

Improving Customer Advocacy: A Long-Term Strategy for Facing Business Competition

Riska Risdiana

UIN Raden Mas Said

Correspondence: riskarisdiana77@gmail.com

Article Info

Article history:

Received Desember 19th, 2025

Revised Mei 5th, 2026

Accepted Mei 6th, 2026

Keywords:

Brand Image, Product Innovation, Trust in Service Brands, Consumer Advocacy, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of brand image and product innovation on trust in service brands and their effect on consumer advocacy. Data were collected from consumers of PT Mutyara Solo Group using purposive sampling, involving 100–200 respondents. Data were obtained through cross-sectional online and offline questionnaires using a Likert scale that measured four key variables: brand image, product innovation, trust in service brands, and consumer advocacy. The analysis employed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS software. The findings show that brand image significantly influences trust in service brands and directly encourages consumer advocacy. Product innovation also influences trust but does not directly affect consumer advocacy unless mediated by brand trust. Trust acts as a partial mediator between brand image and consumer advocacy, and a full mediator between product innovation and consumer advocacy. These results highlight the importance of developing a positive brand image and strong consumer trust as a foundation for fostering brand advocacy. Product innovation must be supported by effective communication and trust-building efforts to influence advocacy behavior. For brand management, the study underscores the need to balance emotional aspects (image) and functional aspects (innovation) to build long-term consumer loyalty and advocacy.



© 2025 The Authors. Published by PERMATA DIDIKASI EKSPLORATIF. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

BACKGROUND

Academics and business practitioners have long sought to understand the role of marketing as an important factor that explains differences in performance between companies. Marketing not only serves to increase sales, but also strengthens the relationship between companies and customers through more effective and efficient interactions (Minarti & Segoro, 2014). The main role of marketing is to increase the number and quality of interactions with consumers while reducing the costs incurred for marketing activities (Rangaswamy et al., 2020). One effective strategy is to create customer loyalty, where loyal customers voluntarily promote the products they enjoy, thus providing an additional competitive advantage. In the context of the tourism and transportation sector such as PT Mutyara Solo Group, service innovation is crucial to meet the dynamic needs of consumers and build positive perceptions that support loyalty (Mahmoud et al., 2018). Thus, innovation and adaptation of services that are responsive to changes in the business environment are essential to maintain the competitiveness of the organization.

In addition, the company's success in facing business challenges depends on its ability to adapt to constantly changing internal and external factors (Iswanti & Hendra, 2023). Companies in the tourism and transportation sectors must develop dynamic capabilities to be able to respond to cultural and environmental changes quickly and appropriately (Sudrajat, 2013). Quality service through empathic interaction and effective coordination between staff is at the core of the consumer experience that contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ahrholdt et al., 2019). High consumer trust also influences consumer advocacy, where satisfied customers voluntarily spread their positive experiences to others, which is considered more credible than information delivered by the company directly (Quaye et al., 2022). Therefore, PT Mutyara Solo needs to build a consumer advocacy strategy that integrates trust, brand image, and emotional touch in product innovation to strengthen its market position and support long-term growth. Innovation adoption models that incorporate the role of consumer emotions

can enrich marketing strategies and strengthen a company's competitive advantage in an increasingly tight market (Castro et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021).

THEORETICAL STUDIES

Consumer Advocacy

Consumer advocacy refers to customer behavior that voluntarily provides positive support to a brand through recommendations or testimonials to other potential customers. This behavior often arises from positive customer experiences and trust in the brand. The Verma et al. (2024) study highlights how demographic and attitudinal similarities between influencers and their followers can affect follower trust, ultimately driving brand advocacy.

The company always strives to get as many consumers as possible through various strategies. The company conducts intensive promotions, to introduce its products. On the other hand, in addition to the promotions that have been carried out, observant companies are able to see the potential of consumers as a means of free but effective promotion. Therefore, consumer disappointment and dissatisfaction with the products that have been consumed must be avoided, as they will result in a behavioral response that is detrimental to the company. Consumers exchange market information and advise other consumers triggered by their positive experiences of the brands they consume (Jayasimha & Srivastava, 2017). On the other hand, consumers can also share negative market experiences to prevent others from having similar unsatisfactory experiences. Chelminski & Coulter, (2011) refer to such sharing as consumer advocacy. Jayasimha & Srivastava, (2017) measured the level of consumer advocacy in terms of consumer disappointment with the products that have been consumed. Meanwhile, (Shimul & Phau, 2018) measures the degree of consumer advocacy in individuals through the role of individuals in sharing their experiences, pleasures, and also feelings of responsibility to convey to others the experiences that have been gained. In addition, consumer advocacy is also explored from how strongly a person has the will to advise others to consume or not to consume the products he has consumed.

Some of the main factors that influence consumer advocacy include psychological, emotional, and relational elements formed from consumer interactions with brands. These factors are not only related to satisfaction with the product or service, but also include consumers' perception of the brand's credibility, uniqueness, and social value. In addition, consumers' personal experiences, trust built through consistency of service, and strong emotional connection with brands also play an important role in encouraging individuals to voluntarily recommend the brand to others (Verma et al., 2024). A strong emotional connection between customers and brands can increase the likelihood of customers becoming brand advocates. Research by Tran et al. (2024) shows that consumer perception of a brand's "coolness" can strengthen consumer-brand relationships and encourage advocacy. Additionally, trust in the brand increases the likelihood of customers recommending the brand to others. The research of Verma et al.

(2024) highlights the role of trust mediation in the relationship between influencer-follower commonality and brand advocacy.

Service Brand Trust

Brand trust is an important concept in marketing that refers to consumers' confidence in a brand's ability to consistently meet its promises and expectations. Pentina et al., (2013) define brand trust as "the average consumer's willingness to rely on the brand's ability to perform its functions properly. Brand trust has a crucial role in building long-term relationships between consumers and brands. The Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis (2019) study found that brand authenticity contributes positively to perceived consumer value and brand trust, which can ultimately increase customer loyalty.

Most buying attempts happen because there are driving factors. Building consumer trust is one of the determining factors for the success of service providers. Consumers with a strong level of trust in product brands, will increase their loyalty (Bricci et al., 2016; Song et al., 2019), and has been shown to have an impact on a company's financial performance (Lins et al., 2017). Developing customer trust is inseparable from the level of satisfaction felt by consumers (Fernández-Bonilla et al., 2022). Therefore reducing social uncertainty, understanding, predicting, and controlling the behavior of others, will be the main forces to motivate consumer behavior (Gefen & Straub, 2004). Trust builds slowly but can be destroyed in an instant, and then almost never recovers (Fuchs, 2019). Therefore, maintaining consumer trust must be made a sustainable agenda. In the business world, trust is similar to the

"attachment" of the market, to "precontractual solidarity", and to the emotional and existential foundations of social life (Fuchs, 2019). Trust is the main medium, to achieve the success of business activities. Trust is usually considered an intrinsic feature of valuable social interactions derived from personal relationships in social psychology (Song et al., 2019). Brand trust can be reviewed to the extent to which the company keeps its promises to customers, for example the suitability of the promotional program with the reality obtained by consumers. The level of confidence, service stability, commitment, and consistency perceived by consumers is a measure of the level of consumer trust in the brand.

Similar to the transportation services industry, consumer trust in its brand will have an impact on its performance. The transportation service industry needs to build, and then strengthen its consumer trust in its brand, which is in the form of service products. Consumer trust in the brand is a crucial factor in building a long-term and profitable relationship between a company and its customers. A variety of factors influence this level of trust, including product quality, credibility of the source of information, and consumers' emotional experience of the brand. One of the key determinants of brand trust is consistent product and service quality. Consumers tend to trust brands that consistently meet or exceed their expectations in terms of quality and performance. Recent research highlights the importance of perceived consumer value in building trust in sustainable brands (Monfort et al., 2025).

In addition, the credibility of information sources also plays an important role in shaping consumer trust. A study emphasizes that the credibility of information sources significantly affects brand loyalty in the fast fashion industry, suggesting that consumers are more likely to trust and remain loyal to brands whose marketing information is considered trustworthy (Low et al., 2025). Consumers' emotional experiences with brands also contribute significantly to the formation of trust. Research examining the influence of brand personality, brand self-conformity, and brand love found that these factors collectively affect consumers' trust in brands. Further, in the context of social media marketing, effective activities can increase consumer engagement, which in turn strengthens trust and loyalty to the brand.

Studies show that well-designed social media marketing activities can improve self-brand connections, brand equity, consumer loyalty (Ali et al., 2025). Thus, to build and maintain consumer trust, companies need to ensure consistent product quality, use credible sources of information, create a positive and emotional brand experience, and utilize effective social media marketing strategies.

Brand Image

Brand image is a brand attribute as perceived by potential and actual customers. Brand image has been extensively researched, such as Mohammed & Rashid (2018) concluding from the results of their analysis, that brand image empirically has a positive effect on consumer satisfaction, while other studies have found empirical evidence that brand image is able to positively predict consumer trust (Lien et al., 2015; Song et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2021). Based on some of this empirical evidence, it can be clarified what strategic steps should be taken by business practitioners, including the transportation service industry, how they should build a brand image that is valuable to consumers.

The alignment between expectations and perceived reality by consumers will have an impact on their perception of the company's brand image. Therefore, the brand image will be better if the greater the compatibility between expectations and reality perceived by consumers. Product quality is important for brand image because it reflects the value or image of the product itself. Companies around the world are using social media tactics as part of their marketing. They promote their products while also aiming to instill their brand image to diverse stakeholders.

Successful branding can be achieved through ways of engaging the community for full participation (Uchinaka et al., 2019), as any branding effort must be in accordance with the perceived image of the user (Childers, 2014). The research of L. Huang et al. (2020) took Procter & Gamble as a brand target, developing and testing a theoretical model regarding the relationship between brand image, brand trust (i.e., cognitive and affective), and customer loyalty (i.e., repurchase and advocacy intent). Empirical results reveal that brand image is positively related to brand trust, both cognitive and affective. Brand image indirectly correlates with repurchase intent through cognitive trust. In addition, it is also concluded that brand image is indirectly related to advocacy intentions through affective brand trust. These findings provide a basis for the company's marketing management to increase loyalty as well as user advocacy behavior by shaping brand image.

Brand image is a consumer's perception of a brand that is influenced by various factors. One of the main factors is the country-of-origin image, which reflects consumer perception of the country in which

the brand originated. Research by Blanco-Encomienda et al. (2024) reveals that the image of the country of origin significantly influences consumers' evaluation of brands, especially through dimensions such as the general image of the country and the image of the country's specific products. Product packaging design also affects consumers' perception of the brand. Research by Wangmo et al. (2025) highlights that packaging elements, such as color, shape, and material, contribute to shaping a positive consumption experience and brand image.

Furthermore, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a significant impact on brand image. The study of Guo et al. (2025) found that consumers' association with a company's CSR activities affects their perception of the brand's image, which in turn can improve the company's financial performance. Thus, brand image is influenced by a combination of factors such as the image of the country of origin, social media marketing activities, product packaging design, and corporate social responsibility. Companies that effectively manage these factors tend to build a strong and positive brand image in the eyes of consumers.

Innovation Products

Product innovation refers to the introduction of a new product or significant improvement to an existing product, which provides added value through improved features, design, or technology. According to Aydin (2021), product innovation involves developing products that not only meet the needs of current customers but also anticipate future needs, by utilizing the technological capabilities owned by the company. Further, product innovation can be categorized into incremental innovations, which involve minor improvements to existing products, and radical innovations, which create fundamental changes and offer unprecedented benefits to customers. Thus, innovation products serve as a key driver of competitive advantage and company growth in a dynamic market (Slater et al., 2014).

In the face of increasingly complex competition, creativity and innovation are strategic elements that must be designed in a planned manner. Competitive advantage can be achieved by integrating creativity and innovation into various managerial aspects, supported by strategy, technology, and other management tools. The dynamics of changing performance demand continuous evaluation of products to meet the needs of increasingly diverse markets. Creativity, according to Fidan and Oztürk (2015), is the ability to generate new, original, and useful ideas for the world of work. Organizations that prioritize communication, participation, and knowledge management have been proven to be able to strengthen innovation and competitiveness (Fachrunnisa et al., 2020). Innovation itself is the main force in expanding the market, introducing new functionality, and improving organizational performance in a sustainable manner (Prajogo, 2016; Andersén, 2021).

Innovation according to English dictionary is the act of innovating; the introduction of new things or methods, while products are the totality of goods or services provided by a company. Innovation products refer to the final result in the form of goods or services produced by the company through the application of new methods, integrating elements of novelty, and being ready to be distributed and consumed by the market. Product innovation doesn't happen in a vacuum; Its success is influenced by a variety of internal and external factors that interact with each other. Internally, organizational capabilities such as creative human resources, leadership that supports change, and flexible organizational structures play an important role in driving the creation of innovative ideas. Aydin's study (2021) emphasizes that the synergy between innovative culture and the use of digital technology is the key to the success of new product development. Meanwhile, from the external side, factors such as market dynamics, competitive pressures, evolving consumer needs, and support from business and government partner networks also greatly affect the innovation process. Research by Saunila and Ukko (2023) highlights that a company's ability to understand customer needs and respond quickly to market changes greatly determines the success of product innovation (Ding et al., 2021). Thus, an effective product innovation strategy requires a holistic approach that takes into account the company's internal dynamics and external market demands.

HYPOTHESIS

The background of this research proposes several problem formulations developed in the form of research questions. To answer the research question, several provisional answers were asked as a hypothesis to the research question. Here are some hypotheses proposed:

Brand image and trust in service brand

Brand image reflects the quality of the product perceived by the user based on his experience after using. The brand image is built by the company over a period of time. In other words, brand image can be valuable or vice versa depending on user perception based on the name. To obtain a positive perception from users, this brand image needs to be strengthened in the minds of users, because this brand image will have an impact on users' trust in the brand that has been consumed (Huang et al., 2020; Lien et al., 2015; Song et al., 2019).

The results of the study Huang et al. (2020) found empirical evidence from 283 consumer data, that brand image has a positive relationship with trust in brands, both cognitively and affectively. Previously, Song et al. (2019) have also empirically proven that consumer love for brands plays a positive role in the relationship between consumer trust and loyalty. Similarly, long before the research of Huang (2020), Song (2019) and Lien et al., (2015) also concluded from the results of their analysis, that brand image as a predictor of trust in products. Based on the logical thinking of the researcher and the support of previous research, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Brand image has a significant positive effect on consumer trust in the service products that have been used

Product innovation and brand trust

The influence of product innovation on trust in brands, we can illustrate it with a scientific approach that integrates theory and the latest research. According to Huaman-Ramirez et al. (2019), product innovation plays a crucial role in strengthening consumer perception of a brand's excellence. When a brand consistently produces relevant and meaningful innovations, it not only improves product quality but also builds long-term consumer trust in the brand (Huang, 2017).

Furthermore, research by Bae & Kim (2023) shows that product innovation can be an effective catalyst in building an emotional bond between brands and consumers. When consumers identify innovations that provide the best solutions to their needs or problems, this not only strengthens their relationship with the brand but also increases trust that the brand can be trusted to deliver added value on an ongoing basis. Thus, it can be concluded that product innovation is not only about creating new products, but also about building a solid foundation of trust between brands and consumers through solutions that are constantly evolving and relevant.

H2: Product Innovation has a significant positive effect on trust in the Brand

Brand image and consumer advocacy

A strong brand image plays a crucial role in driving consumer advocacy. When consumers have a positive perception of a brand, they tend to be more satisfied and trust the brand, which in turn increases their likelihood of recommending it to others. For example, a study shows that a positive brand image and high brand awareness can increase consumer satisfaction and significantly influence purchasing decisions (Mariana et al., 2024).

Additionally, other research found that brand awareness and brand image have a significant positive relationship with purchasing decisions and customer advocacy behavior. This study highlights the important role of brand awareness and image in shaping consumer decisions and influencing post-purchase advocacy behavior (Rodrigues et al., 2021). Thus, building and maintaining a positive brand image not only increases consumer satisfaction and loyalty but also encourages them to become brand advocates, actively recommending products or services to others.

H3: Brand image has a significant positive impact on consumer advocacy

Product innovation and consumer advocacy

Product innovation has a significant impact on consumer advocacy. When a company develops a new product that meets the needs and expectations of consumers, it not only increases customer satisfaction but also encourages them to recommend the product to others. Research shows that product innovation can improve company performance through increased efficiency, new market development, and improved company image (Agustia et al., 2022). In addition, online customer reviews play a crucial role in sustainable product innovation. The sentiment and number of online customer reviews can affect the iteration of software product innovations. Companies can leverage this feedback to improve their products, which in turn can improve consumer advocacy. However, product complexity may moderate

the relationship between online reviews and iterative innovations, suggesting that more complex products may require a different approach to innovation (Tian & Yang, 2024). Thus, product innovation that is responsive to consumer needs and driven by customer feedback can improve consumer advocacy, which in turn supports the company's performance and growth.

H4: Product innovation has a significant positive effect on consumer advocacy

Trust in service brand and consumer advocacy

Consumer advocacy is a manifestation of customer behavior that appears after they consume or use certain products or services. These behaviors can manifest in contrast, depending on the level of satisfaction felt; Satisfied consumers tend to show an advocacy attitude, while disappointed consumers may behave the opposite. High satisfaction results in strong trust in the product or brand used. This trust further acts as a psychological foundation that moves consumers to recommend and voluntarily disseminate their positive experiences to their immediate social environment, thus shaping brand advocacy behavior.

According to Susanta (2013), within the framework of social exchange theory, consumer advocacy arises as a result of dynamic interactions of consumer satisfaction, trust, commitment, and loyalty to brands. Empirical confirmation of these findings is also put forward by Kumar et al. (2014), who affirm that consumer trust and loyalty contribute significantly and positively to consumer advocacy. Furthermore, the research of Huang et al. (2020) found that brand image has a positive indirect influence on consumer advocacy, with cognitive and affective trust in the brand or product as the main mediator in the process. Based on the synthesis of these empirical findings, the research hypotheses proposed in an effort to answer the research questions are as follows:

H5: Trust in service brand has a significant positive effect on consumer advocacy.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is quantitative with a positivism paradigm that considers social phenomena to be objectively observable and measured and have a stable cause-and-effect relationship. This research is in the form of a descriptive and verifiable study in the field of marketing management that examines the influence of trust in services, brand image, and product innovation on consumer advocacy. The cross-sectional survey method was chosen to systematically collect data from relatively large respondents, thus allowing for valid, reliable, and replicable analysis.

Data collection was carried out through a closed questionnaire with a Likert scale which was distributed online and offline to PT Mutyara Solo Group consumers with purposive sampling techniques. Data analysis uses structural equation modeling (SEM) through AMOS software to test the validity of the model and the relationships between variables simultaneously. The validity and reliability of the instruments were also tested to ensure the consistency of the measurements, while the descriptive analysis provided an overview of the respondent profile and the distribution of the variables studied.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Based on the recapitulation of the questionnaire filled out by the following respondents, it is presented in table 4.1:

Table 4. 1: Demographic Data Characteristics

Category	Demographics	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Man	83	55.0
	Woman	68	45.0
	Total	151	100.0
Age	< 26 (W)	29	19.2
	27 – 42 (Y)	41	27.2
	43 – 58 (X)	54	35.8
	> 59	27	17.9

		Total	151	100.0
Education	High School/ Equivalent		39	25.8
	S1		96	63.6
	S2		16	10.6
		Total	151	100.0

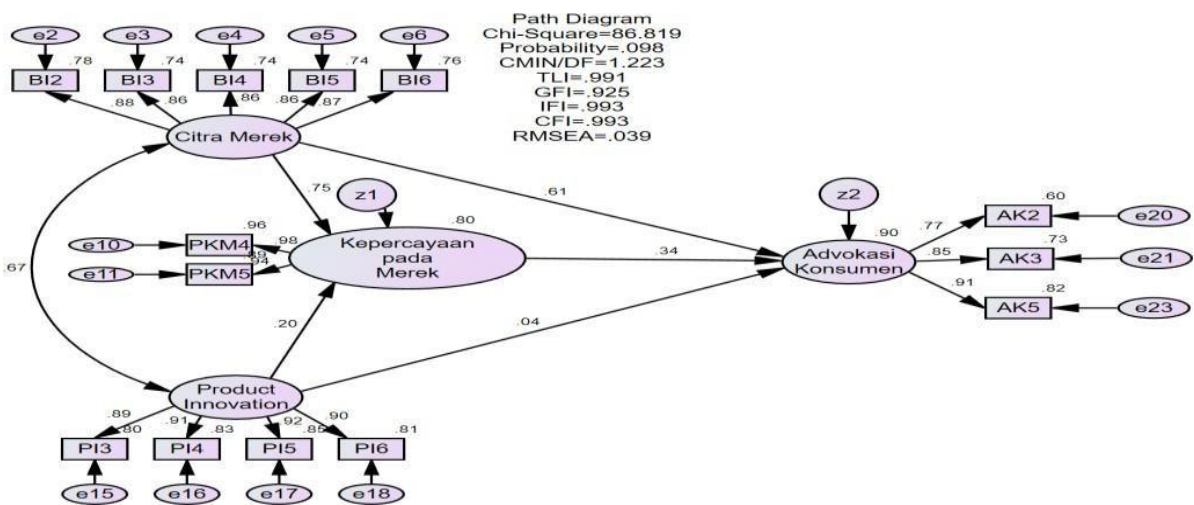
Source : Primary Data (processed, 2025)

Based on gender, the majority of respondents were men as many as 83 people (55.0%), while women amounted to 68 people (45.0%). Judging from the age group, respondents are divided into four generational groups. Most of them came from generation X (aged 43–58 years) as many as 54 people (35.8%), followed by generation Y (aged 27–42 years) as many as 41 people (27.2%), generation Z (under 26 years old) as many as 29 people (19.2%), and the rest over 59 years old as many as 27 people (17.9%).

In terms of education level, the majority of respondents had the last education of strata one (S1) as many as 96 people (63.6%), followed by high school graduates or equivalent as many as 39 people (25.8%), and graduates of strata two (S2) as many as 16 people (10.6%). This demographic composition provides a diverse picture of the respondents' backgrounds and has the potential to influence their perception and participation in the context of this study.

Inferential Statistics

After all research instruments are declared to meet the criteria of validity and reliability, the data analysis process can be continued to the next stage, namely hypothesis testing. This stage aims to confirm the relationship between the previously formulated variables, as well as to evaluate the suitability of the theoretical model with the empirical data obtained.



Picture 1: Path Diagram Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Based on the SEM diagram, all indicators on the latent variable show a strong loading factor, as most of them are valued above 0.70, so it can be concluded that all indicators are valid in measuring their respective constructs. Indicators on Brand Image, Product Innovation, Brand Trust, and Consumer Advocacy all meet convergent validity criteria. In terms of Goodness of Fit, the model also shows an excellent match with the data. This can be seen from the value of Probability = 0.098 (>0.05), CMIN/DF = 1.223 (<2), as well as other indices such as TLI = 0.991, GFI = 0.925, IFI = 0.993, CFI = 0.993, and RMSEA = 0.039, all of which are in the range of good fit to excellent fit. Overall, the SEM model was declared to be very fit, and the research instrument proved to be valid in measuring the variables studied.

Hypothesis Test Results

The results of hypothesis testing were carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis to see the direct influence between variables in the research model. This test involves the relationship between brand image, product innovation, brand trust, and consumer advocacy. The estimated value, critical ratio (CR), and significance (p-value) are the basis for determining whether the hypothesis is confirmed or not.

Table 1: Regression Weights Hypothesis Analysis Results

Endogenous		Eksogen	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Information
KPM	<---	BI	.764	.071	10.716	***	Confirmed
KPM	<---	PI	.191	.061	3.147	.002	Confirmed
AK	<---	KPM	.255	.083	3.094	.002	Confirmed
AK	<---	BI	.474	.088	5.378	***	Confirmed
AK	<---	PI	.032	.045	.706	.480	Unconfirmed

Source : Primary Data (processed, 2025)

The results of the hypothesis test in this study show that most of the relationships between variables are confirmed to be confirmed. Based on Table 4.6, the Brand Image (BI) variable has a positive and significant effect on Trust in Brand (KPM) with an estimated value of 0.764 and a p-value below 0.001. Furthermore, Product Innovation (PI) was also proven to have a significant effect on KPM with an estimated value of 0.191 and a p-value of 0.002. In relation to the Consumer Advocacy (AK) variable, the results of the analysis showed that KPM had a significant positive influence with an estimate value of 0.255 and a p-value of 0.002, as well as Brand Image which had a significant effect on AK with an estimated value of 0.474 and a p-value below 0.001. However, in contrast to other variables, the effect of Product Innovation on AK is not significant because it has a p-value of 0.480, so the hypothesis is not confirmed. Overall, these results confirm that brand image and trust in brands have a stronger contribution in driving consumer advocacy.

Mediation Test Results

Based on the analysis with the approach of Baron and Kenny (1986), the trust in brand variable (KPM) was tested as a mediating variable in the relationship between brand image (BI) and product innovation (PI) to consumer advocacy (AK). First, the direct relationship between brand image (BI) and consumer advocacy (AK) was found to be significant (estimate = 0.474, $p < 0.001$). Meanwhile, BI also has a significant influence on KPM (estimate = 0.764, $p < 0.001$), and KPM is also significant in affecting AK (estimate = 0.255, $p = 0.002$). Since all of these lines are significant and BI's direct relationship with AK remains significant after the mediator is incorporated, it can be concluded that KPM partially mediates the relationship between brand image and consumer advocacy. This means that part of the effect of brand image on consumer advocacy is channeled through trust in the brand.

In contrast, in the relationship between product innovation (PI) and consumer advocacy (AK), no significant direct relationship was found (estimate = 0.032, $p = 0.480$). Although PI has a significant effect on KPM (estimate = 0.191, $p = 0.002$) and KPM also has a significant effect on AK, because the direct relationship between PI and AK is not significant from the beginning, then based on Baron and Kenny's theory, there is full mediation in this relationship. This shows that product innovation does not directly contribute to consumer advocacy.

DISCUSSION

The results show that brand image has the strongest influence on forming trust in the brand, with the highest estimate value in the model. This confirms that a positive perception of the brand, whether through messaging, design, or customer experience, is the main foundation for the formation of consumer trust. Product innovation has also been shown to have a significant effect on trust, although the contribution is lower, so innovation needs to be supported by a consistent customer experience to be able to strengthen that trust. Trust in brands has further been shown to drive consumer advocacy, showing that consumers who believe in a brand are more likely to recommend it to others, either through direct conversations or social media.

In addition, brand image is proven to have a significant direct influence on consumer advocacy, signifying that positive perceptions not only build trust but are also able to create an emotional drive for consumers to become active supporters of brands. In contrast, product innovation did not show a significant influence on advocacy, indicating that the technical aspects of innovation were not enough to trigger consumer recommendations. Therefore, innovation needs to be accompanied by strengthening brand experiences and emotional connections to be able to encourage advocacy. These findings underscore the importance of marketing strategies that emphasize reputation, customer experience, and emotional value to build ongoing consumer loyalty and advocacy.

CONCLUSION

Brand image has proven to be the most powerful factor in building consumer trust, as positive perceptions of the brand through consistent experiences, a professional visual identity, and clear brand values can foster confidence that the brand is trustworthy. Product innovation also contributes to increasing trust, although the impact is not as great as the brand image, so innovation needs to be communicated and executed properly so that the benefits are truly felt by consumers. The trust that is formed then encourages consumers to do advocacy, as recommendations are only given to brands that they truly trust and are proud of.

In addition, brand image not only strengthens trust, but also directly increases consumers' tendency to support and recommend brands, especially when strong emotional bonds are formed. In contrast, product innovation does not have a direct influence on advocacy, as innovation tends to be seen as a technical plus and has not sufficiently created an emotional connection. The mediation analysis shows that trust in the brand partially mediates the relationship between brand image and advocacy, as well as mediates fully the relationship between product innovation and advocacy. Thus, trust is a key element that bridges how brand image and product innovation contribute to the creation of consumer advocacy.

References

- Agustia, D., Haryanto, S. D., Permatasari, Y., & Mudiantari, P. N. (2022). Product innovation, firm performance and moderating role of technology capabilities. *Asian Journal of Accounting Research*, 7(3), 252–265. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJAR-12-2021-0266>
- Ahrholdt, D. C., Gudergan, S. P., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). Enhancing loyalty: When improving consumer satisfaction and delight matters. *Journal of Business Research*, 94, 18–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.08.040>
- Ali, F., Suveatwatanakul, C., Nanu, L., Ali, M., & Terrah, A. (2025). Social media marketing and brand loyalty: Exploring interrelationships through symmetrical and asymmetrical modeling. *Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC*, 29(1), 114–135. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SJME-08-2023-0219>
- Andersén, J. (2021). A relational natural-resource-based view on product innovation: The influence of green product innovation and green suppliers on differentiation advantage in small manufacturing firms. *Technovation*, 104, 102254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2021.102254>
- Aydin, H. (2021). Market orientation and product innovation: The mediating role of technological capability. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 24(4), 1233–1267. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-10-2019-0274>

- Bae, B. R., & Kim, S.-E. (2023). Effect of brand experiences on brand loyalty mediated by brand love: The moderated mediation role of brand trust. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 35(10), 2412–2430. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-03-2022-0203>
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173–1182. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.51.6.1173>
- Blanco-Encomienda, F. J., Chen, S., & Molina-Muñoz, D. (2024). The influence of country-of-origin on consumers' purchase intention: A study of the Chinese smartphone market. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 36(7), 1616–1633. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-05-2023-0462>
- Bricci, L., Fragata, A., & Antunes, J. (2016). The effects of trust, commitment and satisfaction on customer loyalty in the distribution sector. *Journal of Economics, Business and Management*, 4(2), 173–177. <https://doi.org/10.7763/JOEBM.2016.V4.386>
- Castro, C. A. B., Zambaldi, F., & Ponchio, M. C. (2020). Cognitive and emotional resistance to innovations: Concept and measurement. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 29(4), 441–455. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-10-2018-2092>
- Chelminski, P., & Coulter, R. A. (2011). An examination of consumer advocacy and complaining behavior in the context of service failure. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 25(5), 361–370. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08876041111149711>
- Fachrunnisa, O., Adhiatma, A., & Tjahjono, H. K. (2020). Cognitive collective engagement: Relating knowledge-based practices and innovation performance. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-018-0572-7>
- Fernández-Bonilla, F., Gijón, C., & De la Vega, B. (2022). E-commerce in Spain: Determining factors and the importance of e-trust. *Telecommunications Policy*, 46(1), 102280. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2021.102280>
- Fidan, T., & Oztürk, I. (2015). The relationship of the creativity of public and private school teachers to their intrinsic motivation and the school climate for innovation. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 195, 905–914. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.06.370>
- Fuchs, S. (2019). Trust and power. *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews*, 48(2), 179–181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094306119828696>
- Gefen, D., & Straub, D. W. (2004). Consumer trust in B2C e-commerce and the importance of social presence. *Omega*, 32(6), 407–424. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.omega.2004.01.006>
- Hernandez-Fernandez, A., & Lewis, M. C. (2019). Brand authenticity leads to perceived value and brand trust. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*, 28(3), 222–238. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJMBE-10-2017-0027>
- Huang, C.-C. (2017). The impacts of brand experiences on brand loyalty: Mediators of brand love and trust. *Management Decision*, 55(5), 915–934. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-10-2015-0465>
- Huang, L., Wang, M., Chen, Z., Deng, B., & Huang, W. (2020). Brand image and customer loyalty: Transmitting roles of cognitive and affective brand trust. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 48(5). <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.9069>
- Iswanti, P., & Hendra, H. (2023). Peran lingkungan teknologi terhadap adaptasi lingkungan bisnis internasional. *Jurnal Minfo Polgan*, 12(2), 2379–2383. <https://doi.org/10.33395/jmp.v12i2.13276>
- Jayasimha, K. R., & Srivastava, H. S. (2017). Consumer advocacy: Examining the feeling and doing following a failed service encounter. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 34, 201–208. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2016.09.016>
- Kumar, S., Eshghi, A., & Quazi, A. (2014). Consumer advocacy's impact on satisfaction and loyalty. *Journal of Services Research*, 14(1), 39–55.
- Lien, C. H., Wen, M. J., Huang, L. C., & Wu, K. L. (2015). Online hotel booking: The effects of brand image, price, trust and value on purchase intentions. *Asia Pacific Management Review*, 20(4), 210–218. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2015.03.005>
- Lins, K. V., Servaes, H., & Tamayo, A. (2017). Social capital, trust, and firm performance. *Journal of Finance*, 72(4), 1785–1824. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jofi.12505>

- Low, F. C. S., Goh, Y.-N., & Lim, C. N. (2025). Assessing the impact of source credibility on fast fashion brand loyalty. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 29(4), 568–584. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-08-2023-0199>
- Mahmoud, M. A., Hinson, R. E., & Anim, P. A. (2018). Service innovation and customer satisfaction: The role of customer value creation. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 21(3), 402–422. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-09-2017-0117>
- Minarti, S. N., & Segoro, W. (2014). The influence of customer satisfaction, switching cost and trust in a brand on customer loyalty. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 143, 1015–1019. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.546>
- Mohammed, A., & Rashid, B. (2018). A conceptual model of corporate social responsibility dimensions, brand image, and customer satisfaction in Malaysian hotel industry. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 39(2), 358–364. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.kjss.2018.04.001>
- Monfort, A., López-Vázquez, B., & Sebastián-Morillas, A. (2025). Building trust in sustainable brands. *Sustainable Technology and Entrepreneurship*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stae.2025.100105>
- Pentina, I., Zhang, L., & Basmanova, O. (2013). Antecedents and consequences of trust in a social media brand. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(4), 1546–1555. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.01.045>
- Prajogo, D. I. (2016). The strategic fit between innovation strategies and business environment in delivering business performance. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 171, 241–249. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2015.07.037>
- Quaye, E., Taoana, C., Abratt, R., & Anabila, P. (2022). Customer advocacy and brand loyalty. *Journal of Brand Management*, 29, 651–668. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-022-00276-8>
- Rangaswamy, A., Moch, N., Felten, C., van Bruggen, G., Wieringa, J. E., & Wirtz, J. (2020). The role of marketing in digital business platforms. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 51, 72–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2020.04.006>
- Shimul, A. S., & Phau, I. (2018). Consumer advocacy for luxury brands. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 26(3), 264–271. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2018.05.016>
- Song, H. J., Wang, J. H., & Han, H. (2019). Effect of image, satisfaction, trust, love, and respect on loyalty formation for name-brand coffee shops. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 79, 50–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.12.011>
- Susanta, S. (2013). The effect of relationship quality on customer advocacy. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 10(4), 41–52. <https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-1044152>
- Tian, P., & Yang, Q. (2024). The impact of online customer reviews on product iterative innovation. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 27(8), 2646–2667. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-09-2022-0501>
- Tran, K. T., Truong, A. T. T., Truong, V.-A. T., & Luu, T. T. (2024). Leveraging brand coolness for building strong consumer-brand relationships. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 33(2), 258–272. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-05-2023-4476>
- Uchinaka, S., Yoganathan, V., & Osburg, V. (2019). Classifying residents' roles as online place-ambassadors. *Tourism Management*, 71, 137–150. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.10.008>
- Verma, S., Kapoor, D., & Gupta, R. (2024). Role of influencer–follower congruence in influencing followers' food choices and brand advocacy. *British Food Journal*, 126(12), 4055–4071. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-12-2023-1146>
- Wang, M., Li, Y., Li, J., & Wang, Z. (2021). Green process innovation, green product innovation and its economic performance improvement paths. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 297, 113282. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2021.113282>