

Exploring The Mediating Effect Of Trust And Word Of Mouth On Customer Relationship Marketing And Customer Loyalty

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Abstract. Mixue is one of the companies engaged in the Indonesian food and beverage sector. The high development of Mixue has an impact on price competition with competitors and the price of ice cream from Mixue is the most expensive compared to the price of ice cream from other brands, however, the development of Mixue remains so massive from the beginning of its expansion, so that the number of outlets opened can be an indicator of high demand and popularity of Mixue and an indication of customer loyalty to Mixue. Based on the Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing, this study examines customer trust and Word of mouth mediating the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty. This study falls into the category of explanatory research using a quantitative approach. The population determined in this study is all Mixue customers who have consumed Mixue in Malang city; the number is unknown (infinite), so the sample size is 140 respondents. The analysis technique in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The study's results indicate that customer relationship marketing influences customer loyalty mediated by customer trust and Word of mouth. The novelty of this study is that trust and Word of mouth are mediating variables for the influence of customer relationships on customer loyalty, developed in one model. This study provides theoretical implications as a development of the Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing, which suggests that trust and commitment are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Customers who trust Mixue will be more likely to commit to the relationship. Recommendations that can be given by Mixue management in Malang City are to be more open to receiving suggestions from customers regarding the products offered, management needs to pay attention to customer comfort, and management needs to create good relationships with customers so that customers tell others about their experiences. Future research can be done by studying customer satisfaction with Mixue in Malang City, which can be used as a comparison.

Keywords: customer relationship marketing, customer trust, Word of mouth, and customer loyalty

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian food and beverage industry has experienced rapid growth in recent years, exceeding 4.47% in the second quarter of 2023, an increase compared to the previous year's figure of around 3% (<https://indonesia.go.id/>). The rapid growth of the food and beverage industry indicates that Indonesia has a significant market share and good and promising prospects. Mixue is one of the companies operating in the Indonesian food and beverage sector. Mixue's rapid growth has resulted in price competition with its competitors. Other brands that sell ice cream products include McDonald's and A&W. The price of Mixue's strawberry sundae ice cream is IDR 18,000, while McDonald's and A&W's strawberry sundae ice cream is IDR 12,000. Based on the price comparison, it can be concluded that the price of ice cream from Mixue is the most expensive compared to the price of ice cream from other brands, however, the development of Mixue remains so massive from the beginning of its expansion, so that the number of outlets opened can be an indicator of high demand and popularity of Mixue, which is an indicator of customer loyalty of Mixue.

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In order to maintain customer loyalty, companies need to implement the concept of customer relationship marketing (CRM). According to (Kotler & Keller, 2016), CRM in relationship marketing is the overall process of building and maintaining profitable customer relationships by delivering superior customer value and satisfaction. This process relates to acquiring, retaining, and growing customers. A good CRM will create customer trust and, in turn, form a loyal customer base. (Deniz & Onder, 2017). The results of the study conducted by (Semuel, 2012); (Zegullaj et al., 2023); (Jesri et al., 2013); (Rizka & Widji, 2013); (Ansori, 2022) concluded that CRM significantly influences customer loyalty. Different results were shown by (Aprilia & Ridhaningsih, 2025), who concluded that they did not find a significant relationship between CRM and loyalty.

Based on several previous research results regarding the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty, there are still differences in results (research gaps), thus opening up an opportunity to re-examine the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty with customer trust and Word of mouth as mediators. The reason that forms the basis of customer trust and Word of mouth as mediating variables, because conceptually, an increase in customer loyalty due to behavioral changes conceptually trust exists if a party has confidence (Confidence) there is integrity and reliability of the other party (Aprilia & Ridhaningsih, 2025) Word of mouth is a form of personal communication aimed at providing information or influencing others to use a particular organization's products or services. Word of mouth is a highly effective strategy for influencing customers because the person providing the information has a close relationship with the customer and is trustworthy.

Maintaining customer loyalty requires the ability to provide customer trust. According to (Kotler Philip & Armstrong Gary, 2018), when consumers trust a company, they are more likely to make repeat purchases and share valuable personal information with that company. The results of the study (Ball et al., 2004); (Luarn & Lin, 2003); (Auh, 2005); (Ranjbarian, B., Dabestani, R., Khajeh, E. & Noktehdan, 2011); (Zegullaj et al., 2023) proves that trust influences customer loyalty. Customer relationship marketing is a company's effort to build long-term relationships with customers to create a good relationship between customers and the company. With this good relationship, it is hoped that it will create customer trust. Research (Semuel, 2012); (Rizan et al., 2013) shows that customer relationship marketing has an influence on trust

The word-of-mouth phenomenon can encourage purchases and influence communities, strategies, and promotions that are efficient because they do not require significant costs, can create a good image, and make customers repurchase the product. (Saputra et al., 2022) To build Word of mouth, a company can use one business strategy: improving customer relationship marketing. The research results (Ngoma & Ntale, 2019) and (Prasetiawan et al., 2024) show a significant influence between customer relationship marketing and Word of mouth. Word of mouth can market a product and service through enthusiastic and voluntary conversations, promotions, and recommendations from customers about the product and service to others. This condition can create customer loyalty. Research conducted by Prasetiawan et al. (2024), Oliviana et al. (2017), and Sagita & Oetomo (2017) shows that Word of mouth has a significant influence on consumer loyalty. This study can provide insight into how Mixue can utilize the promising market potential in the area and create effective marketing strategies to attract more consumers and increase customer loyalty and conduct a study on trust and Word of mouth as mediating variables developed in one model and become a novelty in this study, so this research aims to test the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty mediated by trust and Word of mouth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing

The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing highlights the crucial role of trust and commitment in building and maintaining strong relationships between customers and brands. Brands prioritizing building trust and commitment with their customers are more likely to develop a strong, loyal customer base and maintain a sustainable presence in the market. The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing is key to explaining the success of relationship marketing: trust and commitment. Trust and commitment are the foundation for building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between companies and customers. (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Customer Relationship Marketing

CRM is a concept that focuses on maintaining relationships with customers to build long-term and profitable relationships. CRM describes how companies interact and actively manage relationships with customers. According to CRM, the aim is to develop profitable relationships and create profitable value for target consumers by integrating internal processes and functions with all external networks. (Zegullaj et al., 2023) CRM is a closer understanding of each customer by creating two-way communication. This communication must be managed as a mutually beneficial relationship between the customer and the company. The relationship in question must be a partnership, not just a relationship between a seller and a buyer, to achieve the long-term goal of generating sustainable profits from a group of loyal customers. Some measures of customer relationship marketing (Deniz & Onder, 2017), namely, Long-term customer focus, creating good communication with customers, involving members in marketing activities, developing a service culture for customers, and obtaining and using customer information.

Customer Trust

Trust is one party's belief in the intentions and behavior of another party. (Ball et al., 2004). It is one of the main determinants of relationship commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Ouch (2005) emphasizes individual trust by referring to consumer confidence in the quality and reliability of the services provided. Three factors shape a person's trust: ability, benevolence, and integrity. (Karhapää et al., 2022).

Word of Mouth

According to Kotler & Keller (2016), Word of mouth is personal communication about a product between buyers, neighbors, friends, family members, and colleagues. Word of mouth is the sum of all word-of-mouth communication about a particular brand of product, service, or company at any given stage in time. According to (Ngoma & Ntale, 2019), Word of mouth refers to the exchange of comments, thoughts, or ideas between two or more consumers and is not a marketing source. According to (Laroche et al., 2005), Word of mouth (WOM) indicators are talking, recommending, and convincing.

Customer loyalty

According to Deniz & Onder (2017), "loyalty is defined as a non-random purchase expressed over time by some decision-making unit". Based on this definition, loyalty is more directed at a behavior indicated by routine purchases based on the decision-making unit. Customer loyalty has an important role in a company; maintaining it means improving the company's performance, which is the main reason for a company to attract and retain customers. Luarn & Lin (2003) revealed that "loyal customers will consider themselves loyal, make purchases in, shopping is their first choice, will go shopping in the future, and will promote to family and friends". (Mattison Thompson et al., 2014) revealed that customer loyalty is formed because of favorable words, repetitive purchases, and intention of repurchase. Whereas (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) identify with the best choice for shopping, loyalty, the desire always to shop, the order of shopping choices, having a character where visitors are served quickly.

Based on the phenomena, theoretical review, and empirical studies that have been presented, the conceptual framework of this research is as follows:

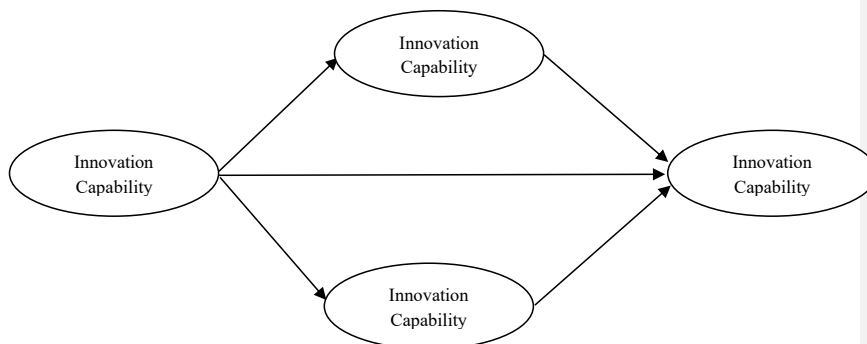


Figure 1. Research Framework

Hypothesis Development

According to Kotler Philip & Armstrong Gary (2018), Relationship marketing aims to build long-term, mutually satisfying relationships with key constituents to acquire and retain customers. Kotler & Keller, (2016) He stated the importance of relationship marketing carried out by companies in the long term, not only to gain short-term profits, but also to create mutually satisfying relationships between companies and customers, because companies can create customer loyalty, obtain as much income as possible from customers, obtain profits according to the set targets and ultimately be able to maintain their business. (Semuel, 2012); (Zegullaj et al., 2023); (Jesri et al., 2013); (Rizka & Widji, 2013); (Ansori, 2022) concluded that CRM significantly influences customer loyalty.

Based on this description, the research hypothesis is as follows:

H1 Customer relationship marketing has an impact on customer loyalty

Customer relationship marketing is a company's effort to establish long-term relationships with customers to create a good relationship between customers and the company, with this good relationship, it is hoped that it can create customer trust. Research (Semuel, 2012; Rizan et al., 2013) shows customer relationship marketing influences trust. Based on this description, the research hypothesis is as follows:

H2 Customer relationship marketing has an impact on customer trust.

The word-of-mouth phenomenon can encourage purchases and influence communities, strategies, and promotions that are efficient because they do not require significant costs, can create a good image, and make customers repurchase the product. (Saputra et al., 2022) To build Word of mouth, a company can use one business strategy: improving customer relationship marketing. The research results (Ngoma & Ntale, 2019) and (Prasertiawan et al., 2024) show a significant influence between customer relationship marketing and Word of mouth. Based on the results of the empirical study, the research hypothesis is as follows:

H3 Customer relationship marketing has a significant influence on Word of mouth.

Maintaining customer loyalty requires the ability to provide customer trust. According to (Kotler Philip & Armstrong Gary, 2018), when consumers trust a company, they are more likely to make repeat purchases and share valuable personal information with that company. The results of the study (Ball et al., 2004); (Luarn & Lin, 2003); (Auh, 2005); (Ranjbarian, B., Dabestani, R., Khajeh, E. & Noktehdan, 2011); (Zegullaj et al., 2023) This study proves that trust influences customer loyalty. This makes customer trust a crucial factor in increasing customer loyalty. Based on the empirical study results, the research hypothesis is as follows:

H4 Customer trust has a significant influence on customer loyalty.

Word of mouth can market a product and service through discussions, promotions, and customer recommendations about the product and service to others enthusiastically and voluntarily; in such conditions, it can create customer loyalty. Research conducted by Prasetiawan et al. (2024), Oliviana et al. (2017), and Sagita & Oetomo (2017) shows that Word of mouth has a significant influence on consumer loyalty. Based on the results of the empirical study, the research hypothesis is as follows:

H5 Word of mouth has a significant influence on customer loyalty.

A study (Semuel, 2012; Rizan et al., 2013) shows customer relationship marketing influences trust. Meanwhile, the results of the study conducted (Ball et al., 2004); (Luarn & Lin, 2003); (Auh, 2005); (Ranjbarian, B., Dabestani, R., Khajeh, E. & Noktehdan, 2011); (Zegullaj et al., 2023) proves that trust influences customer loyalty. Based on the results of the empirical study, the research hypothesis is as follows:

H₆ Customer trust mediates the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty.

Results of the research (Ngoma & Ntale, 2019) and (Prasetiawan et al., 2024) show a significant influence between customer relationship marketing and Word of mouth. Meanwhile, the results of the study conducted (Ball et al., 2004); (Luarn & Lin, 2003); (Auh, 2005); (Ranjbarian, B., Dabestani, R., Khajeh, E. & Noktehdan, 2011); (Zegullaj et al., 2023) proves that trust influences customer loyalty. Based on the results of the empirical study, the research hypothesis is as follows:

H7 Word of mouth mediating the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty.

METHOD

Based on the central problem and research objectives, this study uses an explanatory pattern (level of explanation), which is research that aims to describe the pattern of relationships or influences between two or more variables. The pattern of influence that will be revealed in this study is the influence of customer relationship marketing on trust, Word of mouth, and customer loyalty. The population defined in this study was all Mixue customers who had consumed Mixue in Malang. The number was unknown (infinite), and the indicators were multiplied by 10 to determine the sample size. The total indicators in this study was 14, resulting in a sample size of 140 respondents.

The data sources used in this study are primary data obtained by distributing questionnaires to Mixue customers in Malang City to determine respondents' opinions regarding customer relationship marketing, trust, Word of mouth, and customer loyalty.

Table 1. Identification of Research Variables

Variables	Indicator	Source
Customer relationship marketing	1. Long-term customer focus	(Zegullaj et al., 2023); (Ansori, 2022)
	2. Create good communication with customers.	
	3. Involving members in marketing activities	
	4. Developing a culture of service for customers	
	5. Obtaining and using customer information	
Customer trust	6. Ability	(Luarn & Lin, 2003); (Auh, 2005)
	7. Benevolence	
	8. Integrity.	
Word of mouth	9. Talking about	(Laroche et al., 2005)
	10. Recommend	
	11. Convincing	
Customer loyalty	12. Repurchase	(Zegullaj et al., 2023)
	13. Willingness to reuse	

14. Suitability for product use

A Likert scale was used to measure the variables to be studied through respondents' responses. In this study, each answer to a question in the questionnaire was given a weight as follows: Strongly Disagree was given a weight of 1, Disagree was given a weight of 2, Quite Agree was given a weight of 3, Agree was given a weight of 4, and Strongly Agree was given a weight of 5.

The analysis technique in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The presence or absence of a direct influence is tested using a t-test. With a significance level of 0.05, the following table is used: a 5%. The criteria for accepting or rejecting the hypothesis test are as follows: if the probability is <5% then H0 is rejected; H1 is accepted; if the probability is >5% then H0 is accepted; H1 is rejected. Meanwhile, to investigate the existence of an indirect influence, the Sobel test is carried out by testing the strength of the indirect influence of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y) through the mediating variable (M). The indirect influence of X on Y through M is calculated by multiplying the path X→M (a) by the path M→Y (b) or ab. So the coefficient ab = (c-c'), where c is the influence of X on Y without controlling M, while c' is the coefficient of influence of X on Y after controlling M. The standard error of the coefficients a and b is written as Sa and Sb. The magnitude of the standard error of the indirect effect, Sab, is calculated with the formula below:

$$Sab = \sqrt{b^2.Sa^2 + a^2.Sb^2 + Sa^2.Sb^2}$$

Where:

a: coefficient of direct effect of X on M

b: coefficient of direct effect of M on Y

Sa: standard error of coefficient a

Sb: standard error of coefficient b

To test the significance of the indirect effect, it is necessary to calculate the t value of the ab coefficient using the following formula:

$$t = \frac{ab}{\text{Satu}}$$

This calculated t-value is compared with the t-table value, which is ≥ 1.96 for a significance level of 5%, and a t-table value ≥ 1.64 indicates a significance level of 10%. A mediation effect occurs if the calculated t-value is greater than the t-table value.

RESULTS

Respondent Description

The characteristics of respondents in this study are related to the individual characteristics or demographics of Mixue customers in Malang City, which can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Respondent Characteristics

Individual characteristics	Number of people)	%
Gender		
Man	48	34.3
Woman	92	65.7
Age		
17 - 21 Years	66	47.1
22 - 26 Years	48	34.3
27 years and above	26	18.6
Education		
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	36	25.7
Diploma	59	42.1

Bachelor	28	20.0
Master	17	12.2

Based on Table 2, it can be explained that the characteristics of respondents, seen from gender, show that Mixue customer respondents in Malang City are dominated by women, aged 17-21 years, with a student education level.

Instrument Testing

Instrument testing is carried out to test the validity and reliability. The results of the instrument trial conducted on 30 respondents can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 3. Results of Instrument Validity and Reliability Tests

Variables	Item	Correlation		Coefficient	
		r	Status	alpha	status
Customer Relationship Marketing	X1.1	0.601	Valid	0.849	Reliable
	X1.2	0.631	Valid		
	X1.3	0.594	Valid		
	X1.4	0.805	Valid		
	X1.5	0.625	Valid		
Customer trust	Y1.1	0.774	Valid	0.728	Reliable
	Y1.2	0.712	Valid		
	Y1.3	0.844	Valid		
Word of mouth	Y2.1	0.846	Valid	0.867	Reliable
	Y2.2	0.879	Valid		
	Y2.3	0.792	Valid		
Customer loyalty	Y2.1	0.861	Valid	0.878	Reliable
	Y2.2	0.862	Valid		
	Y2.3	0.876	Valid		

Based on Table 2, all items for the variables are customer relationship marketing, trust, Word of mouth, and customer loyalty.

It is valid and reliable because it met the validity testing criteria, namely the Pearson product-moment correlation index ($r \geq 0.3$). Likewise, all research items are reliable because they have met the reliability testing criteria: a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than or equal to 0.6.

SEM Analysis Results

Test results with Structural Equation Modeling(SEM) are presented in Figure 1 below.

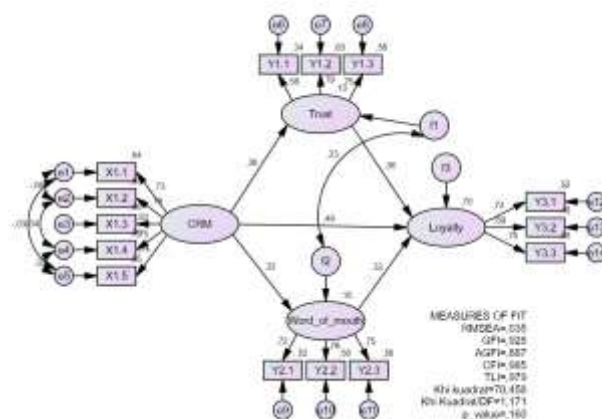


Figure 1: Path Diagram of SEM Analysis Results

Based on Figure 1, the evaluation of the proposed model shows that the evaluation of the model against the construct has met the cut-off value; therefore, the model can be categorized as suitable and feasible for use so that interpretation can be carried out for further discussion.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis using AMOS 20.0 was used to test the hypothesis proposed by the researcher. The Critical Ratio (Cr) from the regression weight output was used as the basis for testing the hypothesis. The research hypothesis will be accepted if the p-value is <5% significance; then the null hypothesis is rejected. Each hypothesis is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Results of Regression Weight Analysis

Connection			Path Coefficient	Cr	p-value	Note
CRM	->	Loyalty	0.487	4,756	0,000	Significant
CRM	->	Trust	0.364	3,204	0.001	Significant
CRM	->	Word of mouth	0.316	3,038	0.002	Significant
Trust	->	Loyalty	0.296	2,847	0.004	Significant
Word of mouth	->	Loyalty	0.325	3,320	0,000	Significant

Hypothesis 1. Customer relationship marketing influence on customer loyalty

The influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty produces a Cr value of 4,756 with a p-value of 0.000. The hypothesis that customer relationship marketing significantly affects customer loyalty can be accepted because the p-value is smaller than the statistical significance at $\alpha = 5\%$. This result shows that the better customer relationship marketing, the higher customer loyalty towards Mixue in Malang city, with an increase of 48.7%.

Hypothesis 2. Customer relationship marketing influences customer trust

The influence of customer relationship marketing on customer trust produces a Cr value of 3,204 with a p-value of 0.001. The hypothesis that customer relationship marketing significantly affects customer trust can be accepted because the p-value is smaller than the statistical significance at $\alpha = 5\%$. This result shows that the better customer relationship marketing, the higher customer trust in Mixue in Malang city, with an increase of 36.4%.

Hypothesis 3. Customer relationship marketing influence on Word of mouth

The influence of customer relationship marketing on Word of mouth produces a Cr value of 3,038 with a p-value of 0.002. Because the p-value is smaller than statistical significance at $\alpha = 5\%$, so the hypothesis stating that customer relationship marketing has a significant effect on Word of mouth can be accepted, this result shows that the better customer relationship marketing, the higher the customer will do Word of mouth towards Mixue in Malang city with an increase of 31.6%.

Hypothesis 4. Customer trust influences customer loyalty

The influence of customer trust on customer loyalty produces a Cr value of 2,847 with a p-value of 0.004. The hypothesis that customer trust significantly affects customer loyalty can be accepted because the p-value is smaller than the statistical significance at $\alpha = 5\%$. This result shows that the higher the customer trust, the higher the customer loyalty towards Mixue in Malang city, with an increase of 29.6%.

Hypothesis 5: Word of mouth has a significant influence on customer loyalty.

The influence of Word of mouth on customer loyalty produces a Cr value of 3,320 with a p-value of 0.000. Because the p-value is smaller than the statistical significance at $\alpha = 5\%$, the hypothesis that Word of mouth has a significant effect on customer loyalty can be accepted. This result shows that the higher the Word of mouth, the higher the customer loyalty towards Mixue in Malang city, with an increase of 32.5%.

Table 5 shows test results, self-efficacy, mediating influence, authoritative parenting style, and peer social support about self-regulated learning.

Table 5 Influence of authoritative parenting style and peer social support on self-regulated learning through self-efficacy

Influence between variables					Cr	p-value	Information
CRM	->	Trust	->	Loyalty	2.128	0.033	Significant
CRM	->	Word of mouth	->	Loyalty	2,241	0.025	Significant

Hypothesis 6. Customer trust mediates the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty

Based on the mediation test results through the Sobel t-test, the Cr value was 2.128, with a p-value of 0.033. Because the p-value is smaller than the statistical significance at $\alpha = 5\%$, the hypothesis that customer trust mediates the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty can be accepted.

Hypothesis 7: Word of mouth mediates the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty.

Based on the mediation test results through the Sobel t-test, the Cr value was 2.241, with a p-value of 0.025. Because the p-value is smaller than the statistical significance at $\alpha = 5\%$, the hypothesis that Word of mouth mediates the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty can be accepted.

DISCUSSION

Influence customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty.

Relationship marketing is created to develop customer loyalty and commitment to the company's products and services; thus, relationship marketing can be achieved by creating strong and lasting relationships with core groups of customers.(Lindberg-Repo & Grönroos, 1999)Relationship marketing can lead to increased marketing productivity if implemented effectively and efficiently. Relationship marketing is implemented because it can improve a company's business performance by increasing customer loyalty.

Based on the analysis results, Mixue customers in Malang city will have a high level of loyalty if Mixue in Malang city focuses on long-term customers, communicates well with customers, involves members in marketing activities, develops a service culture for customers, and obtains and uses customer information.

According to Roy et al. (2025), customer relationship marketing is acquiring, retaining, and developing profitable customers. It requires a clear focus on the attributes of a service that can generate value for customers, thereby generating loyalty. According toKotler Philip & Armstrong Gary (2018), Relationship marketing aims to build long-term, mutually satisfying relationships with key constituents to acquire and retain customers. According to(Kotler & Keller, 2016)The importance of relationship marketing carried out by companies in the long term, not only to gain short-term profits, but also to create mutually satisfying relationships between companies and customers, because companies can create customer loyalty, obtain as much income as possible from customers, obtain profits according to the set targets and ultimately be able to maintain their business. The results of this study expand on the study conducted by(Semuel, 2012);(Zegullaj et al., 2023);(Jesri et al., 2013);(Rizka & Widji, 2013);(Ansori, 2022), which concluded that CRM significantly influences customer loyalty.

Influence customer relationship marketing to influence customer trust.

Based on the analysis, evidence was found that customer relationship marketing influences the trust of Mixue customers in Malang. Trust is generally considered a fundamental element

for successful relationship marketing. Without trust, a relationship will not survive in the long term. Morgan & Hunt (1994). Trust is the foundation of a partnership strategy when both parties are willing to commit to a particular relationship. Companies must communicate effectively, adopt customer-centered norms, and avoid negative judgments to gain customer trust.

Trust customers towards Mixue in Malang City because the implied role of customer relationship marketing in Mixue in Malang City continuously focuses on long-term customers, creates good communication with customers, involves members in marketing activities, develops a service culture for customers, and obtains and uses customer information.

This result is in line with research conducted by Samuel (2012), which shows that customer relationship marketing influences trust. Rizan et al. (2013) concluded that customer relationship marketing directly influences trust.

Influence customer relationship marketing towards Word of mouth.

Based on the results of inferential statistical analysis, evidence was found that customer relationship marketing affects Mixue's Word of mouth in Malang City. This can be explained that customers will do Word of mouth for Mixue which is shown by telling others about Mixue's experiences, recommending Mixue as the first choice and convincing others to choose Mixue if Mixue can implement customer relationship marketing well which is shown by focusing on long-term customers continuously, making good communication with customers, involving members in marketing activities, developing a service culture for customers, obtaining and using customer information.

According to Kotler Philip & Armstrong Gary (2018), to generate Word of mouth, a company can employ one business strategy, namely improving customer relationship marketing. Customer relationship marketing is a strategy for retaining existing customers and building long-term relationships that benefit both parties. The results of this study further support research conducted by Ngoma and Ntale (2019) and Prasetyawan et al. (2024), which shows a significant influence between customer relationship marketing and Word of mouth.

The influence of customer trust on customer loyalty.

Based on the results of inferential statistical analysis, evidence was found that customer trust influences customer loyalty at Mixue in Malang City. This can be explained that customers will be loyal to Mixue in Malang City if customers trust Mixue, which is indicated by employees having the ability to provide quality products for customers, employees having high competence regarding the products sold, employees paying more attention to customers, products sold having the expected quality, employees being reliable in providing service and employees being honest about the quality of the products sold. The existence of customer trust increases customer loyalty to Mixue.

Morgan & Hunt (1994) state trust and commitment are key intermediaries in building loyalty. Consumer loyalty will arise when consumers trust a product brand, leading to communication and interaction between consumers by discussing the product. The relationship between trust and customer loyalty is that the higher the consumer's trust in a product, the higher the level of consumer loyalty to that brand. The results of this study expand on the research conducted by Ball et al. (2004), (Luarn & Lin, 2003), (Auh, 2005), (Ranjbarian, B., Dabestani, R., Khajeh, E. & Noktehdan, 2011), (Zegullaj et al., 2023), which proves that trust influences customer loyalty.

Influence of Word of mouth on customer loyalty

Based on the results of the analysis, evidence was found that Word of mouth influences customer loyalty to Mixue in Malang City. This can be explained by the fact that customers will be loyal to Mixue in Malang City, which is indicated by their willingness to come back to Mixue, continue to use/visit Mixue, and continue to come to Mixue in Malang City.

Customer loyalty is created through Word of mouth, such as sharing experiences with others, recommending Mixue in Malang City, and convincing others to choose Mixue in Malang City.

According to Kotler Philip & Armstrong Gary (2018), Word of mouth is often considered more credible than advertising or promotions conducted by the company itself. When customers hear positive recommendations from friends, family, or others they trust, they tend to feel more confident and comfortable purchasing or remaining loyal to a brand. This trust is crucial in building long-term loyalty. The results of this study expand on research conducted by Prasetyawan et al. (2024), Oliviana et al. (2017), and Sagita & Oetomo (2017), which show that Word of mouth has a significant influence on consumer loyalty.

Customer trust mediates the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty.

The study's results indicate that customer trust mediates the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty. This result can be explained that Mixue in Malang City which implements customer relationship marketing which is implied by focusing on long-term customers continuously, making good communication with customers, involving members in marketing activities, developing a service culture for customers, obtaining and using customer information influences customer trust which is manifested in employees having the ability to provide quality products for customers, employees having high competence about the products sold, employees paying more attention to customers, products sold have the expected quality, employees are reliable in providing services and employees are honest about the quality of the products sold. The existence of customer trust increases customer loyalty to Mixue.

The results of this study further strengthen the study conducted by (Semuel, 2012); (Rizan et al., 2013) shows that customer relationship marketing influences trust. Meanwhile, the results of the study conducted (Ball et al., 2004); (Luarn & Lin, 2003); (Auh, 2005); (Ranjbarian, B., Dabestani, R., Khajeh, E. & Noktehdan, 2011); (Zegullaj et al., 2023) proves that trust influences customer loyalty.

Word of mouth mediates the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty.

The study results show that Word of mouth mediates the influence of customer relationship marketing on customer loyalty. This result can be explained that customers will use Word of mouth for Mixue which is shown by telling others about Mixue's experiences, recommending Mixue as the first choice and convincing others to choose Mixue if Mixue can implement customer relationship marketing well which is shown by focusing on long-term customers continuously, making good communication with customers, involving members in marketing activities, developing a service culture for customers, obtaining and using customer information. The existence of Word of mouth has an impact on increasing customer loyalty towards Mixue.

The results of this study further strengthen the study conducted by Ngoma & Ntale (2019) and Prasetyawan et al. (2024), which shows a significant influence between customer relationship marketing and Word of mouth. Meanwhile, the results of the study conducted (Ball et al., 2004); (Luarn & Lin, 2003); (Auh, 2005); (Ranjbarian, B., Dabestani, R., Khajeh, E. & Noktehdan, 2011); (Zegullaj et al., 2023) proves that trust influences customer loyalty...

Research Implication

This research has implications for developing the Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing, a theory developed by Morgan & Hunt (1994) that explains the importance of commitment and trust in building long-term relationships between companies and customers. This theory focuses on two key elements: commitment and trust, both of which

are considered key factors in driving successful and sustainable relationships in the context of relationship marketing.

The focus of this study is to increase customer loyalty, which is done through trust and commitment, which are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. This means that customer trust is shown by a promise where a good reputation so that they believe in the products sold and employees keep their promises in providing services and Word of mouth is shown by recommending such as Mixue in being the first choice for places to buy ice cream and always recommending mixue products to others because the role of customer relationship marketing is shown by the bond that is implied in customers having the same views about the product and customer service conveying information about the product to improve relationships with customers. Effective customer relationship marketing can increase customer trust, and Word of mouth impacts customer loyalty, as shown by repeat purchases, which are implemented by being willing to come back and be willing to make repeat purchases.

CONCLUSIONS

The study's results show that Mixue management needs to implement customer relationship marketing mediated by customer trust and Word of mouth to increase customer loyalty. Implementing the customer relationship marketing concept can increase customer trust and word of mouth, and impact customer loyalty.

Limitations

The limitation of this research is that it is only based on survey data, which presents an analysis of the relationship in one time period (cross-section) on Mixue customers in Malang City. Thus, the results of this research cannot be generalized to Mixue customers in other cities.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the recommendations that can be given by Mixue management in Malang City are to be more open to receiving suggestions from customers regarding the products offered, management needs to pay attention to customer comfort, and management needs to create good relationships with customers so that customers tell others about their experiences. For future research, it is possible to conduct a study on Mixue customer satisfaction in Malang City, which can be used as a comparison.

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