The Antecedents of Customer Psychological Well-Being in Local Culinary Retail

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the antecedents of customer psychological well-being (CPWB) among Generation Z and Millennial consumers in Indonesia's local culinary retail industry, focusing on perceived brand authenticity, brand love, brand equity, and customer delight. Drawing on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, perceived brand authenticity is conceptualized as a stimulus shaping emotional responses toward psychological well-being. Data were collected from 125 consumers across six cities and analyzed using covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) with AMOS Graphics 24. The findings indicate that perceived brand authenticity significantly influences brand love and brand equity, while brand love influences brand equity and customer delight. Brand equity significantly enhances CPWB. In contrast, customer delight shows a negative and marginally significant relationship with CPWB at the 10% level (CR = −1.939, p = 0.052), contrary to the hypothesized direction. Findings inform Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) by highlighting how authenticity and brand relationships shape well-being in culinary contexts.

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SARI PATI

Penelitian ini mengkaji faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap kesejahteraan psikologis pelanggan (CPWB) pada konsumen Generasi Z dan Milenial dalam industri ritel kuliner Indonesia, dengan berfokus pada *perceived brand authenticity*, *brand love*, *brand equity*, dan *customer delight*. Berlandaskan kerangka *Stimulus-Organism-Response* (S-O-R), *perceived brand authenticity* dikonseptualisasikan sebagai stimulus membentuk respons dan berkontribusi terhadap kesejahteraan psikologis. Data diperoleh dari 125 konsumen di enam kota dan dianalisis menggunakan *Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling* (CB-SEM) dengan AMOS Graphics 24. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *perceived brand authenticity* berpengaruh signifikan terhadap *brand love* dan *brand equity*, sedangkan *brand love* berpengaruh signifikan terhadap *brand equity* dan *customer delight*. *Brand equity* berpengaruh signifikan terhadap CPWB. Sebaliknya, *customer delight* menunjukkan hubungan negatif dan marginal signifikan dengan CPWB pada 10% (CR = −1,939; p = 0,052), berlawanan dengan arah yang dihipotesiskan. Temuan memberikan implikasi bagi *Consumer Culture Theory* (CCT) dengan

menunjukkan autentisitas dan hubungan konsumen dengan merek berperan membentuk kesejahteraan dalam konteks kuliner.

INTRODUCTION

The local food retail industry in Indonesia has experienced significant growth over the past five years, driven by rising domestic consumption and shifts in consumer behavior, particularly among Generation Z and Millennials. Noviayanti (2025) reveals that the middle-class population in Indonesia reached 47.85 million people, or 17.13% of the total population, as of August 2024, contributing 38.28% to national consumption, with the largest portion allocated to food expenditures. Regarding middle-class spending, 41.67% is allocated to food, while the group transitioning into the middle class records a higher allocation of 5621% for this category, underscoring that food and culinary experiences are key components of household spending amid current lifestyle and consumer culture trends. This phenomenon underscores that more than half of urban consumers cite experiences that offer a comfortable atmosphere, social interaction, and emotional value as the primary reasons for choosing a dining venue, surpassing considerations of price and product quantity. In this context, perceived value is a key factor driving repeat visit intentions and fostering long-term loyalty, particularly among consumers who are becoming increasingly rational yet still consider emotional factors in their decision-making (Septia & Marsasi, 2025). These findings indicate that culinary consumption has evolved into a medium for seeking happiness, relaxation, and social connection. However, this phenomenon also points to a gap between fleeting moments of pleasure (delight) and more stable, sustainable psychological well-being.

This industry trend becomes even more relevant when considered in light of the dominance of nationally recognized local food brands. According to (Khaira, 2025) the market share of Indonesia's foodservice industry in 2023 reached US$26.5 billion, with the largest contributions coming from local brands such as HokBen at U8S$181.7 million, Mie Gacoan at US$135.9 million, and Richeese Factory at US$88.5 million. (Rosita, 2025) also notes that Es Teler 77 is one of Indonesia's local culinary brands that has successfully penetrated the international market. Data from Komalasari (2023) indicates that the national culinary market value reached Rp1.247 trillion a 14% increase from the previous year with the food category as the largest contributor. JakPat (2025) reveals that 77% of consumers prefer local culinary products due to their distinctive flavors, affordable prices, and comfortable atmosphere, while interest in new restaurants is driven by unique menus and attractive venue designs. The success of these brands is inseparable from the integration of emotional branding and sensory branding, which builds emotional engagement with consumers through consistent taste, store atmosphere, and a strong visual identity.

The dominance of Gen Z and Millennials further underscores the importance of an experience-based approach in this industry. JakPat (2024) notes that 68% of Gen Z and 61% of Millennials dine at local restaurants at least once a week. The preferences of these two generations are influenced not only by taste and price but also by the social, emotional, and lifestyle experiences associated with the brand. For Gen Z, dining serves as a medium for self-

expression and social media content that reflects personal identity, while Millennials prioritize service quality, a comfortable atmosphere, and emotional stability as the foundation of loyalty. This pattern indicates that local culinary consumption has evolved into experiential consumption, where symbolic meaning and emotional attachment play a role in shaping purchasing decisions and long-term relationships with customers. Additionally, the characteristics of modern consumers, particularly Gen Z, reveal more complex behavioral tendencies influenced by psychological factors such as attitudes and risk perceptions toward a product or service. Positive attitudes can increase adoption intent, while high-risk perceptions can actually hinder consumption decisions; therefore, companies need to understand these psychological dynamics to create more effective and relevant marketing strategies (Indah & Marsasi, 2024). This fact indicates that dining has shifted from a utilitarian activity to a symbolic and social practice rich in meaning. When these sensory stimuli align with the customer's self-image, self-congruence is created, strengthening the consumer's psychological connection to the brand. From the perspective of Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory, the restaurant atmosphere, cultural narrative, menu innovation, and service interactions are positioned as stimuli (S) that influence the internal organism (O) comprising emotions, attachment, and value evaluations ultimately generating responses (R) such as loyalty, advocacy, and psychological well-being.

Within this dynamic, perceived brand authenticity serves as a strategic determinant in creating brand differentiation within the local culinary industry. This phenomenon aligns with the Consumer Culture Theory approach, which views consumption as a cultural practice that shapes identity and social meaning. (Oenica, 2024) demonstrates that perceived brand authenticity significantly influences brand trust and brand love while simultaneously strengthening brand equity. Bazi et al. (2023) also found that brand love significantly increases customer-based brand equity through loyalty and advocacy. Within the S-O-R framework, brand authenticity serves as the primary stimulus that triggers consumers' emotional attachment and reinforces brand value as an evaluative and behavioral response. Theoretically, this research framework is enriched through the integration of Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory and Consumer Culture Theory to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the dynamics of local culinary consumer behavior. The S-O-R model explains that external stimuli such as brand authenticity, store atmosphere design, service quality, and sensory experiences influence consumers' internal psychological states, including emotions, affect, and utility evaluations, thereby generating behavioral responses such as loyalty, advocacy, and sustained psychological well-being (Sen, 2024). This is because authentic experiences significantly enhance consumers' emotional engagement and subjective well-being. Furthermore, from the perspective of Consumer Culture Theory, consumption is viewed as a cultural practice that serves to build identity, symbolism, and social meaning (Thompson, 2005). In this context, brands such as Mie Gacoan, HokBen, Richeese Factory, and Es Teler 77 serve not merely as providers of food products or to meet basic dietary needs, but as symbols of lifestyle and spaces for social expression for Generation Z and Millennials. The integration of these two theories provides a conceptual foundation for understanding how perceived brand authenticity as a cultural stimulus and an experiential factor can shape brand love and brand equity as internal consumer processes, while also influencing customer delight and customer

psychological well-being in Indonesia's local food retail industry.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework to explain the formation of customer psychological well-being within Indonesia's local culinary retail industry. Unlike prior studies that predominantly positioned brand equity as a behavioral outcome associated with loyalty and repurchase intention, this study conceptualizes brand equity as a psychological and symbolic mechanism capable of generating emotional comfort, identity congruence, and long-term consumer well-being. The integration of these theoretical perspectives provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding how perceived brand authenticity, as both a cultural stimulus and experiential attribute, shapes brand love and brand equity as internal consumer responses, while simultaneously influencing customer delight and psychological well-being. From the perspective of CCT, local culinary consumption extends beyond functional value and represents a culturally embedded experience through which consumers construct self-identity, emotional attachment, and social meaning. Accordingly, this study extends the contemporary branding literature by positioning brand equity not merely as a strategic marketing asset, but also as a culturally meaningful construct that contributes to sustainable psychological well-being among Generation Z and Millennial consumers.

Previous studies have demonstrated that consumers' perceptions of brand authenticity play an important role in strengthening emotional attachment toward a brand, as authentic brands are more capable of creating trust, emotional resonance, and long-term relational bonds with consumers (Rodrigues et al., 2024). Within the culinary retail context, authentic brand experiences may encourage consumers to develop stronger affection and emotional closeness toward local brands. However, previous findings also indicate that the development of brand love is not always formed consistently across different consumption situations and cultural contexts, suggesting that emotional attachment toward brands may vary depending on consumers' experiential and symbolic interactions with the brand (Robertson et al., 2022). Furthermore, prior research has revealed that brand love contributes positively to the formation of brand equity through consumers' loyalty and engagement with the brand (Sabiha, 2021). Nevertheless, several empirical findings reported that the influence of brand love on brand equity may weaken or become insignificant when relational dimensions and emotional variables are not simultaneously integrated into the analytical framework (Ulhaq et al., 2025). In subsequent relationships, strong brand equity has been associated with consumers' psychological well-being because meaningful brands are capable of creating feelings of purpose, self-expression, and emotional fulfillment in consumers' lives (Williams et al., 2022). Despite this, other studies still position psychological well-being merely as a supporting or moderating variable in consumer behavior research, resulting in inconsistent findings regarding its direct relationship with brand-related constructs (Kosat, 2024). These inconsistencies indicate that the relationships among perceived brand authenticity, emotional attachment, brand value, and consumers' psychological well-being remain insufficiently explained, particularly within the context of local culinary retail industries in emerging markets. Therefore, this study proposes a more integrated framework by positioning perceived brand authenticity as a driver of brand love and brand equity, while simultaneously examining the roles of brand love and customer delight in enhancing customer

psychological well-being. Through this approach, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how authentic culinary consumption experiences can create emotional attachment, strengthen brand value, and ultimately improve consumers' long-term psychological well-being in the Indonesian local food retail sector.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that prior research has predominantly emphasized behavioral, operational, and functional outcomes while paying limited attention to the cultural and psychological dimensions of culinary consumption, particularly within local culinary retail contexts. Psychological benefits derived from eco-friendly restaurant experiences were found to influence consumers' emotional responses and perceived value; however, the analysis primarily focused on technologically driven dining environments and did not sufficiently explain how culturally embedded consumption experiences contribute to emotional attachment and long-term psychological well-being (Kim, 2023). Similarly, brand experience and brand authenticity were identified as significant antecedents of consumers' behavioral intentions, suggesting that favorable brand experiences strengthen authenticity perceptions and encourage repurchase behavior, yet the study remained limited to behavioral consequences and overlooked the broader cultural and psychological implications of consumption experiences (Park et al., 2023). In addition, sustainability-oriented service innovation was shown to enhance restaurant brand equity through employee training and environmentally responsible practices, although the discussion mainly emphasized managerial and operational perspectives without examining how culinary consumption shapes symbolic meaning, social identity, and cultural attachment among consumers (Gil-saura et al., 2024). Furthermore, the role of service recovery in restoring customer loyalty following service failure has also been extensively highlighted; nevertheless, consumption experiences were still interpreted from a predominantly functional service perspective and were not associated with culturally meaningful experiences capable of fostering emotional attachment and psychological well-being (Lim et al., 2025). A similar limitation can be observed in studies integrating social identity and transformative service research, where consumer identification was found to enhance social well-being through psychosocial resources, yet the investigation remained centered on general service settings and did not specifically address how local brand authenticity and cultural symbolism shape consumers' emotional experiences within culinary retail environments (Inoue et al., 2025). Addressing these limitations, the present study adopts Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) to conceptualize culinary consumption beyond a purely economic activity by examining the interrelationships among perceived brand authenticity, brand love, brand equity, customer delight, and customer psychological well-being in Indonesia's local culinary retail industry. In doing so, this study positions local culinary consumption as a culturally embedded experience capable of shaping symbolic meaning, emotional attachment, consumer identity, and long-term psychological well-being.

The state-of-the-art nature of this research lies in the integration of two major theoretical frameworks the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory, to construct a comprehensive conceptual model. Within the S-O-R framework, perceived brand authenticity is positioned as an external stimulus that influences internal organisms, specifically brand love and brand equity, thereby generating affective and psychological responses such

as customer delight and customer psychological well-being. Meanwhile, from the CCT perspective, local culinary consumption is understood as a cultural practice that shapes social identity, brand symbolism, and collective meaning, particularly among Generation Z and Millennials. The integration of these two theories expands the application of S-O-R from merely explaining behavioral responses to the formation of consumer well-being based on experience and cultural meaning, while also introducing new contextual contributions to Indonesia's rapidly growing local food retail industry.

Despite the growing attention toward emotional branding and experiential consumption, the relationships among perceived brand authenticity, brand love, brand equity, customer delight, and customer psychological well-being remain theoretically and empirically inconclusive. From the perspective of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), consumption is not merely a functional activity but also a socio-cultural practice through which consumers construct identity, negotiate symbolic meanings, and express lifestyle values. This phenomenon is increasingly evident in Indonesia's local food retail industry, particularly among Generation Z and Millennial consumers, where culinary consumption has evolved into a form of experiential and symbolic consumption. Local culinary brands such as Mie Gacoan, HokBen, Richeese Factory, and Es Teler 77 are no longer perceived solely as food providers, but also as cultural symbols associated with emotional experiences, social interaction, and self-expression. However, prior studies report contradictory findings regarding the relationships among perceived brand authenticity, brand love, brand equity, customer delight, and psychological well-being. Several studies demonstrate that authentic brand experiences strengthen emotional attachment and brand value, whereas others reveal insignificant or inconsistent relationships depending on contextual and cultural conditions. Similarly, customer delight often reflects temporary emotional responses that may not necessarily contribute to long-term psychological well-being. These inconsistencies indicate that consumers' emotional and psychological responses toward local culinary brands are shaped by cultural interpretations, symbolic meanings, and identity-related motivations that differ across individuals and consumption contexts.

Accordingly, this study aims to empirically examine the interrelationships among perceived brand authenticity, brand love, brand equity, customer delight, and customer psychological well-being by integrating Consumer Culture Theory with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework. Specifically, this research investigates the role of perceived brand authenticity as a cultural and symbolic stimulus capable of shaping consumers' emotional attachment and evaluative perceptions through brand love and brand equity, which subsequently influence customer delight and psychological well-being. This study also seeks to explain how local culinary consumption functions as a cultural mechanism through which consumers develop emotional attachment, construct social identity, and generate symbolic meaning within their consumption experiences. By focusing on Generation Z and Millennial consumers in Indonesia's local food retail sector, this research contributes to the advancement of culturally oriented consumer behavior literature while providing strategic implications for developing authenticity-based and experience-driven marketing strategies that support sustainable consumer well-being.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Consumer Culture Theory

The Customer Culture Theory (CCT) model is one of the most widely used theoretical frameworks for understanding consumer behavior as a complex social and cultural phenomenon. This perspective enables researchers to identify the antecedent factors that shape the consumer experience, particularly through the process of constructing meaning, symbols, and identity that emerge in the interaction between consumers and the market (Thompson, 2005). The CCT framework positions consumption not merely as an economic activity but as a cultural practice influenced by social narratives, community relations, and symbolic interpretations of brands and consumption experiences. In a more contemporary context, the dynamics of consumption culture have also undergone transformation through the process of platformization, where digital spaces expand the practice of sharing experiences and collectively negotiating the meaning of consumption (Caliandro et al., 2024). Furthermore, conceptual developments in CCT emphasize that consumption practices are influenced by social structures, market dynamics, and consumers' daily routines, which shape symbolic values and brand experiences, thereby providing an applied foundation for explaining emotional attachment and consumer well-being across various industrial contexts (Arnould et al., 2019). From the perspective of Consumer Culture Theory, consumption is viewed as a means of identity formation and symbolic meaning. The alignment between a consumer's self-image and a brand's image (self-congruity) has been shown to strengthen emotional attachment and significantly influence purchasing decisions (Marsasi et al., 2024).

Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory

The Stimulus-Organism-Response model is designed to reinforce the concept that stimuli from the external environment (S) serve as catalysts that activate internal processes within the consumer (O), which then result in specific behavioral responses (R) (Eroglu et al., 2001). This model demonstrates that external factors do not directly shape behavior, but influence it through changes in internal psychological states, which subsequently determine the consumer's final actions (Eroglu et al., 2001). The Stimulus-Organism-Response framework maps various experience-based stimuli, such as interactivity, communication appeal, and message credibility, which influence the cognitive and affective states of the consumer as an organism (O), thereby generating behavioral responses in the form of engagement and purchase intent (Lay et al., 2025). Digital experience stimuli, including visual design and information quality, modify consumers' emotional perceptions before eliciting behavioral responses, thereby reinforcing the mediating role of the organism in the relationship between stimulus and response (Jeon, 2016). Based on S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theoretical framework, this study analyzes the dynamics of consumer behavior in the local food retail industry by positioning perceived brand authenticity as an external stimulus that represents perceptions of brand authenticity, cultural narratives, and authentic taste experiences. This stimulus influences the consumer's internal organism, comprising brand love, brand equity, and customer delight, representing emotional attachment, brand value evaluation, and affective experiences toward the local culinary brand. This internal process subsequently generates a behavioral response in the form of customer psychological well-being, which is a state of emotional well-being arising from meaningful and enjoyable consumption experiences. This model reveals that perceptions of brand authenticity do not directly shape consumers' psychological well-being, but

rather operate through changes in the emotional and evaluative states experienced by consumers first, subsequently determining well-being as an observable behavioral outcome.

Hypothesis Development

Perceived Brand Authenticity, Brand Love, and Brand Equity

Perceived brand authenticity reflects consumers' perceptions that a brand consistently demonstrates authenticity, integrity, and credibility in delivering the promises communicated to the market, thereby strengthening perceptions of sincerity and trustworthiness (Sun et al., 2024; Oenica, 2024). motivations (Marsasi & Barqiah, 2023) further explained that consumers' evaluations of authenticity are influenced by individual consumption motivations and demographic characteristics, while (Bu, 2023) emphasized that authenticity emerges from the alignment between heritage preservation and innovation. Similarly, Tsai et al. (2024) demonstrated that authenticity perceptions positively influence experiential value and customer satisfaction because sincere and genuine services create favorable consumption experiences. The integration of omnichannel communication strategies also strengthens authenticity perceptions by creating more personalized and consistent interactions between consumers and brands (Khoirunnisa & Marsasi, 2024). Previous studies revealed that perceived brand authenticity positively influences brand love because consumers who perceive brands as honest and credible are more likely to develop emotional attachment and long-term commitment toward the brand (Safeer et al., 2020; Hashem, 2024). (Pan, 2021) further found that authentic restaurant characteristics strengthen consumers' emotional connection and loyalty. In addition, perceived brand authenticity significantly contributes to brand equity by reinforcing positive brand associations, perceived quality, and customer loyalty (Amer et al., 2023). Likewise, (Khan, 2023) emphasized that sincerity and credibility in brand activities strengthen long-term brand value and customer advocacy. Based on these findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Perceived brand authenticity has a positive and significant influence on brand love.

H2: Perceived brand authenticity has a positive and significant influence on brand equity.

Brand Love, Brand Equity, and Customer Delight

Brand love reflects a deep emotional bond between consumers and a brand formed through positive experiences, authentic interactions, and consistent service quality (Chang et al., 2024). In the local culinary retail context, emotional attachment may emerge through satisfying food quality, meaningful cultural experiences, and interactive engagement between consumers and restaurant brands. (Carolina et al., 2024) highlighted that brand love and online customer engagement strengthen emotional relationships between consumers and restaurant brands through digital interaction. Likewise, (Trivedi, 2020) positioned brand love as a central construct linking customer experience, service quality, and behavioral loyalty. Previous studies demonstrated that brand love positively contributes to brand equity because emotionally attached consumers are more likely to engage in loyalty, advocacy behavior, and positive word of mouth (Bazi et al., 2023; Dahrouj et al., 2025). (France et al., 2025) further confirmed that brand love enhances perceived quality, brand preference, and repurchase intention within digital brand environments. In addition, customer

delight represents a higher-order emotional response arising when service experiences exceed customer expectations and create feelings of joy and surprise simultaneously (Oliver et al., 1997). (Viet et al., 2020) demonstrated that innovative and interactive customer experiences significantly foster customer delight, while (Clemes, 2017) found that service quality and customer engagement reinforce positive emotional responses and affective attachment toward brands. Based on these findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Brand love has a positive and significant influence on brand equity.

H4: Brand love has a positive and significant influence on customer delight.

Brand Equity and Customer Psychological Well-Being

Brand equity refers to the added value attached to a brand through consumers' perceptions, loyalty, experiences, and emotional evaluations formed through continuous interaction with the brand (Raab, 2025). (Muchuu, 2025) explained that brand equity is reflected through favorable associations, perceived quality, and strong positioning within consumers' cognitive and affective structures. Similarly, (Omidvar, 2025) argued that positive brand image, trust, and corporate social responsibility practices contribute significantly to strengthening brand equity. Within the local culinary retail context, strong brand equity may emerge through consistent service quality, positive restaurant atmosphere, and cultural identity associated with the brand. Previous studies demonstrated that brand equity positively contributes to customer psychological well-being through relational attachment, engagement, and service satisfaction (Yi et al., 2021). (Dahiya, 2026) further emphasized that trust, loyalty, and perceived value strengthen consumers' emotional stability and meaningful consumption experiences. Likewise, (Zhao, 2025) revealed that consistent brand experiences enhance customer well-being through satisfaction and certainty in consumption decisions. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Brand equity has a positive and significant influence on customer psychological well-being.

Customer Delight and Customer Psychological Well-Being

Customer delight refers to a highly positive emotional response arising when service experiences exceed customer expectations and simultaneously generate feelings of joy and surprise (Torrres et al., 2019). (Ul et al., 2024) explained that customer delight emerges when consumers receive unexpected, personalized, and meaningful experiences. Similarly, (Lam et al., 2025) argued that innovative service experiences strengthen admiration and emotional attachment toward organizations. From the perspective of Service-Dominant Logic, value is co-created through interactions between consumers and organizations, where active consumer involvement contributes significantly to memorable experiences and emotional responses (Handoyo & Marsasi, 2025). In the context of local culinary retail, customer delight may emerge through exceptional dining experiences, personalized service, innovative menu presentation, and interactive engagement. Previous studies demonstrated that customer delight significantly enhances customer psychological well-being because memorable experiences foster emotional comfort, happiness, and positive emotional attachment (Widyowati et al., 2023). Likewise, (Aydin, 2026) confirmed that customer delight reinforces trust, engagement, and sustained positive emotional experiences among consumers.

(Utami et al., 2025) further confirmed that delightful service experiences positively contribute to consumers' psychological well-being and long-term relational commitment. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Customer delight has a positive and significant influence on customer psychological well-being.

Drawing on the hypothesis development, Figure 1 presents the research model illustrating the relationships among variables in this study.

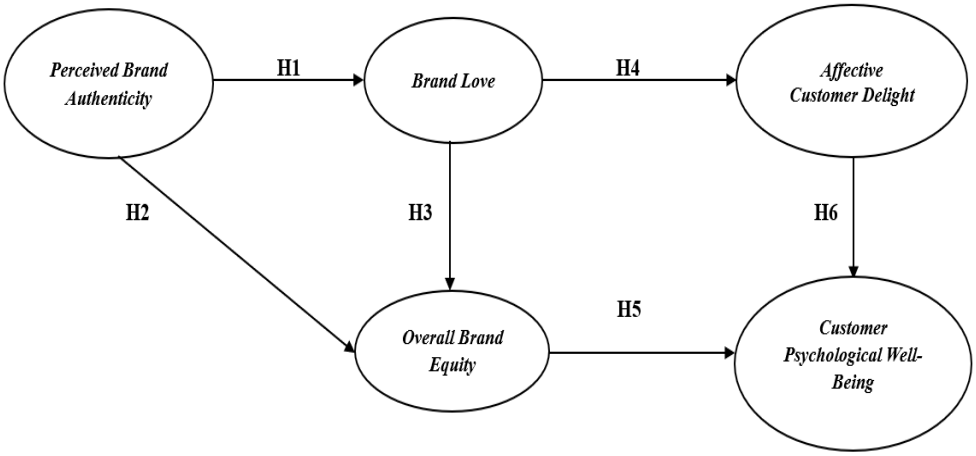


Figure 1. The Research Model

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the relationships among perceived brand authenticity, brand love, brand equity, customer delight, and customer psychological well-being in Indonesia's local culinary retail industry. The study focused on consumers of local culinary brands, including Mie Gacoan, HokBen, Richeese Factory, and Es Teler 77. A quantitative research design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to empirically test the hypothesized relationships among the constructs specified in the conceptual framework. Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) was employed because the research model comprises multiple latent constructs and requires the simultaneous assessment of both the measurement and structural models. The analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 and AMOS Graphics 24.

Sample Selection and Data Source

The population of this study consisted of consumers who had previously visited or purchased products from local culinary retail brands in Indonesia. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed based on predetermined respondent criteria. Respondents were required to be at least 18 years old and to have consumed products from local culinary retail restaurants within the previous six months.

A total of 125 valid responses were retained for the final analysis. Following Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), 21 measurement items were retained as valid and reliable indicators for subsequent structural model estimation. Although the sample size is relatively modest for covariance-based Structural Equation

Modeling (CB-SEM), its suitability was considered in relation to the characteristics and complexity of the proposed model rather than solely on the basis of a fixed indicator-to-sample ratio. Methodological literature indicates that sample-size considerations in SEM should take into account model complexity, the number of estimated parameters, measurement characteristics, and statistical power rather than relying exclusively on a single rule-of-thumb criterion (Kline, 2015; Wolf et al., 2013; Kyriazos, 2018). In the present study, the structural model consists of five latent constructs, 21 retained observed indicators, and seven hypothesized structural relationships. The measurement model was first evaluated through CFA, followed by structural model estimation using the maximum likelihood approach in AMOS 24. Thus, the 125 valid observations represent the final screened sample used for model estimation following the measurement assessment.

The data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with IBM SPSS Statistics 26 and AMOS 24 Graphics. The analysis comprised measurement-model assessment, including validity and reliability testing, followed by structural-model assessment, goodness-of-fit evaluation, and hypothesis testing.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The study employed a structured questionnaire developed from previously established measurement indicators. The operationalization of each construct was based on indicators adopted from prior studies and contextualized to the local culinary retail setting, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicator of the Research Instrument

Variable	Indicator
Perceived Brand Authenticity (PBA)	1. Brand sincerity and genuineness 2. Consistency of brand values 3. Authentic service experience 4. Distinctive local culinary identity (Kumar & Kaushal, 2021; Rodrigues et al., 2024)
Brand Love (BL)	1. Positive emotional feelings toward the brand 2. Affection and preference for the brand 3. Emotional attachment through unique sensory experiences 4. Feelings of happiness resulting from consistent service experiences (Shen et al., 2021; Kiatkawsin & Sutherland, 2020; Alshreef et al., 2023).
Overall Brand Equity (BQ)	1. Perceived brand quality 2. Brand preference 3. Affordable perceived value 4. Emotional loyalty toward the brand 5. Strong brand recognition (Vo & Nguyen, 2022; Guzmán Valle et al., 2024)

Customer Delight (CD)	1. Enjoyable consumption experience 2. Positive emotional impression 3. Personalized service experience 4. Memorable service interaction (Rivera et al., 2019; Jeon et al., 2020)
Customer Psychological Well-Being (CPWB)	1. Social connection through culinary experiences 2. Convenience in using restaurant services 3. Confidence in using digital services 4. Positive self-evaluation and life perception (Yang et al., 2024; Huang & Yan, 2024)

(Source: Primary Data, 2026)

The questionnaire measured five constructs: perceived brand authenticity, brand love, brand equity, customer delight, and customer psychological well-being. It was distributed online through Google Forms to consumers who met the predetermined eligibility criteria. All responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This response format was applied consistently across all constructs to provide a standardized basis for assessing respondents' perceptions(Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

Data Analysis

This study employed covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) as the primary analytical technique. CB-SEM was selected because it enables the simultaneous assessment of relationships among latent constructs, observed indicators, and measurement errors within a single analytical framework. The analysis was conducted using AMOS Graphics 24 to evaluate both the measurement and structural models. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was initially conducted to assess the adequacy of the measurement indicators representing perceived brand authenticity, brand love, brand equity, customer delight, and customer psychological well-being. Indicators with standardized factor loadings below 0.50 were excluded from subsequent analysis. The retained indicators were subsequently assessed using Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to evaluate internal consistency and convergent validity. The analysis also included assessments of univariate and multivariate normality and the identification of potential multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis distance (d^2). Following the assessment of the measurement model, the structural model was estimated to examine the hypothesized relationships among the exogenous and endogenous constructs. Model fit was evaluated using several goodness-of-fit indices, including the chi-square to degrees-of-freedom ratio (CMIN/DF), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). CMIN/DF values of ≤ 3.00 and RMSEA values ranging from 0.03 to 0.08 were considered indicative of acceptable model fit, while GFI, TLI, and CFI values approaching or exceeding 0.90 were regarded as desirable. The goodness-of-fit indices were interpreted collectively rather than on the basis of a single criterion. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the Critical Ratio (CR), probability value (p-value), and standardized regression weight. The study initially considered statistical significance at the 10% level when the absolute CR value exceeded 1.645 and the

p-value was below 0.10, while the conventional 5% significance level was indicated by an absolute CR value exceeding 1.960 and a p-value below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019).

Respondents Demographic Information

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of respondents based on several characteristics, including gender, age, educational background, occupation, domicile, monthly income, preferred local culinary retail brand, and visit frequency. The majority of respondents were male, totaling 73 respondents (58%), while females numbered 52 respondents (42%). By age group, 28 respondents (22%) were aged 18-22, 27 respondents (22%) were aged 23-27, 24 respondents (19%) were aged 28-32, 27 respondents (22%) were aged 33-37, and 19 respondents (15%) were over 38 years old. In terms of the highest level of education, 48 respondents (38%) had a high school diploma or D1/D2 degree, 12 respondents (10%) had a D3 degree, 61 respondents (49%) had a bachelor's degree (S1), and 4 respondents (3%) had a master's degree (S2). In terms of employment status, 51 respondents (41%) were students, 37 respondents (20%) were private-sector employees, 23 respondents (18%) were self-employed, 9 respondents (7%) were civil servants, and 5 respondents (4%) were employees of state-owned enterprises. Based on place of residence, 37 respondents (30%) were from Jakarta, 21 respondents (17%) from Tangerang, 19 respondents (15%) from Bandung, 19 respondents (15%) from Medan, 18 respondents (14%) from Surabaya, and 11 respondents (9%) from Malang. Meanwhile, regarding monthly income, 31 respondents (25%) had an income of less than Rp1,200,000, 48 respondents (38%) have an income of Rp1,200,001-Rp3,600,000, 31 respondents (25%) have an income of Rp3,600,001-Rp6,000,001, and 15 respondents (12%) have an income of more than Rp6,000,001. Based on preferences for local food brands, 81 respondents (65%) chose Mie Gacoan, 21 respondents (17%) chose HokBen, 17 respondents (14%) chose Richeese Factory, and 6 respondents (4%) chose Es Teler 77. Based on visit frequency, 70 respondents (56%) visited ≤2 times per month, while 55 respondents (44%) visited ≥2 times per month. The demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Information of the Respondents

No	Demographic	Category	N	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	73	58
		Female	52	42
2.	Age	18-22	28	22
		23-27	27	22
		28-32	24	19
		33-37	27	22
		>38	19	15
3.	Education	High School/D1/D2	48	38
		D3	12	10
		Bachelor's	61	49
		Master's	4	3

4.	Occupation	Student	51	41
		Private Sector Employee	37	20
		Self-Employed	23	18
		Civil Servant	9	7
		State-Owned Enterprise Employee	5	4
5.	Residence	Jakarta	37	30
		Tangerang	21	17
		Bandung	19	15
		Medan	19	15
		Surabaya	18	14
		Malang	11	9
6.	Monthly Income (IDR)	Less than Rp1.200.000	31	25
		More than Rp6.000.001	15	12
		Rp1.200.001- Rp3.600.001	48	38
		Rp3.600.001- Rp6.000.001	31	25
7.	Local Food Brands	Mie Gacoan	81	65
		HokBen	21	17
		Richeese Factory	17	14
		Es Teler 77	6	4
8.	Visit Frequency	≤ 2 times per month	70	56
		≥ 2 times per month	55	44

(Source: Primary Data, 2026)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Measurement Test

The measurement model was assessed using standardized factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR). Standardized factor loadings of 0.50 or higher were considered acceptable for retaining individual indicators. AVE values of 0.50 or higher are generally recommended as evidence of adequate convergent validity. However, an AVE value below 0.50 does not necessarily indicate inadequate convergent validity when the construct demonstrates sufficient Composite Reliability. In particular, when AVE is below 0.50 but CR exceeds 0.60, the construct may still provide evidence of acceptable convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3. Other Loading Value, Average Variance Extracted, and CR

Variabel	Item	Loading	Ave	CR	Conclusion
Brand Love (BL)	BL2- I feel a connection with this restaurant because it's always innovating to create new dishes..	0.672	0.499	0.796	Valid
	BL3- I love this culinary brand because its brand image is consistently maintained in the eyes of consumers.	0.852			Valid

	BL4-I feel a connection with this food brand because of its distinctive aroma and flavor.	0.708			Valid
	BL6-I like this food brand because of its consistently fast service.	0.563			Valid
Perceived Brand Authenticity (PBA)	PBA1-I experienced something unique about this culinary brand through its menu, which is based on the company's patented original recipes.	0.800	0.499	0.798	Valid
	PBA2-I stick with this culinary brand because it maintains its distinct flavor identity even while following trends.	0.649			Valid
	PBA4-I consider this culinary brand superior because it offers elegant service and a restaurant atmosphere that stands out from the competition..	0.621			Valid
	PBA6-I consider this culinary brand superior because it offers elegant service and a restaurant atmosphere that stands out from the competition.	0.741			Valid
Overall Brand Equity (BQ)	BQ1-I chose this food brand because it offers a wider variety and always prioritizes the safety of the ingredients used.	0.818	0.445	0.888	Valid
	BQ2-I choose this food brand because the taste is always satisfying.	0.799			Valid
	BQ4-I prefer this food brand because of its affordable prices.	0.579			Valid
	BQ6-I prefer this food brand because it tastes more authentic.	0.773			Valid
	BQ7-I find it easier to recognize this food brand because of its distinctive flavor and unique local ingredients.	0.810			Valid
Affective Customer Delight (CD)	CD2-I'm happy with this restaurant because I had the chance to try their favorite dishes.	0.630	0.396	0.722	Valid
	CD3-I feel that the prices at this restaurant are reasonable because they match the quality of the food and the portion sizes.	0.545			Valid
	CD4- I received excellent service from this restaurant because their	0.709			Valid

	responses were quick and personalized.				
	CD5- I feel this restaurant is more trustworthy because customer complaints were handled professionally.	0.621			Valid
Customer Psychological Well-Being (CPWB)	CPWB3-I enjoy this restaurant (brand) because I can hang out with my friends there.	0.599	0.439	0.757	Valid
	CPWB4-I am able to use the services offered by this restaurant (brand).	0.681			Valid
	CPWB5- I am confident in my ability to use the digital services provided by this restaurant (brand).	0.675			Valid
	CPWB7-I feel that this culinary brand has contributed to my achievements so far, both through its products and the facilities it provides.	0.691			Valid

(Source: Primary Data, 2026)

As presented in Table 3, the AVE values for all five constructs are below the conventional threshold of 0.50: Brand Love (0.499), Perceived Brand Authenticity (0.499), Overall Brand Equity (0.445), Affective Customer Delight (0.396), and Customer Psychological Well-Being (0.439). Although these values do not fully meet the conventional AVE criterion, the CR values for all constructs exceed 0.70, providing supporting evidence of convergent validity. The relatively low AVE values, particularly for Affective Customer Delight (0.396) and Customer Psychological Well-Being (0.439), are acknowledged as a limitation of the me asurement model. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted cautiously rather than as indicating that all constructs fully satisfy the conventional AVE criterion.

Structural Test

The structural model was assessed using several goodness-of-fit indices to evaluate the extent to which the proposed model was consistent with the empirical data. The assessment included the chi-square to degrees-of-freedom ratio (CMIN/DF), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). A CMIN/DF value below 3.00 and an RMSEA value below 0.08 were considered indicative of acceptable model fit. For GFI, TLI, and CFI, values approaching or exceeding 0.90 were considered desirable, whereas lower values may indicate marginal fit. Accordingly, the goodness-of-fit indices were interpreted collectively rather than on the basis of a single criterion.

Table 4. Model Fit for The Structural Model

CMIN/DF	RMSEA	GFI	TLI	CFI
	(<0.08)	(>0.8)	(>0.8)	(>0.8)

	(<3.0)				
Structural Model	1,663	0.073	0,833	0.906	0.925

(Source: Primary Data, 2026)

The model fit (Table 4) results indicate an acceptable overall fit. The CMIN/DF value of 1.663 is below the recommended threshold of 3.00, while the RMSEA value of 0.073 is below 0.08. The CFI (0.925) and TLI (0.906) exceed the conventional 0.90 criterion, indicating satisfactory comparative fit. However, the GFI value of 0.833 remains below the conventional 0.90 threshold and is therefore considered marginal. This relatively lower GFI value is acknowledged as a limitation of the model. Overall, the model demonstrates an acceptable fit based on the collective assessment of the goodness-of-fit indices, while the marginal GFI should be considered when interpreting the structural relationships.

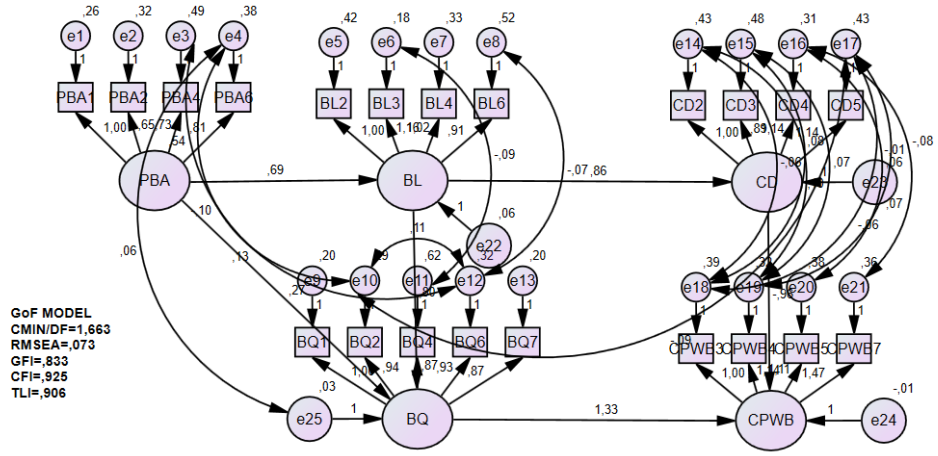


Figure 2. Structural Model

(Source: Primary Data, 2026)

Table 5. Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Path	CR	P-Value	Result
H1 (+)	*Perceived Brand Authenticity → Brand Love*	7.133	***	*Supported*
H2 (+)	*Perceived Brand Authenticity → Brand Equity*	2.181	0.029	*Supported*
H3 (+)	*Brand Love → Brand Equity*	4.333	***	*Supported*
H4 (+)	*Brand Love → Customer Delight*		***	*Supported*
H5 (+)	*Brand Equity → Customer Psychological Well-Being*	3.549	***	*Supported*
H6 (-)	*Customer Delight → Customer Psychological Well-Being*	-1.939	0,052	*Marginally Significant*

Notes: *Triple asterisk* (***) *represent* p < 0.001; *Double asterisk* (**) *represent* 0.01; *Single asterisk* (*) *represent* p < 0.05.

(Source: Primary Data, 2026)

Based on the hypothesis testing results presented in Table 5, five of the six hypotheses were supported at the conventional 5% significance level. For

H6, the relationship between *Customer Delight* and *Customer Psychological Well-Being* was negative (CR = −1.939, p = 0.052). Although this result does not meet the conventional 5% significance threshold, it falls below the study's weaker 10% threshold and may therefore be regarded as marginally significant. Importantly, the negative direction is contrary to the hypothesized positive relationship. Accordingly, H6 is not supported in its hypothesized direction, although the result indicates a marginally significant negative association at the 10% level. Given its borderline significance and unexpected direction, this finding should be interpreted with caution.

Discussion

Perceived Brand Authenticity toward Brand Love and Brand Equity

Based on the statistical analysis, perceived brand authenticity demonstrates a significant positive influence on both brand love and brand equity. From the S-O-R perspective, perceived brand authenticity functions as an external stimulus that activates consumers' internal emotional and cognitive evaluations, reflected in brand love and brand equity as organismic responses. These findings indicate that consumers who perceive local culinary brands as sincere, transparent, consistent, and culturally meaningful are more likely to develop stronger emotional attachment and favorable evaluations of the brand. This result is consistent with prior studies emphasizing that authenticity strengthens consumers' emotional commitment and psychological closeness toward brands (Safeer et al., 2020; Hashem, 2024).

From the perspective of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), perceived brand authenticity can also be understood as a cultural resource through which consumers attach symbolic meanings to consumption experiences. Within brands such as Mie Gacoan, HokBen, Richeese Factory, and Es Teler 77, authenticity is reflected through flavor consistency, transparent communication regarding ingredients, distinctive culinary identity, and service experiences perceived as genuine. Among younger consumers, these characteristics may function as symbolic representations of identity and social belonging, thereby reinforcing emotional attachment and long-term brand value. Furthermore, the significant relationship between perceived brand authenticity and brand equity indicates that authentic brands are more capable of generating positive associations, perceived quality, and consumer loyalty, which ultimately strengthen customer-based brand equity (Tran et al., 2022). From a managerial perspective, these findings suggest that local culinary businesses should prioritize cultural authenticity, consistent product quality, and credible brand narratives to sustain emotional consumer relationships and strengthen long-term competitiveness.

Brand Love toward Brand Equity and Customer Delight

A critical analysis of the relationship between brand love and brand equity reveals a significant and positive influence, indicating that emotional attachment serves as an important mechanism in strengthening overall brand equity. Within the organism dimension of the S-O-R framework, brand love represents consumers' internal emotional attachment, which subsequently shapes cognitive evaluations of brand value and affective experiences such as customer delight. Consumers who emotionally identify with culinary brands tend to evaluate the brand more positively, demonstrate stronger loyalty, and engage in positive word-of-mouth communication. These findings corroborate prior studies suggesting that

brand love strengthens perceived quality, preference, and repurchase intention in contemporary consumption environments (Bazi et al., 2023; France et al., 2025).

From a CCT perspective, brand love also reflects the symbolic and experiential meanings that consumers construct through their relationships with brands. Consumers may incorporate culinary brands into their everyday lifestyles and use brand-related experiences to express identity, social connection, and personal preferences. In addition, this study demonstrates that brand love significantly enhances customer delight. Consumers with strong emotional attachment toward local culinary brands are more likely to experience joy, excitement, and memorable consumption experiences during interactions with the brand. This finding is consistent with earlier studies indicating that delight emerges when psychologically meaningful experiences exceed consumers' expectations and generate affective responses beyond ordinary satisfaction (Oliver et al., 1997; Viet et al., 2020). Within local culinary retail, affectively engaging experiences are shaped not only by product quality but also by distinctive dining atmospheres, social interaction, and active digital engagement, which are highly relevant to younger consumer segments. Therefore, local culinary businesses should not compete solely through functional product attributes but should also cultivate symbolically meaningful experiences capable of deepening emotional attachment and strengthening brand value.

Brand Equity toward Customer Psychological Well-Being

The findings further demonstrate that brand equity exerts a significant positive influence on customer psychological well-being. From the S-O-R perspective, this finding confirms the response component of the framework, whereby positive internal evaluations of brand value ultimately contribute to broader psychological outcomes reflected in customer psychological well-being. Consumers who perceive culinary brands as trustworthy, reputable, and meaningful tend to experience greater emotional comfort, self-confidence, and perceived quality of life during consumption experiences. This result is consistent with previous studies suggesting that strong brand equity contributes not only to behavioral outcomes but also to broader consumer well-being, including psychological and emotional benefits (Yi et al., 2021; Bhardwaj & Kalro, 2024).

From the perspective of CCT, brand equity may extend beyond functional or economic value because consumers attach symbolic and cultural meanings to brands that become integrated into their everyday consumption practices. Within local culinary retail chains such as Mie Gacoan, HokBen, Richeese Factory, and Es Teler 77, strong brand equity is developed through consistent taste quality, positive service experiences, and emotionally embedded brand identities that resonate with consumers' lifestyles and cultural values. For younger consumers, consuming local culinary brands may also represent a form of symbolic consumption associated with self-expression, social interaction, and emotional fulfillment. Consequently, strong brand equity not only strengthens consumer loyalty but also contributes to long-term psychological well-being through emotionally and culturally meaningful consumption experiences.

Customer Delight toward Customer Psychological Well-Being

However, this study also reveals that customer delight does not significantly influence customer psychological well-being. The result suggests that short-term affective organismic responses are

insufficient to directly generate enduring psychological responses within the S-O-R mechanism. Although customer delight reflects highly positive emotional responses arising from pleasant and surprising consumption experiences, the statistical results indicate that delight is insufficient to independently shape enduring psychological well-being. This finding is consistent with previous studies explaining that delight primarily represents temporary affective reactions rather than stable psychological conditions (Altinay et al., 2023; Torrres et al., 2019; Elshawesh, 2026).

From a CCT perspective, this finding further indicates that positive consumption experiences may produce temporary emotional gratification without necessarily becoming a sustained source of psychological well-being. Within the context of local culinary retail brands such as Mie Gacoan, HokBen, Richeese Factory, and Es Teler 77, enjoyable dining experiences may generate temporary excitement and satisfaction; however, these experiences do not necessarily contribute to sustained psychological fulfillment. Psychological well-being is influenced by broader dimensions, including emotional balance, personal meaning, identity congruence, and long-term emotional relationships with brands. This finding highlights that businesses should not rely solely on momentary experiential excitement but should instead prioritize authentic and culturally meaningful brand experiences capable of generating deeper emotional value and sustainable psychological benefits for consumers.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

The findings of this study provide important managerial implications for local culinary retail companies, particularly brands such as Mie Gacoan, HokBen, Richeese Factory, and Es Teler 77, in developing sustainable consumer relationships and strengthening long-term competitiveness. The findings indicate a sequential relationship in which perceived brand authenticity is associated with brand love, which subsequently relates to brand equity and customer psychological well-being. This upstream-to-downstream pattern suggests that authentic branding represents an important strategic foundation for shaping consumers' emotional attachment, brand evaluations, and longer-term psychological outcomes.

From the perspective of the S-O-R framework, perceived brand authenticity operates as an external stimulus that activates consumers' emotional and cognitive responses through brand love and brand equity as organismic mechanisms. Practically, this finding indicates that local culinary companies should prioritize authenticity-oriented strategies rather than relying solely on short-term promotional activities or temporary experiential excitement. Consumers, particularly Generation Z and Millennials, increasingly value brands perceived as transparent, culturally meaningful, emotionally relatable, and consistent in delivering their promises. Therefore, managerial decision-making should emphasize maintaining authentic taste consistency, preserving distinctive local culinary identity, ensuring transparency regarding ingredients and food quality, and maintaining consistent service standards across both offline and digital platforms.

From a CCT perspective, authenticity can also be managed as a source of cultural and symbolic meaning embedded in consumers' everyday consumption practices. Local culinary brands can strengthen this meaning by communicating distinctive culinary identities, cultural values, and brand narratives that resonate with consumers' lifestyles and social identities. Such strategies may support symbolic self-

expression and social belonging while reinforcing consumers' emotional relationships with the brand.

The findings further demonstrate that brand love is significantly associated with brand equity and customer delight. This indicates that emotional attachment represents an important strategic asset for strengthening perceived brand value, loyalty, and positive consumer engagement. Consequently, local culinary businesses should focus on creating emotionally meaningful experiences that foster deeper psychological connections with consumers. Companies should not merely position themselves as food providers but also as lifestyle-oriented brands embedded within consumers' daily social and cultural experiences. Practical implementation may include developing emotionally engaging storytelling content, strengthening digital interaction through social media platforms, creating community-based marketing activities, and designing restaurant atmospheres that encourage social interaction and symbolic self-expression among younger consumers.

In addition, the significant positive relationship between brand equity and customer psychological well-being suggests that strong brand value is associated not only with transactional outcomes but also with consumers' emotional comfort, self-confidence, and longer-term psychological fulfillment. From the S-O-R perspective, this finding indicates that favorable internal evaluations of brand value are related to broader consumer responses. From a CCT perspective, brand equity may also encompass symbolic and cultural meanings that consumers associate with brands as part of their lifestyles and identities. Accordingly, companies should consider moving beyond short-term sales-oriented strategies toward sustainable relationship marketing and cultural branding strategies. Culinary brands that consistently deliver meaningful emotional value, cultural relevance, and symbolic identity may be better positioned to foster stronger consumer relationships and longer-term retention.

Conversely, the insignificant relationship between customer delight and customer psychological well-being indicates that temporary excitement and pleasurable dining experiences alone are insufficient to establish enduring psychological benefits. Within the S-O-R framework, this finding suggests that a positive affective organismic response does not necessarily translate into a sustained psychological response. From a CCT perspective, temporary consumption pleasure may provide immediate gratification without necessarily becoming an enduring source of identity, cultural meaning, or psychological fulfillment. Therefore, local culinary businesses should avoid overemphasizing short-term experiential stimulation without simultaneously developing authentic emotional relationships and sustainable brand meaning. Instead, companies should prioritize long-term engagement strategies centered on authenticity, cultural relevance, and symbolic value creation. Overall, the findings suggest that sustainable competitiveness in Indonesia's local culinary retail industry is supported by authentic branding and emotionally and culturally meaningful consumer relationships rather than temporary experiential satisfaction alone.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that perceived brand authenticity plays an important role in shaping consumer responses and psychological outcomes within Indonesia's local culinary retail industry. The findings demonstrate that perceived brand authenticity is significantly associated with brand love and brand equity, while brand love is significantly

associated with brand equity and customer delight. Furthermore, brand equity has a significant positive relationship with customer psychological well-being, indicating that strong brand value is associated not only with functional evaluations but also with consumers' emotional comfort, self-expression, and longer-term psychological fulfillment. In contrast, customer delight does not significantly relate to customer psychological well-being, suggesting that temporary emotional excitement and pleasurable consumption experiences are insufficient to establish sustainable psychological well-being among consumers.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings can be interpreted through the complementary perspectives of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework and Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). Within the S-O-R framework, perceived brand authenticity functions as the primary stimulus, while brand love, brand equity, and customer delight represent internal organismic responses that connect the stimulus with customer psychological well-being as a consumer response. The findings therefore provide support for understanding how perceptions of authenticity and consumers' internal brand-related responses are associated with psychological outcomes.

From a CCT perspective, the findings further indicate that culinary consumption extends beyond a transactional activity and can constitute a symbolic, emotional, and culturally embedded practice. Authenticity, brand relationships, and brand meanings may become connected to consumers' identity construction, social belonging, self-expression, and emotional experiences. This perspective complements the S-O-R framework by providing a cultural interpretation of how consumers attach symbolic and personal meanings to local culinary brands. Taken together, these perspectives provide a broader understanding of how authentic culinary experiences are associated with emotional attachment, symbolic consumption, and psychological outcomes among Generation Z and Millennial consumers in an emerging market context.

This study also offers several directions for future research. Future studies are recommended to strengthen the cultural and psychological perspective by integrating theories such as Self-Congruity Theory, Symbolic Interactionism Theory, or Experiential Consumption Theory to better explain symbolic consumption, identity formation, and emotional meaning creation in culinary experiences. In addition, future research may incorporate novel variables such as cultural identity, experiential value, consumer nostalgia, local pride, social connectedness, food storytelling, digital engagement, or community attachment to enrich the understanding of customer psychological well-being in local culinary retail consumption.

From a managerial perspective, the findings indicate a sequential relationship from perceived brand authenticity to brand love, brand equity, and customer psychological well-being. This pattern suggests that authentic branding represents an important strategic foundation for developing sustainable emotional relationships with consumers. For local culinary brands such as Mie Gacoan, HokBen, Richeese Factory, and Es Teler 77, managerial decision-making should prioritize maintaining authentic taste consistency, preserving distinctive local culinary identity, strengthening transparent communication, and ensuring consistent service quality across both offline and digital channels. Culinary businesses should also develop culturally meaningful storytelling strategies and emotionally engaging consumer

experiences capable of strengthening symbolic attachment and longer-term brand relationships. Overall, the findings suggest that sustainable competitiveness within Indonesia's local culinary retail industry is supported by authentic branding, emotional attachment, and culturally meaningful consumer experiences rather than temporary experiential satisfaction alone.

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