

The Role of Satisfaction in Mediating the Association of Pesantren Brand Image and Price Fairness on Customer Loyalty in Pesantren Cooperatives

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines the association between pesantren brand image and price fairness with customer loyalty in pesantren cooperatives in East Java, with customer satisfaction as a mediating variable. This study is important because pesantren cooperatives operate not only as business institutions, but also as institutions representing religious and social values that may be associated with customer loyalty.

Design/methodology/approach – This study employed a quantitative method using a cross-sectional approach. Data were collected through online questionnaires distributed to consumers who had experience purchasing products at pesantren cooperatives in East Java. A total of 209 respondents participated in this study, and the data were analysed using SEM-PLS to examine the relationships among variables.

Finding/Results – The results indicate that pesantren brand image is positively and significantly associated with customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.213$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.323$). Price fairness is similarly positively and significantly associated with customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.208$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.279$). Customer satisfaction is the strongest direct predictor of customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.411$). Mediation analysis reveals that customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between pesantren brand image and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.067$) and the relationship between price fairness and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.166$), with the latter demonstrating a substantially stronger mediating role.

Research Implications/Limitations – The findings provide additional insights into the application of satisfaction-mediated loyalty models within faith-based cooperative settings. However, the cross-sectional design limits the causal interpretation of the observed relationships. In addition, the focus on pesantren cooperatives in East Java limits the broader generalizability of the findings.

Originality/Value – This study extends customer loyalty research within the context of pesantren cooperatives and highlights the importance of religious institutional image and fair pricing in their positive association with customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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1. Introduction

Pesantren are educational institutions that continue to evolve in line with social change, while remaining steadfast in their educational principles based on Islamic values. This development is not limited to adjustments in teaching methods within pesantren but also extends to economic aspects. The development of economic aspects is one of the objectives of pesantren, aimed at fostering economic self-reliance among students and the surrounding community. One form of economic development in pesantren is through cooperatives and sharia business groups. Cooperatives are a suitable scheme for the economic empowerment of pesantren, as they not only strengthen the economy but also reinforce the educational mission by harmoniously integrating economic, social, and spiritual growth ([Anggadwita et al., 2021](#)).

Cooperatives play a vital role in nurturing and empowering students, given the large number of students in pesantren. Pesantren cooperatives provide access to capital, business skills training, and market opportunities for students to engage in productive activities, which ultimately contributes to sustainable economic independence (Anaty & Masrukhan, 2025). Economic empowerment through cooperatives has been widely implemented in many pesantren across Indonesia, particularly in East Java. There are 7,347 pesantren in East Java, making it the province with the second-highest number of pesantren in Indonesia (Wafa, 2025). Furthermore, East Java is the province with the highest number of cooperatives in Indonesia, with 30,132 units in 2025 (Yonatan, 2026), indicating that East Java is the center of the largest cooperative activity in Indonesia.

In practice, pesantren cooperatives have various management forms. These include consumer cooperatives, which provide for the daily needs of students; Islamic financial services cooperatives (BMTs), which are involved in the collection and distribution of funds; and production cooperatives, which manage the products of student enterprises, such as food and other consumer goods. In addition, there are cooperatives with a broader market reach, namely pesantren cooperatives operating as retail businesses. One example of a pesantren cooperative with a thriving retail model is Basmalah, owned by the Pesantren Sidogiri. Other examples of developing pesantren cooperatives include Torasera Nurja Berkah, owned by Pesantren Nurul Jadid, Sundra Family Care owned by Pesantren Sunan Drajat, and several other pesantren cooperatives.

Daily needs, such as consumer goods and services related to pesantren, can be accessed through pesantren cooperatives, fostering continuous interaction between sellers and buyers. This intensive interaction enhances product value and strengthens customer loyalty. Previous studies have shown that customer loyalty is associated with various factors, including service quality and positive consumption experiences that encourage repeated purchases. Loyalty is crucial because the sustainability of a cooperative depends on loyal consumers who contribute to stable demand and business growth.

Loyalty is also shaped by customer satisfaction, which refers to the consumer's experience when transacting with the pesantren cooperative and whether it meets their expectations. Several studies have demonstrated the influence of customer satisfaction on loyalty, as shown by Agustini et al. (2022), who identified satisfaction as a factor influencing customer loyalty. Furthermore, loyalty is shaped by price fairness; when customers perceive prices to be fair, trust in the service provider is established, thereby strengthening loyalty and making them more receptive to any potential price adjustments (Tamayo-Fajardo et al., 2025). Furthermore,

Chen et al. (2022) explained that brand image influences brand loyalty through customer participation and experience, with trust acting as the linking factor.

Despite the maturity of this theoretical framework and the growing body of literature examining consumer loyalty in the context of Islamic institutions, including Islamic banks (Dandis et al., 2021; Bachri et al., 2022), Islamic microfinance institutions (Achmad & Solekah, 2022), and Islamic banking more broadly (Afendi & Ghofur, 2021), these studies are largely confined to financial service institutions. Such institutions differ fundamentally from pesantren cooperatives in at least three key ways.

First, Islamic financial institutions essentially perform an economic intermediary function, whereas pesantren cooperatives operate as an extension of the broader educational, social, and spiritual missions of pesantren (Anggadwita et al., 2021). Therefore, the process of building loyalty in pesantren cooperatives is embedded in a communal religious identity that is qualitatively different from the transactional relationships found in Islamic banking. Second, the consumer base of pesantren cooperatives comprises santri (students) whose consumption behavior cannot be separated from their deep involvement in the pesantren's religious environment, thereby creating a unique overlap between religious socialization and commercial exchange that has not been examined in previous studies on loyalty. Third, previous studies on Islamic institutions have largely focused on service quality and trust as precursors to loyalty, with relatively less attention paid to the role of institutional brand image rooted in Islamic educational identity and perceptions of price fairness within the context of community-based cooperatives.

This indicates a gap that can serve as a point of analysis for future development. Therefore, this study analyzes how the association between pesantren brand image and price fairness shapes loyalty, mediated by customer satisfaction, within the specific context of pesantren cooperatives. Furthermore, can the established model of loyalty, mediated by satisfaction in the context of conventional and Islamic financial services, be applied to the retail environment of pesantren cooperatives? This study also seeks to uncover the role of religious values and communal identity in shaping pesantren loyalty. In light of these research gaps, this study seeks to understand what sustains consumer loyalty in pesantren cooperatives and the direct implications for the economic self-reliance of pesantren in East Java.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Customer Loyalty

A positive and sustainable relationship with customers is the primary objective of product branding, which ultimately leads to higher customer loyalty (Ong et al., 2023). In line with this, Tordoya-Espinoza et al. explain that loyalty is the tendency of consumers to repeat a certain action, such as making a purchase, due to a previously established relationship with a brand or product (Tordoya-Espinoza et al., 2025). Loyalty can be formed through satisfaction, positive experiences, and a positive relationship between the brand and the consumer. Oliver presented the concept that loyalty is a firm commitment to repurchase a product in the future, regardless of situational pressures or marketing efforts from competitors (Oliver, 1999).

In the context of pesantren cooperatives, consumer loyalty is crucial for cooperative operational sustainability. Loyalty to pesantren cooperatives stems from various factors, one of which is the pesantren's identity, emphasizing bonds of shared values and religious beliefs.

There is a concept used to understand loyalty in communal contexts such as pesantren. Tajfel and Turner (1979) explained in their social identity theory that consumers who identify themselves as part of a community tend to show greater loyalty toward institutions or organizations that represent their group identity. Furthermore, strong communities exert significant influence, and a strong group identity based on religious values and beliefs reinforces consumer loyalty (Aslam et al., 2022). The customer loyalty indicators used in this study were adapted from Hamid et al. (2023) and adjusted to fit the context of this study's framework. These include positive word-of-mouth intention, referral intention toward the cooperative, first-choice preference for the cooperative, and repurchase intention for the cooperative's products and services.

2.2 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to a customer's evaluation of the alignment between their initial expectations and the reality they experience after consuming a product or service. Customer satisfaction is understood as a multidimensional construct that encompasses cognitive and affective aspects, in which customers assess not only the product's utilitarian functions but also their emotional experiences during the consumption process (Soeharso, 2024). Furthermore, customer satisfaction is formed through the interaction between service quality, perceived value, and the continuous accumulation of customer experiences (Tedja et al., 2024). Empirical research also indicates that customer satisfaction plays a strategic role as an intervening variable linking service quality perceptions with customer loyalty, thereby serving as a crucial mechanism for building long-term relationships between customers and organizations (Bahtera & Munawaroh, 2022). Furthermore, customer satisfaction is influenced by the alignment between initial expectations and the perceived value received, which ultimately determines the level of acceptance and sustainability of consumption behavior (Kinanthi & Sisilia, 2024).

In the context of pesantren cooperatives, customer satisfaction is intertwined with institutional characteristics rooted in religious and social values. Customer satisfaction in this environment is determined not only by rational factors such as price and service quality but also by the alignment of business practices with Islamic values such as honesty, justice, and social benefits. This indicates that satisfaction arises from experiences that are not merely functional but also normative and spiritual. Studies have shown that service experiences aligned with the values and expectations of community-based customers significantly enhance satisfaction levels (Saut & Bie, 2024).

Furthermore, in the context of community-based institutions such as pesantren, customer satisfaction is associated with emotional attachment and collective identity that consumers hold toward the institution, meaning that satisfaction is not merely individual but also social (Kim et al., 2024). Thus, customer satisfaction in pesantren cooperatives serves as a bridge between economic rationality and religious values, ultimately strengthening the long-term relationship between consumers and the cooperative institution. To measure customer satisfaction, this study adapted the indicators developed by Sao and Cuong (2021). These indicators were adjusted to the context of this study, including perceived fulfilment of service quality expectations, overall satisfaction with cooperative products and services, satisfaction with the transactional experience at the cooperative, and perceived value satisfaction from cooperative purchases.

2.3 Pesantren Brand Image

For consumers, brand image is a means of developing subjective perceptions regarding how a brand performs across various criteria, both functional and nonfunctional, which they consider important for evaluation (Patterson, 1999). Furthermore, Kotler and Keller define brand image as the perception of a brand as reflected in the brand associations stored in consumers memories (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Brand image serves as an initial benchmark for consumers to assess the quality and value of a product. In the context of an institution, brand image is crucial for establishing a positive reputation. Zakaria et al. explained that a strong brand image of an educational institution can influence its competitiveness (Zakaria et al., 2023).

In the pesantren context, brand image refers to the perception of an Islamic educational institution based on Islamic values, educational quality, and social trust. This image can be leveraged as a competitive advantage in developing pesantren businesses. A positive perception of pesantren's image can foster consumer confidence in products from the pesantren cooperative and strengthen consumer trust in the transactions. Religious brand image can influence marketing effectiveness, as religious symbols often carry credibility regarding information and emotional appeal, which influences brand perception and social acceptance (Rehman & Al-Ghazali, 2022).

García-Salirrosas et al. (2024) indicated that brand image can influence perceptions of brand quality, satisfaction, and trust. Furthermore, brand image also influences consumer loyalty, as Kini et al. (2024) explain that it can foster a connection between the brand and its consumers, indicating that brand image can influence emotions, which ultimately encourages consumers to make repeat purchases. To measure the variables of pesantren brand image, the indicators used were developed by Wilson and Liu (2011) and Rehman and Zeb (2023), which have been adapted and adjusted to the context of this study. Pesantren brand image is measured through reputation for product quality, trustworthiness based on pesantren authority, value congruence with pesantren identity, confidence in halal compliance, and distinctive pesantren brand identity.

2.4 Price Fairness

Price is the sum of the benefits a consumer derives from a product or service, serving as the consideration paid (Kotler et al., 2012). Consumers assess prices based on their own experiences and those of others (Xia et al., 2004). For consumers, price is an initial indicator of the product quality. Price is often regarded as an indication of the quality of a product or service. Price fairness arises from consumers' subjective feelings toward a price, whether they perceive it as correct, fair, or legitimate or as incorrect, unfair, or illegitimate (Campbell, 2007). Price fairness also refers to the theory of justice, which states that parties involved in a social exchange will compare the extent of their contribution to the exchange with the results obtained from it (Bechwati et al., 2009).

Within the Islamic economic framework, price fairness has ethical and normative dimensions that extend beyond the exchange-based fairness logic of the equity theory. While equity theory explains fairness through consumers' evaluation of the balance between inputs and outcomes,

Islamic commercial ethics place this evaluation within the broader principles of justice ('*adl*), social welfare (*maslahah*), and moral accountability (Adams, 1965; Chapra, 2008). Grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and *maqasid al-shariah*, Islamic price justice emphasizes reasonable and non-exploitative pricing, avoidance of deception (*gharar*), and prohibition of manipulative practices such as *ihtikar* (Chapra, 2008; Hassan et al., 2008). Thus, price fairness in Islam is understood not merely as a transactional assessment but also as an ethical responsibility that aligns commercial practices with fairness and societal well-being (Arham, 2010).

In the context of *pesantren* cooperatives, price fairness holds particular relevance because consumers assess pricing not only on the basis of economic considerations regarding the balance between price and benefit, but also on the expectation that the cooperative upholds Islamic values such as justice, transparency, and social welfare under the moral authority of the *pesantren*. Therefore, fair pricing serves not only as a competitive business practice but also as a mechanism for strengthening the institutional credibility of the cooperative as a faith-based economic entity. Price fairness was measured using the indicators developed by Senali et al. (2024) and adapted for this study. These indicators include perceived equity between the price paid and benefits received, perceived price competitiveness compared to alternative providers, perceived reasonableness of pricing in guiding purchase decisions, and perceived transparency and consistency of cooperative pricing practices.

2.5 Hypothesis Development

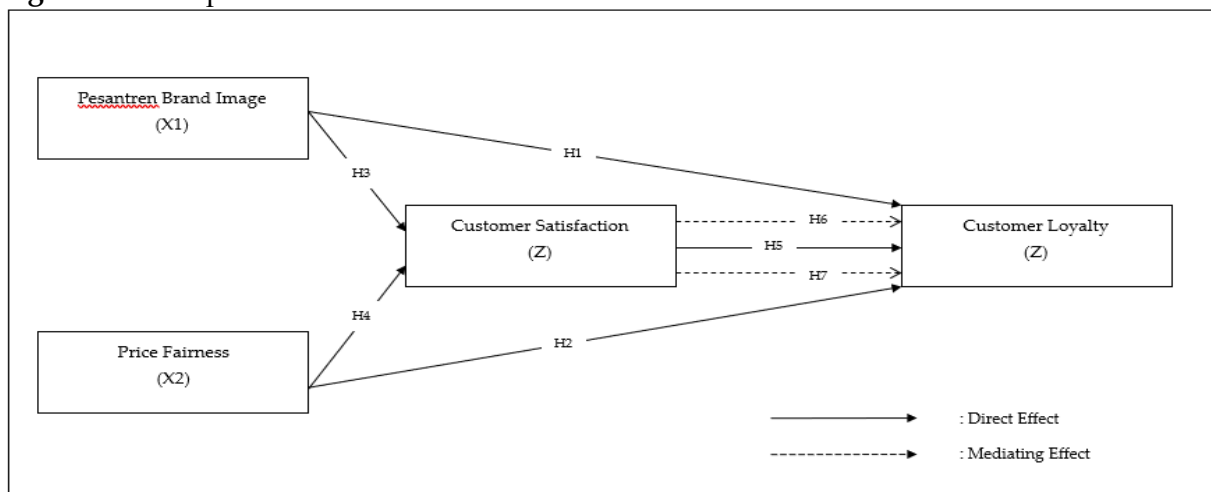
Having outlined the concepts discussed previously, this study formulated hypotheses focusing on the relationship between *pesantren* brand image, price fairness, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty within *pesantren* cooperatives' context. Grounded in Social Identity Theory, a *pesantren* brand image reflecting Islamic values, institutional credibility, and religious identity can strengthen consumers' sense of belonging and emotional attachment toward the cooperative, ultimately encouraging customer satisfaction and loyalty. Barbosa et al. (2023) explain that brand image can influence customer satisfaction and loyalty in the context of food retail, highlighting the importance of brand image. Furthermore, the factor of price fairness plays a role in influencing consumer loyalty; perceptions regarding fairness in pricing enable consumers to return (Singh et al., 2022).

Furthermore, customer satisfaction subsequently becomes an essential factor influencing customer loyalty in *pesantren* cooperatives. Within the *pesantren* cooperative context, customer satisfaction is not only functional but also emotional and value-oriented because customers feel that their transactions align with the religious and moral principles represented by the *pesantren* institution. Customers who experience higher satisfaction are more likely to revisit the cooperative, recommend it to others, and maintain long-term relationships with the institution. Dandis et al. (2021) confirmed that customer satisfaction significantly influences loyalty intentions because satisfied customers tend to develop stronger commitment and repurchase behaviour toward Islamic financial institutions. Afendi and Ghofur (2021) also explain that customer satisfaction strengthens customer loyalty because positive experiences aligned with religious values increase customers emotional attachment and long-term commitment to Islamic institutions.

- H1: Pesantren brand image is associated with customer loyalty.
- H2: Price fairness is associated with customer loyalty.
- H3: Pesantren brand image is associated with customer satisfaction
- H4: Price fairness is associated with customer satisfaction
- H5: Customer satisfaction is associated with customer loyalty.
- H6: Customer satisfaction mediates the association between pesantren brand image and customer loyalty.
- H7: Customer satisfaction mediates the association between price fairness and customer loyalty.

This study comprehensively develops a model that combines the rational-economic dimension (price fairness) with the socio-religious dimension (Pesantren brand image) as key factors in understanding consumer loyalty towards pesantren cooperatives. The formulated hypotheses aim to provide insights into pesantren cooperatives regarding the sustainable management of such cooperatives in accordance with Sharia principles. The conceptual framework of this study examines the association between brand image and price fairness on customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction as a mediating variable, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach and Design

This study employs a quantitative research method using a cross-sectional approach to analyze the associations between pesantren brand image, price fairness, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in pesantren cooperatives. The cross-sectional approach was selected because the data were collected at a single point in time, enabling the study to capture respondents' perceptions and behavioural tendencies simultaneously (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach is considered appropriate because the study focuses on examining the direct and indirect associations between variables through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable. In addition, the quantitative approach allows the associations among variables to be measured objectively through statistical analysis, thereby providing empirical evidence regarding the factors associated with customer loyalty towards pesantren cooperatives.

3.2 Instrument Measurement

In this study, data were collected through the distribution of a closed-ended questionnaire. A Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 was used to assess the respondents' views, with responses ranging from 1, "strongly disagree", to 5, "strongly agree" (Arikunto, 2019). The statement instruments used in this study were adapted from existing references and tailored to suit the research context. Details regarding the instruments used in the study are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Items Measurement of Variables

Variables	Items	Reference Source
Customer Loyalty	1. I will share my positive experiences with the pesantren cooperative with others	Hamid et al. (2023)
	2. I am willing to recommend the pesantren cooperative to others who need advice or information about where to shop	
	3. I make the pesantren cooperative my first choice when I need the products or services it offers	
	4. I intend to use the pesantren cooperative's products or services again in the future	
Customer Satisfaction	1. The quality of service I received from the pesantren cooperative met my expectations before I decided to do business with them	Sao & Cuong (2021)
	2. Overall, I am satisfied with the products and services I received from the pesantren cooperative	
	3. I am satisfied with my experience doing business with the pesantren cooperative	
	4. I feel that the benefits I received from the pesantren cooperative's products and services were worth the money I spent	
Pesantren Brand Image	1. I believe that pesantren cooperatives have a good image and reputation for providing high-quality products and services	Rehman & Zeb (2023); Wilson & Liu (2011)
	2. I trust pesantren cooperatives because they operate under the auspices of pesantren that have a good reputation and credibility	
	3. The pesantren cooperative reflects values that align with the identity and principles of the pesantren	
	4. I have a high level of confidence that all products sold at the pesantren cooperative are guaranteed to be halal	
	5. Overall, pesantren cooperatives have a distinctive image and reflect the values of the pesantren (such as honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, and responsibility), setting them apart from other shopping venues	

Variables	Items	Reference Source
Price Fairness	1. The prices I pay at the pesantren cooperative are commensurate with the benefits and quality of the products I receive	Senali et al. (2024)
	2. I feel that the prices of products at the pesantren cooperative are competitive with those at other stores selling similar products	
	3. I feel that the prices set by the pesantren cooperative are still reasonable for the products and services offered	
	4. I feel that the prices set by the pesantren cooperative are clearly communicated and consistently applied	

Source: Author's own work, 2025

3.3 Research Location and Object

This study employs a quantitative research methodology with a cross-sectional approach to analyze the association between pesantren brand image and price fairness on customer loyalty, mediated by customer satisfaction in pesantren cooperatives. One example of a pesantren cooperative with a thriving retail model is Basmalah, owned by the Pesantren Sidogiri. Other examples of developing pesantren cooperatives include Torasera Nurja Berkah owned by Pesantren Nurul Jadid, Sundra Family Care owned by Pesantren Sunan Drajat, and several other pesantren cooperatives. This study focuses on East Java because it has the second-highest number of pesantren in Indonesia, totalling 7,347 (Wafa, 2025), and these pesantren are spread across diverse areas, from urban centers to rural villages. This context allows the study to capture how pesantren brand images are associated with consumer behavior. Furthermore, the strong religious culture within the community provides a relevant background for understanding how religious and socio-cultural values are associated with customer loyalty in pesantren cooperatives.

3.4 Population and Sampling Technique

The population of this study consisted of consumers who conducted transactions at pesantren cooperatives in East Java. Given the indeterminate size of this population and the absence of an accessible sampling frame, this study employed a non-probability sampling technique, specifically, purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was selected because it allows respondents to be selected based on theoretically relevant characteristics, ensuring that only individuals with sufficient experiential knowledge of the constructs under investigation are included (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

The inclusion criteria for this study were as follows: (1) the respondent had made purchases at a pesantren cooperative in East Java on at least two separate occasions within the preceding six months; (2) the respondent was aware that the cooperative they patronized was affiliated with or operated under the authority of a pesantren institution; and (3) the respondent was aged 15 years or older and capable of providing informed responses regarding price perceptions and institutional image. These criteria were established to ensure that respondents

possessed sufficient transactional experience to meaningfully evaluate pesantren brand image, price fairness, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, as the constructs are perceptual in nature and require repeated exposure to the institution for an accurate assessment (Hair et al., 2019). Respondents who had visited a pesantren cooperative only once or were uncertain about the cooperative's pesantren affiliation were excluded from the study.

3.5 Data Collection Technique

The data in this study were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online to consumers who had experience purchasing products at pesantren cooperatives in East Java. The questionnaire was designed to measure respondents perceptions of pesantren. The online distribution method was selected to facilitate a broader respondent reach and enable efficient data collection from consumers across different pesantren cooperative networks, such as Basmallah, Torasera Nurja Berkah, and other pesantren cooperatives in East Java. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2020). In line with the purposive sampling approach, this survey targeted individuals with prior purchasing experience and a history of repeat transactions with the pesantren cooperative. The exact number of individuals initially exposed to the survey could not be determined precisely. Nevertheless, 230 responses were received, and a total of 209 usable responses that met the predetermined sampling criteria were obtained and included in the final analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

This study used PLS-SEM to analyze the research data. Hair et al. (2019) explained that when using PLS-SEM, a minimum sample size of 100–150 is required for models of moderate complexity. In light of this requirement, this study aimed to obtain a sample of over 150 respondents, and the research data were measured using a 1–5 Likert scale. This study applied Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0. The data analysis process was conducted in two steps.

First, the outer model testing included convergent validity (factor loadings > 0.70 ; AVE > 0.50), reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability > 0.70), and discriminant validity with the HTMT (< 0.90) (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2019). Second, the inner model testing involved an evaluation of multicollinearity (VIF < 5.00) and the coefficient of determination (R^2). Hypothesis testing was carried out using the bootstrapping procedure, whereby a hypothesis was considered supported if the t-statistic > 1.96 or the p-value < 0.05 (Hair et al., 2017). The mediating role was examined by assessing the significance of indirect associations (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Respondent Characteristics

Based on the collected data, the characteristics of the 209 respondents are shown in Table 2. This study involved 209 respondents, comprising 120 women (57%) and 89 men (43%). The majority of respondents came from the general public, accounting for 64% of the sample, while pesantren students represented 36%. These findings indicate that pesantren cooperatives are utilized not only within the pesantren environment but also by the broader community. This

indicates that the religious values, institutional image, and business practices of pesantren cooperatives are associated with consumer interest from diverse social backgrounds. Furthermore, purchase frequency indicates that the majority of respondents make repeated transactions within a month, with 50% purchasing 2–3 times, 31% purchasing 4–5 times, and 19% purchasing more than 5 times. These findings suggest that the respondents had sufficient transactional experience with pesantren cooperatives, which provides a relevant basis for examining customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 2. Respondent Information

Item	n	%
Gender		
Male	89	43
Female	120	57
Status		
Santri	75	36
General Public	134	64
Purchase Scale (in 1 month)		
2 to 3 times	105	50
4 to 5 times	64	31
More than 5 times	40	19

Source: Data processed, 2025

4.2 Common Method Bias (CMB) Assessment

To assess the potential for bias inherent in cross-sectional survey designs, this study employed Harman’s single-factor test using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) in SmartPLS 4.0. All construct items covering pesantren brand image, price fairness, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty were loaded simultaneously into a single-factor extraction, and the resulting variance explained by this single factor was examined. The analysis yielded a value of 42.5%, which was below the accepted threshold of 50% (Harman, 1960; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, it can be understood that in this study, the possibility of bias is not severe.

4.3 Outer Model Evaluation

Based on the results of the measurement model (outer model) testing, all constructs in this study demonstrated adequate validity and reliability. Table 3 shows that the outer loadings for each indicator exceed the threshold of 0.70, which, according to Hair et al. (2017), indicates that each indicator adequately represents the construct being measured. This is supported by Cronbach’s alpha (CA) values for each variable, which are also above 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded 0.50, in line with the criteria outlined by Hair et al. (2019), meaning that each variable explained more than 50% of the variance in its respective indicators. Therefore, the variables of customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, pesantren brand image, and price fairness in the context of pesantren cooperatives are valid and reliable. Consequently, this model is suitable for structural equation modelling to analyze the inter-variable associations on customer loyalty towards pesantren cooperatives in East Java.

Table 3. Outer Measurement Results

Var	Item	Outer Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Customer Loyalty	CL 1	0.864	0.841	0.843	0.678
	CL 2	0.841			
	CL 3	0.794			
	CL 4	0.793			
Customer Satisfaction	CS 1	0.893	0.882	0.897	0.764
	CS 2	0.871			
	CS 3	0.839			
	CS 4	0.892			
Pesantren Brand Image	PBI 1	0.775	0.873	0.890	0.660
	PBI 2	0.802			
	PBI 3	0.834			
	PBI 4	0.829			
	PBI 5	0.819			
Price Fairness	PF 1	0.825	0.856	0.858	0.699
	PF 2	0.851			
	PF 3	0.824			
	PF 4	0.843			

Source: Data processed, 2025

Note: CL: Customer Loyalty, CS: Customer Satisfaction, PBI: Pesantren Brand Image, PF: Price Fairness

4.4 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was tested using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach. As shown in Table 4, all HTMT values between constructs were below the threshold of 0.90, ranging from 0.311 to 0.652. These results indicate that all constructs in this study namely brand image, price fairness, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty meet the criteria for good discriminant validity as defined by Henseler et al. (2015). Consequently, each construct is empirically distinct, and there are no issues of multicollinearity amongst the latent constructs.

Table 4. HTMT Results

	PBI	CL	CS	PF
PBI				
CL	0.446			
CS	0.311	0.652		
PF	0.321	0.539	0.517	

Source: Data processed, 2025

Note: CL: Customer Loyalty, CS: Customer Satisfaction, PBI: Pesantren Brand Image, PF: Price Fairness

4.5 Inner Model Test

The results of the R-squared analysis in Table 5 show that the variables price fairness and brand image can explain 68,9% of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.689$), which is categorised as moderate (Hair et al., 2017). Meanwhile, the variables of pesantren brand image, price fairness, and customer satisfaction together can explain 77,8% of the variance in customer loyalty ($R^2 = 0.778$). This value falls into the strong category and indicates that the research model possesses a reasonably good predictive ability in explaining consumer loyalty. These findings confirm that satisfaction built through price fairness and the religious image of the pesantren are important factors in building consumer loyalty to pesantren cooperatives in East Java.

Table 5. R Square Results

	R-square
CL	0.778
CS	0.689

Source: Data processed, 2025

Note: CL: Customer Loyalty, CS: Customer Satisfaction

A multicollinearity test was then conducted by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for each indicator. Based on Table 6, all VIF values fall within the range of 1.675 to 2.854, which is well below the threshold of 5.00 as recommended by Hair et al. (2017), these results indicate that there are no issues of multicollinearity between variables or between indicators within the research model. Consequently, the estimation of path coefficients in the structural model can be interpreted accurately without bias caused by excessive correlation between predictors. This research model satisfies the assumption of non-multicollinearity and is suitable for proceeding to hypothesis testing.

Table 6. VIF Results

	VIF
PBI 1	1.941
PBI 2	2.212
PBI 3	2.120
PBI 4	2.261
PBI 5	1.917
CL 1	2.220
CL 2	2.011
CL 3	1.675
CL 4	1.720
CS 1	2.854
CS 2	2.447
CS 3	2.073
CS 4	2.847
PF 1	1.929
PF 2	2.035
PF 3	1.892

	VIF
PF 4	2.063

Source: Data processed, 2025

Note: CL: Customer Loyalty, CS: Customer Satisfaction, PBI: Pesantren Brand Image, PF: Price Fairness

The predictive relevance of the structural model was assessed using a blindfolding procedure with an omission distance of seven, as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). The results in Table 7 indicate that the Q² values for both endogenous constructs exceed zero, with customer satisfaction yielding Q² = 0.294, and customer loyalty yielding Q² = 0.286. According to Hair et al. (2017), Q² values above 0.15 indicate moderate predictive relevance, and values above 0.35 indicate strong predictive relevance. Both values fall within the moderate range, confirming that the structural model possesses satisfactory predictive relevance and that the exogenous constructs pesantren brand image, price fairness, and customer satisfaction provide meaningful explanatory power for the endogenous constructs in the model.

Table 7. Q Square Results

	Q ²
CL	0.286
CS	0.294

Source: Data processed, 2025

Note: CL: Customer Loyalty, CS: Customer Satisfaction

4.6 Hypothesis Testing

The results of the hypothesis testing in Table 8 show that all the proposed hypotheses concerning the direct associations among the variables are supported. Pesantren brand image is positively and significantly associated with customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.213$; $t = 3.146$; $p = 0.002$), as are price fairness ($\beta = 0.208$; $t = 2.357$; $p = 0.018$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.411$; $t = 4.804$; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that customer satisfaction is the most dominant factor in shaping consumer loyalty towards pesantren cooperatives. The results indicate a significant association between pesantren brand image and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.323$; $t = 3.259$; $p = 0.009$). Similarly, price fairness was significantly associated with customer satisfaction, as indicated by the results ($\beta = 0.279$; $t = 2.895$; $p < 0.001$).

Table 8. Direct Effect Results

	Original (O)	sample T (O/STDEV)	P values	Results
PBI -> CL	0.213	3.146	0.002	H1 Supported
PF -> CL	0.208	2.357	0.018	H2 Supported
PBI -> CS	0.323	3.259	0.009	H3 Supported
PF -> CS	0.279	2.895	< 0.001	H4 Supported
CS -> CL	0.411	4.804	< 0.001	H5 Supported

Source: Data processed, 2025

Note: CL: Customer Loyalty, CS: Customer Satisfaction, PBI: Pesantren Brand Image, PF: Price Fairness

Furthermore, the results of the mediation analysis presented in Table 9 show that customer satisfaction significantly mediates both indirect relationships in this model. Specifically, customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between pesantren brand image and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.067$; $t = 1.994$; $p = 0.046$; CI [0.031, 0.145]), as well as the relationship between price fairness and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.166$; $t = 4.242$; $p < 0.001$; CI [0.052, 0.211]). The confidence interval did not include zero, thus providing statistical support for the significance of each indirect effect. Classification as partial mediation is determined by the condition that both indirect relationships remain statistically significant, while the direct effect of pesantren brand image on loyalty ($\beta = 0.213$; $t = 3.146$; $p = 0.002$) and between price fairness and loyalty ($\beta = 0.208$; $t = 2.357$; $p = 0.018$) are significant (Hair et al., 2017). This indicates that customer satisfaction does not fully explain the relationship between independent variables and customer loyalty. Rather, customer satisfaction functions as one of two complementary pathways alongside direct pathways grounded in identity and equity. Through these direct and indirect paths, pesantren brand image and price fairness are associated with consumer loyalty.

Table 9. Indirect Effect Results

	Original sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	LLCI	ULCI	Results	Type of Mediating
PBI -> CS -> CL	0.067	1.994	0.046	0.031	0.145	H6 Supported	Partial Mediating
PF -> CS -> CL	0.166	4.242	<0.001	0.052	0.211	H7 Supported	Partial Mediating

Source: Data processed, 2025

Note: CL: Customer Loyalty, CS: Customer Satisfaction, PBI: Pesantren Brand Image, PF: Price Fairness

Confidence intervals are bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) at the 95% level, LLCI: Lower Level Confidence Interval, ULCI: Upper Level Confidence Interval.

4.6 Discussion

The results for the first hypothesis support a significant positive association between pesantren brand image and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.213$; $t = 3.146$; $p = 0.002$). The coefficient for pesantren brand image was slightly larger than that for price fairness, which suggests that customer loyalty in pesantren cooperatives is more strongly associated with institutional perceptions and values-based attachment than with economic evaluations alone. Drawing on Social Identity Theory, these findings indicate that loyalty is linked not only to transactional evaluations but also to consumers' perceived alignment with the values embodied by the cooperative. These results are consistent with prior studies showing that an institutional image

rooted in Islamic values is positively related to long-term loyalty through social identification and emotional bonds (Watson et al., 2024; Aslam et al., 2022; Rehman & Al-Ghazali, 2022).

The results for the second hypothesis support a significant positive association between price fairness and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.208$; $t = 2.357$; $p = 0.018$). Consistent with equity theory, consumers tend to evaluate fairness based on the balance between financial sacrifices and transaction outcomes. When this balance is perceived favorably, it can be associated with more positive evaluations of the cooperative, and these evaluations, in turn, are linked to repeat purchase intention and stronger loyalty. This suggests that loyalty in this context can be associated not only with symbolic attachment to pesantren values but also with consumers' expectations of a fair economic exchange aligned with these values. These findings are consistent with prior research indicating a positive relationship between fair pricing and strengthening customer loyalty and perceived values (Adnan et al., 2021; Opata et al., 2021). Moreover, the observed association between price fairness and loyalty is consistent with consumers' perception of having achieved a fair balance between their financial sacrifices and the benefits received (Sebastian & Pradana, 2023).

The results for the third hypothesis support a positive and significant association between pesantren brand image and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.323$; $t = 3.259$; $p = 0.009$). In this context, satisfaction is associated not only with product or service performance but also with consumers' belief that the cooperative reflects the values and expectations associated with a trusted pesantren institution. This interpretation is consistent with previous studies indicating that the image of Islamic institutions is positively related to customer satisfaction, with positive perceptions, perceived value, and value alignment as relevant correlates (Achmad & Solekah, 2022; Permatasari & Istiqomah, 2024). Furthermore, a strong brand image that aligns with consumer identity is associated with higher customer satisfaction, alongside positive perceptions of the institution's quality (Maysafira, 2024).

The results for the fourth hypothesis support a significant positive association between price fairness and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.279$; $t = 2.895$; $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that, in pesantren cooperatives, customer satisfaction is positively associated with consumers' perceptions that prices are reasonable, equitable, and aligned with the quality and benefits received. Consistent with equity theory, the perceived balance between financial sacrifice and transaction outcomes is linked to more favorable evaluations of cooperatives, and this perception is related to greater satisfaction. This finding supports previous studies on the role of price fairness in shaping positive consumption evaluations and customer satisfaction (Bernarto et al., 2022; Octaviani et al., 2021).

The results for the fifth hypothesis support a significant positive association between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.411$; $t = 4.804$; $p < 0.001$). This relatively strong association suggests that satisfaction is linked not only to post-consumption evaluation but also to the pathway through which positive perceptions of the cooperative are related to sustained loyalty behavior. However, in pesantren cooperatives, loyalty appears to be associated not only with satisfaction with products or transactions but also with customers' broader attachment to the institution's values and identity. This indicates that satisfaction and loyalty are linked, in part, through consumers' perceptions that the cooperative meets their expectations regarding economic performance and value-based characteristics. These findings are consistent with previous studies that reported a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention, institutional commitment, and long-term loyalty in

Sharia-oriented institutions (Santoso & Ibrahim, 2022; Bachri et al., 2022; Afifah & Kurniawati, 2021).

The results support the sixth hypothesis, showing that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between pesantren brand image and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.067$; $t = 1.994$; $p = 0.046$; CI [0.031, 0.145]). These findings indicate partial mediation, suggesting that customer loyalty is associated not only with satisfaction derived from positive consumption experiences but also with other direct mechanisms associated with the brand image. In the context of pesantren cooperatives, loyalty is associated with consumers' identification with the institution's religious values, trust in its credibility, and attachment to the pesantren community beyond satisfaction with transactions. Thus, customer satisfaction represents an important pathway linking brand image to loyalty, whereas identity-based and value-driven factors are directly associated with customer loyalty. These results are consistent with previous studies that analyzed the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between brand image and customer loyalty within Islamic institutions (Adha et al., 2025; Ibrahim et al., 2024; Laili & Hasan, 2024).

The research findings support the seventh hypothesis, indicating that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between price fairness and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.166$; $t = 4.242$; $p < 0.001$; CI [0.052, 0.211]). The stronger indirect relationship of price fairness via satisfaction ($\beta = 0.166$), compared to the indirect relationship of pesantren brand image via satisfaction ($\beta = 0.067$), indicates that customer satisfaction plays a more substantial mediating role in linking economic evaluations to loyalty than in linking symbolic institutional perceptions in this context. These findings also indicate partial mediation, implying that the relationship between price fairness and customer loyalty is associated not only with customer satisfaction but also with perceptions of fairness, economic trust, and lower transaction uncertainties. This is consistent with previous research on the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between price fairness and customer loyalty (Pinaraswati et al., 2024; da Silva et al., 2022; Opata et al., 2021; Kaura et al., 2015).

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study examined the factors associated with customer loyalty in pesantren cooperatives, testing whether pesantren brand image and price fairness are associated with customer loyalty through both direct and satisfaction-mediated pathways. The findings suggest that pesantren brand image is positively associated with customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.213$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.323$), and price fairness is positively associated with customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.208$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.279$). Customer satisfaction showed the strongest direct association with customer loyalty in the model ($\beta = 0.411$). A notable aspect of the findings is the pattern of partial mediation observed in the model. Customer satisfaction partially mediated the association between pesantren brand image and customer loyalty (indirect $\beta = 0.067$) and the association between price fairness and customer loyalty (indirect $\beta = 0.166$).

However, the mediated relationship associated with price fairness was stronger than that associated with the pesantren brand image. This pattern suggests that customer satisfaction plays a more prominent mediating role in the aspect of loyalty that is associated with satisfaction. In the context of pesantren cooperatives, the mediating role of customer satisfaction appears relatively stronger in economic evaluations, such as price fairness,

whereas the relationship between pesantren brand image and loyalty also reflects symbolic, value-related, and identity-based considerations that extend beyond satisfaction alone. These findings refine Equity Theory by highlighting the importance of perceived fairness in being positively associated with loyalty through satisfaction, while also supporting Social Identity Theory by indicating that loyalty toward pesantren cooperatives is associated not only with satisfaction but also with identification with the institution's values and identity.

From a practical perspective, these findings have several implications for pesantren cooperative managers. Given that customer satisfaction demonstrates the strongest direct relationship with customer loyalty, efforts to maintain a consistent and positive transaction experience, including product availability and responsive service, may help strengthen customer loyalty and the institution's reputation. Furthermore, the positive relationship between pesantren brand image and customer loyalty suggests that communicating the cooperative's institutional identity through practices aligned with Islamic values, such as transparent halal product information and business conduct consistent with those values, may support customer engagement with the cooperative. Furthermore, because the mediated relationship between price fairness and customer loyalty through customer satisfaction appears relatively clear, transparent, and consistent, pricing practices may be an important component of Sharia-compliant cooperative management, helping consumers perceive pricing decisions as fair and aligned with the principles of justice.

6. Limitations and Future Research

Based on the existing research findings, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences from the examined constructs. Second, focusing on pesantren cooperatives in East Java may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different pesantren characteristics, market conditions, and cooperative governance structures. Third, although Harman's single-factor test indicated that common method bias was not a serious concern, the use of self-reported data collected from a single source cannot entirely rule out potential method bias. In addition, the inclusion of respondents aged 15 years and above reflects the customer profile of pesantren cooperatives but may introduce differences in perceptions across the age groups. Furthermore, this research model does not include potentially important variables such as consumer religiosity, trust, and subscription length, which may influence the relationships identified in this study's results.

Therefore, future research should address these limitations in several ways. Comparative studies across various Indonesian provinces would be valuable in examining whether the mediation patterns identified in this study remain consistent across different pesantren cooperative contexts. The inclusion of religiosity, trust, and other contextual variables may provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer loyalty formation. Furthermore, qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews or ethnographic observations within pesantren communities, can enrich the understanding of the cultural and social processes associated with loyalty beyond what can be captured through survey-based methods.

Another limitation is the absence of a formal pilot test or expert-based content validation procedure before the main survey. Although the measurement items were adapted from established studies and demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability, future research may strengthen instrument development through pilot testing and expert review to further ensure contextual appropriateness within pesantren cooperative settings.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose before they began. The questionnaire was fully anonymous; no names, contact details, IP addresses, or other identifiers were collected, making it impossible to link the responses to individuals. Respondents could stop the survey at any time. The sample included respondents aged 15 and above, reflecting the fact that younger members of the pesantren community are also active cooperative customers. Formal parental or institutional consent was not obtained from respondents aged 15–17 years. As the survey covered only non-sensitive consumer perception items, posed minimal risk, and preserved full anonymity throughout, adolescent respondents' voluntary decision to participate was treated as sufficient assent. No sensitive personal information was collected from the respondents. All data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

Declaration of AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used OpenAI ChatGPT to assist with language refinement, academic editing, and clarity of presentation. Following the use of this tool, the authors carefully reviewed and presented the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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