

BRAND AUTHENTICITY AND PERCEIVED SERVICE VALUE AS DETERMINING FACTORS OF CONSUMER LOYALTY IN CULINARY BUSINESS OF CAFES AND RESTAURANTS IN MAKASSAR

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Abstract: The culinary business in Makassar has grown significantly, with numerous cafes and restaurants emerging across the city. However, many newly established culinary businesses fail to sustain operations in the long term. Long-standing establishments tend to retain loyal customers and maintain business continuity. This aims to investigate the factors influencing customer loyalty by focusing on two independent variables brand authenticity and perceived service value with brand attachment serving as a mediating variable. A quantitative research method was applied, using a structured questionnaire distributed online to customers who have visited cafes or restaurants in Makassar that have operated for more than ten years. The minimum sample size was determined using Lemeshow's formula, with at least 96 respondents targeted. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) via SmartPLS software. Preliminary expectations based on the conceptual framework suggest that brand authenticity and perceived service value both have a significant direct and indirect effect (through brand attachment) on customer loyalty. The full statistical results will further determine the strength and significance of these relationships. The findings of this study indicate that customer loyalty in long-standing culinary businesses is significantly influenced by brand authenticity and perceived service value, both directly and through brand attachment. Business owners are encouraged to maintain brand consistency and deliver service experiences that create emotional and functional value to sustain long-term customer relationships.



INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the culinary sector in Indonesia has undergone a remarkable transformation, driven by rapid urbanization, lifestyle shifts, and increasing consumer sophistication. Nowhere is this trend more observable than in Makassar, a vibrant urban hub

where cafés and restaurants continue to proliferate. However, this expansion belies a pressing challenge while many new culinary ventures emerge, a considerable number fail to sustain operations beyond their early years. In stark contrast, long-established culinary businesses, some operating for over a decade, have demonstrated resilience and enduring relevance. This phenomenon invites critical inquiry into the mechanisms that underpin customer retention and loyalty in the local food and beverage (F&B) sector.

Customer loyalty has long been regarded as a fundamental determinant of business longevity, particularly in service-dominant industries such as food and hospitality. Oliver (1999) defines customer loyalty as a deeply held commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts from competitors. In the realm of culinary services, loyalty transcends mere transactional repetition; it encompasses affective attachment, advocacy behaviors, and even a willingness to forgive service failures (Shin et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2024). These manifestations of loyalty are often predicated on two core antecedents: the perceived authenticity of the brand and the perceived value of the service.

Brand authenticity is increasingly recognized as a salient construct in contemporary marketing discourse. It denotes the extent to which a brand is perceived as genuine, credible, and consistent with its identity over time (Portal et al., 2018; Oh et al., 2019). In the context of culinary businesses, brand authenticity may be reflected in the consistency of taste, the preservation of traditional recipes, transparency in brand messaging, and alignment between the founder's values and the service ethos. The perception of authenticity fosters not only trust but also emotional resonance, encouraging customers to remain loyal in the face of market saturation.

Complementing authenticity is the construct of perceived service value, which refers to the customer's overall assessment of the utility of a service based on perceptions of what is received and what is given (Zeithaml, 1988). Value is multidimensional; it encompasses emotional satisfaction, functional efficiency, fairness of pricing, and even symbolic meaning (Puspitasari et al., 2023). Particularly in service settings, value is co-created through the interaction between customer expectations and service delivery (Shemwell et al., 1998). When customers perceive a high level of value in their dining experiences, they are more likely to exhibit repeat patronage and brand commitment.

Furthermore, an emerging body of literature underscores the importance of brand attachment as a mediating variable in the loyalty formation process. Brand attachment describes the emotional bond that customers develop with a brand, characterized by feelings of affection, connection, and irreplaceability (Thomson et al., 2005). Research has shown that attachment significantly enhances loyalty behaviors and mediates the effect of both authenticity and service quality on customer outcomes (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Shin et al., 2019).

Despite the rich theoretical landscape, empirical research that integrates these constructs within the localized culinary context of Makassar remains scarce. Moreover, few studies have addressed how these variables operate specifically in long-standing businesses that have demonstrated durability over a decade or more. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap by constructing a conceptual framework that examines the influence of brand authenticity and perceived service value on customer loyalty, with brand attachment serving

as a mediating variable.

By employing a quantitative approach and focusing on consumers who have frequented enduring cafés and restaurants in Makassar, this research aims to produce empirical insights that are both theoretically robust and managerially actionable. The findings are expected to provide strategic implications for culinary entrepreneurs striving to cultivate sustainable competitive advantage through loyalty-centered marketing strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer loyalty has become a central concept in marketing and service management, particularly in industries where consumer experience plays a pivotal role, such as the culinary sector. Loyalty is defined as a customer's commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service despite situational influences and marketing efforts by competitors (Oliver, 1999). It involves behavioral intention, emotional attachment, and trust in a brand over time (Thomson et al., 2005). Brand authenticity refers to the extent to which a brand is perceived as genuine, consistent, and true to its values (Shin et al., 2019). This includes indicators such as originality, consistency, reliability, and advertisement truthfulness. Authentic brands foster emotional connections and long-term loyalty (Portal et al., 2018). Perceived service value, on the other hand, is defined as the consumer's overall evaluation of the benefit received versus the cost paid (Zeithaml, 1988). In the culinary industry, this may include emotional value, functional value, fairness in pricing, and the perception of special treatment (Puspitasari et al., 2023). Brand attachment serves as a bridge between customer perception and loyalty. It is described as an emotional connection that binds the consumer to the brand and enhances loyalty (Thomson et al., 2005).

Shin et al. (2019), in their study on Korean cosmetic brands, found that brand authenticity directly influences brand attachment, which subsequently impacts customer loyalty. Their findings emphasized that customers are more forgiving, loyal, and willing to pay premium prices when they believe in the brand's authenticity. In the context of digital marketplaces, Chiu et al. (2021) demonstrated that utilitarian and hedonic values components of perceived service value significantly affect consumer loyalty. Their study, although focused on e-marketplaces, reinforces the role of perceived value in driving customer commitment. Puspitasari et al. (2023) also highlighted that perceived value, both rational and emotional, contributes to loyalty in online retail settings. Even though the platform differs, the relevance of the construct applies strongly in service contexts like restaurants and cafés. Based on these findings, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H1: Brand authenticity has a positive and significant effect on brand attachment.
- H2: Perceived service value has a positive and significant effect on brand attachment.
- H3: Brand attachment has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.
- H4: Brand authenticity has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.
- H5: Perceived service value has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

S-O-R Model

This study employs the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework to understand how customers develop loyalty toward local culinary businesses. This psychological model, introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), proposes that external

environmental stimuli (S) influence an individual's internal state (O), which in turn leads to a behavioral response (R). In the context of this study, Brand Authenticity and Perceived Service Value act as stimuli (S), representing the external cues perceived by customers in the consumption experience. These stimuli affect the organism (O) in this case, Brand Attachment, which reflects the emotional bond between customer and brand. The final response (R) is Customer Loyalty, expressed through behavioral intentions such as repeat patronage, willingness to recommend, and emotional commitment. This conceptual model is used to explore both direct and indirect effects between variables, especially the mediating role of brand attachment in the relationship between perception (stimulus) and loyalty (response).

Brand Authenticity's Influence on Brand Attachment

Brand authenticity refers to the degree to which customers perceive a brand as genuine, consistent, reliable, and aligned with its communicated identity. In the context of local cafés and restaurants, authenticity may be reflected in how consistently the business delivers its culinary identity, heritage, and service values over time. As supported by Shin et al. (2019), perceived brand authenticity can create a sense of trust and emotional resonance, which enhances customers' emotional attachment. Thus, it is hypothesized that higher perceived brand authenticity significantly increases brand attachment.

Perceived Service Value's Influence on Brand Attachment

Perceived service value encompasses the customer's evaluation of the benefits received relative to the sacrifices made, including price, quality, emotional satisfaction, and personal treatment. In culinary services, this includes not only the quality of food but also ambiance, speed, cleanliness, and emotional experience. Zeithaml (1988) and Chiu et al. (2021) argue that a positive perceived value triggers emotional satisfaction and a sense of belonging, which strengthens brand attachment. Customers who feel that they gain high value from their experience tend to develop stronger emotional connections with the business.

Brand Attachment's Influence on Customer Loyalty

Brand attachment represents the emotional and psychological connection a customer feels toward a brand. Thomson et al. (2005) suggest that this emotional bond plays a central role in determining a customer's intention to remain loyal, tolerate service failures, or recommend the brand to others. In this study, brand attachment serves as a mediating variable that bridges external perception (stimuli) and behavioral intention (loyalty). When customers are emotionally connected to a brand, they are more likely to exhibit loyalty behaviors, such as revisiting and advocating for the brand.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach using a causal design to examine the effect of brand authenticity and perceived service value on customer loyalty, mediated by brand attachment, within the context of local culinary businesses in Makassar. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online to respondents who had visited or purchased from cafés or restaurants that have operated for at least ten years and remain

active to this day. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with inclusion criteria including having made a visit or purchase at least once within the past three months. The minimum required sample size was determined using the Lemeshow formula, resulting in a minimum of 96 respondents. Each construct was measured using validated items adapted from previous studies, such as Shin et al. (2019), Chiu et al. (2021), and Zeithaml (1988), and responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM–PLS) with the SmartPLS software, which is suitable for models with mediating variables and relatively small samples. The analysis included assessment of the measurement model (validity and reliability), structural model (path coefficients, R^2 values), and bootstrapping for hypothesis testing. The outcome is expected to validate the proposed conceptual model of how customer perceptions and emotional connection translate into loyalty behaviors toward local culinary brands.

The measurement items for each variable in this study were adapted and modified from previously validated instruments found in relevant literature, with adjustments to suit the context of local culinary businesses such as cafés and restaurants in Makassar. Each construct was measured using several indicators translated into question items, which were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The table below outlines the constructs, item codes, and descriptions used to operationalize the variables of Brand Authenticity (X1), Perceived Service Value (X2), Brand Attachment (Z), and Customer Loyalty (Y) within the scope of this research.

Table 1. Indicators and description of research variable items

Construct	Code	Description
Brand Authenticity (X1) Shin et al. (2019)	X1.1	The menu and concept of this café/restaurant feel unique and different from others.
	X1.2	The quality of food and service is consistent on every visit.
	X1.3	This café/restaurant always fulfills its promises to customers.
	X1.4	The advertisements/promotions match the reality of the food and ambiance offered.
	X1.5	I trust the honesty and values demonstrated by this brand.
Perceived Service Value (X2) Chiu et al. (2021) dan Zeithaml (1988)	X2.1	I feel happy and satisfied every time I dine at this café/restaurant.
	X2.2	The place is clean, service is quick, and the atmosphere is pleasant.
	X2.3	The prices are fair considering the portion and quality of service.
	X2.4	I feel personally attended to, for example, the staff recognizes me as a regular customer.
Brand Attachment (Z) Shin et al. (2005) dan Thomson et al. (2005)	Z1	I feel emotionally connected to this café/restaurant brand.
	Z2	I would feel a sense of loss if this place were to close down.
	Z3	This place cannot be replaced by any other café or restaurant.
Customer Loyalty (Y) Shin et al. (2019) dan Oliver (1999)	Y1	I intend to return to this place in the future.
	Y2	I will recommend this place to others.
	Y3	I will still dine here even if the prices slightly increase.
	Y4	I remain loyal even if there were minor service issues in the past.

Source: Author Analysis

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Characteristics of Respondents

This study involved a total of 101 valid respondents. Based on gender, 33 individuals (32.7%) were male and 68 individuals (67.3%) were female. The dominant age group was 13 to 28 years, comprising 92 respondents (91.1%), while 9 respondents (8.9%) were aged 29 to 44 years. In terms of city of origin, the vast majority of respondents 96 individuals (95%) were from Makassar, fulfilling the intended local focus of the research. The remaining 5% of respondents came from various other cities in Indonesia, including Parepare, Palu, Toraja, Sungguminasa, and Bekasi, each represented by one respondent. Additionally, all 101 respondents stated that they had visited at least one legendary local restaurant in Makassar (operating for 10 years or more) in the past 3 months, thus confirming that the entire sample meets the inclusion criteria set for this research.

Table 2. Individual Characteristic

Variable	Item	Frequency (n)	Precentage (%)
Gender	Male	33	32.7
	Female	68	67.3
Age	13-28 years	92	91.1
	29-44 years	9	8.9
City of Origin	Makassar	96	95.0
	Pare-pare	1	1.0
	Sungguminasa	1	1.0
	Toraja	1	1.0
	Palu	1	1.0
	Bekasi	1	1.0
Visited Legendary Local Restaurant in Last 3 Months	Yes	101	100.0
Most Visited Restaurant	Ayam Goreng Sulawesi	30	29.7
	Rumah Makan Losari	15	14.9
	Bakso Ati Raja	11	10.9
	Ratu Gurih	11	10.9
	Aroma Coto Gagak	8	7.9
	Bakso Mutiara	7	6.9
	MAMA Toko Kue & Es Krim	7	6.9
	Rumah Makan Muda Mudi	7	6.9
	RM Ayam Bakar Wong Solo	4	4.0
	Warung Kopi Hai Hong	1	1.0

Source: Data Processing

Validity and Reliability Test

The Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis includes two main stages: the outer model and the inner model. The first step in the outer model analysis is to assess the convergent validity, which is determined through the loading values of each indicator against its latent variable. According to Hair et al. (2019), an indicator is considered valid if it has a loading value greater than 0.7, indicating that the construct sufficiently explains the indicator. The results of the outer loading from this study are presented in Table 3, which shows that all indicators across the four constructsBr and Authenticity, Perceived Service Value, Brand Attachment, and Customer Loyalty achieve values above the threshold of 0.7. Thus, these indicators can be considered valid and reliable in measuring their respective latent variables.

Table 3. Output of Outer Loadings

	Outer Loading
X1.1 <- Brand Authenticity	0.794
X1.2 <- Brand Authenticity	0.790
X1.3 <- Brand Authenticity	0.789
X1.4 <- Brand Authenticity	0.839
X1.5 <- Brand Authenticity	0.745
X2.1 <- Percieved Service Value	0.811
X2.2 <- Percieved Service Value	0.735
X2.3 <- Percieved Service Value	0.818
X2.4 <- Percieved Service Value	0.754
Z1 <- Brand Attachment	0.850
Z2 <- Brand Attachment	0.853
Z3 <- Brand Attachment	0.812
Y1 <- Customer Loyalty	0.861
Y2 <- Customer Loyalty	0.844
Y3 <- Customer Loyalty	0.744
Y4 <- Customer Loyalty	0.744

Source: Data Processing

All items in the model were found to have outer loading values above the threshold of 0.7, indicating that each observed variable strongly reflects its respective latent construct. This finding affirms the convergent validity of the measurement model. For instance, the indicators for Brand Authenticity (X1.1–X1.5) have loadings ranging from 0.745 to 0.839, suggesting a consistently strong relationship between the measurement items and the latent variable. Similarly, the Perceived Service Value indicators (X2.1–X2.4) show solid loading values between 0.735 and 0.818, indicating that functional, emotional, price fairness, and special treatment dimensions are all adequately captured. The Brand Attachment indicators (Z1–Z3) display high loadings above 0.81, confirming the emotional bond respondents feel toward the brand is appropriately measured. The Customer Loyalty construct (Y1–Y4) also exhibits high loadings (≥ 0.744), affirming that behavioral intentions such as repeat purchase, recommendation, and brand preference are consistently represented.

These findings imply that the instrument used in this study is statistically reliable and valid, providing confidence for further structural modeling in the inner model analysis. The absence of low-loading items also demonstrates the clarity and consistency of the questionnaire design and its successful operationalization of theoretical constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement model is robust, and each indicator in the study contributes significantly to its respective latent variable. The data is deemed appropriate for advancing to the inner model phase, where hypotheses testing and path coefficient analysis will be performed to examine the relationships among variables.

Table 4. Result Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and AVE

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Attachment	0.789	0.789	0.877	0.703
Brand Authenticity	0.851	0.856	0.894	0.627
Customer Loyalt	0.812	0.824	0.876	0.640
Percieved Service Value	0.786	0.789	0.862	0.609

Source: Data Processing

The assessment of construct reliability and validity was carried out using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to determine the internal consistency and convergent validity of the measurement model. As shown in Table 4, all constructs demonstrate Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, which indicates that the items within each construct are internally consistent and reliable (Hair et al., 2019). Moreover, the composite reliability (ρ_c) values for all constructs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming a high level of internal consistency. The construct Brand Authenticity exhibits the highest composite reliability (0.894), while Brand Attachment has the lowest but still acceptable score (0.877).

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values also meet the convergent validity criterion, where each construct exceeds the threshold of 0.50. This means that more than 50% of the variance in the indicators is accounted for by the latent construct. The highest AVE is observed in Brand Attachment (0.703), followed by Customer Loyalty (0.640), Brand Authenticity (0.627), and Perceived Service Value (0.609), all of which indicate adequate convergent validity. In conclusion, these results confirm that all constructs used in this study are both reliable and valid, and thus suitable for use in the subsequent stages of structural model testing, including mediation and path analysis using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)

Table 5. Cross Loading

	Brand Attachment	Brand Authenticity	Customer Loyalty	Percieved Service Value
X1.1	0.400	0.794	0.631	0.493
X1.2	0.429	0.790	0.534	0.484
X1.3	0.358	0.789	0.609	0.578
X1.4	0.518	0.839	0.597	0.653
X1.5	0.410	0.745	0.472	0.474
X2.1	0.298	0.629	0.685	0.811
X2.2	0.474	0.474	0.504	0.735
X2.3	0.436	0.546	0.582	0.818
X2.4	0.504	0.468	0.404	0.754
Y1	0.461	0.669	0.861	0.606
Y2	0.504	0.665	0.844	0.617
Y3	0.502	0.497	0.744	0.490
Y4	0.474	0.449	0.744	0.526
Z1	0.850	0.447	0.506	0.423
Z2	0.853	0.438	0.490	0.442
Z3	0.812	0.461	0.519	0.499

Source : Data Processing

Discriminant validity was assessed using the cross-loading method, which evaluates whether an item loads more strongly on its designated construct than on other constructs. As presented in Table 5, each indicator exhibits the highest loading on its respective latent variable compared to its correlations with other variables. For instance, items X1.1 to X1.5, which represent the construct Brand Authenticity, demonstrate significantly higher loadings on Brand Authenticity (ranging from 0.745 to 0.839) than on Brand Attachment, Customer Loyalty, or Perceived Service Value. Similarly, X2.1 to X2.4, which measure Perceived Service Value, load higher on their designated construct (0.735 to 0.818) compared to their cross-loadings on the remaining constructs.

Indicators Y1 to Y4, which represent Customer Loyalty, show their highest loadings on the intended construct, with values ranging from 0.744 to 0.861, surpassing the loadings on other latent variables. Lastly, Z1 to Z3, corresponding to the mediating variable Brand Attachment, also show the highest correlations with their respective latent construct (ranging from 0.812 to 0.853). These findings meet the requirements for discriminant validity based on the cross-loading criterion, where the loading of each item on its associated construct must exceed its loadings on other constructs (Hair et al., 2019). This indicates that all items measure distinct and non-overlapping constructs, and thus the model satisfies the discriminant validity assumption. The results affirm that all measurement indicators are sufficiently distinct from one another and demonstrate good discriminant validity. This strengthens the structural integrity of the measurement model and provides a solid basis for further analysis in the structural model, including mediation testing.

Determination coefficient (R-Square test)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is a key metric in evaluating the explanatory power of a structural model within Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). In the present study, the R^2 values indicate how much variance in the endogenous variables can be explained by their respective predictors. As shown in the R^2 results, the construct Brand Attachment yielded an R-square value of 0.342, signifying that 34.2% of the variance in Brand Attachment is explained by the independent variables Brand Authenticity and Perceived Service Value. This value falls within the category of moderate explanatory power (Hair et al., 2017). The construct Customer Loyalty demonstrated a higher R^2 value of 0.636, indicating that 63.6% of the variation in Customer Loyalty can be accounted for by the antecedent variables, namely Brand Authenticity, Perceived Service Value, and Brand Attachment. According to Chin (1998), an R^2 value of 0.67 is considered substantial, 0.33 moderate, and 0.19 weak. Thus, the model's ability to explain Customer Loyalty is considered substantial. These findings suggest that the conceptual model possesses sufficient predictive power and supports the relevance of the proposed structural paths. The R^2 values provide empirical justification for proceeding to further analysis such as path coefficient examination and hypothesis testing.

Path Coefficient

The path coefficient analysis aims to evaluate the magnitude and direction of the

influence between constructs in the proposed research model. This is done by examining the original sample value (O), t-statistics, and p-values obtained through the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS. A coefficient is considered statistically significant if the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2017). The results presented in Table X show that Brand Authenticity (X1) significantly influences Brand Attachment (Z) with a path coefficient of 0.291, a t-statistic of 2.481, and a p-value of 0.007, indicating a strong and positive relationship. Furthermore, Brand Authenticity (X1) also has a direct and significant impact on Customer Loyalty (Y) with a coefficient of 0.375, t-statistic of 4.269, and p-value 0.000. These findings highlight the pivotal role of perceived brand genuineness in both emotional attachment and behavioral loyalty outcomes.

Perceived Service Value (X2) shows a significant and positive relationship with Brand Attachment (Z) ($\beta = 0.349$, $t = 2.870$, $p = 0.002$) and Customer Loyalty (Y) ($\beta = 0.328$, $t = 3.651$, $p = 0.000$), underscoring the importance of consumer-perceived value in fostering attachment and loyalty toward the brand. Brand Attachment (Z) significantly influences Customer Loyalty (Y) with a coefficient of 0.228, supported by a t-statistic of 2.690 and a p-value of 0.004. This result confirms the mediating role of emotional connection between antecedent brand evaluations and final consumer loyalty behavior.

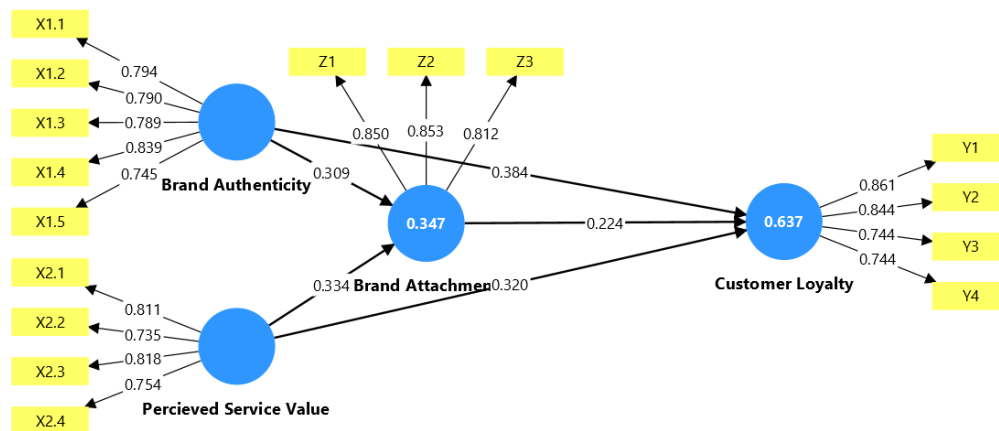


Figure 1. Path Analysis
Source: Data Processing

Hypothesis Test

The hypothesis test is used to test the truth of a statement. Here are the statistical t-values and the p-value. From the results of the Structural Method Test, it can be concluded that the entire exogenous variable of this study has a positive relationship. A deeper explanation of it will be discussed in the sub-chapter of the interpretation of the results of the hypothesis test.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Brand Attachment -> Customer Loyalty	0.228	0.224	0.085	2.690	0.004
Brand Authenticity -> Brand Attachment	0.291	0.299	0.117	2.481	0.007
Brand Authenticity -> Customer Loyalty	0.375	0.375	0.088	4.269	0.000
Perceived Service Value -> Brand Attachment	0.349	0.350	0.122	2.870	0.002
Perceived Service Value -> Customer Loyalty	0.328	0.336	0.090	3.651	0.000

Source : Data Processing

Brand Attachment Effects on Customer Loyalty

The empirical analysis reveals that Brand Attachment significantly affects Customer Loyalty, as evidenced by a T-statistic value of 2.690 (>1.96) and a P-value of 0.004 (<0.05). These results confirm that H1 is supported, indicating that consumers who are emotionally attached to a brand are more likely to exhibit loyal behavior. This finding supports the framework proposed by Thomson et al. (2005), which highlighted emotional bonding as a pivotal mechanism driving sustained customer loyalty in the context of long-standing relationships with local culinary brands.

The Influence of Brand Authenticity on Brand Attachment

The relationship between Brand Authenticity and Brand Attachment shows statistical significance, with a T-statistic of 2.481 and a P-value of 0.007. Hence, H2 is accepted. These results demonstrate that consumers' perception of a brand as authentic—consistent, honest, and original—fosters emotional attachment. This aligns with Shin et al. (2019), who emphasized that authenticity strengthens affective brand responses, which are particularly relevant for local businesses aiming to build lasting emotional connections with their customers.

The Impact of Brand Authenticity on Customer Loyalty

Brand Authenticity is also found to have a significant and direct impact on Customer Loyalty. The T-statistic of 4.269 and P-value of 0.000 indicate robust statistical support for H3. This result reinforces the importance of brand genuineness in cultivating customer trust and ongoing patronage. Supporting the findings of Portal et al. (2018), the study shows that authenticity serves as a foundational element in sustaining loyalty within culinary contexts, especially among consumers who favor heritage-rich local establishments.

The Role of Perceived Service Value in Shaping Brand Attachment

With a T-statistic value of 2.870 and P-value of 0.002, the analysis confirms that H4 is accepted. This suggests that Perceived Service Value plays a meaningful role in shaping consumers' emotional attachment to a brand. Whether through price fairness, service excellence, or convenience, when consumers perceive value in their interactions, they are

more likely to develop a positive affective response toward the brand. This conclusion aligns with Zeithaml (1988) and Chiu et al. (2021), who emphasized that value perception influences relational outcomes, including emotional bonding.

Perceived Service Value Effects on Customer Loyalty

The hypothesis proposing a direct relationship between Perceived Service Value and Customer Loyalty is supported by a T-statistic of 3.651 and a P-value of 0.000. These values affirm that H5 is accepted. The results indicate that when customers perceive high value—through service performance, efficiency, or utility—they are more likely to exhibit loyalty. This finding corroborates prior research by Puspitasari et al. (2023), affirming that perceived value is a significant antecedent of long-term commitment in the consumer-brand relationship, especially in the F&B sector.

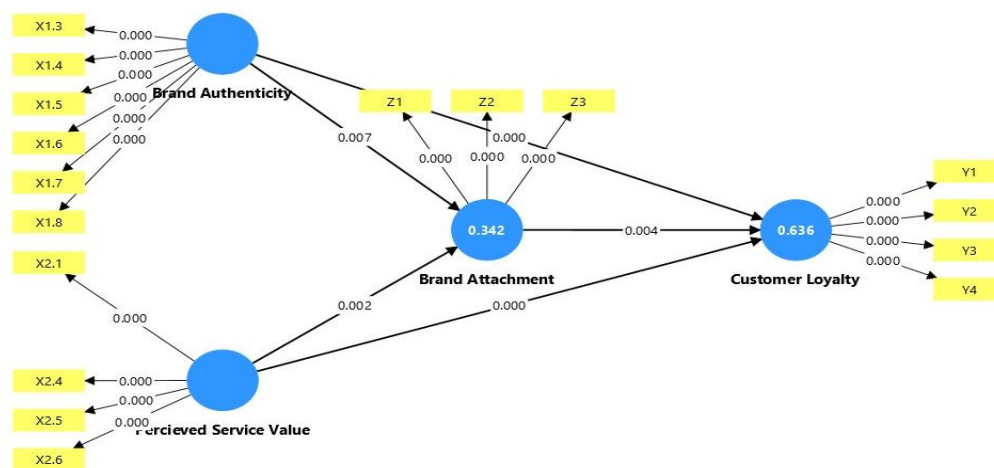


Figure 2. Structural Model Visualization

Source: Data Processing

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing Results (Bootstrapping Visualization)

Figure X illustrates the structural model developed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using bootstrapping analysis. The model includes four main latent variables: Brand Authenticity, Perceived Service Value, Brand Attachment, and Customer Loyalty. The arrows indicate hypothesized relationships, with path coefficients and p-values displayed along each arrow. As shown, Brand Authenticity significantly affects both Brand Attachment ($\beta = 0.291$; $p = 0.007$) and Customer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.375$; $p = 0.000$). Similarly, Perceived Service Value significantly influences Brand Attachment ($\beta = 0.349$; $p = 0.002$) and Customer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.328$; $p = 0.000$).

Brand Attachment also demonstrates a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.228$; $p = 0.004$), confirming its mediating role. The R-square values are 0.342 for Brand Attachment and 0.636 for Customer Loyalty, indicating moderate to substantial explanatory power. Overall, all hypothesized relationships in the model are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), providing empirical support for the conceptual framework.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the effect of Brand Authenticity and Perceived Service Value on Customer Loyalty, with Brand Attachment acting as a mediating variable in the context of legendary local culinary businesses in Makassar. By utilizing the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 4, data from 101 valid respondents were analyzed to test the proposed hypotheses. The analysis reveals that Brand Authenticity exerts a statistically significant influence on both Customer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.375$; $p = 0.000$) and Brand Attachment ($\beta = 0.291$; $p = 0.007$). These findings affirm that authenticity in brand communication, consistency, and values strengthens not only customer commitment but also emotional bonds with the brand. Simultaneously, Perceived Service Value significantly affects Brand Attachment ($\beta = 0.349$; $p = 0.002$) and Customer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.328$; $p = 0.000$), suggesting that both utilitarian and hedonic value perceptions foster long-term consumer loyalty.

Importantly, Brand Attachment also shows a significant mediating effect between antecedent variables and Customer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.228$; $p = 0.004$), affirming its role as a psychological bridge that transforms perception into sustained behavior. The model demonstrates robust explanatory power, with $R^2 = 0.342$ for Brand Attachment and $R^2 = 0.636$ for Customer Loyalty, indicating that the model explains 63.6% of the variance in loyalty outcomes. In terms of measurement model quality, all constructs meet the convergent validity criteria, with outer loadings above 0.70 and AVE values exceeding 0.6. Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficients are also satisfactory, supporting the internal consistency of the indicators used.

In summary, the findings underscore that the authenticity of a brand and the perceived value of service delivery are pivotal in shaping customer loyalty, particularly when mediated through emotional brand connection. These results offer practical implications for culinary entrepreneurs seeking to foster sustainable consumer relationships in increasingly competitive local markets.

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