

## THE EFFECT OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON CONSUMER LOYALTY (CASE STUDY ON MOMQ DIMSUM CART)

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the effect of Relationship Marketing and Customer Experience on Customer Loyalty at Gerobak Dimsum MomQ in Padangsidempuan City. The study is motivated by the intense competition in the culinary industry, which requires marketing strategies that build long-term relationships and create memorable shopping experiences for consumers. This research employs a quantitative method, with a survey of 100 respondents using accidental sampling, and analyzes the data using multiple linear regression in SPSS version 23. The results indicate that Relationship Marketing and Customer Experience have a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty. Simultaneously, these variables explain 52.1% of the variation in Customer Loyalty. The findings highlight the importance of relationship-based marketing and customer experience in enhancing loyalty and provide practical guidance for Gerobak Dimsum MomQ owners in formulating effective marketing strategies to maintain consumer satisfaction.*

**Keywords:** *Relationship Marketing, Customer Experience, Customer Loyalty, Gerobak Dimsum MomQ*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The culinary industry is a promising business sector because food is a basic human need. Population growth, economic growth, and lifestyle changes are driving high consumer demand for convenient, ready-to-eat foods. One popular culinary product is dimsum, a Chinese specialty favored for its delicious taste, attractive appearance, and ease of consumption (Arinda Novela Putri, 2022). In Indonesia, dim sum has become a food that competes with other culinary delights and is readily available, from restaurants to street vendors. This trend encourages businesses to innovate in products and marketing strategies to meet consumer needs and satisfaction. Increasingly fierce competition requires dim sum businesses to offer not only quality products and competitive prices but also effective management and marketing strategies. One important strategy is Relationship Marketing, an approach focused on building and maintaining long-term relationships with customers through consistent communication and the provision of added value (Dethan, 2024). This strategy aims to increase customer satisfaction while fostering strong loyalty. Consumer loyalty is important because loyal customers tend to make repeat purchases, recommend products, and remain loyal even when competitors' alternatives are available (Rohmatin, 2017).

The culinary business sector in Indonesia is experiencing rapid growth in line with changes in modern lifestyles. People now tend to prioritize food that is practical, fast, has a variety of flavors, and is easily accessible in terms of location and price. This situation has encouraged the emergence of various types of culinary businesses, both large-scale and micro- and small-scale, including dim sum cart businesses, which are popular for their flexibility, affordability, and flavors that cater to local tastes. The growing number of culinary businesses has directly increased competition. Every business is required not only to offer quality products but also to create added value to survive and win the competition. In a competitive market, product and price advantages alone are no longer sufficient, as consumers have many readily accessible alternatives. Therefore, companies need to develop marketing strategies that focus on customers and long-term relationships.

Furthermore, customer experience is also a crucial factor in building loyalty. A pleasant customer experience, from interactions with sellers to product quality, can encourage repeat purchases and positive recommendations (Indah Febriani; Riska Aulia Putri, 2023). Satisfied customers not only return but also support the business through word of mouth, helping sustain it amid competition. The MomQ Dimsum Cart in Padangsidempuan City is a relevant research object due to its loyal customer base and the intense competition in the culinary sector. MomQ implements a relationship marketing strategy by maintaining communication via digital channels, such as WhatsApp, to share information about new menu items and promotions. Furthermore, MomQ regularly offers daily promotions and savings packages to attract customers. However, the question arises whether customer loyalty is driven by satisfaction and familiarity with the store, or simply by discount programs. Reliance on promotions can be temporary and does not guarantee long-term loyalty. This study aims to analyze the Influence of relationship marketing and

customer experience on consumer loyalty at MomQ Dimsum Cart. The results are expected to provide insight into the factors that significantly influence customer loyalty and help business owners formulate effective marketing strategies, maintain customer satisfaction, and increase long-term loyalty.

## **2. METHOD**

This study used a quantitative, survey-based approach to examine the Influence of Relationship Marketing and Customer Experience on Consumer Loyalty at MomQ Dimsum Cart in Padangsidempuan City. This approach was chosen because it can produce numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to test the relationship between variables. The study was conducted at MomQ Dimsum Cart, located on Jalan Dr. FL. Tobing, Padangsidempuan City, from December 2024 to July 2025. The study population was all consumers who had purchased from MomQ Dimsum Cart. Because the exact population size was unknown, the sample was determined using the LEMESHOW formula, yielding 100 respondents selected by accidental sampling.

The data used were primary data, obtained through questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale and interviews with business owners to corroborate field data. Indicator variables used included: trust, commitment, communication, and customer orientation for Relationship Marketing; sense, feel, think, relate, and act for Customer Experience; and repeat purchases, product preferences, brand loyalty, and recommendations for Consumer Loyalty. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 23, including validity and reliability tests and classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity). The primary analysis used multiple linear regression to test partial and simultaneous effects, with t-tests and F-tests, and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was measured to determine the contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **a. Research Result**

This research was conducted on 100 respondents, customers of Gerobak Dimsum MomQ in Padangsidempuan City. Respondents were selected using an accidental sampling technique, whereby consumers who happened to be making a purchase and were willing to complete a questionnaire served as the research sample. Of the 100 questionnaires distributed, all were eligible for processing because they were completed completely and met the analysis requirements. The data collected covered three main variables: Relationship Marketing ( $X_1$ ), Customer Experience ( $X_2$ ), and Consumer Loyalty ( $Y$ ). Before conducting the regression analysis, the data were tested to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The validity test results showed that all questionnaire items had a calculated  $r$  value greater than the table  $r$  (0.1966) at the 5% significance level; all items were declared valid and could be used in the study. Reliability tests using Cronbach's Alpha values showed results above 0.60 for all variables: 0.872 for Relationship Marketing, 0.891 for Customer Experience, and 0.868 for Consumer Loyalty. Thus, all instruments were deemed reliable because they consistently measured the constructs

under study.

The results of the classical assumption test also indicated that the data met the requirements for multiple linear regression analysis. The normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method yielded a p-value of 0.200 ( $> 0.05$ ), indicating a normal distribution of the data. The multicollinearity test showed that all independent variables had Tolerance values greater than 0.10 and VIF values less than 10, indicating no multicollinearity. Meanwhile, the heteroscedasticity test indicated that the points in the scatterplot were randomly distributed and did not form a pattern, suggesting no heteroscedasticity in the regression model. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the Influence of Relationship Marketing and Customer Experience variables on Consumer Loyalty. The calculation results using SPSS version 23 yielded the following regression equation:

$$Y = 4,217 + 0,351X_1 + 0,442X_2$$

This equation shows a constant of 4.217, indicating that if the Relationship Marketing and Customer Experience variables are set to zero, then the level of Consumer Loyalty remains at 4.217 units. The regression coefficient of 0.351 for the Relationship Marketing variable indicates that each one-unit increase in Relationship Marketing will increase Consumer Loyalty by 0.351 units, assuming other variables remain constant. Similarly, the regression coefficient of 0.442 for the Customer Experience variable indicates that each one-unit increase in this variable will increase Consumer Loyalty by 0.442 units, assuming other variables remain constant.

The partial t-test results show that the Relationship Marketing variable has a t-value of 4.216 and a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating a positive and significant effect on Consumer Loyalty. This means that the better the relationship between Gerobak Dimsum MomQ and its customers, the higher the level of consumer loyalty. Meanwhile, the Customer Experience variable had a t-value of 5.214 with a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating that Customer Experience also has a positive and significant effect on Consumer Loyalty. These two results indicate that both the relationship and the customer experience are important factors in building consumer loyalty at Gerobak Dimsum MomQ. Furthermore, the results of the simultaneous test (F-test) showed a calculated F-value of 53.401 with a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating that Relationship Marketing and Customer Experience jointly have a significant effect on Consumer Loyalty. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.521 indicates that the two independent variables explain 52.1% of the variation in changes in the Consumer Loyalty variable. In comparison, the remaining 47.9% is influenced by factors outside the scope of this study, such as product quality, price, or promotion.

#### **4. Discussion**

The results of this study demonstrate that Relationship Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Consumer Loyalty at Gerobak Dimsum MomQ. This finding aligns with the theory proposed by Kotler and Keller (2016), which explains that relationship marketing is a company's effort to build long-term relationships with customers through trust, commitment, and effective communication. A strong relationship between customer and seller fosters trust and emotional attachment, ultimately increasing customer loyalty. In the context of MomQ Dimsum Cart, relationship marketing is evident in the business owner's efforts to build close relationships with customers through ongoing communication. For example, the shop owner regularly informs customers about promotions, new menu items, and business activities via WhatsApp status updates and social media posts. Although communication is simple, this strategy is effective at maintaining customer relationships and making customers feel cared for. This personal interaction creates an emotional connection between customers and the business, which is the essence of relationship marketing. This is further reinforced by indicators of trust and commitment, where consumers who feel confident in the quality of products and services are more likely to make repeat purchases.

This finding aligns with research conducted by I.W.M. Semaranata and N.L.W.S. Telagawathi (2022), which found that relationship marketing significantly influences the loyalty of Simpati cardholders in Singaraja. Similarly, the relationship between sellers and buyers in culinary businesses like MomQ Dimsum can strengthen long-term customer loyalty. When customers have a good relationship with a brand, they are not only satisfied but also committed to continuing to choose the same product, even when there are many other alternatives on the market. Furthermore, research results also show that Customer Experience has a positive and significant impact on Consumer Loyalty. This means that the more positive the experience consumers have when interacting with products and services, the more likely they are to become loyal customers. Customer experience encompasses the five senses (sense), feelings (feel), ways of thinking (think), social relationships (relate), and actions (act). In this case, Dimsum MomQ customers positively assessed the product's taste, the attractive appearance of the dim sum, the cleanliness of the serving containers, and the vendor's friendly service. All of these aspects create a pleasant consumption experience, which ultimately strengthens their intention to repurchase.

Customer experience factors encompass not only product quality but also customers' emotional and psychological perceptions of the brand. In the culinary context, sensory factors such as food aroma, taste, and presentation significantly influence consumer perception. This aligns with research by Davina Meita Rizqiyanti et al. (2024), who found that customer experience strongly influences customer loyalty in the MSME culinary sector. Consumers who have a pleasant experience tend to remember the brand better, make repeat purchases, and recommend it to others. The two variables, Relationship Marketing and Customer Experience, when tested simultaneously, also showed a significant influence on Consumer Loyalty. These results demonstrate that loyalty is not formed solely by functional factors such as price and

product quality, but also by emotional connections and positive experiences during interactions with the brand. In the context of MomQ Dimsum Cart, customers not only buy for the delicious dim sum, but also because they feel close to the business owner and are comfortable with the service. This factor indicates that the emotional aspect is the main differentiator between merely satisfied customers and truly loyal ones.

The findings of this study also support the theory proposed by Griffin (2015) regarding customer loyalty, which states that loyalty is not only repeat purchasing behavior but also a psychological commitment to the brand. Loyal consumers do not easily switch to other products even when offered lower prices, because they have formed an emotional connection and trust in the brand. In this context, Dimsum MomQ customers show this tendency because they feel added value from the personal interactions built by the business owner. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination of 52.1% indicates that both independent variables contribute significantly to customer loyalty. This figure indicates that emotional connections (through relationship marketing) and positive experiences (through customer experience) play a significant role in customer retention. However, other factors, such as price, menu variety, ingredient quality, and promotional strategies, still contribute to loyalty at 47.9%. This provides scope for further research to explore these variables.

Interviews with the owners of Gerobak Dimsum MomQ revealed that their strategy focuses on an emotional approach to customers. The owners not only sell products but also strive to provide friendly service, maintain communication, and create the impression that each customer is an important part of their business. Simple strategies such as remembering regular customers, greeting them at special occasions, and offering special discounts to frequent customers have been shown to increase customer retention. These strategies reinforce the theory that loyalty is built through a combination of functional and emotional value. Thus, the results of this study confirm that, in the context of micro and small businesses like Gerobak Dimsum MomQ, successful customer retention does not depend solely on product quality, but instead on how business owners build personal relationships and consistently provide positive experiences. The implementation of relationship marketing, which emphasizes trust and effective communication, as well as the creation of a pleasant customer experience, has proven to be a dominant factor in shaping customer loyalty.

Overall, this study supports previous findings and broadens the understanding of the importance of relationship aspects and customer experience in building loyalty in small-scale culinary businesses. In an era of increasingly fierce competition, this approach can be an effective strategy for MSMEs to retain customers without relying on large-scale promotions. Customer loyalty built on trust and positive experiences has far greater long-term value than loyalty driven solely by incentives or discounts.

## **5. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULT**

### **a. Conclusion**

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that:

1. Relationship marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty at Gerobak Dimsum MomQ. This is evidenced by the t-test results, where the calculated t value (7.224) is greater than the t-table (1.660). This means that the better the relationship built with customers, the higher the level of customer loyalty.
2. Customer experience also has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. The t-test results show that the calculated t value (3.744) is greater than the t-table value (1.660), indicating that the more positive the customer experience when interacting with and transacting with the business, the greater the customer loyalty.
3. Based on the F-test results, it was found that relationship marketing and customer experience simultaneously have a significant effect on customer loyalty, with the calculated F value (54.898) exceeding the F table value (2.14).
4. The coefficient of determination (Adjusted  $R^2$ ) of 0.521, or 52.1%, indicates that variations in consumer loyalty can be explained by relationship marketing and customer experience, while other factors outside the study influence the remaining 47.9%.
5. Overall, this study confirms that building strong customer relationships and providing a pleasant shopping experience are important strategies for fostering and sustaining customer loyalty.

### **b. Sugestion**

It is hoped that MomQ Dimsum Cart business owners will continue to improve their relationships with customers through friendly service, intensive communication, attractive promotions, maintaining quality taste, and expanding digital promotions. This research can serve as a reference for readers and students in examining customer loyalty factors in culinary MSMEs. For future researchers, it is recommended to add variables such as product quality, brand image, and customer satisfaction to make the research results more comprehensive and representative.

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