



The Effect Of Perceived Quality, Mediated By Shopping Experience, On Store Loyalty Among Alfamidi Customers In Palu City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of perceived quality on shopping experience and store loyalty, as well as to examine the mediating role of shopping experience in the relationship between perceived quality and store loyalty among Alfamidi customers in Palu. This study employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive and correlational design. The sample consisted of 100 Alfamidi customers selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected via a questionnaire using a 1–7 Likert scale and analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The research findings indicate that perceived quality has a positive and significant effect on shopping experience and store loyalty. In addition, the shopping experience has a positive and significant effect on store loyalty and mediates the effect of perceived quality on store loyalty. These findings indicate that improvements in perceived quality and a positive shopping experience are important factors in increasing consumer loyalty toward Alfamidi. Therefore, the company needs to maintain the quality of its products and services and create a comfortable shopping experience to retain customer loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

Changes in consumer behavior in Indonesia indicate a growing demand for convenience, efficiency, and quality in shopping, particularly in the modern retail sector such as minimarkets (Sholihah et al., 2022; Kustaji et al., 2025). Increasingly fierce competition is driving every retailer, including Alfamidi, to compete not only on price but also on product quality, service quality, and shopping experiences that can enhance consumer loyalty (Aisyah & Alfiah, 2023; Hidayah et al., 2026). Customer loyalty is a critical factor for business sustainability because it contributes to

repeat purchases and competitive advantage amid a dynamic market (Ambarwati et al., 2020; Munir & Ahmadi, 2025).

One factor that plays a role in building loyalty is perceived quality, which is consumers' subjective assessment of the quality of the products or services they receive (Sholihah et al., 2022; Hutabarat & Budiono, 2022). Various studies show that perceived quality has a positive effect on loyalty because it increases trust, satisfaction, and the likelihood of repeat purchases (Aisyah & Alfiah, 2023; Dianafakroh et al., 2025). However, some studies also reveal that loyalty is influenced not only by perceived quality but also by other factors such as brand image, brand awareness, and the consumer's shopping experience (Hutabarat & Budiono, 2022). This suggests that the relationship between perceived quality and loyalty still requires a more comprehensive explanation in the context of minimarket retail (Ambarwati et al., 2020; Hidayah et al., 2026).

In addition to perceived quality, the shopping experience is a key factor influencing consumer loyalty. The shopping experience encompasses consumers' interactions with the store environment, customer service, ease of transaction, and the store atmosphere—all of which shape sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses during the purchasing process (Schmitt, 2000; Schmitt, 2011). A positive shopping experience has been shown to increase consumer satisfaction, trust, and preference for a particular retailer (Aisyah & Alfiah, 2023; Ramli et al., 2026). However, most previous studies have been conducted in the context of e-commerce or sectors outside the minimarket retail industry, so empirical evidence regarding the role of the shopping experience in physical minimarkets remains relatively limited (Munir & Ahmadi, 2025; Hidayah et al., 2026).

This situation has become increasingly relevant for Alfamidi, which operates amid intense competition in the minimarket industry. In the fourth quarter of 2025, Alfamidi recorded revenue growth of 3.2% and a 5.65% increase in the number of stores, but continued to face a slowdown in growth due to pressure on consumer purchasing power and a shift in consumer behavior toward value for money. On the other hand, a Populix survey shows that 77% of Indonesians choose minimarkets as their go-to place for daily necessities, making competition among retailers increasingly fierce (Databoks, 2024). This situation requires companies to maintain customer loyalty by improving product quality and the shopping experience.

Previous research still indicates a research gap. Ambarwati et al. (2020) only examined the effects of price, product quality, and brand love on loyalty at Indomaret minimarkets without including the shopping experience. Sholihah et al. (2022) and Munir and Ahmadi (2025) studied perceived quality of specific products, so their findings cannot yet be generalized to the minimarket retail sector. Meanwhile, Hutabarat and Budiono (2022) examined the relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention, not store loyalty. To date, there remains a limited body of research that simultaneously examines the effect of perceived quality on store loyalty through the mediating role of the shopping experience in the context of Alfamidi minimarkets, particularly in Palu City.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the effect of perceived quality on the shopping experience and store loyalty, as well as to test the mediating role of the shopping experience in the relationship between perceived quality and store loyalty. This study is expected to contribute to the development of the modern retail marketing literature while also providing practical insights for Alfamidi in formulating strategies to increase customer loyalty by enhancing perceived quality and the shopping experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceived quality

Perceived quality is consumers' overall perception of the level of excellence and suitability of a product or service compared to other alternatives, which is formed from experience, information, and expectations. In the concept of customer-based brand equity, perceived quality

is one of the key dimensions of brand equity because it enhances brand value, influences consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions, and fosters brand loyalty (Sholihah et al., 2022; Hutabarat & Budiono, 2022). In the retail context, perceived quality is reflected in consumers' assessments of product performance, quality consistency, physical appearance, the alignment of price with quality, and the ease of obtaining the product (Sholihah et al., 2022; Aisyah & Alfiah, 2023).

In this study, perceived quality is operationalized as consumers' subjective assessment of the quality of products sold at Alfamidi across six aspects: performance suitability, reliability, durability, physical attractiveness, price-quality fit, and attractive product design (Sholihah et al., 2022). The higher the quality perceived by consumers, the more positive their shopping experience will be. Based on the theoretical framework and the results of previous studies, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Perceived quality has a positive effect on Alfamidi customers' shopping experience.

Shopping experience

The shopping experience refers to the overall cognitive, emotional, sensory, and behavioral responses of consumers that arise through their interactions with the store environment, products, and services during the shopping process (Aisyah & Alfiah, 2023; Hidayah et al., 2026). This concept draws on the experiential marketing theory proposed by Schmitt (2000; 2011), which divides the consumer experience into five Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs): sense, feel, think, act, and relate. The "sense" dimension describes sensory experiences derived from the store layout, lighting, cleanliness, scent, and atmosphere. The "feel" dimension relates to the feelings of comfort, joy, and satisfaction consumers experience while shopping. The "think" dimension reflects cognitive experiences arising from the ease of accessing information, understanding promotions, and product displays that facilitate the decision-making process. The "act" dimension describes behavioral experiences reflected in the ease of transactions, the tendency to make repeat purchases, and the frequency of visits. Meanwhile, the "relate" dimension indicates consumers' social connection to the brand, such as alignment with their lifestyle, a sense of belonging as an Alfamidi customer, and a willingness to share positive experiences with others. (Schmitt, 2000; Schmitt, 2011).

In this study, the shopping experience was operationalized based on these five dimensions to measure consumers' perceptions of the quality of their shopping experience at Alfamidi. A positive shopping experience is expected to increase satisfaction, strengthen the relationship between consumers and the store, and ultimately foster store loyalty (Ambarwati et al., 2020; Aisyah & Alfiah, 2023; Hidayah et al., 2026). Based on the theoretical framework of experiential marketing and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Perceived quality has a positive effect on Alfamidi customers' store loyalty.

Store loyalty

Store loyalty is defined as a customer's commitment to consistently choose, shop at, recommend, and maintain a long-term relationship with a store, as reflected through repeat purchases, resistance to competitors' offers, and positive word-of-mouth communication (Capriati, 2023; Verawati, 2022). Loyalty is viewed as a commitment that drives consumers to make consistent repeat purchases despite situational influences or marketing efforts from competitors (Prabawanti et al., 2024; Sudin & Rahma, 2025). From a retail equity perspective, store loyalty is one of the key assets formed through the accumulation of shopping experiences, perceptions of quality, store image, and customers' positive associations with the store (Prakoso, 2020; Mustaqim et al., 2022).

According to Oliver (1999), loyalty develops through four stages. Cognitive loyalty is characterized by the belief that a store is the best choice and is capable of meeting customers' needs (Dick & Basu, 1994; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Affective loyalty is characterized by

feelings of pleasure, comfort, and emotional attachment to the store (Back & Parks, 2003; Harris & Goode, 2004). Conative loyalty reflects customers' intention and commitment to continue shopping at the store and not switch to competitors (Gremler & Brown, 1996; Oliver, 1999; Zeithaml et al., 1996). The highest stage is action loyalty, which is actual behavior in the form of consistent repeat purchases, a willingness to recommend the store, sharing positive information, and continuing to choose the store even when there are attractive offers from competitors (Anderson, 1998; Harris & Goode, 2004; Oliver, 1999; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

In the context of minimarkets, store loyalty is influenced by service quality, store atmosphere, ease of access, product variety, price perception, and promotional programs that can create a satisfying shopping experience and build long-term preference for the store (Prakoso, 2020; Verawati, 2022; Mustaqim et al., 2022; Capriati, 2023; Sismanto & Wulandari, 2023). This study operationalizes store loyalty as consumers' commitment to Alfamidi, reflected through the belief that Alfamidi is the best choice, emotional attachment, the intention to continue shopping there, as well as the behavior of recommending and continuing to choose Alfamidi even when other minimarket alternatives are available (Prakoso, 2020; Verawati, 2022; Capriati, 2023). Based on this study, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H3: The shopping experience has a positive effect on Alfamidi customers' store loyalty.

Indirect Effect

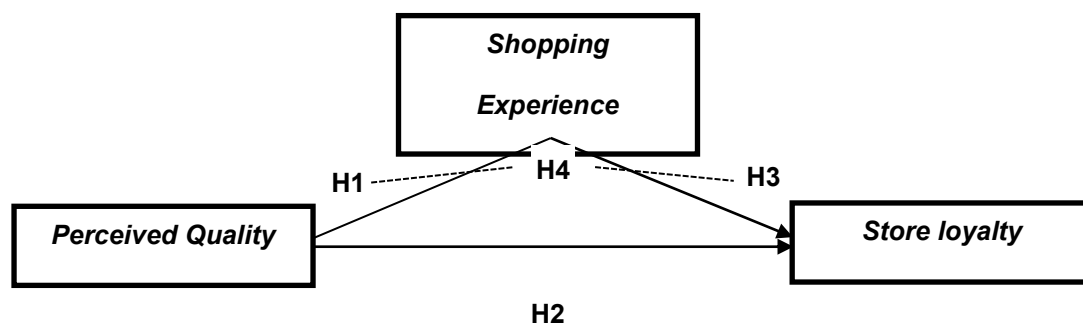
Studies of consumer behavior show that the relationship between perceived quality and store loyalty is not always direct, but may involve psychological mechanisms that explain how quality evaluations translate into loyalty. In the retail context, the shopping experience is a relevant mechanism because consumers evaluate product quality not only based on its functional characteristics but also on their experiences during the process of searching for, selecting, purchasing, and using the product (Saputra et al., 2023; Angeline, 2023). Perceptions of high product quality tend to create a more comfortable, enjoyable, and valuable shopping experience, thereby strengthening consumer attachment to the store.

Theoretically, perceived quality is an initial cognitive evaluation, while store loyalty is the final outcome that involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. In this relationship, the shopping experience acts as a mechanism that transforms quality assessments into real experiences that drive satisfaction, trust, repeat purchases, and long-term commitment to the store (Rahayu & Ruswanti, 2024; Saputra et al., 2023). Thus, the shopping experience is not only a consequence of perceived quality but also serves as a bridge that strengthens the development of loyalty.

Empirical findings support this argument. Rahayu and Ruswanti (2024) show that perceived quality contributes to the development of store loyalty through brand experience and emotional bonds with customers. Meanwhile, Angeline (2023) found that the effect of perceived quality on loyalty occurs through the mediating variable of brand trust, while Saputra et al. (2023) showed that customer experience enhances customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and customer trust. These results indicate that the relationship between perceived quality and loyalty generally involves mediating mechanisms in the form of customer experiences or psychological responses.

In the context of minimarkets such as Alfamidi, consumers not only evaluate product quality but also experience direct interaction with the store environment, customer service, layout, cleanliness, ease of transactions, and information on prices and promotions. Therefore, the shopping experience is viewed as a mechanism that explains how perceived quality translates into store loyalty. Based on this study, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: The shopping experience mediates the positive effect of perceived quality on Alfamidi customers' store loyalty.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study (Figure 1) illustrates the structural relationship among perceived quality, shopping experience, and store loyalty among Alfamidi customers in Palu. The research model is based on the theories of customer-based brand equity and experiential marketing, and is supported by empirical findings that indicate that perceived quality and shopping experience are important factors in shaping consumer loyalty in the modern retail sector. (Rahayu & Ruswanti, 2024; Saputra et al., 2023; Angeline, 2023).

The research model tests four hypotheses: the effect of perceived quality on the shopping experience (H1), the effect of perceived quality on store loyalty (H2), the effect of the shopping experience on store loyalty (H3), and the mediating role of the shopping experience in the relationship between perceived quality and store loyalty (H4). The relationships among these variables are presented in Figure 1.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive and correlational design to analyze the influence of perceived quality and shopping experience on store loyalty among Alfamidi customers in Palu. The study was conducted from May to June 2026 at Alfamidi stores located in Palu, Central Sulawesi. The study population consisted of all consumers who made purchases at Alfamidi stores in Palu. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, with respondents required to be at least 18 years old and to have shopped at Alfamidi at least three times in the past six months.

The sample size was determined based on the guidelines for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), namely at least 10 times the number of the largest number of indicators in the research construct. Based on these guidelines, this study included 115 respondents who met the research criteria.

The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire designed based on the theories of perceived quality, shopping experience, and store loyalty, with indicators adapted from previous studies. All variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

Data collection was conducted offline by distributing questionnaires to customers at Alfamidi outlets in Palu and online using Google Forms. The data were analyzed using SmartPLS with a PLS-SEM approach through an evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to test the validity and reliability of the constructs based on outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability, as well as an evaluation of the structural model (inner model) to test the relationships between variables and the research hypotheses.

RESULTS

Data analysis in this study was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the assistance of SmartPLS. The results of the analysis are presented in two main stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model), as well as testing of hypotheses—both direct and indirect.

Outer Model Evaluation

An outer model evaluation was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the research constructs, which include perceived quality, shopping experience, and store loyalty. Results: The results of the convergent validity test showed that all indicators had outer loadings above 0.70; therefore, all indicators were deemed valid and suitable for measuring their respective constructs (Table 1).

Table 1. Outer Loading

Indicators	Perceived quality	Shopping experience	Store loyalty
pq1	0.871	-	-
pq2	0.851	-	-
pq3	0.868	-	-
pq4	0.774	-	-
pq5	0.857	-	-
pq6	0.807	-	-
pq7	0.903	-	-
pq8	0.779	-	-
pq9	0.888	-	-
pq10	0.839	-	-
pq11	0.877	-	-
pq12	0.850	-	-
pq13	0.895	-	-
pq14	0.830	-	-
pq15	0.931	-	-
pq16	0.834	-	-
se1	-	0.849	-
se2	-	0.887	-
se3	-	0.897	-
se4	-	0.893	-
se5	-	0.905	-
se6	-	0.858	-
se7	-	0.887	-
se8	-	0.910	-
se9	-	0.889	-
se10	-	0.892	-
se11	-	0.800	-
se12	-	0.860	-
se13	-	0.905	-
se14	-	0.853	-
se15	-	0.901	-
se16	-	0.844	-

se17	-	0.765	-
se18	-	0.821	-
se19	-	0.748	-
se20	-	0.872	-
sl1	-	-	0.843
sl2	-	-	0.774
sl3	-	-	0.845
sl4	-	-	0.806
sl5	-	-	0.800
sl6	-	-	0.778
sl7	-	-	0.842
sl8	-	-	0.826
sl9	-	-	0.864
sl10	-	-	0.876
sl11	-	-	0.909
sl12	-	-	0.864
sl13	-	-	0.898
sl14	-	-	0.830
sl15	-	-	0.826
sl16	-	-	0.727
sl17	-	-	0.771
sl18	-	-	0.731
sl19	-	-	0.756
sl20	-	-	0.776

Table 1 presents the outer loadings for all indicators within the constructs of perceived quality, shopping experience, and store loyalty. The results show that all indicators have outer loading values above 0.70, ranging from 0.774 to 0.931 for perceived quality, 0.748 to 0.910 for shopping experience, and 0.727 to 0.909 for store loyalty. These values meet the criteria for convergent validity; therefore, all indicators are deemed valid and suitable for use in the analysis.

In the perceived quality construct, the indicator with the highest loading value indicates that perceptions of product quality play a significant role in shaping consumers' perceived quality. In the shopping experience construct, all dimensions of the shopping experience—including sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational aspects—adequately represent the construct. Meanwhile, in the store loyalty construct, all indicators also meet the validity criteria, indicating that the indicators of repurchase, store preference, and recommendations effectively capture consumer loyalty toward Alfamidi.

Based on these results, no indicators were eliminated, so all indicators can be used in the structural model analysis (inner model).

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Construction	AVE
Perceived quality	0.730
Shopping experience	0.745
Store loyalty	0.670

Table 2 presents the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct. The results show that perceived quality, shopping experience, and store loyalty have AVE values of 0.730, 0.745, and 0.670, respectively. All of these values are above the minimum threshold of 0.50, thus meeting the criteria for convergent validity.

High AVE values indicate that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its respective indicators. Thus, the indicators for all three constructs adequately represent the latent variables and demonstrate a good level of convergent validity. These results confirm that the measurement model is suitable for structural equation modeling (inner model).

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construction	Perceived quality	Shopping experience	Store loyalty
Perceived quality	-	0.861	0.732
Shopping experience	0.861	-	0.807
Store loyalty	0.732	0.807	-

Table 3 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values used to test the discriminant validity among constructs. A construct is considered to have good discriminant validity if its HTMT value is below 0.90.

The results show that the HTMT value between perceived quality and shopping experience is 0.861, between perceived quality and store loyalty is 0.732, and between shopping experience and store loyalty is 0.807. All of these values are below the 0.90 threshold, thus meeting the criteria for discriminant validity.

These results indicate that perceived quality, shopping experience, and store loyalty are conceptually distinct constructs, even though they are interrelated. Thus, the measurement model meets the criteria for discriminant validity and is suitable for structural equation modeling (inner model).

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construction	Perceived quality	Shopping experience	Store loyalty
Perceived quality	0.854	-	-
Shopping experience	0.845	0.863	-
Store loyalty	0.729	0.803	0.819

Table 4 presents the results of the discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker criteria. Discriminant validity is considered to be met if the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs.

The results show that the root-mean-square error of estimation (RMSE) values for perceived quality (0.854), shopping experience (0.863), and store loyalty (0.819) are each higher than their correlation coefficients with other constructs. These findings indicate that each construct is better able to explain its own indicators than those of other constructs. Thus, the measurement model meets the criteria for discriminant validity according to Fornell and Larcker and is suitable for use in structural equation modeling (inner model).

Table 5. Cross-Loading of Indicators

Indicator	Perceived quality	Shopping experience	Store loyalty
pq1	0.871	0.740	0.604
pq2	0.851	0.688	0.643
pq3	0.868	0.735	0.607
pq4	0.774	0.616	0.616
pq5	0.857	0.709	0.627
pq6	0.807	0.653	0.615
pq7	0.903	0.745	0.655

pq8	0.779	0.678	0.635
pq9	0.888	0.767	0.613
pq10	0.839	0.732	0.624
pq11	0.877	0.755	0.593
pq12	0.850	0.727	0.590
pq13	0.895	0.752	0.579
pq14	0.830	0.716	0.599
pq15	0.931	0.815	0.658
pq16	0.834	0.701	0.697
se1	0.738	0.849	0.633
se2	0.768	0.887	0.675
se3	0.800	0.897	0.689
se4	0.796	0.893	0.690
se5	0.798	0.905	0.691
se6	0.733	0.858	0.747
se7	0.807	0.887	0.672
se8	0.777	0.910	0.774
se9	0.781	0.889	0.735
se10	0.773	0.892	0.684
se11	0.624	0.800	0.676
se12	0.694	0.860	0.752
se13	0.730	0.905	0.660
se14	0.705	0.853	0.691
se15	0.751	0.901	0.713
se16	0.744	0.844	0.639
se17	0.606	0.765	0.605
se18	0.623	0.821	0.752
se19	0.559	0.748	0.651
se20	0.724	0.872	0.712
sl1	0.619	0.709	0.843
sl2	0.525	0.554	0.774
sl3	0.650	0.728	0.845
sl4	0.497	0.563	0.806
sl5	0.705	0.768	0.800
sl6	0.415	0.483	0.778
sl7	0.717	0.756	0.842
sl8	0.597	0.592	0.826
sl9	0.744	0.762	0.864
sl10	0.568	0.597	0.876
sl11	0.668	0.724	0.909
sl12	0.554	0.600	0.864
sl13	0.699	0.765	0.898
sl14	0.555	0.625	0.830
sl15	0.725	0.780	0.826
sl16	0.368	0.442	0.727
sl17	0.562	0.658	0.771
sl18	0.450	0.541	0.731
sl19	0.488	0.616	0.756
sl20	0.553	0.629	0.776

Table 5 presents the cross-loading values for each indicator with respect to the constructs of perceived quality, shopping experience, and store loyalty. An indicator is considered to meet the criteria for discriminant validity if it has the highest loading value on the construct it measures compared to the other constructs.

The results show that all indicators have the highest loadings on their respective constructs. The perceived quality indicator has the highest loading on the perceived quality construct; similarly, the shopping experience and store loyalty indicators each have the highest loadings on their own constructs. These findings indicate that all indicators are able to distinguish the measured constructs well and that there is no overlap between constructs.

Thus, the cross-loading test results reinforce the findings of the HTMT and Fornell-Larcker tests that the measurement model meets the criteria for discriminant validity and is therefore suitable for use in structural equation modeling (inner model).

Table 6. Construct Reliability

Construction	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability (rho_C)
Perceived quality	0.975	0.976	0.977
Shopping experience	0.982	0.983	0.983
Store loyalty	0.974	0.978	0.976

Table 6 presents the results of the construct reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability. A construct is considered reliable if the values of all three measures exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70.

The results show that the perceived quality construct has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.975, a rho_A value of 0.976, and a Composite Reliability value of 0.977. The "shopping experience" construct obtained values of 0.982, 0.983, and 0.983, respectively, while "store loyalty" had values of 0.974, 0.978, and 0.976. All values were above 0.70, so all three constructs were deemed to have excellent reliability.

These findings indicate that all indicators exhibit high internal consistency in measuring their respective constructs. Thus, the research instrument is deemed reliable and suitable for use in structural equation modeling (inner model).

Inner Model Evaluation

An internal model evaluation was conducted to test the model's validity and the relationships among latent variables.

Table 7. Model Fit (PLS-SEM)

Indicators	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.071	0.071
NFI	0.715	0.715

Table 7 presents the results of the model fit evaluation using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the Normed Fit Index (NFI). The results show that the SRMR values for the saturated model and the estimated model are both 0.071, which is below the threshold of 0.08, indicating a good level of model fit.

The NFI value for both models was 0.715, indicating that the models have an adequate level of fit. Thus, based on the SRMR and NFI values, the research model is deemed suitable for use in structural equation modeling and hypothesis testing.

Tabel 8. Uji Kolinearitas (VIF)

Route	VIF
Perceived quality → Shopping experience	1.000
Perceived quality → Store loyalty	3.497
Shopping experience → Store loyalty	3.497

Table 8 presents the results of the multicollinearity test using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). This test aims to ensure that there is no multicollinearity among the predictor variables in the structural model.

The results show that the VIF value for the perceived quality → shopping experience path is 1.000, while those for the perceived quality → store loyalty and shopping experience → store loyalty paths are 3.497, respectively. All VIF values are below the threshold of 5, indicating that there is no multicollinearity issue in the model.

Thus, each independent variable can explain the dependent variable independently without distortion due to high multicollinearity, making the model suitable for hypothesis testing.

Table 9. R-Square

Construction	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Shopping experience	0.714	0.712
Store loyalty	0.653	0.648

Table 9 presents the R-squared and adjusted R-squared values for the endogenous constructs of shopping experience and store loyalty. The R-squared value indicates the proportion of variance in the endogenous constructs that can be explained by the exogenous variables in the model.

The results show that shopping experience has an R-squared value of 0.714 (Adjusted R-squared = 0.712), meaning that 71.4% of the variation in shopping experience can be explained by perceived quality. Meanwhile, store loyalty has an R-squared value of 0.653 (Adjusted R-squared = 0.648), indicating that 65.3% of the variation in store loyalty can be explained by perceived quality and shopping experience.

Based on these results, the model is effective in explaining the endogenous variables; thus, perceived quality and shopping experience are adequate predictors of Alfamidi customers' store loyalty.

Table 10. Effect Size (f-square)

Route	f-square	Category
Perceived quality → Shopping experience	2.497	Very large
Perceived quality → Store loyalty	0.026	Medium (small-medium)
Shopping experience → Store loyalty	0.352	Large

Table 10 presents the effect size (f^2) values to assess the magnitude of each exogenous variable's contribution to the endogenous variable. Based on the f^2 criteria, a value of 0.02 indicates a small effect, 0.15 a moderate effect, and 0.35 a large effect.

The results show that the path from perceived quality to shopping experience has an f^2 value of 2.497, indicating a large effect. The path from perceived quality to store loyalty has an f^2 value of 0.026, which falls into the small category, while the path from shopping experience to store loyalty has an f^2 value of 0.352, which falls into the large category.

These findings indicate that perceived quality plays a very strong role in shaping the shopping experience, while the shopping experience makes a significant contribution to store loyalty. Conversely, the direct contribution of perceived quality to store loyalty is relatively small, suggesting that loyalty is built primarily through the shopping experience.

Table 11. Q-Square Predictive Relevance

Construction	Q ² predict	RMSE	MAE
Shopping experience	0.714	0.554	0.386
Store loyalty	0.525	0.704	0.486

Table 11 presents the Q²predict values, Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), and Mean Absolute Error (MAE) to evaluate the model's predictive ability. A Q²predict value greater than 0 indicates that the model has predictive relevance for the endogenous construct.

The results show that shopping experience has a Q²predict value of 0.714 with an RMSE of 0.554 and an MAE of 0.386. Meanwhile, store loyalty has a Q²predict value of 0.525 with an RMSE of 0.704 and an MAE of 0.486. All Q²predict values are above 0, indicating that the model has good predictive ability for both endogenous constructs.

Thus, the research model not only explains the relationships among variables but also possesses adequate predictive validity.

Table 12. Direct Effect

Route	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	t-statistics	p-values	Description
Perceived quality → Shopping experience	0.845	0.841	0.047	17.959	0.000	Significant
Perceived quality → Store loyalty	0.176	0.175	0.145	1.217	0.224	Not significant
Shopping experience → Store loyalty	0.654	0.657	0.136	4.805	0.000	Significant

Table 12 presents the results of the direct effect tests between variables using the bootstrapping procedure. The tests were conducted based on path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values.

The results show that perceived quality has a positive and significant effect on shopping experience ($\beta = 0.845$; $t = 17.959$; $p < 0.001$), so H1 is accepted. Conversely, the direct effect of perceived quality on store loyalty is not significant ($\beta = 0.176$; $t = 1.217$; $p = 0.224$), so H2 is rejected. Meanwhile, shopping experience has a positive and significant effect on store loyalty ($\beta = 0.654$; $t = 4.805$; $p < 0.001$), so H3 is accepted.

These findings indicate that perceived quality plays a significant role in enhancing the shopping experience, whereas store loyalty is influenced more by the shopping experience than directly by perceived quality. These results serve as the basis for evaluating the mediating role of the shopping experience in the relationship between perceived quality and store loyalty, as presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Indirect Effect (Mediation)

Route	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	t-statistics	p-values	Description
Perceived quality → Shopping experience → Store loyalty	0.552	0.553	0.123	4.498	0.000	Significant mediation

Table 13 presents the results of the test of the indirect effect of perceived quality on store loyalty through shopping experience. The bootstrapping results show that the path perceived quality → shopping experience → store loyalty has a coefficient of $\beta = 0.552$, a t-value of 4.498, and $p < 0.001$. Thus, H4 is accepted.

These results indicate that shopping experience significantly mediates the effect of perceived quality on store loyalty. This finding suggests that an increase in perceived quality will enhance the shopping experience, which in turn contributes to increased store loyalty. Given that the direct effect of perceived quality on store loyalty is not significant (Table 12), the relationship between these two variables occurs through shopping experience as the mediating variable

DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyze the effect of perceived quality on brand loyalty, with shopping experience as a mediating variable, among Alfamidi consumers in Palu City. Based on the results of the PLS-SEM analysis, this study shows that perceived quality has a positive and significant effect on shopping experience, and that shopping experience has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty, whereas the direct effect of perceived quality on brand loyalty is not significant. Furthermore, shopping experience was found to mediate the relationship between perceived quality and brand loyalty. These findings suggest that consumers' perceptions of quality do not directly lead to loyalty but must be realized through positive and memorable shopping experiences.

The findings regarding the influence of perceived quality on the shopping experience reinforce the view in customer-based brand equity theory that consumers' perceptions of quality form the basis for their evaluation of and experience with a brand (Aaker, 1991). Consumers who perceive Alfamidi products as being of good quality, reliable, and in line with their expectations are more likely to have a positive shopping experience. The results of this study are consistent with previous research showing that perceived quality plays a significant role in shaping consumers' positive responses to a brand (Sholihah et al., 2022; Munir & Ahmadi, 2025). However, this study expands on those findings by demonstrating that, in the context of minimarket retail, perceived quality is not only related to the products but also to how consumers experience the overall shopping process.

Furthermore, the research results show that the shopping experience has a strong influence on brand loyalty. These findings support the concept of experiential marketing, which explains that consumer experiences—through sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational aspects—can create a stronger bond between consumers and brands (Schmitt, 2000; 2011). In the context of Alfamidi, positive experiences gained by consumers through store comfort, ease of finding products, employee service, and a convenient checkout process can increase consumers' likelihood of making repeat purchases and recommending the brand to others. These results are consistent with previous research that found customer experience is a key factor in building loyalty in the retail industry. (Saputra et al., 2023; Rahayu & Ruswanti, 2024). Interestingly, this study found that perceived quality does not have a direct impact on brand loyalty. The results indicate that the quality perceived by consumers is not sufficient to

directly foster loyalty in the increasingly competitive minimarket sector. Consumers today have many alternatives to choose from, so the relatively similar product quality across retailers has not yet become a key differentiating factor. Loyalty is more likely to develop when that quality translates into a shopping experience that is convenient, effortless, and provides emotional value to consumers. This finding differs from some previous studies that identified a direct influence of perceived quality on loyalty (Hutabarat & Budiono, 2022; Munir & Ahmadi, 2025), but supports research that positions the consumer experience as a key mechanism in the relationship between quality and loyalty. (Saputra et al., 2023; Rahayu & Ruswanti, 2024).

The mediating role of the shopping experience is the main contribution of this study. The results show that perceived quality can increase brand loyalty when consumers have a positive shopping experience. Thus, this study provides insight into the fact that the relationship between quality and loyalty is not always direct but can occur through the process of evaluating the consumer experience. These findings reinforce the perspective that consumer loyalty is the result of a combination of cognitive evaluations of quality and emotional experiences formed during interactions with a brand (Oliver, 1999; Harris & Goode, 2004). In the context of minimarket retail, the shopping experience is a critical factor that transforms perceptions of quality into consumer commitment to the brand.

From a managerial perspective, this study provides insights for Alfamidi management that increasing customer loyalty requires more than just offering high-quality products; it also necessitates a focus on creating a superior shopping experience. These efforts can be achieved by enhancing the comfort of the store environment, implementing an intuitive product layout, improving the quality of employee service, and providing clear promotional information. Furthermore, Alfamidi needs to develop strategies based on the consumer experience to differentiate itself from competitors, such as other minimarkets. In this way, a consistently positive experience can strengthen consumers' emotional connection and increase their loyalty to Alfamidi. This study has several limitations. First, the study was conducted only among Alfamidi customers in Palu City, so the generalizability of the results to other regions remains limited. Second, the study used a cross-sectional design, so it is not yet able to describe changes in consumer experience and loyalty over the long term. Third, the study only considered perceived quality and shopping experience as factors influencing brand loyalty, while other factors such as price, location, promotions, brand image, and the use of digital technology were not included in the model. Future research is recommended to expand the scope of the study, adopt a longitudinal approach, and incorporate other relevant variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how retail consumer loyalty is formed.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that perceived quality and shopping experience play distinct yet complementary roles in shaping Alfamidi customers' store loyalty in Palu City. Empirically, H1 was accepted, indicating that perceived quality has a positive and significant effect on shopping experience, while H3 was also accepted, indicating that shopping experience has a positive and significant effect on store loyalty. Conversely, H2 was rejected because perceived quality does not have a direct and significant effect on store loyalty, and H4 was accepted because the shopping experience was found to significantly mediate the positive effect of perceived quality on store loyalty. This indicates that good product quality must first be translated into a positive shopping experience before it can generate strong customer loyalty.

Consequently, Alfamidi management and similar minimarket retailers must do more than simply improve product quality and adjust prices; they must also seriously manage the in-store shopping experience—from store layout and ambiance to employee service, as well as the clarity of promotions and pricing information—so that high perceived quality truly translates into store loyalty. For future researchers, these findings open up opportunities to expand the model to

include other variables—such as brand image, price, or digital channels—and to re-examine the relationships among the hypotheses using a longitudinal design and across different locations, thereby deepening our understanding of the mechanisms underlying loyalty formation in minimarket retail

SUGGESTION

Given these limitations, several directions for future research may be considered. First, similar studies could be replicated in other cities or across different minimarket chains to test the consistency of the perceived quality–shopping experience–store loyalty relationship across various geographic and competitive contexts. Second, longitudinal research could be conducted to track how changes in strategies to improve quality and the shopping experience impact consumer loyalty over a specific period, such as before and after a particular managerial intervention. Third, the model could be expanded to include other variables such as brand image, price fairness, store convenience, or digital engagement (e.g., use of apps and online services) as additional predictors of store loyalty, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of loyalty in modern minimarket retail. Fourth, a mixed-methods approach incorporating qualitative studies (in-depth interviews or focus groups) can help delve deeper into the aspects of the shopping experience that are most meaningful to consumers, thereby enriching the quantitative findings with narrative insights into what truly makes consumers “feel connected” to Alfamid

RESEARCH TRANSPARENCY AND ETHICS STATEMENTS

1. Author Contributions:

EYC: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Collection, Data Analysis,

US: Writing – Original Draft, Visualization, Review and Editing

P: Writing – Original Draft, Visualization, Review and Editing

SA: Writing – Original Draft, Visualization, Review and Editing

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No conflict of interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest related to the research and publication of this article.

4. Research Ethics:

The study did not involve any intervention, biological specimens, vulnerable groups, or sensitive personal data. Participation was voluntary, and the confidentiality of the respondents was maintained.

5. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):

No use of ai. The authors declare that generative ai was not used in the preparation of this article.

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