

THE INFLUENCE OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND BRAND IMAGE ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY ATHIFAH KENDARI SOUVENIR STORE

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Abstract: *This study aims to determine the effect of Relationship Marketing and Brand Image on Customer Loyalty at ATHIFAH Kendari Souvenir Store. This type of research uses quantitative research. The population in this study is the consumers of ATHIFAH Kendari Souvenir Store whose number is unknown (infinite). The sample in this study amounted to 50 respondents. The sampling technique in this research is by using purposive sampling. The method of data collection in this study was using an online questionnaire, namely through Google Form. This study uses multiple linear regression analysis. The results of this study indicate that: (1) relationship marketing and brand image have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty simultaneously (2) relationship marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty partially (3) brand image has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty partially.*



INTRODUCTION

"ATHIFAH Kendari Souvenir" is a souvenir business that was founded in 2012 by Mrs. Dea Kusuma as the owner of the company which is located in the city of Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi. The ATHIFAH store sells various kinds of Southeast Sulawesi special souvenirs and crafts such as cashew nuts, processed sago, chocolate, clothing, traditional fabrics, key chains, and others. There are products that are self-produced by the ATHIFAH home industry, there are also other products that are entrusted by MSMEs to be sold at ATHIFAH store. This store is located on Haji Supu Yusuf Street, Kadia sub-district, Bende sub-district, Kendari City. Having been established for 9 years, the ATHIFAH store has gone through various economic conditions and competed with many other similar businesses.

Recently, several Kendari souvenir businesses are competitors in this field. Some have been established for 28 years, some have been established recently, so ATHIFAH stores must always be ready to develop their marketing strategy in order to compete and survive. There are so many competitors out there that offer various kinds of product advantages that make it difficult for companies to capture market share and increase the number of consumers. This is why the ATHIFAH store has to work harder to be able to increase its market share, one of which is by creating and developing innovative marketing strategies. Consumers are an asset that must be maintained in order to consistently buy or consume the products we produce. As

for one form of commitment that must be given to consumers is to provide the best service so that loyalty arises between consumers and companies.

Acquiring new customers is only the first stage in a marketing process, the next process is how companies can strengthen customer relationships, turn them into loyal ones, and then make them regular customers (Firdaus and Kanyan, 2014). Loyalty can be defined as someone who is used to buying from a company (Jill Griffin, 2002). Customer loyalty is a commitment between customers to a brand, store or supplier based on positive traits and long-term purchases. Very deep loyalty will make consumers continue to buy back or protect the product or service brands they like in the future, and will lead to repeated purchases (Tjiptono, 2006). The indicators of customer loyalty consist of 3, namely Repeat Purchases (loyalty to product purchases), Retention (resistance to negative influences about the company) and Referrals (total reference to the existence of the company) (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

In the phenomenon of increasingly fierce competition, consumers have more and more alternative choices for purchasing decisions. Consumers will easily switch to other products if the product produced by a company is no longer able to satisfy their needs and wants. If consumers start leaving the company's products and switch to other products (competitor products), it means that the company must start from the bottom again to be able to get consumers who have switched to other products. To prevent consumers from switching to other products, the company must pay attention to several factors that can make consumers loyal, such as Relationship Marketing and Brand Image.

Relationship marketing is a process of maintaining, building and enhancing strong and high-value relationships between customers and companies (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006). Meanwhile, according to (Saputra and Ariningsih, 2004) Relationship marketing is a marketing strategy that seeks to create and establish long-term relationships between buyers and business actors, which will then maintain and create strong relationships so as to benefit each party and create customer loyalty. In today's competitive environment for companies to compete and remain superior, maintaining relationships with customers (relationship marketing) has become an important issue (Wang et al., 2009). The indicators used to measure relationship marketing in this study are communication, trust, commitment, and conflict handling (Ndubisi, 2007).

Not only creating and maintaining good relationships with customers, creating a good brand image will also create customer loyalty. A good product or company image will of course make consumers confident to buy or use our products. The image of a brand will influence consumers in choosing products and services that suit their needs and desires (Halik et al., 2021). Loyal consumers will not easily switch to competing products because there has been an emotional attachment to the product used. (Kotler and Keller, 2009) defines brand image as an impression that arises in the minds of consumers about a brand that is created by the consumer's own experience of the brand. According to Kotler and Keller (2009: 269), for a brand to have a good image, the criteria that a brand must have are easy to remember, quality brand image, attractive packaging, affordable prices, well-known products, and products safety. (HALIK et al., 2023)

Based on field data, ATHIFAH stores have experienced quite significant business growth over the last 5 years. There was a decrease in growth in 2018 of -3% due to road repairs in front of the ATHIFAH store which caused problems with access and parking lots which made consumers uncomfortable. However, the ATHIFAH store was still able to get through this problem and experienced quite satisfactory growth of 40% the following year plus in 2019 World Food Day activities were taking place in Kendari City and at that time there were several ambassadors from various countries shopping at ATHIFAH store so that sales of ATHIFAH stores shoot up and can become a stepping stone for ATHIFAH stores so that they are better known by tourists and local residents. However, in 2020, there was a

decrease of -12% which was the most drastic decrease in the last five years due to the COVID-19 outbreak which has hit the whole world. And at that time there was a simultaneous lockdown which greatly affected the economic sector, especially tourism. But once again the ATHIFAH store managed to survive and again experienced the highest percentage increase in business growth since the founding of the ATHIFAH store, namely 79% in 2021. To be able to always increase sales and always be able to adapt and rise in all economic situations, the ATHIFAH shop must continue to develop and apply various marketing strategies and implement them optimally. Given today's technological developments that are increasingly sophisticated, the emergence of various business competitors, and various methods are used to attract customers.

Based on the results of research (Iyan M Yanuar, 2019) (ANASTASIA et al., 2023), it was found that there is a significant influence between Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty on Instagram Luphine Shop. While research (Alex Santana, 2019) obtained results that brand image has a positive effect on customer loyalty. Research by (A. Nur Qalby, Jusni, and Abdul Razak, 2018) also shows that relationship marketing and brand image have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty refers to a profound allegiance in which consumers continuously choose to repurchase or remain devoted to a preferred product or service brand in the future, resulting in repetitive purchases of the same brand or a group of brands (Tjiptono, 2006). Earning and maintaining customer loyalty is crucial (Jill Griffin, 2007). Customer loyalty tends to emphasize behavioral patterns rather than mere attitudes, meaning that if an individual repeatedly purchases the same product two or three times, they can be categorized as a loyal customer (Londong et al., 2024). (Utami, 2006) defines customer loyalty as a commitment to acquiring necessities and a disregard for competitors' attempts to attract their attention. According to (Kotler and Keller, 2006), loyalty indicators include Repeat purchase (repurchase), Retention (resisting negative influences about the company), and Referrals (providing positive references about the company's existence).

Relationship Marketing

Relationship Marketing is a strategy involving continuous exchange transactions between the seller and the buyer (McKenna, 2005). It emphasizes the importance of maintaining a strong relationship between the two parties even after the sale is completed. Similarly, (Saputra and Ariningsih, 2014) view Relationship Marketing as a marketing strategy that aims to establish and sustain long-term relationships with buyers. The goal is to foster strong and mutually beneficial connections between businesses and customers, as this can lead to increased customer loyalty (Latiep et al., 2023). In addition, the goal of relationship marketing is to establish long-lasting, mutually beneficial relationships with the key parties, such as clients, suppliers, distributors, and other marketing partners (Kotler and Keller, 2007). According to (Ndubisi, 2007) states that the indicators used to measure relationship marketing are communication, trust, commitment, and conflict handling.

Brand Image

Image refers to a collection of ideas, beliefs, and impressions that an individual holds about an object. On the other hand, a brand encompasses a name, symbol, sign, term, design, or a combination of these elements, with the purpose of identifying the goods and services of a person or group of sellers and distinguishing them from competitors' offerings (Kotler,

2001). In the market, every product possesses a brand, serving as a means of differentiation between one product and another. The brand functions as an identifier of the seller or manufacturer, and it essentially represents a promise to consistently deliver specific perspectives, benefits, and services to consumers or customers. The most successful brands ensure a consistent level of quality provided by the manufacturers. In this study, the measurement of brand image is guided by the theory proposed by Kotler and Keller (2009). According to their theory, a brand must possess certain criteria to establish a positive image, which includes being memorable, maintaining a high-quality brand image, having attractive packaging, offering affordable prices, being well-known for its products, and providing safe products. (Halik et al., 2021)

The relationship between relationship marketing and customer loyalty

The process of establishing a robust customer loyalty is referred to as Relationship Marketing. It is a strategy employed by companies to cultivate enduring connections with their customers (Kotler in Tjiptono, 2000). Relationship Marketing significantly impacts loyalty, as it stems from the satisfaction customers experience from consuming a product. When Relationship Marketing is earnestly implemented, it leads to a high level of loyalty from customers.

H1: Relationship Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty.

The relationship between brand image and customer loyalty

(Aaker and Biel, 1993) assert that brand image is a customer evaluation of the brand in a market. The production may be based on firsthand knowledge, information gleaned from others or the media, or both. Brand image is a set of associations about a brand that is stored in the minds or memories of consumers. Customer loyalty to a store is also influenced by its brand image; when a store has a positive reputation, this fosters customer loyalty; in contrast, when a store has a negative reputation, this fosters consumer disloyalty.

H2 :Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty.

Conceptual Model

In this conceptual model, customer loyalty at the ATHIFAH Kendari Souvenir Store is examined in relation to two key variables: relationship marketing and brand image. Customer Loyalty refers to the degree to which customers will return to acquire products from the store and keep their loyalty to the brands and services provided. The ATHIFAH store is a store that sells numerous souvenirs typical of the Kendari area.

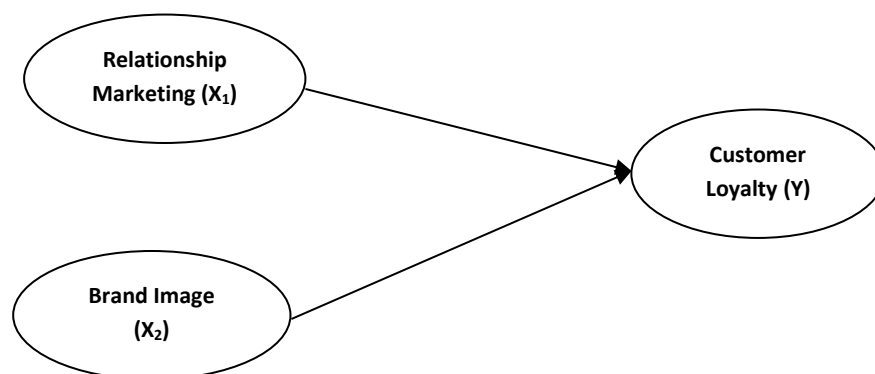


Figure 1: The Conceptual Model

RESEARCH METHOD

Location and Research Design

The research was conducted at the ATHIFAH Kendari SouvenirStore. Located on Haji Supu Yusuf Street, Kadia district, Bende village. The research method used was a quantitative method. Data collection was done using questionnaires, and The analytical tool used in this study was analysis multiple linear regression with the help of softwareIBM Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS 25,0).

Population or Samples

The population of this study were all consumers of the ATHIFAH Kendari SouvenirStore. The sample studied was 50 respondents with the respondent's criteria being that they had shopped at the ATHIFAH Kendari Souvenir Store more than twice.

Data Collection Method

Data collection in this study was carried out by means of questionnaires, observations and documentation.

Data Analysis Method

With the use of IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics software, analysis of multiple linear regression was performed as the analytical method in this study. This method was designed to determine whether relationship marketing (X_1) and brand image (X_2) had any significant effects on customer loyalty (Y).

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

According to table 1, the respondents' characteristics are predominately female consumers with a percentage of 72% or as many as 36 people out of a total of 50 respondents. Then based on work, most of the respondents were dominated by employees of 29 respondents or 58%, both civil servants and private employees. In addition, based on domicile, most consumers come from the city of Kendari, namely as many as 43 respondents or 86%, the rest are from outside the city of Kendari. Based on age, most consumers are 41-50 years old, namely 35 people or 70%. Then based on the frequency of shopping, most consumers spend more than 6 times, namely 35 respondents or 70%, and at least 2-3 times, which means that the respondents in this study are customers of ATHIFAH stores. And finally, based on Store Information Sources, the most respondents are those who know ATHIFAH stores through their family/relatives, namely 39 respondents or 78%. The rest found out through friends and social media.

Table-1:Distribution Of Customers Based On Gender, Occupation, Domicile, Age, Shopping Frequency, And Store Information Sources.

No	Characteristics Respondents	Respondents	
		(n)	(%)
1	Gender		
	Man	14	28
	Woman	36	72
2	Occupation		
	Employee	29	58
	Entrepreneur	7	14
	Housewife	9	18
	Police/Army/Navy	5	10

3	Domicile		
	In the city of Kendari	43	86
	Outside the city of Kendari	7	14
4	Age		
	22-30 years old	6	12
	31-40 years old	5	10
	41-50 years old	35	70
	>51 years old	4	8
5	Shopping Frequency		
	2-3 times	7	14
	4-5 times	8	16
	>6 times	35	70
6	Store Information Sources		
	Family/Realatives	39	78
	Friends	5	10
	Social Media	6	12

Source: Primary Data, 2022

Prerequisite Evaluations

a. Validity Test Results

Validity is the level of assurance between the data in the research object and the strength that can be reported by research (Sugiyono, 2010). Whether or not a questionnaire is valid is seen from the extent to which the questions on the questionnaire can reveal something that will be measured by the questionnaire (Ghozali, 2002). The results of the questionnaire are declared valid if there are similarities between the data that has been collected and the data that actually occurs in the object being studied. The instrument test in this study was carried out with a bivariate correlation between each indicator score with a total variable score.

Table 2: Validity Test Results

Variabel	Item	Correlation coefficient	Cut Of Point	Information
Relationship Marketing	X _{1.1}	0,595	0,050	Valid
	X _{1.2} X _{1.3}	0,727	0,050	Valid
	X _{1.4}	0,723	0,050	Valid
	X _{1.5}	0,788	0,050	Valid
	X _{1.6}	0,709	0,050	Valid
	X _{1.7}	0,605	0,050	Valid
	X _{1.8}	0,652	0,050	Valid
	X _{1.9}	0,692	0,050	Valid
	X _{1.10}	0,809	0,050	Valid
	X _{1.11}	0,792	0,050	Valid
	X _{1.12}	0,750	0,050	Valid
			0,830	0,050
Brand Image	X _{2.1}	0,595	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.2}	0,577	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.3}	0,680	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.4}	0,743	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.5}	0,775	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.6}	0,695	0,050	Valid

	X _{2.7}	0,793	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.8}	0,812	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.9}	0,702	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.10}	0,824	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.11}	0,731	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.12}	0,861	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.13}	0,691	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.14}	0,732	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.15}	0,817	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.16}	0,584	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.17}	0,715	0,050	Valid
	X _{2.18}	0,758	0,050	Valid
Customer Loyalty	Y _{.1}	0,787	0,050	Valid
	Y _{.2}	0,826	0,050	Valid
	Y _{.3}	0,786	0,050	Valid
	Y _{.4}	0,883	0,050	Valid
	Y _{.5}	0,761	0,050	Valid
	Y _{.6}	0,829	0,050	Valid
	Y _{.7}	0,801	0,050	Valid
	Y _{.8}	0,801	0,050	Valid
	Y _{.9}	0,695	0,050	Valid

Source : Data Processed using SPSS 25,0, 2022

b. Reliability Test Results

Reliability is a measure of the level of confidence of a measuring instrument (Masri Singarimbun, 1989). If a measuring instrument is used twice to measure the same symptoms and the results are relatively consistent, then the measuring instrument is reliable. One method that can be used to evaluate reliability is direct measurement, measurement only once, and then comparing the results with the results of other questions or evaluating correlations between answers to questions.

Table 3: Reliability Test Results

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Cut Of Point	Information
Relationship Marketing	0,912	0,600	Reliable
Brand Image	0,940	0,600	Reliable
Customer Loyalty	0,915	0,600	Reliable

Source : Data Processed using SPSS 25,0, 2022

c. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-8,219	6,083		1,351	0,183

	Relationship Marketing	0,174	0,075	0,170	2,318	0,025
	Brand Image	0,479	0,039	0,910	12,431	0,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

Source : Data Processed using SPSS 25,0, 2022

The outcomes of the regression equation are then obtained based on data analysis table 4 using SPSS 25.0, and they are as follows:

$$Y = 0.170X_1 + 0.910X_2 + 6.083$$

The interpretation of the regression equation above is as follows:

1. The relationship marketing variable's regression coefficient has a positive value. Therefore, if the other independent variables are taken as constants, it can be deduced that if the Relationship Marketing variable increases by 1%, the Customer Loyalty variable will increase by 0.170.
2. The brand image variable's regression coefficient has a positive value. As a result, it can be deduced that, if the other independent variables are assumed to remain constant, the Customer Loyalty variable will increase by 0.910 if the Brand Image variable grows by 1%.

d. Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing (Test F)

The F test was used to determine whether the relationship between the dependent variable, customer loyalty, and the independent variables, relationship marketing and brand image, are significant and positively correlated.

Table 5: Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing (Test F)

ANOVA^a

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	525,121	2	262,561	78,104	,000 ^b
	Residual	157,999	47	3,362		
	Total	683,120	49			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Image, Relationship Marketing

Source : Data Processed using SPSS 25,0, 2022

With a F count of 78.104 and a significant probability value in this study of 0.000, which is less than : 0.05, the results of the Anova test or F test were obtained based on table 5. The claim that relationship marketing and brand image have a substantial impact on customer loyalty at the same time is accepted. The theory, that relationship marketing and brand image have a major impact on customer loyalty concurrently, can therefore be considered to be true.

e. Partial Hypothesis Testing (t test)

To determine whether relationship marketing and brand image had a substantial impact on customer satisfaction in part, partial hypothesis testing (t test) was done. The computation yields the results shown below:

Table 6: Partial Hypothesis Testing (t test)

Coefficients^a

	Model	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-1,351	0,183
	Relationship Marketing	2,318	0,025
	Brand Image	12,431	0,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

Source : Data Processed using SPSS 25,0, 2022

Based on table 6, the following scale measures the partial (individual) influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable:

1. The Effect of Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty
It is known that the Relationship Marketing variable's significant probability value is 0.025, which is lower than the value = 0.05. Therefore, it can be said that the hypothesis is true. indicates that relationship marketing has a big impact on customer loyalty.
2. The Effect of Brand Image on Customer Loyalty
As opposed to the value = 0.05, the significant probability value for brand image is known to be 0.000. Therefore, it can be said that the hypothesis is true. It implies that there is a strong correlation between customer loyalty and brand image.

f. Analysis of the Coefficient of Determination (R2)

The contribution of impact made by the independent variable (X) to the dependent variable (Y) is meaningfully represented by the coefficient of determination (R Square), which may be used to anticipate and measure the influence of several independent variables concurrently (together) on a single dependent variable. These findings suggest that the relationship marketing and brand image variables shown in table 7 can be used to explain the extent of customer loyalty.

**Table 7: Analysis of the Coefficient of Determination (R2)
Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,877 ^a	0,769	0,759	1,833

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Image, Relationship Marketing
Source : Data Processed using SPSS 25,0, 2022

The summary of the model, which is represented in Table 7, includes the findings of various correlation values (R), the coefficient of determination (R Square), the adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square), and the standard error of the estimate :

1. Multiple correlation values, or the correlation between two or more independent variables and the dependent variable, are displayed by R in multiple linear regression. R has a value between 0 and 1; if it is close to 1, the relationship is improving; if it is close to 0, the relationship is deteriorating. The resulting R value of 0.877 indicates a strong connection between relationship marketing and brand image and customer loyalty, demonstrating the close relationship between these two factors and the loyalty metric.
2. A value of 0.769 is displayed for the corrected R2 coefficient of determination. This shows that 76.9% of customer loyalty is influenced by relationship marketing and brand image, while the remaining 23.1% is influenced by other factors not taken into account in this model.
3. A measurement of accuracy error is the standard error of the estimate. The estimate's standard error is 1.833, therefore, the inaccuracy in Relationship Marketing and Brand Image Analysis of Customer Loyalty is 1.833.

DISCUSSION

1. The influence of relationship marketing on customer loyalty

According to the study's findings, relationship marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. This is evident from the t test, which shows that $0.025 < 0.05$ is a significant probability value for the Relationship Marketing variable. Therefore, it can be said that the hypothesis is true. This indicates that relationship marketing has a big impact on customer loyalty. According to research by Muh. Teguh Nuryadin, Evi Lestari Pratiwi, and Julian Fiqri Hasany titled "Analysis of the Influence of Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty at PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia, Tbk Witel Kalsel" published in 2020, the relationship marketing variable has a significant impact on customer loyalty. Additionally consistent with Iyan M. Yanuar's research from 2019 titled "The Influence of Relationship Marketing on Instagram Customer Loyalty at Luphine Shop," which suggests relationship marketing has a significant impact on customer loyalty at Luphine Shop on Instagram.

2. The influence of brand image on customer loyalty

According to the study's findings, brand image has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. The t test results, which show a significant probability value on brand image of $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, it can be said that the hypothesis is true. It implies that there is a strong correlation between consumer loyalty and brand image. The findings of this study are consistent with M. Afif Fathi Ramadhan's research from 2019, "The Influence of Brand Image, Trust, and Commitment to Customer Loyalty of the GOJEK Online Transportation Application in Malang City," which found that brand image has a positive and significant impact on GOJEK customer loyalty. This is also consistent with research by Eka Sapitri (2020), "The Influence of Brand Image and Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty (Case Study of Cussons Baby Telon Oil Customers in DKI Jakarta)," which found a positive and significant relationship between brand image and customer loyalty for Cussons Baby Telon Oil.

CONCLUSION

The following findings have been drawn from research that was done on 50 respondents to ascertain the impact of Relationship Marketing and Brand Image on Customer Loyalty at the ATHIFAH Kendari Souvenir Store:

1. Relationship Marketing and Brand Image have a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty simultaneously. The better the Relationship Marketing and Brand Image provided by the ATHIFAH Kendari Souvenir Store, the Customer Loyalty will also increase.
2. Relationship Marketing partially has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty. This shows that the better the Relationship Marketing, the more Customer Loyalty at the store will increase. This is due to feelings of satisfaction consumers for Relationship Marketing offered by ATHIFAH stores.
3. Brand Image partially has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty. This shows that the better the Brand Image, the more Customer Loyalty will also increase at the ATHIFAH Kendari Souvenir Store. This is due to the consumer's feeling of satisfaction with the Brand Image owned by the ATHIFAH store.

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