

The Influence of Emotional Branding, Price Perception, Product Innovation and Trust in Customer Loyalty in F&B Industry

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the impact of emotional branding, price perception, product innovation, and trust on customer loyalty in the Food & Beverage (F&B) market. Due to rising competition and shifts in customer behavior, customer loyalty has become an important aspect of ensuring sustainability in the F&B market. By adopting a quantitative explanatory methodology, data has been gathered using an organized interview technique among customers with pre-buying experience of F&B products. By analyzing the collected data using statistical methods, the impact of various independent factors on customer loyalty is measured. The analysis shows that emotional branding, price perception, product innovation, and trust have a positive, combined effect on customer loyalty, both individually and together. The analysis shows that trust has the highest predictive validity for customer loyalty, followed by emotional branding, product innovation, and price perception. Also, customer loyalty in the F&B market is influenced by emotional appeal, innovation, price perception, and trust. Customer loyalty in the F&B market can have diverse interpretations among different customers, but customer loyalty in the F&B market has been found influenced jointly by emotional attraction, innovation, price perception.

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Keywords:

Emotional Branding; Price Perception; Product Innovation; Trust; Customer Loyalty; Food and Beverage Industry

INTRODUCTION

The Food and Beverage (F&B) business environment entails a very dynamic and fiercely competitive operating environment with heightened trends of consumer sentiments, rivalry, and innovation (Garcia et al., 2025). In recent times, consumer behavior had become more differentiated and emotionally motivated, and therefore, loyalty had emerged as a defining determinant and driver of business sustainability (Dewanti et al., 2011). Contrary to the past market, where functionality was a central determinant, current and emerging trends in consumer behavior focus entirely on emotional connect, perceived fairness, innovativeness, and trust associated with the chosen F&B products and organizations (Quoquab et al., 2020).

Emotional branding has emerged as a strategic approach that enables firms to create deep psychological bonds with consumers. In the F&B industry, emotional branding often manifests through brand stories, sensory experiences, brand personality, and symbolic meanings that resonate with the lifestyles and values of customers (Ole et al., 2025). Indeed, emotional attachment has been found to drive repeat purchases and positive word of mouth, both important components of customer loyalty. When customers perceive emotional attachment to a brand, they are less likely to switch to other competitive brands due to (Keller, 2013).

Price perception is the other factor considered integral to customer loyalty, more so in the food and beverages industry, where the price sensitiveness of customers differs from one segment of the market to another. Price judgments of customers relate not only to the amount they have to pay but also fairness of the

charge relative to the quality of the product (Le et al., 2025; Quan et al., 2024). The positive influence of favorable price perception on customer satisfaction and subsequent loyalty cannot be overemphasized. On the contrary, unfair pricing may result in dissatisfaction and a loss of customer loyalty. Research shows that customers are willing to pay higher prices when they perceive greater emotional value from the brand (Kotler et al., 2018; Zeithaml, 1988).

Product innovation is very crucial to maintaining customer interest and loyalty in the F&B industry. With rapid changes in consumer tastes, health consciousness, and lifestyle trends, product innovation in flavors, ingredients, packaging, and mode of service delivery is needed continuously (Christianti & Hasanah, 2025). Innovative products can give a brand a differential advantage from competition and therefore make their response to the evolving needs of customers more definitive. However, innovation alone is not helpful unless it aligns with customers' expectations and perceived value. Successful product innovation leads to customer satisfaction and reinforces loyalty by providing something new and relevant (Jeaheng et al., 2020; Nurmartiani, 2025).

Trust is one of the basic ingredients in the process of cultivating and maintaining consumer loyalty, particularly in the F&B sector where the concerns for consumer safety, quality, and honesty play a pivotal role (Hermawanto et al., 2025). Consumers should feel confident that the brand can deliver the best possible goods while maintaining its integrity. Trust reduces perceived risk for consumers and makes them more amenable to long-term relationships with the brand. In the context of F&B enterprises, the factor of trust emerges through good quality, truthful communication, integrity, and service (Akram et al., 2025; Vo et al., 2025). Empirical studies have made it clear in their results that the factor of trust exerts a considerable impact on the aims of consumer retention as well as consumer loyalty (Bunjamin et al., 2024).

While emotional branding practices, price perception, product innovation, and trust have all received individual research focus regarding customer loyalty, their joint role in the F&B sector warrants further research. The combination of emotional and rational constructs helps to develop a better understanding of customer loyalty. The rising level of competition and empowered customers make it all the more necessary to study the interplay of various factors influencing customer loyalty in the F&B industry.

Although there has been a rise in the relevance of loyalty to customers within the F&B sector, there are cases where organizations have lacked loyalty from customers as a result of a poor emotional appeal, unfavourable price, limited innovation, as well as a lack of trust within these sectors. Most studies conducted to date have focused on these key areas independently, resulting in incomplete understanding of their cumulative effect on customer loyalty in the F&B sector. The marketing strategy, as well as branding within these organizations, has become ineffective as a result.

Literature Review

1. Customer Loyalty

Customer Loyalty is a widely used term in marketing, and it is widely recognized as essential to securing long-term commercial success for businesses (Setiawati, 2025; Utami, 2023). Customer loyalty can be defined as a lucrative approach dedicated to exhibiting loyalty for purchasing or continuing the use of a preferred

product or service in the long run, unaffected by any situational factors or competitive marketing by consumer-oriented products in the market (Ing et al., 2020). Moreover, loyalty is uniform for both purchase-oriented loyalty and attitudinal loyalty, encompassing attributes such as attachment, advocacy, and resilience in the food & beverage sector, where purchase frequency is higher due to the availability of alternative products available in the market (Arlanda & Suroso, 2018).

Customer loyalty has been further divided by some researchers into behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty. While behavioral loyalty aims to study the purchase behavior of customers, attitudinal loyalty emphasizes consumer attachment with a particular company (Basmantra et al., 2023). Behavioral loyalty would not be solely responsible for ensuring customer loyalty for a longer period since this type of behavior can be driven by convenience and discounts (Bou Saada et al., 2023). However, attitudinal loyalty would involve a strong consumer-brand relationship; hence, understanding its antecedents is quite important for F&B enterprises to secure a stable growth base (Cynthia & Tuti, 2023).

2. Emotional Branding

Emotional branding stands out as a marketing tool that seeks to establish emotional links with consumers on a personal level. Unlike traditional branding practices, which depend on functional values, emotional branding emphasizes emotional values and experiences that a particular brand embodies (Basmantra et al., 2023; Bou Saada et al., 2023). In the F&B sector, emotional branding can be executed through various means such as emotional values of taste, smell, package design, and branding storytelling (Quan et al., 2024). Studies indicate that the emotional bonding of customers with the brand leads to the association of love and passion with the brand. In addition, the incorporation of the brand into customers' lifestyles and identities leads to strong brand loyalty. The emotional branding further leads to customer satisfaction and trust. The emotional differentiation of the brand acts as a strong method for fostering customers' retention in a highly competitive F&B industry despite the functionality offered, like price and quality (Dewanti et al., 2011).

3. Price Perception

Price perception refers to customers' subjective assessment of a product/service's price relative to their perception of the product or service. Instead of focusing solely on the product's price, customers evaluate whether it is fair and in line with the benefits they receive. In the F&B sector, where customers tend to make comparisons of the price of the product from different organizations frequently, price perception acts as one of the important factors for the purchasing decision of customers (Mapalus et al., n.d.; Rivai, 2021). Various considerations go into the perceived pricing, such as fairness in pricing, transparency in pricing, and value for money. In fact, customers would be retained if the pricing is perceived to be in line with the quality and value for money. Moreover, the markdown strategies could also influence the pricing perceptions. It is evident that if the pricing is relatively short, the customers would be resoundingly loyal to such high-priced catering services (Jeaheng et al., 2020; Le et al., 2025).

4. Product Innovation

Product innovation involves introducing new products, services, or processes to meet customers' changing needs. In the F&B context, product innovation takes the form of new flavors, healthier ingredients, packaging innovations, or novel dining

concepts (Cynthia & Tuti, 2023). Continuous innovation is required for a firm to stay competitive and relevant in markets where consumer tastes and trends change rapidly. Product innovation differentiates the firms and attracts both new and existing customers (Kahn, 1996; Kumar et al., 2021). Empirical research has shown that product innovation is a significant driver of customer satisfaction and loyalty, as it emphasizes novelty and added value. However, it is important for innovation to address the expectations of the target customers for it to make a significant impact. Low-order product innovation, which focuses on improving existing products, is as significant a driver of customer loyalty as high-order product innovation. In F&B, innovation can also drive emotional engagement to create curiosity among the customers, which enhances their relationships with brands (Christianti & Hasanah, 2025; Nurmartiani, 2025).

5. Trust

Thus, trust is a basic ingredient in relationship marketing and acts as an important shaper of customer loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Trust implies the belief in the brand as being dependable, honest, and able to consistently assure the delivery of quality and performance. In the food and beverages industry, the customer has to be confident because food is ingested and connects to basic survival. The concerns about food safety, hygiene, and product authenticity thus call for trust. Such customers are likely to continue purchasing more from that brand and recommend it to others even when competitive alternatives come their way (Coderoni & Perito, 2020).

Trust can be established through product performance, communication, ethical operating practices, and past experience. Once established, trust can reduce perceived risks and enhance customer confidence in decisions. Empirical evidence showed that besides being an important determinant of customer loyalty, trust acted as a mediating factor between satisfaction and customer loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). In F&B settings, brands with high trust enjoy strong affection and susceptibility to adverse messages or momentary service failures (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

METHOD

In this study, a quantitative research method is used to investigate the effects of emotional branding, price perception, product innovation, and trust as independent variables, and customer loyalty as the dependent variable, in the Food and Beverage industry. Using quantitative methods to conduct the research is appropriate because they help the researcher establish objective relationships between the study's independent and dependent variables, enabling the statistical testing of hypotheses. This study also makes use of an explanation-type of research design, where the intent is to explain the relationships between the independent variables of emotional branding, price perception, product innovation, and trust and the dependent variable of customer loyalty. The information for the study is obtained through a structured questionnaire survey targeting customers of the Food and Beverage companies chosen as the study's context.

The target population for this research is customers in the F&B sector, and the sampling method is purposive sampling. The respondents (250) for this research will be selected based on the criteria of whether they have experience with a certain F&B

brand or outlet and whether they have made repeat purchases. The questionnaire allows for a Likert-scale analysis of respondents' perceptions of emotional branding, price perception, product innovation, trust, and customer loyalty. The measurement tools used in the analysis include pre-testing to assess the tools' reliability and validity. Data analysis is conducted using statistical software to validate the study's research model. Descriptive statistical analysis is used to describe the respondents' data, while inferential statistical analysis is used to establish relationships among variables. Multiple Regression Analysis is conducted based on the nature of the data obtained from the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Emotional Branding	4.112	0.563	2.800	5.000
Price Perception	3.984	0.601	2.600	5.000
Product Innovation	4.067	0.579	2.700	5.000
Trust	4.198	0.541	3.000	5.000
Customer Loyalty	4.153	0.558	2.900	5.000

Source: Data Analysis, 2026

The outcomes show that all variables have means above 3.900, implying that all respondents have positive perceptions of the variables at study. Trust has the highest mean of 4.198, indicating strong confidence in F&B Brands. The lowest mean, 3.984, relates to price perception, indicating that respondents have neutral feelings about prices.

2. Reliability and Validity Analysis

Table 2. Reliability and Validity Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Item Correlation Range
Emotional Branding	0.872	0.612 – 0.781
Price Perception	0.841	0.598 – 0.746
Product Innovation	0.858	0.623 – 0.769
Trust	0.889	0.654 – 0.802
Customer Loyalty	0.865	0.637 – 0.788

Source: Data Analysis, 2026

All values of Cronbach's Alpha are well above the required value of 0.700, ensuring internal consistency. However, all corrected item-total correlation values are well above 0.500, ensuring that all valid indicators of the constructs are correctly represented. Thus, it may be confirmed that based on both reliability and validity tests, the research instruments utilized in this research work are fit to be further analyzed.

3. Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 3. Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.781	0.610	0.602	0.352

Source: Data Analysis, 2026

The R Square of 0.610 indicates that 61.0% of customer loyalty is explained by emotional branding, pricing perceptions, product innovation, and trust factors in the

model. The adjusted R Square of 0.602 shows that the model is stable despite having multiple independent variables. This clearly shows that the proposed model in this research has great explanatory power in facilitating customer loyalty in the F&B market.

4. Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 4. Regression Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Variable	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Emotional Branding	0.268	4.312	0.000
Price Perception	0.173	2.984	0.003
Product Innovation	0.219	3.756	0.000
Trust	0.314	5.128	0.000
Constant	0.482	2.167	0.032

Source: Data Analysis, 2026

The findings indicate that emotional branding makes a significant positive contribution to customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.268$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that the stronger the emotions, the stronger the loyalty. Price satisfaction significantly contributes to customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.173$, $p = 0.003$), indicating that people are satisfied with the price they pay. Product innovation makes a significant positive contribution to customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.219$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that innovative products keep the customers interested and committed. Trust makes the greatest contribution to the model ($\beta = 0.314$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that trust is a crucial element in establishing long-term business relationships in the food and beverage sector.

Discussion

In this study, we investigate how emotional branding practices, perceptions of prices, product innovation, and trust affect customer loyalty in the Food & Beverage sector. The results provide concrete evidence that each factor influences customer loyalty constructs at both individual and combined levels. This paper will discuss how these outcomes relate to various theoretical propositions and prior research on customer loyalty in the Food & Beverage sector.

The findings show that emotional branding positively affects customer loyalty, indicating that emotional ties between customers and F&B brands are fundamental to building long-term relationships. The findings are in agreement with theories that explain the significance of emotional attachment in influencing consumer behavior. If customers are able to link a positive emotional response, memory, and self-identity with a specific brand, they are more apt to become attitudinal loyal customers. In the F&B world, which revolves around experiential consumer behavior, emotional branding increases customer engagement, boosting repeat behavior. The result agrees with previous research that indicated emotional attachment generates stronger resistance and advocacy towards competitors (Dewanti et al., 2011; Garcia et al., 2025; Ole et al., 2025; Quoquab et al., 2020).

What constitutes the major impact of emotional branding means that the F&B industry should really concentrate on building consistent storytelling and memorable experiences as well. Some of the emotional branding components such as ambiance, storytelling, packaging design, and customer interactions all play critical roles in those efforts to achieve uniqueness and emotional satisfaction. Notably, emotional branding components are not only used as core drivers of loyalty but also as indirect means of improving other relationship elements as well.

Price perception is also revealed to have a positive but significant impact upon customer loyalty, although its impact is comparatively less significant in comparison with emotional branding and trust. It implies that customer-perceived price fairness has played an important role in determining customer loyalty. Within the context of the F&B sector, customers are often subjected to price comparisons and offers; hence, price perception is a critical variable in such a sector. However, the outcome of this analysis implies that customers are not entirely driven toward price; rather, the price point has been aligned with quality, emotional benefits, or experience.

The above findings are in support of the theory of value-based pricing, which argues that customers are ready to remain loyal to a firm on perceiving a balance between price and perceived values. Customers would be ready to pay a higher price if they are convinced that a firm offers it with better values, innovation, and emotional benefits (Jeaheng et al., 2020; Le et al., 2025; Quan et al., 2024). The relatively lower coefficient on the beta for price perception implies that while pricing remains a key strategy, it should be integrated with emotional branding and innovation strategies rather than overemphasized for customer retention.

What the study yields further is that product innovation exerts a strongly positive impact on customer loyalty, thus validating the need for constant innovation in the F&B sector. Innovation ensures that the brand keeps up with the dynamic demands of consumers. Variations in offerings, better ingredients, unique packaging designs, and unique service offerings help to keep the customers engaged. In consonance with the innovation diffusion theory, customers are drawn towards the offerings which offer more value or are unique.

Product innovation also fosters emotional engagement by arousing excitement and curiosity among customers. Most innovative products often signal a brand's commitment to improvement and responsiveness, thus enhancing trust and perceived competence. However, discussion of results would suggest that innovation is effective to the extent that it is in line with customer expectations and the identity of the brand. Too much or inconsistent innovation may confuse customers or dilute brand imagery. Therefore, F&B businesses should implement a balanced approach to innovation-one which focuses on the relevance of customers and brand consistency-to forge better loyalty.

Among all independents, trust is the strongest predictor of customer loyalty, which further underscores its central importance in relationship marketing. The authors further confirm this view, suggesting that trust is a critical component in maintaining long-term customer relationships. Trust will be especially essential in the F&B industry due to issues related to food safety, hygiene, inconsistent quality, and corporate ethics. Customers with high trust levels in a brand are more likely to continue buying a brand despite service failure or competitive pressures (Christanti & Hasanah, 2025; Garcia et al., 2025).

The strong impact of trust on customer loyalty supports relationship marketing theory, which emphasizes trust as a core driver or antecedent of commitment and loyalty. Building trust lowers perceived risk and raises customers' confidence, hence leading to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth (Hermawanto et al., 2025). These results have some important implications: they suggest that emotional branding, fair price, and innovation efforts will be more effective whenever customers consider the brand to be trustworthy. In this respect, trust has a twofold impact, not

only affecting loyalty per se but also enhancing the effectiveness of other loyalty drivers.

The combined effect of emotional branding, price perception, product innovation, and trust accounts for a significant amount of variation in overall customer loyalty. This result highlights the multi-faceted nature of the complex process of building loyalty for the F&B sector. Customer loyalty is not dramatically affected by one feature but by a multi-faceted synthesis of various elements – be it emotional branding, product innovation for the creation of emotional value, or price perception and trust for rational assessment and risk mitigation. Customer loyalty is the endpoint for a well-crafted holistic experience.

The presentation of results is also insightful for managers in the food and beverage industry. Those firms which operate through price competition alone may face a challenge in establishing strong consumer loyalty because consumer loyalty based solely on price considerations can sometimes be precarious. Emotional branding practices, innovation, and trust-enhancing initiatives can therefore contribute to more stable consumer loyalty. Communication practices based on strong ethical standards can reinforce consumer loyalty, for instance.

Theoretically, as a contribution to literature, this study tries to make a mark by applying a model that configures the influence of emotional branding, price, product, and trust simultaneously for customer loyalty in the F&B sector, as opposed to previous studies that considered these parameters independently, providing a piecemeal effect to understanding them as a whole, including emotional as well as rational considerations under a single research framework, giving a holistic view to understanding how customers create loyalty as a whole, as opposed to singular parameters. The results validate that customers consider emotional bits as important as functionality for building loyalty.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that emotional branding, price perception, product innovation, and trust play important roles in shaping customer loyalty in the Food and Beverage sector. The results shown illustrate that customer loyalty is an n-dimensional construct. Both emotional and rational aspects appear to affect customer loyalty. The most important factor in customer loyalty appears to be trust, which reinforces the notion that it plays a key role in forming customer loyalty in any organization operating in the F&B sector. Finally, positive emotional branding and product innovation play an important role in building customer loyalty in organizations operating in this sector by providing customers with a positive experience from the products the organization offers, satisfying their product requirements and price expectations.

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