

THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH IN MODERATING THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY (A STUDY AT EL LAGO BALI)

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Abstract

Customer loyalty refers to a consumer's commitment to continue repurchasing the same product or service as a result of positive experiences or favorable impressions of the product or service. It reflects a consumer's tendency to repeatedly purchase preferred products or services. This study aims to examine and explain the effect of service quality on customer loyalty, as well as the moderating role of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) in the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty at El Lago Bali. The sample consists of 100 respondents selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires, and the data analysis technique employed was Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). The findings reveal that service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, and electronic word of mouth effectively moderates the influence of service quality on customer loyalty.

Keywords: Customer Loyalty, Service Quality, E-WOM

INTRODUCTION

El Lago Bali itself is a sushi restaurant located on Jl. Raya Penelokan No. 899, Batur Selatan., Kec. Kintamani, Bangli Regency, Bali. If from the direction of the center of Denpasar City, it is about 54.6 km and takes about 1 hour 29 minutes. El Lago Bali started operating in August 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, of course it is courageous because at a time when many other restaurants or cafes were closing down or going bankrupt, El Lago Bali dared to take the decision to open its outlets. El Lago Bali offers delicious food and drinks at affordable prices, views that directly face Mount Batur, and the concept of this cafe building looks minimalist when viewed from the outside. The color of the building uses more white and there are also large windows for taking pictures. The atmosphere in this cafe feels modern from the furniture in the cafe and its bar. So it looks more minimalist and looks clean. There is a long sofa on the balcony of the cafe with a very beautiful mountain background. So El Lago Bali has its own charm to be used as an Instagrammable photo spot.

The increasingly tight competition in the cafe industry, it is important for El Lago Bali to focus on strategies that maintain and retain customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is an important part of a business to determine the success of the restaurant or cafe business. Of course this will be a problem if there is instability in a business, many things can be factors that cause this instability, one of which is the Quality of Service and Customer Loyalty of the cafe. Loyal customers will tend to continue shopping or make repeat purchases regularly, buying products and services sold by the restaurant or cafe (Dhisasmito & Kumar, 2020). In addition, loyal customers can refer or promote both electronically such as on social media. The number of loyal customers is very beneficial for restaurant or cafe businesses to survive the tight business competition like today.

Reviews from visitors who have been to El Lago Bali about the quality of service is 5/5 with positive comments too. Of course this will have a good impact on the cafe because

this is in line with the findings of (Bimrew Sendekie Belay, 2022) according to him, service quality is the fulfillment of customer needs and desires and the timeliness of delivery to balance customer expectations.

Different findings on the influence of service quality on customer loyalty are shown by the research results. Taufik et al. (2022) and Abror et al. (2020) found different findings, namely that service quality does not have a direct effect on consumer loyalty. Another finding that is inconsistent is the study Juwaini et al. (2022) and Lie et al. (2019) which shows that service quality has no significant effect on loyalty. Table 1 presents the research gap / inconsistency of previous research results.

Table 1. Previous Research on the Influence of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty

No	Researcher	Findings	Information
1	Dhisasmito & Kumar (2020)	Significant	Inconsistent
2	Nabila & Vandayuli Riorini (2023)	Significant	
3	Dhasan & Aryupong (2019)	Significant	
4	Kanyama et al. (2022)	Significant	
5	Darwin et al. (2019)	Not Significant	
6	Taufik et al. (2022)	Not Significant	
7	Abror et al. (2020)	Not Significant	
8	Juwaini et al. (2022)	Not Significant	

Based on inconsistent research results on the influence of service quality on customer loyalty, this study proposes a moderating variable of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM). Electronic Word of Mouth is any positive or negative statement made by restaurant customers about a product or service via the internet. (Alshreef et al., 2023). The use of the Electronic Word of Mouth moderating variable is based on a study conducted by (Alshreef et al., 2023), which places the moderation of Electronic Word of Mouth on the influence of Hedonic Value and Brand Love Intimacy; moderation of Electronic Word of Mouth on the influence of Perceived Value on Repurchase Intention (Unpapar, 2021). Based on previous empirical studies, no moderation variable of Electronic Word of Mouth has been found on the influence of service quality on customer loyalty. Thus, this study explores the moderation variable of Electronic Word of Mouth on the influence of service quality on customer loyalty. The use of this moderation variable is important to determine whether Electronic Word of Mouth or online reviews conducted by other consumers strengthen or weaken the influence of service quality on customer loyalty. Electronic Word of Mouth here functions as a moderation variable and what is meant by Electronic Word of Mouth here is an online review on social media given by customers who have visited El Lago Bali.

Electronic Word of Mouth is a positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company that is available to most people and institutions via the internet. Some of the advantages of the internet, especially in terms of efficiency, are able to change the way of selling and buying (Nofri & Hafifah, 2018). One of the phenomena that is currently occurring is consumers who utilize online media in carrying out shopping activities. Online media users can easily participate, share, and create content about products through social media.

Electronic Word of Mouth related to reviews available on social media related to a product or service, in this case related to cafes and restaurants. There are many types of social media used to share content or share reviews, one of which is Google Review. Google Review is a Google feature that allows users to provide reviews and ratings on products, services, or businesses. These reviews can be in the form of text, photos, or numeric values. Google Reviews can help other buyers make informed purchasing decisions, as well as help businesses improve their service quality and reputation.

This is influenced by the development of information technology (internet usage). Based on a survey institution called WeAreSocial in Databooks.id, the number of internet users in Indonesia has reached 213 million people as of January 2023 from a population of 276.4 million in Indonesia, meaning that 77% of the total population in Indonesia has used the Internet.

According to the results of the National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas) conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022, the percentage of Indonesians aged 5 years and over who had accessed the internet in the last three months reached 66.48% in 2022. This percentage increased by 7.05% from the previous year which was 62.1%. Based on age group, the majority or 47.64% of internet users in Indonesia come from the productive or working age group, namely 25-49 years. Then, the next largest number of internet users in the country come from the student age group or 19-24 years at 14.69%. Which means that almost half of internet users are Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z.

Generation Y or Millennials are the generation born from 1981 to 1996 and Generation Z are the generation born from 1997 to 2011, their age range is 13-27 years in 2024. Unlike the older generation, according to the report, "Indonesia Gen Z and Millennial Report 2020" which was published by the research company Alvora, Generation Z is referred to as the mobile generation, which is the highest level of internet consumption compared to other generations.

The use of social media has become an integral part of everyday life. One of the things that is often shared on social media is the experience of visiting new places such as restaurants and cafes. Consumers not only share photos and stories about their experiences at the restaurant, but also often make reviews, both positive and negative. Through positive interactions and sharing experiences, consumers can form a strong emotional bond with their favorite cafe and increase loyalty to a cafe.

Reviews from other consumers has great potential to strengthen or weaken the influence of service quality on customer loyalty to a restaurant. Positive feedback from customers can strengthen their belief in the quality of service and products provided by El Lago, which in turn strengthens emotional bonds and increases loyalty to the brand. However, on the other hand, negative reviews can raise doubts about the quality of service and products offered, which can lead to decreased customer loyalty or even lose customers altogether. Therefore, it is important for cafes to actively monitor and respond to customer reviews well, take necessary actions to improve their services, and maintain their positive reputation in the eyes of customers. This is because prospective consumers tend to trust more in advice or recommendations they get from people who have been to the place, rather than advertisements that are spread. Usually, some people who have bought, used, and been to the place will share their experiences on the internet and social media accounts they have.

In addition to the positive impacts, there are also other impacts caused by the existence of E-WOM such as fake or negative reviewers, meaning people who share fake reviews that in fact they have never bought or used. This can destroy the positive reviews or reviews that should be, so that customers who have been there and prospective consumers will feel hesitant when they want to buy or visit the place. There are many things that can be shared and reviewed by customers such as one of them is Service Quality.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research design includes associative research using a quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2019) associative research aims to determine the cause and effect of variables that influence the variables that are influenced. Quantitative research according to Sugiyono (2019), is a research method based on the philosophy of positivism, as a scientific method because it has met scientific principles in a concrete or empirical, objective, measurable, rational, and systematic manner. This study aims to determine how the role of electronic word of mouth moderates service quality towards customer loyalty.

The location of the research plays an important role in the success of a research. Determining the location of the research is a very important stage in quantitative research, because by determining the location of the research means that the subject, object and purpose of the research have been determined, so that it will make it easier for researchers to conduct research. The selection of the research location must be precise and careful considering that at that location the data will be obtained, both primary and secondary data (Harmon, et al. 2016). This research was conducted at El Lago Bali, Kintamani with the aim of obtaining direct information from customers after they visited.

The object of this research is consumer behavior, namely customer loyalty of El Lago Bali products by prospective El Lago Bali consumers themselves which is influenced by Electronic Word of Mouth with the moderation variable of Service Quality, while the subjects of this research are people who have made purchases of El Lago Bali products who are domiciled in Denpasar City.

The population in this study was all people who had shopped at El Lago Bali. This study uses a non-probability sampling method, namely a sampling technique that does not provide the same opportunity/chance for each element or member of the population to be selected as a sample (Rahyuda, 2020:234).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Inferential Analysis Results

Results of Moderated Regression Analysis

Table 2. Results of Moderated Regression Analysis Test

		Unstandardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1,153	0.495
	Quality of Service X)	0.176	0.049
	Electronic Word of Mouth(M)	0.170	0.023
	Interaction (X*M)	0.010	0.047

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty (Y)

Source: Appendix 9 (Processed data, 2024)

Based on the results obtained from the MRA test presented in Table 2, the following regression equation was obtained.

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M + \beta_3 XM + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

$$Y = 1.153 + 0.176X + 0.170M + 0.010XM + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

The interpretation of the above equation is as follows.

- 1) The constant value (α) is positive 1.153, meaning that if the service quality and electronic word of mouth variables are stated as constant at zero, then customer loyalty at El Lago Bali is 1.153.
- 2) Regression coefficient of service quality variable (β_1) a positive value of 0.176 means that if the service quality variable increases by one unit, customer loyalty at El Lago Bali will increase by 0.176 assuming the other independent variables are constant.
- 3) Regression coefficient of electronic word of mouth variable (β_2) a positive value of 0.170 means that if the electronic word of mouth variable increases by one unit, customer loyalty at El Lago Bali will increase by 0.270 assuming the other independent variables are constant.
- 4) The regression coefficient of interaction between the service quality variable and the electronic word of mouth variable (β_3) a positive value of 0.010 means that if the interaction between the service quality variable and the electronic word of mouth variable increases by one unit, then customer loyalty at El Lago Bali will increase by 0.010 assuming that other independent variables are constant.

Classical Assumption Test Results

1) Normality Test

Table 3. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	
	Unstandardized Residual

N		100
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	.82075829
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.106
	Positive	.049
	Negative	-.106
Test Statistics		.106
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.007c
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig.	.195d
99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.185
	Upper Bound	.206

Source: Appendix 8 (Processed data, 2024)

Based on the results of the normality test, it can be seen in Table 3 above that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov value is 0.106 and the Monte Carlo Sig. Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.195. The Monte Carlo approach is a method of testing data normality using systematic development that utilizes random numbers. The purpose of the Monte Carlo approach was carried out in the research of Kinanti & Rosdiana (2022), Sumartana & Dewi (2024), and Dharma & Suwandana (2024) to see the distribution of data that has been tested from samples with random values or values considered too extreme. This shows that the data in the regression model has been normally distributed with a Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) value of $0.195 > 0.05$. Thus, this data can be used for further research. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov value is greater than the alpha value of 0.05, indicating that the data used in this study is normally distributed, so it can be concluded that the model meets the assumption of normality.

2) Multicollinearity Test

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Results

Equality	Model	Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
Sub-structural 1	Quality of Service	0.958	1,044
	Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)	0.958	1,044

Source: Appendix 8 (Processed data, 2024)

Based on Table 4, it is shown that there are no independent variables that have a tolerance value of less than 0.10 and there are also no independent variables that have a VIF value of more than 10. Therefore, the regression model is free from multicollinearity symptoms.

3) Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Equality	Variables	t	Sig.
Sub-structural 1	Quality of Service	0.632	0.529

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)	-0.232	0.817
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Source: Appendix 8 (Processed data, 2024)

Based on Table 5, it is shown that each has a significance value greater than 5% (0.05). This shows that the independent variables used in this study do not significantly affect the dependent variable, namely the absolute residual, therefore, this study is free from heteroscedasticity symptoms.

Model Feasibility Test

1) Model Feasibility Test (F Test)

Table 6. Results of Model Feasibility Test (F Test)

Model	Sig.
1 Regression	.000b

a. Dependent Variable: Repurchase Intention (Y)
b. Predictors: (Constant), Interaction (X*M), Trust (M), Feeling Experience (X)

Source: Appendix 9 (Processed data, 2024)

Based on Table 6, the F significance value is 0.000. The F test results show that the significance or p value is $0.000 \leq 0.05$, so it can be concluded that the resulting regression model is feasible to predict the relationship between the independent variables in this study and the dependent variable.

2) Coefficient of Determination Test (R²)

Table 7. Results of the Determination Coefficient Test (R²)

Adjusted R Square
0.875

a. Predictors: (Constant), Interaction (X*M), Electronic Word of Mouth (Quality of Service (X)

Source: Appendix 9 (Processed data, 2024)

Based on Table 7, the magnitude of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables indicated by the total determination value (Adjusted R Square) of 0.875 means that the variation of the service quality variables, electronic word of mouth and the interaction of the service quality variables with electronic word of mouth are able to explain 87.5 percent of the variation in the customer loyalty variable, while the remaining 12.5 percent is explained by other factors or variables not included in the research model.

Tabel 8. Results of Moderated Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	
		B	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1,153	0,495

Service Quality (X)	0,176	0,049
Electronic Word of Mouth (M)	0,170	0,023
Interaction (X*M)	0,010	0,047
<hr/>		
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty (Y)		
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Source: Appendix 9 (Processed Data, 2024)

Based on the results of the MRA test presented in Table 13, the regression equation is as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M + \beta_3 XM + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

$$Y = 1,153 + 0,176X + 0,170M + 0,010XM + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

The interpretation of the above equation is as follows:

a) The constant value (α) of 1.153 indicates that if the variables of service quality and electronic word of mouth are held constant at zero, customer loyalty at El Lago Bali is 1.153.

b) The regression coefficient for the service quality variable (β_1) of 0.176 indicates that if the service quality variable increases by one unit, customer loyalty at El Lago Bali will increase by 0.176, assuming other independent variables remain constant.

c) The regression coefficient for the electronic word of mouth variable (β_2) of 0.170 indicates that if the electronic word of mouth variable increases by one unit, customer loyalty at El Lago Bali will increase by 0.170, assuming other independent variables remain constant.

d) The regression coefficient for the interaction between the service quality variable and the electronic word of mouth variable (β_3) of 0.010 indicates that if the interaction between these two variables increases by one unit, customer loyalty at El Lago Bali will increase by 0.010, assuming other independent variables remain constant.

Hypothesis Testing Results

- 1) The service quality variable (X) has a positive regression coefficient value with a t significance of 0.050 or less than 0.05 (Sig < α). The results of this t test mean that the service quality variable has a positive and significant effect on the customer loyalty variable so that H1, namely service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty at El Lago Bali can be accepted.
- 2) The interaction variable of service quality with electronic word of mouth (XM) has a positive regression coefficient value with a t significance of 0.049 or less than 0.05 (Sig < α). The results of this t test mean that the electronic word of mouth variable is able to strengthen the influence of service quality on customer loyalty so that H2, namely electronic word of mouth strengthens the influence of service quality on customer loyalty at El Lago Bali can be accepted.

Discussion of Research Results

The Influence of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty

Based on the results of the first hypothesis test in this study regarding the effect of service quality on customer loyalty, it can be seen that there is a positive and significant effect between service quality and customer loyalty at El Lago Bali. The results of this study indicate that the better the quality of service received by customers at El Lago Bali, the more it will increase customer loyalty at El Lago Bali. So the first hypothesis in this study can be proven true.

Customer loyalty can be assessed through consistent repeat purchases, customer resistance to alternative products or services offered by competitors, and the level of satisfaction obtained from the service received. In the context of TPB, these are stimuli that influence intentions. Good service quality increases customer intentions to be loyal to the cafe. This is based on the principle that positive experiences increase the desire to repeat the same behavior (revisiting the cafe).

The Role of Electronic Word of Mouth in Moderating the Effect of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty

Based on the results of the second hypothesis test in this study regarding the role of electronic word of mouth moderating the influence of service quality on customer loyalty, it can be seen that there is electronic word of mouth that can strengthen the influence of service quality on customer loyalty at El Lago Bali. The results of this study indicate that the stronger the electronic word of mouth at El Lago Bali, coupled with the quality of service provided, it will be able to increase customer loyalty at El Lago Bali. So that the second hypothesis in this study can be proven true.

Electronic word of mouth is a marketing activity that utilizes word of mouth media to market a product. Information related to the product can be given or delivered through blogs, review sites, reviews on social media or so on (Priansa, 2017: 339). Appropriate and good online reviews on various social media provided by customers who have visited El Lago Bali will have an impact on customer loyalty. Customers are willing to do online reviews with a positive impression indicating that customers trust and have the desire to continue returning to the place (Hariono, 2018).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion presented in the previous chapters, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. Service quality has a positive and significant influence on customer loyalty at El Lago Bali. This indicates that the better the quality of service provided to customers, the higher the customer loyalty at El Lago Bali.
2. Electronic word of mouth strengthens the influence of service quality on customer loyalty, where electronic word of mouth plays a role in amplifying the effect of service quality on customer loyalty at El Lago Bali. This shows that the impact of service quality on customer loyalty at El Lago Bali increases when strengthened by electronic word of mouth.

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