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The Effect of Viral Marketing Strategy and Customer Experience on Customer Loyalty Mediated by Customer Satisfaction: A Study of Cloud Cakes Donut MSME in Jakarta

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The Effect Of Viral Marketing Strategy And Customer Experience On Customer Loyalty Mediated By Customer Satisfaction: A Study Of Cloud Cakes Donut MSME In Jakarta

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Abstract

This study was conducted to analyze the impact of viral marketing strategies and customer experience on consumer loyalty through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable in the Cloud Cakes Jakarta Donuts MSME. Cloud Cakes is a mochi donut brand that was initially popular in Bali and has now opened a branch in Jakarta. This uniqueness makes Cloud Cakes quickly attract the attention of consumers, widely discussed, and often used as content on various social media platforms. This study will be conducted using a quantitative approach with primary data obtained from distributing questionnaires to 230 respondents who are consumers aged at least 17 years who have purchased Cloud Cakes Jakarta Donuts products at least twice, thus having sufficient experience in evaluating products and services. Data analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) method with the help of the SmartPLS program. The results of the study indicate that viral marketing strategy (X_1) and customer experience (X_2) have a positive effect on customer satisfaction (Z). Furthermore, viral marketing strategy (X_1), customer experience (X_2), and customer satisfaction (Z) have a positive effect on consumer loyalty (Y). And customer satisfaction (Z) mediates the effect of viral marketing strategy (X_1) and customer experience (X_2) on consumer loyalty (Y).

Keywords: *Customer experience, customer satisfaction, consumer loyalty, viral marketing strategy*

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of virality through social media demonstrates how viral marketing strategies can serve as an effective instrument for reaching consumers. According to



Verawati (2023), social media marketing is a form of direct marketing that aims to build consumer awareness, recognition, and action toward a product through the utilization of various digital platforms. In addition to viral marketing, customer experience is an important factor in building consumer loyalty. Mihron & Nuvriasari (2023) explains that customer experience encompasses consumers' emotional and rational responses when interacting with a product or service. Previous studies have shown that customer experience has a positive and significant influence on consumer loyalty across various business contexts (Nirawati et al., 2020; Mihron et al., 2023).

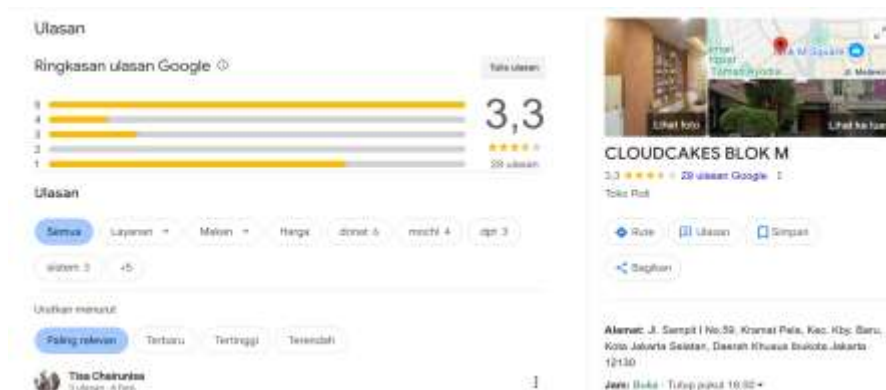


Figure 1. CloudCakes Jakarta Rating

The studies conducted by Helin & Fadli (2025) as well as Ayesha & Muchtar (2025) further emphasize the role of customer experience and psychological factors in shaping consumer loyalty. Helin & Fadli (2025) found that social media marketing and customer experience have significant effects on customer loyalty, both individually and simultaneously. Furthermore, the study by Danurdara & Masatiff (2025) demonstrated that customer satisfaction serves as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between customer experience quality and loyalty. Their findings indicate that a positive customer experience enhances customer satisfaction, which in turn strengthens consumer loyalty.

Although previous studies have emphasized the importance of digital marketing strategies and customer experience, a research gap remains regarding the simultaneous effects of viral marketing and customer experience on consumer loyalty through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable, particularly in viral culinary MSMEs such as CloudCakes mochi donuts. Most prior research has focused on e-commerce businesses or local coffee shops, providing limited insight into the behavior of consumers who are attracted by social media virality and how their actual experiences influence long-term loyalty through customer satisfaction. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its focus on a viral culinary



MSME, examining the effects of viral marketing strategies and customer experience on consumer loyalty with customer satisfaction as a mediating variable. Additionally, this study emphasizes the alignment between consumer expectations generated by the product's popularity and the actual experiences they encounter, offering a deeper understanding of loyalty formation in the context of viral food businesses.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is developed based on the relationships among viral marketing strategy, customer experience, customer satisfaction, and consumer loyalty in the context of Cloud Cakes Donuts MSME, Jakarta. Viral marketing strategy focuses on a brand's ability to disseminate information or content rapidly and extensively through social media platforms and consumer-to-consumer interactions. The implementation of an effective viral marketing strategy can generate consumer interest, enhance brand awareness, and foster trust in the product. Consequently, consumers who are exposed to viral content tend to develop a stronger attachment to the brand and are more likely to remain loyal, particularly when their actual experiences align with their expectations.

Furthermore, customer experience plays a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction and consumer loyalty. Positive experiences encountered by consumers during their interactions with Cloud Cakes Donuts Jakarta, whether in terms of service quality, product quality, or the atmosphere provided can enhance customer satisfaction and strengthen their emotional attachment to the brand. Schmitt (1999) emphasizes that customer experience is formed through various dimensions, including sensory perceptions, emotional responses, and social engagement, all of which contribute to creating a memorable impression. Therefore, a consistent and positive customer experience is expected to increase customer satisfaction, which in turn reinforces consumer loyalty through repeat purchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth recommendations to others.

Furthermore, viral marketing strategies and customer experience not only influence consumer loyalty individually but can also reinforce one another through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable. Engaging viral content can create memorable emotional experiences, while positive customer experiences can enhance overall satisfaction, which in turn strengthens consumer loyalty. Therefore, customer satisfaction serves as an important mechanism through which the effects of viral marketing strategies and customer experience are translated into long-term consumer loyalty.



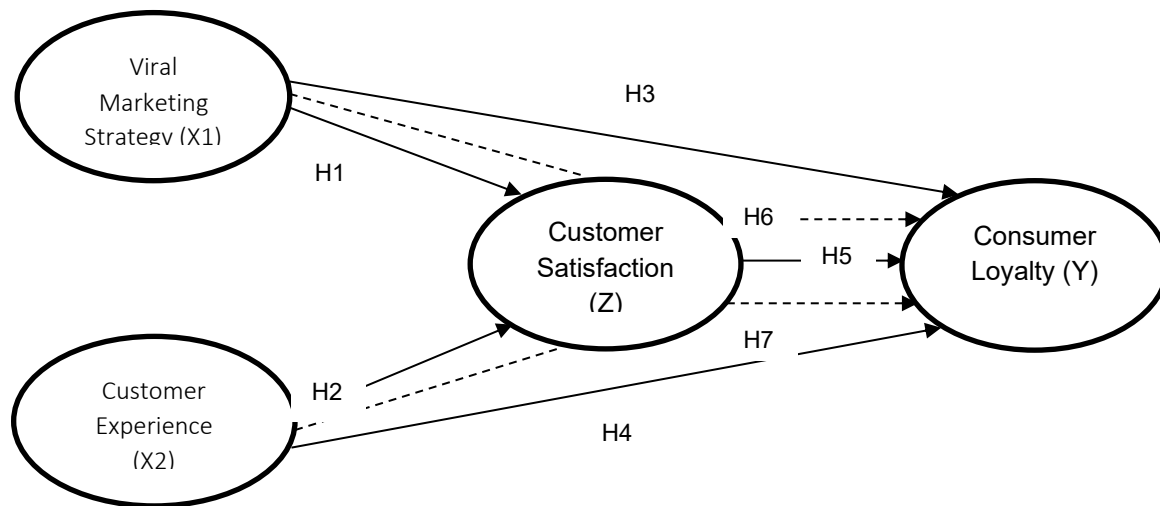


Figure 2. Research Framework

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive and correlational research design. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to measure variables numerically and analyze the causal relationships among variables in a systematic manner. In this study, the variables examined included viral marketing strategy (X_1), customer experience (X_2), customer satisfaction (Z) as the mediating variable, and consumer loyalty (Y) at Donat Cloud Cakes SMEs.

The population of this study consisted of all customers of Donat Cloud Cakes SMEs. However, the exact number of customers in the population was unknown because it is dynamic and continuously changing. Therefore, the sample size was determined based on the recommendation of Hair & Alamer (2022), which suggests that the minimum sample size should be 5–10 times the number of research indicators. Based on this guideline, a total sample of 220 respondents was considered adequate for this study.

This study employed a quantitative analysis method using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. The selection of this method was based on its ability to analyze the relationships between latent variables and their indicators while simultaneously assessing the relationships among latent variables. PLS-SEM was considered appropriate for this study because it can accommodate complex research models, examine

both direct and indirect effects, and is particularly suitable for research focused on predicting consumer behavior.

4. RESULT

This study involved 230 respondents who were consumers aged at least 17 years and had purchased Cloud Cakes Donuts Blok M products at least twice, ensuring that they had sufficient experience to evaluate the products and services provided. The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire, which was distributed to the respondents through Google Forms.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	72	31.3
Female	158	68.7
Age		
17 - 20 years	7	3.0
20 - 25 years	67	29.1
26 - 30 years	72	31.3
31 - 35 years	64	27.8
>35 years	20	8.7
Occupation		
Civil Servant	73	31.7
Private Employee	63	27.4
Student	54	23.5
Entrepreneur	40	17.4
Frequency of Purchasing Cloud Cakes Donuts Blok M		
2-3 times	115	50.0
4-5 times	65	28.3
Lebih dari 5 kali	50	21.7
Initial Source of Information About Cloud Cakes Donuts		
Instagram	55	23.9
TikTok	47	20.4
Youtube	3	1.3

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Influencers	39	17.0
Family	37	16.1
Friends	49	21.3
Total	230	100

Based on data collected from 230 respondents, the majority were female (68.7%), while males accounted for 31.3%, indicating that Cloud Cakes Donuts Jakarta customers are predominantly women. In terms of age, most respondents were between 26–30 years old (31.3%), followed by those aged 20–25 years (29.1%) and 31–35 years (27.8%). This suggests that the customer base is largely composed of young adults who are active, have purchasing power, and are interested in current culinary trends.

Regarding occupation, the largest group consisted of civil servants (31.7%), followed by private-sector employees (27.4%), students (23.5%), and entrepreneurs (17.4%). This indicates that most consumers are employed individuals with stable incomes, enabling them to make repeat purchases. In terms of purchase frequency, half of the respondents (50.0%) had purchased Cloud Cakes Donuts Blok M products 2–3 times, while 28.3% had purchased 4–5 times and 21.7% had purchased more than 5 times. This demonstrates a considerable level of repeat purchasing behavior. As for the initial source of information, most respondents first learned about the product through Instagram (23.9%), followed by friends (21.3%), TikTok (20.4%), influencers (17.0%), family (16.1%), and YouTube (1.3%).

Table 2. Variable Descriptive Statistics

Indicator	Likert Scale					Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
Viral Marketing Strategy						
SPV1	4	3	49	114	60	3.97
SPV2	4	13	54	86	73	3.917
SPV3	6	8	53	59	104	4.074
SPV4	4	16	45	54	111	4.096
SPV5	3	19	66	114	28	3.63
SPV6	4	30	75	83	38	3.526
Customer Experience						
CE1	4	15	57	111	43	3.757

Indicator	Likert Scale					Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
CE2	4	26	54	106	40	3.661
CE3	7	21	59	51	92	3.87
CE4	3	22	63	53	89	3.883
CE5	2	24	58	108	38	3.678
CE6	4	35	74	79	38	3.487
Customer Satisfaction						
KP1	3	15	57	113	42	3.765
KP2	3	27	51	106	43	3.691
KP3	8	23	45	59	95	3.913
KP4	6	20	58	102	44	3.687
KP5	7	37	79	55	52	3.47
Customer Loyalty						
LK1	3	9	72	108	38	3.735
LK2	3	20	102	64	41	3.522
LK3	7	30	34	120	39	3.67
LK4	9	22	30	118	51	3.783
LK5	9	32	53	58	78	3.713
LK6	8	23	77	72	50	3.578

The descriptive statistics indicate that all indicators across the study variables achieved mean scores above 3.4 on a five-point Likert scale, suggesting generally positive perceptions among respondents. For the Viral Marketing Strategy variable (SPV1–SPV6), the highest mean was recorded by SPV4 (4.096), while SPV6 had the lowest mean (3.526), indicating that although respondents perceived the viral marketing efforts positively, some aspects were considered less effective.

For Customer Experience (CE1–CE6), all indicators showed favorable evaluations, with CE4 obtaining the highest mean (3.883) and CE6 the lowest (3.487). This suggests that respondents generally had positive experiences with Cloud Cakes Donuts Blok M, although certain aspects of the customer experience still require improvement.

Customer Satisfaction (KP1–KP5) also demonstrated positive results, with all mean scores exceeding 3.4. KP3 recorded the highest mean (3.913), indicating a relatively high level of satisfaction, whereas KP5 had the lowest mean (3.470), suggesting that some satisfaction-related aspects were not fully optimized.

Similarly, Consumer Loyalty (LK1–LK6) showed mean values above 3.5, reflecting a generally good level of loyalty among respondents. LK4 achieved the highest mean (3.783), while LK2 had the lowest mean (3.522), indicating that although consumers tended to be loyal to the brand, certain dimensions of loyalty could still be strengthened.

Table 3. Loading Factor & AVE

Variable	Item	Loading Factor	AVE	Description
Customer Experience	CE1	0.793	0.557	Valid
	CE2	0.787		Valid
	CE3	0.653		Valid
	CE4	0.687		Valid
	CE5	0.740		Valid
	CE6	0.803		Valid
Customer Satisfaction	KP1	0.804	0.614	Valid
	KP2	0.794		Valid
	KP3	0.720		Valid
	KP4	0.803		Valid
	KP5	0.793		Valid
Customer Loyalty	LK1	0.787	0.624	Valid
	LK2	0.809		Valid
	LK3	0.766		Valid
	LK4	0.787		Valid
	LK5	0.823		Valid
	LK6	0.767		Valid
Viral Marketing Strategy	SPV1	0.797	0.519	Valid
	SPV2	0.654		Valid
	SPV3	0.647		Valid
	SPV4	0.658		Valid
	SPV5	0.759		Valid
	SPV6	0.789		Valid

Based on the results presented in the table above, it can be concluded that all measurement indicators are considered valid, as each indicator achieved a loading factor value of ≥ 0.50 . Therefore, the model evaluation process can be continued. The Average

Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each research variable are also shown in the table. Since all AVE values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.50, it can be concluded that the convergent validity requirement has been satisfied.

Table 4. R-Square & Q-Square

Variable	R-Square	Q-Square
Customer Satisfaction	0.557	0.328
Customer Loyalty	0.689	0.420

Referring to the table above, the R^2 value for Customer Satisfaction is 0.557, indicating that Viral Marketing Strategy and Customer Experience explain 55.7% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction, while the remaining 44.3% is attributed to other factors not included in the research model. Furthermore, the R^2 value for Consumer Loyalty is 0.689, meaning that Viral Marketing Strategy, Customer Experience, and Customer Satisfaction jointly explain 68.9% of the variance in Consumer Loyalty, while the remaining 31.1% is influenced by factors outside the model.

Based on the table, the Q^2 values of 0.328 and 0.420 are both greater than zero, indicating that the research model possesses predictive relevance. Therefore, the model demonstrates adequate capability in predicting the endogenous variables included in the study

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Path	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values
Viral Marketing Strategy → Customer Satisfaction	0.472	3.812	0.000
Customer Experience → Customer Satisfaction	0.356	3.242	0.001
Viral Marketing Strategy → Customer Loyalty	0.258	3.046	0.002
Customer Experience → Customer Loyalty	0.360	4.767	0.000
Customer Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty	0.328	3.998	0.000
Viral Marketing Strategy → Customer Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty	0.155	2.284	0.022
Customer Experience → Customer Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty	0.117	3.080	0.002

5. DISCUSSION

The hypothesis testing results indicate that the hypothesis stating that “Viral Marketing Strategy (X_1) has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction (Z)” is accepted. The magnitude of the effect is 0.472, suggesting that the more effective the viral marketing strategy, the higher the level of customer satisfaction. In the context of Cloud Cakes Donuts Jakarta customers, viral marketing activities such as engaging social media content, customer reviews, and word-of-mouth communication can create positive expectations that are subsequently fulfilled when customers purchase the product, thereby increasing their satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Ardhyatama et al. (2025), which demonstrated that viral marketing has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. Viral marketing through digital platforms has become an effective approach for attracting consumer attention to a product. The rapid and widespread dissemination of information through social media enables consumers to access product information easily and directly. This not only increases initial interest but also contributes to higher levels of customer satisfaction with the products and services offered. Furthermore, these results are in line with the findings of Larasati (2023), which also indicated that viral marketing has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.

The hypothesis testing results indicate that the hypothesis stating that “Customer Experience (X_2) has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction (Z)” is accepted. The magnitude of the effect is 0.356, suggesting that customer experience plays an important role in shaping customer satisfaction, although its influence is smaller than that of viral marketing strategy. Customer experience is a key factor in determining customers’ perceptions of a product. In the context of Cloud Cakes Donuts Jakarta, a pleasant experience during the purchase and consumption process enhances customers’ satisfaction with the product. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Maharani et al. (2025), which found that customer experience has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction can be achieved when companies pay close attention to the quality of the products and services they offer. Therefore, well-planned service strategies and product designs are essential for creating positive customer experiences. To ensure customer satisfaction, businesses need to continuously develop and improve their products and services to meet customer expectations. The findings are also supported by Handayani & Budiarta (2024), who reported that customer satisfaction is significantly influenced by customer experience. Meaningful experiences that provide personal value are closely linked to business success, as consumers are attracted not only to products and services but also to the company itself. In this context, customer experience has become a central focus of marketing research because it shapes customers’ perceptions of quality in highly



competitive markets. Consequently, accurate measurement of customer perceptions is essential, as the experiences remembered by consumers ultimately influence their evaluations and satisfaction levels.

The hypothesis testing results indicate that the hypothesis stating that “Viral Marketing Strategy (X_1) has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty (Y)” is accepted. The magnitude of the effect is 0.258. This finding suggests that viral marketing strategies not only attract consumer attention but also contribute to the development of consumer loyalty, although the effect can be considered moderate. Repeated exposure through social media and recommendations from other users can strengthen consumers’ emotional connections with a product. In the context of Cloud Cakes Donuts Jakarta, a consistent viral marketing strategy can keep the brand in consumers’ minds and encourage repeat purchases. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Susilo & Apriadi (2025), which found that viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. The results confirm that marketing strategies utilizing viral content and customer reviews can strengthen customer relationships with brands, enhance customer retention, and encourage repeat purchases. The study further highlights that viral marketing is capable of creating emotional attachment and positive perceptions toward a brand. Furthermore, viral marketing can increase consumer trust and loyalty because information shared through social media is often perceived as more authentic and credible. As a marketing strategy, viral marketing encourages individuals to disseminate promotional information to others through their social networks. In this context, viral marketing serves as an important factor influencing consumer purchasing behavior, as consumers can easily share information with friends and family, allowing messages to spread widely and ultimately fostering stronger consumer loyalty.

The hypothesis testing results indicate that the hypothesis stating that “Customer Experience (X_2) has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty (Y)” is accepted. The magnitude of the effect is 0.360. This finding suggests that positive customer experiences create lasting impressions that encourage consumers to make repeat purchases and recommend the product to others. In the context of Cloud Cakes Donuts Jakarta, positive experiences such as consistent product quality, friendly service, and a comfortable purchasing process are key factors that foster consumer loyalty. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Arianto et al. (2025), which demonstrated that customer experience has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Customers who are satisfied with friendly service, a comfortable store environment, and responsive complaint handling tend to exhibit higher levels of loyalty. These findings emphasize that in a highly competitive retail environment, a high-quality shopping experience is a critical factor in retaining customers and reducing the





risk of losing them to competitors. The results are also supported by the study of Ayesha & Muchtar (2025), which found that customer experience significantly influences customer loyalty. This suggests that loyalty is not driven solely by price and promotional activities but also by positive experiences, trust in the brand, and the perceived value received by consumers.

The hypothesis testing results indicate that the hypothesis stating that “Customer Satisfaction (Z) has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty (Y)” is accepted. The magnitude of the effect is 0.328. This finding suggests that customers who are satisfied are more likely to remain committed to purchasing the same product in the future. In the context of this study, consumers of Cloud Cakes Donuts Jakarta who are satisfied with the product quality and service are more likely to become loyal customers. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Rahman et al. (2024), which found a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and consumer loyalty. Customer satisfaction reflects consumers’ responses to their experiences with the products and services provided. Based on these experiences, consumers form evaluations of the company. When products and services are of high quality, they are more likely to meet customer expectations and deliver superior value, thereby creating higher levels of satisfaction compared to competitors and ultimately fostering consumer loyalty. The results are further supported by the study of Taufik et al. (2024), which confirmed that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. To enhance consumer loyalty through increased customer satisfaction, businesses should focus on improving key aspects such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible product attributes. The higher the level of customer satisfaction, the stronger the consumer loyalty. Therefore, companies should continuously improve customer satisfaction by ensuring overall satisfaction, delivering products and services that meet customer expectations, and maintaining positive long-term relationships with customers.

The hypothesis testing results indicate that the hypothesis stating that “Customer Satisfaction (Z) mediates the effect of Viral Marketing Strategy (X_1) on Consumer Loyalty (Y)” is accepted. The magnitude of the indirect effect is 0.155. This finding suggests that although viral marketing strategies directly contribute to consumer loyalty, customer satisfaction plays a crucial mediating role in strengthening this relationship. Specifically, effective viral marketing strategies such as creative content, easily shareable messages, and engaging social media campaigns can create positive initial expectations among consumers. When these expectations are met or exceeded during the actual purchase and consumption experience, consumers develop a sense of satisfaction, which in turn strengthens their emotional attachment to the brand. This satisfaction becomes a key factor in fostering



consumer loyalty, as reflected in repeat purchase intentions, positive recommendations to others, and a reduced likelihood of switching to competing brands. In the context of Cloud Cakes Donuts Jakarta, viral marketing serves not only as a tool for attracting consumer attention but also as a mechanism for building a positive brand image that leads to genuine post-purchase satisfaction. Consequently, this satisfaction reinforces consumer loyalty over time. Therefore, it can be concluded that Customer Satisfaction acts as a partial mediating variable in the relationship between Viral Marketing Strategy and Consumer Loyalty.

The hypothesis testing results indicate that the hypothesis stating that “Customer Satisfaction (Z) mediates the effect of Customer Experience (X_2) on Consumer Loyalty (Y)” is accepted. The magnitude of the indirect effect is 0.117. This finding suggests that customer experience not only has a direct influence on consumer loyalty but also exerts an indirect effect through customer satisfaction, which plays a significant role in strengthening loyalty. From a theoretical perspective, customer experience encompasses all interactions consumers have with a product and service, including product quality, employee behavior, store atmosphere, and the convenience of the purchasing process. When these elements create positive and memorable experiences, customers are more likely to achieve a high level of satisfaction. This satisfaction subsequently develops into strong positive attitudes toward the brand, which are reflected in loyal behaviors such as repeat purchase intentions and willingness to recommend the brand to others. In the context of this study, customers of Cloud Cakes Donuts Jakarta who enjoy positive experiences ranging from the product’s unique taste and attractive presentation to the friendliness of the staff are likely to feel satisfied. This satisfaction serves as a bridge that strengthens the development of consumer loyalty. Therefore, Customer Satisfaction functions as a partial mediating variable, confirming that consumer loyalty is influenced not only by direct customer experiences but also by how those experiences are transformed into satisfaction that reinforces long-term loyalty.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, Viral Marketing Strategy (X_1) has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction (Z), with a path coefficient of 0.472. This indicates that the more effective the viral marketing strategy, the higher the level of customer satisfaction. Customer Experience (X_2) also has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction (Z), with a coefficient of 0.356, suggesting that customer experience plays an important role in shaping satisfaction, although its influence is relatively lower than that of viral marketing strategy.

Furthermore, Viral Marketing Strategy (X_1) positively influences Consumer Loyalty (Y), with a coefficient of 0.258, indicating that viral marketing not only attracts consumer



attention but also contributes to the development of consumer loyalty. Customer Experience (X_2) has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty (Y), with a coefficient of 0.360, demonstrating that positive experiences create lasting impressions that encourage repeat purchases and recommendations to others. In addition, Customer Satisfaction (Z) positively affects Consumer Loyalty (Y), with a coefficient of 0.328, suggesting that satisfied customers are more likely to remain committed to the brand and continue purchasing its products in the future.

The mediation analysis further reveals that Customer Satisfaction (Z) significantly mediates the relationship between Viral Marketing Strategy (X_1) and Consumer Loyalty (Y), with an indirect effect of 0.155. This finding indicates that although viral marketing directly enhances consumer loyalty, customer satisfaction provides an additional and significant pathway through which loyalty is strengthened. Similarly, Customer Satisfaction (Z) mediates the relationship between Customer Experience (X_2) and Consumer Loyalty (Y), with an indirect effect of 0.117. This suggests that customer experience influences consumer loyalty not only directly but also indirectly through customer satisfaction, which serves as an important mechanism for reinforcing long-term consumer loyalty.

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