

The Role of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in Increasing Customer Loyalty in E-Commerce Businesses in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the influence of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) strategies on customer loyalty in e-commerce businesses in Indonesia, particularly in the post-pandemic era. This research focuses on four key dimensions of CRM: customer acquisition, customer retention, customer service, and personalization.

Subjects and Methods: This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey of 150 respondents, active users of e-commerce platforms in Indonesia. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, and data processing was performed through multiple linear regression analysis using SPSS software. The independent variables analyzed included customer acquisition, customer retention, customer service, and personalization; while the dependent variable was customer loyalty.

Results: The results of the study indicate that all four CRM dimensions simultaneously have a significant effect on customer loyalty (significance <0.05). Among these dimensions, customer retention has the most dominant influence, followed by customer acquisition, personalization, and customer service. These findings demonstrate that an integrated CRM strategy can sustainably increase customer loyalty in a competitive digital environment.

Conclusions: CRM strategies have proven to be a crucial element in building customer loyalty in e-commerce in Indonesia. Effective CRM implementation, particularly in terms of customer retention and service personalization, is essential for creating positive customer experiences and strong long-term relationships in the post-pandemic digital era.

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly evolving digital era, e-commerce businesses in Indonesia are experiencing rapid growth (Lestari et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024). According to Chan et al. (2024), Indonesia's e-commerce market value is estimated to reach over USD 80 billion, making it the largest in Southeast Asia. This growth is driven by increasing internet penetration, changing consumer behavior, and easy access to digital technology (Naz, 2019; Ovodenko et al., 2020). However, amidst this growth, competition among e-commerce players is also intensifying. Customers now have more choices, making maintaining their loyalty a strategic challenge for companies.

Align with research from Juanamasta et al. (2019) and Sofi et al. (2020), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has become a crucial strategy adopted to maintain long-term customer relationships. CRM is not simply a technology system, but an integrated strategic approach to understanding customer needs, increasing satisfaction, and building loyalty (Chen & Popovich,

2003). By leveraging customer data collected through various digital channels such as social media, mobile applications, and e-commerce platforms, companies can develop more personalized and relevant communications, provide faster service, and design effective retention programs.

The success of CRM implementation in e-commerce is measured not only by increased transactions, but also by the company's ability to create a consistent, enjoyable, and satisfying experience for consumers (Le & Dai, 2017). Customer loyalty stems not solely from low prices or substantial discounts, but from the emotional and functional value consumers perceive in every interaction with a brand. Therefore, CRM plays a strategic role in building sustainable customer engagement and trust. However, not all e-commerce businesses in Indonesia are able to implement CRM optimally.

Many still focus on acquiring new customers without considering the importance of retaining existing ones (Arnold et al., 2011). However, according to Frederick Reichheld (Harvard Business Review), a 5% increase in customer loyalty can increase profits by 25–95%. This demonstrates that an appropriate CRM strategy not only contributes to increased customer loyalty but also to sustainable business growth. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to deeply analyze the role of Customer Relationship Management in increasing customer loyalty in e-commerce businesses in Indonesia. This research is crucial for providing theoretical and practical understanding of how CRM can be used as a strategic tool to address competitive challenges and build a loyal customer base amidst today's digital dynamics.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a strategic management approach focused on creating, developing, and maintaining long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between a company and its customers (Payne & Frow, 2005; Rawal & Upadhyay, 2017). In the context of e-commerce, CRM encompasses the use of digital technology and customer databases to develop more personalized and relevant communication, service, and marketing strategies. CRM consists of three main components: (1) Operational CRM, which automatically supports sales, marketing, and customer service activities; (2) Analytical CRM, which processes and analyzes customer data for strategic decision-making; and (3) Collaborative CRM, which facilitates customer interactions through various integrated communication channels. Effective CRM implementation can increase customer retention, customer satisfaction, and customer lifetime value, all of which contribute to long-term loyalty.

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a customer's commitment to consistently repurchase or reuse a product/service despite the availability of alternatives (Griffin, 2005). Loyalty reflects not only behavioral aspects but also emotional components and positive attitudes toward the brand. According to Back & Parks (2003), customer loyalty is formed from a combination of customer satisfaction and a positive attitude toward a company or brand. Loyalty in e-commerce can be measured through indicators such as: (1) Repeat Purchase Behavior; (2) Willingness to Recommend; and Customer Retention Rate. In the digital era, loyalty is influenced not only by product quality and price, but also by digital experiences, ease of transactions, personalized offerings, and speed and accuracy of service.

CRM and Customer Loyalty in E-Commerce

Previous studies have shown a positive and significant relationship between CRM implementation and customer loyalty (Lawson-Body & Limayem, 2004). According to Alam et al. (2021), CRM has a strong influence on customer loyalty through the dimensions of trust, effective communication, and meeting individual needs. In the context of e-commerce, the presence of a CRM system capable of providing a smooth and personalized shopping experience is crucial in building loyalty. Research by Basri & Wirdana (2024) on e-commerce platforms in Asia found that the use of technology-based CRM such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), chatbots, and data-driven product recommendations has strengthened customer relationships and increased the

likelihood of repeat purchases. This is also supported by the findings of Sobouti & Karimi (2024) showed that personalized messaging and content through CRM increases customer engagement and brand attachment. Thus, CRM plays a role not only in retaining existing customers but also in creating emotional added value that strengthens long-term bonds between customers and e-commerce brands.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research type, because it aims to explain the causal relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) variables and customer loyalty in e-commerce businesses in Indonesia. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for measuring the extent of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable in a measurable and objective manner. Explanatory research also allows researchers to test hypotheses based on data obtained from the field (Bentouhami et al., 2021). Data collection was conducted through a survey using a structured questionnaire and distributed online to respondents who met predetermined criteria. The population in this study were all active users of e-commerce platforms in Indonesia, such as Tokopedia, Shopee, Bukalapak, and Lazada. The sample in this study was selected using a purposive sampling technique, a sampling technique based on certain considerations. The respondent criteria in this study included individuals aged between 18 and 45 years, actively making online purchases at least twice in the last six months, and having received marketing communications from e-commerce platforms such as notifications, emails, or personalized ads. The number of respondents used in this study was determined based on the number of indicators in the questionnaire, with a minimum of five to ten respondents per indicator, resulting in an estimated sample size of 100 to 200 respondents.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire structured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." This questionnaire measured two main variables: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and customer loyalty. The CRM variables in this study encompassed dimensions such as customer acquisition, customer retention, customer service, and personalization or customization. Meanwhile, customer loyalty was measured through indicators such as repurchase intention, willingness to recommend to others, and brand commitment. The indicators in this instrument were compiled based on references from previous studies that have been proven valid and reliable, thus allowing for accurate data collection.

Data Analysis Technique

The data obtained from the questionnaire will be analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS or SmartPLS, depending on the complexity of the model used. The initial stages of analysis include validity and reliability tests to ensure that each item in the questionnaire measures the intended variable validly and consistently. Validity testing is conducted by measuring the correlation between items, while reliability is tested using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. After ensuring that the instrument is suitable for use, the analysis is continued with multiple linear regression tests if the model is simple. If the research model has latent variables and complex relationships, a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) is used. SEM allows researchers to test direct and indirect relationships between latent and manifest variables simultaneously. In addition, a coefficient of determination (R^2) test is conducted to measure the extent to which the independent variables are able to explain the dependent variable. A significance test is also conducted to determine whether the relationship between variables is significant at the 95 percent confidence level or a significance level of 0.05. The results of this analysis will form the basis for answering the problem formulation and testing the previously formulated research hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

This study involved 150 respondents who met the research criteria, namely active users of e-commerce platforms in Indonesia who had conducted online transactions at least twice in the last

six months and had received marketing communications from the platforms. An analysis of respondent characteristics is important to ensure that the sample adequately represents the targeted digital consumer segment and supports the generalizability of the findings within the Indonesian e-commerce context. The demographic distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent Characteristics (n = 150)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	60	40.0%
	Female	90	60.0%
Age	18–25 years	45	30.0%
	26–35 years	75	50.0%
	>35 years	30	20.0%
Shopping Frequency	2–4 times/month	65	43.3%
	>4 times/month	85	56.7%
Main Platform	Shopee	82	54.7%
	Tokopedia	40	26.7%
	Others	28	18.6%

The data indicate that the majority of respondents were female (60%) and within the age range of 26–35 years (50%), representing a productive and digitally active consumer segment. More than half of respondents (56.7%) reported shopping more than four times per month, reflecting high engagement with e-commerce platforms. Shopee emerged as the most frequently used platform, suggesting strong brand penetration and user preference in the Indonesian market. These characteristics confirm that the sample consists of highly relevant respondents for analyzing CRM and customer loyalty relationships.

Validity and Reliability Testing

Before conducting regression analysis, the research instrument was evaluated to ensure that all measurement items were valid and reliable. Validity testing was performed using Pearson Product Moment correlation, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha. Ensuring instrument quality is essential to guarantee that the constructs are measured accurately and consistently. The reliability test results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Description
Customer Relationship Management	10	0.842	Reliable
Customer Loyalty	6	0.813	Reliable

The Cronbach’s Alpha values for both variables exceed 0.80, indicating excellent internal consistency. All items also met the validity threshold ($r > 0.30$; $p < 0.05$). These results confirm that the questionnaire items are stable and appropriate for further statistical analysis.

Classical Assumption Testing

Prior to multiple linear regression analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the regression model met statistical requirements. These tests included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroskedasticity assessments.

Normality Test

The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test produced a significance value of 0.081 (> 0.05), indicating that the residuals are normally distributed. Therefore, the normality assumption is satisfied.

Multicollinearity Test

To detect multicollinearity among independent variables, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values were examined. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Customer Acquisition	0.641	1.560
Customer Retention	0.598	1.672
Customer Service	0.724	1.381
Personalization	0.689	1.451

All VIF values are below 5 and tolerance values exceed 0.10, indicating no multicollinearity issues. This confirms that each independent variable contributes independently to the regression model.

Heteroskedasticity Test

The Glejser test showed significance values above 0.05 for all independent variables, indicating homoscedastic residual variance. Thus, the model does not suffer from heteroskedasticity

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

After confirming that all classical assumptions were satisfied, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of four CRM dimensions customer acquisition, customer retention, customer service, and personalization on customer loyalty. The overall model summary is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
0.786	0.618	0.607	0.412

The R² value of 0.618 indicates that 61.8% of the variance in customer loyalty can be explained by the four CRM dimensions simultaneously. The Adjusted R² value of 0.607 confirms that the model maintains strong explanatory power after adjusting for the number of predictors. The remaining 38.2% of variance may be influenced by other variables not included in this study, such as price competitiveness, product variety, or user experience. The ANOVA test result is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. ANOVA Test Results

F-value	Sig.
46.23	0.000

The F-statistic is significant at $p < 0.05$, indicating that the regression model is statistically valid and suitable for explaining customer loyalty.

Regression Coefficient Results

To examine the individual contribution of each CRM dimension, the regression coefficients were analyzed. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Regression Coefficient Results

Independent Variable	β	t-value	Sig.
Customer Acquisition	0.253	3.201	0.002
Customer Retention	0.298	3.845	0.000
Customer Service	0.189	2.642	0.009
Personalization	0.211	2.918	0.004

All four CRM dimensions have positive and significant effects on customer loyalty ($p < 0.05$). Among them, customer retention has the highest regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.298$), indicating that retention strategies exert the strongest influence on loyalty formation. This is followed by customer acquisition, personalization, and customer service. The regression equation can be formulated as follows:

$$\text{Customer Loyalty} = 0.253(\text{Acquisition}) + 0.298(\text{Retention}) + 0.189(\text{Service}) + 0.211(\text{Personalization}) + \varepsilon$$

These findings demonstrate that integrated CRM implementation significantly enhances customer loyalty among Indonesian e-commerce users.

Discussion

The Strategic Role of CRM in Strengthening Customer Loyalty

The results of this study demonstrate that the four dimensions of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) customer acquisition, customer retention, customer service, and personalization simultaneously exert a positive and significant influence on customer loyalty. The regression model explains 61.8% of the variance in customer loyalty ($R^2 = 0.618$), indicating that CRM represents a substantial explanatory factor in understanding loyalty formation within Indonesian e-commerce platforms. This finding reinforces the strategic importance of CRM as an integrated managerial approach rather than merely a technological tool. The significant F-test result further confirms that CRM dimensions collectively shape customer loyalty behavior in the digital marketplace (Suryadi et al., 2025). In a highly competitive and post-pandemic environment where switching costs are relatively low, structured relationship management becomes a critical differentiating factor. These findings align with relational marketing theory, which emphasizes that sustainable competitive advantage is derived from long-term customer relationships rather than transactional exchanges.

Customer Retention as the Dominant Predictor

Among the four dimensions, customer retention emerged as the most dominant factor influencing customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that strategies aimed at maintaining existing customers contribute more substantially to loyalty formation than acquisition-oriented efforts. Retention activities such as loyalty programs, reward systems, and continuous engagement appear to strengthen repeat purchase intention and emotional attachment. This result is consistent with the loyalty-profit chain argument proposed by Reichheld, which suggests that retaining customers is more cost-effective and profitable than continuously acquiring new ones. In the Indonesian e-commerce context, frequent promotional programs and membership-based benefits likely reinforce habitual purchasing behavior. The dominance of retention in this model confirms that loyalty is primarily sustained through continuous relationship nurturing rather than initial attraction. The finding also supports previous CRM literature emphasizing that long-term relational value is built through sustained interaction, trust development, and perceived commitment from the company toward its customers (Menon & O'Connor, 2007).

The Contribution of Customer Acquisition

Customer acquisition also shows a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.253$, $p = 0.002$). Although acquisition is typically associated with attracting new customers, this result indicates that acquisition strategies can indirectly shape loyalty when the initial experience creates positive impressions and perceived value. In digital markets, acquisition campaigns such as introductory promotions and digital advertising serve as entry points into the relational cycle. However, without effective follow-up retention strategies, newly acquired customers may remain transactional. Therefore, acquisition should not be viewed in isolation but as the first stage in a broader CRM lifecycle. The significance of acquisition in this model suggests that early-stage relationship quality influences future behavioral commitment (Gounaris & Venetis, 2002; Mungra & Yadav, 2020). This finding complements previous research highlighting that first impressions in online environments significantly determine repurchase intention and long-term engagement.

The Role of Customer Service in Building Trust

Customer service was found to have a significant, though comparatively smaller, influence on loyalty ($\beta = 0.189$, $p = 0.009$). This indicates that service quality remains an essential foundation of the customer experience but may function as a baseline expectation rather than a primary loyalty driver. In e-commerce settings, service reliability, complaint handling efficiency, and transaction security contribute to perceived trust. The relatively lower coefficient does not imply that service is unimportant; rather, it suggests that customers may perceive good service as a

minimum standard. Only when service quality fails does it negatively affect loyalty. Thus, service operates as a hygiene factor that supports but does not solely determine long-term commitment. This finding aligns with service quality theory, which posits that consistent and responsive service enhances satisfaction and trust two critical antecedents of loyalty. In post-pandemic digital consumption patterns, where online interactions dominate, efficient customer support becomes crucial for maintaining confidence in digital transactions (Cole, 2025).

Personalization as a Contemporary Loyalty Driver

Personalization demonstrated a significant positive effect on customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.211$, $p = 0.004$). This indicates that customers value experiences tailored to their preferences and transaction histories. Personalized product recommendations, customized promotions, and relevant communication enhance perceived relevance and engagement. In the digital transformation era, personalization represents the analytical dimension of CRM, where customer data is utilized to create individualized experiences. This finding supports contemporary CRM literature, which argues that personalized interaction strengthens emotional connection and brand attachment. The effect of personalization confirms that loyalty in digital environments is increasingly influenced by data-driven relevance rather than generic mass marketing approaches. Customers are more likely to remain loyal when they perceive that platforms understand and anticipate their needs.

Integrative Interpretation

The findings illustrate that customer loyalty in Indonesian e-commerce is multidimensional and relationship-based. While all CRM dimensions significantly influence loyalty, retention plays the most dominant role, followed by acquisition, personalization, and service. The model suggests that loyalty is built through a structured relational cycle: attracting customers, retaining them through engagement, supporting them with reliable service, and strengthening bonds through personalized experiences. These results reinforce the argument that CRM should be implemented holistically. Organizations that integrate operational efficiency, relational continuity, and data-driven personalization are more likely to cultivate sustainable customer loyalty in competitive digital markets.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that Customer Relationship Management (CRM) plays a significant role in increasing customer loyalty in e-commerce businesses in Indonesia, particularly in the post-pandemic era. The four main dimensions of CRM—customer acquisition, retention, customer service, and personalization—have been shown to have a simultaneous positive influence on consumer loyalty. Among these dimensions, customer retention demonstrates the most dominant influence, emphasizing the importance of retaining existing customers through loyalty programs, ongoing promotions, and ongoing communication. This is followed by customer acquisition, which plays a crucial role in expanding the customer base through digital marketing strategies and initial incentives. The customer service and personalization dimensions also contribute significantly, reflecting consumers' need for fast, accurate service and a shopping experience that is relevant to their personal preferences. These findings demonstrate that e-commerce's success in creating loyalty depends not only on price or product alone, but also on how companies build and maintain meaningful, long-term relationships with their customers. Therefore, implementing an integrated CRM that is adaptive to technological developments and oriented towards customer needs is a crucial strategy for creating a sustainable competitive advantage in the Indonesian digital market.

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