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Product Packaging, Brand Equity, and Customer Experience as Drivers of Wardah Loyalty

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study — This study evaluates the comparative associations of product packaging, brand equity, and customer experience with customer loyalty toward Wardah, a halal-positioned cosmetic brand, among consumers in Pekalongan City.

Research Method: An explanatory cross-sectional survey was administered through Google Forms to 100 purposively selected Wardah users aged 17–45 years who had purchased or used the products at least three times. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression in SPSS version 23.

Result— The regression model was significant ($F = 34.131$, $p < .001$) and explained 51.6% of the variance in customer loyalty (adjusted $R^2 = .501$). Product packaging ($\beta = .326$, $p = .001$), brand equity ($\beta = .314$, $p = .004$), and customer experience ($\beta = .188$, $p = .045$) were positively associated with loyalty.

Conclusion— Packaging was the strongest predictor, closely followed by brand equity, while customer experience retained a smaller positive association. Wardah should combine functional packaging improvements, consistent brand meaning, and coordinated customer touchpoints to sustain repeat purchase and advocacy.

Limitations: The non-probability, single-city, single-brand, cross-sectional design and the concentration of young female respondents restrict generalization and causal interpretation.

Contribution: The study compares functional, symbolic, and experiential loyalty drivers in one model and provides locally grounded evidence from consumers of an Indonesian halal-positioned cosmetic brand.

Keywords *: Customer loyalty; Product packaging; Brand equity; Customer experience; Wardah cosmetics.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's cosmetic industry has become a strategically important consumer market. The Ministry of Industry reported that the domestic cosmetic market reached approximately USD 9.74 billion in 2025, with continuing annual growth and rising exports (Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia, 2026). This expansion increases consumer choice and reduces the protection historically enjoyed by established brands. Wardah remains visible in several beauty categories; for example, the 2026 Top Brand Index reported Wardah among the leading lipstick and loose face-powder brands (Top Brand Award, 2026). Wardah also explicitly positions its brand around halal green beauty innovation and the "Beauty Moves You" platform (Wardah, 2021). Strong market visibility, however, does not automatically ensure loyalty when consumers can compare local and global alternatives across digital channels.

Customer loyalty reflects a durable preference expressed through repurchase, recommendation, first-choice behavior, and resistance to switching (Oliver, 1999). For cosmetics, this response may be formed through multiple routes. Packaging supplies immediate visual and functional cues about safety, usability, information, and brand identity (Rundh, 2016; Srivastava et al., 2022). Brand equity represents the value embedded in consumer knowledge, associations, and perceived quality (Keller, 1993; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Customer experience captures sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, and relational responses across interactions with the product and brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). These constructs are related but managerially distinct: packaging can be redesigned, brand equity must be accumulated, and experience must be coordinated across touchpoints.

Prior research has usually examined these mechanisms separately or has emphasized purchase intention rather than established loyalty. Packaging studies show that visual and symbolic cues shape brand image and loyalty, but most evidence comes from food or packaged consumer goods (Rehman & Elahi, 2024). Brand-equity studies confirm its association with loyalty, frequently through satisfaction, yet the magnitude varies across product categories (Kataria & Saini, 2020). Experience research similarly demonstrates a positive loyalty pathway but often focuses on services or digital journeys (Brakus et al., 2009; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Evidence comparing the three predictors simultaneously for an Indonesian halal-positioned cosmetic brand in a secondary-city market remains limited.

This study addresses that contextual and comparative gap by examining Wardah users in Pekalongan City. It asks whether product packaging, brand equity, and customer experience are positively associated with customer loyalty and which predictor has the strongest relative contribution. The study contributes by integrating functional, symbolic, and experiential explanations in one parsimonious regression model without overstating causal inference. It also provides practical priorities for cosmetic-brand managers serving a predominantly young consumer segment outside Indonesia's largest metropolitan markets.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Integrated Customer-Based Perspective

The model adopts an integrated customer-based marketing perspective rather than the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework. A complete S-O-R model requires an explicit internal organism construct between environmental stimuli and behavioral response. Because the available data contain no mediator such as satisfaction, trust, perceived value, or emotional attachment, positioning all three predictors as stimuli would leave the organism component

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unmeasured. The revised framework instead treats packaging as a market-facing product cue, brand equity as accumulated consumer knowledge, customer experience as the consumer's response across interactions, and loyalty as the focal behavioral outcome. This structure aligns the theory with the variables that were actually measured.

Customer Loyalty

Loyalty extends beyond a single repeat purchase. Oliver (1999) conceptualizes loyalty as a deeply held commitment to repurchase despite situational influences and competing marketing efforts. In the present study, loyalty is reflected in the intention to continue buying Wardah, preference for Wardah over alternatives, positive recommendation, and resistance to switching. These behaviors are particularly valuable in cosmetics because product categories are frequently replenished and consumers can easily experiment with substitute brands.

Product Packaging and Customer Loyalty

Packaging performs protective, informational, convenience, and communication functions. It enables consumers to identify the brand, assess expected quality, understand product use, and judge whether the product appears safe and suitable (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Rundh, 2016). In cosmetics, packaging is also part of the product experience because consumers repeatedly handle, open, store, and display it. Srivastava et al. (2022) emphasize that cosmetic packaging may reinforce or weaken the intended brand message. Rehman and Elahi (2024) further show that packaging semiotics contributes to brand-related evaluations and loyalty. When Wardah packaging is attractive, informative, protective, and easy to use, consumers should perceive lower functional risk and greater consistency, supporting repeat choice.

> ***H1:*** *Product packaging is positively associated with customer loyalty toward Wardah products.*

Brand Equity and Customer Loyalty

Customer-based brand equity occurs when consumers hold strong, favorable, and distinctive knowledge about a brand (Keller, 1993). Awareness makes the brand accessible in memory, associations provide meaning, and perceived quality reduces uncertainty. Yoo and Donthu (2001) demonstrate that these dimensions can be measured as a consumer-level brand asset. In a crowded cosmetic market, strong equity simplifies choice and lowers the perceived risk of changing brands. Kataria and Saini (2020) found that consumer-based brand equity is closely connected to loyalty, both directly and through satisfaction. Wardah's recognizable identity and halal-positioned values should therefore support continued preference when consumers consider competing products.

> ***H2:*** *Brand equity is positively associated with customer loyalty toward Wardah products.*

Customer Experience and Customer Loyalty

Customer experience comprises internal responses generated by encounters with a brand across pre-purchase, purchase, use, and post-purchase stages (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

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Brakus et al. (2009) show that sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral brand experiences contribute to satisfaction and loyalty. Schmitt (1999) additionally highlights relational experience, through which consumers connect a brand with identity and social meaning. For Wardah, pleasant texture and aroma, confidence during use, cognitive reassurance, convenient behavior, and identification with the brand community can reinforce the willingness to repurchase and recommend.

H3: *Customer experience is positively associated with customer loyalty toward Wardah products.*

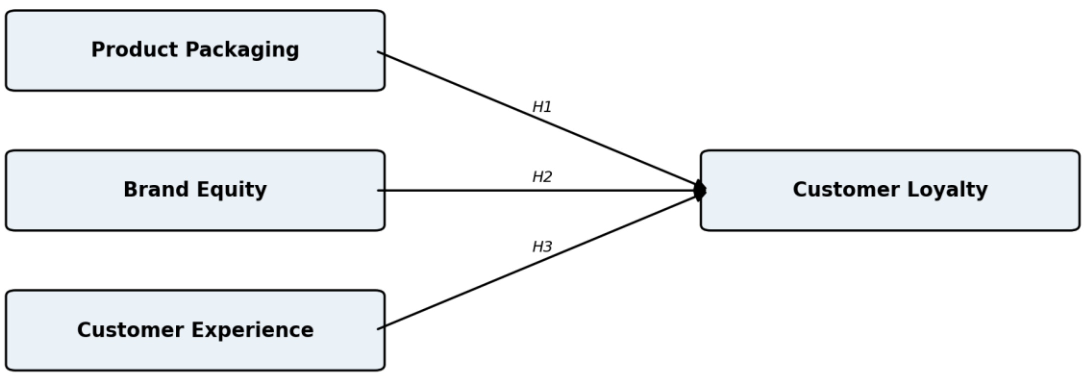

Figure 1. Research model

Source: Authors' formulation.

METHOD

Research Design, Context, and Sample

The study used an explanatory cross-sectional survey. This design estimates statistical associations among the variables at one point in time and does not establish definitive causality. The population comprised Wardah users residing in Pekalongan City. Because the population size was unknown, the minimum sample was estimated using the Lemeshow proportion formula, $n = Z^2p(1-p)/d^2$, with $Z = 1.96$, $p = .50$, and $d = .10$. The calculation produced 96.04 observations; rounding upward required at least 97 respondents. The final sample consisted of 100 respondents.

Purposive sampling was applied using two eligibility criteria: respondents were 17–45 years old and had purchased or used Wardah products at least three times. The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms during Mart to Aprl 2026 in Pekalongan City. Screening questions were placed at the beginning of the form to exclude ineligible responses.

Measurement

The questionnaire measured four constructs through adapted multi-item statements. For conceptual clarity, brand equity was reported through awareness, associations, perceived

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quality, and overall brand strength, while customer loyalty was measured separately to avoid definitional overlap. Responses were recorded on likert scale. The operationalization is summarized in Table 1; the authors should retain only sources that correspond to the wording used in the original questionnaire.

Table 1. Operationalization of the constructs

Construct	Operational dimensions	Items	Measurement basis
Product packaging	Visual appeal; information clarity; protection and usability	6	Adapted from Ampuero and Vila (2006), Rundh (2016), and Srivastava et al. (2022)
Brand equity	Brand awareness; brand associations; perceived quality; overall brand strength	8	Adapted from Keller (1993) and Yoo and Donthu (2001)
Customer experience	Sensory; affective; cognitive; behavioral; relational experience	10	Adapted from Schmitt (1999), Brakus et al. (2009), and Lemon and Verhoef (2016)
Customer loyalty	Repurchase; first choice; recommendation; resistance to switching	4	Adapted from Oliver (1999)

Data Analysis and Ethical Procedure

SPSS version 23 was used for descriptive analysis and multiple linear regression. Item validity was evaluated by Pearson item–total correlation against r = .1966 at α = .05. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with .70 used as the preferred minimum. Regression diagnostics included residual normality, tolerance and variance inflation factor, and the Glejser test for heteroscedasticity. Model performance was reported using R, R^2, adjusted R^2, the standard error of estimate, the omnibus F test, and standardized regression coefficients. Statistical significance was assessed at $p < .05$. Because all variables were collected from the same respondents through one questionnaire, common-method variance should be evaluated from the original item-level dataset.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Respondent Profile

The sample was geographically distributed across the four districts of Pekalongan City, but it should not be interpreted as statistically representative because respondents were selected purposively. Women constituted 88% of the sample, 80% were 17–25 years old, and 57% were students. The findings therefore primarily describe young Wardah consumers rather than the entire population of cosmetic users in Pekalongan City.

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Table 2. Respondent characteristics (n = 100)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Domicile	North / East / West / South Pekalongan	23 / 24 / 27 / 26	23 / 24 / 27 / 26
Gender	Male / Female	12 / 88	12 / 88
Age	17–20 / 21–25 / 26–30 / 31–35 / 36–40 / 41–45	30 / 50 / 11 / 3 / 3 / 3	30 / 50 / 11 / 3 / 3 / 3
Education	Elementary / Junior high / Senior high / Diploma / Bachelor / Master / Doctorate	1 / 2 / 65 / 4 / 26 / 1 / 1	1 / 2 / 65 / 4 / 26 / 1 / 1
Occupation	Student / Teacher-Lecturer / Homemaker / Entrepreneur / Freelancer / Civil servant / Employee	57 / 7 / 6 / 5 / 6 / 1 / 18	57 / 7 / 6 / 5 / 6 / 1 / 18

Source: Authors' calculations.

Measurement Quality and Regression Diagnostics

All item–total correlations exceeded the critical value of .1966. The lowest coefficient was .432 for brand equity and the highest was .914 for customer loyalty. Cronbach's alpha ranged from .783 to .842, exceeding the preferred .70 threshold. The tolerance and VIF values indicated no problematic multicollinearity, and the Glejser p-values were above .05.

Table 3. Measurement quality

Construct	Items	Item–total correlation range	Cronbach's α	Decision
Product packaging	6	.759–.849	.799	Valid and reliable
Brand equity	8	.432–.885	.783	Valid and reliable
Customer experience	10	.771–.884	.785	Valid and reliable
Customer loyalty	4	.899–.914	.842	Valid and reliable

Source: Authors' calculations.

Table 4. Regression diagnostics

Diagnostic	Result	Criterion	Interpretation
Residual normality	K–S asymptotic p = .034; Monte Carlo p = .338 (10,000 samples)	p > .05	Mixed evidence; the Monte Carlo estimate did not reject normality, while the asymptotic test warrants caution
Multicollinearity	Tolerance = .444–.588; VIF = 1.702–2.251	Tolerance > .10; VIF < 10	No problematic multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity	p = .257–.756 for the	p > .05	No evidence of

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Diagnostic	Result	Criterion	Interpretation
(Glejser)	predictors		heteroscedasticity
Common-method bias	Harman’s single-factor test showed that the first unrotated factor explained 32.45% of the total variance, below the 50% threshold.	No dominant single factor / appropriate criterion	Pending author verification

Source: Authors’ calculations.

Model and Hypothesis Tests

The omnibus regression model was significant, $F(3, 96) = 34.131$, $p < .001$. The model explained 51.6% of the variance in customer loyalty, with an adjusted R^2 of .501. The reconstructed model summary is consistent with the reported ANOVA output: R = .718 and standard error of estimate = 1.136. The estimated equation was $Y = -0.644 + 0.178X_1 + 0.244X_2 + 0.107X_3$, where X_1 is product packaging, X_2 is brand equity, and X_3 is customer experience.

Table 5. Regression and hypothesis-testing results

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	Decision
Product packaging	.178	.054	.326	3.328	.001	H1 supported
Brand equity	.244	.083	.314	2.944	.004	H2 supported
Customer experience	.107	.053	.188	2.029	.045	H3 supported

Source: SPSS output

Table 6. Model summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard error	F(3, 96)	p
.718	.516	.501	1.136	34.131	< .001

Source: R, adjusted R^2, and standard error reconstructed mathematically from the reported ANOVA output

DISCUSSION

Product Packaging and Customer Loyalty

Product packaging had the largest standardized association with loyalty (β = .326). This result indicates that visible and functional product cues remain highly consequential even for an established cosmetic brand. Packaging can reduce uncertainty by signaling protection, hygiene, authenticity, instructions, and ease of use while simultaneously making the brand recognizable at the point of choice. The finding is consistent with Rundh’s (2016) view of packaging as a value-creation tool and with cosmetic-packaging evidence showing that the physical pack communicates brand meaning (Srivastava et al., 2022). It also aligns with Rehman and Elahi (2024), who found that packaging semiotics contributes to loyalty-related evaluations. For the

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predominantly young sample, packaging may be especially salient because it is repeatedly encountered in online content, retail displays, and everyday product use.

Brand Equity and Customer Loyalty

Brand equity was the second-strongest predictor and was close in magnitude to packaging (β = .314). The result supports customer-based brand-equity theory: familiar and favorable brand knowledge reduces decision effort and makes the brand a safer choice (Keller, 1993). Wardah's established identity and halal-positioned communication provide associations that can differentiate the brand, but the study did not directly measure halal awareness, religiosity, or halal trust; the result should therefore be interpreted as general brand equity rather than a specifically halal mechanism. The finding is consistent with Kataria and Saini (2020), who document the link between consumer-based brand equity and loyalty. Managerially, Wardah should protect visual and verbal consistency while ensuring that claims are supported by stable product quality.

Customer Experience and Customer Loyalty

Customer experience remained positive after packaging and brand equity were controlled, but its coefficient was smaller (β = .188) and its p-value was close to .05. The result should therefore be interpreted cautiously. It nevertheless confirms that sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, and relational encounters contribute incremental information beyond what consumers think about the package and brand. Brakus et al. (2009) similarly show that brand experience supports loyalty, while Lemon and Verhoef (2016) emphasize that experience emerges across the entire customer journey. The modest coefficient may reflect overlap between product experience and perceptions already captured by packaging and brand equity, or it may indicate that Wardah users in this sample prioritized functional and symbolic reassurance over broader experiential differentiation.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

The study's theoretical contribution lies in comparing three distinct customer-based routes to loyalty in one model. Together, the predictors explained 51.6% of loyalty variance, showing that no single route is sufficient. The relative effects place functional packaging cues slightly ahead of accumulated brand equity, with customer experience providing a smaller additional contribution. This pattern refines the manuscript's original theoretical claim: the findings do not validate a complete S-O-R process, but they do support an integrated functional–symbolic–experiential explanation of loyalty in a halal-positioned cosmetic-brand context.

For managers, the results suggest a sequence of priorities. First, packaging should preserve product integrity, communicate information clearly, be convenient to use, and remain visually recognizable. Second, brand-equity investments should maintain consistent associations, perceived quality, and credible halal-positioned values across channels. Third, experience management should connect product performance with digital content, service encounters, complaint handling, and post-purchase communication. Because 80% of respondents were 17–25 years old, mobile-first product education, transparent usage guidance, and shareable but accurate packaging communication are especially relevant. These implications apply to the observed sample and should not be generalized to all Indonesian consumers.

CONCLUSION

Product packaging, brand equity, and customer experience were positively associated with customer loyalty toward Wardah products in Pekalongan City. Packaging was the strongest predictor, followed closely by brand equity, whereas customer experience produced a smaller but still significant association. The model explained 51.6% of loyalty variance, indicating that loyalty is formed through a combination of functional product cues, accumulated brand meaning, and consumer interactions. The study therefore provides a more focused conclusion than the original manuscript: it identifies the relative importance of the three predictors without claiming definitive causality or a complete S-O-R mechanism.

The findings are bounded by purposive sampling, a single city and brand, a cross-sectional self-report design, and a sample dominated by young women and students. The analysis did not distinguish skincare, makeup, and cleansing categories, and common-method bias must be assessed from the original item-level data. Future studies should use probability or quota sampling, compare product categories and brands, employ longitudinal or experimental designs, and test mediating mechanisms such as satisfaction, brand trust, perceived value, or emotional attachment. Halal awareness and halal brand trust should be measured explicitly when halal-related theoretical conclusions are intended.

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DECLARATION ON THE USE OF AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

OpenAI ChatGPT was used to support language editing, formatting, and consistency checking during manuscript revision. It was not used to collect data, alter the dataset, conduct the original statistical analyses, or determine the research conclusions. The authors reviewed and verified the revised manuscript and remain fully responsible for its accuracy, originality, integrity, and ethical compliance.

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