

Modeling the impact of customer engagement on brand loyalty through customer satisfaction in food parks

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Abstract: This study investigates the effect of customer engagement on brand loyalty and the mediating role of customer satisfaction among patrons of food parks in Cebu City, Philippines. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were gathered from 420 randomly selected respondents through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The model achieved excellent fit indices ($CFI = 0.979$, $TLI = 0.973$, $RMSEA = 0.066$, $SRMR = 0.026$, $\chi^2/df = 2.849$), confirming its validity. Results revealed that engagement significantly influences both satisfaction ($\beta = 0.801$, $p < 0.001$) and brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.628$, $p < 0.001$), while satisfaction also positively affects brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.297$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, a significant indirect effect of engagement on brand loyalty through satisfaction ($\beta = 0.099$, $p = 0.005$) indicates partial mediation. These findings demonstrate that engaged customers are more likely to be satisfied and develop stronger loyalty toward food park brands. The study highlights the importance of creating engaging and satisfying customer experiences to strengthen brand loyalty. It contributes to understanding the engagement–satisfaction–loyalty framework and offers managerial insights for enhancing customer relationships and loyalty in the competitive food service industry.

Keywords: Brand loyalty, Customer engagement, Customer satisfaction, Food parks, Structural equation modeling.

1. Introduction

In today's experience-driven marketplace, customer engagement has become a critical factor in achieving brand success, particularly in the food and hospitality industry. Food parks, vibrant dining destinations that feature a collection of small food businesses in one communal space, have grown in popularity among urban consumers who seek variety, convenience, and social experiences. In such competitive environments, brand loyalty can no longer rely solely on product quality or pricing. Instead, it increasingly depends on how effectively brands create meaningful interactions and lasting relationships with their customers. As modern consumers look for both satisfaction and experience [1], engagement has emerged as a key element that drives their connection and commitment to brands.

Customer engagement represents the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement of customers in their interactions with a brand. When customers are deeply engaged, they are more likely to feel connected, share positive experiences, and repeatedly support the brand. However, engagement alone may not directly lead to loyalty [2]. Customer satisfaction often serves as the bridge that transforms engagement into enduring brand commitment. When customers' expectations are met or exceeded, their satisfaction reinforces trust and emotional attachment, which eventually leads to stronger loyalty. Thus, satisfaction plays a crucial mediating role between engagement and loyalty, shaping how customers convert positive experiences into repeat patronage.

Despite growing interest in the concepts of engagement and loyalty, limited research has explored their relationship within the context of food parks. This business setting is unique because it involves multiple small brands sharing a single space, offering customers a wide range of choices and

experiences. Unlike traditional restaurants or cafes, food parks foster a collective environment where customer loyalty may not be directed to one specific brand but to the overall experience. Understanding how engagement and satisfaction influence loyalty in this dynamic context is essential [3], especially for small business owners who rely on consistent customer visits and word-of-mouth recommendations to sustain growth.

The purpose of this study is to model the impact of customer engagement on brand loyalty through the mediating role of customer satisfaction in food parks. It examines how different forms of engagement, mental involvement, emotional connection, and behavioral participation contribute to satisfaction, and how satisfaction, in turn, strengthens customer loyalty. Using a structured modeling approach, the study seeks to uncover the underlying relationships among these variables to provide both theoretical and practical insights.

The findings of this research are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of how customer engagement drives satisfaction and loyalty in shared dining spaces. From a managerial perspective, the study can guide food park operators and vendors in designing strategies that enhance customer experience, build satisfaction, and promote loyalty. Ultimately, this research highlights the importance of creating engaging and satisfying customer interactions as a foundation for long-term brand success in the competitive food service industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Customer Engagement

Customer engagement has emerged as a central concept in modern marketing, representing the depth of a customer's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral connection with a brand [1]. It goes beyond simple transactions, emphasizing active participation, emotional attachment, and meaningful interaction between customers and businesses. Engagement occurs when customers develop interest and involvement in the brand's activities, promotions, or experiences [4]. In food service settings, engagement can take the form of repeat visits, social media interaction, word-of-mouth recommendations, and emotional satisfaction derived from dining experiences. Engaged customers are more likely to feel a sense of belonging, which strengthens their relationship with the brand and enhances their perception of value.

Customer engagement can be categorized into three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral [5, 6]. The cognitive dimension refers to the level of attention and awareness customers give to the brand. The emotional dimension reflects the feelings and affective attachment customers have toward the brand experience. The behavioral dimension represents the actions customers take as a result of their engagement, such as making purchases, sharing experiences online, or encouraging others to visit. Together, these dimensions shape how customers relate to a brand and influence their overall satisfaction and loyalty.

2.2. Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction plays a vital role in determining the long-term success of a brand [7]. It is the customer's overall evaluation of their experience, which results from the comparison between expectations and actual performance. When customers feel that their needs and expectations have been fulfilled, they develop positive emotions that strengthen their perception of the brand. In contrast, dissatisfaction arises when experiences fail to meet expectations, leading to negative attitudes and reduced loyalty.

In food parks, customer satisfaction is shaped by several factors, including the quality of food, service efficiency, cleanliness, ambiance, convenience, and price fairness [8]. Because food parks offer a wide range of food choices and social experiences, customer satisfaction extends beyond product quality; it also involves emotional enjoyment and social connection [9]. Satisfied customers tend to revisit, recommend the establishment to others, and develop a preference for specific brands within the food

park. As such, customer satisfaction serves as both a direct outcome of engagement and a crucial determinant of brand loyalty.

2.3. Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is one of the most valuable outcomes of effective marketing and customer relationship management. It reflects a customer's consistent preference for a particular brand, demonstrated through repeat purchases and positive advocacy. Loyalty encompasses both attitudinal and behavioral components. Attitudinal loyalty involves emotional commitment and trust, while behavioral loyalty refers to repeated patronage and long-term relationship maintenance. In competitive industries such as food service, where alternative options are easily accessible, brand loyalty provides businesses with stability, profitability, and customer retention advantages [10].

In the context of food parks, achieving brand loyalty can be challenging because customers are exposed to multiple brands within the same environment. Each visit offers opportunities to try new vendors, making loyalty more fragile. Therefore, food park businesses must focus on building emotional connections and consistent satisfaction to sustain loyalty. Effective engagement strategies, such as social media interaction, personalized service, and memorable dining experiences, can help reinforce customer attachment and strengthen loyalty even in a multi-brand setting.

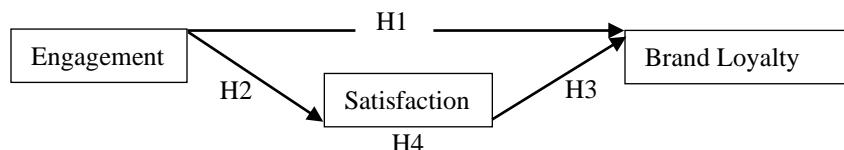
2.4. Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction

The relationship between customer engagement and brand loyalty is often indirect, with customer satisfaction serving as the key mediating variable. Engagement creates positive experiences that stimulate satisfaction, while satisfaction, in turn, solidifies the emotional and behavioral bonds that lead to loyalty. Customers who are actively engaged are more likely to feel satisfied with their interactions, and satisfied customers are more inclined to remain loyal. This mediating effect highlights the psychological process through which engagement transforms into enduring brand commitment [11].

In food parks, where the customer experience is shaped by both individual brands and the collective environment, satisfaction plays a crucial role in maintaining loyalty. Even when customers have multiple options, a satisfying and engaging experience can encourage repeat visits and brand advocacy. Thus, understanding the mediating influence of satisfaction allows businesses to design engagement strategies that not only attract customers but also retain them through sustained emotional and experiential value.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

Based on the reviewed literature, this study proposes a framework in which customer engagement directly influences brand loyalty, with customer satisfaction serving as a mediating variable. The model suggests that when customers are highly engaged, they experience greater satisfaction, which strengthens their loyalty toward the brand. This relationship underscores the importance of managing engagement and satisfaction as interconnected drivers of customer retention, especially in experiential settings such as food parks.



2.6. Customer Engagement and Customer Satisfaction

Customer engagement is often viewed as the foundation of a positive customer experience. It represents the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement of customers in their interactions with a brand. When customers are highly engaged, they feel connected to the brand and develop a sense of

belonging and enjoyment in every interaction. This sense of involvement strengthens their overall perception of the brand experience and increases their level of satisfaction [6].

In the context of food parks, engagement can manifest through social media interaction, frequent visits, participation in promotional activities, or sharing feedback about the dining experience. Such active participation enhances customer enjoyment, leading to favorable evaluations of the brand's offerings and environment. Therefore, higher levels of engagement are expected to result in higher levels of satisfaction.

H₁: Customer engagement has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.

2.7. Customer Engagement and Brand Loyalty

Customer engagement is a critical driver of brand loyalty, as it fosters emotional attachment and long-term connections between customers and brands. Engaged customers tend to develop trust, familiarity, and affection toward a brand, which encourages repeat patronage and positive word-of-mouth behavior. Engagement transforms a customer's relationship from being purely transactional to being relational, making them more resistant to switching to competitors.

In the food park setting, customer engagement may include frequent interaction with specific food brands, participation in brand events, and sharing experiences through online or offline communities. These behaviors strengthen the relationship between customers and the brand, resulting in increased loyalty. Thus, when customers are actively engaged, they are more likely to remain committed to the brand despite the availability of many alternative options within the food park.

H₂: Customer engagement has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty.

2.8. Customer Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty

Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in building and maintaining brand loyalty. Satisfied customers are more likely to trust the brand, repurchase its products, and recommend it to others. Satisfaction reinforces positive feelings toward the brand, reduces the perceived risk of future purchases, and fosters a sense of reliability and comfort. Over time, these positive perceptions evolve into a loyal relationship characterized by consistent patronage and advocacy.

In food parks, where consumers are exposed to multiple dining options, satisfaction becomes the key factor that differentiates brands [12]. When customers experience satisfaction in terms of food quality, ambiance, service, and value for money, they are more inclined to revisit and stay loyal to that particular food stall or brand. Therefore, satisfaction acts as the main psychological mechanism that drives loyalty in competitive and experience-oriented markets.

H₃: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty.

2.9. Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction

While customer engagement directly influences brand loyalty, this relationship is often strengthened through the mediating role of customer satisfaction. Engagement initiates positive emotional and experiential responses that lead to satisfaction, which in turn deepens the customer's loyalty to the brand. In this process, satisfaction acts as a psychological bridge that translates engagement into long-term commitment [13].

Within the food park environment, engagement activities such as personalized service, interactive experiences, and consistent brand communication may enhance satisfaction by making customers feel valued and connected [14]. This heightened satisfaction then encourages them to return, recommend the brand, and remain loyal over time. Hence, customer satisfaction is expected to mediate the relationship between engagement and loyalty, amplifying the overall effect of engagement on customer retention [7].

H₄: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between customer engagement and brand loyalty.

3. Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative research design employing structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships among customer engagement, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty in food parks. The SEM approach was chosen because it allows simultaneous testing of multiple relationships and the estimation of both direct and indirect effects among variables. This design enabled the researcher to develop a comprehensive model that explains how customer engagement influences brand loyalty, both directly and through the mediating role of customer satisfaction.

The study was conducted in selected food parks located in Cebu City, Philippines. Cebu City was chosen as the research site because of its growing number of food parks and its vibrant dining culture that attracts diverse groups of customers. Food parks offer a unique setting where multiple small food businesses operate in a shared environment, creating a dynamic atmosphere ideal for studying engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty behaviors.

A total of 420 respondents participated in the study. The respondents were customers of selected food parks in Cebu City and were chosen through random sampling to ensure a fair representation of the target population. Participants were required to be at least 18 years old and to have visited a food park at least once within the past three months. This criterion ensured that the participants had recent and relevant experiences necessary for providing reliable responses regarding their engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty toward food park brands.

Data were gathered through a structured survey questionnaire designed to measure the three main constructs of the study. The questionnaire included statements related to customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty, each measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The engagement scale assessed the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement of customers in their interactions with food park brands. The satisfaction items measured the extent to which customers were pleased with the quality of food, service, ambiance, and overall value for money. The loyalty items captured the customers' intention to repurchase, recommend, and maintain a long-term relationship with their preferred food park brands. Data collection was conducted through on-site administration of printed questionnaires in selected food parks during peak hours. Respondents were approached randomly and invited to participate voluntarily after being informed about the study's purpose and their rights as participants. The researcher ensured adherence to ethical research standards by maintaining respondent anonymity, securing informed consent, and ensuring that participation was entirely voluntary.

The data collected were encoded, tabulated, and analyzed using structural equation modeling. The analysis followed two stages: the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model examined the reliability and validity of the latent constructs through confirmatory factor analysis, while the structural model tested the hypothesized relationships among customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty. The analysis also determined the mediating effect of customer satisfaction on the relationship between engagement and loyalty. Model fit was evaluated using several indices, including the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Acceptable values for these indices indicated a good fit between the proposed model and the observed data [15]. Through this analytical approach, the study was able to validate the hypothesized relationships and provide empirical evidence on how customer engagement affects brand loyalty both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction within the food park context.

4. Results

4.1. The Respondents

The study surveyed 420 customers from selected food parks in Cebu City to determine their demographic characteristics. Findings revealed that the majority of respondents were young adults aged 18 to 21 years old, comprising 65 percent of the total, followed by those aged 22 to 25 at 31.9 percent. Only a small proportion were aged 26 to 29 (2.1%) and 30 to 34 (1%). This distribution indicates that

food parks primarily attract younger consumers, typically students or early professionals, who view such venues as social spaces for relaxation and interaction. In terms of gender, females dominated the sample at 76.7 percent, while males accounted for 21.4 percent, with a minimal percentage identifying as agender, bigender, genderqueer, or other. The gender skew suggests that food parks appeal more to female patrons, possibly due to their stronger social dining tendencies and group-oriented consumption behavior [16].

In terms of civil status, an overwhelming 99.8 percent of the respondents were single, while only 0.2 percent were married. This finding aligns with the age profile, reinforcing that food parks largely cater to a youthful, single demographic that values social engagement and experiential dining. As for income, the majority reported earning between ₱0–₱10,000 monthly (85.2%), followed by those earning ₱10,001–₱20,000 (10.2%). Smaller portions earned ₱20,001–₱30,000 (2.1%), ₱30,001–₱40,000 (1%), and above ₱40,000 (0.4% combined). These figures suggest that most food park customers belong to lower-income segments, implying that affordability and accessibility are key determinants of their dining choices.

With respect to educational attainment, 88.6 percent of the respondents were undergraduates, followed by high school graduates (8.3%), master's degree holders (2.6%), and a minimal number of doctorate degree holders and out-of-school individuals (0.2% each). This composition further supports that food parks are predominantly frequented by students and young professionals seeking affordable dining options and communal experiences. Taken together, the demographic profile portrays food parks in Cebu City as vibrant social hubs attracting young, female, single, and low-income customers. These insights highlight the need for operators to develop marketing and engagement strategies that emphasize affordability, ambiance, and interactive experiences to strengthen satisfaction and loyalty among their primary market segment.

4.2. Psychometric Properties

The results of the model fit indices presented in Table 1 indicate that the proposed structural equation model achieved an acceptable and excellent fit with the observed data. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) obtained a value of 0.979, exceeding the threshold value of 0.80 suggested by Garson [17], indicating a very good model fit. Similarly, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was 0.973, which is well above the acceptable level of 0.85 recommended by Sharma et al. [18], further supporting the adequacy of the model.

Moreover, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value was 0.066, which falls below the 0.08 benchmark proposed by Kenny et al. [19], suggesting a reasonable approximation of the model to the data. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) yielded a value of 0.026, which is lower than the 0.08 threshold recommended by Hu and Bentler [20], indicating a low discrepancy between the observed and predicted correlations. Finally, the Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) was 2.849, within the acceptable range of less than 3.0 as suggested by Hair et al. [21], confirming that the model exhibits an adequate level of parsimony.

All indices consistently demonstrate that the structural model provides a satisfactory fit to the empirical data. This implies that the proposed relationships among engagement, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty are well supported by the data, validating the model's suitability for explaining the underlying constructs in the context of food parks in Cebu City.

Table 1.
Model Data Fit Indices Results.

| Model Fit Indices | Proposed Threshold Value | Source | Resulting Value |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| CFI | >0.80 | Garson [17] | 0.979 |
| TLI | >0.85 | Sharma et al. [18] | 0.973 |
| RMSEA | <0.08 | Kenny et al. [19] and Kenny [22] | 0.066 |
| SRMR | ≤ 0.08 | Hu and Bentler [20] | 0.026 |
| Chi-square/df ratio | <3.00 | Hair et al. [21] | 2.849 |

4.3. Convergent Validity and Internal Consistency

The results of the convergent validity and internal consistency analysis, as presented in Table 2, demonstrate that all constructs in the model, engagement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty, exhibited satisfactory psychometric properties. All standardized factor loadings exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating that each observed indicator reliably represents its corresponding latent construct. Specifically, the factor loadings for the engagement indicators ranged from 0.786 to 0.900, those for satisfaction ranged from 0.822 to 0.868, and those for brand loyalty ranged from 0.847 to 0.912, reflecting strong item reliability and high indicator relevance.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values also confirmed strong convergent validity for all constructs. Engagement achieved an AVE of 0.745, satisfaction had 0.724, and brand loyalty yielded 0.781, all surpassing the 0.50 threshold, which suggests that more than half of the variance in the indicators is explained by their respective latent constructs. Furthermore, the Composite Reliability (CR) values demonstrated excellent internal consistency across all variables, with engagement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty scoring 0.921, 0.913, and 0.935, respectively. These results indicate that the items used in the measurement model are highly consistent and reliable in capturing the intended constructs. This confirms that the measurement model satisfies the conditions for convergent validity and internal consistency. The high factor loadings, substantial AVE values, and strong composite reliability scores collectively validate that the constructs of engagement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty are robust and well-measured, providing a solid foundation for further structural analysis.

Table 2.
Convergent and Internal Consistency.

| Constructs | Items | Standardized Factor Loading | AVE | Composite Reliability |
|---------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Engagement | ENGA1 | 0.786 | 0.745 | 0.921 |
| | ENGA2 | 0.885 | | |
| | ENGA3 | 0.900 | | |
| | ENGA4 | 0.876 | | |
| Satisfaction | SAT4 | 0.866 | 0.724 | 0.913 |
| | SAT3 | 0.868 | | |
| | SAT2 | 0.846 | | |
| | SAT1 | 0.822 | | |
| Brand Loyalty | BL1 | 0.847 | 0.781 | 0.935 |
| | BL2 | 0.912 | | |
| | BL3 | 0.912 | | |
| | BL4 | 0.863 | | |

4.4. Discriminant Validity

The results presented in Table 3 confirm that the measurement model satisfies the Fornell and Larcker criterion for discriminant validity. According to this criterion, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (\sqrt{AVE}) for each construct should be greater than its corresponding inter-construct correlations, ensuring that each latent variable is empirically distinct from the others. As shown in the table, the \sqrt{AVE} values for engagement (0.863), satisfaction (0.851), and brand loyalty (0.884) all exceed their respective correlation coefficients with other constructs.

Specifically, engagement exhibited correlations of 0.803 with satisfaction and 0.788 with brand loyalty, both of which are lower than its \sqrt{AVE} value, demonstrating clear discriminant separation. Similarly, satisfaction's correlation with brand loyalty (0.729) was lower than its \sqrt{AVE} of 0.851, indicating that satisfaction and brand loyalty are related but not conceptually overlapping constructs. The same pattern was observed for brand loyalty, which maintained \sqrt{AVE} values higher than its correlations with both engagement and satisfaction, thereby confirming its distinctiveness as a construct.

These results affirm that the constructs of engagement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty are conceptually unique and statistically independent from one another. The measurement model, therefore,

demonstrates strong discriminant validity, supporting the robustness and adequacy of the measurement indicators used in assessing relationships among the variables in the structural equation model.

Table 3.
Fornel and Larcker Criterion.

| | Engagement | Satisfaction | Brand Loyalty |
|---------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| Engagement | 1 | | |
| Satisfaction | 0.803 | 1 | |
| Brand Loyalty | 0.788 | 0.729 | 1 |
| AVE | 0.745 | 0.724 | 0.781 |
| \sqrt{AVE} | 0.863 | 0.851 | 0.884 |

4.5. Structural Model Estimates and Hypothesis Testing

The results of the structural equation modeling presented in Table 4 reveal that all hypothesized relationships among the constructs are statistically significant and positively related. The first hypothesis (H1), which proposed that engagement has a positive effect on satisfaction, was strongly supported with an unstandardized path coefficient of $\beta = 0.801$, a standard error of 0.051, and a critical ratio (C.R.) of 15.671 ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that higher levels of customer engagement significantly enhance customer satisfaction among patrons of food parks in Cebu City. The result suggests that when customers actively interact with the brand or experience, they are more likely to feel satisfied with the service and offerings [1, 5].

The second hypothesis (H2) examined the direct relationship between engagement and brand loyalty. The findings show a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.628$, S.E. = 0.077, C.R. = 8.101, $p < 0.001$), confirming that customer engagement directly fosters brand loyalty. This implies that engaged customers, those who show emotional or behavioral involvement with the brand, are more likely to develop stronger attachment and commitment, leading to repeat patronage and positive word-of-mouth [2].

Finally, the third hypothesis (H3) tested the effect of satisfaction on brand loyalty. The results indicate a significant and positive path coefficient ($\beta = 0.297$, S.E. = 0.073, C.R. = 4.074, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that customer satisfaction also contributes to the development of brand loyalty. Although engagement exerts a stronger direct influence on loyalty, satisfaction still plays a crucial role in reinforcing loyal behavior. Taken together, these findings confirm that engagement and satisfaction both serve as key drivers of brand loyalty, and that satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between engagement and loyalty in the context of food parks [23].

Table 4.
Structural Model Estimates.

| Hypothesis | Path | Estimate (Unstandardized β) | S.E. | C.R. | P | Decision |
|------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------|--------|-----|-----------|
| H1 | SATISFACTION \leftarrow ENGAGEMENT | 0.801 | 0.051 | 15.671 | *** | Supported |
| H2 | BLOYALTY \leftarrow ENGAGEMENT | 0.628 | 0.077 | 8.101 | *** | Supported |
| H3 | BLOYALTY \leftarrow SATISFACTION | 0.297 | 0.073 | 4.074 | *** | Supported |

4.6. Mediation Analysis

The mediation analysis, as shown in Table 5, examined the indirect effect of engagement on brand loyalty through customer satisfaction. The results indicate a significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.099$, $p = 0.005$), with a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval (0.099–0.335) that does not include zero. This finding confirms that customer satisfaction serves as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between engagement and brand loyalty [13, 24]. In other words, customer engagement not only directly influences brand loyalty but also indirectly enhances it by increasing levels of satisfaction.

This mediation effect implies that when customers experience meaningful engagement with food park brands through positive interactions, enjoyable experiences, or emotional connections, they tend to

feel more satisfied, which in turn strengthens their loyalty to the brand. The presence of both a significant direct and indirect effect suggests a partial mediation, indicating that engagement influences brand loyalty both independently and through the mediating role of satisfaction.

The results emphasize the importance of fostering customer engagement strategies that also enhance satisfaction to build stronger, long-term brand loyalty. In the context of food parks in Cebu City, this suggests that businesses should prioritize creating interactive, satisfying experiences that not only capture customer attention but also sustain their emotional and behavioral commitment to the brand.

Table 5.
Mediation Path.

| Path | Indirect Effect | 95% CI (BC) | p-value | Interpretation |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------|-----------------------------|
| Bloyalty \leftarrow Engagement | 0.099 | [0.099, 0.335] | 0.005 | Significant indirect effect |

5. Discussion

The results of this study reveal a strong and significant relationship among engagement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty in food parks within Cebu City. The findings indicate that customer engagement exerts a substantial positive effect on both satisfaction and brand loyalty, underscoring its role as a critical driver of customer experience. When customers are meaningfully engaged, through active participation, emotional connection, or interactive experiences, they develop stronger satisfaction and loyalty toward the brand. Engagement fosters not only behavioral involvement but also psychological attachment, shaping customers' perceptions and long-term commitment to the food park.

Furthermore, the results show that satisfaction significantly influences brand loyalty while also mediating the relationship between engagement and loyalty. This suggests that engagement enhances loyalty both directly and indirectly through satisfaction. The presence of a significant indirect effect indicates that when engagement leads to higher satisfaction, it strengthens the customer's intention to return, recommend, and maintain loyalty to the brand. Thus, satisfaction acts as a critical bridge that converts engagement into enduring loyalty, reinforcing the experiential and relational nature of brand commitment in the food service industry.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that customer engagement and satisfaction are key determinants of brand loyalty in the food park industry. Engagement directly enhances both satisfaction and loyalty, while satisfaction itself significantly predicts loyalty and mediates the engagement–loyalty link. These findings confirm that engagement is not only about interaction but about creating meaningful and memorable experiences that increase satisfaction and foster brand allegiance. Satisfied and engaged customers are more likely to become loyal patrons who exhibit repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth behavior.

The results validate the structural model, showing that engagement is the foundation of customer–brand relationships, satisfaction reinforces the emotional connection, and loyalty serves as the ultimate behavioral outcome. Overall, the study establishes that maintaining high engagement and satisfaction levels is essential for developing a sustainable and loyal customer base in food parks.

7. Implications

The findings carry important managerial and theoretical implications. From a managerial perspective, food park operators should prioritize strategies that enhance engagement and satisfaction to strengthen brand loyalty. These may include interactive marketing activities, customer feedback mechanisms, and personalized service experiences that encourage active participation and emotional connection. Improving satisfaction through consistent food quality, appealing ambiance, prompt service, and social engagement can further nurture long-term loyalty and advocacy.

From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforces the mediating role of satisfaction in the engagement–loyalty framework, extending existing consumer behavior and relationship marketing theories. It supports the view that engagement acts as both an antecedent and a catalyst in building loyalty through satisfaction. This contributes to a deeper understanding of how psychological and experiential factors interact to shape brand relationships, particularly in experiential consumption settings such as food parks in Cebu City.

Transparency:

The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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