



# The Innovation–Loyalty Nexus: Unpacking the Role of Perceived Quality in the Automotive Industry

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## Abstract

*This study investigates the effect of brand innovativeness on brand loyalty, with perceived quality as a mediating variable, in the context of Hyundai car consumers in West Java. Motivated by the highly competitive Indonesian automotive market where innovation is a key driver of customer retention, the research applies a quantitative design with purposive sampling of 120 respondents. Data were collected through an online survey and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SmartPLS). The results demonstrate that brand innovativeness significantly enhances both perceived quality and brand loyalty, while perceived quality exerts a positive effect on loyalty and mediates the relationship between innovativeness and loyalty. These findings underscore the strategic importance of continuous innovation complemented by improvements in after-sales service quality to reinforce Hyundai's market position in an increasingly competitive environment.*

**Keywords:** Brand Innovativeness, Brand Loyalty, Perceived Quality

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## I. Introduction

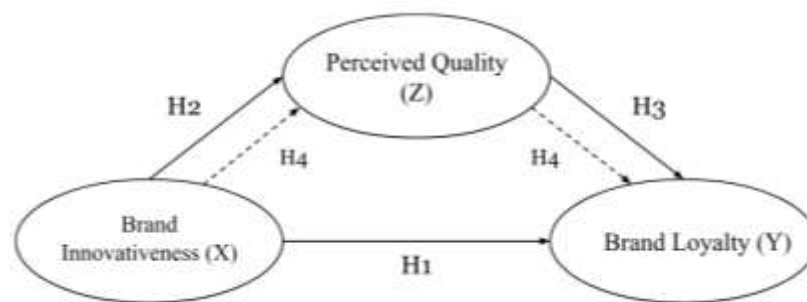
The global automotive industry has experienced rapid transformation in recent decades, largely influenced by technological advancement and changing consumer expectations. Brand innovativeness has become a critical factor in creating competitive advantage, allowing firms to differentiate their products, attract consumer attention, and build long-term relationships. Innovations in areas such as safety features, eco-friendly engines, digital connectivity, and driver-assistance systems have reshaped consumer purchasing behavior and intensified competition. In Indonesia, the number of car users grew from 12.3 million units in 2015 to more than 20.1 million units in 2024, reflecting the increasing importance of automobiles as both a necessity and a lifestyle symbol for the expanding middle class (BPS and CNN Indonesia, 2024). This trend creates opportunities for automotive manufacturers to respond to consumer demand for advanced technology, stylish design, and sustainability-focused solutions (PwC Indonesia, 2024).

The Indonesian automotive market is characterized by intense competition, with Japanese brands such as Toyota, Daihatsu, and Honda dominating sales. Hyundai, although globally recognized with awards including the World Car of the Year and the World Electric Vehicle of the Year, accounted for only 2.5 percent of market share in 2024. The company also recorded a 37 percent decline in sales compared to 2023 (Gaikindo, 2024). This situation presents a paradox in which market expansion occurs simultaneously with Hyundai's declining performance. The decline suggests that innovation alone may not be sufficient to ensure loyalty unless accompanied by improvements in perceived quality and after-sales service.

Previous studies confirm the significance of innovation and perceived quality in shaping brand loyalty. Naz et al. (2023) demonstrated that innovation strongly enhances consumer loyalty when its value is clearly recognized. Cahyani et al. (2022) found that perceived quality did not significantly influence loyalty, indicating that innovation and quality perceptions may not always translate into consumer commitment. Sinta et al. (2023) identified a strong positive association between perceived quality and loyalty, reinforcing its role as a determinant of consumer attachment. These inconsistencies highlight the need for further research to examine whether perceived quality acts as a mediator between innovation and loyalty, particularly in the Indonesian automotive sector where competition and consumer expectations are rapidly evolving.

The present study investigates the influence of brand innovativeness on brand loyalty with perceived quality as a mediating variable among Hyundai car consumers in West Java. This province is a strategic market that contributes 15.6 percent of national automotive sales (Motorest, 2024). Bandung and surrounding cities represent areas with high purchasing power and consumer responsiveness, making them suitable locations for exploring loyalty dynamics (Suhairi, 2020). By applying a quantitative research design and analyzing data using Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares method, this study provides empirical insights into the interaction between innovation and perceived quality in driving loyalty.

This study follows the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

H<sub>1</sub>: Brand innovativeness has a positive effect on brand loyalty among Hyundai car consumers in West Java.

H<sub>2</sub>: Brand innovativeness has a positive effect on perceived quality among Hyundai car consumers in West Java.

H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived quality has a positive effect on brand loyalty among Hyundai car consumers in West Java.

H<sub>4</sub>: Perceived quality mediates the effect of brand innovativeness on brand loyalty among Hyundai car consumers in West Java.

## Empirical Literature Review

### Brand Innovativeness

Brand innovativeness has been widely acknowledged as a determinant of consumer preference and competitive advantage. Ravi and Pascale in Yang (2020) describe it as the ability of a brand to provide valuable new solutions, while Pappu and Quester in Yang (2020) highlight its role in building positive perceptions of trust and reliability. Empirical evidence suggests that continuous innovation strengthens brand relevance and reputation as shown by Jalu et al. (2024) and Arham and Dwita (2021). Schumpeter in Dölarslan (2018) further explains that brand innovativeness can be observed through product, process, market, input, and organizational innovation. Kim et al. (2021) developed five indicators to measure brand innovativeness which include differentiation, dynamic brand, innovative brand, new leader, and idea generator, and these have been proven to be reliable in empirical studies.

### Perceived Quality

Perceived quality refers to the subjective judgment of consumers regarding the overall excellence of a product, which plays a central role in purchase decisions and long-term brand relationships. Barlow in Arbi and Aminah (2023) emphasizes that the success of a brand depends more on consumers' quality experiences than on recognition of logos or slogans, while Aaker and Zeithaml in Dhanny et al. (2021) state that perceived quality strongly influences consumer choice through both tangible and intangible attributes. Previous studies show that high perceived quality increases satisfaction, loyalty, and willingness to pay a premium as found by Abbas et al. (2021) and Cahyani et al. (2022), while Foroudi in Arbi and Aminah (2023) and Naz et al. (2023) demonstrate its role in reinforcing differentiation and brand growth. Juran and Godfrey in Adi (2022) identify several dimensions of perceived quality which include reasons to buy, differentiation, price premium, customer intention, and brand associations. Empirical research commonly operationalizes perceived quality through indicators such as ease of use, functionality, service ability, durability, and performance as proposed by Brucks et al. in Dhanny et al. (2021).

### Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is defined as the consistent preference of consumers for a brand which reflects satisfaction, trust, and emotional commitment. Schiffman and Wisenblit in Arham and Dwita (2021) explain that loyalty develops when brands are able to consistently meet consumer expectations. NGO et al. (2024) point out that brand loyalty reduces marketing costs and ensures business sustainability. Zayerkabehe et al. in Dhanny et al. (2021) emphasize that loyalty reflects a strong emotional bond between consumers and brands, while Mowen and Minor in Dhanny et al. (2021) highlight that it is not only about repeated purchases but also about long-term commitment to continue supporting the brand. Oliver in Kim et al. (2021) describes four stages of loyalty development, namely cognitive, affective, conative, and action. The measurement of brand loyalty generally uses five indicators as proposed by Mowen and Minor in Dhanny et al. (2021), which are brand preference, brand favorableness, repurchase intention, recommendation, and word of mouth.

## II. Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative explanatory research design, aiming to examine the causal relationships among brand innovativeness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. The methodology is designed to ensure rigor and clarity, encompassing the sampling design, data collection procedures, measurement of variables, and analytical techniques employed to test the research hypotheses.

### Sampling

The population of this research consists of Hyundai car consumers in West Java who have purchased and used Hyundai vehicles for personal purposes. The determination of this population is based on its relevance to the research objectives, as these individuals have direct experience in evaluating the quality, innovation, and brand performance of Hyundai vehicles. Sekaran and Bougie (2020) define a population as a group of individuals sharing specific characteristics relevant to the research. Kotler and Keller (2021) emphasize that consumers are central actors in purchase and usage processes, while Solomon (2020) explains that consumers engage in evaluation, purchase, and use to satisfy personal or social needs.

The sampling technique employed is non-probability purposive sampling. Sugiyono (2017) defines non-probability sampling as a method in which not all elements of the population have the same probability of being selected. Ames et al. (2019) state that purposive sampling allows researchers to deliberately select respondents based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. In this study, the inclusion criteria are as follows: consumers who purchased a Hyundai car for personal use, have used the vehicle for at least six months, reside in West Java, are at least 21 years old, and actively use and maintain the vehicle. Matthews and Coughlan (2011) highlight that sufficient product usage duration, such as six months, enables consumers to provide more reliable evaluations. Solomon (2017) adds that longer-term usage allows consumers to assess durability and performance in real conditions.

The sample size was determined using the rule of multiplying the number of indicators by the number of parameters. Ghazali (2011) recommends a range of five to ten times the number of indicators for determining sample size in structural equation modeling. With 15 indicators and 8 parameters, the required sample size was 120 respondents.

### Data Collection

This research utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to respondents via Google Forms, focusing on the relationships among brand innovativeness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Sugiyono (2017) defines primary data as information collected directly from the source, providing accuracy and relevance. Secondary data were collected from academic journals, market research reports, and statistical publications. These sources provided complementary insights to strengthen the contextual background of the study.

The data collection method combined questionnaires and literature study. Questionnaires were chosen for their efficiency and ability to capture large-scale responses systematically. Literature study was conducted to provide theoretical support and enrich the interpretation of findings.

### Measurement of Variables

All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"). Aybek and Toraman (2022) note that the Likert scale is widely applied for measuring attitudes and perceptions. Dalka et al. (2022) emphasize that Likert scaling allows systematic categorization of responses according to degrees of agreement.

The operationalization of variables is as follows. Brand Innovativeness was measured using five indicators developed by Kim et al. (2021), namely differentiation, dynamic brand, innovative brand, new leader, and idea generator. Perceived Quality was assessed with five indicators by Brucks et al. in Dhanny et al. (2021), including ease of use, functionality, service ability, durability, and performance. Brand Loyalty was measured through five indicators adapted from Mowen and Minor in Dhanny et al. (2021), namely brand preference, brand favorableness, repurchase intention, recommendation, and word of mouth.

### Validity and Reliability Tests

To ensure measurement quality, both validity and reliability tests were conducted. Anggraini et al. (2022) explain that validity assesses whether the instrument accurately measures the intended construct, often tested by item-total correlations. Subhaktiyasa (2024) describes reliability as the consistency of an instrument in producing stable results across repeated uses. Cronbach's Alpha was employed to test reliability, with values above 0.6 considered acceptable and values above 0.7 regarded as highly reliable.

### Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. Chin (2010) explains that SEM-PLS is a variance-based technique suitable for models involving latent variables and mediation. Hair et al. (2024) emphasize that PLS-SEM is appropriate for small to medium sample

sizes, does not assume data normality, and enables simultaneous testing of measurement and structural models.

The analysis proceeded in two stages. First, the measurement model (outer model) was assessed for indicator reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability. Second, the structural model (inner model) was examined to assess explanatory power (R-Square), the significance of path coefficients, and mediation effects. Hypotheses were tested using t-statistics and p-values generated through bootstrapping in SmartPLS.

### III. Result and Discussion

#### Description of Respondents' Characteristics

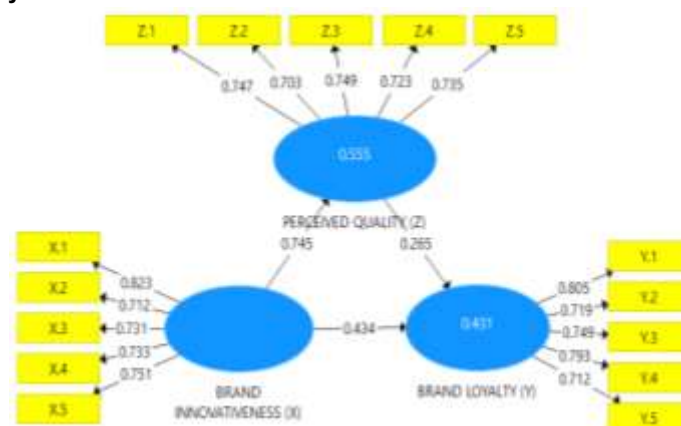
**Table 1. Respondents' Characteristics**

| Category                      | Sub-category        | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                 | Male                | 88        | 73.33%     |
|                               | Female              | 32        | 26.67%     |
| <b>Age</b>                    | 21–30 years         | 55        | 45.83%     |
|                               | 31–40 years         | 49        | 40.83%     |
|                               | 41–50 years         | 15        | 12.50%     |
|                               | >50 years           | 1         | 0.83%      |
|                               |                     |           |            |
| <b>Occupation</b>             | Student             | 24        | 20.00%     |
|                               | Private Employee    | 60        | 50.00%     |
|                               | Government Employee | 18        | 15.00%     |
|                               | Entrepreneur        | 18        | 15.00%     |
| <b>Car Ownership Duration</b> | 6–12 months         | 42        | 35.00%     |
|                               | 1–2 years           | 41        | 34.17%     |
|                               | >2 years            | 37        | 30.83%     |

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

Most respondents were male (73.33%), reflecting the broader trend of higher male participation in the automotive market. The majority were in the productive age range of 21–40 years (86.66%), indicating responsiveness to product innovations. Private employees dominated the occupational profile (50%), followed by students (20%), while government employees and entrepreneurs each represented 15%. Car ownership duration was evenly distributed, suggesting Hyundai's ability to attract new buyers while retaining long-term customers in West Java.

#### Research Model Analysis



**Figure 2. Research Framework Model**  
Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

Figure 2 reports the evaluation of the measurement model through factor loadings and path coefficients, confirming construct validity and the relative importance of indicators. For Brand Innovativeness (X), the highest loading was X.1 (0.823), indicating product differentiation as the key driver of innovativeness. In Brand Loyalty (Y), the strongest loading was Y.1 (0.805), highlighting consumer preference as the most salient dimension of loyalty. For Perceived Quality (Z), Z.3 showed the highest loading (0.749), suggesting that service quality and vehicle functionality are central to consumers' quality perceptions. Overall, these results support the robustness of the measurement model and provide a basis for further structural testing.

## Outer Model (Indicator Measurement and Validity)

**Table 2. Outer Loadings**

| Indicator | Brand Innovativeness (X) | Brand Loyalty (Y) | Perceived Quality (Z) |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| X.1       | 0.823                    |                   |                       |
| X.2       | 0.712                    |                   |                       |
| X.3       | 0.731                    |                   |                       |
| X.4       | 0.733                    |                   |                       |
| X.5       | 0.751                    |                   |                       |
| Y.1       |                          | 0.805             |                       |
| Y.2       |                          | 0.719             |                       |
| Y.3       |                          | 0.749             |                       |
| Y.4       |                          | 0.793             |                       |
| Y.5       |                          | 0.712             |                       |
| Z.1       |                          |                   | 0.747                 |
| Z.2       |                          |                   | 0.703                 |
| Z.3       |                          |                   | 0.749                 |
| Z.4       |                          |                   | 0.723                 |
| Z.5       |                          |                   | 0.735                 |

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

Table 2 reports the results of indicator validity testing based on factor loadings. All indicators of Brand Innovativeness, Brand Loyalty, and Perceived Quality recorded values above 0.50, confirming that they meet the criterion for convergent validity and are suitable for inclusion in the research model. Among them, indicator X.1 (0.823) emerged as the strongest measure of Brand Innovativeness, Y.1 (0.805) was the most dominant in reflecting Brand Loyalty, and Z.3 (0.749) provided the most salient representation of Perceived Quality.

**Table 3. Cross Loadings**

| Indicator | Brand Innovativeness (X) | Brand Loyalty (Y) | Perceived Quality (Z) |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| X.1       | <b>0.823</b>             | 0,560             | 0,644                 |
| X.2       | <b>0.712</b>             | 0,445             | 0,502                 |
| X.3       | <b>0.731</b>             | 0,455             | 0,541                 |
| X.4       | <b>0.733</b>             | 0,453             | 0,533                 |
| X.5       | <b>0.751</b>             | 0,447             | 0,564                 |
| Y.1       | 0,520                    | <b>0,805</b>      | 0,462                 |
| Y.2       | 0,477                    | <b>0,719</b>      | 0,418                 |
| Y.3       | 0,483                    | <b>0,749</b>      | 0,347                 |
| Y.4       | 0,454                    | <b>0,793</b>      | 0,523                 |
| Y.5       | 0,455                    | <b>0,712</b>      | 0,468                 |
| Z.1       | 0,560                    | 0,474             | <b>0,747</b>          |
| Z.2       | 0,510                    | 0,393             | <b>0,703</b>          |
| Z.3       | 0,572                    | 0,469             | <b>0,749</b>          |
| Z.4       | 0,547                    | 0,405             | <b>0,723</b>          |
| Z.5       | 0,533                    | 0,404             | <b>0,735</b>          |

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

Table 3 presents the results of the cross-loading analysis, which demonstrate that all indicators satisfy the criterion for discriminant validity. Each indicator consistently loaded more strongly on its designated construct than on the other constructs, confirming that the indicators appropriately represent their respective latent variables and are suitable for inclusion in the research model.

**Table 4. Average Variance Extracted**

| Variable                 | AVE   |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Brand Innovativeness (X) | 0.823 |
| Brand Loyalty (Y)        | 0.712 |
| Perceived Quality (Z)    | 0.731 |

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

Table 4 reports the results of convergent validity testing using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All constructs recorded values above the minimum threshold of 0.50, indicating that the latent variables adequately capture the variance of their respective indicators. These findings confirm that the research model satisfies the requirement for convergent validity.

**Table 5. Composite Reliability**

| Variable                 | AVE   |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Brand Innovativeness (X) | 0.823 |
| Brand Loyalty (Y)        | 0.712 |
| Perceived Quality (Z)    | 0.731 |

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

Table 5 shows that all constructs achieved composite reliability values above the recommended threshold of 0.70. These results confirm that the indicators within each construct demonstrate strong internal consistency, thereby establishing the reliability of the measurement model.

**Table 6. Latent Variable Correlation**

| Variable                 | X     | Y     | Z     |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Brand Innovativeness (X) | 1.000 |       |       |
| Brand Loyalty (Y)        | 0.632 | 0.632 |       |
| Perceived Quality (Z)    | 0.745 | 0.745 | 0.745 |

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

Table 6 presents the correlations among latent variables. The strongest relationship was observed between Brand Innovativeness and Perceived Quality ( $r = 0.745$ ), indicating a strong positive association. This suggests that the higher consumers perceive Hyundai's innovativeness, the more favorable their assessment of product quality becomes.

#### Inner Model (Structural Model Testing)

**Table 7. R-Square**

| Variable              | AVE   |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Brand Loyalty (Y)     | 0.431 |
| Perceived Quality (Z) | 0.555 |

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

Table 7 reports the coefficient of determination (R-Square) for the endogenous variables. The R-Square value for Perceived Quality was 0.555, indicating that 55.5% of its variance is explained by Brand Innovativeness, which can be categorized as strong. Meanwhile, Brand Loyalty recorded an R-Square of 0.431, meaning that 43.1% of its variance is explained jointly by Brand Innovativeness and Perceived Quality, falling into the moderate category. These findings highlight the substantial role of the two predictors, while also suggesting the presence of other external factors that may influence consumer loyalty.

**Table 8. Path Coefficients and Specific Indirect Effects**

| Relationship Between Variables  | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics ( O/STDEV ) | P Values |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| $X \rightarrow Y$               | 0,434               | 0,420           | 0,137                      | 3,169                    | 0,002    |
| $X \rightarrow Z$               | 0,745               | 0,748           | 0,049                      | 15,324                   | 0,000    |
| $Z \rightarrow Y$               | 0,265               | 0,276           | 0,114                      | 2,324                    | 0,021    |
| $X \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$ | 0,198               | 0,207           | 0,089                      | 2,215                    | 0,027    |

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2025)

Table 8 summarizes the results of hypothesis testing, examining the relationships among Brand Innovativeness, Perceived Quality, and Brand Loyalty among Hyundai consumers in West Java. All hypotheses were supported, with the following findings:

1. Brand Innovativeness exerted a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.434, T-statistic of 3.169 ( $>1.96$ ), and P-value of 0.002 ( $<0.05$ ). This indicates that higher levels of innovation by Hyundai strengthen consumer loyalty toward the brand.
2. Brand Innovativeness had a significant positive impact on Perceived Quality, as reflected by a path coefficient of 0.745, T-statistic of 15.324, and P-value of 0.000. This result demonstrates that Hyundai's innovations consistently enhance consumers' perceptions of product quality.
3. Perceived Quality significantly influenced Brand Loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.265, T-statistic of 2.324, and P-value of 0.021. This finding suggests that favorable quality perceptions contribute directly to the development of consumer loyalty.
4. Perceived Quality was found to partially mediate the effect of Brand Innovativeness on Brand Loyalty, with a specific indirect effect of 0.198, T-statistic of 2.215, and P-value of 0.027. This implies that brand innovativeness not only influences loyalty directly but also reinforces it indirectly by improving consumers' perceptions of quality.

#### IV. Conclusion and Implications

This study demonstrates that brand innovativeness exerts a significant influence on consumer loyalty, both directly and indirectly through perceived quality. Hyundai's ability to differentiate its products through design, technology, and features strengthens loyalty, while consistent innovation enhances consumer perceptions of product quality. Perceived quality itself contributes meaningfully to brand loyalty and functions as a partial mediator, underscoring its central role in bridging innovation and long-term consumer commitment.

The findings provide both theoretical and managerial implications. Theoretically, the study enriches the literature on brand equity by positioning innovation as a key determinant of perceived quality and loyalty in the automotive sector of an emerging market. Practically, the results emphasize the importance of aligning innovation with consumer needs, supported by consistent after-sales service, warranty clarity, and service responsiveness. The scope of this research remains limited to Hyundai consumers in West Java, suggesting that future studies should include broader geographic areas, additional variables, or cross-brand comparisons to deepen the analysis.

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