

Determinants of Customer Loyalty The Role of Brand Awareness, Product Quality, and Price Perception through Customer Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of brand awareness, product quality, and price perception on customer satisfaction and loyalty for Cussons Baby products in Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi. A total of 184 respondents, who are active consumers of Cussons Baby products in the region, participated in the research. Data were collected through an online questionnaire designed to capture consumer perceptions of five main variables: brand awareness, product quality, price perception, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which allows for a comprehensive examination of direct and indirect relationships among variables. The findings indicate that brand awareness, product quality, and price perception significantly and positively influence customer satisfaction. Among these determinants, product quality emerged as the most influential factor, underscoring the critical role of delivering products that consistently meet or exceed consumer expectations. The results further demonstrate that customer satisfaction exerts a strong and direct impact on customer loyalty. In addition, satisfaction serves as a mediating variable that reinforces the effects of brand awareness, product quality, and price perception on loyalty. These findings suggest that while brand awareness, product quality, and price perception are vital in shaping consumer behavior, their effectiveness in driving loyalty is maximized when they translate into positive consumer experiences. Therefore, customer satisfaction functions as both an outcome of marketing efforts and a crucial mechanism for building sustainable consumer–brand relationships.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty

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INTRODUCTION

Consumer loyalty research has become increasingly relevant in addressing the growing competition in today's marketplace. Previous studies have highlighted that brand awareness, product quality, and price perception are key factors contributing to consumer loyalty. Brand awareness plays a critical role in building consumer attachment to a brand, where strong recognition and recall can drive loyalty, as noted Khurong et al. (2016). Superior product quality is another primary factor enhancing customer satisfaction and encouraging repeat purchases, as demonstrated in the studies Millenia and Sukma (2022). Additionally, fair price perception significantly impacts satisfaction, which in turn strengthens loyalty, as shown Silva et al. (2022). However, these variables often interact through mediating factors rather than direct relationships. Anwar and Ali (2017) revealed that customer satisfaction serves as a vital mediator in the relationship between brand awareness, product quality, and price perception with consumer loyalty. Considering these dynamics, this study focuses on Cussons Baby products in Kendari City

to understand how these relationships are formed and interrelated.

The literature review underscores the practical relevance of brand awareness, product quality, and price perception in influencing consumer loyalty.

Brand awareness not only creates initial consumer engagement but also shapes brand image perception that reinforces loyalty, as emphasized Khan et al. (2020). Meanwhile, high product quality has consistently been shown to enhance customer satisfaction, which subsequently impacts loyalty, as highlighted Taufik et al. (2022) and Prakoso et al. (2023). Fair price perception also plays a critical role, where consumers perceiving a product as fairly priced are more likely to be satisfied and loyal, as reported Ali et al. (2014). Within this context, this research aims to contribute significantly to understanding how these three factors integrate to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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While many studies have examined the relationships between brand awareness, product quality, and price perception with consumer loyalty, there is a research gap in adequately addressing the mediating role of customer satisfaction. Most prior research has focused on direct relationships between these variables, as explored by Anwar and Ali (2017) and Kataria and Saini (2019). Additionally, studies in the context of baby care products remain limited, despite the unique trust and safety expectations associated with these products. Moreover, the complex interactions between brand awareness, product quality, and price perception such as how fair price perception can strengthen the impact of product quality or brand awareness on customer satisfaction and loyalty have often been overlooked. This study aims to fill these gaps by exploring these dynamics in the context of Cussons Baby products. Kendari City provides a significant market opportunity for baby care products like Cussons Baby. This developing region features a unique market landscape characterized by diverse brand awareness levels, dynamic purchasing power, and consumer preferences influenced by local values. This environment offers an ideal setting to test the relationships between brand awareness, product quality, and price perception on consumer loyalty, while considering the mediating role of customer satisfaction. This study is expected to deliver relevant insights not only for companies operating in Kendari City but also for similar markets with analogous characteristics.

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the influence of brand awareness, product quality, and price perception on consumer loyalty and to understand the mediating role of customer satisfaction in these relationships. By employing this approach, the study aims to make significant contributions to marketing theory, particularly regarding the mediating role of customer satisfaction, while also providing practical guidance for companies to enhance customer experience, satisfaction, and loyalty. The findings are expected to not only enrich academic literature but also offer practical implications to help businesses design more effective marketing strategies.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Brand Awareness on Customer Satisfaction

Brand awareness plays a pivotal role in shaping customer satisfaction by influencing how customers perceive and evaluate a product. Familiarity with a brand and the ability to recall it easily often create positive associations, such as trust and reliability. According to Khurong et al. (2016), strong brand awareness fosters a sense of assurance and perceived value, which enhances customers' evaluations of a product. This alignment between expectations and perceived quality leads to greater satisfaction. Additionally, customers tend to feel more confident when choosing products from well-known brands, reducing perceived risks and improving their overall experience. Emotional connections established through brand awareness also contribute significantly to customer satisfaction.

As Khan et al. (2020) suggest, familiarity with a brand reinforces positive perceptions and loyalty, enhancing satisfaction levels. These findings highlight the critical role of strategic brand awareness initiatives in driving customer satisfaction.

Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction

Product quality is a fundamental factor in determining customer satisfaction, as it directly impacts how customers perceive the value and utility of a product. High-quality products that meet or exceed expectations lead to positive experiences and satisfaction. Millenia and Sukma (2022) argue that superior product performance, durability, and reliability are key drivers of satisfaction. Moreover, Taufik et al. (2022) emphasize that perceived quality influences both emotional and cognitive evaluations, strengthening customer satisfaction. Customers who perceive a product as high-quality feel that their investment is justified, further boosting satisfaction levels. Businesses must prioritize delivering exceptional product quality to foster satisfaction and build long-term customer trust.

Price Perception on Customer Satisfaction

Price perception significantly impacts customer satisfaction, as it reflects how customers evaluate the fairness and value of a product relative to its quality and benefits. Positive price perception fosters satisfaction by reinforcing emotional responses and perceived value. Ali et al. (2014) note that customers who perceive pricing as fair are more likely to feel satisfied and develop stronger brand connections. Silva et al. (2022) add that price fairness mediates the relationship between product quality and satisfaction, suggesting that transparent pricing strategies enhance customer satisfaction and brand trust. Conversely, negative price perceptions can diminish satisfaction, even if the product meets other expectations. Fair pricing strategies are therefore essential for enhancing customer satisfaction and competitiveness.

Brand Awareness on Customer Loyalty

Brand awareness strongly influences customer loyalty by creating trust, familiarity, and emotional bonds with the brand. Recognized and recalled brands foster customer engagement and attachment, resulting in loyalty. Khurong et al. (2016) argue that brand recall strengthens customer confidence and decision-making, ensuring repeat purchases. Khan et al. (2020) highlight that brand awareness not only directly impacts loyalty but also builds trust and customer engagement. Familiar brands often remain top-of-mind, promoting repeat business and long-term loyalty. Effective brand awareness strategies, such as consistent messaging and customer-focused branding, are critical to fostering loyalty.

Product Quality on Customer Loyalty

Product quality plays a central role in fostering customer loyalty by meeting customer expectations and reinforcing trust. High-quality products enhance satisfaction and encourage repeat purchases, leading to loyalty. Millenia and Sukma (2022) argue that consistently superior quality builds customer trust and preference, ensuring loyalty.

Taufik et al. (2022) further highlight that satisfied customers are more likely to exhibit loyalty, reinforcing the importance of product quality. Businesses that maintain high product standards foster positive word-of-mouth and strengthen their brand reputation, securing customer loyalty.

Price Perception on Customer Loyalty

Price perception significantly shapes customer loyalty by reinforcing trust and satisfaction. When customers perceive prices as fair and aligned with product value, they are more likely to remain loyal. Anggraeni et al. (2019) found that positive price perception encourages long-term commitment and repeat purchases.

Silva et al. (2022) emphasize that fair pricing strategies enhance satisfaction, which mediates the relationship between price perception and loyalty. Transparent and justifiable pricing is crucial for fostering loyalty and maintaining competitive advantage.

Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty

Customer satisfaction is a key driver of loyalty, as it reflects how well a product or service meets customer expectations. Satisfied customers tend to develop emotional connections with brands, resulting in loyalty and advocacy. Taufik et al. (2022) highlight that satisfaction enhances trust and reduces switching behavior, ensuring long-term commitment. Silva et al. (2022) suggest that satisfaction strengthens loyalty by fostering positive perceptions and mitigating negative experiences. Businesses must prioritize customer satisfaction to build a loyal customer base and achieve sustainable growth.

Customer Satisfaction as a Mediator Between Brand Awareness and Customer Loyalty

Customer satisfaction serves as a vital mediating factor in the relationship between brand awareness and customer loyalty. Brand awareness fosters trust and familiarity by enabling customers to recognize and recall a brand, but customer satisfaction bridges the gap between recognition and loyalty. Positive experiences with a well-recognized brand lead to higher satisfaction levels, which subsequently strengthen loyalty. Anwar and Ali (2017) argue that brand awareness enhances customer satisfaction, which, in turn, reinforces loyalty. Satisfied customers are more likely to perceive the brand positively, trust its offerings, and maintain long-term commitment. Fitriani and Paramita (2022) emphasize that customer satisfaction is crucial in converting brand awareness into tangible loyalty outcomes. This underscores the importance of aligning brand awareness initiatives with strategies that improve customer satisfaction to achieve sustainable customer loyalty.

Customer Satisfaction as a Mediator Between Product Quality and Customer Loyalty

Customer satisfaction also plays a pivotal role in mediating the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty. High product quality, characterized by superior performance, reliability, and value, directly enhances customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers are

more likely to trust the brand and exhibit loyalty over time. Millenia and Sukma (2022) demonstrate that perceived product quality increases satisfaction, which in turn drives loyalty. Moreover, customer satisfaction strengthens the emotional connection between customers and the brand, transforming positive product perceptions into enduring loyalty. Taufik et al. (2022) highlight that while product quality directly impacts satisfaction, satisfaction acts as a bridge to fostering loyalty. Businesses must prioritize maintaining consistent product quality to enhance satisfaction, which solidifies customer loyalty and encourages positive word-of-mouth.

Customer Satisfaction as a Mediator Between Price Perception and Customer Loyalty

Customer satisfaction is a critical mediator in the relationship between price perception and customer loyalty. Fair and reasonable pricing that aligns with perceived value increases customer satisfaction, creating a strong emotional connection that reinforces loyalty. Silva et al. (2022) suggest that perceived price fairness not only fosters satisfaction but also strengthens loyalty by promoting trust and encouraging repeat purchases. Anggraeni et al. (2019) further highlight that while price perception directly impacts loyalty, customer satisfaction amplifies this effect by transforming favorable price perceptions into long-term brand commitment.

Satisfied customers who perceive value for money are more likely to remain loyal and recommend the brand to others. Businesses must adopt pricing strategies that balance competitiveness and fairness to enhance satisfaction and cultivate customer loyalty.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative approach with a causal design to analyze the influence of brand awareness, product quality, and price perception on customer satisfaction and loyalty. It also examines the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between the independent variables (brand awareness, product quality, and price perception) and the dependent variable (customer loyalty). The population of this study consists of consumers who use Cussons Baby products in Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi. The sample size was determined to ensure the representativeness and validity of the data, involving 184 respondents. This number was considered sufficient to meet the requirements of structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. Respondents were selected using a non-probability sampling technique with purposive sampling, targeting active users of Cussons Baby products who have experience with the brand and are familiar with its products. Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed to the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of structured questions designed to measure respondents' perceptions of the research variables, namely brand awareness, product quality, price perception, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. Each variable was measured using validated indicators adapted from previous studies, with responses recorded on a 5-point

Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent (%)
Sex		
Man	43	23,37
Woman	141	76,63
	184	100
Age		
20-29	35	19,02
30-39	46	25,00
40-49	53	28,80
50-59	50	27,17
	184	100
Educational baground		
High School	79	42,93
Associate's Degree	27	14,67
Bachelor's Degree	38	20,65
Master's Degree	40	21,74
	184	100
Education		
Housewife	43	23,37
Private Sector Employee	62	33,70
Civil Servant	36	19,57
Entrepreneur	43	23,37
	184	100

This table presents the demographic profile of respondents who are consumers of Cussons Baby products in Kendari City. Out of the total 184 respondents, the majority are female, accounting for 76.63%, while males represent only 23.37%. Regarding age distribution, the largest group falls within the 40–49 age range, comprising 28.80% of the total respondents, followed by the 50–59 age group at 27.17%, the 30–39 age group at 25.00%, and the 20–29 age group at 19.02%. In terms of educational background, the majority of respondents have completed high school (42.93%), followed by respondents with a bachelor's degree (20.65%), a master's degree (21.74%), and a diploma (D3) qualification (14.67%). Regarding occupation, most respondents work as private employees (33.70%), followed by homemakers and entrepreneurs, each accounting for 23.37%. Additionally, 19.57% of respondents are civil servants. This data provides a detailed overview of the characteristics of Cussons Baby consumers in Kendari City.

Table 2. Results of the Measurement Model

Variables	Indicator	Loading Factor	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Brand awareness	Brand Recognition	0,846	0,846	0,856
	Brand Recall	0,863		

Top of Mind	0,913			
Product Quality	0,887	0,914	0,922	0,630
Additional Features	0,833			
Reliability	0,831			
Conformance	0,829			
Durability	0,821			
Serviceability	0,767			
Aesthetics	0,704			
Perceived Quality	0,650			
Affordability	0,931	0,839	0,915	0,685
Price-Quality Alignment	0,896			
Price-Benefit Alignment	0,876			
Price Competitiveness or Suitability	0,549			
Service Quality Matching Expectations	0,901	0,865	0,866	0,788
Satisfaction Compared to Similar Products	0,914			
Absence of Complaints	0,847			
Brand Awareness	0,870	0,907	0,917	0,730
Consumer Satisfaction	0,913			
Product Quality	0,881			
Consumer Loyalty	0,842			
Price Perception	0,761			

The measurement model results indicate that the indicators for the analyzed variables demonstrate strong validity and reliability. For the Brand Awareness variable, the indicators Brand Recognition, Brand Recall, and Top of Mind all have loading factors above 0.8, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.846, composite reliability of 0.856, and an average variance extracted (AVE) of 0.765. Similar results are observed for other variables, such as Product Quality, which has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.914 and an AVE of 0.630. Price Perception also exhibits strong reliability with an AVE of 0.685 and composite reliability of 0.915. The Customer Satisfaction variable records a high AVE of 0.788, while the Customer Loyalty variable shows high loading factor values for all its indicators. These findings affirm that the model's constructs are both valid and reliable, providing a solid foundation for subsequent structural analysis.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

	1	2	3	4	5
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Brand Awareness	0,875			
Customer Satisfaction	0,598	0,888		
Product Quality	0,337	0,804	0,794	
Customer loyalty	0,769	0,836	0,675	0,855
Price Perception	0,549	0,800	0,667	0,751

Based on Table 3, which uses the Fornell-Larcker criterion, most constructs meet the requirements for discriminant validity, as indicated by the square root of the AVE on the diagonal being higher than the correlations between constructs. However, there is an indication of a discriminant validity violation in the Product Quality construct, as its correlation with Customer Satisfaction (0.804) is higher than its own square root of the AVE (0.794). This suggests a possible conceptual overlap between the two constructs in respondents' perceptions.

Table 4. R Square and Q²

	R-square	Q ² predict
Customer Satisfaction	0,815	0,805
Customer loyalty	0,830	0,806

The analysis results in Table 4 indicate that the variables Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty have high R-square and Q²predict values, demonstrating a strong influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables. The R-square value for Customer Satisfaction is 0.815, indicating that 81.5% of the variation in customer satisfaction can be explained by Brand Awareness, Product Quality, and Price Perception. Similarly, the R-square value for Customer Loyalty is 0.830, meaning that 83% of the variation in customer loyalty is accounted for by these independent variables. Additionally, the Q²predict values for Customer Satisfaction (0.805) and Customer Loyalty (0.806) confirm that the predictive model has excellent capability in explaining and forecasting customer satisfaction and loyalty. This underscores the significant and relevant influence of Brand Awareness, Product Quality, and Price Perception in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty for Cussons Baby products in Kendari City. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening these three factors to maintain positive relationships with consumers.

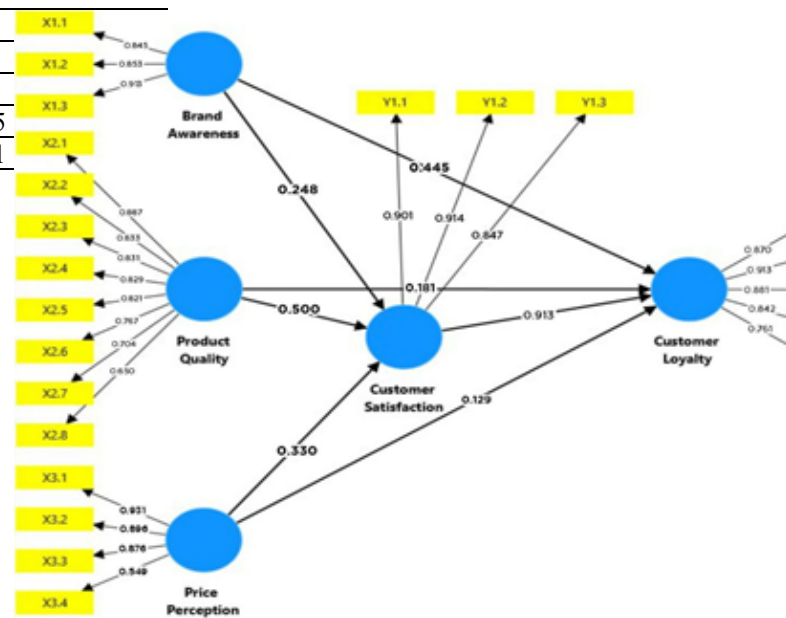


Figure. SEM-PLS Model

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Table 4. Hypothesis Effects

Path	Original Sample	P Values	Descripti
Brand Awareness -> Customer Satisfaction	0.276	0.000	Accepted
Product Quality -> Customer Satisfaction	0.552	0.000	Accepted
Price Perception -> Customer Satisfaction	0.255	0.000	Accepted
Brand Awareness -> Customer Loyalty	0.431	0.000	Accepted
Product Quality -> Customer Loyalty	0.153	0.003	Accepted
Price Perception -> Customer Loyalty	0.083	0.014	Accepted
Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	0.396	0.000	Accepted
Brand Awareness -> Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	0.109	0.000	Partial Mediation
Product Quality -> Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	0.218	0.000	Partial Mediation
Price Perception -> Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	0.101	0.000	Partial Mediation

The hypothesis testing results show that all examined paths have a p-value < 0.05, indicating their acceptance. Brand Awareness has a significant influence on Customer Satisfaction, with a path coefficient of 0.276 and a p-value of 0.000. Additionally, Product Quality demonstrates the largest influence on Customer Satisfaction, with a path coefficient of 0.552 and a p-value of 0.000, followed by Price Perception, which has a path coefficient of 0.255 and a p-value of 0.000. These findings confirm that all three factors significantly affect customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, Brand Awareness also significantly impacts Customer Loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.431 and a p-value of 0.000. Although the influence of Product Quality on Customer Loyalty is smaller (0.153), it remains significant, with a p-value of 0.003. Similarly, Price Perception exhibits a lower impact (0.083) but still shows significance, with a p-value of 0.014. Customer Satisfaction, however, has a strong direct effect on

Customer Loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.396 and a p-value of 0.000, highlighting its critical role in building loyalty.

Mediation analysis reveals that Customer Satisfaction serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between Brand Awareness, Product Quality, and Price Perception with Customer Loyalty. The mediation path from Brand Awareness to Customer Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction has a coefficient of 0.109, while mediation by Product Quality shows a stronger influence, with a coefficient of 0.218. Mediation by Price Perception is also significant, with a coefficient of 0.101. These results indicate that while Brand Awareness, Product Quality, and Price Perception have direct effects on Customer Loyalty, their influence is further enhanced through increased Customer Satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis testing results provide evidence that Brand Awareness, Product Quality, and Price Perception significantly influence Customer Satisfaction. This indicates that these three factors play a vital role in shaping how consumers perceive the value of a product or service Albari and Kartikasari (2019). Among these factors, Product Quality emerges as the most dominant influence, highlighting that consumers' direct experiences with product attributes, such as performance, durability, and reliability, are key determinants of their satisfaction. Consumers are more likely to feel satisfied when the product they use meets or even exceeds their expectations in terms of quality. Furthermore, Brand Awareness significantly contributes to Customer Satisfaction, suggesting that strong brand recognition, including how easily a brand is recalled and recognized by consumers, positively impacts their perceptions (Foroudi, 2019). Price Perception also plays an essential role, as prices that are deemed fair and aligned with product benefits create a more positive experience for consumers, enhancing their satisfaction.

In addition to affecting Customer Satisfaction, these three factors also directly influence Customer Loyalty. However, the influence of Product Quality and Price Perception on Customer Loyalty is relatively smaller compared to Brand Awareness. This finding suggests that, while product quality and price perception are important in maintaining customer loyalty, strong brand recognition has a more significant impact (Ahmed et al. 2023). This can be attributed to the ability of a well-known brand to foster trust and build stronger emotional connections with consumers. Meanwhile, Customer Satisfaction has a substantial impact on Customer Loyalty. When consumers are satisfied with the product or service they use, they are more likely to continue using the product, recommend it to others, and remain loyal to the brand. Thus, satisfaction serves as a strong foundation for establishing long-term relationships between consumers and the brand.

Furthermore, the analysis reveals the mediating role of Customer Satisfaction in the relationship between Brand

Awareness, Product Quality, and Price Perception with Customer Loyalty. In other words, while these three factors have a direct influence on Customer Loyalty, their impact is further enhanced through Customer Satisfaction. For example, although Brand Awareness can directly improve Customer Loyalty, its effect becomes significantly stronger when consumers are first satisfied with the brand's products or services (Rane et al. 2023). A similar pattern applies to Product Quality and Price Perception, where satisfied consumers are more loyal than those who rely solely on the direct influence of these factors. These findings underscore the importance of ensuring consumer satisfaction as an integral part of strategies to build sustainable loyalty. In the long term, efforts to enhance Brand Awareness, maintain Product Quality, and establish fair Price Perception must be balanced with a focus on creating satisfying experiences for consumers (Kenyon and Sen 2015). By doing so, brands can not only attract consumer attention but also ensure that consumers remain loyal and continue to support the offered products or services.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Brand Awareness, Product Quality, and Price Perception have a significant influence on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty for Cussons Baby products in Kendari City. Product Quality is the most dominant factor in building customer satisfaction, while Brand Awareness has the greatest influence on customer loyalty. Additionally, Customer Satisfaction acts as a partial mediator, strengthening the relationships between these three variables and Customer Loyalty. These findings affirm that customer satisfaction is not only essential for creating positive experiences but also a key factor in building long-term relationships between consumers and brands.

Implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications. First, companies need to consistently improve product quality to meet consumer expectations, as this is the primary factor in enhancing satisfaction. Second, efforts to increase Brand Awareness, such as effective marketing campaigns and targeted promotions, are essential for driving customer loyalty. Third, product pricing needs to align with the benefits perceived by consumers to create a positive perception of value. By managing these three factors in a balanced way, companies can strengthen customer loyalty and maintain a competitive edge in the market.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study has several limitations that present opportunities for future research. One limitation is that the scope of the research is restricted to Cussons Baby products in Kendari City, meaning the findings may not fully apply to other brands or regions. Future studies could expand the geographic scope or examine similar relationships in other product categories. Additionally, this research focuses only on a few specific variables; other

variables, such as emotional loyalty or customer experience, could be explored for a more comprehensive understanding. Future research is also encouraged to use longitudinal approaches to capture changes in the influence of variables over time.

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