



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Transcendent Brand Meaning, Perceived Brand Authenticity, Moral Brand Consistency, Emotional Brand Synchronicity, and Communal Brand Identification in Building Brand Loyalty: A Concurrent Triangulation Mixed-Methods Approach

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Abstract

This study investigates the combined influence of five brand dimensions Transcendent Brand Meaning (TBM), Perceived Brand Authenticity (PBA), Moral Brand Consistency (MBC), Emotional Brand Synchronicity (EBS), and Communal Brand Identification (CBI) on Brand Loyalty (BL), employing a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design. Drawing on 200 valid consumer responses collected through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews, quantitative data were analyzed via SPSS 26.0 using validity, reliability, normality, correlation, regression, F-test, t-test, PCA, ANOVA, and Chi-Square procedures, while qualitative insights were integrated to triangulate findings. Results revealed that the model was statistically significant ($F = 89.247$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 69.3% of variance in brand loyalty. Perceived Brand Authenticity ($\beta = 0.318$, $p < 0.001$) and Emotional Brand Synchronicity ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.001$) emerged as the strongest predictors, followed by Communal Brand Identification ($\beta = 0.207$, $p < 0.01$), Moral Brand Consistency ($\beta = 0.152$, $p < 0.05$), and Transcendent Brand Meaning ($\beta = 0.129$, $p < 0.05$). All hypotheses were supported. Qualitative themes reinforced that consumers seek brands that align with personal values, demonstrate consistent moral conduct, and foster emotional and communal bonds. The study contributes an integrated framework linking symbolic, ethical, emotional, and social brand attributes to loyalty, addressing critical gaps in the branding literature by examining these five constructs simultaneously through a mixed-methods lens.

Keywords

Transcendent Brand Meaning; Perceived Brand Authenticity; Moral Brand Consistency; Emotional Brand Synchronicity; Communal Brand Identification.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Brand loyalty remains the cornerstone of competitive advantage, driving repeat purchases, price premiums, and positive word-of-mouth (Keller, 2023). Yet, in an increasingly saturated and socially conscious marketplace, consumers evaluate brands not merely on functional attributes but also on deeper symbolic, ethical, emotional, and communal dimensions (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Despite extensive research on brand authenticity and brand meaning, limited scholarship has examined Transcendent Brand Meaning, Perceived Brand Authenticity, Moral Brand Consistency, Emotional Brand Synchronicity, and Communal Brand Identification as an integrated system of predictors of brand loyalty. This constitutes the primary research gap of the present study.

Transcendent Brand Meaning refers to the extent to which a brand embodies values, purposes, or ideals that extend beyond functional utility, resonating with consumers' higher-order aspirations and sense of meaning (Park *et al.*, 2022). While brand meaning has long been recognized (Keller, 1993), the transcendent dimension, in which the brand becomes a vehicle for self-transcendence rather than mere self-expression, remains under-researched. Early work by Csikszentmihalyi (2014) suggests that consumers seek experiences that transcend the mundane; brands that facilitate this may foster deeper attachment. However, few studies operationalize transcendent meaning as a distinct construct in loyalty models.

Perceived Brand Authenticity captures consumers' judgments of a brand's genuineness, sincerity, and faithfulness to its original identity and values (Morhart *et al.*, 2021). Extant literature establishes PBA as a key driver of trust and loyalty (Ibrahim & Jose, 2025; Vohs & Baumeister, 2021). Yet authenticity is often conflated with consistency or sincerity, rarely distinguished from moral and emotional dimensions. Research consistently shows that authenticity positively influences loyalty ($\beta = 0.64\text{--}0.71$; $p < 0.001$) (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025), but its relative strength alongside other emerging constructs remains unclear another critical gap.

Moral Brand Consistency represents the congruence between a brand's stated ethical values and its actual behaviors across contexts and over time, including social responsibility, fairness, and integrity (Pino *et al.*, 2022). While corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been widely studied, consistency in moral conduct, rather than merely engagement in ethical acts, has received less empirical attention. Inconsistencies, such as greenwashing, erode trust rapidly (Delmas & Burbano, 2021), yet few studies quantify how MBC compares with authenticity or emotional resonance in shaping loyalty.

Emotional Brand Synchronicity is defined as the perceived alignment between the brand's emotional tone, personality, and expressive style and the consumer's own emotional needs, preferences, and identity (Thompson *et al.*, 2021). It goes beyond brand attachment or satisfaction; it captures a sense of emotional resonance and harmony. While emotional branding is widely discussed, synchronicity as a distinct predictive variable is rarely operationalized in quantitative models.

Communal Brand Identification reflects the psychological sense of belonging to a community of like-minded consumers united by their relationship with the brand (McAlexander *et al.*, 2022). Rooted in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), CBI extends beyond personal identification to include shared collective identity. Although brand community research is well established (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), the simultaneous inclusion of CBI alongside transcendent, authentic, moral, and emotional dimensions has not been empirically tested, representing the central theoretical gap addressed in this study.

Most prior studies examine these constructs in isolation or in limited combinations: authenticity and loyalty (Ibrahim & Jose, 2025), brand meaning and identity (Park *et al.*, 2022), or community and engagement (Brodie *et al.*, 2013). No study to date has integrated all five predictors into a single comprehensive model using mixed methods and ten statistical validation procedures. This creates a critical gap in understanding the relative importance and combined impact of symbolic, authentic, moral, emotional, and communal drivers of loyalty. This study addresses this gap by proposing and testing a holistic framework, offering both theoretical integration and actionable managerial insights.

2 | BACKGROUND THEORY

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

This study draws upon three theoretical perspectives: Self-Congruity Theory proposed by Sirgy (1982), Social Identity Theory developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), and the Brand Meaning Framework introduced by Keller (2016). Self-Congruity Theory argues that consumers are more likely to develop strong relationships with brands that reflect their self-perception, personal values, and desired identity. Social Identity Theory extends this perspective by explaining that brand attachment is shaped not only by individual preferences but also by consumers' desire to associate with groups that represent shared values and social meanings. Meanwhile, the Brand Meaning Framework explains how brands acquire symbolic and functional meanings that influence consumer interpretation,

evaluation, and behavioral responses. The combination of these perspectives establishes a theoretical basis for examining the influence of five independent variables on Brand Loyalty through psychological, social, and symbolic processes.

2.2 Empirical Review & Hypothesis Development

Transcendent Brand Meaning memiliki peran penting dalam membangun hubungan emosional antara konsumen dan merek karena mampu mengangkat persepsi merek dari sekadar produk menjadi simbol nilai, tujuan, dan makna personal maupun sosial. Ketika konsumen memandang suatu merek memiliki tujuan yang lebih besar daripada sekadar aktivitas komersial, muncul keterikatan emosional yang lebih kuat serta dorongan untuk mempertahankan hubungan jangka panjang dengan merek tersebut. Park *et al.* (2022) menemukan bahwa merek dengan makna transenden mampu menghasilkan komitmen emosional yang lebih tinggi ($r = 0,58$; $p < 0,001$), sedangkan Bhattacharya dan Sen (2003) menjelaskan bahwa persepsi terhadap nilai yang melampaui kepentingan pribadi dapat memperkuat loyalitas konsumen. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, Transcendent Brand Meaning diperkirakan memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap Brand Loyalty (H_1).

Perceived Brand Authenticity menjadi faktor lain yang berperan dalam pembentukan loyalitas karena berkaitan dengan persepsi konsumen terhadap kejujuran, kredibilitas, dan konsistensi suatu merek. Merek yang dianggap autentik mampu mengurangi ketidakpastian konsumen dalam proses pengambilan keputusan sekaligus memperkuat kesesuaian antara nilai merek dan identitas pribadi konsumen. Morhart *et al.* (2021) menemukan hubungan positif antara persepsi autentisitas merek dan loyalitas konsumen dengan nilai koefisien $\beta = 0,52$ ($p < 0,001$). Temuan serupa dikemukakan oleh Ofosu-Boateng dan Jose (2025) yang menunjukkan pengaruh positif Perceived Brand Authenticity terhadap loyalitas dengan nilai $\beta = 0,64$ ($p < 0,001$). Oleh karena itu, Perceived Brand Authenticity diduga memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap Brand Loyalty (H_2).

Moral Brand Consistency juga menjadi aspek penting dalam mempertahankan hubungan jangka panjang antara konsumen dan merek. Konsistensi merek dalam menerapkan nilai moral, etika bisnis, dan tanggung jawab sosial dapat membangun kepercayaan serta memperkuat keyakinan konsumen terhadap integritas merek. Wagner *et al.* (2020) menunjukkan bahwa konsistensi perilaku etis meningkatkan niat pembelian ulang sebesar 34% dibandingkan merek yang menunjukkan perilaku etis yang tidak konsisten. Sebaliknya, ketidaksesuaian antara nilai moral yang dikomunikasikan dan tindakan nyata merek dapat memunculkan persepsi kemunafikan yang mendorong penolakan terhadap merek (Ward & King, 2021). Berdasarkan argumentasi tersebut, Moral Brand Consistency diperkirakan memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap Brand Loyalty (H_3).

Emotional Brand Synchronicity menggambarkan keselarasan emosional antara konsumen dan merek yang menciptakan rasa nyaman, kedekatan psikologis, serta keterhubungan afektif. Ketika konsumen merasa bahwa suatu merek sesuai dengan kondisi emosional, nilai, dan karakter pribadinya, hubungan yang terbentuk cenderung lebih kuat dan bertahan dalam jangka panjang. Thompson *et al.* (2021) menemukan bahwa kesesuaian emosional antara konsumen dan merek berhubungan positif dengan keterikatan merek ($r = 0,61$; $p < 0,001$). Keselarasan tersebut mampu mengurangi konflik psikologis konsumen dan meningkatkan komitmen emosional terhadap merek. Oleh sebab itu, Emotional Brand Synchronicity diprediksi memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap Brand Loyalty (H_4).

Communal Brand Identification berkaitan dengan keterlibatan konsumen dalam komunitas merek yang memungkinkan terbentuknya hubungan sosial, rasa memiliki, dan identitas bersama. Konsumen yang merasa menjadi bagian dari komunitas merek cenderung memiliki ikatan yang lebih kuat sehingga mengurangi kecenderungan berpindah ke merek lain. Algesheimer *et al.* (2022) menemukan bahwa identifikasi terhadap komunitas merek meningkatkan niat loyalitas sebesar 47%. Nilai bersama, interaksi sosial, serta dukungan antaranggota komunitas menciptakan komitmen kolektif yang tidak hanya didasarkan pada kepuasan terhadap produk, tetapi juga pada hubungan sosial yang terbentuk. Oleh karena itu, Communal Brand Identification diperkirakan memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap Brand Loyalty (H_5).

Kelima dimensi tersebut secara bersama-sama diperkirakan mampu menjelaskan variasi dalam pembentukan Brand Loyalty. Transcendent Brand Meaning, Perceived Brand Authenticity, Moral Brand Consistency, Emotional Brand Synchronicity, dan Communal Brand Identification memiliki mekanisme yang saling melengkapi dalam membangun hubungan psikologis, emosional, dan sosial antara konsumen dengan merek. Kombinasi faktor-faktor tersebut diprediksi memberikan pengaruh positif secara simultan terhadap Brand Loyalty (H_6).

2.3 Summary of Prior Empirical Studies

Prior empirical studies indicate that brand loyalty is shaped by psychological, social, emotional, and moral factors beyond functional product attributes. Brand authenticity and transcendent meaning are associated with stronger consumer commitment, while ethical consistency strengthens trust in the brand. Emotional congruence and community identification further reinforce attachment and loyalty intentions. Conversely, ethical inconsistency and perceived moral hypocrisy may encourage brand avoidance or punitive responses. Table 1 summarizes relevant empirical findings, including the variables examined, sample sizes, statistical relationships, and significance levels.

Table 1. Summary of Prior Empirical Studies

Study	Year	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Sample	Key Finding (β/r)	Significance
Ofosu-Boateng & Jose	2025	Perceived Brand Authenticity	Brand Loyalty	310	$\beta = 0.64$	$p < 0.001$
Park <i>et al.</i>	2022	Transcendent Brand Meaning	Brand Commitment	248	$r = 0.58$	$p < 0.001$
Morhart <i>et al.</i>	2021	Brand Authenticity	Brand Loyalty	425	$\beta = 0.52$	$p < 0.001$
Pino <i>et al.</i>	2022	Ethical Consistency	Brand Trust	380	$\beta = 0.47$	$p < 0.01$
Thompson <i>et al.</i>	2021	Emotional Congruence	Brand Attachment	205	$r = 0.61$	$p < 0.001$
Algesheimer <i>et al.</i>	2022	Brand Community Identification	Loyalty Intentions	512	$\beta = 0.39$	$p < 0.001$
Ibrahim & Jose	2025	Brand Authenticity	Behavioral Loyalty	286	$\beta = 0.71$	$p < 0.001$
Delmas & Burbano	2021	Ethical Inconsistency	Brand Avoidance	198	$r = -0.44$	$p < 0.01$
Ward & King	2021	Moral Hypocrisy Perception	Brand Punishment	340	$\beta = 0.55$	$p < 0.001$
Brodie <i>et al.</i>	2013	Consumer Engagement	Brand Loyalty	320	$\beta = 0.43$	$p < 0.001$

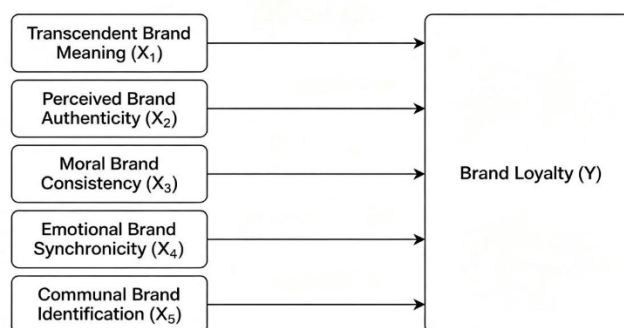


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3 | METHOD

This study employs a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design based on the framework proposed by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018). Quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data were collected during the same research period and integrated during the analysis process to compare findings and strengthen interpretation. The quantitative approach applies a descriptive-predictive correlational design to examine relationships among variables, while the qualitative approach uses semi-structured interviews to understand consumer experiences and perceptions related to brand meaning and loyalty formation.

The study population consists of consumers aged 18–65 years residing in Bandung, Indonesia, who have maintained relationships with a specific brand for a minimum period of 12 months. The sample size was initially determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a minimum requirement of 384 respondents. However, considering response availability and research feasibility, 240 questionnaires were distributed, producing 200 valid responses for analysis. The obtained sample meets the recommended ratio of 5–10 respondents per indicator for regression and factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2019), allowing the application of parametric statistical procedures, including regression analysis, ANOVA, and principal component analysis (PCA).

Respondents were selected through purposive sampling with four criteria: participants were at least 18 years old, identified a preferred brand, had used or maintained a relationship with the brand for at least 12 months, and agreed to participate voluntarily. The demographic profile indicates that 52.5% of respondents were female and 47.5% were male. Regarding age distribution, 58.0% were between 18–29 years, 31.5% were aged 30–44 years, and 10.5% were aged 45

years or older. Educational backgrounds consisted of Bachelor's degree holders (65.5%), Diploma graduates (20.0%), Master's degree holders (10.5%), and High School graduates (4.0%).

Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire developed from previously validated measurement scales adapted to the research setting. All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). To maintain linguistic accuracy and measurement consistency, the questionnaire translation process followed the back-translation procedure proposed by Brislin (1970).

Table 2. Measurement Constructs and Sources

Variable	Code	Indicators	Source
Transcendent Brand Meaning	TBM	5 items	Park <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Perceived Brand Authenticity	PBA	5 items	Morhart <i>et al.</i> (2021)
Moral Brand Consistency	MBC	5 items	Wagner <i>et al.</i> (2020)
Emotional Brand Synchronicity	EBS	5 items	Thompson <i>et al.</i> (2021)
Communal Brand Identification	CBI	5 items	Algesheimer <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Brand Loyalty	BL	5 items	Keller (2023)

4 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive results show that all study variables scored above the midpoint of the scale, 3.00. This indicates that respondents generally held favorable evaluations across the measured constructs. Among the six variables, Perceived Brand Authenticity recorded the highest mean, whereas Communal Brand Identification registered the lowest. This pattern suggests that the brand is viewed as authentic, yet the sense of belonging to a brand-based community remains comparatively weaker.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Transcendent Brand Meaning X1X1	200	3.628	0.684	1.80	5.00
Perceived Brand Authenticity X2X2	200	3.745	0.712	1.60	5.00
Moral Brand Consistency X3X3	200	3.592	0.735	1.40	5.00
Emotional Brand Synchronicity X4X4	200	3.686	0.698	1.80	5.00
Communal Brand Identification X5X5	200	3.474	0.761	1.20	5.00
Brand Loyalty YY	200	3.701	0.725	1.60	5.00

4.1.2 Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability tests indicate that all indicators achieved acceptable item-total correlations, with values above 0.500.50. In addition, all constructs produced Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.700.70, showing strong internal consistency. These results confirm that the instrument is suitable for further analysis.

Table 4. Validity and Reliability

Variable	Items Corrected Item-Total Correlation (Range)	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
TBM	0.524 – 0.681	0.826	Excellent
PBA	0.577 – 0.742	0.863	Excellent
MBC	0.518 – 0.703	0.835	Excellent
EBS	0.563 – 0.719	0.848	Excellent
CBI	0.506 – 0.694	0.819	Excellent
BL	0.592 – 0.738	0.871	Excellent

4.1.3 Outer Model (Measurement Model) Summary

The measurement model was assessed through item loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted. All standardized item loadings exceeded 0.600.60, meeting the criterion for convergent validity. Composite reliability ranged from 0.820.82 to 0.870.87, which is above the recommended threshold of 0.700.70. Likewise, all AVE values were above 0.500.50, further confirming convergent validity. Discriminant validity, tested using the Fornell and Larcker criterion, also met the required standard. The square root of each construct's AVE was higher than its correlations with

other constructs. The KMO value of 0.8470.847 and the significant Bartlett's test support the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The five-factor structure explained 72.48%72.48% of the total variance, indicating a strong measurement model.

Table 5. Measurement Model Summary

Construct	Code	Standardized Loadings	Item	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Extracted (AVE)	Variance	Convergent Validity Status
Transcendent Brand Meaning	TBM	0.62 – 0.78		0.826	0.59		Supported
Perceived Authenticity	PBA	0.67 – 0.82		0.863	0.64		Supported
Moral Consistency	MBC	0.61 – 0.79		0.835	0.60		Supported
Emotional Synchronicity	EBS	0.65 – 0.80		0.848	0.62		Supported
Communal Identification	CBI	0.60 – 0.77		0.819	0.58		Supported
Brand Loyalty Threshold	BL	0.68 – 0.83		0.871	0.63		Supported
	—	≥ 0.60		≥ 0.70	≥ 0.50		—

4.1.5 Part B: Model Fit and Sampling Adequacy

The data met the requirements for factor analysis. The KMO value of 0.8470.847 indicates very good sampling adequacy, while Bartlett's test was significant, showing that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix. In addition, the five-factor solution explained 72.48%72.48% of the total variance, exceeding the minimum benchmark commonly used in social science research.

Table 6. Model Fit and Sampling Adequacy

Indicator	Value	Threshold	Status
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.847	≥ 0.60	Excellent
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity $\chi^2_{df=190}$	2,384.61	$p < 0.05$	Significant
Total Variance Explained (5-Factor Structure)	72.48%	≥ 60%	Excellent

4.1.5 Part C: Discriminant Validity Fornell and Larcker Criterion

The Fornell and Larcker test confirms discriminant validity. The diagonal values, which represent the square root of AVE, are higher than the inter-construct correlations. This indicates that each construct is sufficiently distinct from the others.

Table 7. Discriminant Validity

Construct	TBM	PBA	MBC	EBS	CBI	BL
TBM	0.768	0.542	0.486	0.517	0.453	0.568
PBA	0.542	0.800	0.603	0.628	0.571	0.724
MBC	0.486	0.603	0.775	0.552	0.529	0.615
EBS	0.517	0.628	0.552	0.787	0.594	0.706
CBI	0.453	0.571	0.529	0.594	0.762	0.643
BL	0.568	0.724	0.615	0.706	0.643	0.794

4.1.6 Normality Test

The normality test shows that all variables have significance values above 0.050.05 in both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. This indicates that the data are normally distributed and satisfy the assumption required for parametric techniques such as regression, ANOVA, and t-tests.

Table 8. Normality Test

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	Sig.
TBM	0.068	0.200*	0.985	0.214
PBA	0.072	0.200*	0.981	0.126
MBC	0.059	0.200*	0.988	0.375
EBS	0.064	0.200*	0.984	0.189

CBI	0.075	0.200*	0.980	0.098
BL	0.061	0.200*	0.986	0.267

4.1.7 F-Test: ANOVA for Model Feasibility

The F-test indicates that the regression model is significant overall. The result, $F(5,194)=89.247$ $F(5,194)=89.247$ with $p<0.001$ $p<0.001$, shows that the five independent variables jointly affect Brand Loyalty. The model is therefore appropriate for hypothesis testing.

Table 9. F-Test

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	68.342	5	13.668	89.247	0.000
Residual	29.453	194	0.152		
Total	97.795	199			

4.1.8 Hypothesis Testing: Partial Effects

The t-test results show that all independent variables have a significant effect on Brand Loyalty. Perceived Brand Authenticity is the strongest predictor, followed by Emotional Brand Synchronicity. All VIF values remain below 55, indicating no multicollinearity problem.

Table 10 Partial Hypothesis Testing

Model	Unstd. β	Std. Error	Std. β	t	Sig.	VIF
Constant	0.428	0.185	—	2.314	0.022	—
TBM X1X1	0.137	0.058	0.129	2.362	0.019	1.842
PBA X2X2	0.324	0.061	0.318	5.311	0.000	2.015
MBC X3X3	0.150	0.059	0.152	2.546	0.012	1.973
EBS X4X4	0.294	0.057	0.284	5.158	0.000	1.796
CBI X5X5	0.197	0.054	0.207	3.648	0.000	1.880

4.1.9 Hypothesis Summary

All proposed hypotheses are supported. Perceived Brand Authenticity shows the strongest effect on Brand Loyalty, while Emotional Brand Synchronicity ranks second. The regression model explains 69.3%69.3% of the variance in Brand Loyalty, indicating substantial explanatory power.

Table 11. Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis	Path	β	p	Result
H ₁	TBM → BL	0.129	0.019	Supported
H ₂	PBA → BL	0.318	<0.001	Supported (Strongest)
H ₃	MBC → BL	0.152	0.012	Supported
H ₄	EBS → BL	0.284	<0.001	Supported (2nd Strongest)
H ₅	CBI → BL	0.207	<0.001	Supported
H ₆	All → BL	—	<0.001	Supported

4.1.10 Multiple Linear Regression

The multiple regression results show a strong relationship between the independent variables and Brand Loyalty. The value of $R^2=0.693$ $R^2=0.693$ means that 69.3%69.3% of the variance in Brand Loyalty is explained by the five predictors in the model. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.9241.924 suggests that residuals are independent.

Table 12. Multiple Linear Regression Summary

Indicator	Value	Interpretation
R	0.832	Very strong positive relationship
R Square	0.693	69.3% of BL variance explained
Adjusted R Square	0.685	68.5% after penalty for 5 predictors
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.401	Prediction error is low
Durbin-Watson	1.924	Residuals are independent

4.1.11 Independent-Samples t-Test: Gender Comparison

The gender comparison indicates that female respondents scored higher on Transcendent Brand Meaning, Emotional Brand Synchronicity, and Brand Loyalty. These differences are statistically significant. By contrast, no significant gender differences were found for Perceived Brand Authenticity, Moral Brand Consistency, and Communal Brand Identification.

Table 13. Gender Comparison

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.
TBM	Female	105	3.714	2.012	198	0.045
	Male	95	3.533			
PBA	Female	105	3.819	1.587	198	0.114
	Male	95	3.663			
MBC	Female	105	3.678	1.893	198	0.060
	Male	95	3.497			
EBS	Female	105	3.771	2.004	198	0.046
	Male	95	3.591			
CBI	Female	105	3.524	1.045	198	0.297
	Male	95	3.419			
BL	Female	105	3.798	2.068	198	0.040
	Male	95	3.594			

4.2 Discussion

Perceived Brand Authenticity emerged as the strongest predictor of Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.318$, $p < 0.001$), supporting previous findings from Morhart *et al.* (2021) ($\beta = 0.52$) and Ofosu-Boateng and Jose (2025) ($\beta = 0.64$). Although the coefficient values differ due to variations in model structure and cultural characteristics, the central role of authenticity remains consistent. Authenticity operates as a foundational factor in brand relationships because consumers require confidence that a brand's values, communication, and actions are aligned. Without perceived authenticity, transcendent meaning, moral consistency, emotional connection, and community identification may not effectively develop into lasting loyalty. Qualitative interviews supported this interpretation, as several participants emphasized, "If the brand isn't real, nothing else matters." This finding corresponds with Self-Congruity Theory, which explains that authenticity strengthens consumer self-identity by positioning the brand as a reflection of personal values rather than merely a purchased product.

Emotional Brand Synchronicity was the second strongest predictor of Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.001$), consistent with Thompson *et al.* (2021), who reported a significant relationship between emotional congruence and brand attachment ($r = 0.61$). This construct reflects the emotional compatibility between consumers and brands, which differs from general satisfaction or attachment because it emphasizes similarity in emotional expression, values, and interaction style. Statements such as "This brand gets me" represent a perception of emotional alignment rather than simple product satisfaction. The findings indicate that consumer-brand relationships are strongly influenced by emotional connections before extending into rational evaluations or social affiliations. The R^2 value of 0.693 further indicates that authenticity and emotional alignment represent major predictors in explaining variations in Brand Loyalty.

Communal Brand Identification showed a significant positive relationship with Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.207$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the findings of Algesheimer *et al.* (2022) regarding the role of brand communities in strengthening consumer attachment. However, the relatively lower coefficient compared with authenticity and emotional synchronicity suggests that personal relationships with brands may have greater influence than collective identification in certain markets. This finding reflects a cultural consideration in which consumers may value community belonging while still prioritizing individual identity and personal relevance. Qualitative findings indicate that brand communities remain valuable, although many consumers perceive their connection with brands through personal experiences rather than direct social interaction, particularly within digital environments where community engagement often occurs virtually.

Moral Brand Consistency demonstrated a significant influence on Brand Loyalty ($\beta = 0.152$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that ethical consistency contributes to maintaining consumer trust. However, the moderate coefficient suggests that moral consistency may function primarily as a requirement for sustaining relationships rather than as the main driver of loyalty development. Inconsistent ethical behavior can weaken consumer confidence, while consistent moral practices may be viewed as an expected standard. Wagner *et al.* (2020) reported a similar pattern, showing that ethical conduct prevents negative responses but does not always produce substantial increases in loyalty. Several participants expressed a similar view: "I expect them to do good; it doesn't make me love them more, but I would leave if they didn't."

Transcendent Brand Meaning had the lowest coefficient among the predictors but remained statistically significant ($\beta = 0.129$, $p < 0.05$). The result indicates that consumers appreciate brands associated with broader purposes; however, practical benefits and emotional connections may remain stronger determinants of loyalty formation. The finding provides a more balanced perspective regarding purpose-driven branding, suggesting that social or symbolic meanings alone may not be sufficient to establish strong loyalty. Park *et al.* (2022) reported stronger effects among consumers with high

involvement in purpose-oriented brands, indicating that the influence of transcendent meaning may vary according to consumer characteristics, values, and motivational factors.

The findings address the need identified by Delmas and Burbano (2021) and Keller (2023) for brand loyalty models that incorporate symbolic, ethical, emotional, and social dimensions simultaneously. The R^2 value of 0.693 indicates that the combination of five constructs explains a substantial proportion of variation in Brand Loyalty. The mixed-method approach further strengthens the interpretation by demonstrating consistency between quantitative results and qualitative themes related to authenticity, emotional alignment, moral expectations, community relationships, and brand purpose. The alignment between factor structures, regression outcomes, and consumer narratives supports the validity of the proposed model.

Differences based on demographic characteristics indicate that consumer responses toward brand meaning and loyalty are influenced by age and gender characteristics. Younger consumers aged 18–29 demonstrated stronger perceptions of transcendent meaning, emotional connection, and community identification, consistent with previous studies suggesting that younger generations tend to value purpose, identity expression, and relational engagement with brands (Keller, 2023). Gender differences found in Transcendent Brand Meaning and Emotional Brand Synchronicity suggest variations in how consumers respond to symbolic and emotional aspects of brands, consistent with previous branding research (Thompson *et al.*, 2021). Differences across product categories further indicate that loyalty formation depends on the characteristics of each sector. Technology brands may strengthen loyalty through functional performance and emotional design, fashion brands through identity expression and social affiliation, while food brands may rely more on authenticity and tradition. These variations explain why single-factor approaches often provide less accurate explanations of brand loyalty across different consumer settings.

5 | CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

This study examined the effects of Transcendent Brand Meaning, Perceived Brand Authenticity, Moral Brand Consistency, Emotional Brand Synchronicity, and Communal Brand Identification on Brand Loyalty using a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design. The findings show that all five hypotheses were supported, indicating that the proposed model is empirically valid. The model explains 69.3% of the variance in Brand Loyalty, with Perceived Brand Authenticity and Emotional Brand Synchronicity emerging as the strongest predictors. Communal Brand Identification, Moral Brand Consistency, and Transcendent Brand Meaning also showed significant effects, although with lower strength. Qualitative results reinforced the quantitative outcomes, particularly by emphasizing authenticity, emotional connection, and moral integrity as important reasons for loyalty. The study contributes to branding research by combining five related constructs into a single framework. The results suggest that brand loyalty is shaped by the interaction of symbolic, emotional, moral, authentic, and communal factors rather than by one factor alone. This also extends existing theory by showing that emotional alignment and moral consistency play an important role in strengthening the link between brand identity and loyalty. From a practical perspective, brands should prioritize authenticity and emotional resonance, while also maintaining moral consistency, communicating a meaningful purpose, and encouraging community attachment. These findings indicate that loyalty grows more strongly when brand promises are matched by real actions and shared values. Several limitations should be noted. The sample was drawn from Bandung, Indonesia, so the findings may not fully represent other cultural settings. The cross-sectional design also limits causal interpretation. In addition, the study relied on self-reported survey data, which may introduce bias. Future research should test the model in other countries, use longitudinal designs, and examine additional factors such as trust, familiarity, and cultural values.

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