



Mediating Roles of Customer Engagement and Satisfaction in the Connection Between E-Retail Customer Experience and Loyalty

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ABSTRACT

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customer experience, customer engagement, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty

The fundamental purpose of the research is to scrutinize experimentally how customer engagement (CE) and satisfaction (CS) mediated the influence of customer experience (CX) and loyalty (CL). Purposive sampling was used to choose a sample of 220 respondents for this study of e-retailer customers. This study looked at how CE antecedents influenced CL in the e-retailer market. The analytical tool employed was Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), which utilized the AMOS 26 application package. The study's major findings revealed that CX had a favorable and considerable effect on CE and CS. CX, CE, and CS all had a positive and significant impact on CL. Furthermore, CE and CS were found to moderate the connection between e-retailer CX and CL. CE, on the other hand, had no beneficial impact on CS. Finally, the importance of this research is to show how the development of CX impacts the CE, CS, and CL of e-retailer customers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, the use of digital platforms in Indonesia has grown dramatically. People are rapidly using e-retail platforms for various activities, such as social media, shopping, health, entertainment, traveling, learning, and food ordering [1], because of their hectic schedules, people prefer to buy and sell online. The e-retail platform is continuously developing, creating an excellent potential for online shops. In Indonesia, the online retail industry is entering a new era of competition as companies compete to outdo one another in service and product offerings [2].

According to the Indonesian statistical data, 204.7 million Indonesians have internet connectivity as of January 2022 [3]. This figure, representing internet connectivity, increased by only 1.03% over the previous year. The number of people in Indonesia who use the Internet has steadily increased over the last five years. The overall number of internet users in the country increased by 54.25% compared to 2018.

The Indonesian people's need for quick and easy online access to products and services is driving the rapid development in internet usage in Indonesia. The increased use of the Internet has fueled the growth of firms that provide services linked to online shopping. As a result, many customers buy online to suit their everyday necessities [4]. In these conditions, e-retail is a wise consumer purchase option [5]. Because of the easiness with which transactions may be bought and sold, people's needs and wishes can be addressed through e-retail utilizing only cell phones and internet networks [6].

Previous studies have discovered that the way a person feels has a big effect on how engaged they are [7]. According to other studies, the way a person feels has a big effect on how satisfied they are. As a result, a study in the e-retail [8] and residential industries [9] revealed that customer satisfaction (CS) significantly impacted customer loyalty (CL). Furthermore, Al-Dmour et al. [7] discovered that customer engagement (CE) significantly and directly affects CL [10].

In addition, customer experience (CX) is how much value a customer puts on a brand based on how they see its value, service, quality, and what it provides. These multiple elements influence CS and influence CE [11]. When customers completely trust a brand, he or she is satisfied [12]. CS, conversely, is determined by how pleased customers are with the chosen brand and how well it satisfies their expectations. CS is crucial for gauging customer interactions in the e-retail industry. These findings support the earlier study, which uncovered CS as a moderating variable in measuring CX relationships [13]. The importance of CE in developing CL is then recognized [14]. To reduce risk, the loyal consumer will review the total CL, CX, CE, and CS. Because of this, it is crucial for the e-retail business to study how CX, CE, CS, and CL are related.

Much research has been done on the link between CL and CS. Nonetheless, there has not been any study done on how long-term brand equity affects CE, CS, and CL. Prior research examined the significance of CX in the contexts of the industry of automotive [15], retail fashion [16], industry of hospitality [17], industry of insurance [18] industry of tourism [19], industry of telecommunication [20], industry of food [21],

industry of banks [22], and industry of education [23]. According to the researchers, this is the first study to examine the e-retailer industry's CX. Hence, the researchers want to explore the e-retailer industry, which has been regarded as a vital industry in enhancing the circular economy [24].

As previously said, most research on the e-retail industry has concentrated on service improvement, with no previous studies considering CE. The primary purpose of this study is to look into the effects of long-term CE in the e-retail industry. CE research in the e-retail business has been regarded as a ground-breaking innovation in offering theoretical value for CE, CX, and CL.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

CX has been seen as the most crucial aspect of the world's e-retail sector. Then, CX can be defined as the measurement method to guarantee that a service or product can function continually throughout its lifecycle with the least possible negative impact on the company. The main goal of CX is to show how advantages to the economy, environment, and society affect the growth of future commercial endeavors [25]. The idea of CX directly impacts CE. Economic principles and social advantages highlight the significance of balancing supply and demand in the e-retail industry [26].

Each business must prioritize CX to satisfy its clients amid the global industry change. Marketplaces in the e-retail sector offer CS through CX. Therefore, when creating CE, e-retailers gain a competitive edge on the social, economic, and environmental fronts [27]. It implies that the marketplace should be able to utilize CE as a strategy for marketing to draw in more customers. Every customer generally assesses the effectiveness of CE while making a purchase. This shows that the customer drives change in the retail sector [28].

Customers would keep looking for other options that offer better goods and services if an online merchant did not meet their needs. Customers are obviously continuously looking for better options to meet their needs. Based on the customers' motivations, the e-retailer should subsequently be able to determine their needs [29]. As a result, a marketplace can build a solid reputation if it can satisfy its clients' expectations, uphold the quality of its products, and offer after-sales service [30].

The Indonesian e-retail sector has a generally low barrier to entry. Small and medium-sized firms and diverse industries' incursions led to fierce competition and a pricing war. Due to these factors, a widening pricing gap creates commercial issues for the market. The management of quality [31], risk [32], facilities [33], prospecting of clients [34], safety of transaction [35], management information systems [36], and time performance [37] are a few of the many subjects that have been the subject of studies on the e-retailer industry.

As was already said, most research on the e-retail industry has concentrated on client profiles; no prior studies have covered CX. This study's main objective is to find out how long-term CX affects businesses that offer goods and services online. The research on CX in the e-retail sector has been acknowledged as a ground-breaking innovation in giving theoretical value to CX, CE, CS, and CL.

3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Customer experience (CX)

A positive CX has a beneficial and considerable influence on the development of CE, claim McColl-Kennedy et al. [38]. CE directly or indirectly involves customers in an online retailer's marketing initiatives. CX can inspire customers to engage with a firm in a way that involves both emotional and physical activity on their behalf. A consumer may have a favorable or unfavorable experience. A positive experience will increase CL and CE and motivate them to utilize the business' services again, while a negative one will make them switch to a rival. The results demonstrated that CE is significantly impacted by CX [39].

According to Nobar and Rostamzadeh [40], CX and CE are closely associated. It is also highlighted that experiences and engagements are essential in exchanging goods and/or services between businesses and customers. Engagement can be raised by utilizing memorable, worthwhile, and engaging experiences. Therefore, it suggests that CX and CE have an excellent link. This highlights the relationship between CE and CX.

The other study showed that focusing on CS is necessary to maintain a customer base. Create meaningful CXs based on their demands to get a competitive advantage and increase CS [41]. As a result, without satisfied customers, the company has fewer chances of surviving in a market that is becoming increasingly competitive. The study's findings revealed that, in the retail sector, CX had a considerable effect on CS [42]. CS is influenced by whether a customer's favorable or bad experience. Customers are believed to be satisfied when they positively remember the encounter [43].

A spectacular CX will entice customers to repeat the experience, which will, in the long term, retain CL, according to the conclusions of the study done by NasarAmini Jeloudarlou et al. [44]. The unshakeable commitment to support or use a specific brand again in the future is loyalty. CL is described by Manyanga et al. [37] as customers' intention to continue supporting a business over time. According to the other study, loyalty is the determination to repurchase and support brands in the future despite marketing campaigns and external factors [45].

If a customer has a satisfying and memorable experience when dealing with a company's service providers, they are likelier to remain loyal to that company. The fantastic CX produces the customers' favorable emotional values. Customers who receive services from businesses will feel more loyal to them, increasing their propensity to make follow-up purchases and refer friends and family to their products and services. According to this study, CL and CXs are positively and significantly related [46].

Although the proposed price is more significant or associated with many other considerations, customers with a great experience will be likelier to do it again, ultimately increasing CL. This suggests that the effect of CX on CL is both favorable and considerable [47]. This highlights the link between CL and the CX. The study's hypotheses are as follows based on this interpretation:

- H1: CX significantly and favorably affects CE.
- H2: CX significantly and favorably affects CS.
- H3: CX significantly and favorably affects CL.

3.2 Customer engagement (CE)

The organization's objective is to increase the number of new consumers obtained through positive engagement, per the conclusions of the research done by Tahamtan and Bornmann [48]. This is so because happy customers are more engaged. Additionally, it provides capabilities that improve CXs, allowing the business to interact with customers. Engaged customers will likely exhibit favorable future behavioral responses toward CL [49].

As Tuguinay et al.'s [50] study stated, CE mediates the association between CX with automated games and their loyalty to casinos. According to Kurniawati and Ariyani's path analysis research findings from 2021, CE mediates between CX and CL. A positive CX can encourage loyalty by creating an emotional connection in a compelling, consistent, unified environment. Customers can be exposed to scenarios through the CX that affect their decisions on loyalty [50].

Consistent with the study's findings, a CX and demands being met are crucial for fostering loyalty. Thus, CS is the mediating variable to achieve the ultimate objective of comprehending CL [51]. Consequently, CX can considerably affect CL, mediated by CS [52]. According to Sandra and Keni's research, customers are more devoted and inclined to frequent a store if they are pleased with the level of service they receive and the overall quality of their shopping experience. Therefore, we may conclude that CS can effectively mediate the impact of CX and CL in retail businesses [53].

Additionally, Ramadani's research indicates that for customers to feel content and form a long-lasting, loyal mindset, a company must offer a positive and satisfying CX. As a result, CS serves as a bridge between CX and CL [54]. Hence, the researchers proposed:

- H4: The influence of CX on CL is mediated by CE, yielding a positive and substantial relationship.
- H5: The influence of CX on CL is found to be positive and statistically significant, mediated by CS.

3.3 Customer satisfaction (CS)

CS is the outcome of their efforts, claims Jonathan [55]. The degree to which the customer interacts with the brand or product will affect how highly they value it and how satisfied they are. The assumption is that positive CE is crucial for CS. We can infer that CE strongly and favorably impacts CS.

Additionally, the basis of CE can impact the degree of CS [56]. Thus, it may be said that CE increases CS. Thus, it can be seen that raising CE will raise CS [57]. The current study has made the following suggestion in response to these investigations:

- H6: CE significantly and favorably affects CS.

3.4 Customer loyalty (CL)

The cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components of CE can significantly aid CL's mental and emotional components, suggesting that CL significantly impacts loyalty [58]. The results confirm the multidimensional nature of CE and provide evidence for each model's predictions. In conclusion, CE significantly impacts loyalty [59]. CE and CL appear to have a substantial association, according to a study by Pandey et al. [60]. This indicates how strengthening CL will be impacted by raising CE.

CS is one of the elements thought to be a precursor to CL. This suggests that CS and CL are directly related [61]. The level of satisfaction and willingness to stick with a brand will directly depend on how well they were treated. This demonstrated that CS greatly and favorably influences CL [62]. CS must be constant and free of unfavorable incidents to build CL. CL significantly impacts, as empirically shown [63]. The research presented the hypotheses below:

- H7: The level of CE has a large and positive impact on CL.
- H8: The level of CS has a large and positive impact on CL.

4. METHODOLOGY

The objective of the current study was to employ a quantitative approach. The researcher's willingness to use data analysis to find answers to research questions led to the selection of the quantitative approach for this investigation. As a result, the researchers evaluated the research's hypothesis testing employing the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) method. The main grounds for using SEM are its capability to define which independent variable impacts dependent variables or which variables have a link to one another, as well as its ability to assess the association between latent variables. It is plausible for the present study, which examined the connections among latent variables, including CX, CE, CS, and CL.

The survey's participants were Indonesian e-retailer customers. Purposive sampling is a technique that was adopted in this study because we wanted to examine customer input from those who had dealt with online retailers. The primary requirements for this study were that participants must reside in Indonesia, be Tokopedia members, and have at least one year of Tokopedia experience. Two hundred twenty responses—or a response rate of 73.3%—were returned to the 300 questionnaires provided to customers of e-retailers.

The evaluation of the research constructs was conducted through the utilization of a seven-point Likert scale, encompassing responses that varied from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). CX is measured using ten indicators [64], and CE using ten indications [65]. Therefore, CS uses six indicators [66], followed by CL, which uses seven. There are 33 indications to be looked at in total.

5. RESULTS

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used in this study to evaluate hypotheses using the AMOS program. The data was gathered from an Indonesian e-retailer user. Two hundred twenty responses were collected from the 300 questionnaires sent to housing developer clients. In this survey, 93 female respondents (42.27%) and 127 male respondents (57.73%). Because of a lack of readily accessible information about the number of building material merchant owners, an online survey was used.

All variables in Table 1 are discriminately valid since their indicator values are more significant than or equal to 0.50. This indicates that the loading value met the measurement model requirements for this investigation. As such, the reliability of internal consistency is frequently evaluated using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. Table 2's overall

reliability test findings showed that each of the four study variables has a CR value that is more significant than 0.7, indicating that each variable has a statistically significant value. These findings support the assertion that the overall research tool is trustworthy and appropriate for this investigation.

This study's hypothesis 1 demonstrates the connection between CX and CE. The hypothesis testing results are exhibited in Table 3. The projected parameter value for the standardized regression weight coefficient is 0.830, and the critical ratio (CR) value is 11.496, which exceeds the threshold of 1.96. This result illustrates the close relationship between CE and CX. It suggests that as CX improves, so will CE. If there is a direct correlation between CX and CE, the hypothesis (H1) that "CX significantly and favorably affects CE" is validated and stated. The probability value is 0.00 (p 0.05) or less for the test of the link between the two variables. It validates previous hotel industry studies, establishing a favorable correlation between CE and CX [67].

Table 1. Validity test

Constructs	Item	Loading
Customer experience (CX)		
	CX1	0.722
	CX2	0.646
	CX3	0.713
	CX4	0.687
	CX5	0.718
	CX6	0.652
	CX7	0.669
	CX8	0.744
	CX9	0.789
	CX10	0.808
Customer engagement (CE)		
	CE3	0.741
	CE4	0.723
	CE5	0.756
	CE6	0.747
	CE7	0.761
	CE8	0.761
	CE9	0.793
	CE10	0.741
Customer satisfaction (CS)		
	CS1	0.845
	CS2	0.732
	CS3	0.764
	CS4	0.789
	CS5	0.754
	CS6	0.761
Customer loyalty (CLO)		
	CL1	0.800
	CL2	0.778
	CL3	0.770
	CL4	0.822
	CL5	0.680
	CL6	0.814
	CL7	0.726

Table 2. Reliability test

Main Variable	Composite Reliability	Model
CX	0.9130	Reliable
CE	0.9129	Reliable
CS	0.9000	Reliable
CL	0.9111	Reliable

This research's second hypothesis is supported since CX has

a favorable and significant impact on CS. In addition, Table 3 shows a significant correlation between CS and CX, with a CR on the impact of 2.645, more significant than 1.96, and an estimated value of 0.612. It backs up prior health insurance industry studies that discovered a connection between happy and satisfied customers [68].

Furthermore, this study's third hypothesis shows that the CX has a positive and significant effect on CL. According to the findings presented in Table 3, the standardized regression weight coefficient is assessed to be -0.710, while the CR value is reported as 3.069, which is more significant than 1.96. This outcome demonstrates the link between CS and CL. It implies comparable findings from the earlier study in the airline business, which states that when CX improves, CL will rise [69].

Table 3. Research hypothesis direct parameter

Hypothesis	Estimate	CR	SE	P	Results
H1: CX→CE	0.830	11.496	0.072	0.00	Supported
H2: CX→CS	0.602	4.172	0.144	0.00	Supported
H3: CX→CL	-0.710	3.069	0.231	0.002	Supported
H6: CE→CS	0.204	1.316	0.155	0.188	Not supported
H7: CE→CL	1.442	6.051	0.238	0.00	Supported
H8: CS→CL	0.513	3.346	0.153	0.00	Supported

The fourth hypothesis was confirmed, demonstrating that CE significantly and favorably influences the connection between CX and CL. In this regard, a represents the regression coefficient value of the CX variable on CE of 0,830, and b represents the CE variable's regression coefficient value on CL of 1.442, according to Table 4, which displays the mediation value results from Sobel Test AMOS 26 calculations. While the standard error for the relationship between the CX variable and CE is 0.072, the connection between the CE variable and CL is 0.238. According to the Sobel test calculation, the CE variable's mediation value is 5.363179, and the test of the link between the three variables produces a probability value of 0.00. The variable is regarded as mediating if the Sobel test results in a value more significant than 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05. These findings support the conclusion that CE mediates the link between CL and CX. The results of this study are consistent with those of Tuguinay et al. [50] and Kurniawati and Ariyani, which show that between CX and CL, CE acts as a mediating factor [70].

Table 4. Research hypothesis indirect parameter

Hypothesis	T-Statistic	P value	Results
H4: CX→CE→CL	5.363179	0.00	Supported
H5: CX→CS→CL	2.615612	0.004	Supported

The fifth hypothesis verified that the association between CX and CL is favorably and significantly moderated by CS. A represents the CX variable's regression coefficient value on CS of 0.602, and b represents the CE variable's regression coefficient value on CL of 0.513, according to Table 4, which displays the results of the mediation value from Sobel test AMOS 26 calculations. The standard error for CX has a 0.144 correlation with CS, while the standard error for the impact of the variable CS on CL is 0.153. These values are referred to as SEA and SEB, respectively. According to the Sobel test calculation, the CS variable's mediation value is 2.615612, and the test of the connection between the three variables' probability value is 0.004. The variable is regarded as

mediating if the Sobel test results in a value more significant than 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05. The results are consistent with earlier research in the retail sector, which shows that the association between CX and CL is influenced by the mediating factor of CS [71].

Additionally, the sixth hypothesis of this study uncovers that CE does not significantly and favorably affect CS. The results presented in Table 4 indicate that the estimated parameter value for the standardized regression weight coefficient is 0.204. Additionally, the critical ratio (CR) value is 1.316, which exceeds the threshold of 1.96. This result shows a poor connection between CE and CS. It suggests that the study's findings do not support earlier studies that CS and CE are positively correlated [72].

Based on the seventh hypothesis, it is posited that the level of CE exerts a positive influence on the degree of CL. The standardized regression weight coefficient is predicted to be 1.442, with a corresponding critical ratio (CR) value of 6.051, above the threshold of 1.96. This result illustrates how closely CE and CL are related. It means that when CE rises, CL will also rise. The study's findings are consistent with other studies that claim loyalty is significantly impacted by CE [73].

Ultimately, this study has determined that CS positively impacts CL. The observed standardized regression weight coefficient is calculated to be 0.513, with a corresponding critical ratio (CR) value of 3.346, exceeding the threshold of 1.96. This result illustrates a robust correlation between CS and CL. It may be inferred that CL and CS are positively correlated, suggesting that an improvement in CS will likely increase CL. This implies that the study's findings align with prior research, which suggests a noteworthy and favorable effect of CS on CL [74].

6. DISCUSSION

The study's findings indicate that CX emerged as the most prominent factor of CE in the e-retailer industry. This implies that many customers who actively interact with a specific store report positive experiences with the product. Within the electronic retail industry, the present findings bear significance concerning prior scholarly investigations undertaken by Nam et al., wherein it was posited that CX plays a pivotal role in fostering CE [75]. CS is influenced by the extent of their engagement, particularly when they have a robust experience. CS with a particular service or product depends on their awareness and familiarity.

CE is an essential factor contributing to the retention of loyal customers [76]. Based on the findings of this study, it was observed that the level of CE exhibited by e-retailers had a significant impact on CL, for a substantial proportion of 33.2%. The present study's results corroborate the previous study's findings, which demonstrated a notable impact of CE on CL [77]. When an electronic merchant fulfills or exceeds the customer's expectations, it establishes a robust CE, resulting in the customer's ultimate satisfaction.

Therefore, one indicator of CE that has a favorable impact on CS is rational engagement. Other researchers also proposed that CE had an impact on CS. According to a recent survey, CX is valued in both local and international societies. This evaluation result supports a prior study that found that e-retailers' customers were much more satisfied when CX was good in the context of the e-retail industry.

The excellence of CE, such as rational and emotional

engagement, is one of the most important aspects contributing to the overall CS [78]. Also, CE emerged when a company was developing CS. These support the study's findings that e-retailer rational and emotional engagement significantly correlated with CS.

Departing from the results of many studies, it can be said that CS is a requirement for CL. Additionally, there is a significant correlation between CL and CE on the part of the consumer. According to a recent study, CL in the e-retail sector is positively impacted by CE. In the context of e-retailers, the study's results showed a favorable association between CE and CL. The results of the current study validate earlier research by quantifying CE and CL.

7. CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to evaluate CX and CL by employing CE and CS components. This article presents three notable contributions. The study has confirmed that the factors leading to CX directly result in the occurrence of CE. The present study has revealed that experience significantly influences the determination of CS within the e-retailer industry.

Furthermore, the research demonstrates that CX indirectly influences CL. The previous study did not investigate or empirically establish CE and CS as a mediating variable. The abovementioned findings expand our comprehension of CE within the CX framework. Moreover, the present study substantiates that CE and CS directly elicit CL within the e-retailer industry. This article posits that the functions related to CX impact CL through the mechanisms of CE and CS. Subsequently, the results of this study provide the impetus for organizations to formulate an effective strategy for cultivating CX, thereby immediately instigating CE and enhancing CS.

Although this study contributes substantially to understanding CX in the e-retailer industry, it is essential to acknowledge its inherent limits. The study was primarily carried out in Indonesia, a nation categorized as a developing country. Notably, the findings acquired in developed countries may exhibit variations compared to the present study's outcomes. Consequently, additional deliberation is necessary. This implies that future research should be undertaken in a developed nation with a distinct cultural context.

Furthermore, it is recommended that future studies validate this conceptual framework by employing various approaches, such as a mixed-method design. By integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the research findings are expected to yield enhanced precision in understanding. In conclusion, including business performance measures such as return on investment, profit loss ratio, and market share inside the conceptual framework would enhance the article's academic and industrial significance.

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