THE ROLE OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE IN MEDIATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY AND CONSUMER LOYALTY IN SHOPEEFOOD APPLICATION USERS IN SEMARANG CITY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine and test the role of consumer satisfaction as an intervening variable in mediating the relationship between service quality and consumer loyalty among ShopeeFood users in Semarang City. The research population is ShopeeFood application users who live in Semarang City. The sampling technique uses a probability sampling technique with a purposive samplina method distributina bv questionnaires via Google Form which is distributed via social media. The sample used in the research was 141 respondents and the data was processed using SMART-PLS 3.0. The results of the research show that (1) Service quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. (2) service quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer satisfaction. (3) Consumer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. (4) Consumer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and consumer loyalty. For further research, it is recommended to add variations to the independent variables used and take samples in different cities so that the results can be compared with this research.

Keywords: Service Quality, Consumer Satisfaction, Consumer Loyalty, SMART-PLS.

INTRODUCTION

Online food delivery (OFD) services are one of the online business platforms that have emerged due to rapid advances in technology and internet use (Ling, 2021). In Indonesia itself, the survey results show that the number of Indonesian internet users at the beginning of 2024 reached 221,563,479 people out of a total of 278,696,200 people in Indonesia in 2023. This survey shows that the number of internet users in Indonesia has increased significantly from year to year. (APJII). One popular example of the rapid progress of technology and internet use is the emergence of OFD services that connect offline and online businesses, where customers can buy the food they want via online channels (mobile applications) and their orders will be delivered directly to their homes (Yao *et al.*, 2023). One of the OFD services currently available in Indonesia is ShopeeFood.

Unfortunately, a Snapchart survey regarding the OFD services most frequently used in Indonesia shows that ShopeeFood is far behind other OFD services such as Grabfood and Gofood. This indicates that there are suspected problems in the services provided by ShopeeFood. In connection with this problem, researchers made observations on ShopeeFood consumers through reviews and ratings left by consumers after making transactions on the ShopeeFood application. Many consumers complain about the services provided by ShopeeFood and restaurants, such as discrepancies between the products ordered and received, delivery that feels unsafe, the large number of additional fees given, and the lack of solutions from related parties to problems complained about by consumers.

Furthermore, if it is not resolved immediately, this could cause losses for OFD services, especially ShopeeFood. For example, the decline in application usage and the loss of ShopeeFood consumers. Because in essence, service quality is an important factor in gaining an advantage in increasingly fierce competition, especially in the *food and beverage sector* (Chenget al., 2021). Therefore, this research is aimed at examining the effect of service quality on consumer loyalty through the mediation of consumer satisfaction.

Research on consumer loyalty has been carried out, but there are still problems. The problem can be seen from the results of several previous studies where Ling *et al* (2021) in their research stated that service quality has no effect on consumer loyalty. Meanwhile, in research by Prasetyo *et al.*, (2021) Supriyanto *et al.*, (2021) Berliana *et al.*, (2022) stated that service quality influences consumer loyalty so this research offers an intervening variable, namely consumer satisfaction as a novelty and resolution of existing problems.

In connection with the expected research objectives, the following procedures are used in this research. first, by collecting research articles that discuss *online food delivery* in the 2018-2023 period. Second, collect data by conducting a survey by distributing questionnaires to active OFD ShopeeFood users in Semarang City which will be distributed via social media platforms. Third, the data that has been collected will be analyzed using the PLS-SEM method and presented with a descriptive narrative.

This research provides several contributions that can be considered. First, for academics this research can be used as learning material for future research. Second, for practitioners, this research can be used as evaluation material to develop and improve OFD services to improve the quality of their services so that consumer loyalty can be built.

THEORITICAL REVIEW

Service Quality

Service quality is a means of satisfying consumer needs and desires in accordance with what consumers themselves expect. In the study, Cheng *et al.*, (2021) underlined that service quality does not only include service aspects but also the goods, processes and environment involved in the interaction of service providers and consumers. Service quality is defined as the level of service provided by a company to consumers. Service quality can be measured by comparing consumer perceptions and expectations of the services received (Ling *et al.*, 2021). Service quality itself has an important role in attracting consumer attention which involves various aspects such as responsibility, reliability, responsiveness and guarantees. To survive in increasingly tight market competition, business people need to pay attention to the quality of the services provided to gain the trust of consumers (Naini *et al.*, 2022).

Service quality is one of the factors that determines consumer loyalty to a product or service, where when the quality of the service provided to consumers is good, it will trigger consumer loyalty to the service. This is reinforced by research conducted by Sitoruset al., (2018) Fidaet al., (2020) and Rizaqet al., (2018) which states that service quality has a positive and significant relationship with consumer loyalty. From this statement, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

HI: Service Quality Has a Significant Positive Influence on ShopeeFood Consumer Loyalty in Semarang City.

Apart from that, other research on service quality is also linked to consumer satisfaction. Having good service quality tends to increase customer satisfaction with a product or service. This is supported by several previous studies which state that there is a significant positive relationship between service quality and consumer satisfaction (Ling *et al.*, (2021), Berliana *et al.*, (2022), Supriyanto *et al.*, (2021) and Khan *et al.*, (2020). From these data the following hypothesis can be concluded:

H3: Service Quality has a Significant Positive Influence on ShopeeFood Consumer Satisfaction in Semarang City.

Consumer satisfaction

Sasono *et al.* (2021) explain that consumer satisfaction is a result felt by consumers when their expectations are met. Consumer satisfaction is defined as a positive perception experienced by customers towards a product or service which is based on previous purchasing experiences after using a product or service from time to time. Paying attention to consumers is one of the keys to long-term success for companies.

Satisfied consumers tend to reuse products or services and recommend them in the future. This shows that consumer satisfaction plays an active role as a strong foundation for building consumer loyalty. This is supported by previous research which states that there is a positive relationship between satisfaction and consumer loyalty. In their research, Rizal *et al.*, (2019) stated that satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Rizaq *et al.*, (2019) also stated that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Likewise, Sitorus *et al.*, (2018) and Wilson *et al.*, (2018) stated the same research results that satisfaction has a positive correlation with loyalty. From this statement, the following hypothesis can be concluded: **H2: Consumer Satisfaction Has a Significant Positive Influence on ShopeeFood Consumer Loyalty in Semarang City**

Consumer Loyalty

Consumer loyalty is a commitment held firmly by consumers to use or prioritize purchasing a product or service consistently. which causes repeated purchases or use of services from the same brand even though there is influence from competitors to switch to other brands (Jeremia 2019). Yustine (2020) states that loyalty is a behavior where customers express their availability to subscribe, provide product recommendations, and like products exclusively. Furthermore, loyalty can be defined as a consumer commitment to repurchase for a long time and recommend the product to other people (Kenneth, 2018).

Loyalty can be built through several factors such as trust, satisfaction and commitment (Berliana et al., 2022). Service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty have a relationship with each other (Myo *et al.*, 2019). This is proven by the large amount of literature that supports this argument (Sudigdo *et al.*, 2019; Khalifa *et al.*, 2018). When service quality is able to satisfy customer desires, that is where customers will start to be loyal and willing to recommend the product and buy more (Myo *et al.*, 2019). In this context, consumer satisfaction acts as a mediating variable, where consumer satisfaction can link the effect of service quality on consumer loyalty. How strong the relationship between service quality and consumer loyalty is influenced by the level of consumer satisfaction.

This is supported by several studies which state that there is an indirect influence between service quality on consumer loyalty which is mediated by satisfaction (Salwa *et al.*, 2022). Other research (Fitriani *et al.*, 2018; Rizaq *et al.*, 2019) also states the same results, namely that service quality has an influence on customer loyalty through satisfaction. From this evidence, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

H4: Consumer Satisfaction Mediates the Relationship Between ShopeeFood Consumer Satisfaction and Loyalty in Semarang City.

Theoretical Framework

This research model consists of 3 variables; Service quality (X), consumer loyalty (Y) and consumer satisfaction (Z). The following is a picture of the proposed research framework:

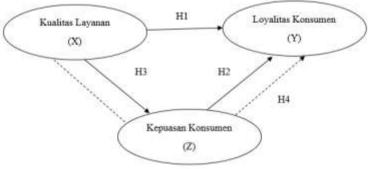


Figure 1. Research model

Based on Figure 1. It can be explained that service quality influences consumer loyalty (X->Y), consumer satisfaction influences consumer loyalty (Z->Y), service quality influences consumer satisfaction (X->Z) and service quality indirectly influence consumer loyalty through consumer satisfaction (X->Z->Y)

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach. The research is aimed at testing the hypothesis that has been formulated and analyzing the relationship between related variables. This research consists of 3 variables. Service quality as an independent variable, consumer loyalty as a dependent variable and consumer satisfaction as an intervening variable.

The population in this research are ShopeeFood application users in Semarang City. The sample collection technique itself uses a *non-probability sampling method* with a *purposive sampling technique* with sampling criteria for users who have made transactions using the ShopeeFood application and live in Semarang City. The minimum sample size set was 96 respondents based on calculations using the Lemeshow formula.

The data used in this research was collected through distributing questionnaires, while secondary data was obtained through literature study. The analytical tool used to process research data is P LS-SEM with SmartPls software with analysis stages including evaluation of *outer models, inner models* and hypothesis testing. This research uses PLS-SEM as an analysis tool because it is considered more accurate in presenting the results of the research. Using PLS-SEM can also facilitate abstract or multi-dimensional research with better accuracy compared to other analytical tools (Wingdes 2019).

Information		Frequency	Amount	Total percentage (%)	
Gender	Man	38	141	100	
Condor	Woman	103	171		
	18-25 Years	114			
Age	26-30 Years	20	141	100	
	>30 Years	7			
Job status	Student	10		100	
	Student	82	1 1 1		
	Employee	23	141		
	Others	26			

RESULTS

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

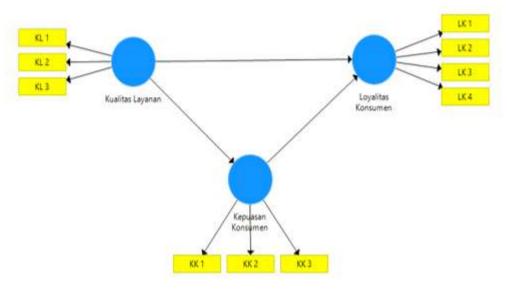


Figure 1 Research model

Outer Model

The following are the results of testing the Outer model in this research:

Indicator	Consumer Satisfaction (Z)	Service Quality (X)	Consumer Loyalty (Y)
KK 1	0.874		
KK 2	0.807		
KK 3	0.855		
KL 1		0.721	
KL 2		0.710	
KL 3		0.873	
LK 1			0.786
LK 2			0.712
LK 3			0.731
LK 4			0.837

Table 2. Convergence Validity Test Results

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

From the data above, the convergent validity test which is based on the outer loading value states that all indicators for each variable in this study are declared valid because the outer loading value is greater than 0.7. Next, the AVE value for the reflective indicator is as follows:

Table 3. Average Variance Extract (AVE) Results				
Variable AVE				
Service Quality	0.716			
Consumer Loyalty	0.595			
Consumer Satisfaction	0.585			

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

The table above shows that all constructs in each research variable have an AVE value greater than 0.50. So it can be said that the overall construct has good measurements.

	Table 4. Discriminant Validity Test Results						
Indicator	Consumer Satisfaction	Service Quality	Consumer Loyalty				
KK 1	0.874	0.722	0.654				
KK 2	0.807	0.617	0.642				
KK 3	0.855	0.702	0.665				
KL 1	0.532	0.721	0.561				
KL 2	0.505	0.710	0.527				
KL 3	0.785	0.873	0.703				
LK 1	0.629	0.597	0.786				
LK 2	0.490	0.566	0.712				
LK 3	0.552	0.548	0.731				
LK 4	0.683	0.679	0.837				

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Table 5 shows that all *cross loading* values for each indicator of a variable are higher than the *cross loading values* for other variables. Based on this, all variables in the research can be said to have good validity.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results					
Variable Cronbach's Alpha Composite Reliab					
Service Quality (X)	0.658	0.814			
Consumer Satisfaction (Z)	0.801	0.883			
Consumer Loyalty (Y)	0.767	0.851			

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Table 5 shows that the Composite reliability value for each variable is above 0.70 and the Cronbach's alpha value is above 0.60, which means that all the variables presented in this study are declared valid and reliable.

Inner Model

The following table contains the results of the inner model testing in this research:

Variable	R-Square
Consumer Satisfaction (Z)	0.649
Consumer Loyalty (Y)	0.669

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Table 6 shows that the service quality model on consumer satisfaction provides a value of 0.649, which explains that the variability of the consumer satisfaction construct which can be explained by the variability of the service quality construct is 64.9% while the remainder (35.1%) is explained by other variables outside this research. Likewise, the model of the influence of service quality on consumer loyalty gives a value of 0.669, which means that the variability of the consumer loyalty construct that can be explained by the variability of the service quality construct is 66.9%, while the remainder (33.1%) is explained by other variables. Outside this research.

Hypothesis test

Below is a table containing the results of hypothesis testing in this research:

Hypothesis	Original	Sample	Standard	T Statistics	Р	Conclusion
	Sample	Mean (M)	Deviatio	(O/STDEV)	Values	
	(0)		n (STDEV)			
KL (X) -> LK	0.453	0.457	0.084	5,425	0,000	Hypothesis
(Y)	0.400	0.457	0.004	0,420	0,000	accepted
KL (X) -> KK	0.806	0.807	0.032	25,551	0,000	Hypothesis
(Z)						accepted
KK (Z) -> LK	0.407	0.401	0.084	4,870	0,000	Hypothesis
(Y)						accepted

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

From the results of hypothesis testing through *the path coefficient test* in table 7, the following conclusions can be obtained:

1. Testing hypothesis 1: Service quality has a significant positive effect on consumer loyalty.

Based on the results of hypothesis 1 testing, it shows that the coefficient value of service quality on consumer loyalty has a positive value of 0.453. This shows that the higher the service quality, the higher the consumer loyalty will be. And this test produces a t-statistic value of 5,425 which shows that the hypothesis has a significant influence because the *t-statistic value* is > 1.96 with a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. So it can be concluded that service quality has a significant positive effect on consumer loyalty. So it can be said that hypothesis 1 is accepted.

2. Testing hypothesis 2: Service quality has a significant positive effect on consumer satisfaction.

Based on the results of hypothesis 2 testing, it shows that the coefficient value of service quality on consumer satisfaction has a positive value of 0.806. This shows that the higher the service quality, the higher the consumer satisfaction will be. And this test produces a t-statistic value of 25,551, which shows that this hypothesis has a significant influence because the *t-statistic value* is > 1.96 with a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. So it can be concluded that service quality has a significant positive effect on consumer satisfaction. So it can be said that hypothesis 2 is accepted.

3. Testing hypothesis 3: Consumer satisfaction has a significant positive effect on consumer loyalty.

Based on the results of hypothesis 3 testing, it shows that the coefficient value of consumer satisfaction on consumer loyalty has a positive value of 0.407. This shows that the higher consumer satisfaction, the higher consumer loyalty will be. And this test produces a t-statistic value of 4,870, which shows that the hypothesis has a significant influence because the *t-statistic value* is > 1.96 with a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. So it can be concluded that consumer satisfaction has a significant positive effect on consumer loyalty. So it can be said that hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Table 8. Indirect Effect Test Results (Indirect Effect) Original Sample Statistics P Conclusion							
	Sample	Mean	Deviation	(O/STDEV)	Values		
	(0)	(M)	(STDEV)				
KL (X) -> KK	0.328	0.324	0.068	4,811	0,000	Hypothesis	
(Z) -> LK (Y)						accepted	

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Based on table 8, it is known that the *t-statistics value* of the influence of service quality has a positive effect on consumer loyalty, mediated by consumer satisfaction, which is 4,811, greater than the t-table statistics value (1.967) with an influence of 0.328 and a p value of 0.000. From this description it can be concluded that consumer satisfaction has an indirect effect in mediating the relationship between service quality and consumer loyalty. So it can be said that hypothesis 4 is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Service Quality on Consumer Loyalty

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, it proves that the first hypothesis in this research is accepted. This means that service quality has a positive and significant effect on ShopeeFood consumer loyalty in Semarang City. This confirms the assumption that the better the quality of service provided by a company to consumers, the higher the level of consumer loyalty to that company. The results of this research are supported by previous research by Rizaq *et al.*, (2019), Sitorus et al., (2018) which stated that service quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty.

The Influence of Consumer Satisfaction on Consumer Loyalty

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, it proves that the second hypothesis in this research is accepted. This means that consumer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on ShopeeFood consumer loyalty in Semarang City. This confirms the assumption that the higher the level of consumer satisfaction with a product or service, the higher the consumer's loyalty to that product or service. This research is supported by research conducted by Sitorus *et al.*, (2018) and Rizal *et al.*, (2019) which shows research results that consumer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty.

The Influence of Service Quality on Consumer Satisfaction

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, it proves that the third hypothesis in this research is accepted. This means that service quality has a positive and significant effect on ShopeeFood consumer satisfaction in Semarang City. In other words, if the quality of the service provided is optimal, this will also increase consumer satisfaction with the product or service itself. This is in line with previous research by Supriyanto *et al.*, 2021 which stated that service quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer satisfaction.

The Influence of Consumer Satisfaction in Mediating the Relationship Between Service Quality and Consumer Loyalty

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, it proves that the fourth hypothesis in this research is accepted. This means that consumer satisfaction as an intervening variable represents a fairly large role in mediating the relationship between service quality and consumer loyalty on the ShopeeFood application in Semarang City. The better the quality of service provided to consumers will make consumers feel satisfied and if consumers are satisfied consumer loyalty to the product or service will also increase. This is in line with previous research by Supriyanto *et al.*, (2021) which states that service quality has an indirect influence on consumer loyalty through consumer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, it is known that loyalty is an important factor that ShopeeFood needs to pay full attention to. Without loyalty from consumers, ShopeeFood will not be able to compete in today's increasingly tight market competition. Several indicators that can influence consumer loyalty are service quality and consumer satisfaction. Consumers tend to be loyal to the company if the quality the company provides is in accordance with what consumers want. If the company can fulfill consumers' desires and expectations to the maximum, consumers will feel satisfied and there is a high possibility that these consumers will have loyalty to the company. Where consumers will make repeat purchases in the future, recommend ShopeeFood to others voluntarily and make ShopeeFood the first choice when consumers want to order food online.

Research Limitations

- 1. During the research process carried out by researchers there were limitations that might influence the results of this research. Among them are: limitations in research time and researchers' abilities in terms of materials, energy and knowledge.
- 2. There are limitations to data access involving a particular organization.
- 3. There is limited variation in the variables used by researchers in research.

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