relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Trust

Customers' assessments of a brand's performance are influenced by their experiences. Positive experiences lead to higher brand trust, while negative experiences diminish brand image (Masitoh & Kurniawati, 2023; Yobeanto, 2020). Consistently enjoyable experiences foster trust in the brand and encourage continued usage. This aligns with the results by Artiniwati et al., (2022) on Scarlett Whitening and by Akoglu & Özbek (2022), who discovered a noteworthy connection between brand experience and brand trust.

H3 Brand Experience has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust

The Relationship between Perceived Quality and Brand Loyalty

Perceived quality influences consumer commitment, satisfaction, and purchasing intentions. It plays a pivotal role in shaping brand loyalty. The higher the perceived quality, the greater the likelihood that customers will stick with the brand. Research by Andik & Rachma, (2022), Akoglu & Özbek (2022), Ardyansyah et al. (2022), Hadinata (2020) and, Fajariah et al. (2016) supports the Ardyansyah et al., (2022) significant influence of perceived quality on brand loyalty.

H4 Perceived Quality has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty

The Relationship between Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty

Among the primary factors affecting brand loyalty is brand trust. It shows how secure a customer feels when interacting with the brand and belief that it acts in their best interest (Keni & Winnie, 2020; Kwon et al., 2020). Trust reduces perceived risk and encourages repeat purchases (Khan et al., 2023; Nuzula Agustin et al., 2023). Research by Akoglu & Özbek (2022), W. M. Rahmat & Kurniawati (2022), and Samarah et al., (2021) found a positive and significant relationship between brand trust and brand loyalty.

H5 Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty

The Mediating Role of Perceived Quality in the Relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Loyalty

A brand's visual, emotional, social, and cognitive interactions are all included in the brand experience (Tjokrosaputro, 2020). Percived quality is formed from consumers' subjective evaluations, based on these experiences. Enhancing perceived quality through a favorable brand experience strengthens loyalty (R. Rahmat & Marso (2020). Perceived quality serves as an important cognitive evaluation that translates emotional and experiential responses into more stable brand judgments. According to Zeithaml (1998) perceived quality reflects a consumer's overall assessment of excellence or superiority, which heavily influences future purchase intentions. When consumers have favorable brand experiences such as intuitive navigation, aesthetic appeal, and helpful service they tend to infer that the brand offers high quality. This inference becomes a rational foundation for loyalty. In this way, perceived quality functions as the cognitive link between emotional engagement (experience) and behavioral commitment (loyalty). Studies by Gultom & Hasibuan (2021) and Akoglu & Özbek (2022) discovered that a relationship between brand loyalty and brand experience is mediated by perceived quality.

H6 Brand Experience has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty through Perceived Quality

The Mediating Role of Brand Trust in the Relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Loyalty

According to (Kotler et al., 2022), brand loyalty is formed through experiences and emotional rational responses such as trust. Celyn & Hasan (2023) and Akoglu & Özbek (2022) discovered that the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty is mediated by brand trust. Further support is provided by Ang & Keni (2021) who found that brand trust significantly mediates this relationship for Adidas in Jakarta.

H7 Brand Experience has a positive and significant effect on Brand Loyalty through Brand Trust

S-O-R

The stimulus-organism-response framework, which holds that external stimuli (like brand experience) impact internal states (like perceived quality and trust), which in turn produce behavioral responses (like loyalty), forms the basis of this study's conceptual model. According to McQuail in (Nurfitrianah & Ekowati, 2023) the way individuals respond to stimuli depends on how they cognitively and emotionally process the information. The stimulus that elicits perceptions and trust in this situation is brand experience, which mediates the consumer's reaction in the form of brand loyalty.

According to the aforementioned rationale and after compensating for earlier research, Figure 1 below illustrates the connection between Brand Experience and Brand Loyalty via Perceived Quality and Brand Trust.
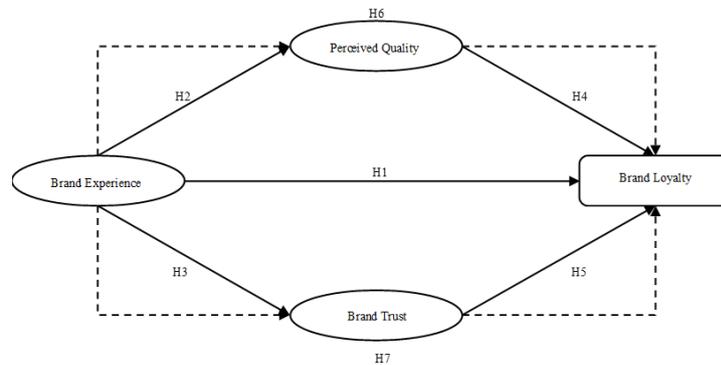
Figure 1 Research Framework

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal method. A quantitative approach enables researchers to generate measurable information, as it is based on data to draw conclusions (Hardani, 2020). The measurement technique in this study employs a Likert scale, which is commonly used to assess individuals' or groups' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of social phenomena (Sugiyono, 2023).

The population in this study consists of residents of Bandung who are familiar with and have used the SOCO by Sociolla application to purchase cosmetics. The sampling technique used combines probability and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected, while in non-probability sampling, not every individual has that same opportunity (Sugiyono, 2023). In this research, the sampling is purposive, meaning that respondents are selected based on specific criteria, namely those who reside in Bandung, belong to Generation Z, and have used the SOCO application.

The data used in this study are primary data, obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to users of the SOCO application who meet the sampling criteria. Secondary data are also utilized to support and enrich the interpretation of the primary data.

To analyze the data, this study uses the Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) method with the help of SmartPLS software. SEM-PLS is chosen because it is suitable for complex models involving multiple variables and mediation paths, does not require normally distributed data, and is effective for exploratory studies with moderate sample sizes. The analysis is divided into two stages: testing the outer model, which assesses the validity and reliability of the indicators, and testing the inner model, which evaluates the relationships between latent variables.

In compliance with academic standards, all procedures related to sampling and data analysis are described clearly and concisely (Ghozali, 2021; Hair et al., 2021).

4. RESULT

The respondents' demographic profile is shown in Table 1, and it shows that the majority of them were female. (60.9%, n = 262), while male respondents accounted for 39.1% (n = 168). This indicates that most SOCO by Sociolla users in Bandung are women. Regarding age distribution, most respondents were between 25–28 years old (48.8%, n = 210), followed by those aged 17–20 years (26.5%, n = 114), and 21–24 years (24.7%, n = 106). In terms of domicile, respondents were relatively evenly distributed across all five regions of Bandung: Central Bandung (20.2%, n = 87), North Bandung (20.0%, n = 86), South Bandung (20.0%, n = 86), East Bandung (20.0%, n = 86), and West Bandung (19.8%, n = 85). Occupationally, most respondents were employees (44.7%, n = 192), followed by students (31.6%, n = 136), and entrepreneurs or self-employed individuals (23.7%, n = 102). Regarding earnings, the majority of those surveyed made between IDR 3,000,001 and IDR 7,000,000 (67.4%, n = 290), while 27.2% (n = 117) earned less than IDR 3,000,000, and 5.3% (n = 23) had monthly incomes ranging from IDR 7,000,001 to IDR 10,000,000.

4.1. Validity Test

Convergent validity refers to the extent to which indicators of a particular construct are highly correlated. It can be evaluated by looking at the the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings. (Ghozali, 2021) state that if the AVE value is greater than 0.5

and each item has a factor loading greater than 0.5, the construct is said to have excellent convergent validity. In Table 2, the AVE values are shown.

Table 1. Demographic Respondents

Characteristics	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	168	39.1%
	Woman	262	60.9%
Age	17 - 20	114	26.5%
	21 - 24	106	24.7%
	25 - 28	210	48.8%
Domicile	Bandung Utara	86	20%
	Bandung Selatan	86	20%
	Bandung Timur	86	20%
	Bandung Barat	85	19.8%
	Bandung Tengah	87	20.2%
Job	Housewife	0	0%
	Employee	192	44.7%
	Student	136	31.6%
	Entrepreneur	102	23.7%
Income	< 3.000.000	117	27.2%
	3.000.000 - 7.000.000	290	67.4%
	7.000.001 - 10.000.000	23	5.3%
	> 10.000.000	0	0%

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Table 2. Average Variant Extracted (AVE)

Latent Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Experience	0.683
Brand Loyalty	0.649
Perceived Quality	0.638
Brand Trust	0.688

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Table 2 displays the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each research construct. Perceived Quality (0.638), Brand Trust (0.688), Brand Experience (0.683), and Brand Loyalty (0.649) all had AVE values above the suggested cutoff of 0.5. According to these findings, each construct has satisfactory convergent validity, it indicates that the corresponding latent variable accounts for over 50% of the indicators' variance (Ghozali, 2021). This demonstrates the reliability and correctness of the measurement model used in the study.

4.2. Reliability Test

The internal consistency of measurement instruments is assessed through reliability testing. A dependable instrument measures what it is supposed to measure with precision, accuracy, and consistency. Composite reliability, which represents a construct's overall reliability, can be used to evaluate reliability in the context of PLS-SEM. If a construct's composite reliability value is more than 0.60, it is deemed dependable. All of the study's variables, as indicated in Table 4, had composite reliability values more than 0.60, demonstrating the validity and consistency of the assessment tools employed across the examined domains. Reliablility test has been analyzed as below in Table 3.

4.3. R-Square

The coefficient of determination, also referred to as R-Square, quantifies how well the statistical model in use can explain variance in the dependent variable. Hair et al., (2021) state that an R-Square value between 0.50 and 0.75 is considered moderate and shows that the model can appropriately explain the endogenous variable. The findings of the tests that were run are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 3. Reliability test results

Latent Variable	Composite Reliability
Brand Experience	0.945
Brand Loyalty	0.902
Perceived Quality	0.941
Brand Trust	0.952

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Table 4. R-Square

Dependent Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Brand Loyalty (Y)	0.627	0.625
Brand Trust (Z2)	0.421	0.419
Perceived Quality (Z1)	0.586	0.585

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Table 4 shows that the study's R-Square value is 0.627. This suggests that perceived quality, brand trust, and brand experience all have an impact on 62.7% of brand loyalty. The remaining 37.3%, however, is impacted by additional variables not included in the model and not investigated in this investigation.

4.4. Hypothesist Test

This test aims to determine the path coefficients within the structural model, with the main goal of evaluating the significance of each relationship and testing the proposed hypotheses. Direct and indirect effects are the two categories of hypothesis testing used in this study. The findings of the hypothesis testing for both kinds of effects, which were obtained using the SmartPLS 4.0 program, are shown in the path coefficient diagrams below (see Figure 2).
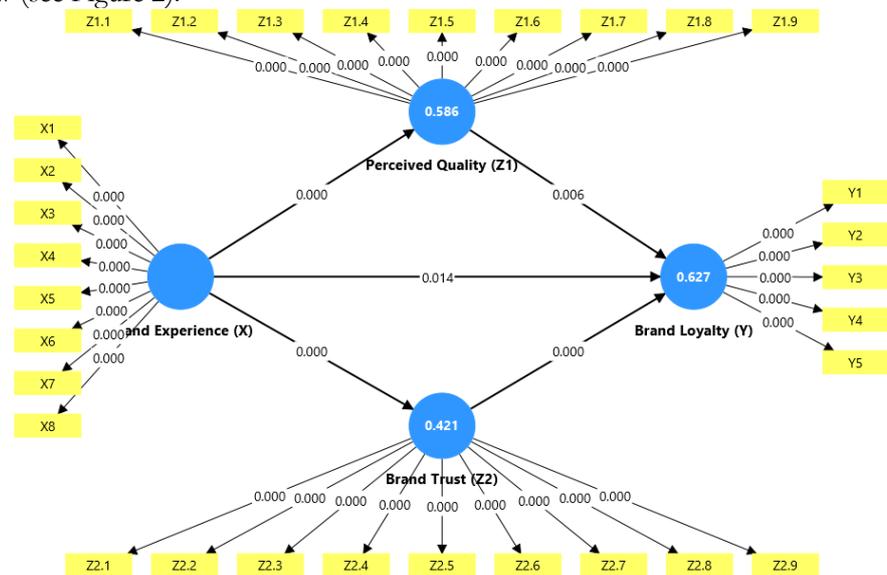
Figure 2. Path Coefficient Diagram
Source: Processed Data (2025)

Table 5. Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Decision
Brand Experience (X) -> Brand Loyalty (Y)	0.180	2.195	0.014	Accepted
Brand Experience (X) -> Perceived Quality (Z1)	0.766	20.444	0.000	Accepted
Brand Experience (X) -> Brand Trust (Z2)	0.649	13.418	0.000	Accepted
Perceived Quality (Z1) -> Brand Loyalty (Y)	0.203	2.538	0.006	Accepted
Brand Trust (Z2) -> Brand Loyalty (Y)	0.493	6.592	0.000	Accepted
Brand Experience (X) -> Perceived Quality (Z1) -> Brand Loyalty (Y)	0.155	2.457	0.007	Accepted
Brand Experience (X) -> Brand Trust (Z2) -> Brand Loyalty (Y)	0.320	5.563	0.000	Accepted

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Table 5 displays the indirect connection between the independent and dependent variables in the study. Through Perceived Quality, the mediation study validates a statistically significant indirect association between Brand Experience and Brand Loyalty (t = 2.457, p = 0.007), confirming H6. Likewise, Brand Experience confirms H7 by indirectly influencing Brand Loyalty through Brand Trust (t = 5.563, p = 0.000). These results imply that perceived quality and brand trust serve as effective mediators in the relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

The outcomes of the direct effect hypothesis testing are also presented in Table 6. The analysis using SmartPLS shows that Brand Experience significantly affects Brand Loyalty (t = 2.195, p = 0.014), Perceived Quality (t = 20.444, p = 0.000), and Brand Trust (t = 13.418, p = 0.000), confirming H1, H2, and H3, respectively. In addition, Perceived Quality significantly affects Brand Loyalty (t = 2.538, p = 0.006), supporting H4, and H5 is confirmed by the substantial relationship between Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty (t = 6.592, p = 0.000). These results support the structural model and show how crucial brand related perceptions are in influencing customer loyalty.

4.5. Discussion

H1 is accepted since the results of the first hypothesis test show that Brand Experience positively and statistically significantly affects Brand Loyalty (t = 2.195, p = 0.014). This implies that better consumer experience with the SOCO by Sociolla app enhances their loyalty to the brand. These findings align with (Kotler et al., 2022), who highlighted how crucial meaningful client experiences are to contemporary marketing. Akoglu & Özbek (2022) further explained that positive brand experience shapes perceptions of quality and emotional attachment. Similar support comes from Gultom & Hasibuan (2021), R. Rahmat & Marso (2020), and W. M. Rahmat & Kurniawati (2022), who confirmed that brand experience strongly contributes to loyalty, particularly in digital beauty platforms.

The second hypothesis test's findings show that Brand Experience has a significant influence on Perceived Quality (t = 20.444, p = 0.000), leading to the acceptance of H2. Positive interaction with SOCO by Sociolla—such as seamless navigation, fast responses, and accurate product information—enhances users' perception of quality. According to Farrellio & Djakasaputra (2025), intense and meaningful experiences build consumer knowledge, which improves perceived quality. These results are consistent with previous studies by Febrianti et al. (2025), W. M. Rahmat & Kurniawati (2022), and (Nathasayana & Slamet, 2023) which highlight the critical role of brand experience in shaping perceived quality.

The third hypothesis is also supported (t = 13.418, p = 0.000), confirming that Brand Experience significantly affects Brand Trust (H3). A satisfying and reliable user experience fosters trust in the SOCO by Sociolla brand As stated by (Yobeanto, 2020). Brand trust is established by consistent positive experiences that reflect the brand's competence. This is reinforced by findings from Masitoh & Kurniawati (2023) and Artiniwati et al. (2022) who discovered a direct link between brand experience and trust.

According to the fourth hypothesis test's findings, perceived quality significantly and favorably affects Brand Loyalty (t = 2.538, p = 0.006), thus H4 is accepted. Consumers

who perceive high product and quality of service are more inclined to stick with the company. This is consistent with Andik & Rachma (2022), who stated that customer loyalty and preferences are greatly influenced by the perception of quality. Supporting studies by Fajariah et al., (2016), Hadinata (2020), and (Nuzula Agustin et al., 2023) further demonstrated how crucial perceived quality is for building brand loyalty.

The fifth hypothesis test confirms that Brand Trust significantly affects Brand Loyalty (t = 6.592, p = 0.000), leading to the acceptance of H5. A greater degree of brand trust increases customer loyalty and the likelihood of repeated use. This is in line with Keni & Winnie (2020) who underlined how important trust is to building loyalty. Khan et al., (2023), Samarah et al. (2021), and Kwon et al. (2020) similarly discovered that increased loyalty is a result of good brand trust.

The sixth hypothesis, which examines the mediating role of Perceived Quality, is accepted (t = 2.457, p = 0.007). This suggests that perceived quality serves as a partial mediator in the connection between brand loyalty and brand experience. Consumers' positive experience improves their perception of quality, which then enhances brand loyalty. This result is consistent with R. Rahmat & Marso (2020), Gultom & Hasibuan (2021), and Akoglu & Özbek (2022), who emphasized perceived quality as an effective mediator in this relationship.

Lastly, the seventh hypothesis shows that the connection between brand experience and brand loyalty is also mediated by brand trust (t = 5.563, p = 0.000), thereby H7 is accepted. A satisfying brand experience fosters trust, this ultimately results in increased loyalty. This confirms the mediating role of trust as highlighted by Keller (2013), Celyn & Hasan (2023), and Ang & Keni (2021). Akoglu & Özbek (2022) and Kusuma (2014) further supported that trust, based on a consistent brand experience, is essential for increasing client loyalty.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that brand experience plays a crucial role in enhancing brand loyalty, both directly and indirectly through perceived quality and brand trust. A positive user experience with the SOCO by Sociolla application significantly strengthens users' perception of product quality and builds brand trust, which ultimately contributes to customer loyalty. These results reinforce the applicability of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework in the context of digital commerce, particularly within beautytech platforms, by emphasizing the importance of emotional, sensory, and interactive experiences in fostering brand loyalty. Practically, this study offers strategic recommendations for SOCO and similar platforms to improve user retention through intuitive UX design, personalized content, and reward-based engagement mechanisms. This research, however, is limited to a Gen Z sample in the Bandung area and focuses on four main constructs. Future research is encouraged to broaden the demographic scope, incorporate additional behavioral variables, and adopt longitudinal approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving consumer–brand relationship in digital platforms.

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