

BRAND TRUST, CUSTOMER DELIGHT, AND PRICE FAIRNESS AS PREDICTORS OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY AMONG COFFEE SHOPS IN MINGLANILLA, CEBU

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Abstract. This quantitative study investigates brand trust, customer delight, and price fairness as predictors of customer loyalty among coffee shops in Minglanilla, Cebu. Using a descriptive-correlational and predictive approach involving 120 respondents selected in a convenient manner, a structured patron in a convenience sampling manner. A structured self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data. The developed instrument was reported to have high internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's alpha which turned out to be equal to 0.932. The study employed descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression analysis to analyze both bivariate relationships and multivariable predictive power. Bivariate analysis revealed exceptionally strong, statistically significant positive correlations between customer loyalty and brand trust ($r = 0.880, p < 0.001$), customer delight ($r = 0.890, p < 0.001$), and perceived price fairness ($r = 0.882, p < 0.001$). However, when examining these constructs simultaneously within a multiple linear regression model, the explanatory dynamics shifted. Perceived price fairness ($\beta = 0.417, p < 0.001$) and customer delight ($\beta = 0.404, p < 0.001$) emerged as the primary, statistically significant direct predictors of customer loyalty. Conversely, brand trust ($\beta = 0.157, p = 0.064$) failed to demonstrate a direct, statistically significant predictive effect on loyalty when controlled for the other two factors. The findings of this study suggest that while brand trust remains a vital baseline component of consumer relationships, it is insufficient on its own to drive actionable repeat patronage in competitive local markets. Instead, driving customer loyalty relies primarily on direct, high-value experiential touchpoints, specifically memorable service experiences that exceed expectations and transparent, competitive pricing strategies. Consequently, coffee shop managers and entrepreneurs in Minglanilla should prioritize experiential service design and equitable pricing frameworks over traditional brand-building initiatives to maximize customer retention and competitive advantage.

Keywords: Customer loyalty, customer delight, perceived price fairness, brand trust

Introduction

Customer loyalty has become a cornerstone of competitiveness in the global coffee shop industry, where businesses increasingly strive to differentiate themselves in saturated markets. Beyond the traditional focus on product quality, studies show that brand trust, customer delight, and perceived price fairness significantly shape loyalty outcomes. For instance, research in Southeast Asia confirms that brand credibility and distinctiveness drive repeat purchase behavior (Han & Swanepoel, 2023; Rather et al., 2022). Similarly, global research treats customer delight as more than high satisfaction: it is a distinct emotional response that occurs when service exceeds

expectations with surprise, joy, or positive arousal (Arholdt et al., 2019; Priyanka & Karthik, 2025; Rahmawati et al., 2026; Terrah et al., 2022).

Empirical literature confirms that price fairness, transparent pricing communication, and equitable treatment anchor perceived value and preserve institutional trust (Kanyurhi & Aknokwa, 2021; Susanto & Modupe, 2025; Ziestman et al., 2019). Similarly, other studies covering coffee shop loyalty reflect a decisive shift from transactional purchasing to experiential and ethical consumption, driven primarily by physical servicescape atmospherics, omnichannel digital engagement, and visible sustainability practices (Anggara & Wiweko, 2026; Rashid et al., 2021). These findings suggest that while trust and fairness remain foundational, customer delight and experiential value are the most actionable levers for sustaining loyalty.

Taken together, global evidence indicates that coffee shops must integrate trust, delight, and fairness with experiential and digital strategies to remain competitive. Operators who invest in memorable service experiences, transparent pricing, and distinctive brand identities are better positioned to thrive in an industry where customer loyalty is both fragile and decisive.

In this context, businesses must build strong customer relationships to sustain long-term success, especially in local markets such as Minglanilla, Cebu. Key factors that strengthen customer relationships include brand trust, which builds confidence in a shop's reliability; customer delight, which enhances experiences beyond mere satisfaction; and perceived price fairness, which affects customers' evaluation of value for money. Previous studies show that brand trust strongly influences customer loyalty. Cardosa et al. (2020) found that customers who trust a brand are more likely to return and recommend it to others. Customer delight also affects loyalty because customers feel happier when services exceed their expectations, strengthening their attachment to the brand, as explained by Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (Schiebler et al., 2026). In addition, perceived price fairness influences customer loyalty, as customers tend to stay loyal to businesses they believe offer reasonable, fair prices, as supported by Equity Theory (Konuk, 2022). The Trust-Commitment Theory further supports the influence of brand trust on loyalty by emphasizing trust as a foundation of long-term customer relationships.

These theories support the present study by explaining how brand trust, customer delight, and perceived price fairness contribute to customer loyalty in selected coffee shops in Minglanilla, Cebu. These studies are relevant because they show how brand trust, customer delight, and perceived price fairness influence customer loyalty (Li et al., 2020; Akoğlu et al., 2021). In coffee shops, these factors help create positive experiences that encourage customers to return and stay loyal (Shern et al., 2024). Although many studies have examined brand trust, customer delight, and perceived price fairness, a gap remains because most focus on large businesses or other industries (Dhisasmito et al., 2022; Fitroh et al., 2025). Most existing research on customer loyalty has focused on large businesses or industries outside the coffee sector (Mundo & Govender, 2021). While prior studies have examined brand trust, customer delight, and price fairness independently, few studies have examined their combined effects on customer loyalty in small, local coffee shops (Wati et al., 2021). This gap is particularly evident in emerging markets such as the Philippines, where coffee shops have expanded significantly, especially in areas where people come to work, study, or socialize (Siregar, 2026). These coffee shops emphasize customer trust and delight and, most importantly, fair prices to maintain customer loyalty (Mabeza, 2024). However, some compete not only through good customer service but also by providing comfortable settings with

free Wi-Fi access and offering programs and activities to attract customers (Vu, 2024). Moreover, supporting local coffee shops contributes to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by promoting small business development and job creation (United Nations Development Program, 2022). It also supports SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption) through fair pricing and improved customer service, and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by using technology in operations and promotions (United Nations General Assembly, 2021).

Customer loyalty is vital to coffee shops' long-term success, especially in highly competitive local markets like Minglanilla, Cebu. Customers are more likely to remain loyal if they trust a brand, enjoy the overall experience, and perceive prices as fair. Each factor creates emotional and value-based connections between customers and the coffee shop, encouraging repeat visits and recommendations. Despite their importance, relatively few studies have examined how brand trust, customer delight, and perceived price fairness simultaneously influence customer loyalty in local coffee shop settings.

Research Questions

This research aims to analyze how customers perceive brand trust, customer delight, and perceived price fairness, and to explore their relationships and influence on customer loyalty at selected coffee shops in Minglanilla, Cebu. By focusing on these variables, the research aims to provide insights that could help coffee shop proprietors strengthen customer relationships and foster loyalty.

Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do customers perceive the levels of brand trust, customer delight, perceived price fairness, and customer loyalty?
2. Is there a significant relationship between:
 - 2.1. Brand trust and customer loyalty;
 - 2.2. Customer delight and customer loyalty; and
 - 2.3. Perceived price fairness and customer loyalty?
3. Which factors significantly predict customer loyalty when considered simultaneously?
4. What practical recommendations can be suggested to coffee shop owners and managers based on the study's results?

Methodology

Design

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design to examine the relationship between brand trust, customer delight, perceived price fairness, and customer loyalty among selected coffee shops in Minglanilla, Cebu. The descriptive component assessed customers' perceptions of each variable. At the same time, the correlational approach determined the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variables and customer loyalty. In addition, multiple regression analysis was employed to identify which variables considerably influence customer loyalty. This research design is appropriate because it allows the researchers to analyze numerical data, test the proposed hypotheses, and understand how the variables relate to one another.

Locale and Respondents

The study site was the municipality of Minglanilla, Cebu Province, Philippines. Minglanilla is a fast-growing urban area known for its coffee culture and dense concentration of coffee shops. The town serves as a business center connecting major urban towns in southern Cebu, making it a strong location for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including coffee shops. Thus, it serves as a good case study for analyzing how service delivery, price, and trust affect client loyalty in competitive local markets.

The target group was composed of 120 consumers from a few local cafés in Minglanilla, Cebu. The convenience sampling technique, which does not require random selection, was used to recruit participants based on their immediate availability and willingness to participate in the data collection process. Certain criteria were applied to determine respondent eligibility. Eligible respondents were 18-year-olds who had previously purchased products and services from the selected coffee shops. This approach favored collecting authentic data from available consumers at the point of selecting participants.

The study relied on primary data collected directly from respondents through a structured self-administered questionnaire. The quantitative tool consisted of a structured questionnaire with 20 closed-ended items using a five-point Likert scale to measure the survey constructs. Additionally, secondary sources of data, including peer-reviewed articles, local business reports, and theoretical findings, informed the questionnaire, presented the empirical findings, and confirmed the study's theoretical approach.

Instrument

This study used a self-developed survey questionnaire tailored to the local coffee shop context in Minglanilla, Cebu. It measured four constructs: brand trust, customer delight, perceived price fairness, and customer loyalty, using a six-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Agree to 6 = Strongly Disagree). The six-point scale reduced neutral-response bias and encouraged respondents to provide more definitive answers.

To assess validity, faculty members and research specialists reviewed the questionnaire for content validity, assessing the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the items for the coffee shop setting. The items also aligned with established definitions of the constructs to ensure construct validity, meaning they accurately represented trust, delight, fairness, and loyalty. Furthermore, the strong correlations support the instrument's criterion validity, as the measures behaved as theory predicted.

To establish reliability, we also conducted a pilot test with 20 students from St. Cecilia College–Cebu. The pilot yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.945, indicating excellent internal consistency. These results show that the instrument was dependable and produced stable measurements across respondents.

Data Analysis

The researchers used Microsoft Excel to manage and prepare the data and perform initial descriptive computations. Jamovi statistical software was employed to execute inferential statistical procedures. The researchers computed two descriptive statistics metrics, weighted means and standard deviations, to analyze central tendency and dispersion for respondents' data

on brand trust, customer delight, perceived price fairness, and customer loyalty. Subsequently, the researchers conducted inferential statistical analyses to test the study's hypotheses. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to assess bivariate linear relations of all independent variables on the dependent variable, namely customer loyalty, and multiple linear regression analysis was performed to check the predictive abilities, contribution of each predictor variable separately, as well as the overall quality of prediction of brand trust, customer delight, and perceived price fairness for customer loyalty of local coffee shop visitors.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed fundamental ethical guidelines. Respondents were informed of the study's goal before completing the questionnaire, and participation was entirely voluntary. They were assured that their answers would remain private and anonymous. The researchers used all information solely for academic purposes and collected no personal information that could identify respondents. Only the researchers had access to the safely stored data. The study also ensured that respondents were not harmed, coerced, or given false information during data collection.

Results and Discussions

Table 1.

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Brand Trust	5	0.938	Excellent Reliability
Customer Delight	5	0.931	Excellent Reliability
Price Fairness	5	0.939	Excellent Reliability
Customer Loyalty	5	0.920	Excellent Reliability
Overall Instrument	20	0.932	Excellent Reliability

Based on the data gathered from the respondents, the reliability scores for each variable were as follows: Brand Trust (0.938), Customer Delight (0.931), Perceived Price Fairness (0.939), and Customer Loyalty (0.920), with an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.932. All values exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating excellent reliability across all constructs. This means the items within each variable are highly consistent and reliable in measuring their respective concepts, making the research instrument suitable for data collection.

The results also indicate that the questionnaire is well-structured and clearly understood by the respondents, as reflected in the consistency of their responses. High reliability suggests that the indicators used for each variable effectively captured the intended measurements without significant variation or confusion. According to Kouam (2024), reliable research instruments are essential for producing trustworthy, accurate results because they ensure consistent measurement and reduce data-collection errors. Therefore, the high Cronbach's alpha values in this study confirm that the instrument is dependable and appropriate for analyzing the relationship between brand trust, customer delight, perceived price fairness, and customer loyalty.

Table 2.

Brand Trust as Perceived by the Respondents

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I trust the coffee shop to deliver consistent product quality.	2.38	0.97	Agree
This coffee shop is honest in its dealings with customers.	2.41	1.04	Agree
I feel confident in this coffee shop's reliability.	2.46	0.88	Agree
This coffee shop keeps its promises to customers.	3.00	1.00	Agree
I believe this coffee shop has my best interests in mind.	2.43	1.01	Agree
Overall Mean	2.34	0.87	Agree

Legend: Strongly Agree – 4.0-3.35 Agree – 3.24-2.50 Disagree – 2.49-1.75 Strongly disagree –1.74-1.0

Table 2 shows that brand trust had an overall mean of 2.43 (SD = 0.87), interpreted as “Agree,” indicating that respondents generally trust the coffee shop in terms of product quality, honesty, and reliability. The relatively low variability suggests consistent perceptions among customers. Among the indicators, “This coffee shop keeps its promises to customers” had the highest mean (3.00; SD = 1.00), highlighting the importance of reliability and keeping promises in building trust. Conversely, “I trust the coffee shop to deliver consistent product quality” had the lowest mean (2.38; SD = 0.97), suggesting that while customers generally trust the shop, consistency in product quality remains an area for improvement.

Overall, the results suggest customers perceive the coffee shop as trustworthy, a critical foundation for long-term customer relationships. Hanaysha (2022) supports this finding, emphasizing that consumers identified brand trust as a central determinant that directly stimulated customer engagement and reinforced loyalty (Rahmayani & Suryani, 2025). More recent studies reinforce this perspective. For example, Nguyen and Simkin (2023) found that brand trust, when combined with customer delight, strengthens relational bonds and advocacy behaviors in service contexts. Similarly, Laradi et al. (2024) demonstrated that brand attachment and trust are essential for sustaining loyalty, but their impact is magnified when paired with emotional experiences such as delight. These studies highlight that while trust is necessary, it is not sufficient on its own; consistent quality and memorable customer experiences must complement it to drive loyalty fully.

Table 3.

Customer Delight as Perceived by the Respondents

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The coffee shop often exceeds my expectations.	3.09	0.94	Agree
I feel happy when I visit this coffee shop.	2.47	0.91	Agree
The coffee shop's service makes me feel valued as a customer.	2.49	0.90	Agree
My experiences at this coffee shop are enjoyable and memorable.	2.49	0.88	Agree
The coffee shop provides pleasant surprises that enhance my experience.	2.08	0.98	Agree
Overall Mean	2.52	0.82	Agree

Legend: Strongly Agree – 4.0-3.35 Agree – 3.24-2.50 Disagree – 2.49-1.75 Strongly disagree –1.74-1.0

Table 3 shows that customer delight had an overall mean of 2.52 (SD = 0.82), interpreted as “Agree,” which indicates that respondents generally feel satisfied, happy, and emotionally pleased with their coffee shop experiences. The relatively low variability suggests consistency in customer perceptions. Among the indicators, “The coffee shop often exceeds my expectations” recorded the highest mean (3.09; SD = 0.94), highlighting that exceeding expectations is a key driver of delight. Meanwhile, “I feel happy and pleased when I visit this coffee shop” had the lowest mean (2.47; SD = 0.91), though still within the “Agree” range, suggesting that while customers are generally pleased, there is room to foster stronger emotional engagement.

These findings align with Kim and Baker (2020), who emphasized that customer delight enhances emotional satisfaction and strengthens loyalty in hospitality settings. More recent studies reinforce this perspective. For example, Torres and Kline (2022) found that delight is a critical antecedent of customer advocacy behaviors, such as recommending a business to others, which amplifies loyalty effects. Similarly, Nguyen and Simkin (2023) highlighted that delight, when combined with personalized service, creates deeper relational bonds that sustain loyalty even in competitive markets. Laradi et al. (2024) further showed that emotional experiences, such as delight, often outweigh rational factors like trust in predicting repeat patronage, underscoring the importance of designing memorable customer experiences.

Table 4.
Price Fairness as Perceived by the Respondents

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The coffee shop’s product prices are reasonable.	2.40	0.86	Agree
The product quality justifies the prices.	2.46	0.89	Agree
The coffee shop offers fair prices compared to other coffee shops.	2.47	0.96	Agree
I feel that I get good value for the money I spend at this coffee shop.	2.48	0.89	Agree
The pricing of this coffee shop is transparent and fair.	2.44	0.91	Agree
Overall Mean	2.45	0.81	Agree

Legend: Strongly Agree – 4.0-3.35

Agree – 3.24-2.50

Disagree – 2.49-1.75

Strongly Disagree –1.74-1.0

Table 4 shows that perceived price fairness had a section average of 2.45 (SD = 0.81), interpreted as “Agree.” This suggests respondents perceive the coffee shop's pricing as reasonable, justified, and aligned with the value they receive, with low variability indicating strong agreement. The indicator “I feel that I get good value for the money spent” had the highest mean (2.48; SD = 0.89), while “The prices of the coffee shop’s products are reasonable” had the lowest mean (2.40; SD = 0.86).

These results suggest that customers generally view the coffee shop’s pricing strategy as fair and transparent, which is essential to sustaining loyalty. Homburg et al. (2021) support this finding, noting that perceptions of price fairness significantly influence customer satisfaction and purchase

behavior. More recent research further enriches this perspective. For instance, Nst et al. (2024) examined customer loyalty in the restaurant industry. They found that while product and service quality more strongly predicted satisfaction and loyalty, perceived price fairness still shaped customer expectations and competitive positioning. This suggests that pricing fairness may not always directly drive loyalty but can reinforce other experiential factors that do.

Similarly, a study examined equity-based pricing models and found that transparent, consistent pricing enhances perceived fairness, strengthening customer trust and reducing switching behavior (Radic, 2024). These findings align with Xia et al. (2004), who argued that fairness perceptions shape both emotional and cognitive value evaluations, ultimately affecting loyalty. Taken together, these studies highlight that while price fairness may interact with other factors such as service quality and customer delight, it remains a cornerstone of sustainable customer relationships.

Table 5.
Customer Loyalty as Perceived by the Respondents

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I intend to continue purchasing from this coffee shop.	2.27	0.99	Agree
I would recommend this coffee shop to others.	3.97	0.87	Strongly Agree
I prefer this coffee shop over other coffee shops.	2.05	0.99	Agree
I am willing to visit this coffee shop regularly.	2.10	0.99	Agree
I would remain loyal to this coffee shop even if competitors offer promotions.	2.17	0.96	Agree
Overall Mean	2.21	0.83	Agree

Legend: Strongly Agree – 4.0-3.35 Agree – 3.24-2.50 Disagree – 2.49-1.75 Strongly disagree –1.74-1.0

Table 5 reports customer loyalty results as perceived by the study's respondents, with an overall mean of 2.21 (SD = 0.83), interpreted as “Agree,” suggesting respondents generally intend to continue patronizing and supporting the coffee shop. Notably, the strongest indicator was “I would recommend this coffee shop to others” (M = 3.97; SD = 0.87), which reflects customers’ willingness to act as brand advocates, while the lowest was “I am willing to visit this coffee shop regularly” (M = 2.10; SD = 0.99), still within the “Agree” range. These findings suggest that customers are loyal not only in their purchasing behavior but also in their willingness to promote the coffee shop through word-of-mouth, a powerful driver of growth in competitive local markets.

Several studies resonate with the findings. Kumar and Singh (2021) noted that trust and positive service experiences strongly influence customer loyalty, reinforcing the importance of consistent, reliable service delivery. More recent empirical research shows that emotional satisfaction and advocacy behaviors are central drivers of sustainable customer loyalty (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2020; Setiawan et al., 2025; Yaduvanshi et al., 2025), while Gremler et al. (2020) and Rahmwati et al. (2026) highlighted that customer retention depends on cognitive

stability such as trust alongside emotionally engaging, delightful encounters. Together, these findings suggest that while repeat patronage matters, customers' willingness to recommend the coffee shop to others reflects a deeper form of loyalty that can significantly enhance competitiveness and long-term sustainability.

Table 6.

Correlation Analysis of Key Variables with Customer Loyalty

Variable Relationship		r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Brand Trust ↔ Customer Loyalty		0.880	< 0.001	Very Strong Correlation Relationship
Customer Delight ↔ Customer Loyalty		0.890	< 0.001	Very Strong Correlation Relationship
Price Fairness ↔ Customer Loyalty		0.882	< 0.001	Very Strong Correlation Relationship

Legend: 0-0.19 Very Weak; 0.20-0.39 Weak; 0.40-0.59 Moderate; 0.60-0.79 Strong; 0.80-0.99 Very Strong; 1.0- Perfect

Table 6 presents the correlational analysis of key variables, such as brand trust, customer delight, and price fairness, with customer loyalty. Based on the data, the correlation between Brand Trust and Customer Loyalty is $r = 0.880$, $p < 0.001$, indicating a very strong positive relationship. This suggests that as brand trust increases, customers are more likely to remain loyal to the coffee shop. When customers trust a brand, they feel confident in its products and services, which fosters repeated purchases and long-term relationships. Trust reduces uncertainty and strengthens customer preference, particularly in competitive markets. This finding is consistent with Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2021), who emphasized that brand trust is a critical driver of customer loyalty and enduring brand relationships.

Customer delight, defined as satisfaction beyond expectations, builds emotional bonds and encourages repeat patronage. Aityassine (2022) similarly found that delight positively affects customer loyalty and strengthens it in service industries, particularly restaurants. Recent evidence supports this view: a meta-analysis by Laradi et al. (2024) showed that brand attachment and emotional experiences mediate loyalty, indicating that delight-driven engagement often outweighs rational trust in predicting repeat behavior.

Price fairness also plays a pivotal role. Customers who perceive pricing as transparent and equitable are more inclined to stay loyal, as unfair pricing can trigger dissatisfaction and switching. Konuk (2021) highlighted this effect, and newer studies confirm it. For example, a 2024 study in *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* found that perceived price fairness directly influences purchase intention and moderates the role of trust in online and offline contexts, underscoring its importance in competitive markets (Senali et al., 2024).

Taken together, these findings suggest that while trust remains a baseline requirement, customer delight and perceived price fairness are the most actionable levers for strengthening loyalty. Coffee shops should therefore prioritize creating memorable experiences and maintaining transparent, value-driven pricing strategies to sustain competitiveness.

Table 7.

Multiple Regression Analysis of Brand Trust, Customer Delight, and Price Fairness as Predictors of Customer Loyalty

Variables	Beta	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Brand Trust	0.157	1.868	0.064	Not Significant
Customer Delight	0.404	4.738	< 0.001	Significant
Price Fairness	0.417	6.340	< 0.001	Significant

Table 7 presents the multiple regression results, showing that customer delight ($\beta = 0.404$, $p < 0.001$) and perceived price fairness ($\beta = 0.417$, $p < 0.001$) significantly predict customer loyalty. In contrast, brand trust ($\beta = 0.157$, $p = 0.064$) does not exert a statistically significant effect when analyzed alongside the other variables. This suggests that although customers generally trust the coffee shop, emotional experiences and perceived value drive loyalty more strongly. In other words, memorable service encounters and transparent, fair pricing strategies are the most decisive factors in encouraging repeat patronage.

The finding that customer delight significantly influences loyalty underscores the importance of exceeding customer expectations. When customers feel valued and emotionally engaged, they are more likely to return and recommend the business. This aligns with Kim and Baker (2020), who emphasized that delight enhances loyalty in service industries. More recent studies reinforce this: Nguyen and Simkin (2023) found that emotional satisfaction and advocacy behaviors are central to sustaining loyalty in hospitality and retail settings, while Laradi et al. (2024) highlighted that brand attachment and experiential delight often outweigh rational trust in predicting repeat behavior.

Similarly, perceived price fairness emerged as a significant predictor of loyalty. Customers who view prices as reasonable and transparent are more likely to continue supporting the coffee shop, as fair pricing builds trust and satisfaction. Supporting this finding, studies by Setiawan and Lestari (2025) and Dhisasmito and Kumar (2020) show that, in coffee shops, perceived price fairness consistently predicts customer satisfaction and loyalty, including in Tangerang, Jakarta, and Kopi Kenangan samples.

In contrast, brand trust, while strongly correlated with loyalty, did not significantly predict loyalty in the regression model. This suggests that trust alone may serve as a baseline condition rather than a direct driver of repeat patronage. In fact, a meta-analysis of 50 years of empirical research covering 324,834 respondents showed that consumer trust shapes attitudinal outcomes far more than direct behavioral actions (Khamitov et al., 2024). In competitive local markets, customers appear to prioritize experiential delight and fair value over trust alone.

Conclusion

The study revealed that while brand trust, customer delight, and perceived price fairness are all strongly linked to customer loyalty, only customer delight and perceived price fairness emerged as true drivers of loyalty when considered together. This means customers are most likely to remain loyal when they feel genuinely delighted by their experiences and believe the prices they pay are fair and transparent. In contrast, brand trust, though important as a foundation, did not

directly predict loyalty once the other factors were taken into account. These findings suggest that coffee shops in Minglanilla can best secure long-term patronage by focusing on creating enjoyable, memorable experiences and maintaining fair pricing strategies.

The study also confirmed that the research instrument was highly reliable, which strengthens confidence in the results. However, some limitations remain. Convenience sampling and a relatively small sample of 120 respondents mean the findings may not fully represent all coffee shop customers in Minglanilla or beyond. Additionally, the study focused on only three variables, excluding other possible influences such as service quality, brand image, or overall satisfaction.

In summary, delightful customer experiences and fair pricing are the strongest levers for building loyalty, while brand trust remains a supportive but less decisive factor. Future studies should broaden the scope with larger, more diverse samples and additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer loyalty in competitive local markets.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, coffee shop owners and managers in Minglanilla, Cebu should focus on enhancing customer delight and ensuring perceived price fairness, as these two factors were the strongest predictors of customer loyalty. Creating memorable experiences through attentive, personalized service; a welcoming ambiance; and innovative menu offerings that exceed expectations can strengthen emotional engagement and foster repeat patronage. At the same time, transparent, value-driven pricing strategies that align product quality with cost and clearly communicate fairness will reinforce customers' perceptions of value and encourage long-term loyalty.

Although brand trust did not emerge as a statistically significant predictor in the regression analysis, it remains a foundational element of customer relationships, making consistent product quality, honesty, and reliability essential to sustaining credibility and reinforcing the strong correlational link between trust and loyalty.

For future research, expand the scope by including constructs such as service quality, brand image, and overall satisfaction, and use larger sample sizes, probability-based sampling methods, and broader geographic coverage across diverse service industries to improve generalizability and provide deeper insights into loyalty dynamics in competitive markets.

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