

**THE INFLUENCE OF PRODUCT QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ON  
CUSTOMER LOYALTY AT EKINPO CAKE & DESSERT MANADO**

**PENGARUH KUALITAS PRODUK DAN KEPUASAAN PELANGGAN TERHADAP LOYALITAS  
PELANGGAN PADA EKINPO CAKE & DESSERT MANADO**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyse the effect of Product Quality and Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty at Ekinpo Cake & Dessert, a local cake and dessert business in Manado. The independent variables in this study are Product Quality and Customer Satisfaction, while the dependent variable analysed is Customer Loyalty. This research uses a quantitative method with a sample of 118 respondents who are Ekinpo customers. Data was collected through a questionnaire using a Likert scale. The results of this study indicate that both Product Quality and Customer Satisfaction significantly influence Customer Loyalty, both partially and simultaneously, were conducted and showed that the regression model meets the required assumptions. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining product quality and customer satisfaction as key strategies to strengthen customer loyalty in a competitive F&B MSME market.

**Keywords:** Product Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh Kualitas Produk dan Kepuasan Pelanggan terhadap Loyalitas Pelanggan pada Ekinpo Cake & Dessert, sebuah usaha kue dan dessert lokal di Manado. Variabel independen dalam penelitian ini adalah Kualitas Produk dan Kepuasan Pelanggan, sedangkan variabel dependen yang dianalisis adalah Loyalitas Pelanggan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan sampel sebanyak 118 responden yang merupakan pelanggan Ekinpo. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner menggunakan skala Likert. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa baik Kualitas Produk maupun Kepuasan Pelanggan berpengaruh signifikan terhadap Loyalitas Pelanggan, baik secara parsial maupun simultan. Temuan ini menekankan pentingnya menjaga kualitas produk dan kepuasan pelanggan sebagai strategi utama untuk meningkatkan loyalitas pelanggan di tengah persaingan pasar kuliner pada bidang UMKM yang semakin ketat.

**Kata Kunci:** Kualitas Produk, Kepuasan Pelanggan, Loyalitas Pelanggan

## INTRODUCTION

### Research Background

Understanding what drives customer loyalty becomes increasingly crucial. Customer loyalty is a deep commitment to repurchase or repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences or marketing efforts by competing brands. Specifically, there is a need to explore how product quality and customer satisfaction interact and contribute to customer loyalty within the highly competitive environment of the dessert business. However, achieving and maintaining customer loyalty requires more than just product quality and initial satisfaction. Businesses must be able to adapt to changing consumer expectations, stay aware of market trends, and continuously innovate to retain their customer base.

Product quality has long been considered a key determinant of consumer satisfaction and brand perception. Tjiptono (2008) defines product quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied customer needs. This concept highlights the importance of consistently meeting or exceeding customer expectations in terms of taste, texture, appearance, freshness, and safety—especially for food-

related businesses. Customer satisfaction is another critical factor in the competitive landscape. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), customer satisfaction is the level of a person's felt state resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance to expectations. When performance meets or exceeds expectations, satisfaction is achieved; when it falls short, dissatisfaction arises. In practical terms, this means that satisfied customers become more than one-time buyers—they become brand advocates.

In North Sulawesi, particularly in the city of Manado, the food and beverage industry continues to show dynamic growth, driven by evolving consumer demands, culinary innovation, and the increasing number of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) entering the market. Among the many MSMEs operating in this sector, businesses focusing on cakes and desserts have gained notable attention. These businesses not only satisfy the rising demand for sweet treats but also contribute significantly to the local economy. One such enterprise is Ekinpo Cake & Dessert, a Manado-based business committed to producing high-quality cakes and desserts for its community.

Ekinpo Cake & Dessert has developed a loyal customer base by continuously delivering high-quality desserts characterized by excellent taste, elegant presentation, and careful craftsmanship. Its emphasis on quality, freshness, and innovative presentation has contributed to the establishment of a strong brand identity within the local market. Over time, Ekinpo has earned a positive reputation for its meticulous attention to detail and commitment to customer satisfaction. A key aspect of the business's dedication to quality lies in its careful selection of ingredients. Ekinpo consistently utilizes premium components such as fresh eggs, Wijsman butter, and other high-grade ingredients to ensure that its products not only appear attractive but also deliver a satisfying taste. Within the context of dessert products, visual appeal alone is insufficient; a pleasing appearance must be complemented by an exceptional flavor profile to create a truly enjoyable consumer experience. Ekinpo's adherence to this principle reflects its ongoing commitment to delivering products that meet high standards of both taste and presentation. However, despite these strengths, Ekinpo is currently facing several challenges that threaten its market position and long-term growth.

The emergence of new competitors in a relatively small and concentrated market such as Manado presents significant challenges, especially for businesses that previously enjoyed a loyal customer base. In the past, Ekinpo's name recognition and consistent quality may have been enough to ensure steady sales, but in the current climate, customer loyalty can no longer be taken for granted. Consumers today have more choices than ever before, and with increased access to online platforms and social media, their purchasing decisions are influenced by a variety of factors—ranging from peer reviews and aesthetic appeal to price competitiveness and convenience.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To analyze the influence of product quality on customer loyalty at Ekinpo Cake & Dessert
2. To analyze the influence of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty at Ekinpo Cake & Dessert

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Customer Loyalty**

Customer loyalty is defined as a customer's tendency to maintain a long-term relationship with a brand, often demonstrated through repeated purchases and positive recommendations (Nuryadi, 2014). It suggests that loyalty stems from a customer's satisfaction with previous purchases, creating a sense of trust and commitment to the brand.

### **Product Quality**

Tjiptono (2008) states that product quality plays a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty by ensuring that a product meets or exceeds consumer expectations. It highlights the importance of aligning product attributes—such as taste, freshness, presentation, and variety—with customer preferences to create a positive consumption experience. Higher product quality enhances perceived value, which in turn strengthens customer satisfaction and fosters long-term brand attachment..

### **Customer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction, as defined by Kotler and Keller (2016), occurs when a product's perceived performance matches or exceeds customer expectations. This process involves emotional and cognitive evaluations that customers make after consuming a product. When expectations are met, customers experience positive feelings, leading to satisfaction; conversely, unmet expectations result in dissatisfaction.

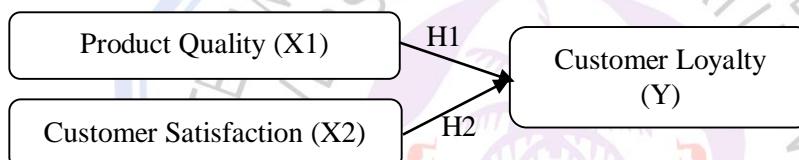
### Previous Studies

Sambung and Kusdiantoro (2023) aimed to find out the effect of product quality on customer loyalty with mediation of customer satisfaction. Subject or also population of this research is the customers of a restaurant named Kuliner Dhahar Enak. Sampling technique is Slovin Equation with sample of 78 persons. The results of research show that product quality has significant effect on customer satisfaction, product quality has significant effect on customer loyalty, customer satisfaction has significant effect on product quality, and product quality significantly affects customer loyalty with mediation of customer satisfaction.

Sudaria et al. (2019) analyzed the effect of marketing mix on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction in food and beverage products of SMEs in Malaysia. The method of collecting data is by using questionnaire and a sample of 300 customers is used for data gathering. Path analysis and Sobel test are used in analyzing the data. The finding shows that product, promotion, place and price have positive effects on customer satisfaction of food and beverage products SMEs in Malaysia. Moreover, customer satisfaction has a positive effect on customer loyalty. The finding also shows that product, promotion, place and price had positive effects on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction of food and beverage products SMEs in Malaysia.

Mahsyar and Surapati (2020) analyzed the impact of service quality and product quality on customer satisfaction and the customer loyalty in restaurants and to know which factors are influential in the restaurant. In the data collection, researchers spread the questionnaire to 50 respondents who were consumers of the restaurants in Samarinda. The result of this research is that the quality of service has no significant effect on customer satisfaction, product quality has significant effect on customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction has significant effect on consumer loyalty

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**

Source: Literature Review

### Research Hypothesis

H1: Customer loyalty is positively influenced by Product Quality.

H2: Customer Loyalty is positive influenced by customer satisfaction.

### RESEARCH METHOD

#### Research Approach

This study uses a quantitative approach by collecting numerical data through surveys and questionnaires to understand the experiences of Ekinpo's customers. Quantitative research helps measure these factors through statistical analysis.

#### Population, Sample, and Sample Technique

The population that used in this study consists of customers who have purchased products from Ekinpo Cake & Dessert in Manado. These customers are considered relevant as they have experienced the product quality and can provide insights into their satisfaction levels and loyalty to the brand. The required sample size based on the Slovin formula is 110 respondents. However, to ensure the adequacy and representativeness of the data, the number of respondents will be rounded up to 118. This study use probability methods, namely simple random sampling.

#### Data Collection Method

Primary data for this study will be obtained by asking eligible participants to complete a questionnaire designed specifically for this study. Secondary data will be obtained from books and journals that contain information relevant to the research topic. Both types of data will be used to support the research findings and analysis.

**Operational Definition and Indicator of Research Variables****Table 1. Operational Definition and Indicator of Research Variables**

Variable	Definition	Indicators
Product Quality	Customers' perception of the overall excellence or superiority of Ekinpo Cake & Dessert's products.	1.Taste 2.Consistency 3.Quality Garvin (1987)
Customer Satisfaction	Customers overall evaluation of their experience with Ekinpo Cake & Dessert products and services.	1.Expectations 2.Satisfaction with products 3.Perceived value Kotler and Keller (2016)
Customer Loyalty	The commitment of customers to repeatedly purchase products from Ekinpo Cake & Dessert and recommend them to others.	1.Repurchase behavior 2.Willingness to pay premium prices 3.Recommendations to other Kotler and Keller (2016)

**Testing of Research Instruments****Validity and Reliability Tests**

The concept of validity in research ensures that the study is accurately measuring what it claims to measure. It confirms that the data collected and the conclusions drawn from it are reliable and meaningful. If a question in an instrument questionnaire may reveal what is meant to be measured, then that instrument or questionnaire is deemed legitimate (Ghozali, 2018:51).

According to Ghozali (2018:45), a method for assessing questionnaires that display variables or constructs is reliability. The reliability of the questionnaire is determined by how consistently or steadily the answers to the statements change over time. The reliability test is used to determine how reliable the questionnaire's measurement results are when utilized repeatedly. Respondents are deemed dependable if they constantly provide consistent to answer if their responses are not arbitrary.

**Data Analysis Method****Test of Classical Assumption****Normality Test**

The normality test assesses whether the residuals follow a normal distribution. This test, commonly conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, examines whether the residuals adhere to a normal distribution pattern. A significance value (p-value) above 0.05 shows that the residuals are regularly distributed, while a p-value below 0.05 indicates deviation from normality (Sugiyono, 2017).

**Multicollinearity Test**

Multicollinearity refers to the relationship between binary variables. Multicollinearity analysis is used to ascertain whether the regression model has high or pure independent variables.

**Multiple Linear Regression Analysis**

Multiple linear regression (MLR), also known as multivariate regression, is a statistical method that employs several explanatory variables to forecast the value of a response variable. This analysis is valuable for understanding the complex relationships between multiple predictors and a response variable, allowing researchers to assess how various factors collectively influence an outcome. Multiple linear regression equations are usually expressed in the form of a formula as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Description:

Y = Customer Loyalty

$\alpha$  = Constant

X1 = Product Quality

X2 = Customer Satisfaction

$\varepsilon$  = Error Regression

**Hypothesis Testing****T-Test**

The t-test is a statistical method used for evaluate hypotheses, and the t-statistic is employed to gauge significance levels in hypothesis testing, often computed through bootstrapping. According to Ghozali (2018), the criteria for interpreting t-test statistics are as follows:

- If the p-value of the t-test exceeds 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is upheld, while the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is dismissed, indicating no discernible relationship between the independent and dependent variables.
- If the p-value of the t-test falls below 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is refuted, and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is embraced, signifying a significant association between the independent and dependent variables.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION****Result****Validity and Reliability Tests****Table 2. Validity Test**

		Correlations		
		X1	X2	Y
Product Quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.224*	.267**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.015	.003
	N	118	118	118
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.224*	1	.589**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015		.000
	N	118	118	118
Customer Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.267**	.589**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	
	N	118	118	118

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Data processed, SPSS 25 (2025)

According to the table 2, the results show that all items are statistically valid (Sig. < 0.05). Product Quality (X1) correlates with Customer Loyalty (Y) at 0.267 (Sig. 0.003), and Customer Satisfaction (X2) correlates strongly with Customer Loyalty (Y) at 0.589 (Sig. 0.000), both significant at the 0.01 level. The correlation between Product Quality (X1) and Customer Satisfaction (X2) is 0.224 (Sig. 0.015), significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 3. Reliability Test**

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.625	3

Source: Data processed, SPSS 25 (2025)

The reliability test assesses data consistency over time. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.60–0.70 is acceptable, and above 0.80 is considered good. The results show a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.625 for the three variables, indicating acceptable reliability and adequate internal consistency.

**Classical Assumption Test****Normality Test****Table 4. Normality Test**

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Unstandardized Residual
N		118
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	1.93298997

Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.080
	Positive	.046
	Negative	-.080
Test Statistic		.080
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.060 <sup>c</sup>

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Source: Data processed, SPSS 25 (2025)

According to the criteria established for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, where a p-value greater than 0.05 indicates normality, this result meets the requirement, suggesting that the data is normally distributed.

### Multicollinearity Test

**Table 5. Multicollinearity Test**

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)		
Product Quality	.806	1.241
Customer Satisfaction	.806	1.241

Source: Data processed, SPSS 25 (2025)

These values indicate that the variance inflation occurring is still within acceptable tolerance limits. With a Tolerance value greater than 0.100 and a VIF value below the 10.00 threshold, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity. This means that the independent variables in this study, namely Product Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty do not have significant multicollinearity.

### Heteroscedasticity Test

**Table 6. Heteroscedasticity Test**

Variable	Sig.	Description
Product Quality	0,453	Non- heteroscedasticity
Customer Satisfaction	0,493	Non- heteroscedasticity

Source: Data processed, SPSS 25 (2025)

Heteroscedasticity in this research identified using Glejser test. The condition is that if the significance value is more than 0,05, then heteroscedasticity does not occur, but if the significance value is less than 0,05 then heteroscedasticity occurs. In table 6 shows that the significance value of X1 (Product Quality) is 0,353 and X2 (Customer Satisfaction) is 0,453 so it can be concluded that, these two variables are more than 0,05, and that means heteroscedasticity was not detected.

### Multiple Linear Regression

**Table 7. Multiple Linear Regression**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>			t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Beta		
	B	Std.Error			
1 (Constant)	6.743	1.973		3.418	.001
Product Quality	.177	.075	.187	2.378	.019
Customer Satisfaction	.517	.075	.546	6.929	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

Source: Data processed, SPSS 25 (2025)

The results of multiple linear regression or the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable can be seen as follows:

1. The constant has a positive value of 6.743. This means that if Product Quality (X1) and Customer Satisfaction (X2) are both equal to 0, the predicted value of Customer Loyalty (Y) is 6.743. Therefore, it can be concluded that Product Quality and Customer Satisfaction contribute to explaining changes in Customer Loyalty.
2. Product Quality (X1) has a coefficient value of 0.177, indicating that if Product Quality increases by 1 unit, Customer Loyalty is expected to increase by 0.177 units. This suggests a positive relationship between Product Quality and Customer Loyalty.
3. Customer Satisfaction (X2) has a coefficient value of 0.517, meaning that a 1-unit increase in Customer Satisfaction will result in a 0.517 unit increase in Customer Loyalty. This also shows a positive relationship, and the effect of Customer Satisfaction is greater than that of Product Quality.

### Coefficient of Determination Analysis (R2)

**Table 8. R and R Square Table**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.651 <sup>a</sup>	.424	.414	1.950

a. Predictors (Constant), Product Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

Source: *Data processed, SPSS 25 (2025)*

In the table 8, the R value of 0.651 shows a moderate to strong correlation between Product Quality (X1), Customer Satisfaction (X2), and Customer Loyalty (Y). The R<sup>2</sup> of 0.424 means these variables explain 42.4% of customer loyalty, with the rest influenced by other factors. The Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.414 confirms the model's moderate explanatory power.

### Hypothesis Testing

#### Partial (T-Test)

Table 7 shows that:

1. It is known that the significance value of Product Quality (X<sub>1</sub>) is  $0.010 < 0.05$ . This means that H<sub>1</sub> is accepted and H<sub>0</sub> is rejected.
2. It is known that the significance value of Customer Satisfaction (X<sub>2</sub>) is  $0.001 < 0.05$ . This means that H<sub>2</sub> is accepted and H<sub>0</sub> is rejected.

### Discussion

#### The Influence of Product Quality on Customer Loyalty

Based on the results of this study, Product Quality has a significant impact on Customer Loyalty. Key indicators—such as taste, quality, consistency, packaging, and presentation—directly shape customer perceptions. Among them, taste and freshness are the most influential, as they reflect product authenticity and perceived value. Consistency in quality helps maintain customer trust and encourages repeat purchases. Packaging and visual appeal, though often overlooked, also play a vital role, especially in today's digital landscape where product appearance can attract attention through social media. These findings support previous research by Sambung and Kusdiantoro (2023), who highlighted that product quality positively affects both customer satisfaction and loyalty, directly or through satisfaction as a mediator. Similarly, Sambo et al. (2022) emphasized that consistent product quality strengthens loyalty, warning that declining quality risks customer loss. These studies highlight that tangible product attributes—such as flavor, freshness, and appearance—are critical to securing customer loyalty in this industry.

#### The Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty

Based on the results of this study, Customer Satisfaction has a strong positive influence on Customer Loyalty. Indicators like meeting expectations, emotional response, repeat purchase intentions, and willingness to recommend show that satisfied customers tend to stay loyal. For Ekinpo Cake & Dessert, satisfaction stems from aspects like taste, portion, delivery, and service—leading to repeat purchases and word-of-mouth promotion. These findings align with Kotler & Keller (2016), who emphasize satisfaction as a key driver of loyalty. Lina (2022) supports this view, highlighting satisfaction's role in loyalty within competitive markets. However, Purwati et al. (2020) noted that satisfaction alone may not guarantee loyalty, especially without factors like emotional connection or after-sales service. This suggests that while satisfaction is crucial, Ekinpo should also focus on building emotional ties and loyalty programs to secure lasting customer relationships.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION****Conclusion**

Conclusions are drawn based on the results of this research are as follows :

1. Ekinpo Cake & Dessert is a relevant and strategic case for studying the influence of product quality and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty due to its position in the increasingly competitive culinary industry in Manado, particularly within the cake and dessert segment. The business has faced a noticeable decline in income, which highlights the urgency to examine internal factors that could strengthen customer retention. By focusing on product quality and customer satisfaction, this study seeks to identify key drivers of loyalty that can help Ekinpo maintain its existing customer base and compete more effectively in the market.
2. The product quality of Ekinpo Cake & Dessert has a positive and significant influence on customer loyalty. The findings demonstrate that customers place a high value on aspects such as taste, texture, freshness, visual appeal, and consistent quality. When these elements meet or exceed customer expectations, they contribute to greater emotional attachment, repurchase behavior, and willingness to recommend the products to others. This result confirms that maintaining and continuously improving product quality is essential in building long-term customer relationships.
1. Customer satisfaction also plays a crucial and statistically significant role in influencing customer loyalty at Ekinpo Cake & Dessert. The study reveals that when customers are satisfied—not only with the products but also with the overall service, responsiveness, and experience—they are more inclined to continue supporting the business. Satisfied customers are more likely to become loyal patrons, engage in positive word-of-mouth, and show brand advocacy. Therefore, customer satisfaction serves as a critical mediator that strengthens the relationship between the business and its consumers.

**Recommendations**

1. This study provides a useful foundation for understanding how product quality and customer satisfaction influence customer loyalty in the food and beverage industry, particularly among micro and small enterprises (MSMEs) like Ekinpo Cake & Dessert. While the study shows a significant relationship, the model explains a certain portion of customer loyalty behavior. It is recommended that future researchers incorporate additional variables such as service quality, brand image, emotional engagement, or pricing perception to explore the remaining unexplained factors. Broader sampling and comparative studies between MSMEs and larger brands can also enrich future insights.
2. Ekinpo Cake & Dessert and other local bakery business owners prioritizing improvements in product quality—particularly in taste, freshness, and packaging as they have a direct and strong influence on customer loyalty. Maintaining consistent quality will reinforce customer trust and repeat patronage. Additionally, efforts to improve customer satisfaction through better responsiveness, after-sales service, and a more personalized customer experience should also be emphasized.

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