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## The Influence of Brand Trust, Brand Reputation, and Brand Relationship Quality on Distributor Loyalty with Distributor Satisfaction of Panen Mas as a Mediating Variable

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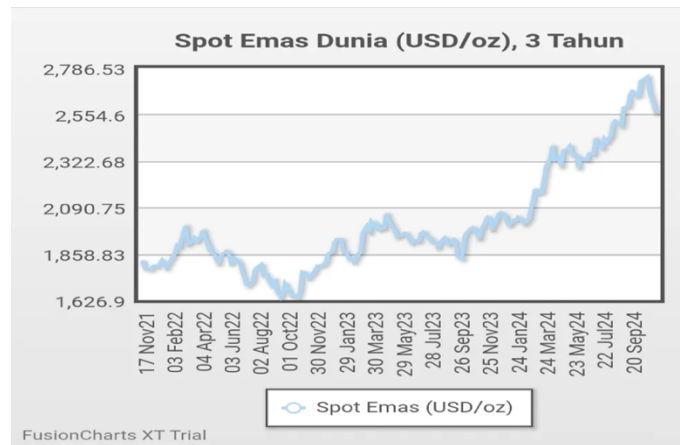
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**Abstract:** The gold mining industry in Indonesia has undergone significant changes, particularly with the continuous rise in gold prices, which impacts the distribution of mining products such as water pumps and sand pumps. PT Panen Raya Mustika (Panen Mas) faces challenges in maintaining distributor loyalty amid intense competition. This study aims to analyze the effect of brand trust, brand reputation, and brand relationship quality on distributor loyalty, with distributor satisfaction of Panen Mas as a mediating variable. This is a quantitative study, and data collection was carried out using a questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms to 36 distributors of PT Panen Raya Mustika across various distribution areas. The results show that brand trust, brand reputation, and brand relationship quality significantly affect distributor satisfaction of Panen Mas, which serves as a mediator in enhancing distributor loyalty for Panen Mas.

**Keyword:** Brand Trust, Brand Reputation, Brand Relationship Quality, Satisfaction Distributors, Loyalty Distributor.

### INTRODUCTION

In 2022 to 2024, the gold mining industry in Indonesia experienced significant dynamics. The world gold price showed an upward trend that had a direct impact on gold mining activities in the country. Based on data reported by CNBC Indonesia, the price of gold has increased from year to year. In March 2022, the price of gold was recorded at Rp 1,036,000 per gram. Then, in December 2023, the price of gold increased by Rp 109,000 per gram to Rp 1,145,000 per gram Susi Setiawati (2024). In mid-November 2024, the global gold price experienced a significant spike, reaching USD 2,567 per ounce, which if converted into rupiah is equivalent to Rp1,523,955 per gram. Meanwhile, in April 2025, the price of gold continued to increase to Rp1,965,000 per gram (Gideon, 2025).



Source: Kompas.com, 2024

**Figure 1. Graph of World Gold Price Increases from Year to Year**

According to research conducted by financial services company Goldman Sachs , the increase in world gold prices in Figure 1. was triggered by increasing market concerns about political and economic uncertainty. The main factor contributing to this condition is the geopolitical conflict involving Ukraine, Russia, Palestine and Israel , as well as the global economic slowdown due to the long-term impacts of the pandemic. COVID-19 Kurnia Erika (2024). The increase in gold prices has also had an impact on increasing gold mining activities in Indonesia, where miners need more mining equipment such as water pumps and sand pumps to increase their production capacity.

As a manufacturing company that produces water pumps, sand pumps, and sand pump spare parts, PT Panen Raya Mustika also felt the impact of the rising gold price trend. PT Panen Raya Mustika markets its products to various regions that have high gold mining activity, such as Central Kalimantan Province, Banjarmasin, Pontianak, Sulawesi, Medan, and Padang. Previously, the company marketed non-branded products , but in the last 2 years, distributor purchasing patterns have shown a downward trend. The number of active distributors decreased by 15.15% from a total of 33 distributors in 2022 to 28 distributors in mid-2023. One of the main factors causing this decline is customer preferences in several distribution areas such as in Central Kalimantan Province which have changed, where based on research conducted by the company, it shows that end consumer purchasing patterns are greatly influenced by brand reputation .

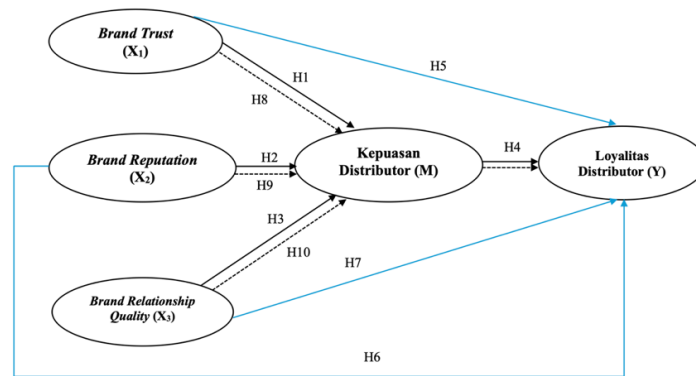
Brand reputation reflects customers' perceptions of a brand based on the experiences and information they receive. Fitriasari (2025). A good brand reputation can build strong differentiation, increase competitiveness, and reduce consumer uncertainty in the purchasing decision-making process Firdaus Ahmad & Lingga Yuliana (2024). Realizing the importance of brand identity, in building trust between distributors and end consumers, since mid-2023 PT Panen Raya Mustika has started branding its products with the brand "Panen Mas". This is done with the aim of strengthening brand credibility in the eyes of end consumers and distributors, while increasing product competitiveness. Strong brand credibility plays an important role in building brand trust , where high brand trust will make it easier to attract new distributors, because distributors are more likely to choose brands that have a good reputation and can be relied on in the long term Andika & Purnamasari (2024). This strategy has succeeded in increasing sales and the number of active distributors, where based on company data the number of distributors increased from 28 distributors in mid-2023 to 36 distributors in 2024, indicating an increase of 28.57%. In addition, as many as 84.85% of distributors who previously worked together remained throughout the 2022–2024 period , indicating that brand trust also plays an important role in maintaining distributor loyalty.

The increase in the number of distributors also poses challenges in meeting product demand. Some distributors complain about late delivery and unavailability of requested products, making it difficult for distributors to meet customer demand on time. Although the company has innovated technology and increased production capacity, the instability of product stock availability is still a challenge for the company. The company's inability to meet distributor demand on time can reduce distributor satisfaction, which ultimately has a negative impact on brand relationship quality or the quality of the relationship between the brand and the consumer. In the context of the business relationship between the company and the distributor, If the relationship is not managed well, distributor loyalty can decrease and encourage distributors to choose other, more reliable brands.

Andika & Purnamasari (2024) stated that loyalty is a person's commitment or loyalty to continue using a product or service, which is more based on personal loyalty compared to external factors. Distributor satisfaction with Panen Mas products is needed to create this sense of loyalty. This is supported by research conducted by Massie et al. (2023) that when a product is able to meet or even exceed customer expectations, it will increase the level of customer satisfaction and encourage long-term loyalty. Furthermore, customer satisfaction itself is formed from a comparison between expectations and the real experience felt by customers, where the more it matches or exceeds expectations, the higher the level of satisfaction achieved.

In increasingly competitive market conditions, increased mining activity also gives rise to new competitor which offers products with more competitive prices and more product stock. Distributors will tend to be more selective in choosing products to be marketed. Distributors who sell products from brands with high brand trust and brand reputation find it easier to get customers because of the trust that is already embedded in the minds of consumers Satria et al. (2024). In the mining product market such as water pumps and sand pumps, miners as end consumers often choose products based on their trust in the brand and previous experience with the product. Even though there are other products with cheaper prices, miners will trust brands that have been proven to have good quality and consistent results.

Distributors do not only want relationships that focus only on sales transactions, but also on efforts to build long-lasting and mutually beneficial relationships. The increasing number of distributors does not automatically mean that distributor loyalty is guaranteed. So, it still needs to be studied whether the distributors who survive or new distributors are truly loyal or just taking advantage of business opportunities. Distributor loyalty is not only measured by transactions, but also by the distributor's commitment to continue to cooperate, not switch to other brands, and voluntarily promote the brand to customers. Therefore, it is important to examine the role of brand trust, brand reputation, and brand relationship quality in forming sustainable loyalty. These three factors are becoming increasingly relevant amidst increasingly tight competition, where the superiority of a brand is no longer determined by product quality alone, but also by the ability to build and maintain valuable relationships with its distribution partners. With this understanding, companies are expected to not only focus on fulfilling stock demand, but also develop relational strategies that can strengthen the foundation of long-term loyalty. This study can provide academic contributions by presenting a new perspective on the factors that influence distributor loyalty, which have not been widely discussed in previous studies. Most previous studies or literature focus more on end-consumer loyalty, while studies on distributor loyalty are still limited. Based on the explanation of the theory that has been presented, the following is conceptual framework that is prepared as a guide in this research. The framework describes the flow of thinking, as well as being the basis for formulating the hypothesis to be tested.



Source: Researcher, 2025  
Figure 2. Research Model

Based on Figure 2. it can be seen that the variables *Brand Trust* (X<sub>1</sub>), *Brand Reputation* (X<sub>2</sub>), and *Brand Relationship Quality* (X<sub>3</sub>) are latent variables that act as independent variables that influence other variables in the model. The Distributor Satisfaction variable (M) is a latent variable that functions as a mediating variable that connects the influence of the three independent variables on the Distributor Loyalty variable (Y). The Distributor Loyalty variable (Y) is a latent variable that acts as an independent variable. as a dependent variable in the model.

## METHOD

This study applies quantitative methods, as stated Sugiyono (2022), this method is a method that is in line with the philosophy of positivism. In this study, population The research covers all distributors who sell products Panen Mas as many as 36 distributors, spread across various distribution areas, namely in the Provinces of Central Kalimantan, Banjarmasin, Pontianak, Sulawesi, Medan, and Padang. A total of 36 populations, all of which will be used as research samples . According to Arikunto (2021), if the number of research subjects is less than 100, it is better to use all of them so that the research becomes population research . However, if the number is large, it can be taken 10% – 25% as a sample. Therefore, This research uses total sampling technique or can be called census, where the entire population will be used as a research sample. The data source in this study uses primary data, which is collected directly from respondents through distribution.

questionnaire. To deepen the understanding of the problems studied, this study also conducted a literature study, namely by reviewing various related literature (such as books, journals, reports, internal company data) to obtain theoretical insights and additional data. In this study, data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires or surveys to distributors who sell products. Panen Mas . The questionnaire was prepared by researchers to dig up the required information directly from respondents. The questionnaire was distributed online using Google Form media . To measure respondents' answers, the questionnaire was used Likert scale with a range of values 1 to 5 , which represents the level of agreement with each statement, ranging from "strongly disagree" until "strongly agree" (Arifianti et al., 2023). This study uses a quantitative approach with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis techniques based on Partial Least Squares (PLS), with the help of SmartPLS 4.0 software. The PLS-SEM method was chosen because it is considered effective in studying models involving a number of latent variables such as Brand Trust , Brand Reputation , Brand Relationship Quality , Distributor Satisfaction, and Distributor Loyalty. PLS - SEM is a method that can be used to predict a model with many factors and can be used on various types of data scales, does not require many statistical assumptions, and is suitable for application to a sample size that is not too large.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Validity Test

#### a) Convergent Validity Test

*Convergent* validity test is used to ensure that each indicator used truly represents a construct or variable being measured. In this case, indicators in one variable should have a strong relationship or correlation with each other. To assess it, the *loading factor value is used*, which is a number that shows how much the indicator contributes to its construct. As a general reference, a good *loading factor value* is above 0.70. If the *loading factor value* is less than 0.70, this indicates that the error variance has exceeded 50%, so the indicator is less valid to represent the construct being measured. In this case, indicators with a *loading factor* below 0.70 should be considered for removal from the model so that the quality of measurement is maintained and the validity of the construct is not disturbed. Joseph F. Hair et al. (2019)

<b>Convergent Validity Test Results</b>			
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Loading Factor</b>	<b>Information</b>
<b>Brand Trust (X1)</b>	BT1	0.913	Valid
	BT2	0.880	Valid
	BT3	0.836	Valid
	BT4	0.885	Valid
	BT5	0.884	Valid
	BT6	0.864	Valid
	BT7	0.687	Invalid
	BT8	0.815	Valid
	BT9	0.836	Valid
	BT10	0.876	Valid
<b>Brand Reputation (X2)</b>	BR1	0.838	Valid
	BR2	0.791	Valid
	BR3	0.776	Valid
	BR4	0.744	Valid
	BR5	0.875	Valid
	BR6	0.867	Valid
<b>Brand Relationship Quality (X3)</b>	BRQ1	0.842	Valid
	BRQ2	0.878	Valid
	BRQ3	0.898	Valid
	BRQ4	0.835	Valid
	BRQ5	0.797	Valid
	BRQ6	0.797	Valid
<b>Satisfaction (M)</b>	M1	0.851	Valid
	M2	0.820	Valid
	M3	0.882	Valid
	M4	0.849	Valid
	M5	0.792	Valid
	M6	0.663	Invalid
	M7	0.831	Valid
	M8	0.827	Valid
<b>Loyalty (Y)</b>	Y1	0.879	Valid
	Y2	0.847	Valid
	Y3	0.869	Valid
	Y4	0.820	Valid
	Y5	0.705	Valid
	Y6	0.864	Valid
	Y7	0.865	Valid
	Y8	0.861	Valid

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The test results in Table 1. show that the majority of indicators have *loading factor values* above 0.70 so that they are declared valid. However, indicators BT7 (0.687) and M6 (0.663) do not meet these criteria and are declared invalid. These invalid indicators are eliminated so that the model meets the convergent validity criteria in PLS - SEM, so that the analysis becomes more accurate and reliable. The following is the final result after elimination of the invalid indicators. All invalid indicators were eliminated, then retested with the following test results:

**Table 2. Convergent Validity Test Results After Elimination**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Loading Factor</b>	<b>Information</b>
<b>Brand Trust (X1)</b>	BT1	0.915	Valid
	BT2	0.886	Valid
	BT3	0.845	Valid
	BT4	0.894	Valid
	BT5	0.889	Valid
	BT6	0.866	Valid
	BT8	0.806	Valid
	BT9	0.837	Valid
	BT10	0.874	Valid
	<b>Brand Reputation (X2 )</b>	BR1	0.838
BR2		0.792	Valid
BR3		0.775	Valid
BR4		0.744	Valid
BR5		0.875	Valid
BR6		0.867	Valid
<b>Brand Relationship Quality (X3)</b>	BRQ1	0.839	Valid
	BRQ2	0.880	Valid
	BRQ3	0.897	Valid
	BRQ4	0.832	Valid
	BRQ5	0.798	Valid
	BRQ6	0.800	Valid
<b>Satisfaction (M)</b>	M1	0.868	Valid
	M2	0.822	Valid
	M3	0.881	Valid
	M4	0.854	Valid
	M5	0.783	Valid
	M7	0.842	Valid
	M8	0.841	Valid
	<b>Loyalty (Y)</b>	Y1	0.880
Y2		0.848	Valid
Y3		0.868	Valid
Y4		0.818	Valid
Y5		0.704	Valid
Y6		0.864	Valid
Y7		0.864	Valid
Y8		0.862	Valid

**Source:** Processed Data (2025)

The results of the convergent validity test after eliminating invalid indicators showed that all indicators had *loading factor values* above the minimum threshold of 0.70 so that all indicators could be categorized as valid. By fulfilling the convergent validity criteria, the measurement model is considered to have met the technical requirements of good *outer loading* . Therefore, the analysis process can be continued to the next testing stage with the confidence that the constructs used have been measured accurately and consistently.

**b) Discriminant Validity Test**

*Discriminant* validity test is done to ensure that each variable studied really measures something different from each other. This means that one variable does not overlap or is too similar to another variable. An indicator is said to have good discriminant validity if value *loading* is highest on its own variable than on other variables, so that the measurement results are clearer and more accurate Riyanto & Winarti Setyorini (2024). The method used to test discriminant validity is the *Fornell-Larcker criterion*. A variable is declared to meet the *Fornell-Larcker criteria* if the value of the variable itself must be greater than the value of the relationship between the variable and other variables in the model.

**Fornell-Larcker Test Results**

Variables	BR	BRQ	BT	M	Y	Conclusion
<b>BR</b>	0.817					Valid
<b>BRQ</b>	-0.025	0.842				Valid
<b>BT</b>	0.073	0.105	0.869			Valid
<b>M</b>	0.353	0.368	0.479	0.842		Valid
<b>Y</b>	0.473	0.424	0.629	0.838	0.840	Valid

**Source:** Processed Data (2025)

Based on the test results in Table 3. the main diagonal values (BR = 0.817; BRQ = 0.842; BT = 0.869; M = 0.842; Y = 0.840) consistently exceed the cross-correlation values between other constructs, indicating that each variable has a stronger relationship with its own indicators compared to other variables in the model. Thus, discriminant validity can be confirmed, and the measurement model has met the requirements to separate variables appropriately so that the results of further analysis can be trusted and valid.

**B. Reliability Test**

Reliability testing is a way to see whether the answers given by respondents are consistent and do not change randomly when repeated. Reliability can be measured through two criteria that is *Cronbach's Alpha* and **Composite Reliability** Ghozali & Karlina (2023). A construct is stated to have good reliability or reliable if it has a *Cronbach's Alpha* and *Composite Reliability* value above 0.70. In addition, the construct evaluation is also equipped with the calculation of *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE) as an indicator of convergent validity. The AVE value that meets the requirements is  $\geq 0.50$ , which indicates that the construct is able to explain at least 50% of the variance of the indicators it has, thus strengthening the evidence that the indicator is convergently valid. Riyanto & Winarti Setyorini (2024).

**Table 4. Reliability Test Results**

Variables	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Conclusion
<b>BR</b>	0.903	0.946	0.923	0.667	Reliable
<b>BRQ</b>	0.918	0.934	0.936	0.709	Reliable
<b>BT</b>	0.959	0.963	0.965	0.754	Reliable
<b>M</b>	0.931	0.938	0.945	0.709	Reliable
<b>Y</b>	0.940	0.943	0.950	0.706	Reliable

**Source:** Processed Data (2025)

Based on the test results presented in the table, the *Cronbach's Alpha* values for each variable are BR (0.903), BRQ (0.918), BT (0.959), M (0.931), and Y (0.940), all indicating very good internal reliability. The *Composite Reliability* value with the rho\_a method ranges from 0.934 to 0.963, while the *Composite Reliability* value with the rho\_c method is in the range of 0.923 to 0.965, both of which exceed the minimum limit of 0.70. Furthermore, the AVE value which is a representation of the convergent validity of each variable has also been met with a value between 0.667 to 0.754. Thus, all variables in this study have met the established reliability and convergent validity criteria.

**C. Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis testing is used to test assumptions or conjectures in a study to determine whether the relationship between the variables studied has statistical significance Riyanto & Winarti Setyorini (2024). In this study, hypothesis testing was carried out using the t-test, as explained by Sugiyono (2022), u t-test used to see whether there is a significant influence between the dependent variables And independent variables . This test is conducted by controlling other independent variables, so that the influence of each variable can be known separately. The benchmark used in this test is the t-statistic value obtained must be greater than the t-table value at the specified significance level (usually 0.05). After the t-test statistic value is obtained, an evaluation is carried out on *the p-value* , which is a probability value that shows how likely the results obtained occur by chance if the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is true. If *the p-value* is less than 0.05, then the influence of the variable is considered statistically significant and the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) can be rejected.

**Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results**

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistic ( O/STDEV )	P Value ( P values )	Conclusion
BR ->M	0.331	0.327	0.137	2,411	0.016	Significant
BR -> Y	0.278	0.275	0.069	4,054	0,000	Significant
BRQ -> M	0.332	0.331	0.136	2,447	0.014	Significant
BRQ -> Y	0.213	0.200	0.077	2,768	0.006	Significant
BT -> M	0.420	0.412	0.132	3,169	0.002	Significant
BT -> Y	0.349	0.339	0.082	4,259	0,000	Significant
M -> Y	0.495	0.488	0.091	5,444	0,000	Significant

**Source:** Processed Data (2025)

Based on the hypothesis test conducted, it shows that all tested paths have a statistically significant influence ( $p < 0.05$ ). On the path BR against M , the t-statistic value is 2.411 with a p-value of 0.016, which indicates a significant relationship between the two variables, namely *brand reputation* has an effect on distributor satisfaction. On the path BR to Y , the t-statistic value is 4.054 with a p-value of 0.000 which indicates a significant relationship between the two variables, namely *brand reputation* has an effect on distributor loyalty. On the BRQ path to M The t-statistic value is 2.447 with a p-value of 0.014 which indicates a significant relationship between the two variables where *brand relationship quality* has an effect on distributor satisfaction. On the BRQ path to Y The t-statistic value of 2.768 with a p-value of 0.006 shows a strong significance between the two variables where *brand relationship quality* has an effect on distributor loyalty. On the path BT to M The t-statistic value obtained was 3.169 with a p-value of 0.002, which indicates a significant relationship between the two variables where *brand trust* has an effect on distributor satisfaction. On the BT Path to Y The t-statistic value obtained was 4.259 with a p-value of 0.000, which indicates a significant relationship between the two variables where *brand trust* has an effect on distributor loyalty. On the M to Y path The t-statistic value is 5.444 with a p-value of 0.000, which indicates a significant relationship between the two variables, where distributor satisfaction is influence on distributor loyalty. Since all p-values are less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) can be rejected for all tested paths, and the relationship between variables is considered significant.

**D. Mediation Test (specific indirect effect)**

The mediation test aims to evaluate whether the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable occurs through the role of the mediating variable. This relationship is considered statistically significant if the value *t-statistic* exceeding 1.96 and *p-value* is below 0.05. This indicates that the tested mediation path is significant, reliable and plays a role in explaining the mechanism of the relationship between variables in the model Hair Joseph F et al. (2017).

**Table 6. Mediation Test Results (specific indirect effect)**

Variables	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistic ( O/STDEV)	P Value (P values)	Conclusion
BR -> M -> Y	0.164	0.159	0.074	2,208	0.027	Significant
BRQ -> M -> Y	0.164	0.164	0.079	2,079	0.038	Significant
BT -> M -> Y	0.208	0.203	0.080	2,589	0.010	Significant

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The results of the mediation test show that all tested mediation paths are significant, because the t-statistics exceed 1.96 and the p-values are each smaller than 0.05. On the BR path through M to Y, the t-statistic value of 2.208 with a p-value of 0.027 indicates that the role of the mediation variable is significant, where *brand reputation* has a significant effect on distributor loyalty through distributor satisfaction as a mediation variable. On the BRQ path through M to Y, the t-statistic value of 2.079 with a p-value of 0.038 indicates that the role of the mediation variable is significant, where *brand relationship quality* has a significant effect on distributor loyalty through distributor satisfaction as a mediation variable. On the BT path through M to Y, the t-statistic value of 2.589 with a p-value of 0.010 indicates that the role of the mediation variable is significant, where *brand trust* has a significant effect on distributor loyalty through distributor satisfaction as a mediation variable. Thus, since all p-values in the three mediation paths are less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the mediation role in explaining the relationship between variables is significant, and the mediation hypothesis in the model can be accepted.

**E. Coefficient of Determination Test**

The determination coefficient test is used to see how much influence the independent variable has in explaining the dependent variable in the research model. In the analysis using the PLS - SEM method, this measure is shown through the R-Square (R<sup>2</sup>) value. In general, an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.75 indicates a strong or substantial influence, while a value of around 0.50 is considered moderate, and a value approaching 0.25 is categorized as weak. Thus, R<sup>2</sup> helps researchers assess how well the model used in explaining the relationship between the variables studied Ghozali (2021).

**Table 7. Results of Determination Coefficient Testing**

Variables	R-square	Adjusted R-square
M	0.440	0.387
Y	0.856	0.837

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on the results of the determination coefficient test presented, on the variable M obtained an Adjusted R-Square value of 0.387, which indicates that the model can explain about 38.7% of the variability of the dependent variable with a moderate influence. Therefore, it can be concluded that the independent variables of *brand trust*, *brand reputation* and *brand relationship quality* can affect the distributor satisfaction variable by 38.7%. The remaining 61.3% is influenced by other variables not included in the study. While the variable Y Adjusted R-Square value of 0.837 indicates that the model can explain about 83.7% of the variability of the dependent variable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the independent variables of *brand trust*, *brand reputation*, *brand relationship quality* and *distributor satisfaction* can affect the distributor loyalty variable by 83.7%. The remaining 16.3% is influenced by other variables not included in the study.

**DISCUSSION**

**A. Relationship between Brand Trust and Satisfaction**

In the results of the first hypothesis test, it was found that *brand trust* has a positive and significant effect on distributor satisfaction at PT Panen Raya Mustika. Based on the results of the path analysis, the t-statistic value for the *brand trust path* to satisfaction is 3.169 with a p-value of 0.002. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1) in this study is accepted. The results of this study indicate that the higher the level

of *brand trust*, the greater the level of distributor satisfaction. Previous research by Febriani et al. (2022), supports the results of this study which states that increasing *brand trust* will directly increase customer satisfaction, satisfaction created from trust in the services provided will build a positive perception. *Brand Trust* is formed through distributors' direct experience in interacting with products and companies. Positive experiences through direct interaction with the company, such as responsive support for questions or complaints, not only strengthens *brand trust*, but also directly creates distributor satisfaction. This study underlines the importance of *brand trust* as a major factor in creating a positive experience that impacts distributor satisfaction. This study is in line with research Martin & Nasib (2021), stating that *brand trust* has a positive and significant influence on satisfaction. Therefore, PT Panen Raya Mustika needs to maintain and continue to strengthen *brand trust* in Panen Mas products to increase distributor satisfaction.

### **B. Relationship between *Brand Reputation* and Satisfaction**

The results of the second hypothesis test found that *brand reputation* has a positive and significant effect on distributor satisfaction of PT Panen Raya Mustika. Based on the results of the path analysis, the t-statistic value is 2.411 with a *p-value* of 0.016. Thus, the second hypothesis (H2) in this study is declared accepted. *Brand reputation* reflects market perception of the credibility and quality of a company. Panen Mas' brand reputation is formed not only through consistent product quality, but also through the company's ability to meet distributor expectations and responsiveness to distributor needs. A strong *brand reputation* shows that the company has a positive track record and can be trusted to continue to provide products according to the promised standards. The better the relationship built between the company and the distributor, the stronger the *brand reputation* formed. This is in line with research by Sari et al. (2023) which states that *brand reputation* has a significant effect on customer satisfaction. Thus, to maintain and strengthen *brand reputation* requires the company's commitment to continue to meet distributor expectations, not only through product quality but also in terms of service and operational consistency. Research Widyadhari & Tambunan (2024) supports this statement, stating that customers tend to choose companies with good reputations, especially if the company provides high-quality services. Therefore, PT Panen Raya Mustika needs to continue to strengthen Panen Mas' *brand reputation* by ensuring a smooth supply chain, as well as ensuring timely fulfillment of distributor requests, to maintain distributor satisfaction.

### **C. The Relationship Between *Brand Relationship Quality* and Satisfaction**

The results of the third hypothesis test indicate that *brand relationship quality* (BRQ) has a positive and significant effect on distributor satisfaction at PT Panen Raya Mustika. The results of the path analysis show a t-statistic value of 2.447 with a *p-value* of 0.014, which indicates a significant relationship between the two variables. Thus, the third hypothesis (H3) in this study is declared accepted. *Brand relationship quality* includes several important aspects such as trust, satisfaction, and shared commitment between the company and the distributor Nur Rafika Putri & Sri Rahayu (2023). By building a transparent and responsive relationship to the needs of distributors, PT Panen Raya Mustika can strengthen distributor trust in Panen Mas and ultimately increase distributor satisfaction. This is in line with research Sianipar et al. (2023), which shows that *relationship quality* has a positive and significant influence on distributor satisfaction. In addition, this study is also in line with research Akin & Dogan (2021) showing that strong *brand relationship quality* can strengthen positive experiences, which will ultimately increase distributor satisfaction. *Brand relationship quality* and distributor satisfaction are interrelated, so companies need to continue to make improvements in maintaining strong and mutually beneficial relationships, in order to remain competitive and strengthen distributor satisfaction.

### **D. Relationship between Satisfaction and Distributor Loyalty**

The results of the fourth hypothesis test indicate that distributor satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on distributor loyalty at PT Panen Raya Mustika. The results of the path analysis show a t-statistic value of 5.444 with a *p-value* of 0.000, indicating a significant relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, the fourth hypothesis (H4) in this study is accepted. Distributor satisfaction is the result of distributor evaluation of business experience with the company, which includes various aspects such as product quality, delivery reliability, to the quality of the relationship

built between the distributor and PT Panen Raya Mustika. Previous research by Kusuma Rizki & Tambunan Damelina Basauli (2024), supports this statement which states that satisfaction is not only influenced by the fulfillment of needs, but also by the quality of service and experience gained while using a product. Distributors who feel appreciated, heard, and well supported by the company will trust the brand more. Satisfaction is the basis for forming loyalty, while a strong and transparent relationship with distributors provides a sense of security in running a business, which makes distributors more likely to remain loyal to Panen Mas products. The findings in this study are also in line with research Meitha Wulur et al. (2020), which states that distributor satisfaction has a significant influence on loyalty. To increase distributor satisfaction, PT Panen Raya Mustika needs to ensure product quality. Panen Mas is consistent and can meet distributor expectations. Effective communication is also important to understand distributor needs and provide appropriate solutions. In addition, the company must actively listen to input from distributors, by responding to feedback, the company can increase distributor satisfaction and strengthen distributor loyalty to the brand.

#### **E. Relationship between *Brand Trust* and Loyalty**

The results of the fifth hypothesis test indicate that *brand trust* has a positive and significant effect on distributor loyalty at PT Panen Raya Mustika. Based on path analysis, the t-statistic value is 4.259 with a *p-value* of 0.000, indicating a significant relationship between the two variables. Thus, the fifth hypothesis (H5) in this study is accepted. The trust built between PT Panen Raya Mustika and distributors is the main factor that strengthens mutually beneficial business relationships. *Brand trust* serves as a foundation for maintaining stable relationships and reducing uncertainty that distributors may feel in choosing products to be marketed. Strong trust in the Panen Mas brand makes distributors feel confident that Panen Mas products not only provide consistent quality, but are also able to meet distributors' needs and expectations, which encourages distributors to continue choosing the Panen Mas brand, even in dynamic market conditions or when there are other choices in the market. Previous research by Yohana F. C. P. Meilani, & Ian N. Suryawan (2020), in line with this study, states that *brand trust* has a positive effect on customer loyalty, where trust is an important basis for building loyalty, because trust is the main requirement for creating and maintaining long-term relationships. In other words, the higher the distributor's trust in a brand, the more likely the distributor is to continue to support and choose the brand in the long term. The findings of this study are in line with research Permatasari et al. (2022) which reveals that *brand trust* has a positive influence on customer loyalty.

#### **F. Relationship between *Brand Reputation* and Loyalty**

The results of the sixth hypothesis test show that *brand reputation* has a positive and significant effect on distributor loyalty of PT Panen Raya Mustika. Based on path analysis, the t-statistic value is 4.054 with a *p-value* of 0.000, which indicates a significant relationship between the two variables. Thus, the sixth hypothesis (H6) in this study is accepted. A good *brand reputation* plays an important role in building customer confidence in the quality and integrity of a brand. A good Panen Mas reputation will strengthen distributors' positive perceptions of the company, which makes it easier for distributors to choose products to market. A strong *brand reputation* encourages distributors to continue to support the brand, even in the long term. A well-maintained reputation strengthens a mutually beneficial relationship between the company and distributors, which can ultimately increase distributor loyalty. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Permatasari et al. (2022) which states that *brand reputation* has a positive and significant relationship with loyalty. However, the results of this study contradict research Farkhan (2024), which states that even though a brand has a good reputation, there are other factors such as price discounts, distribution locations, and service quality that can affect customer hesitation in making repeat purchases. Therefore, companies must focus on maintaining a good *brand reputation by maintaining the quality of products, services, and communication with distributors*.

#### **G. The Relationship Between *Brand Relationship Quality* and Loyalty**

The results of the hypothesis test show that *brand relationship quality* (BRQ) has a positive effect on distributor loyalty of PT Panen Raya Mustika. The t-statistic value of 2.768 with a *p-value* of 0.006 indicates a significant relationship between the two variables. Therefore, the seventh hypothesis (H7) in this study is accepted. When PT Panen Raya Mustika has a strong *brand relationship quality*, it can

strengthen emotional and professional relationships with distributors, which encourages distributors to remain loyal and committed in the long term. Previous research by Song & Kim (2022) stated that emotional attachment to a brand has a significant influence in forming loyalty. Distributor loyalty is very important for the success of the company, loyalty can not only be measured by how often distributors place orders, how long distributors have a relationship with the company, and how much distributors are involved in product marketing, but also by the extent to which distributors entrust their market to the product, prioritize the company's products in sales, and their willingness to promote products to end customers. With strong loyalty, companies can maintain market stability and strengthen their competitiveness. This study is also in line with research Nurrochman, (2024) showing that *brand relationship quality* has a positive effect on loyalty. This confirms that good *brand relationship quality* is an important factor in maintaining distributor commitment and supporting company growth. Therefore, PT Panen Raya Mustika needs to continue to improve *brand relationship quality* through effective communication, building stronger distributor trust, and providing consistent support to maintain distributor loyalty, especially amidst increasingly tight market competition.

#### **H. The Relationship Between *Brand Trust* and Loyalty Mediated by Distributor Satisfaction**

The results of the mediation test show that *brand trust* has a significant effect on distributor loyalty through distributor satisfaction as a mediating variable, with a t-statistic value of 2.589 and a *p-value* of 0.010. Therefore, the eighth hypothesis (H8) in this study is accepted. The findings of this study confirm that distributor satisfaction plays an important role in strengthening the relationship between *brand trust* and distributor loyalty, especially when the company faces operational challenges such as stock out-of-stock or late delivery. Strong *brand trust not only increases distributor satisfaction but also strengthens* distributor loyalty to Panen Mas. The trust that exists between the company and the distributor serves as a balancing factor, allowing distributors to remain loyal even though the company is facing operational problems. Distributors who have high levels of trust and satisfaction tend to be more tolerant of supply problems, because the distributors believe that the company will immediately resolve the problem, which ultimately helps maintain and strengthen distributor loyalty in the long term. The findings in this study are in line with research Fachmi et al. (2020) stating that directly, *brand trust* has an influence on satisfaction and satisfaction mediates *brand trust* on loyalty. In addition, other studies by Calvin Feliks Cantona & Meilisa Alvita (2024) shows that *brand trust* does not have a direct influence on customer loyalty. Without customer satisfaction, *brand trust* alone is not enough to ensure loyalty, because high satisfaction is the basis for customers to remain loyal to the brand. Thus, PT Panen Raya Mustika needs to ensure that the punctuality of delivery and product availability are maintained, so that distributor satisfaction is guaranteed. High satisfaction will strengthen *brand trust* and *the brand trust* that has been built can continue to become stable distributor loyalty in the long term.

#### **I. The Relationship Between *Brand Reputation* and Loyalty Mediated by Distributor Satisfaction**

The results of the mediation test show that *brand reputation* has a significant effect on distributor loyalty through distributor satisfaction as a mediating variable, with a t-statistic value of 2.208 and a *p-value* of 0.027. Therefore, the ninth hypothesis (H9) in this study is accepted. *Brand reputation* serves as a foundation that strengthens distributor satisfaction and commitment, which is the key to maintaining a stable relationship and increasing distributor loyalty. The satisfaction created by *brand reputation* is very important, because the higher the level of satisfaction, the more likely distributors are to continue choosing the Panen Mas brand. This is supported by research by Barakat Ali (2022), which states that *Brand reputation* plays an important role in increasing satisfaction, which in turn influences loyalty and strengthens the tendency to do positive *word of mouth*. *A strong brand reputation* will also encourage distributors to stay and support the company, even though the company faces operational challenges or tight market competition. The findings of this study are in line with research Allysa Sabrina & Agus Setiawan (2025) which states that *brand reputation* has a positive and significant impact on satisfaction, and satisfaction mediates *brand reputation*, which can ultimately increase loyalty.

## J. The Relationship Between *Brand Relationship Quality* and Loyalty Mediated by Distributor Satisfaction

The results of the mediation test show that *brand relationship quality* has a significant effect on distributor loyalty through distributor satisfaction as a mediating variable, with a t-statistic value of 2.079 and a p-value of 0.038. Therefore, the tenth hypothesis (H10) in this study can be accepted. Good *brand relationship quality* encourages the fulfillment of distributor needs and expectations consistently, resulting in a high level of satisfaction. Satisfaction is the main foundation in strengthening distributor loyalty. In facing competitive market dynamics and operational challenges such as late delivery and product stock fluctuations, *brand relationship quality* functions as a buffer that can minimize the negative impact on distributor commitment. Distributors who establish strong *brand relationship quality* and feel satisfied will be better able to withstand external pressures, maintain loyalty, and commit to supporting the company's growth. This is in line with research Ahmadi (2021) which states that, commitment which is built through a strong and mutually supportive relationship between the company and customers will strengthen customer loyalty to the company (*brand*). Meanwhile, Khowojoy et.al (2023) research stated similar research results where *brand relationship quality* has a significant impact on satisfaction, which in turn strengthens loyalty. However, satisfaction and trust act as mediators that connect *brand relationship quality* with loyalty, and strengthen the bond between the two. Thus, PT Panen Raya Mustika needs to continue to improve the management of *brand relationship quality* through open and transparent communication, responsive service, and consistency in meeting distributor needs. This will not only increase distributor satisfaction and loyalty, but also strengthen the company's position in market competition.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that brand trust, brand reputation, and brand relationship quality have a significant influence on distributor loyalty, with distributor satisfaction acting as a mediating variable. Brand trust is proven to increase distributor satisfaction, which ultimately strengthens distributor loyalty. The trust that exists between the company and the distributor serves as a counterweight that allows distributors to remain loyal even though the company faces operational challenges such as stock outages or late deliveries. Distributors who are satisfied and trust the company tend to be more tolerant of supply issues, because of the belief that the company will immediately resolve the issue, which in turn helps maintain distributor loyalty in the long term.

Brand reputation also has a significant effect on distributor loyalty through distributor satisfaction. A good brand reputation strengthens distributor satisfaction and commitment, which ultimately increases distributor loyalty. A strong reputation encourages distributors to remain loyal, even though the company faces operational challenges or tight market competition. In addition, brand relationship quality has also been shown to have a positive and significant effect on distributor loyalty, with distributor satisfaction as a mediator that strengthens the bond. Good relationship quality, which is reflected in trust, satisfaction, and commitment between the company and distributors, plays an important role in maintaining long-term relationships. Strong brand relationship quality encourages distributors to remain loyal and committed despite market dynamics and other operational challenges. This emphasizes that satisfaction and trust are the main factors in maintaining distributor loyalty.

This study suggests that PT Panen Raya Mustika continue to strengthen brand trust, brand reputation, and brand relationship quality and ensure timely product stock fulfillment. This fulfillment will maintain distributor satisfaction, which is the key to strengthening distributor loyalty in the long term. This study has limitations, including being limited to a sample of distributors from one company, namely PT Panen Raya Mustika, so that the results cannot be fully generalized to other companies in similar industries. Further research is recommended to expand the scope of the sample and consider other external factors that can affect distributor loyalty.

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