Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen (JIMMU),11 (1) 2026, 16-31
Published Online: April, 2026
https://doi.org/10.33474/jimmu.v11i1. 24297, e-ISSN 2621-6957

Building Sariayu Martha Tilaar Customer Loyalty Through Customer Intimacy And Brand Equity

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to explore and analyze the impact of customer intimacy and brand equity on customer loyalty among members of the Sariayu Martha Tilaar community on Facebook. The background of this research lies in the increasingly competitive beauty industry in Indonesia, where local brands must strengthen emotional bonds and brand perception to retain loyal customers, especially in digital spaces. Previous studies have predominantly focused on product quality and customer satisfaction, leaving a research gap in understanding how emotional closeness and brand equity influence loyalty within online brand communities. This study addresses that gap by offering a novel approach that integrates psychological and relational constructs—customer intimacy and brand equity—within a digital context. Employing a quantitative approach, the research combines descriptive and verification methods. The study involved a population of 386 individuals, from which 186 respondents were selected using non-probability purposive sampling. Data analysis was conducted using path analysis. The findings indicate that customer intimacy and brand equity both fall within the good category in terms of their influence on customer loyalty. Moreover, these two variables were found to significantly and positively affect customer loyalty, both individually and simultaneously. Theoretically, this research contributes to the literature by emphasizing the role of emotional and perceptual factors in fostering loyalty beyond functional attributes. Practically, the results offer strategic insights for marketers to enhance customer engagement and loyalty through personalized interaction and consistent brand messaging in digital communities. This study is expected to benefit both academics and practitioners in developing more holistic and human-centered loyalty strategies in the digital era.

ARTICLE INFO

Article Type: Research Paper

Article History:
Received : October, 2025
Reviewed : October, 2025
Revised : November, 2025
Accepted : April, 2026

Keywords: Customer Intimacy; Brand Equity; Customer Loyalty; Facebook Community

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1. Introduction

In the current era of digital transformation and highly competitive markets, businesses are continuously seeking strategies to retain their customers and foster long-term loyalty (Amanah & Harahap, 2022), (Amanah et al., 2024). One of the most effective approaches is to build strong emotional connections with consumers, known as customer intimacy (Bügel et al., 2011). This concept emphasizes understanding individual customer needs, preferences, and expectations to deliver personalized experiences. When effectively implemented, customer intimacy can increase trust, satisfaction, and ultimately, loyalty (Tartaglione et al., 2019).

Alongside customer intimacy, brand equity plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and behavior. Brand equity refers to the value that a brand holds in the minds of consumers, encompassing elements such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty (Ou et al., 2016). A strong brand equity not only differentiates a product or service in the market but also enhances customer commitment and repeat purchase behavior (Lieven, 2017). Both customer intimacy and brand equity are considered essential assets for companies aiming to create and sustain competitive advantages(Nathalia & Indriyanti, 2022).

In the context of beauty and personal care products, consumer attachment to brands can be particularly strong due to the emotional and identity-related aspects involved. Sariayu Martha Tilaar, as one of Indonesia's most well-known and culturally rooted beauty brands (Hidayat, 2025), has cultivated a large online community, especially through social media platforms like Facebook (Nathalia & Indriyanti, 2022). The brand's ability to engage its audience through personalized interactions and consistent brand messaging offers a relevant setting to investigate the roles of customer intimacy and brand equity in influencing customer loyalty (Raniaziza et al., 2025).

This research aims to examine the relationship and impact of customer intimacy and brand equity on customer loyalty among members of the Sariayu Martha Tilaar Facebook community. This study seeks to provide empirical evidence on how emotional closeness and perceived brand value affect consumer loyalty in an online brand community setting. The results of this study are expected to contribute to both academic knowledge and practical marketing strategies, particularly in enhancing customer engagement and brand management within the beauty industry.

Currently, there are many other local cosmetic options, and competition is increasingly fierce (Nawiyah et al., 2023). Sariayu itself has experienced a year-over-year decline in net revenue.

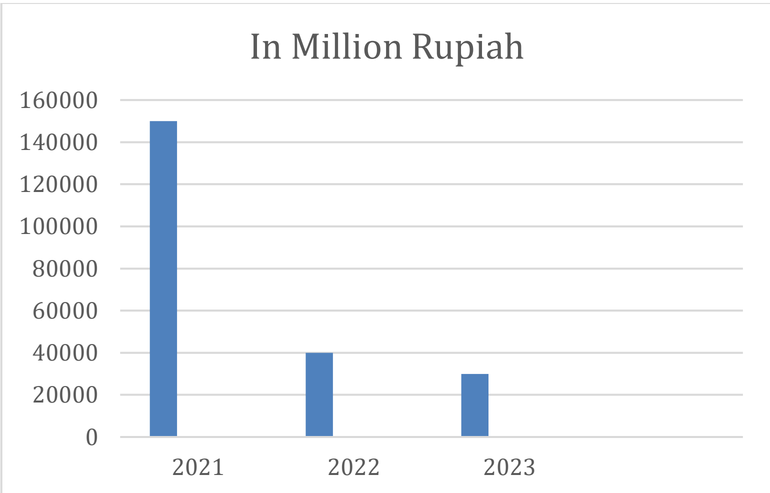

Figure 1 Sariayu Total Net Income

Figure 1 shows Sariayu total net revenue for 2021-2023. Sariayu Martha Tilaar's net revenue has continued to decline year after year. In 2022, net revenue decreased by 71%. In 2023, it also showed a 24.7% decline. This phenomenon indicates a customer loyalty issue (Anggraini & Suryoko, 2018). According to a study conducted by a researcher, the key to maintaining net revenue is maintaining customer loyalty. Net revenue is one dimension of recurring purchases (Butarbutar, 2017). If Sariayu continues to experience a decline in customer revenue, customer loyalty is at risk.

Table 1 Percentage of Sariayu Repurchases 2023 - Mid 2024

Year	Repurchase (%)
2023	29.0
Mid 2024	12.5

Source: Sandria et al., (2021)

Table 1 shows that by mid-2024, the repurchase percentage had decreased by 16.5%. This percentage was collected from several Sariayu Martha Tilaar products. This indicates that customer satisfaction is not being met, impacting repurchases. This in turn leads customers to spread the word to other potential customers (Sandria et al., 2021).

Therefore, this study seeks to answer the main question of how customer intimacy and brand equity influence customer loyalty of Sariayu Martha Tilaar customers. This study aims to identify the level of customer intimacy, assess their perception of brand equity, and measure the influence of each variable on customer loyalty. The results of this study are expected to enrich marketing studies, particularly in the fields of relationship marketing and brand management, by providing empirical evidence regarding the important role of customer intimacy and brand equity in shaping loyalty. This study can also be a reference for academics who examine customer loyalty strategies in local beauty brands. Practically, the results of this study provide benefits for Sariayu Martha Tilaar in formulating marketing strategies that are more oriented towards emotional closeness with customers and strengthening brand image. In addition, the findings of this study can help marketing practitioners in understanding how to integrate customer intimacy and brand equity strategies to increase consumer loyalty, as well as provide customers with an understanding of the importance of their relationships and perceptions of the brand in shaping long-term loyalty.

2. **Literature Review**

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty by Guillén & Rubio, (2019); Amanah & Miraza, (2015) refers to a customer's commitment to consistently repurchase a brand or product, despite the availability of alternatives in the market. Daffy, (2019) defines loyalty as a deep commitment to consistently repurchase a product or service in the future. Loyalty is reflected not only in repeat purchases but also in positive recommendations to others Hermawan & Vikaliana, (2023). In the context of cosmetic brands like Sariayu Martha Tilaar, customer loyalty is key to maintaining market share amidst intense competition. The Customer Loyalty indicators in this study are Recurring Purchase, Retention, and Referral (Griffin, 2009; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Reinartz & Kumar, 2012).

Customer Intimacy

Customer intimacy by Natarelli & Plapler, (2017) is a business strategy approach that emphasizes a deep understanding of individual customers' needs, preferences, and desires. According to Elgarhy & Alharethi, (2025), customer intimacy involves creating close, personal relationships with customers to create sustainable value. Companies that implement this strategy are typically more responsive to customer feedback, create customized products, and build strong emotional connections Hulu & Lubis, (2025). In the beauty industry, where customer preferences are highly subjective, customer intimacy can be a crucial factor in building long-term loyalty. Bonding, empathy, reciprocity, and commitment are indicators of customer intimacy in this study (Ndubisi, 2007; Parasuraman et al., 2005; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999).

Brand Equity

Brand equity by Mogaji, (2021) is the added value a brand provides to a product or service, both in consumer perception and in market performance. Beverlad, (2018) states that brand equity consists of several key dimensions: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and brand loyalty. The author uses these seven dimensions as a measure of brand equity in this study. Strong brand equity can build consumer trust, differentiate a brand from competitors, and increase customer loyalty. In the context of Sariayu Martha Tilaar, positive brand equity can increase emotional attachment and consumer preference for local products. The indicators are social image, promotion, price (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Belch & Belch, 2024; Kotler & Armstrong, 2016)

The Influence of Customer Intimacy on Brand Equity

In an era of increasingly fierce brand competition, an approach based on emotional intimacy and a deep understanding of customers is a crucial strategy for building strong brand equity. Customer intimacy encompasses a company's ability to personally understand customer needs, preferences, and behaviors, and provide relevant and valuable services. When customers feel understood and valued, they tend to form positive perceptions of the brand, ultimately strengthening brand equity dimensions such as image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty.

Pina & Dias, (2021) shows that the emotional and intellectual experiences built through intimate interactions with customers have a significant impact on all dimensions of brand equity. This aligns with the co-creation approach in marketing, where brand value is shaped not only by the company but also by the experiences and relationships built with customers. In the context of digital communities like Facebook, the intensity of communication, customer participation, and personalized responses from the brand strengthen the emotional bonds that form the foundation of brand equity.

Thus, a customer intimacy strategy not only increases satisfaction but also acts as a catalyst for shaping superior and sustainable brand perceptions. Companies that can consistently integrate this approach will find it easier to build strong and relevant brand equity in the eyes of customers.

H1: Customer Intimacy has an effect on Brand Equity

The Influence of Brand Equity on Customer Loyalty

Brand equity is an intangible asset that adds value to a product or service from the customer's perspective. Dewi, (2025) defines brand equity as a set of brand assets and liabilities associated with the brand name and symbol, which add to or subtract from the value provided by the product or service to customers. The main dimensions of brand equity include brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty.

Strong brand equity plays a crucial role in establishing and maintaining customer loyalty. According to Mahendra & Fadhilla, (2025), when brand equity is high, customers have a more positive perception of the brand, have greater confidence in the product's quality, and develop a stronger emotional bond. This leads to customers being more likely to make repeat purchases, less likely to switch to other brands, and more likely to recommend the brand to others.

Previous research has shown a significant relationship between brand equity and customer loyalty. Idemon & Nisa, (2024) found that all dimensions of brand equity, especially perceived quality and brand loyalty, have a positive influence on customer loyalty. Research by Darmansyah, s2024) also confirmed that the higher a product's brand equity, the higher the level of customer loyalty to that product.

In the context of the cosmetics industry, such as Sariayu Martha Tilaar, brand equity is a crucial factor in maintaining customer loyalty. Cosmetic consumers generally have an emotional attachment to the brands they use, and they tend to stick with brands that convey a positive image, trusted quality, and consistent user experience. Therefore, strengthening brand equity is an effective strategy for building sustainable customer loyalty.

H2: Brand Equity has an effect on Customer Loyalty

The Influence of Customer Intimacy on Customer Loyalty

Customer intimacy is a business strategy focused on creating long-term relationships with customers through a deep understanding of their needs, preferences, and behaviors. According to Luthfitawti & Sutejo, (2025), customer intimacy occurs when a company strives to get to know its customers personally and offers customized solutions, not just standard products. This approach creates added value that is difficult for competitors to imitate and strengthens the emotional bond between customers and the brand.

In the context of customer loyalty, customer intimacy plays a crucial role. Customer loyalty is shaped not only by satisfaction but also by emotional closeness and a strong connection with the brand. Yasmine & Dwita, (2025) stated that customers who feel personally valued by a company tend to remain loyal, even when other alternatives are available in the market. This suggests that customer intimacy can reduce psychological switching costs.

Empirical research also supports a positive relationship between customer intimacy and customer loyalty. According to Lauwrence et al., (2024), companies that effectively implement customer intimacy strategies will increase customer loyalty by enhancing satisfaction, trust, and commitment. Similar results were found by Ghaffari et al., (2024), who showed that personal interactions and attention to customers strengthen emotional connections and influence repurchase decisions.

In the beauty industry, like Sariayu Martha Tilaar, where consumer preferences are highly individualized and emotional, customer intimacy is a relevant strategy for increasing loyalty. Customers who feel personally cared for and understood tend to remain loyal to the brand and even advocate for it by recommending it to others.

H3: Customer Intimacy has an effect on Customer Loyalty

The Influence of Customer Intimacy on Customer Loyalty through Brand Equity

Customer intimacy is seen as a strategy to build deep relationships with customers through understanding needs and customizing services/products, a classic concept developed by Treacy & Wiersema, (1993). Brand equity, according to the customer-based brand equity framework, is formed from brand awareness and strong brand associations, which in turn influence consumer responses to marketing activities, Keller, (1993). Contemporary research shows that customer intimacy is not only relevant offline but is also transforming in a digital context—known as digital customer intimacy, which enriches the way companies build personal and data-driven relationships with consumers (Liu et al., 2024). Several empirical studies have found that customer intimacy increases brand equity because intense interactions strengthen positive associations and brand preference; brand equity further serves as a driver of customer loyalty through affective and cognitive motivations for repeat purchases (PhamThi & Ho, 2024). The literature review also confirms that customer loyalty remains a key outcome influenced by a combination of brand experience, perceived value, and brand equity strength (Alfaisaly, 2024). Thus, the theoretical framework linking customer intimacy → brand equity → customer loyalty is supported by both classical literature and recent empirical evidence, while opening up research directions on the mediating role of brand equity and the digitalization conditions of customer interactions (Treacy & Wiersema, 1993).

H4: Brand Equity Mediates Customer Intimacy to Customer Loyalty

3. **Research Methods**

This study uses a quantitative approach (Roni et al., 2019) with a survey method to analyze the influence of customer intimacy and brand equity on customer loyalty to Sariayu Martha Tilaar products. The population in this study consisted of 386 members of the Sariayu Martha Tilaar community on Facebook. The sampling technique used was non-probability purposive sampling (Thompson, 2012), meaning respondents were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The number of samples obtained based on the Slovin formula was 196, but of all the questionnaires distributed, only 186 were suitable for analysis. A total of 186 community members were selected as samples and given a structured questionnaire (Patten, 2016) as the data collection instrument.

The questionnaire was compiled based on validated indicators of the variables of customer intimacy, brand equity, and customer loyalty, and measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was distributed online via direct message and group posting within the Facebook community to ensure accessibility and engagement. The collected data were then processed through several stages of analysis, including data cleaning, validity and reliability testing, and descriptive statistics. This study uses path analysis to examine the direct influence between customer intimacy and brand equity on customer loyalty. Using multiple linear regression through SPSS, this analysis explains the direct causal relationship and measures the contribution of each variable to customer loyalty. The research model is as follows

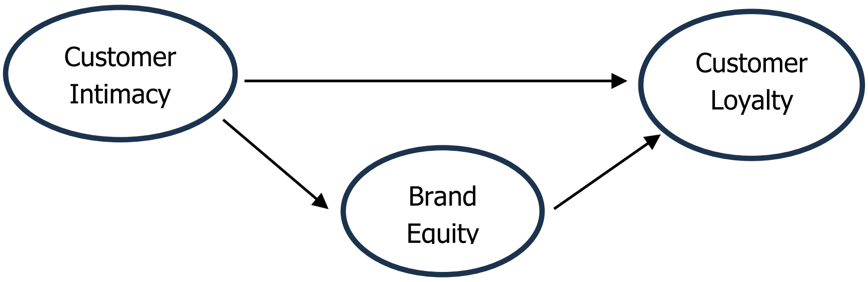

Figure 2 The Research Model

4. **Results**

Table 2 Respondent Characteristics

No	Characteristics	Categories	Frequency (people)	Percentages (%)
1	**Gender**	Male	16	9%
		Female	170	91%
2	**Age**	< 20 years old	38	20%
		21 – 25 years old	99	53%
		26 – 30 years old	36	19%
		31 – 35 years old	7	4%
		>36 years old	6	3%
3	**Occupation**	Entrepreneur	6	3%
		Civil Servant	13	7%
		Private Employee	27	15%
		Housewives	6	3%
		High School Students	21	11%
		College Students	109	59%
		Others	4	2%
4	**Expenses**	<Rp1.000.000	109	59%
		Rp1.000.000 - Rp2.500.000	42	23%
		Rp2.500.000 - Rp3.500.000	9	5%
		Rp3.500.000 - Rp5.000.000	25	13%
		>Rp5.000.000	1	1%
	Total Respondents		**186**	**100%**

Source: Research Data, (2026)

Based on Table 2, the majority of respondents were female (91%), which is highly relevant to the characteristics of Sariayu beauty products, as a brand that targets female consumers. This proportion ensures that the research findings reflect the views of the product's primary users.

Regarding age, the majority of respondents were in the 21–25 age group (53%), followed by those under 20 (20%) and those 26–30 (19%). This young age group is a segment that actively uses beauty products, follows local beauty trends, and has a strong interest in personal experiences with brands. This segment is also highly responsive to digital strategies and direct interactions, which are at the heart of customer intimacy.

Regarding occupation, the largest number of respondents were university students (59%), followed by private sector employees (15%) and students (11%). This indicates that the sample is dominated by young, educated consumers who tend to be open to product innovation and are strongly influenced by brand equity, such as brand image, perceived quality, and trust in local brands.

In terms of monthly expenditure, the majority (59%) spent less than Rp1,000,000, indicating that Sariayu consumers in this study come from low- to middle-income groups. This situation is relevant to Sariayu's positioning as an affordable local beauty brand that still emphasizes quality and cultural values.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results Of Customer Intimacy (X1), Brand Equity (X2, and Customer Loyalty (Y) Variables

No	Statement	r-count	r-table (n=186)	Explanation	r_{count}	r_{table}	Explanation
1	X1.1	0.681	0.361	Valid			
2	X1.2	0.726	0.361	Valid			
3	X1.3	0.761	0.361	Valid			
4	X1.4	0.753	0.361	Valid			
5	X1.5	0.786	0.361	Valid			
6	X1.6	0.770	0.361	Valid			
7	X1.7	0.793	0.361	Valid			
8	X1.8	0.773	0.361	Valid			
9	X1.9	0.718	0.361	Valid			
10	X1.10	0.782	0.361	Valid			
11	X1.11	0.686	0.361	Valid			
12	X1.12	0.794	0.361	Valid	0,963	0,361	Reliabel
13	X1.13	0.655	0.361	Valid			
14	X1.14	0.684	0.361	Valid			
15	X1.15	0.759	0.361	Valid			
16	X1.16	0.767	0.361	Valid			
17	X1.17	0.738	0.361	Valid			
18	X1.18	0.631	0.361	Valid			
19	X1.19	0.753	0.361	Valid			
20	X1.20	0.775	0.361	Valid			
21	X1.21	0.831	0.361	Valid			
22	X1.22	0.826	0.361	Valid			
23	X1.23	0.804	0.361	Valid			
1	X2.1	0.836	0.361	Valid			
2	X2.2	0.781	0.361	Valid			
3	X2.3	0.806	0.361	Valid			
4	X2.4	0.704	0.361	Valid			
5	X2.5	0.844	0.361	Valid	0.936	0,361	Reliabel
6	X2.6	0.548	0.361	Valid			
7	X2.7	0.824	0.361	Valid			
8	X2.8	0.886	0.361	Valid			
9	X2.9	0.861	0.361	Valid			
10	X2.10	0.686	0.361	Valid			
11	X2.11	0.825	0.361	Valid			

1	Y1	0.802	0.361	Valid	0,940	0,361	Reliabel
2	Y2	0.733	0.361	Valid			
3	Y3	0.645	0.361	Valid			
4	Y4	0.693	0.361	Valid			
5	Y5	0.743	0.361	Valid			
6	Y6	0.701	0.361	Valid			
7	Y7	0.766	0.361	Valid			
8	Y8	0.804	0.361	Valid			
9	Y9	0.762	0.361	Valid			
10	Y10	0.846	0.361	Valid			
11	Y11	0.777	0.361	Valid			
12	Y12	0.746	0.361	Valid			
13	Y13	0.764	0.361	Valid			
14	Y14	0.712	0.361	Valid			
15	Y15	0.641	0.361	Valid			

Source: Processed research data, (2026)

Table 3 displays the validity test results for all statement items representing the variables Customer Intimacy (X1), Brand Equity (X2), and Customer Loyalty (Y), indicating that all instruments are valid. For the Customer Intimacy variable, 23 items covering the dimensions of bonding, empathy, reciprocity, and commitment had a calculated r-value greater than the table r-value (0.361), reflecting the quality of social interactions, service responsiveness, product satisfaction, and strong brand commitment. A similar finding was found for the Brand Equity variable, where indicators for the Social Image, Promotion, and Price aspects all exceeded the table r-value, indicating that the company's image and promotional effectiveness were perceived positively by respondents. Finally, for the Customer Loyalty variable, all 15 statement items (Y1–Y15) met the validity criteria with calculated r-values ranging from 0.641 to 0.846. Overall, the validity of all these items confirms that the instrument used is able to measure each variable accurately and consistently, making it suitable for use in further structural analysis.

Furthermore, based on the reliability test conducted on the three main variables in this study, it was found that the variables Customer Intimacy, Brand Equity, and Customer Loyalty have a very high level of internal consistency. This is evidenced by the calculated r-values of 0.963, 0.936, and 0.940, respectively, all of which are much greater than the standard r-table value (0.361). This high reliability value ensures that each questionnaire item is able to reflect the measured construct stably, both as a relational variable, brand perception, and consumer behavior. This finding not only strengthens the validity of the analytical model used but also provides a solid foundation and increases the credibility of the research results in explaining the relationship between variables convincingly.

Table 7. Normality Test Result

e-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		186
Normal Parameters[a,b]	*Mean*	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	5.03426612
Most Extreme Differences	*Absolute*	.061
	Positive	.045
	Negative	-.061
Test Statistic		.061
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.084[c.d]

Source: Processed research data, (2026)

Based on Table 7, the normality test for the data obtained from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov calculation yields a value of 0.084. This value is > 0.05, indicating that the research variable data are normally distributed.

Table 8. Multicollinearity Test Result

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Explanation
Customer Intimacy	0.582	1.717	There is no multicollinearity
Brand Equity	0.582	1.717	There is no multicollinearity

Source: Processed research data, (2026)

Multicollinearity testing was conducted to ensure there was no high correlation between the independent variables in the regression model, which could distort parameter estimates (Table 8). In this study, the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were used as indicators. The analysis results showed that the Tolerance values for the Customer Intimacy and Brand Equity variables were above 0.10, and the VIF values were each below 10. This indicates that there are no symptoms of multicollinearity in the model.

Thus, both independent variables—Customer Intimacy and Brand Equity—can be used simultaneously in the analysis model without causing distortion due to excessively high correlation. The validity of the regression model is maintained, and the estimated effect of each variable on Customer Loyalty can be accurately interpreted. These findings strengthen the model's reliability in explaining the relationships between variables in the context of customer loyalty to Sariayu Martha Tilaar products.

Table 9. Heteroscedasticity Test Result

Independent Variable	Coefficient	Sig. (p-value)	Explanation
Customer Intimacy	0.087	0.312	There is no heteroscedasticity
Brand Equity	0.094	0.284	There is no heteroscedasticity

Source: Processed research data, (2026)

A heteroscedasticity test was conducted to determine whether there was inequality in the variance of the residuals in the regression model (Table 9). In this study, the test was conducted using the Glejser Test, which examined the significance of the coefficient values of each independent variable on the absolute residual value. The test results showed that all independent variables—Customer Intimacy and Brand Equity—had a significance value (Sig.) greater than 0.05. This means there is no significant relationship between the independent variables and the residuals, thus concluding that the regression model is free from heteroscedasticity.

With the absence of heteroscedasticity, the regression model used in this study meets one of the classical assumptions of linear regression, so the parameter estimation results can be considered valid and can be interpreted accurately.

The Influence of Customer Intimacy on Brand Equity

Table 10. Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.144	3.621		.592	.554
	X1	.456	.028	.767	16.220	.000

a. Dependent Variable: X2

Table 10 shows that customer intimacy (X1) has a positive and significant influence on brand equity (X2). The unstandardized regression coefficient value of 0.456 indicates that every one unit increase in customer intimacy will increase brand equity by 0.456 units. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.767 indicates that the influence of X1 is relatively strong. The t-value of 16.220 with a significance of 0.000 confirms that the relationship is highly statistically significant. Meanwhile, the constant of 2.144 indicates the initial value of brand equity when customer intimacy is considered zero. This finding emphasizes the importance of customer closeness in building brand equity.

Table 11. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.767[a]	.588	.586	4.186

a. Predictors: (Constant), X1

Source: Processed research data, (2026)

The R Square value in Table 11 is 0.588 means that 58.8% of the variation in brand equity can be explained by customer intimacy. The Adjusted R Square of 0.586 indicates a stable level of model explanation even when adjusted for the number of variables. Meanwhile, the Std. Error of the Estimate of 4.186 indicates the level of model prediction error. Overall, this regression model is quite good at explaining the influence of customer intimacy on brand equity.

The Influence of Customer Intimacy and Brand Equity on Customer Loyalty

Table 12. Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	21.877	4.370		5.006	.000
	X1	.324	.053	.490	6.137	.000
	X2	.304	.089	.273	3.422	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Source: Processed research data, (2026)

The unstandardized regression coefficient for X1 in Table 12 is 0.324 indicates that every one unit increase in customer intimacy will increase customer loyalty by 0.324 units. Meanwhile, the X2 coefficient of 0.304 indicates that brand equity also contributes to an increase in customer loyalty by 0.304 units. The standardized beta value shows that X1 (β = 0.490) has a relatively stronger influence than X2 (β = 0.273). The high t-values of each variable and the significance of 0.000 and 0.001 confirm that both are statistically significant. The constant 21.877 indicates the baseline value of loyalty when both predictors are zero.

Table 13. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.721[a]	0.520	0.515	5.047

Source: Processed research data, (2026)

An R value in Table 13 is 0.721 indicates a strong correlation between the predictor and dependent variables. An R Square of 0.520 means that 52% of the variation in customer loyalty can be explained by the two variables in the regression model. An Adjusted R Square of 0.515 indicates that the model remains stable and does not experience a decline in quality even when adjusted for the number of variables. The Std. Error of the Estimate of 5.047 illustrates the level of model prediction error, which is still within the reasonable category. Overall, this model is quite good at predicting customer loyalty.

The Influence of Customer Intimacy on Customer Loyalty through Brand Equity

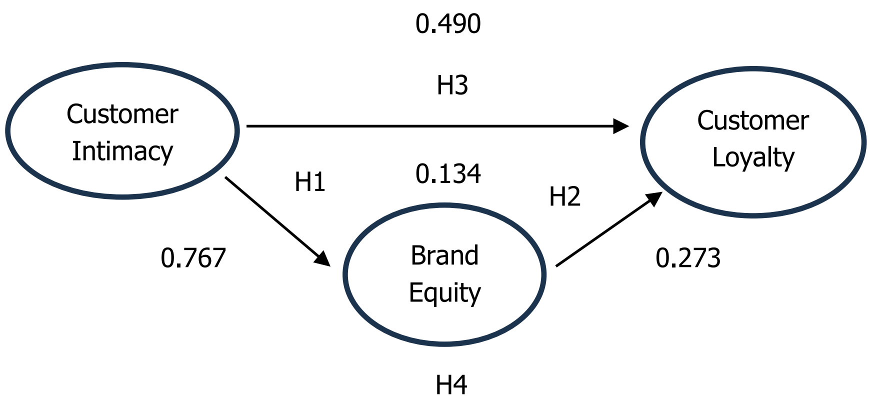

Figure 3. Research model and analysis results

Customer intimacy has a strong influence on brand equity, indicated by a coefficient value of 0.767. Furthermore, brand equity also influences customer loyalty with a coefficient of 0.273. The relationship between customer intimacy and customer loyalty shows a coefficient of 0.490, indicating a fairly strong and significant influence. Meanwhile, a value of 0.134 illustrates the influence of customer intimacy on customer loyalty through brand equity. Overall, this model demonstrates that brand equity acts as a key link mediating the relationship between customer intimacy and customer loyalty.

Discussions

The Influence of Customer Intimacy on Brand Equity

The research results show that customer intimacy has a positive influence on brand equity, with a coefficient value of 0.108. Although this influence is considered weak, it remains significant in explaining how emotional closeness and the depth of the relationship between customers and the brand shape the perceived value of the Sariayu Martha Tilaar brand. This finding aligns with the view that customer intimacy is a crucial foundation for creating a unique customer experience, ultimately strengthening the brand's image and value in the minds of consumers (Beig & Nika, 2022).

Customer intimacy encompasses a company's ability to deeply understand customer needs, provide personalized service, and build long-term relationships based on trust (Treacy & Wiersema, 1993a). In the context of Sariayu Martha Tilaar, a customer intimacy strategy can be realized through consistent interactions across various touchpoints, such as beauty consultations, personalized product recommendations, and communication approaches relevant to customer preferences. When customers feel understood and valued, these positive perceptions contribute to increased brand associations, brand trust, and brand perceived value—three key elements in building brand equity (Aaker, 2009); (Keller, 2013).

However, the relatively small coefficient indicates that emotional connection and customer intimacy are not the only dominant factors in shaping Sariayu's brand equity. Other factors such as product quality, innovation, price competitiveness, and strong brand identity may contribute more significantly to increasing brand equity (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This may be because Sariayu is a long-established beauty brand in Indonesia, so its brand equity is formed more from its long history, reputation for quality, and cultural positioning than from intimate relationships with customers.

Nevertheless, the contribution of customer intimacy remains crucial in the increasingly digital and customer-centric context of competition in the beauty industry. Closeness to customers can help brands understand changing consumer preferences, especially among younger consumers who are more responsive to personalized experiences and meaningful interactions (Basalamah et al., 2025). Customer intimacy can also strengthen emotional attachment, which in the long term has the potential to significantly increase brand equity if developed consistently.

Thus, although the influence of customer intimacy on brand equity in this study is relatively weak, the findings still confirm that building authentic closeness with customers is an important strategy to strengthen the brand value of Sariayu Martha Tilaar in the long term.

The Influence of Brand Equity on Customer Loyalty

The findings of this study show that brand equity has a positive but relatively small effect on customer loyalty, with a standardized coefficient of 0.070. Although the influence is positive, the magnitude indicates that brand equity contributes only modestly to increasing customer loyalty toward Sariayu Martha Tilaar. This result suggests that while brand equity remains an important factor, it is not the primary driver of loyalty in this context. Other relational aspects—such as customer intimacy—may play a more dominant role in shaping loyalty behaviors.

Brand equity refers to the added value a brand provides, manifested through brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand trust (Aaker, 2009). A strong brand typically influences customers' purchase decisions, emotional attachment, and long-term loyalty. However, the coefficient of 0.070 indicates that for Sariayu consumers, brand equity alone is not strong enough to significantly reinforce loyalty. This aligns with recent studies showing that in saturated beauty markets, brand equity must be supported by emotional engagement and personalized experience to meaningfully affect loyalty (Buil et al., 2013).

One possible explanation for the relatively low effect is the competitive landscape of the Indonesian beauty industry. Consumers—especially millennials and Gen Z—are increasingly exposed to numerous local and international beauty brands. In such a dynamic market, brand equity may not be sufficient to secure loyalty unless accompanied by stronger value propositions, such as experiential engagement, cultural relevance, or intimate relationship-building efforts. This is consistent with findings by (Keller, 2013), which argue that brand equity's influence on loyalty is maximized when the brand continuously strengthens its resonance and relationship depth with consumers.

Another explanation relates to the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The majority are young consumers with moderate purchasing power, who tend to be more experimental and frequently switch between beauty brands in search of novelty or better suitability. Thus, even though Sariayu possesses strong historical brand equity rooted in Indonesian cultural identity, younger consumers may perceive brand value as only one of several considerations in forming loyalty.

Nevertheless, the positive coefficient confirms that brand equity still contributes to loyalty formation, albeit modestly. Elements such as Sariayu's brand heritage, trusted quality, and cultural symbolism continue to provide value to its customers. The implication for managerial strategy is clear: Sariayu must strengthen its brand equity by enhancing perceived quality, deepening brand associations, and reinforcing brand trust while integrating emotional and relational strategies that better resonate with younger audiences.

The Influence of Customer Intimacy on Customer Loyalty

The results of this study show that customer intimacy has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty with a standardized coefficient of 0.269. This finding indicates that the stronger the emotional closeness, understanding, and personalized interaction perceived by customers, the higher their loyalty toward Sariayu Martha Tilaar. Customer intimacy reflects the brand's ability to recognize customer needs, build meaningful engagement, and create feelings of being valued (Treacy & Wiersema, 1996). In the beauty industry—where emotional connection and personal relevance play a central role—this relational approach becomes a strategic determinant of loyalty.

The coefficient value of 0.269 demonstrates that customer intimacy contributes moderately but consistently to loyalty formation. This aligns with previous studies showing that emotional bonds between customers and brands enhance trust, commitment, and long-term relationship continuity (Zegullaj et al., 2025). For Sariayu, customer intimacy may be formed through personalized communication on digital platforms, culturally rooted brand narratives, and product recommendations that resonate with consumers' identities. When customers feel understood and emotionally connected, they tend to show higher repeat purchase intentions and advocacy behavior (Harrigan et al., 2018).

The demographic profile of respondents—dominated by young female consumers—also strengthens this effect. Younger segments, particularly millennials and Gen Z, highly value brands that provide authenticity, emotional relevance, and two-way interaction. Customer intimacy enables Sariayu to meet these expectations by presenting itself not only as a functional beauty brand but also as a companion aligned with customers' personal values and lifestyle aspirations. This sense of closeness increases attachment and decreases switching tendencies even in a highly competitive beauty market (Prentice et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the positive relationship found in this study supports the relational marketing theory, which states that cultivating intimacy with customers results in higher satisfaction and loyalty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Customer intimacy strengthens customer trust and creates emotional security, which ultimately encourages customers to remain loyal despite the abundance of competing local and international brands.

The Influence of Customer Intimacy on Customer Loyalty through Brand Equity

The influence of customer intimacy on customer loyalty has been increasingly studied in the marketing literature, particularly through the role of mediating variables such as brand equity. Peppers and Rogers (Peppers & Rogers, 2022) explain that a customer intimacy approach—which emphasizes a deep understanding of customer needs and preferences—can foster long-term relationships that ultimately strengthen brand perceptions. When customer relationships are well-managed, brand value increases and impacts loyal customer behavior. This finding aligns with research by Cardoso et al. (Cardoso et al., 2022), which shows that the strength of brand relationships, including trust and emotional closeness, plays a crucial role in maintaining customer loyalty. This research suggests that the influence of intimacy on loyalty often occurs indirectly through improving the quality of brand relationships.

Awalludin's (Awalludin & Heikal, 2024) study also demonstrated that relationship equity and brand equity significantly influence customer satisfaction and loyalty, supporting a mediation model in which brand equity is a key pathway connecting intimacy to loyalty. Furthermore, PhamThi's (PhamThi & Ho, 2024) findings emphasize that the strength of customer-brand relationships is a consistent mediator across various retail contexts, confirming that the effects of intimacy rarely occur directly without the involvement of perceived value and brand attachment. These various studies collectively strengthen the argument that customer intimacy can increase customer loyalty, but the most powerful mechanism is usually through increased brand equity or the strength of brand relationships. Therefore, research examining this relationship needs to include mediating variables to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

5. **Conclusions**

This research shows that brand equity has a strong influence on customer loyalty. When customers have a positive perception of the quality, image, reputation, and trustworthiness of the Sariayu Martha Tilaar brand, they are more likely to remain loyal. Brand equity has proven to be a crucial asset in maintaining long-term loyalty.

Furthermore, customer intimacy plays a significant role in shaping brand equity. Closer relationships with customers—through understanding their needs, personalized service, and intensive communication—can create positive brand perceptions. Customer intimacy also directly influences customer loyalty, as emotional and functional connections drive customer trust, value, and preference for Sariayu products over competitors.

Most importantly, this research confirms that customer intimacy indirectly influences customer loyalty through brand equity, acting as a mediating variable. While closeness to customers can indeed increase loyalty, its impact is even stronger when supported by solid brand equity. In this case, brand equity serves as a bridge that strengthens emotional bonds and transforms them into sustainable loyalty.

Theoretically, this study contributes by broadening the understanding of the relationship between customer intimacy and loyalty through the mediating role of brand equity in the context of digital communities. These findings enrich the literature on relationship marketing and brand equity by emphasizing the importance of emotional interactions and brand perceptions in shaping loyalty. Practically, these results emphasize the importance of synergy between customer intimacy strategies and strengthening brand equity to maintain competitiveness and expand market share in the increasingly dynamic cosmetics industry.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that companies place greater emphasis on strengthening their Customer Intimacy strategy as a means of enhancing customer loyalty. Customer intimacy, which refers to the development of close and personalized relationships between firms and their customers, can be fostered through individualized communication, a deeper understanding of customer needs and preferences, as well as the provision of experiences that are relevant and satisfying. By adopting a more customer-centric orientation, companies are better positioned to anticipate consumer expectations, respond proactively to emerging demands, and cultivate long-term emotional bonds. Such practices are essential in establishing sustainable loyalty, as customers tend to remain committed to firms that consistently demonstrate attentiveness and responsiveness.

In parallel, companies must also continue to invest in the improvement of Brand Equity, given its proven role as a determinant of customer loyalty. Strengthening brand equity requires the consistent maintenance of a positive brand image, delivery of high-quality products or services, and the nurturing of consumer trust toward the brand. Strong brand equity not only enhances customer perceptions but also creates a sense of reliability and differentiation in competitive markets. Consequently, the combination of robust customer intimacy practices and strong brand equity becomes a critical foundation for the formulation of long-term marketing strategies. Furthermore, the scope of future research may be expanded by considering additional variables such as customer satisfaction, perceived value, and service quality. These constructs may serve as mediating or moderating factors that provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which loyalty is developed and sustained.

Author Contribution

Dita Amanah conceptualized the study, designed the research framework, and drafted the original manuscript. Rd Dian Herdiana Utama conducted data collection and performed the formal analysis. B Lena Nuryanti contributed to the research methodology and data interpretation. Novani G S Sipayung assisted in literature review, data validation, and manuscript editing. Dedy Ansari Harahap supervised the overall research process, provided critical revisions, and ensured the integrity of the study. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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