

## THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF LIFESTYLE ON THE INFLUENCE OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND FANATICISM ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY

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### Abstract

This research investigates the impact of experiential consumption in Tebing Tinggi City's culinary MSME industry, specifically focusing on the shift from traditional bamboo steamers (klakat) to cost-efficient alternatives. This transition risks eroding product authenticity and long-term customer loyalty. The study empirically analyzes the influence of Country of Origin (COO) and consumer fanaticism on customer loyalty, with lifestyle serving as a mediating variable. Using a descriptive quantitative approach, data were collected from consumers of five specialized dimsum outlets and analyzed via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) using SmartPLS 3.8. The findings reveal that while COO and fanaticism positively and significantly influence lifestyle, their direct impact on customer loyalty is insignificant. Instead, the study confirms a full mediation effect, demonstrating that lifestyle is the critical bridge between these factors and loyalty. The novelty of this research lies in recontextualizing the COO variable—traditionally used in global manufacturing—to evaluate the physical attributes of regional culinary artifacts. Practically, the study recommends that MSME actors preserve traditional bamboo steamer elements as a strategic instrument to foster an active urban lifestyle ecosystem, thereby securing long-term consumer loyalty.

**Keywords:** *Country of Origin; Fanaticis; Lifestyle; Customer Loyalt; Klakat Dimsum; PLS-SEM.*

### INTRODUCTION

The culinary industry in Indonesia has undergone a fundamental transformation, evolving from a mere provider of primary food needs into one of the most dynamic and competitive pillars of the creative economy. Amidst rapid globalization and massive digitalization, consumer preferences are no longer based solely on functional aspects such as taste or competitive pricing. Modern society is increasingly engaged in "experiential consumption," where the value of a product is measured by its cultural narrative, aesthetic presentation, and the emotional satisfaction it provides. This behavioral shift compels business actors, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), to focus not only on technical production quality but also on building unique brand identities to secure customer loyalty in an increasingly saturated market.

A prominent international culinary phenomenon that has rooted itself in local consumption patterns is dim sum. In Tebing Tinggi, a strategic transit city in North Sumatra, dim sum has evolved from a simple snack into a vital urban culinary identity. The high market dynamics in this transit city demand that dim sum entrepreneurs adopt unconventional marketing strategies that resonate with the psychological and sociological aspects of their consumers to foster long-term loyalty. However, a significant issue has emerged. While specialized outlets in Tebing Tinggi—such as Micky Dimsum, Qiaghi Dimsum, Oini Dimsum, Classic Dimsum, and Cahaya Dimsum—consistently use klakat (traditional bamboo steamers) as a symbol of Country of Origin (COO) authenticity, many other local MSMEs are abandoning this practice for cost efficiency and durability. Switching to modern, non-cultural materials like plastic risks eroding the product's authentic value. If this trend continues, it is feared that the loss of traditional authenticity will dismantle the foundation of long-term customer loyalty. Therefore, this study aims to empirically analyze the integrative model of Country of Origin (COO), consumer fanaticism, and lifestyle as a mediator to understand how these factors sustain loyalty in the regional culinary sector.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Lifestyle and Customer Loyalty

Lifestyle reflects an individual's way of life, expressed through activities, interests, and opinions (AIO). According to Nasib and Tambunan (2022), consumption decisions are closely linked to how a product represents an individual's social class and lifestyle. In the digital era, maintaining customer loyalty requires marketers to adapt to rapidly changing consumer lifestyles (Luhgiatno, 2024). Empirical evidence supports this, as lifestyle has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty (Wahyuzi et al., 2025; Ester et al., 2025; Arif Rachman Putra et al., 2022). In Tebing Tinggi, culinary consumption has become a means of self-actualization, where lifestyle trends drive consumer loyalty toward brands offering symbolic value.

### Country of Origin (COO) and Authenticity

COO refers to the influence of a country's perception on consumer evaluations of product quality, reliability, and authenticity (Angelina, 2024). In the food sector, COO imagery plays a vital role in influencing psychological evaluations and attitudes toward foreign cuisine (Hasanudin & Sholahuddin, 2023). A positive perception of COO fosters repeat consumption and brand loyalty (Indriani & Harmen, 2023; Lestari & Zen, 2023). Furthermore, COO imagery dictates the lifestyle shifts of its target groups, as seen in the context of cultural assimilation (Ni Made Febriana Sara Dwiyananti et al., 2023; Aprilia Simanjuntak & Primahardani, 2022). This study uniquely applies the COO concept to local culinary artifacts, specifically the klakat bamboo steamer as a marker of traditional authenticity.

### Consumer Fanaticism

Fanaticism is defined as an extraordinary level of devotion and deep affective attachment to an object of consumption. Purnomo (2024) demonstrated that fanaticism significantly directs an individual's lifestyle, as extreme enthusiasm drives individuals to adjust their consumption patterns to satisfy emotional desires. In terms of loyalty, high levels of fanaticism drive purchase decisions and prevent customers from switching to competitors (Irsyad & Suarna, 2024; Prianggono & Nugroho, 2025). Integrating these variables—COO, fanaticism, and lifestyle—provides a comprehensive framework to map the drivers of consumer loyalty in the local culinary industry.

## METHOD

### Research Design and Location

This study employs a quantitative approach to examine the relationships between the variables influencing customer loyalty. The research was conducted at various dim sum outlets in Tebing Tinggi City, North Sumatra.

### Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of dim sum customers in Tebing Tinggi City, whose exact total number is unknown. Consequently, the sample size was determined using the Cochran formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2}$$

With a  $z$ -score of 1.96 (at a 95% confidence level),  $p = 0.5$ , and an error margin ( $e$ ) of 10%, the calculated sample size is 96.04, which was rounded up to 100 respondents. The sampling was conducted using the accidental sampling technique

### Research Hypotheses

A positive perception of a product's Country of Origin (COO) has been proven to significantly shift and guide consumer lifestyle trends in selecting culinary products. Empirical research by Ni Made Febriana Sara Dwiyananti et al. (2023) and Aprilia Simanjuntak and Primahardani (2022) indicates that the perceived authenticity of a country of origin triggers cultural assimilation, which alters the consumption activity structures of target groups. Furthermore, extreme consumer enthusiasm for specific cultures drives individuals to adjust their lifestyles to satisfy their emotional desires. Purnomo (2024) demonstrated that high levels of fanaticism have a positive and significant impact on shaping consumer lifestyles, particularly within the modern food industry. A strong country-of-origin image also serves as a guarantee of psychological quality that secures customer loyalty. This is supported by the findings of Lestari and Zen (2023) and Furukawa and Terasaki (2025), who stated that a positive COO image has a significant and positive effect on long-term consumer loyalty commitment. Beyond the country-of-origin factor, strong affective attachment through brand fanaticism ensures customer retention amidst the competitive landscape of the culinary MSME sector. Research by Prianggono and Nugroho (2025) provides evidence that fanaticism makes a substantial

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direct contribution to maintaining consumer loyalty. Finally, the alignment of a product with a consumer's lifestyle triggers consistent repeat purchase commitment. This relationship has been empirically validated by Wahyuzi et al. (2025) and strongly supported by findings from Kezia Lidya Imanuella and Aris Budiono (2023), who confirmed that lifestyle dimensions make a tangible and positive contribution to forming consumer loyalty.

## Conceptual Framework

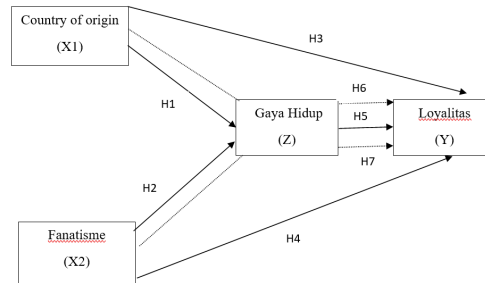


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

### Variable Definitions

Y = Dependent Variable (Customer Loyalty)

Xi = Independent Variable (Country of Origin)

X2 = Independent Variable (Fanaticism)

Z = Intervening/Mediating Variable (Lifestyle)

### Operational Definitions of Variables and Research Questionnaire

The operational definitions aim to provide a clear overview of how the variables in this study are measured. Therefore, an operational table has been compiled, which includes theoretical definitions, indicators, and the questionnaire items presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Operational Definitions of Variables and Research Questionnaire

Variable	Operational Definition (Source)	Indicators	Questionnaire Items (Likert Scale)
<b>Country of Origin (X1)</b>	Consumer perception of a product's origin that influences quality evaluation and authenticity (Angelina, 2024).	1. Authenticity 2. Identity 3. Culture 4. Origin Quality	1. I strongly believe that klakat dim sum meets high authenticity standards. 2. The bamboo klakat is the best way to represent traditional culture. 3. I believe that the aroma of dim sum is perfectly preserved by bamboo steaming. 4. The klakat attribute serves as a guarantee of superior product quality. 5. The traditional presentation helps me easily identify quality products.
<b>Fanaticism (X2)</b>	Extraordinary devotion and deep emotional attachment to an object of consumption (Prianggono & Nugroho, 2025).	1. High Interest 2. Affection 3. Duration	1. I always prioritize buying klakat dim sum over other products. 2. I have a strong interest in continuing to enjoy the klakat presentation. 3. I feel proud and highly satisfied enjoying authentic dim sum.

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			<p>4. I am always willing to set aside special time for bamboo klakat dim sum.</p> <p>5. I do not mind queuing for the unique quality of traditional presentation.</p>
<b>Lifestyle (Z)</b>	Patterns of living expressed through an individual's activities, interests, and opinions (Arif Rachman Putra et al., 2022).	<p>1. Activities</p> <p>2. Interests</p> <p>3. Opinions (AIO)</p>	<p>1. Visiting klakat dim sum outlets has become my daily routine.</p> <p>2. I enjoy spending my leisure time gathering at klakat dim sum places.</p> <p>3. I am enthusiastic about following culinary trends that maintain original traditional values.</p> <p>4. I agree that this dining choice reflects a sophisticated lifestyle.</p> <p>5. In my opinion, bamboo containers are healthier and higher quality for my lifestyle.</p>
<b>Customer Loyalty (Y)</b>	A deep commitment to consistently rebuy in the future (Wahyuzi et al., 2025).	<p>1. Repurchase</p> <p>2. Recommendation</p> <p>3. Resistance</p>	<p>1. I have a very strong intention to remain a loyal customer here.</p> <p>2. I will definitely make repeat purchases regularly due to my satisfaction.</p> <p>3. I will confidently recommend this klakat dim sum to others.</p> <p>4. I remain loyal to choosing klakat dim sum despite cheaper culinary alternatives.</p> <p>5. I have no intention of switching to other brands that do not use klakat.</p>

**Data Analysis Technique**

This research employs a quantitative approach using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method via SmartPLS 3.8 software. This method was selected based on the need to test a complex structural model involving mediating variables, consistent with the principles proposed by Sugiyono (2025) regarding the effectiveness of associative methods in testing relationships between variables. The data analysis process begins with the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to ensure that each indicator is valid and reliable in measuring its respective variable. The criteria used at this stage include convergent validity, assessed through loading factor values above 0.70 and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of at least 0.50. Furthermore, discriminant validity is tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion or the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio to ensure the uniqueness of each variable. Instrument reliability is confirmed through construct reliability, requiring Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values to exceed 0.70. The standardization of parameter values in this validity and reliability testing via SmartPLS aligns with the structured quantitative data analysis framework proposed by Basir and Dollah (2025).

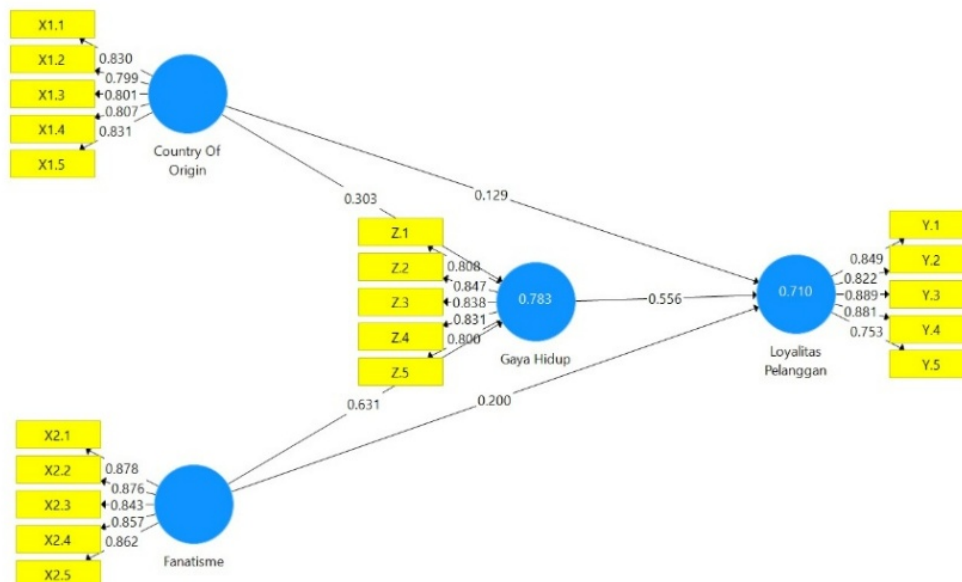
Once the measurement model is confirmed as valid and reliable, the analysis proceeds to the evaluation of the structural model (inner model). This evaluation is performed using bootstrapping techniques to test the significance of the relationships between variables in the research model. This testing includes the coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup> to assess the percentage of influence that Country of Origin and fanaticism have on lifestyle and customer loyalty. The significance of the relationships is determined by path coefficients, where a hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic value is greater than 1.96 or the p-value is less than 0.05. Furthermore, the structural path estimates derived from the PLS algorithm are optimized through precise statistical parameter verification to minimize

error margins or data multicollinearity (Hatta Setiabudhi, 2024). The mediating role of lifestyle is analyzed through specific indirect effects to determine whether the variable significantly bridges the influence of the independent variables on customer loyalty. All analytical procedures refer to the methodology applied in the research by Wahyuzi et al. (2025).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

The initial stage of the analysis includes an outer model evaluation using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ensure the validity and reliability of each latent construct. The results of this evaluation are presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Outer Model

**1. Validity Test**

The validity and reliability testing of the research instruments were processed using SmartPLS version 3.8 software. Convergent validity analysis was based on loading factor values, while discriminant validity was evaluated by examining the cross-loading values of each indicator.

**a. Convergent Validity**

The assessment of convergent validity for the reflective model refers to the correlation between item scores and construct scores derived from PLS calculations. Reflective indicators are considered strong if their values exceed 0.70. However, according to Hatta Setiabudhi (2024), in exploratory research or the development of new models, loading factor values between 0.50 and 0.60 are still tolerable and considered acceptable. Nevertheless, this study maintains a minimum loading factor threshold of 0.70 using the SmartPLS 3.8 algorithm, with the test results presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Results of Instrument Validity Test Using Loading Factor

	Country Of Origin	Fanatisme	Gaya Hidup	Loyalitas Pelanggan
X1.1	0,830			
X1.2	0,799			
X1.3	0,801			
X1.4	0,807			
X1.5	0,831			
X2.1		0,878		
X2.2		0,876		
X2.3		0,843		
X2.4		0,857		
X2.5		0,862		
Y.1				0,849
Y.2				0,822
Y.3				0,889
Y.4				0,881
Y.5				0,753
Z.1			0,808	
Z.2			0,847	
Z.3			0,838	
Z.4			0,831	
Z.5			0,800	

The results presented in Table 2 demonstrate that all loading factor values have exceeded the minimum threshold criteria of 0.60. These results provide empirical confirmation that each indicator used in this study possesses good validity. Consequently, these indicators are considered valid and reliable for measuring each latent variable within the research model.

#### b. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is ensured through two methods: comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with inter-construct correlations, and analyzing cross-loading values. A model is considered to have good discriminant validity if the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than the correlation between that construct and other variables in the research model. The detailed results of the cross-loading test are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Results of Instrument Validity Test Using Cross Loading

	Country Of Origin	Fanatisme	Gaya Hidup	Loyalitas Pelanggan
X1.1	0,830	0,612	0,640	0,543
X1.2	0,799	0,650	0,638	0,515
X1.3	0,801	0,514	0,598	0,600
X1.4	0,807	0,686	0,686	0,658
X1.5	0,831	0,655	0,635	0,601
X2.1	0,653	0,878	0,688	0,634
X2.2	0,659	0,876	0,787	0,687
X2.3	0,695	0,843	0,792	0,659
X2.4	0,671	0,857	0,737	0,635
X2.5	0,637	0,862	0,715	0,740
Y.1	0,691	0,691	0,760	0,849
Y.2	0,624	0,603	0,727	0,822
Y.3	0,619	0,657	0,665	0,889
Y.4	0,577	0,665	0,736	0,881
Y.5	0,496	0,658	0,577	0,753
Z.1	0,637	0,864	0,808	0,696
Z.2	0,684	0,746	0,847	0,627
Z.3	0,637	0,712	0,838	0,649
Z.4	0,642	0,628	0,831	0,696
Z.5	0,645	0,592	0,800	0,751

The research results presented in Table 3 show that the cross-loading value of each indicator is higher for its assigned variable than for any other variable. This proves that the research instrument possesses a good level of discriminant validity, as each construct is able to distinguish itself from the other variables.

## 2. Reliability Test

The reliability testing of the instruments in this study was conducted by verifying that the values meet the required thresholds for three primary parameters: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must exceed 0.50, Cronbach's Alpha should be at least 0.60, and Composite Reliability must be above 0.70. The detailed results of the reliability parameter calculations for each latent construct are presented in Table 4:

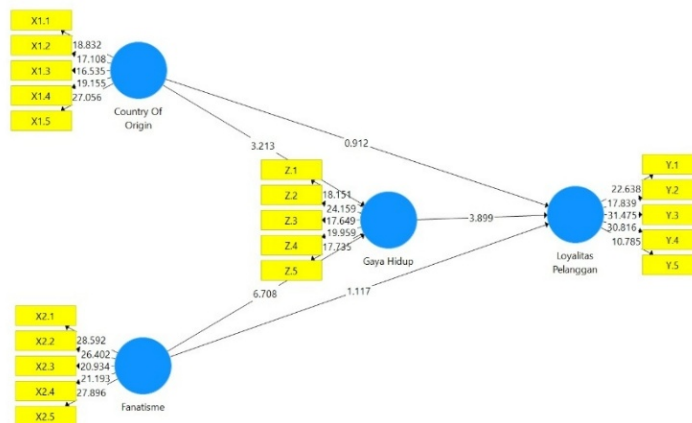
**Table 4.** Calculation of AVE, Cronbach Alpha, and Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Country Of Origin	0,872	0,874	0,907	0,662
Fanatisme	0,915	0,915	0,936	0,745
Gaya Hidup	0,883	0,883	0,914	0,680
Loyalitas Pelanggan	0,895	0,900	0,923	0,706

Based on Table 4, it can be observed that the Cronbach's Alpha values for customer loyalty, lifestyle, Country of Origin (COO), and fanaticism are 0.946, 0.928, 0.938, and 0.953, respectively. These calculation results indicate that all indicators are reliable in measuring their respective latent variables.

### c. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model (inner model) is evaluated through several primary parameters, including the coefficient of determination  $R^2$ ,  $Q^2$  (predictive relevance), and the Goodness of Fit (GoF) index. Based on the data calculations using SmartPLS 3.8 software, the structural model outputs obtained in this study are presented as follows:



**1. R<sup>2</sup> (R-square) Results**

The structural model evaluation stage begins by examining the R-square (R<sup>2</sup>) values for each dependent latent variable to measure the model's ability to explain the variance in the data. The results of the R-square calculations in this study are as follows:

**Table 5. Corelation Value (r<sup>2</sup>)**

	<b>R Square</b>
<b>Life Style</b>	0,783
<b>Customer Loyalty</b>	0,710

Referring to Table 5, the R<sup>2</sup> value for the lifestyle variable is 0.783. This figure indicates that 78.3% of the variance in lifestyle is explained by the Country of Origin (COO) and fanaticism variables. Meanwhile, the remaining 21.7% is influenced by factors outside the research model, such as demographic profiles (age and income), the influence of reference groups, and the intensity of social media promotions Furthermore, for the customer loyalty variable, an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.710 was obtained. This demonstrates that 71% of the variance in customer loyalty is influenced by the constructs of COO, fanaticism, and lifestyle. The remaining 29% represents the contribution of other variables not examined in this study, such as price perception, service quality, store location, and consumer satisfaction.

**2. Model Goodness of Fit**

The Goodness of Fit (GoF) test is conducted to measure the extent of the contribution of exogenous variables in influencing endogenous variables. In Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis, this model evaluation is performed by calculating the Q-square predictive relevance Q<sup>2</sup> the results of the Goodness of Fit calculation in this study are presented as follows

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - r_1^2) (1 - r_2^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0.783) (1 - 0.710)$$

$$Q^2 = 0,937$$

The Q-square predictive relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>) value obtained in this study is 0.937. This figure indicates that the developed model possesses a high level of predictive accuracy, as the variables of Country of Origin (COO), fanaticism, and lifestyle collectively contribute 93.7% to customer loyalty. The remaining 6.3% represents the influence of variables outside the research model.

**E. Hypothesis Testing**

Based on the outer model evaluation, the research instruments are confirmed to be valid and reliable for further testing. Hypotheses are considered significant if the t-statistic value reaches a minimum threshold of 1.960 or if the

p-value does not exceed 0.05. This 5% significance level provides 95% confidence that the accepted hypotheses are valid. The hypothesis analysis encompasses two categories: direct effects and indirect effects. Direct effect testing is conducted using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS, while indirect effect testing (mediation) is performed through an analysis of indirect effects based on t-statistic values.

**1. Direct Effect Testing**

Direct effect testing is conducted to verify hypotheses 1 through 5 by analyzing the path coefficients. The significance of the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables is determined based on the t-statistic value, which must exceed the critical t-table value of 1.96. Statistically, a hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic value is  $\geq 1.960$  or the probability level (p-value) is  $\geq 0.05$  ( $\alpha = 5\%$ ), indicating a significant relationship between variables. The results of the direct effect analysis, obtained through the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS, are presented in Table 6. The following is an in-depth explanation of the test results for each research hypothesis.

**Table 6.** Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
Country Of Origin -> Gaya Hidup	0,303	0,299	0,094	3,213	<b>0,001</b>
Fanatisme -> Gaya Hidup	0,631	0,634	0,094	6,708	<b>0,000</b>
Country Of Origin -> Loyalitas Pelanggan	0,129	0,130	0,142	0,912	<b>0,362</b>
Fanatisme -> Loyalitas Pelanggan	0,200	0,174	0,179	1,117	<b>0,264</b>
Gaya Hidup -> Loyalitas Pelanggan	0,556	0,581	0,143	3,899	<b>0,000</b>

The research results presented in Table 6 provide the following findings for each hypothesis:

**a. Hypothesis 1**

The testing of the first hypothesis indicates a positive and significant influence of Country of Origin (COO) on lifestyle, with a t-statistic of 3.213 and a p-value of 0.001. Since the hypothesis acceptance criteria have been met ( $t \geq 1.960$  and  $p \leq 0.05$ ), H1 is empirically supported. These results are consistent with studies conducted by Simanjuntak et al. (2022) and Dwiyantri et al. (2023), which state that the perception of authenticity regarding a country of origin significantly influences consumption behavior and lifestyle.

**b. Hypothesis 2**

The statistical test results for H2 provide strong evidence that Country of Origin (COO) has a positive and significant impact on consumer lifestyle, with a t-statistic of 3.213 and a p-value of 0.001. Since the hypothesis acceptance criteria have been met ( $t \geq 1.960$  and  $p \leq 0.05$ ), it can be concluded that the perception of a product's country of origin authenticity is capable of shifting consumer preferences. This finding is consistent with the literature provided by Simanjuntak et al. (2022) and Dwiyantri et al. (2023) regarding the significant influence of country-of-origin perceptions on lifestyle behavior.

**c. Hypothesis 3**

The research results presented in Table 6 show that the relationship between Country of Origin (COO) and customer loyalty yields a t-statistic of 0.912 with a p-value of 0.362. Given that the t-statistic is below 1.960 and the significance level exceeds 0.05 ( $\alpha = 5\%$ ), the third hypothesis (H3) is not empirically supported. This indicates that the COO variable does not have a significant direct influence on customer loyalty in the klakat dim sum culinary business in Tebing Tinggi City. This result differs from the findings of Angelina (2024) as well as Lestari and Zen (2023), which focused on global manufactured commodities. This discrepancy provides a strong indication of a full mediation role within the research model, suggesting that the influence of COO on customer loyalty for local culinary products is not direct.

**d. Hypothesis 4**

The testing of H4 shows that fanaticism does not have a significant direct effect on customer loyalty ( $t = 1.117$ ;  $p = 0.264$ ). Given that the significance criteria were not met ( $t \leq 1.960$ ;  $p \geq 0.05$ ), this hypothesis is rejected. Empirically, these results suggest that consumer fanaticism requires lifestyle as an intervening variable to enhance loyalty. This

differs from the findings of Prianggono and Nugroho (2025) and Irsyad and Suarna (2024), which identified a direct influence of fanaticism on brand loyalty. Such differences indicate that the unique characteristics of klakat dim sum products require the presence of a mediating variable to bridge these relationships.

**e. Hypothesis 5**

The testing of H5 indicates a positive and significant influence of the lifestyle variable on customer loyalty, with a t-statistic of 3.899 and a p-value of 0.000. Since the significance criteria were met ( $t \geq 1.960$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ), this hypothesis is accepted. The research findings confirm that an urban lifestyle plays a crucial role in securing customer loyalty for traditional food products. This is supported by studies by Wahyuzi et al. (2025), Ester et al. (2025), and Imanuella & Budiono (2023), which assert that modern lifestyle is a primary determinant in creating sustainable consumer loyalty.

**2. Indirect Effect Testing**

The indirect effect is tested to determine the significance of the role of the intervening variable (Z) in bridging the relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y). The acceptance criteria for this mediation hypothesis include a t-statistic value  $> 1.96$  and statistical significance in each direct effect path that constitutes the model. Detailed results of the indirect effect testing are presented in the table below.

**Table 7.** Inderict effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Country Of Origin -> Gaya Hidup -> Loyalitas Pelanggan	0,168	0,168	0,057	2,933	<b>0,004</b>
Fanatisme -> Gaya Hidup -> Loyalitas Pelanggan	0,351	0,373	0,123	2,842	<b>0,005</b>

**a. Hypothesis 6**

The testing of H6 demonstrates that lifestyle significantly mediates the influence of Country of Origin (COO) on customer loyalty ( $t = 2.933$ ;  $p = 0.004$ ). As the significance criteria have been met, this hypothesis is accepted. Variance Accounted For (VAF) analysis indicates the presence of full mediation, where COO can only influence customer loyalty through lifestyle as an intervening variable. These findings provide new insights, suggesting that the authenticity of local culinary products does not have a direct impact; rather, it must be mediated by the lifestyle adoption process of urban society in Tebing Tinggi City. These results are supported by research from Dwiyanti et al. (2023) and Wahyuzi et al. (2025) regarding the role of lifestyle as a mediator in consumption behavior.

**b. Hypothesis 7**

The testing of H7 confirms that lifestyle significantly mediates the influence of fanaticism on customer loyalty ( $t = 2.842$ ;  $p = 0.005$ ). Referring to the significance criteria and the VAF value, which indicates full mediation, it can be concluded that consumer fanaticism does not have a direct influence on loyalty. Customer loyalty toward dim sum will only be formed when the sense of fanaticism is converted into sustainable lifestyle behavior. These research results support the studies of Purnomo (2024) and Ester et al. (2025), which emphasize the importance of lifestyle activities in bridging consumers' emotional attachment and brand loyalty.

**Discussion**

This section elaborates on the conceptual implications of the statistical findings and contextualizes them within consumer behavior theories and relevant literature. Based on the structural model evaluation, unique dynamics in the relationships between variables were identified, particularly regarding the crucial role of the mediating variable.

**The Influence of Country of Origin on Lifestyle and Customer Loyalty**

The analysis results indicate that Country of Origin (COO) has a positive and significant influence on the lifestyle of dim sum consumers in Tebing Tinggi City. With a t-statistic value of 3.213, these findings demonstrate that the traditional cultural artifact—the bamboo klakat (steamer)—is no longer viewed merely as a cooking utensil, but as a representation of the authenticity of traditional Chinese products that shapes consumer perception. Consumers

associate the use of klakat with high standards of culinary hygiene, distinct aroma, and aesthetic value, which encourages them to adopt the consumption of klakat dim sum as part of their routine agenda or urban lifestyle. These findings reinforce the study by Aprilia Simanjuntak and Primahardani (2022), which states that exposure to external or foreign cultural elements is capable of directing and reshaping the lifestyle preferences of its users.

However, surprisingly, the direct influence of COO on customer loyalty was found to be insignificant ( $t$ -statistic = 0.912). This contradicts initial assumptions and previous research by Angelina (2024). This insignificance indicates a shift in market behavior in Tebing Tinggi City as a dynamic transit city. Urban consumers in this transit hub possess pragmatic expectations; a positive perception regarding the authenticity of the bamboo klakat does not automatically secure their loyalty or commitment to repurchase instantly if the establishment does not offer other value propositions relevant to their socialization needs.

### **The Influence of Fanaticism on Lifestyle and Customer Loyalty**

The fanaticism variable proved to be the strongest driver of consumer lifestyle, with a  $t$ -statistic reaching 6.708. The profound affective attachment and extreme enthusiasm of authentic culinary enthusiasts in Tebing Tinggi massively dictate their entire consumption patterns. Fanatical customers do not merely seek the functionality of food; rather, they pursue emotional satisfaction and self-identity recognition. They are willing to dedicate specific time and overlook modern container options to experience the sensation of traditional dining. These empirical results support the study by Purnomo (2024), which asserts that an extraordinary level of devotion to a consumption object absolutely compels individuals to adjust their lifestyle patterns to satisfy their psychological desires. Similar to the Country of Origin (COO) variable, the direct influence of fanaticism on customer loyalty was also found to be insignificant ( $t$ -statistic = 1.117), which distinguishes these findings from those of Prianggono and Nugroho (2025). This indicates that extreme emotional attachment to klakat dim sum is volatile in the digital era and a saturated market. Amidst intense competition, such fanatical feelings do not automatically transform into concrete repeat-purchase loyalty unless they are accommodated by established social routines.

### **The Full Mediation Role of Lifestyle**

The primary novelty and major scientific contribution of this study lie in the evidence supporting the mediating role of lifestyle. The testing of specific indirect effects demonstrates that lifestyle significantly mediates the influence of Country of Origin (COO) on loyalty ( $t$ -statistic = 2.933) as well as the influence of fanaticism on loyalty ( $t$ -statistic = 2.842). Since the direct effect paths for both variables are insignificant, lifestyle acts as a full mediator. This phenomenon provides a valuable new theoretical perspective. Customer loyalty toward specialized dim sum outlets in Tebing Tinggi City (such as Micky, Qiaghi, Oini, Classic, and Cahaya Dimsum) cannot be established instantly merely through the physical labeling of bamboo klakat authenticity or simple consumer preference. Both independent variables must pass through the "bridge" of lifestyle first. The attributes of origin authenticity (COO) and emotional attachment (fanaticism) must be converted by consumers into acts of self-actualization, means of social interaction, routine gathering agendas, and aesthetic content for social media (lifestyle). Once the consumption of klakat dim sum becomes an established identity of a high-class lifestyle, only then will a solid, long-term commitment to loyalty and resilience against competitors' offerings be created sustainably. These integrative findings align with and reinforce the theoretical foundations established by Arif Rachman Putra et al. (2022), Kezia Lidya Imanuella and Aris Budiono (2023), and Wahyuzi et al. (2025), which position lifestyle as the most crucial mediating predictor within the ecosystem of modern consumer behavior.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research provides a comprehensive explanation of consumer behavior dynamics within the culinary industry in Tebing Tinggi City, concluding that customer loyalty toward traditional dim sum outlets is not directly determined by the influence of Country of Origin (COO) perceptions or consumer fanaticism. Instead, it must be fully mediated by lifestyle as the sole intervening variable, exhibiting a full mediation pattern. The empirical evidence demonstrates that the authenticity of the presentation method using bamboo klakat and the emotional attachment of authentic culinary enthusiasts will only succeed in securing long-term customer loyalty once these traditional elements have been adopted, internalized, and converted into routine social habits, self-actualization agendas, and a sophisticated urban lifestyle identity within the community. This emotional integration proves that local cultural values must be manifested in daily actions to influence consumer affect sustainably. The scientific novelty of this integrative study lies in its conceptual reconstruction, shifting the focus of COO examination from large-scale manufacturing commodities or the global beauty industry to the realm of physical attributes of regional culinary cultural artifacts.

Simultaneously, it challenges classical literature dogmas by proving that in an era of market saturation among MSMEs, emotional satisfaction and authenticity labeling are powerless to generate commitment-based loyalty without transforming into an active consumer lifestyle ecosystem. Practically, the implications suggest that business owners should not rely solely on the visual uniqueness of their products but must also create aesthetic social interaction spaces to facilitate the modern lifestyle needs of their consumers. Although the overall structural model possesses a very strong predictive relevance ( $Q^2 = 93.7\%$ ), this research acknowledges fundamental limitations regarding the scope of the sample, which was centered solely in Tebing Tinggi City, and the quantitative approach, which relied on the subjective responses of questionnaires. Consequently, it was unable to capture consumer psychological fluctuations in depth over an extended period. Therefore, strategic recommendations are proposed for future researchers to expand the geographical scope of study across various transit regions, integrate a mixed-methods approach using qualitative-phenomenological methods, and include contextual marketing mix variables—such as price perception, service quality, and store location—to provide more generalizable, adaptive, and cutting-edge recommendations for the future sustainability of culinary MSMEs.

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