

THE ROLE OF BRAND AWARENESS AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE IN TOURISTS' PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR GAYO ARABICA COFFEE IN CENTRAL ACEH REGENCY

Isra Mawarni¹, Mariyudi², Nurainun³, Naufal Bachri⁴, Syamsul Bahri⁵, Heriyana⁶

Master of Management Science Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh,
Lhokseumawe, Indonesia

^{2,3,4,5,6} Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, Lhokseumawe, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: mariyudi@unimal.ac.id

Received: 04/09/2026 | Revised: 15/09/2026 | Accepted: 01/10/2026 | Published: 06/10/2026

Abstract

This study examines the role of brand awareness in mediating the effects of taste, brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love on tourist purchasing decisions for Gayo Arabica Coffee in Central Aceh Regency. All variables were measured using a Likert scale. Primary data were collected through questionnaires administered to 210 tourists who had purchased or consumed Gayo Arabica Coffee while visiting tourist destinations in Central Aceh Regency. The data were analyzed using path analysis with WarpPLS version 7.0. The results show that taste, perceived quality, and brand love significantly affect brand awareness, whereas brand trust does not. Brand awareness, brand trust, and brand love significantly affect tourist purchasing decisions, whereas taste and perceived quality do not have significant direct effects. Path analysis further shows that brand awareness mediates the effects of taste, perceived quality, and brand love on tourist purchasing decisions, but does not mediate the effect of brand trust. These findings position brand awareness as an important intervening mechanism in tourists' purchasing decisions for Gayo Arabica Coffee.

Keywords: Brand Awareness; Brand Love; Brand Trust; Perceived Quality; Taste

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an agricultural country in which the agricultural sector remains important for employment, foreign-exchange generation, and domestic food supply. In 2025, the sector recorded growth of 13.53%, compared with 9.74% in the previous year, and contributed 13.83% to gross domestic product, making it the second-largest contributor after manufacturing (Firmansyah, 2025). Coffee is part of this agricultural economy because it supports farmers while also stimulating downstream processing, exports, and coffee-related tourism. Domestic coffee consumption reached 4.45 million bags, or about 267 thousand tons, in 2020/2021 and was projected to reach 4.8 million bags, or about 288 thousand tons, in 2025. Coffee consumption in Indonesia has also increased by an average of 8.2% per year over the last decade (Gabriel & Lubis, 2025).

The growth of culinary tourism has changed the tourist experience from merely visiting a destination to seeking local taste, culture, and authentic sensory experiences. Specialty coffee has attracted greater interest because consumers increasingly look for quality, product stories, and sensory authenticity during travel (Yoga et al., 2025). Coffee therefore functions not only as an agricultural commodity but also as a tourism asset that connects local products with cultural identity. Tourists are interested in the process behind a cup of coffee, from cultivation and harvesting to processing and brewing, which gives coffee additional value as an authentic destination experience (Nasvian et al., 2025).

Central Aceh Regency is one of Indonesia's major coffee-producing areas. Its highland geography, approximately 1,200 to 1,700 meters above sea level, is highly suitable for Gayo Arabica Coffee (Mahyuda et al., 2018). Cool temperatures, adequate rainfall, and fertile soil support its distinctive aroma, balanced acidity, and smooth aftertaste (Wirda et al., 2025). Gayo Arabica Coffee also has an important economic role in Central Aceh, where almost 55% of household heads depend on the coffee plantation sector (Mubarak, 2025). These conditions make Gayo Arabica Coffee relevant not only as a commodity but also as part of the tourism identity of the region.

Gayo Arabica Coffee has received national and international recognition. In 2024, it was reported as the best coffee bean in Asia by TasteAtlas and was listed seventh among the world's top twelve coffees. In the 2021 Cup of

Excellence Indonesia competition, Gayo Arabica Coffee achieved a score of 89.28 and ranked above 157 other coffee samples (Nurlaela, 2025). A preliminary survey conducted by the researcher also identified several Gayo Arabica Coffee products offered in tourist destinations, including Arabica Specialty, Long Berry, Wine, Pea Berry, and Wild Luwak, with 250-gram prices ranging from IDR 65,000 to IDR 100,000. These product variations show the commercial presence of Gayo Arabica Coffee in tourism locations and the opportunity to understand why tourists choose to purchase it.

An initial observation involving 30 tourists showed generally positive responses toward Gayo Arabica Coffee, with an average positive response of 87.22%. Taste received 90% positive responses, perceived quality 93.33%, brand trust 86.67%, brand love 76.67%, brand awareness 86.67%, and tourist purchasing decision 90%. The results indicated that sensory experience, perceived quality, trust, emotional attachment, and brand awareness were all relevant to tourist purchasing behavior. The relatively lower percentage for brand love also suggested an opportunity to strengthen emotional attachment to Gayo Arabica Coffee. The preliminary interviews further indicated that tourists associated the coffee with a distinctive aroma and taste, consistent consumption experiences, perceived premium quality, pride in bringing it home as a regional souvenir, and strong recognition of Gayo Arabica Coffee as part of the travel experience.

Purchase decisions are complex because consumers evaluate product quality, brand trust, and emotional experience before translating their evaluations into actual buying behavior. Brand awareness is especially important because it enables consumers to recognize, recall, and distinguish a product when making a choice. Previous research has shown significant relationships between brand awareness and purchase decisions (Suardana et al., 2024), between taste and purchase decisions (Aurelia et al., 2023), between brand trust and purchase decisions (Indriyani et al., 2022), and between brand love and purchase decisions (Saragih et al., 2024). However, the direct and indirect roles of these factors may differ when brand awareness is positioned as an intervening variable. This issue is particularly relevant in a tourism setting, where visitors may make purchasing decisions under limited time, incomplete information, and strong symbolic or experiential motivations.

Accordingly, this study investigates the role of brand awareness as an intervening variable in tourist purchasing decisions for Gayo Arabica Coffee in Central Aceh Regency. The model examines taste, brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love as antecedents of brand awareness and tourist purchasing decision, and further examines whether brand awareness mediates the relationships between these antecedents and tourist purchasing decision. The study retains the original conceptual structure, measurement indicators, sample, analytical method, and empirical results of the thesis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Decision Making Theory and Tourist Purchasing Decision

Customer decision making theory explains how consumers select, purchase, use, and evaluate products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Consumer decisions are influenced by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors and develop through stages of acquisition, consumption, and post-purchase evaluation. In the tourism context, tourist purchasing decision refers to the process by which tourists choose, purchase, and consume tourism-related products or services. Martina et al. (2018) operationalized tourist purchasing decision through problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase decision. These stages are appropriate for examining the decision to purchase Gayo Arabica Coffee because tourists may first recognize a need for consumption or souvenirs, search for information, compare alternatives, make a purchase, and evaluate the experience afterward.

Brand Awareness, Taste, Brand Trust, Perceived Quality, and Brand Love

Brand awareness reflects the extent to which consumers can recognize, recall, and feel familiar with a brand. Dabbous and Barakat (2020) describe brand awareness through brand recognition, brand familiarity, ease of brand recall, unaided brand awareness, top-of-mind awareness, brand differentiation, and brand salience. In this study, brand awareness represents the cognitive availability of Gayo Arabica Coffee in tourists' memory. A brand that is familiar and easily recalled is more likely to enter the consumer's consideration set and support the purchase decision.

Taste is the consumer's sensory perception of a product and is particularly important for food and beverage products. Mustapa et al. (2024) identify color, smell, flavor, appearance, texture, and general acceptance as components of sensory evaluation. In the Gayo Arabica Coffee context, a distinctive sensory experience may leave a memorable impression and strengthen brand recognition. Prior research on sensory branding and blind tasting has

linked sensory experience with brand awareness (Ocel & Durak, 2023), while other studies have shown that taste can influence purchasing decisions in food and beverage settings.

Brand trust refers to the consumer's belief that a brand is reliable, honest, capable of fulfilling promises, concerned with consumers, benevolent, and able to reduce perceived risk. Zhou et al. (2019) operationalize the construct through brand reliability, quality consistency, brand honesty, promise fulfillment, consumer concern, brand benevolence, and risk reduction. In tourism purchasing situations, trust is important because tourists often make choices with limited information. A trusted coffee product may therefore reduce uncertainty and support a purchase even when the tourist has limited time to compare alternatives.

Perceived quality is the consumer's subjective evaluation of the overall superiority and value of a product. Shanahan et al. (2019) emphasize product quality, superiority over competitors, brand credibility, alignment with consumer expectations, positive brand experience, perceived value, and perceived professionalism. In the present model, perceived quality captures tourists' assessments of Gayo Arabica Coffee based on taste, aroma, consistency, value, and the professionalism of presentation or service. A strong quality perception may help a product become more memorable and strengthen brand awareness even when quality does not directly determine a purchase.

Brand love reflects a strong emotional attachment between a satisfied consumer and a brand. Bazi et al. (2023) describe this attachment through perceptions that the brand is wonderful, makes the consumer feel good, is awesome, creates happiness, is loved, provides delight, inspires passion, and generates strong attachment. For Gayo Arabica Coffee, brand love is related to emotional satisfaction, pride, and the meaning attached to consuming or bringing home a distinctive local product. Emotional attachment can strengthen both brand awareness and purchasing behavior.

Research Relationships and Hypotheses

The original thesis proposed thirteen hypotheses. Four hypotheses test the effects of taste, brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love on brand awareness. A fifth hypothesis tests the effect of brand awareness on tourist purchasing decision. Four additional hypotheses test the direct effects of taste, brand trust, perceived quality, and brand love on tourist purchasing decision. The final four hypotheses test whether brand awareness mediates each of those four antecedent relationships. The model therefore distinguishes cognitive recognition of the coffee brand from sensory evaluation, relational trust, quality perception, and emotional attachment. This structure allows the analysis to determine whether an antecedent influences tourist purchasing decision directly, indirectly through brand awareness, or through both routes. The study is grounded in the expectation that memorable taste, positive quality perceptions, trusted product performance, and emotional attachment can shape brand-related cognition and purchasing behavior. At the same time, previous evidence is not uniform across product and tourism contexts. This makes the mediating role of brand awareness empirically important. The present study therefore tests the complete structural model using primary data from tourists in Central Aceh Regency without changing the variables, indicators, relationships, or hypotheses formulated in the thesis.

METHOD

This quantitative study was conducted in Central Aceh Regency. The population consisted of tourists visiting tourist destinations in Central Aceh, and the exact population size was unknown. The sample size followed the rule used in the thesis, namely five respondents for each of 42 indicators, producing a total sample of 210 respondents (Hair et al., 2019). The study used non-probability purposive sampling. Respondents were required to be tourists visiting destinations in Central Aceh Regency and to have purchased or consumed Gayo Arabica Coffee at least three times.

Primary data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed offline at strategic locations, including tourist attractions, coffee shops, and souvenir centers in Central Aceh Regency. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, confidentiality of their responses, and the voluntary nature of participation. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The procedure followed the data collection approach described by Bougie and Sekaran (2019) and Sugiyono (2021).

Data analysis used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling with WarpPLS version 7.0. The measurement model was evaluated through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. Convergent validity was assessed using outer loadings above 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted above 0.50. Reliability was evaluated through composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. The structural model was evaluated using model fit

THE ROLE OF BRAND AWARENESS AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE IN TOURISTS' PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR GAYO ARABICA COFFEE IN CENTRAL ACEH REGENCY

Isra Mawarni et al

and quality indices, the coefficient of determination, path coefficients, and p-values. A relationship was treated as significant when $p < 0.05$. Direct and indirect effects were then examined to identify mediation patterns.

Table 1. Operational Definition of Variables

Variable	Definition	Indicator	Scale
Tourist Purchasing Decision (Y)	Tourist purchasing decision is the decision-making process undertaken by tourists in selecting, purchasing, and consuming tourism products or services. (Martina et al., 2018)	1. Problem recognition 2. Information search 3. Evaluation of alternative 4. Purchase decision 5. Post-purchase decision (Martina et al., 2018)	Likert
Brand Awareness (M)	Brand awareness is the degree to which consumers are able to recognize, remember, and feel familiar with a brand as a result of exposure to brand content on social media. (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020)	1. Brand recognition 2. Brand familiarity 3. Ease of brand recall 4. Unaided brand awareness 5. Top of mind 6. Brand differentiation 7. Brand salience (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020)	Likert
Taste (X1)	Taste includes perceptions generated by chemical stimulation of the taste buds on the tongue involving conscious tastes such as sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and others. Taste plays an important role in shaping consumer satisfaction and consumption experience. (Mustapa et al., 2024)	1. Color 2. Smell 3. Flavor 4. Appearance 5. Texture 6. General acceptance (Mustapa et al., 2024)	Likert
Brand Trust (X2)	Brand trust is the consumer's belief that a brand has the ability, integrity, and goodwill to consistently fulfill promises and provide reliable performance. (Pandiangan et al., 2021)	1. Brand reliability 2. Quality consistency 3. Brand honesty 4. Promise fulfillment 5. Consumer concern 6. Brand benevolence 7. Risk reduction (Zhou et al., 2019)	Likert
Perceived Quality (X3)	Perceived quality is the consumer's assessment of the superiority and value of a brand or product based on experience, interaction, and information received, rather than only the objective quality of the product itself. (Shanahan et al., 2019)	1. Product quality 2. Brand superiority over competitors 3. Brand credibility 4. Alignment with consumer expectations 5. Positive brand experience 6. Perceived value 7. Perceived professionalism (Shanahan et al., 2019)	Likert
Brand Love (X4)	Brand love is the emotional and passionate attachment possessed by satisfied consumers toward a particular brand. Brand love reflects feelings of closeness, emotional attachment, and devotion to a brand.	1. Is a wonderful brand 2. Makes me feel good 3. Is totally awesome 4. Make me very happy 5. I love 6. Is a pure delight 7. Passionate about	Likert

8. Very attached

(Bazi et al., 2023)

(Bazi et al., 2023)

Source: Thesis operationalization, adapted into English without changing the constructs or indicators (2026).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The study used 210 respondents. The respondent profile shows that 59.52% were male and 40.48% were female. The largest age group was 31–45 years (42.86%), followed by respondents younger than 30 years (39.05%). Bachelor's degree holders represented 42.86% of the sample, and entrepreneurs were the largest occupational group (29.52%). In terms of purchasing experience, 65.71% of respondents had purchased Gayo Arabica Coffee more than eleven times, indicating that most respondents had substantial experience with the product.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

No.	Description	Total	Percentage
1	Gender:		
	Male	125	59,52%
	Female	85	40,48%
2	Age:		
	< 30 Years	82	39,05%
	31–45 Years	90	42,86%
	> 46 Years	38	18,10%
3	Education Level:		
	Senior High School/Equivalent	40	19,05%
	Diploma III/Equivalent	43	20,48%
	Bachelor's Degree	90	42,86%
	Other	37	17,62%
4	Occupation:		
	Student	20	9,52%
	Civil Servant	42	20,00%
	Private Employee	30	14,29%
	Entrepreneur	62	29,52%
	Trader	40	19,05%
	Other	16	7,62%
5	Number of Gayo Arabica Coffee Purchases in Central Aceh Regency:		
	< 5 Times	9	4,29%
	6–10 Times	63	30,00%
	> 11 Times	138	65,71%

Source: Research Results (2026)

Measurement Model

Convergent validity was first examined using outer loading values. All 40 indicators reported loading values above 0.70 and p-values of 0.001. This means that the indicators for taste, brand trust, perceived quality, brand love, brand awareness, and tourist purchasing decision met the validity criterion used in the thesis. The complete loading results are retained in Table 3.

THE ROLE OF BRAND AWARENESS AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE IN TOURISTS' PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR GAYO ARABICA COFFEE IN CENTRAL ACEH REGENCY

Isra Mawarni et al

Table 3. Convergent Validity Based on Loading Values

Indicator	Loading Value	P-Value	Description
X1.1	0,786	0,001	Meets Criterion
X1.2	0,784	0,001	Meets Criterion
X1.3	0,839	0,001	Meets Criterion
X1.4	0,881	0,001	Meets Criterion
X1.5	0,811	0,001	Meets Criterion
X1.6	0,851	0,001	Meets Criterion
X2.1	0,818	0,001	Meets Criterion
X2.2	0,843	0,001	Meets Criterion
X2.3	0,877	0,001	Meets Criterion
X2.4	0,852	0,001	Meets Criterion
X2.5	0,860	0,001	Meets Criterion
X2.6	0,870	0,001	Meets Criterion
X2.7	0,877	0,001	Meets Criterion
X3.1	0,819	0,001	Meets Criterion
X3.2	0,873	0,001	Meets Criterion
X3.3	0,891	0,001	Meets Criterion
X3.4	0,866	0,001	Meets Criterion
X3.5	0,842	0,001	Meets Criterion
X3.6	0,834	0,001	Meets Criterion
X3.7	0,780	0,001	Meets Criterion
X4.1	0,841	0,001	Meets Criterion
X4.2	0,819	0,001	Meets Criterion
X4.3	0,882	0,001	Meets Criterion
X4.4	0,896	0,001	Meets Criterion
X4.5	0,902	0,001	Meets Criterion
X4.6	0,808	0,001	Meets Criterion
X4.7	0,842	0,001	Meets Criterion
X4.8	0,812	0,001	Meets Criterion
M.1	0,865	0,001	Meets Criterion
M.2	0,844	0,001	Meets Criterion
M.3	0,831	0,001	Meets Criterion
M.4	0,868	0,001	Meets Criterion
M.5	0,858	0,001	Meets Criterion
M.6	0,805	0,001	Meets Criterion
M.7	0,796	0,001	Meets Criterion
Y.1	0,903	0,001	Meets Criterion
Y.2	0,901	0,001	Meets Criterion
Y.3	0,879	0,001	Meets Criterion
Y.4	0,829	0,001	Meets Criterion
Y.5	0,915	0,001	Meets Criterion

Source: Research Results (2026)

All outer loading values exceeded the 0.70 criterion. The lowest loading was 0.780 for X3.7 and the highest was 0.915 for Y.5, so none of the indicators required elimination. The measurement model therefore retained the complete set of indicators from the thesis.

THE ROLE OF BRAND AWARENESS AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE IN TOURISTS' PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR GAYO ARABICA COFFEE IN CENTRAL ACEH REGENCY

Isra Mawarni et al

Validity, Reliability, Model Fit, and Coefficient of Determination

Table 4. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted	Description
Taste	0,682	Valid
Brand Trust	0,734	Valid
Perceived Quality	0,713	Valid
Brand Love	0,724	Valid
Brand Awareness	0,703	Valid
Tourist Purchasing Decision	0,785	Valid

Source: Research Results (2026)

Table 5. Reliability Test

Variable	Inner Model		Description
	CR	CA	
Taste	0,928	0,906	Reliable
Brand Trust	0,951	0,940	Reliable
Perceived Quality	0,945	0,933	Reliable
Brand Love	0,954	0,945	Reliable
Brand Awareness	0,943	0,929	Reliable
Tourist Purchasing Decision	0,946	0,934	Reliable

Source: Research Results (2026)

Table 6. Goodness of Fit Indices

Fit Indices	Index	P-Value	Criterion	Decision
Average Path Coefficient (APC)	0,224	0,001	$P < 0,05$	Accepted
Average R-Squared (ARS)	0,857	0,001	$P < 0,05$	Accepted
Average Adjusted R-Squared (AARS)	0,854	0,001	$P < 0,05$	Accepted
Average Variance Inflation Factor (AVIF)	6,084		$AVIF < 5$	Rejected
Average Full Collinearity VIF (AFVIV)	5,792		$AFVIV < 5$	Rejected
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	0,787		Accepted: Small $> 0,1$ Medium $> 0,25$ Large $0,36$	Accepted
Simpson's Paradox Ratio (SPR)	1,000		$SPR > 0,7$	Accepted
R-Squared Contribution Ratio (RSCR)	1,000		$RSCR > 0,9$	Accepted
Statistical Suppression Ratio (SSR)	1,000		$SSR > 0,7$	Accepted
NLBCDR	1,000		$NLBCDR > 0,8$	Accepted

Source: Research Results (2026)

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination

Latent Variable	R-Square
Brand Awareness	0,795
Tourist Purchasing Decision	0,919

Source: Research Results (2026)

AVE values ranged from 0.682 to 0.785, and all constructs therefore exceeded the 0.50 threshold. Composite reliability ranged from 0.928 to 0.954 and Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.906 to 0.945. The goodness-of-fit results show that APC, ARS, AARS, GoF, SPR, RSCR, SSR, and NLBCDR met the stated criteria, while AVIF and AFVIV exceeded the criterion of 5. Following the interpretation in the thesis, the model was retained because only two fit indices were not satisfied. The R-square value for brand awareness was 0.795, indicating that taste, brand trust,

THE ROLE OF BRAND AWARENESS AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE IN TOURISTS' PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR GAYO ARABICA COFFEE IN CENTRAL ACEH REGENCY

Isra Mawarni et al

perceived quality, and brand love explained 79.5% of its variance. The R-square for tourist purchasing decision was 0.919, indicating that the five predictors in the structural model explained 91.9% of its variance.

Structural Model and Direct Effects

The WarpPLS structural model produced the following equations: $BA = 0.266T + 0.089BT + 0.333PQ + 0.256BL$, and $TPD = 0.412BA + 0.060T + 0.287BT + 0.093PQ + 0.218BL$, where BA represents brand awareness, T represents taste, BT represents brand trust, PQ represents perceived quality, BL represents brand love, and TPD represents tourist purchasing decision. The original WarpPLS figure from the thesis is reproduced below without alteration.

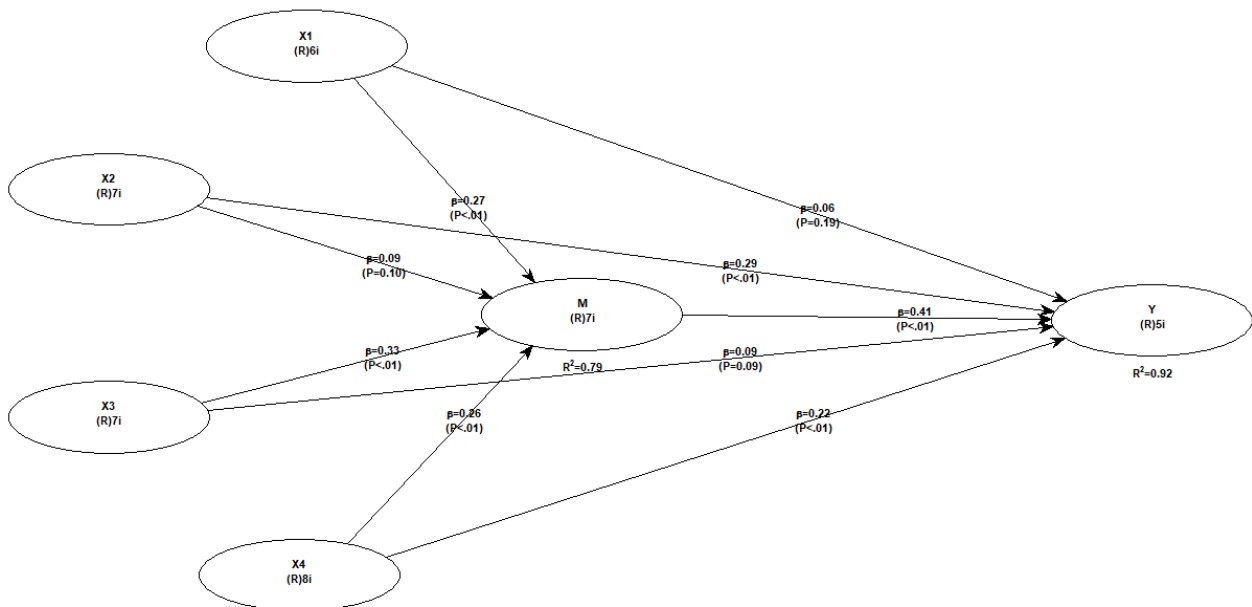


Figure 1. Structural Equation Modeling Analysis Results

Source: Original WarpPLS output in the Isra Mawarni thesis (2026).

Table 8. Direct Effects

Variable		β	p	Decision
Taste	Brand Awareness	0,266	0,001	Accepted
Brand Trust	Brand Awareness	0,089	0,096	Rejected
Perceived Quality	Brand Awareness	0,333	0,001	Accepted
Brand Love	Brand Awareness	0,256	0,001	Accepted
Brand Awareness	Purchase Decision	0,412	0,001	Accepted
Taste	Purchase Decision	0,060	0,190	Rejected
Brand Trust	Purchase Decision	0,287	0,001	Accepted
Perceived Quality	Purchase Decision	0,093	0,086	Rejected
Brand Love	Purchase Decision	0,218	0,001	Accepted

Source: Research Results (2026)

Indirect Effects and Mediation

Table 9. Indirect Effects

Variable	β	p	Decision
Taste	0,110	0,011	Accepted
Brand Trust	0,037	0,225	Rejected
Perceived Quality	0,137	0,002	Accepted
Brand Love	0,105	0,014	Accepted

Source: Research Results (2026)

Table 10. Mediation Interaction Results

Variable	Direct		Indirect		Mediation Type
	β	P	β	P	
Taste	0,060	0,190	0,110	0,011	Full Mediation
Brand Trust	0,287	0,001	0,037	0,225	No Mediation
Perceived Quality	0,093	0,086	0,137	0,002	Full Mediation
Brand Love	0,218	0,001	0,105	0,014	Partial Mediation

Source: Research Results (2026)

Discussion of Direct Effects

Taste had a significant positive effect on brand awareness ($\beta = 0.266$, $p = 0.001$). This result indicates that the color, aroma, flavor, appearance, texture, and general acceptance of Gayo Arabica Coffee contribute to how easily tourists recognize and remember the product. Sensory experience can create memorable associations between product characteristics and a brand, supporting the explanation that taste-related stimuli strengthen consumer memory (Motoki et al., 2023). The result is also consistent with sensory-branding research showing that taste experience can be connected with brand awareness (Ocel & Durak, 2023).

Brand trust did not have a significant effect on brand awareness ($\beta = 0.089$, $p = 0.096$). The thesis interprets this finding as evidence that tourists may recognize Gayo Arabica Coffee primarily through direct exposure, sensory experience, and product familiarity rather than through trust itself. A tourist can know and remember a coffee product before a strong trust relationship has developed. In contrast, perceived quality significantly affected brand awareness ($\beta = 0.333$, $p = 0.001$), and this was the strongest antecedent of brand awareness in the model. A positive perception of product quality creates a stronger impression and makes the coffee easier to recognize and remember.

Brand love also significantly affected brand awareness ($\beta = 0.256$, $p = 0.001$). Emotional attachment increases attention to a brand and strengthens its place in memory. The finding is consistent with the thesis argument that tourists who feel proud, satisfied, comfortable, or emotionally connected to Gayo Arabica Coffee are more likely to recognize and recall it. Brand awareness itself significantly affected tourist purchasing decision ($\beta = 0.412$, $p = 0.001$) and was the largest direct predictor of the purchasing decision. This result supports the view that familiar brands receive greater consideration when consumers evaluate alternatives and make choices.

Discussion of Purchasing Decisions and Mediation

Taste did not have a significant direct effect on tourist purchasing decision ($\beta = 0.060$, $p = 0.190$). The thesis explains that tourists may make purchasing decisions before fully evaluating taste, particularly when price, packaging, accessibility, popularity, or recommendations are more immediately observable. This interpretation is consistent with the distinction between sensory evaluation after consumption and the external cues used before purchase. Perceived quality also did not have a significant direct effect on tourist purchasing decision ($\beta = 0.093$, $p = 0.086$). Tourists may have positive quality perceptions but still rely on practical and situational cues when making purchases during travel.

Brand trust, in contrast, significantly affected tourist purchasing decision ($\beta = 0.287$, $p = 0.001$). Trust reduces uncertainty and allows tourists to rely on a product that they believe will consistently meet expectations. Brand love also significantly affected tourist purchasing decision ($\beta = 0.218$, $p = 0.001$), showing that emotional attachment can directly motivate tourists to choose Gayo Arabica Coffee even when alternatives are available. These findings distinguish the roles of the constructs: trust and emotional attachment can directly support the purchase decision, whereas taste and perceived quality require a stronger cognitive link through brand awareness.

The mediation analysis reinforces this distinction. Brand awareness fully mediated the effect of taste on tourist purchasing decision because the direct effect was not significant while the indirect effect was significant ($\beta = 0.110$, $p = 0.011$). Brand awareness also fully mediated the effect of perceived quality ($\beta = 0.137$, $p = 0.002$). These results mean that sensory experience and quality perceptions influence purchasing decisions when they first strengthen tourists' recognition and memory of Gayo Arabica Coffee. This mechanism is consistent with the role of brand awareness in helping consumers identify familiar options during the evaluation process (Ghifari et al., 2023).

Brand awareness did not mediate the relationship between brand trust and tourist purchasing decision ($\beta = 0.037$, $p = 0.225$). Brand trust already had a significant direct effect on the purchasing decision, so the thesis concludes that trust operates more directly and does not depend on increased awareness. Brand awareness partially mediated the effect of brand love because both the direct effect of brand love and the indirect effect through brand awareness were significant (indirect $\beta = 0.105$, $p = 0.014$). Emotional attachment can therefore influence tourist

purchasing decision through two paths: directly through affective preference and indirectly by making the brand more salient and memorable.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

The theoretical implication is that brand awareness plays a central but differentiated role in the model. It connects sensory and quality-related evaluations with tourist purchasing behavior, while brand trust primarily works through a direct path and brand love works through both direct and indirect paths. The findings therefore clarify that cognitive awareness, relational trust, perceived product quality, sensory experience, and emotional attachment are not interchangeable constructs. Their effects occur through different mechanisms even when they jointly explain a high proportion of tourist purchasing decision. The managerial implication is that local Gayo Arabica Coffee businesses and the Central Aceh regional government should strengthen brand awareness through consistent sensory experiences, recognizable packaging, digital communication, coffee festivals, tourism events, storytelling, and clear information about product origin and authenticity. Taste and perceived quality remain important even though their direct effects on purchasing decisions were not significant because both become effective through brand awareness. Brand trust should be strengthened through consistent quality, transparent information, authenticity, reliable service, and product guarantees. Brand love can be strengthened through distinctive cultural identity, storytelling about Gayo coffee history, personalized service, coffee tasting, and educational experiences that create positive memories for tourists.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that brand awareness has an important intervening role in tourist purchasing decisions for Gayo Arabica Coffee in Central Aceh Regency. Taste significantly increased brand awareness but did not directly increase tourist purchasing decision. Brand trust did not significantly increase brand awareness, but it significantly increased tourist purchasing decision. Perceived quality significantly increased brand awareness but did not have a significant direct effect on tourist purchasing decision. Brand love significantly increased both brand awareness and tourist purchasing decision. Brand awareness itself significantly increased tourist purchasing decision and was the strongest direct predictor in the structural model.

The mediation results provide a more specific explanation of these relationships. Brand awareness fully mediated the effect of taste on tourist purchasing decision and fully mediated the effect of perceived quality. Brand awareness did not mediate the effect of brand trust, indicating that trust works directly in the purchasing decision. Brand awareness partially mediated the effect of brand love, showing that emotional attachment influences purchasing decisions both directly and through stronger brand recognition and recall. These conclusions reproduce the direction, significance, coefficients, and mediation classifications reported in the original thesis.

For policy and practice, the study recommends prioritizing brand awareness as a strategy for increasing tourist purchasing decisions. The Central Aceh regional government can integrate Gayo Arabica Coffee promotion with digital media, coffee festivals, tourism events, and collaboration between coffee businesses and tourism stakeholders. Coffee businesses should maintain sensory consistency and perceived quality, communicate product advantages through recognizable packaging and storytelling, strengthen trust through authenticity and reliable information, and build brand love through cultural narratives and memorable coffee experiences. Future studies may extend the model with perceived value, destination image, electronic word of mouth, tourist experience, or tourist satisfaction, use mixed methods to investigate non-significant relationships, compare tourist segments, and consider longitudinal designs.

REFERENCES

- Aurelia, U., Titing, A. S., & Stiadi, M. (2023). Taste And Promotion On Purchasing Decisions For Chokolaka Drink Products. *Jurnal Penelitian Manajemen Dan Inovasi Riset*, 1(6), 162–169.
- Bazi, S., Filieri, R., & Gorton, M. (2023). Social Media Content Aesthetic Quality and Customer Engagement: The Mediating Role of Entertainment and Impacts On Brand Love and Loyalty. *Journal of Business Research*, 1(6), 112789–113778.
- Bougie, R., & Sekaran, U. (2019). *Research Methods For Business: A Skill Building Approach* (8th ed.; L. Johnson & J. Howarth, Eds.). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

- Dabbous, A., & Barakat, K. A. (2020). Bridging The Online Offline Gap: Assessing The Impact of Brands' Social Network Content Quality On Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 5(3), 1–9.
- Dominici, A., Boncিলnelli, F., Marone, E., & Casini, L. (2025). Territorial Brand Equity In The Wine Market and The Role of The Organic Label: A Consumer Perspective. *Food Quality and Preference*, 12(6), 1054–1077.
- Elalfy, R. M., Elgazzar, A., El-Ashry, Y. Y., & Elshamouby, M. H. (2025). The Destination and Local Brand Equity Role In Shaping Tourist's Loyalty: The Moderated Mediation Effect of Age and Number of Visits. *Future Business Journal*, 11(61), 1–13.
- Firmansyah, M. I. (2025). BPS: Sektor Pertanian Tumbuh Signifikan, Penopang Utama Ekonomi Nasional Triwulan II-2025. Badan Perakitan Dan Modernisasi Pertanian. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/63y3rtc4>
- Gabriel, P. Y., & Lubis, M. M. (2025). Sustainability Analysis of Coffe Agribusiness In Indonesia: Environmental, Economic, and Social Perspectives. *IJHESS: International Journal of Health, Economics, and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 788–795.
- Ghifari, E. A. A., Ridwan, M. A., & Usman, O. (2023). Can Purchasing Decisions be Mediated by Brand Awareness? *International Students Conference On Business, Education, Economics, Accounting, and Management*, 1(1), 248–260.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Jakarta: Cengage.
- Indriyani, N. A., Savitri, C., & Pratiwi, W. (2022). The Effect of Brand Image and Brand Trust on The Purchase Decision of coffe of Promise of Souls on Management Students of UBP Karawang. *Jurnal Ekonomi*, 11(1), 215–220.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing Management* (15th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Pretice Hall, Inc.
- Mahyuda, Aminah, S., & Tjitropranoto, P. (2018). Tingkat Adopsi Good Agricultural Practices Budidaya Kopi Arabika Gayo oleh Petani di Kabupaten Aceh Tengah. *Jurnal Penyuluhan*, 14(2), 308–325.
- Martina, S., Hakim, L., Rahmasari, G., Andriani, R., & Somantri, P. R. (2018). Brand Awareness Strategy to Increase Tourist Purchase Decision in Sentra Rajut Binong Jati. *Conference Proceeding IFSAC*, 1(1), 432–438.
- Motoki, K., Nakahara, T., & Velasco, C. (2023). Tasting Brands: Associations Between Brand Personality and Tastes. *Journal of Business Reseach*, 15(6), 1135–1145.
- Mubarak, Z. (2025). Kopi Arabika Gayo: Potensi Ekonomi dan Pariwisata Aceh Tengah. Askara.Co. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/59uaprdm>
- Mustapa, M. A. C., Kallas, Z., Silande, C., Gagnaire, V., Jan, G., Lopez, L., & Aguayo, I. A. (2024). From Taste To Purchase: Understanding The Influence of Sensory Perceptions and Informed Tasting on Plant-Based Product Purchases - An Extension of The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Journal of Agriculture and Food Research*, 1(6), 101188–101197.
- Nasvian, M. F., Rosyida, H. N., & Aditya, C. S. K. (2025). Digital Discourse and Cultural Narratives: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Coffe Tourism In Indonesia On Twitter. *INJECT: Interdisciplinary Journal of Communication*, 10(1), 593–620.
- Nurlaela, E. (2025). Kopi Arabika Gayo Dinobatkan Sebagai Biji Kopi Terbaik Asia versi TasteAtlas. Kumparan.Com. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/52yznk6y>
- Ocel, Y., & Durak, I. (2023). Examining The Relationship Between Sensory Branding, Brand Awareness, and Preference After A Blind Tasting Test: An Application On Tea Brands. *Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems*, 21(1), 97–113.
- Pandiangan, K., Masiyono, & Atmogo, Y. D. (2021). Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Brand Equity: Brand Trust, Brand Image, Perceived Quality, & Brand Loyalty. *JIMT: Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen Terapan*, 2(4), 471–484.
- Saragih, A. A. N., Miswanto, & Ximenes, V. S. (2024). Analysis of the Influence of Influencer Marketing, Electronic Word of Mouth, and Brand Love on Product Purchase Decisions. *IJABM: International Journal of Asian Business and Management*, 3(6), 803–816.
- Shanahan, T., Tran, T. P., & Taylor, E. C. (2019). Getting to Know You: Social Media Personalization As A Means of Enhancing Brand Loyalty and Perceived Quality. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 4(7), 57–65.
- Solimun, Fernandes, A. A. R., & Nurjannah. (2017). *Metode Statistika Multivariat Pemodelan Persamaan Sturuktural (SEM) Pendekatan WapPLS*. Malang: Universitas Brawijaya Press.
- Suardana, I. A. R. A., Mahyuni, L. P., Lestari, N. P. N. E., & Suardana, I. B. R. (2024). Impact of Brand Image, Brand Awareness, and Social Media Marketingon PurchaseDecisions: Mediating Roles of Purchase Interest, Service Quality, and Experiential Marketing. *JBTI: Jurnal Bisnis Teori Dan Implementasi*, 15(1), 56–71.

- Sugiyono. (2021). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Wirda, B., Nurmalina, R., & Muflikh, Y. N. (2025). Tata Kelola Rantai Nilai Kopi Arabika Gayo di Kabupaten Aceh Tengah Provinsi Aceh. *Journal of Indonesian Agribusiness*, 13(1), 1–15.
- Yoga, V., Widyawan, I., & Wisesa, K. Y. (2025). The Sustainability Preferences of Specialty Coffe Consumption Trends at Sa. Tuang Coffe. *The Journal Gastronomy Tourism*, 12(1), 145–153.
- Zhou, J.-D., Huang, J.-S., & Su, S. (2019). The Effects of Trust On Consumers' Continuous Purchase Intentions In C2C Social Commerce: A Trust Transfer Perspective. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 5(1), 42–49.
- Ghozali, I. (2021). *Aplikasi Analisis Multivariate Dengan Program IBM SPSS 26 (10th ed.)*. Semarang: Universitas Diponegoro.
- Intuluck, W., Srisakun, C., & Tadawattanawit, S. (2023). The Mediating Role of Perceived Value, Brand Awareness, and Brand Loyalty in Tourism Revisit Intention among High-Quality Tourists in Thailand. *Thammasat Review*, 26(2), 395–422.
- Kokthi, E., Thoma, L., Saary, R., & Kelemen-Erdos, A. (2022). Disconfirmation of Taste as a Measure of Trust in Brands: An Experimental Study on Mineral Water. *Foods*, 1(1), 1–19.
- Sohaib, M., Mlynarski, J., & Wu, R. (2022). Building Brand Equity: The Impact of Brand Experience, Brand Love, and Brand Engagement—A Case Study of Customers' Perception of the Apple Brand in China. *Journal of Sustainability*, 15(1), 746–765.
- Tegar, A., & Tuti, M. (2024). The Influence of Taste and Packaging On Purchase Decisions and Repurchase Intentions. *JMDK: Jurnal Manajemen Dan Kewirausahaan*, 12(1), 59–65.