

The Influence of Trust, Customer Satisfaction, and Promotion on Brand Loyalty of Samsung Smartphones: Case Study on Students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of trust, customer satisfaction, and promotion on brand loyalty of Samsung smartphones among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh. Trust, customer satisfaction, and promotion were selected as independent variables because they are considered key factors in shaping consumer loyalty, while brand loyalty serves as the dependent variable, reflecting consumers' commitment to a specific product. Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed to students who have purchased or used Samsung smartphones, employing purposive sampling to ensure that respondents met the research criteria. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression, allowing the identification of the effect of each independent variable on brand loyalty both partially and simultaneously. The results indicate that trust, customer satisfaction, and promotion have a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty. In other words, higher levels of consumer trust in Samsung's quality and services, greater customer satisfaction with the product, and more effective promotional strategies increase the likelihood that consumers remain loyal to the Samsung brand. These findings provide important insights into the main factors influencing consumer loyalty and serve as a strategic reference for companies to design more targeted marketing programs, enhance brand loyalty among students as potential long-term consumers, and contribute valuable academic knowledge for future studies in the field of consumer behavior and brand management.

Keywords: *Brand Loyalty, Trust, Customer Satisfaction, Promotion*

INTRODUCTION

Management is widely recognized as the process of achieving organizational goals through the effective use of resources, particularly human and non-human assets. In the context of marketing management, one of the crucial goals is to understand consumer behavior and maintain long-term customer relationships. A key determinant of organizational success in today's competitive global market is brand loyalty. Companies that are able to foster strong consumer loyalty are more likely to sustain growth and competitiveness. The smartphone industry represents one of the fastest-growing and most competitive sectors, characterized by rapid technological advancements and dynamic consumer preferences. Among various global brands, Samsung has established itself as a major player with a strong reputation for innovation and quality. Nevertheless, the company faces ongoing challenges in maintaining market share, especially in Indonesia, where consumer loyalty has become increasingly fragmented due to the aggressive strategies of competitors such as Apple, Xiaomi, Oppo, and Vivo. Brand loyalty is not only shaped by product quality but also influenced by psychological and emotional factors. Trust, customer satisfaction, and promotional strategies are among the most critical variables affecting loyalty. Brand trust refers to the confidence consumers place in a brand's reliability, integrity, and performance. When consumers believe that a brand consistently delivers on its promises, they are more likely to remain loyal despite competitive offers. Customer satisfaction, on the other hand, reflects the positive evaluation of a product or service based on the alignment between expectations and actual experience. High satisfaction often translates into repeat purchases, word-of-mouth recommendations, and stronger

emotional attachment to the brand. Meanwhile, promotion serves as an essential marketing tool for informing, persuading, and reminding consumers about the value of a product. Effective promotional activities not only increase brand awareness but also strengthen consumer engagement and loyalty. In Indonesia, market statistics show that Samsung has experienced a decline in market share between 2023 and 2024, signaling that loyalty towards the brand is under pressure. However, preliminary findings from a survey conducted among students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, reveal that many students still demonstrate a relatively high level of trust and satisfaction toward Samsung smartphones, influenced by product quality, after-sales service, and promotional campaigns. This contrast between national trends and campus-level findings highlights the importance of further investigation. Given this background, the present study focuses on analyzing the influence of trust, customer satisfaction, and promotion on brand loyalty toward Samsung smartphones, using students of Universitas Malikussaleh as the case study. The results are expected to provide both theoretical contributions by enriching the literature on consumer behavior and brand management, and practical implications for companies seeking to design effective marketing strategies to enhance brand loyalty in the highly competitive smartphone industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is recognized as a key determinant of sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace. It reflects the degree of consumer commitment to consistently repurchase and recommend a particular brand despite alternative offers from competitors. Loyal consumers exhibit both behavioral consistency, such as repeat purchases, and attitudinal commitment, such as emotional attachment to the brand. Prior studies highlight that strong brand loyalty not only increases customer lifetime value but also reduces marketing costs, as loyal consumers act as voluntary promoters through positive word of mouth. However, loyalty is not formed overnight; it requires consistent quality, effective communication, and trustful relationships with consumers. Scholars argue that loyalty is multidimensional, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects, which together determine the depth and sustainability of consumer-brand relationships.

Trust

Trust is an essential factor in building long-term relationships between companies and consumers. In marketing literature, brand trust is defined as the belief that a brand will deliver on its promises consistently, honestly, and reliably. Consumers who trust a brand are more willing to take risks, remain loyal despite competitors' offers, and forgive occasional shortcomings. Trust emerges through perceived competence, integrity, and benevolence of the brand, supported by transparent communication and consistent product performance. Empirical evidence shows that higher trust levels increase consumers' willingness to engage in repeat purchases and strengthen their resistance to switching to other brands. Nevertheless, some studies suggest that when market competition intensifies, trust alone may not guarantee loyalty if not supported by satisfaction and value alignment.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is another critical driver of loyalty, representing consumers' positive evaluation of their consumption experiences compared to prior expectations. When product performance meets or exceeds expectations, consumers are more likely to develop satisfaction, which subsequently encourages repeat purchases and brand advocacy. Conversely, dissatisfaction can quickly erode loyalty, especially in highly competitive industries like smartphones, where alternative brands are easily accessible. Prior studies identify several dimensions of satisfaction, including product quality, service experience, price fairness, and emotional value. Satisfaction has been consistently linked to stronger loyalty; however, its effect may be moderated by consumer involvement and situational factors. For instance, satisfied consumers may still switch brands if competitors offer significantly better promotions or innovations. This indicates that satisfaction, while necessary, is not always sufficient to ensure loyalty.

Promotion

Promotion is widely recognized as a vital component of the marketing mix, serving to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about a brand's offerings. Effective promotional strategies create brand awareness, shape consumer perceptions, and encourage purchase intentions. In the smartphone industry, companies like Samsung rely on a variety of promotional tools, including advertising campaigns, digital marketing, celebrity endorsements, sales promotions, and experiential marketing events. Prior research shows that well-executed promotions can enhance brand image and stimulate consumer interest, ultimately reinforcing loyalty. However, excessive reliance on short-term promotional tactics, such as price discounts, may reduce perceived brand value and shift consumer behavior

toward opportunistic rather than loyal patterns. Therefore, promotion needs to be strategically aligned with brand positioning and long-term relationship-building efforts.

Synthesis of Prior Studies

Empirical evidence suggests that trust, satisfaction, and promotion each play significant roles in shaping brand loyalty. Studies indicate that trust enhances consumer confidence, satisfaction reinforces positive experiences, and promotion sustains brand visibility in a crowded market. Nevertheless, inconsistencies remain in the literature. While most findings highlight positive relationships, some studies suggest that the strength of these effects varies depending on consumer demographics, product categories, and market contexts. For example, trust may strongly influence loyalty in premium product segments, while promotion may play a greater role in markets where consumers are more price-sensitive. These mixed findings emphasize the need for further research in specific contexts.

Conclusion

Based on theoretical perspectives and empirical findings, it can be concluded that trust, satisfaction, and promotion are interrelated factors that collectively influence brand loyalty. Understanding their interaction is essential for companies such as Samsung, which face declining market shares and shifting consumer preferences. By examining these relationships in the context of university students as potential long-term consumers, this study aims to provide new insights into how consumer perceptions and experiences shape loyalty, and how companies can strengthen their competitive advantage through effective marketing strategies.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey method to examine the influence of trust, customer satisfaction, and promotion on brand loyalty toward Samsung smartphones. The research was conducted at Universitas Malikussaleh, Lhokseumawe, with students of the Faculty of Economics and Business serving as the object of the study. The population consisted of all students who had purchased or used Samsung smartphones. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure that respondents were relevant to the research objectives, namely those with actual user experience of Samsung products. The final sample size was determined based on statistical considerations to provide sufficient representativeness. A structured questionnaire was utilized as the primary data collection instrument. The items were designed using a Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” allowing for the measurement of respondent perceptions regarding each variable. The independent variables included trust (X1), customer satisfaction (X2), and promotion (X3), while brand loyalty served as the dependent variable (Y). Each construct was operationalized through multiple indicators adopted and adapted from established theories and prior empirical studies to ensure theoretical consistency.

Before proceeding with hypothesis testing, the research instrument was subjected to validity and reliability tests to confirm that all items accurately measured their intended constructs and were internally consistent. Classical assumption tests—including normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests—were also conducted to verify that the data met the requirements of regression analysis. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with the assistance of statistical software. Both partial effects (t-tests) and simultaneous effects (F-tests) were examined to determine the significance of each independent variable on brand loyalty. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to assess the proportion of variance in brand loyalty explained by trust, customer satisfaction, and promotion collectively. Through this methodological framework, the study aimed to provide empirical evidence on how these three marketing variables influence consumer loyalty toward Samsung smartphones, both individually and jointly, within the context of university students as potential long-term consumers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, who have purchased or used Samsung smartphones, were analyzed using multiple linear regression to examine the influence of trust, customer satisfaction, and promotion on brand loyalty. Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity confirmed that the data satisfied the requirements for regression analysis. Additionally, the validity and reliability tests indicated that the measurement instruments were both accurate and consistent, ensuring the robustness of the findings.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis showed that most respondents expressed relatively high trust in Samsung smartphones, citing product reliability, design quality, and after-sales service as key drivers. Customer satisfaction levels were also

reported to be moderate to high, reflecting positive experiences with product performance and service delivery. Furthermore, promotion was perceived as effective by many respondents, particularly in terms of advertising campaigns, digital marketing, and brand ambassador endorsements. Finally, indicators of brand loyalty, such as repeat purchase intention and willingness to recommend Samsung to others, were reported at moderate to high levels.

Effect of Trust on Brand Loyalty

The regression analysis revealed that trust has a positive and significant influence on brand loyalty. This finding supports theoretical arguments that consumer confidence in a brand's reliability, integrity, and consistency increases their willingness to remain loyal despite competitive alternatives. It also aligns with prior studies indicating that trust reduces perceived risks and strengthens emotional attachment to the brand. For Samsung, this suggests that maintaining consistent product quality, transparent communication, and dependable after-sales service is essential for preserving consumer trust and reinforcing loyalty.

Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Brand Loyalty

Customer satisfaction was also found to have a significant positive impact on brand loyalty. Respondents who reported satisfaction with product performance, design features, and value for money demonstrated a greater tendency to repurchase Samsung smartphones and recommend them to peers. This supports the argument that satisfaction serves as a mediator between consumption experience and long-term loyalty. The result is consistent with earlier research highlighting that satisfied customers are more likely to develop strong brand relationships, whereas dissatisfaction can accelerate brand switching. For Samsung, the implication is that continuous improvements in product performance and customer service are necessary to strengthen loyalty.

Effect of Promotion on Brand Loyalty

The analysis further demonstrated that promotion significantly and positively influences brand loyalty. Respondents noted that promotional activities, such as attractive advertising, social media campaigns, and student-targeted events, enhanced their awareness and attachment to the Samsung brand. This result confirms that promotion not only stimulates initial purchase but also sustains long-term loyalty by reinforcing consumer-brand connections. However, it also highlights the need for balanced promotional strategies, as excessive reliance on short-term sales promotions may undermine long-term brand equity.

Simultaneous Effect of Trust, Satisfaction, and Promotion on Brand Loyalty

The simultaneous regression analysis showed that trust, customer satisfaction, and promotion collectively have a significant impact on brand loyalty. The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicated that a substantial proportion of the variance in brand loyalty could be explained by these three factors. This demonstrates that loyalty is not shaped by a single determinant but rather by the combined effect of cognitive, emotional, and promotional influences.

Discussion

Overall, the findings suggest that strengthening brand loyalty requires an integrated approach. Trust builds consumer confidence in the brand, satisfaction ensures positive post-purchase evaluation, and promotion enhances visibility and engagement. Each factor contributes uniquely but also interacts synergistically to reinforce consumer loyalty toward Samsung smartphones. For Samsung, this highlights the importance of adopting a comprehensive marketing strategy that emphasizes consistent product quality, effective customer service, and innovative promotional activities to sustain competitiveness in the increasingly saturated smartphone market. rall performance, increase employee retention, and ensure sustainable organizational growth.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of trust, customer satisfaction, and promotion on brand loyalty toward Samsung smartphones among students of Universitas Malikussaleh. The findings revealed that all three independent variables—trust, customer satisfaction, and promotion—have positive and significant effects on brand loyalty, both individually and collectively. This indicates that consumer loyalty is shaped not only by cognitive evaluations but also by emotional experiences and effective marketing efforts. Specifically, trust was found to strengthen loyalty by fostering consumer confidence in Samsung's reliability, product quality, and consistency. Customer satisfaction enhanced loyalty through positive post-purchase experiences, leading to repeat purchase intentions and recommendations to others. Promotion also contributed significantly, as advertising campaigns, digital marketing, and student-oriented activities reinforced brand awareness and consumer attachment.

The simultaneous analysis further demonstrated that these three variables together explained a substantial proportion of variance in brand loyalty, underscoring their collective importance in sustaining competitiveness in the smartphone market. From a practical perspective, the results imply that Samsung should implement integrated marketing strategies that emphasize the development of consumer trust through consistent product quality and reliable service, the enhancement of customer satisfaction through continuous innovation and value delivery, and the execution of effective promotional activities that resonate with target consumers. By aligning these three aspects, the company can strengthen long-term loyalty and maintain its market position in an increasingly competitive industry.

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