

## A Brand Authenticity and Consumer Loyalty among Generation Z Apple Users: The Mediating Roles of Brand Trust and Perceived Value

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines how brand authenticity influences consumer loyalty among Generation Z Apple users through the mediating roles of brand trust and perceived value. The study is grounded in the argument that authenticity is an important strategic factor for premium technology brands, particularly among younger consumers who evaluate brands based on credibility, value alignment, symbolic meaning, and consistency between brand promises and brand actions. A quantitative explanatory research design was employed. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 205 Generation Z Apple users residing in the Greater Jakarta area, also known as Jabodetabek. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The findings show that brand authenticity has a positive and significant effect on brand trust, perceived value, and consumer loyalty. Brand trust and perceived value also have positive and significant effects on consumer loyalty. The mediation results indicate that both brand trust and perceived value mediate the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer loyalty. Perceived value shows a stronger mediating effect than brand trust, suggesting that authenticity strengthens loyalty mainly by increasing consumers' perception of Apple products as functionally, emotionally, and symbolically valuable. These findings contribute to the literature on brand authenticity by showing that, in the context of Generation Z consumers and premium technology brands, loyalty is shaped not only by trust but also by the broader value consumers attach to the brand. Managerially, the study suggests that premium technology brands should maintain authenticity through consistent innovation, credible communication, reliable product experience, and value propositions that resonate with Generation Z consumers.



## Introduction

In the digital era, consumers are continuously exposed to competing brand messages, online reviews, social media narratives, and public discussions about corporate behavior. This condition has made brand authenticity increasingly important in contemporary marketing. Brands that are perceived as genuine, consistent, transparent, and aligned with their stated values are more likely to gain consumer acceptance and sustain long-term relationships. Authenticity is therefore not only related to brand image, but also to how consumers evaluate the consistency between brand promises, product experience, communication, and corporate actions.

Brand authenticity is particularly relevant in premium technology markets, where consumers do not evaluate brands solely based on functional performance. In this category, consumers also consider design identity, ecosystem experience, symbolic meaning, innovation consistency, and the credibility of brand values. Apple Inc. represents one of the most prominent examples of a premium technology brand that has built a strong global identity around innovation, design, exclusivity, and lifestyle. Its products, including the iPhone, iPad, MacBook, Apple Watch, and AirPods, are not only used as technological devices but also as symbols of personal identity, digital lifestyle, and social expression.

The Indonesian market provides a relevant context for examining Apple consumers. Apple recorded global revenue of USD 391 billion in fiscal year 2024, reflecting the continued strength of its product ecosystem and global brand position (Apple Inc., 2024). In Indonesia, iPhone usage has continued to grow, particularly among younger consumers. IDC Indonesia (2024) reported that iPhone shipments increased from 2.1 million units in 2023 to 2.7 million units in 2024. Data from Start.io (2024) further indicate that Indonesia had approximately 9.68 million iPhone users, with 50.5% aged between 18 and 24 years. These figures suggest that Generation Z represents a strategically important segment for Apple in Indonesia.

Generation Z is an important consumer group because this segment has grown up in a digital environment characterized by high information access, social media exposure, peer evaluation, and continuous comparison among brands. Unlike consumers who rely mainly on product functionality, Generation Z consumers tend to evaluate brands through broader considerations, including credibility, value alignment, symbolic relevance, social meaning, and consistency between what brands communicate and what they actually deliver. In the context of Apple, this means that loyalty among Generation Z users may not only depend on trust in product quality, but also on whether Apple products are perceived as valuable in functional, emotional, experiential, and symbolic terms.

Previous studies have shown that brand authenticity can influence consumer responses such as brand trust, perceived value, brand love, purchase intention, and loyalty. Hernandez-Fernandez and Lewis (2019) found that brand authenticity leads to perceived value and brand trust. Dag (2022) also demonstrated that brand authenticity contributes to perceived value and brand trust. Kim, Kim, and Holland (2020) showed that consumer-based brand

authenticity is related to brand trust and brand loyalty, while Oenica and Maulida (2024) highlighted the relevance of perceived value, brand trust, and brand love in explaining brand loyalty in the context of authentic brands. These studies indicate that brand authenticity can shape loyalty through different psychological and evaluative mechanisms.

Despite these contributions, several gaps remain. First, previous studies have not sufficiently examined how brand trust and perceived value operate simultaneously as mediating mechanisms between brand authenticity and consumer loyalty in the context of premium technology brands. Brand trust and perceived value represent different pathways. Brand trust reflects consumers' confidence that a brand is reliable and capable of fulfilling its promises, while perceived value reflects consumers' evaluation of the benefits they receive relative to the sacrifices they make. Examining both mediators in one model is important because loyalty toward premium technology brands may be shaped not only by confidence in the brand, but also by consumers' assessment of whether the brand delivers meaningful value.

Second, the role of Generation Z in brand authenticity research remains particularly important because this group evaluates brands in a highly digital, symbolic, and socially connected consumption environment. For Generation Z Apple users, authenticity may influence loyalty not only through trust, but also through the perception that Apple products support identity expression, lifestyle relevance, ecosystem convenience, and social recognition. Therefore, the Generation Z context provides an appropriate setting for understanding whether authenticity-based loyalty is driven more strongly by trust formation or by value perception.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to examine the effect of brand authenticity on consumer loyalty among Generation Z Apple users in Jabodetabek through the mediating roles of brand trust and perceived value. This study contributes to the brand authenticity literature by comparing two mediating mechanisms in the context of a premium technology brand. It also provides managerial insight into how authenticity can strengthen loyalty among Generation Z consumers by enhancing both brand trust and perceived value. The proposed hypotheses are as follows:

- H1: Brand authenticity has a positive effect on brand trust;
- H2: Brand authenticity has a positive effect on perceived value;
- H3: Brand authenticity has a positive effect on consumer loyalty;
- H4: Brand trust has a positive effect on consumer loyalty;
- H5: Perceived value has a positive effect on consumer loyalty;
- H6: Brand trust mediates the effect of brand authenticity on consumer loyalty;
- H7: Perceived value mediates the effect of brand authenticity on consumer loyalty

## Method

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the direct and indirect relationships among brand authenticity, brand trust, perceived value, and

consumer loyalty. This design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to test the proposed hypotheses and explain how brand authenticity influences consumer loyalty through the mediating roles of brand trust and perceived value.

The population of this study consisted of Generation Z consumers who use Apple products and reside in the Greater Jakarta area, also known as Jabodetabek. Respondents were selected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. This technique was used because the study required respondents who met specific criteria relevant to the research context. The inclusion criteria were: respondents had to belong to Generation Z, reside in Jabodetabek, currently use at least one Apple product, and have sufficient experience using Apple products to evaluate brand authenticity, brand trust, perceived value, and consumer loyalty.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed online. The questionnaire began with screening questions to ensure that respondents met the required criteria. Respondents who did not meet the criteria were not included in the final dataset. The use of an online questionnaire was considered appropriate because Generation Z consumers are highly familiar with digital platforms and because the target respondents were geographically distributed across the Jabodetabek area.

The sample size was determined using the rule of thumb proposed by Hair et al. (2014), which recommends a minimum sample size of five to ten times the number of indicators for studies using structural equation modeling. Based on this guideline, 205 valid responses were obtained and considered adequate for further analysis.

The questionnaire consisted of items measuring four main constructs: brand authenticity, brand trust, perceived value, and consumer loyalty. Brand authenticity was positioned as the independent variable, brand trust and perceived value were positioned as mediating variables, and consumer loyalty was positioned as the dependent variable. The measurement items were adapted from previous studies related to brand authenticity, brand trust, perceived value, and consumer loyalty. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire items were reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and contextual suitability for Apple products and Generation Z respondents.

All items were measured using a Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. PLS-SEM was selected because it is suitable for testing complex models involving multiple relationships and mediating variables. The analysis was conducted in two stages: evaluation of the measurement model and evaluation of the structural model.

The measurement model was evaluated using convergent validity and reliability tests. Convergent validity was assessed through outer loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Indicators were considered valid when the outer loading values exceeded 0.70 and the AVE values exceeded 0.50. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, with values above 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability. The

structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, p-values, and bootstrapping results. Hypotheses were considered supported when the path coefficients were positive and the p-values were below the significance level of 0.05.

### Results and Discussion

This section presents the empirical findings of the study. The analysis is organized into four parts: respondent profile, measurement model evaluation, structural model evaluation, and discussion of findings. The respondent profile describes the characteristics of Generation Z Apple users included in the study. The measurement model evaluation assesses the validity and reliability of the constructs, while the structural model evaluation examines the direct and indirect relationships among brand authenticity, brand trust, perceived value, and consumer loyalty. The discussion then interprets the findings by connecting the statistical results with the theoretical framework, prior studies, and the context of Generation Z consumers in the premium technology market.

### Descriptive Statistics

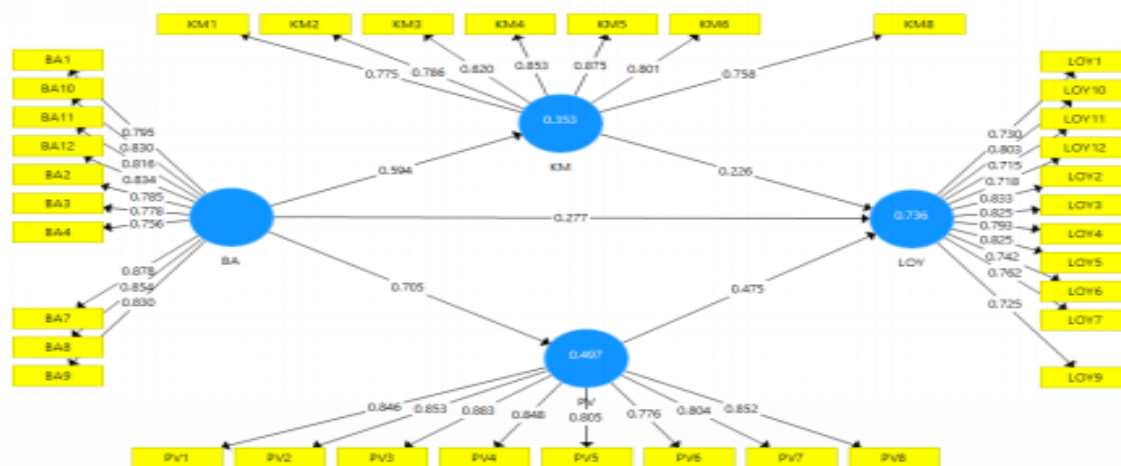
This study involved 205 respondents who were Apple product users residing in the Greater Jakarta area, also known as Jabodetabek. The respondent profile provides an overview of age distribution, type of Apple product used, and length of product use. These characteristics are important because the study requires respondents who have sufficient experience with Apple products to evaluate brand authenticity, brand trust, perceived value, and consumer loyalty.

**Table 1. Respondent Profile**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Usia</b>		
Under 20 years old	5	2.4%
20-25 years old	156	76.1%
26-31 years old	44	21.5%
<b>Apple Product Used</b>		
AirPods	2	1.0%
iPad	5	2.4%
iPhone	190	92.7%
Iphone and Apple watch	1	0.5%
Iphone and mac	1	0.5%
Mac	6	2.9%
<b>Length of Apple Product Use</b>		
< 6 Months	3	1.5%
> 12 Months	194	94.6%
6 - 12 Months	8	3.9%

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were aged between 20 and 25 years, representing 156 respondents or 76.1% of the total sample. Respondents aged 26 to 31 years accounted for 44 respondents or 21.5%, while respondents below 20 years old accounted for five respondents or 2.4%. This distribution indicates that the sample is dominated by young adult Generation Z consumers who are likely to have active exposure to digital platforms, online brand communication, peer recommendations, and technology-based consumption.

In terms of Apple products used, most respondents reported using an iPhone. A total of 190 respondents, or 92.7% of the sample, used an iPhone, while the remaining respondents used other Apple products such as Mac, iPad, AirPods, or combinations of Apple devices. This profile indicates that the study primarily reflects the experience of iPhone users within the Apple ecosystem. Regarding usage duration, 194 respondents or 94.6% had used Apple products for more than 12 months. This suggests that most respondents had adequate experience to assess Apple not only based on initial product impressions, but also based on repeated use, ecosystem familiarity, and accumulated brand experience.



### Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated to ensure that the indicators used in this study adequately represented their respective constructs. Convergent validity was assessed using outer loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). In PLS-SEM, indicators are generally considered acceptable when outer loading values exceed 0.70, while constructs are considered to achieve convergent validity when AVE values exceed 0.50. The results of the convergent validity assessment are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Convergent Validity Results**

Variable	Indicator	Loading	AVE
Brand authenticity	BA1	0.795	0.667
	BA2	0.785	
	BA3	0.778	
	BA4	0.756	

	BA7	0.878	
	BA8	0.854	
	BA9	0.830	
	BA10	0.830	
	BA11	0.816	
	BA12	0.834	
<b>Brand trust</b>	KM1	0.775	0.657
	KM2	0.786	
	KM3	0.820	
	KM4	0.853	
	KM5	0.875	
	KM6	0.801	
	KM7	0.875	
	KM8	0.758	
<b>Perceived value</b>	PV1	0.846	0.696
	PV2	0.853	
	PV3	0.883	
	PV4	0.848	
	PV5	0.805	
	PV6	0.776	
	PV7	0.804	
	PV8	0.852	
<b>Consumer loyalty</b>	LOY1	0.730	0.595
	LOY2	0.833	
	LOY3	0.825	
	LOY4	0.793	
	LOY5	0.825	
	LOY6	0.742	
	LOY7	0.762	
	LOY8	0.762	
	LOY9	0.725	
	LOY10	0.803	
	LOY11	0.715	
	LOY12	0.718	

As shown in Table 2, all indicators had outer loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.70. The loading values for brand authenticity ranged from 0.756 to 0.878, indicating that the retained indicators adequately captured respondents' perceptions of Apple's authenticity. The loading values for brand trust ranged from 0.758 to 0.875, showing that the indicators reflected consumers' confidence in Apple's reliability and credibility. For perceived value, the loading values ranged from 0.776 to 0.883, suggesting that the indicators captured consumers' evaluation of the benefits they received from Apple products. For consumer loyalty, the loading values ranged from 0.715 to 0.833, indicating that the indicators adequately represented continued preference, repurchase intention, and recommendation behavior.

The AVE values also exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50. Brand authenticity had an AVE value of 0.667, brand trust had an AVE value of 0.657, perceived value had an AVE value of 0.696, and consumer loyalty had an AVE value of 0.595. These results confirm

that each construct was able to explain more than half of the variance of its indicators. Therefore, the measurement model met the requirements for convergent validity.

### Reliability Test

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Cronbach's alpha measures internal consistency among indicators, while composite reliability evaluates construct reliability by considering the different outer loadings of each indicator. Values above 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability. The reliability test results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Reliability Test Results**

Variabel	Cronbach Alpha	Composite reliability
Brand authenticity	0.874	0.913
Brand trust	0.866	0.949
Perceived value	0.848	0.898
Consumer loyalty	0.892	0.926

As shown in Table 3, all constructs met the recommended reliability threshold. Brand authenticity had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.874 and a composite reliability value of 0.913. Brand trust had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.866 and a composite reliability value of 0.949. Perceived value had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.848 and a composite reliability value of 0.898. Consumer loyalty had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.892 and a composite reliability value of 0.926. These results indicate that all constructs had strong internal consistency and were reliable for further structural model analysis.

### Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

After the measurement model met the validity and reliability requirements, the structural model was evaluated to test the proposed hypotheses. The evaluation was conducted by examining the path coefficients and p-values obtained from the bootstrapping procedure. A hypothesis was considered supported when the path coefficient was positive and the p-value was below 0.05. The results of the structural model evaluation are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	P-Value	Decision
H1	Brand Authenticity → Brand Trust	0.594	0.000	Supported
H2	Brand Authenticity → Perceived Value	0.705	0.000	Supported
H3	Brand Authenticity → Consumer Loyalty	0.277	0.000	Supported

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	P-Value	Decision
H4	Brand Trust → Consumer Loyalty	0.226	0.000	Supported
H5	Perceived Value → Consumer Loyalty	0.475	0.000	Supported
H6	Brand Authenticity → Brand Trust → Consumer Loyalty	0.134	0.001	Supported
H7	Brand Authenticity → Perceived Value → Consumer Loyalty	0.335	0.000	Supported

Table 4 shows that all proposed hypotheses were supported. Brand authenticity had a positive and significant effect on brand trust, perceived value, and consumer loyalty. Brand trust and perceived value also had positive and significant effects on consumer loyalty. In addition, both brand trust and perceived value significantly mediated the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer loyalty. These findings indicate that brand authenticity influences loyalty among Generation Z Apple users both directly and indirectly through trust-based and value-based mechanisms.

### Discussion of Findings

#### H1: Effect of Brand Authenticity on Brand Trust

The result shows that brand authenticity has a positive and significant effect on brand trust, with a path coefficient of 0.594 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that Generation Z consumers are more likely to trust Apple when they perceive the brand as authentic, consistent, credible, and aligned with its identity. In the context of Apple, authenticity is reflected not only in brand communication but also in product design consistency, innovation continuity, ecosystem reliability, and the brand's ability to maintain a distinctive identity over time.

This finding supports the argument that trust is formed when consumers perceive a close alignment between what a brand promises and what it delivers. For Generation Z consumers, who are highly exposed to digital information and public discussions about brands, authenticity becomes an important basis for evaluating whether a brand deserves trust. The result is consistent with Dag (2022) and Kim, Kim, and Holland (2020), who found that brand authenticity contributes to brand trust because authentic brands are perceived as more sincere, dependable, and credible.

## **H2: Effect of Brand Authenticity on Perceived Value**

The result shows that brand authenticity has a positive and significant effect on perceived value, with a path coefficient of 0.705 and a p-value of 0.000. This is the strongest direct relationship in the model, indicating that brand authenticity is a major determinant of perceived value among Generation Z Apple users. When consumers perceive Apple as authentic, they are more likely to evaluate its products as valuable.

This finding is important because perceived value in the context of Apple is not limited to technical performance or product features. For Generation Z consumers, Apple's value may also come from design consistency, ease of use, ecosystem integration, durability, social recognition, and symbolic meaning. Apple's authenticity strengthens the perception that its premium positioning is justified by a broader set of benefits. This result is consistent with Hernandez-Fernandez and Lewis (2019) and Dag (2022), who show that brand authenticity can increase perceived value by making a brand appear more meaningful, credible, and relevant to consumers.

## **H3: Effect of Brand Authenticity on Consumer Loyalty**

The result shows that brand authenticity has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.277 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that Generation Z consumers who perceive Apple as authentic are more likely to remain loyal to the brand. Loyalty may be reflected in continued use, repurchase intention, willingness to recommend, and preference for Apple over competing technology brands.

This finding suggests that authenticity can directly strengthen consumer-brand relationships. For Apple users, authenticity reinforces the perception that the brand remains consistent with its identity as an innovative, premium, design-oriented, and lifestyle-driven technology brand. Among Generation Z consumers, this consistency may encourage emotional attachment and identity alignment. The result supports previous studies by Kim, Kim, and Holland (2020) and Hidayat and Setiawati (2021), which found that brand authenticity is positively related to brand or consumer loyalty.

## **H4: Effect of Brand Trust on Consumer Loyalty**

The result shows that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.226 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that trust remains an important factor in shaping loyalty toward Apple products. When consumers trust Apple, they are more confident that the brand will continue to provide reliable product quality, stable software performance, secure user experience, and consistent after-sales support.

However, the coefficient of brand trust is lower than that of perceived value. This suggests that, among Generation Z Apple users, trust may function as a basic requirement rather than the strongest driver of loyalty. Apple is already perceived as a globally established and reliable technology brand, so trust may be expected by consumers. Loyalty is therefore strengthened not only when consumers trust Apple, but also when they perceive

that Apple continues to provide value that justifies their long-term preference. This result is consistent with Kim, Kim, and Holland (2020), who found that brand trust contributes to brand loyalty.

#### **H5: Effect of Perceived Value on Consumer Loyalty**

The result shows that perceived value has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.475 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that perceived value is the strongest direct predictor of consumer loyalty in this study. Compared with brand trust, perceived value has a larger effect on loyalty, suggesting that Generation Z Apple users are more likely to remain loyal when they believe that Apple products provide meaningful benefits relative to the sacrifices required.

This finding is particularly relevant because Apple products are positioned in the premium segment. For Generation Z consumers, loyalty toward a premium technology brand requires more than trust. Consumers need to perceive that the brand provides functional, emotional, experiential, and symbolic value. Apple's product quality, design, ecosystem integration, user experience, durability, and social meaning may all contribute to the perception that the brand remains worth using and repurchasing. This result supports Oenica and Maulida (2024), who show that perceived value plays an important role in explaining brand loyalty in the context of authentic brands.

#### **H6: Mediating Role of Brand Trust**

The result shows that brand trust significantly mediates the effect of brand authenticity on consumer loyalty, with an indirect effect coefficient of 0.134 and a p-value of 0.001. This finding indicates that authenticity increases loyalty partly through trust. When Generation Z consumers perceive Apple as authentic, they are more likely to trust the brand, and this trust subsequently strengthens their loyalty.

This mediation effect confirms that brand trust functions as a psychological mechanism that translates authenticity into loyal behavior. Authenticity helps reduce skepticism and strengthens consumers' confidence that the brand will fulfill its promises. In the context of Apple, this trust may be built through consistent product performance, ecosystem reliability, privacy-related brand positioning, and repeated positive user experience. Since the direct effect of brand authenticity on consumer loyalty remains significant, brand trust can be interpreted as a partial mediator in the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer loyalty.

#### **H7: Mediating Role of Perceived Value**

The result shows that perceived value significantly mediates the effect of brand authenticity on consumer loyalty, with an indirect effect coefficient of 0.335 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that perceived value is an important mechanism through which brand authenticity strengthens consumer loyalty. Compared with brand trust, the mediating effect of perceived value is stronger, indicating that authenticity influences loyalty more strongly through value perception than through trust alone.

This result suggests that Generation Z Apple users respond to authenticity by evaluating whether Apple products remain meaningful, beneficial, and worth maintaining. For this segment, authenticity enhances loyalty because it strengthens the perception that Apple offers more than functional utility. Apple products may provide emotional satisfaction, social recognition, identity expression, ecosystem convenience, and lifestyle relevance. Since the direct effect of brand authenticity on consumer loyalty remains significant, perceived value can also be interpreted as a partial mediator in the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer loyalty.

### **Why Perceived Value Dominates Brand Trust among Generation Z Apple Users**

The finding that perceived value has a stronger effect than brand trust provides an important insight into loyalty formation among Generation Z Apple users. In the context of a premium technology brand, trust is important, but it may no longer be the main differentiating factor. Apple is widely known as an established global brand with strong product quality, design consistency, and ecosystem reliability. As a result, many consumers may already assume that Apple is trustworthy. Trust therefore becomes a baseline expectation.

Perceived value, on the other hand, becomes a more active driver of loyalty because Generation Z consumers must evaluate whether Apple products remain worth their premium price and long-term commitment. This evaluation includes not only functional benefits, such as product performance and ease of use, but also emotional and symbolic benefits, such as pride of ownership, social recognition, identity expression, and lifestyle compatibility. In a digital consumption culture where technology products are closely connected to self-presentation and social interaction, Apple's value is shaped by both product experience and symbolic meaning.

This finding also reflects the characteristics of Generation Z consumers in Indonesia, particularly in urban areas such as Jabodetabek. These consumers are highly exposed to digital content, peer recommendations, influencer narratives, online reviews, and social comparisons. As a result, their loyalty is influenced by how well a brand fits their daily digital practices and social identity. For Apple, authenticity strengthens loyalty not only because the brand is trusted, but because consumers perceive the brand as offering a coherent combination of quality, ecosystem convenience, emotional satisfaction, and premium symbolic value.

### **Overall Discussion**

Overall, the findings show that brand authenticity plays a central role in shaping consumer loyalty among Generation Z Apple users. Brand authenticity has a direct effect on consumer loyalty and also influences loyalty indirectly through brand trust and perceived value. This means that authenticity works through two complementary mechanisms. The first mechanism is trust-based, where authenticity increases consumers' confidence in the

brand's reliability and credibility. The second mechanism is value-based, where authenticity increases consumers' perception that the brand provides meaningful benefits.

The most important finding of this study is the stronger role of perceived value compared with brand trust. The strongest direct relationship in the model is the effect of brand authenticity on perceived value, while the strongest predictor of consumer loyalty is perceived value. The mediating effect of perceived value is also stronger than the mediating effect of brand trust. These findings suggest that, among Generation Z Apple users, authenticity-based loyalty is driven more strongly by value perception than by trust formation.

This result provides a relevant contribution to the literature on brand authenticity and consumer loyalty. Previous studies have established that authentic brands can increase trust and loyalty. This study extends that understanding by showing that, in the context of premium technology brands and Generation Z consumers, perceived value may become the more dominant mechanism. This is because Generation Z consumers evaluate premium technology brands not only from credibility and reliability, but also from ecosystem experience, symbolic meaning, emotional benefits, and identity relevance.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that Apple and other premium technology brands should maintain authenticity through consistent innovation, design identity, product quality, and credible brand communication. However, authenticity should also be translated into value that consumers can clearly experience. For Generation Z consumers, value is created through seamless ecosystem integration, reliable user experience, long-term usability, emotional satisfaction, and the ability of the brand to support identity expression and digital lifestyle.

The findings also suggest that marketing communication for Generation Z should not focus only on product specifications or brand prestige. Premium technology brands need to communicate how their products fit into consumers' daily lives, creative activities, social interactions, and personal identity. In this context, authenticity becomes meaningful when consumers can see consistency between the brand's promises, the product experience, and the broader value delivered by the brand.

## **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that brand authenticity is a key determinant of consumer loyalty among Generation Z Apple users in the Greater Jakarta area. The findings indicate that authenticity strengthens loyalty both directly and indirectly by fostering higher levels of brand trust and perceived value. However, perceived value emerges as the more influential mechanism, suggesting that Generation Z consumers are more likely to remain loyal when they perceive Apple products as delivering meaningful functional, emotional, experiential, and symbolic benefits. Therefore, the effectiveness of brand authenticity in building long-term loyalty depends not only on enhancing consumers' trust in the brand but also on reinforcing the overall value they associate with the brand. In the context of premium

technology products, loyalty is primarily driven by consumers' perception that the brand consistently provides relevant, valuable, and identity-enhancing experiences that justify continued usage and repurchase intentions.

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