



The Service Quality and Brand Trust Toward Purchase Decisions the Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction : A Conceptual Paper

Fahmi Renaldy Azzam¹, Arry Widodo², Anita Silvianita³, Nurafni Rubiyanti⁴

Telkom University

Corresponding Author: Fahmi Renaldy Azzam

renaldyazzam@student.telkomuniversity.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Brand Trust,
Customer Satisfaction,
Purchase Decision, Service
Quality

Received : 10 March

Revised : 12 April

Accepted: 20 May

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the relationship between service quality and brand trust through customer satisfaction regarding purchase decisions with a sample of Bandung people who know and have bought Crocs products at Shopee. This research method is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Square (PLS) approach, using the help of SmartPLS 3.0 software. This research shows an influence between service quality and brand trust on purchase decisions through customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction mediates between service quality, brand trust, and purchase decisions. This research has several implications for companies that pay attention to service quality and build brand trust to create customer satisfaction, which impacts increasing purchase decisions

INTRODUCTION

In the present age of digitization, numerous technologies can enhance human activity. Indonesia's e-commerce sector is seeing significant expansion, leading to an increase in the number of companies producing items across all categories. This has resulted in intense competition in the trade sector as companies vie for market dominance. However, consumers still prefer to choose products or services that are more popular and have guaranteed good quality on the market (Desfitriady & Insanny, 2023).

Crocs is a fashion brand that has become popular and has unique and different products on the market. Even though previously Crocs was a brand that was not liked by the public, it has become one of the favorite brands for young children and fashion adults this year (eTail, n.d.). Crocs, a shoe company from the United States, is famous for its products made from comfortable and light Croslite™ material. Crocs can be purchased through offline stores, usually found in large malls, but Crocs also provides purchases via the official website Crocs.co.id or marketplaces, one of which is Shopee.

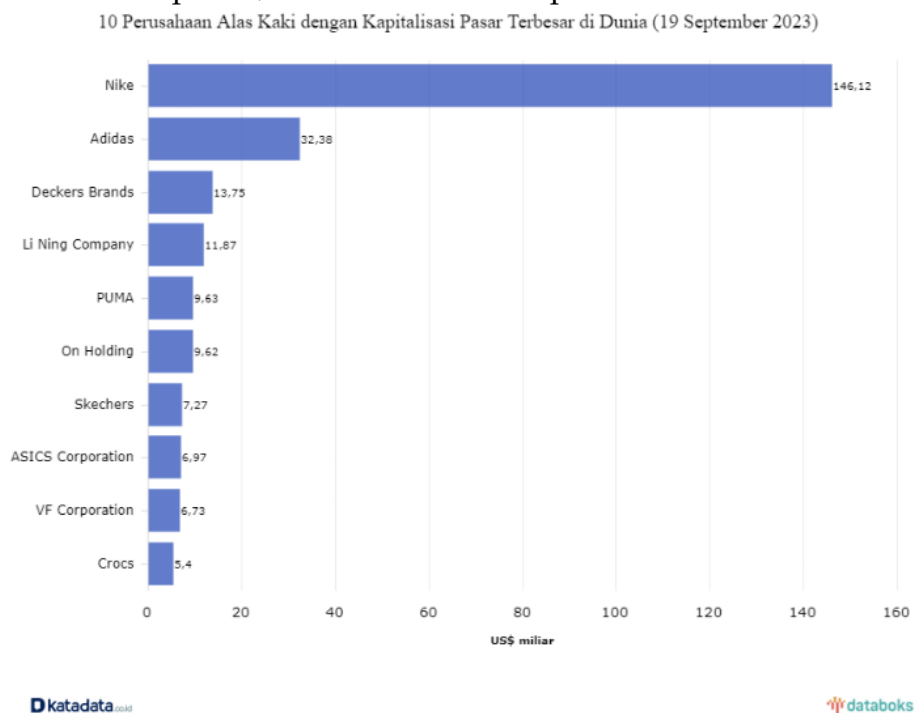


Figure 1. Footwear Company with the Largest Market Capitalization in the World

Based on Figure 1, a survey conducted by Databooks explains that Crocs is in last place with a value of \$5.4 billion. Meanwhile, the company with the number 1 largest capitalization in the world is Nike, with a capitalization value of \$146.42 billion (Annur, 2023). From this data, it can be concluded that market capitalization is also the key to measuring a company's profitability and is used in various other important metrics, such as revenue (Eryanto, 2023). Crocs is also known as a versatile rubber shoe brand. Crocs experienced a significant increase in sales in Indonesia.

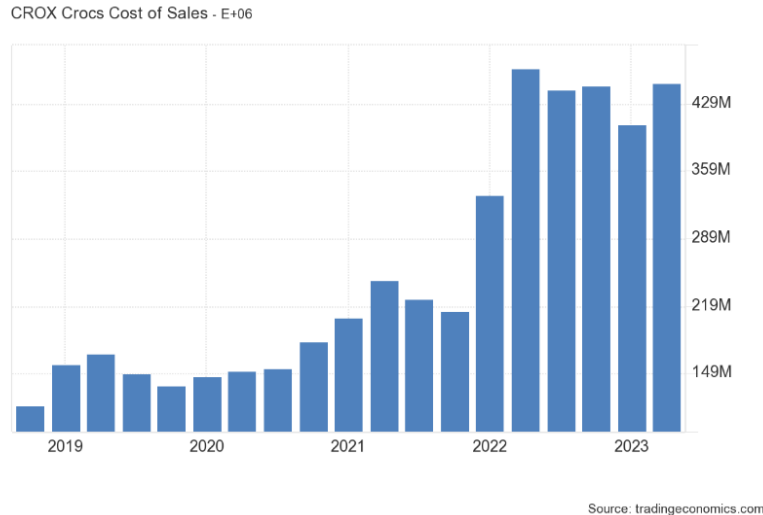


Figure 2. Cost of Sales Crocs 2019-2023

Based on Figure 1.6, it explains that in 2019, the Cost of Sales was 158 billion, and experienced a relatively large increase in the following year, namely 2021 to 2023, amounting to 408 billion (Economics, 2023). With Indonesian society being quite consumptive of fashion products, many companies carry out promotional activities to introduce their products to the wider public (Darmawan et al., 2022). Sadik, (2023) This explains Crocs' success in social media marketing and increased brand identification and loyalty, with customers adopting Crocs as a fashion statement, which is an important aspect of Crocs' success in social media marketing. One of the factors in the consumptive style of Indonesian people towards fashion products is the ease of shopping online because it is practical, can compare prices, and can get more cashback (Populix, 2023). The growth rate of e-commerce transactions has been very drastic since 2017 when it amounted to 139 million users and 212 million users in 2023 (Jayani, 2019). Based on data from Datanesia, (2022), Bandung is in seventh place with 616,109 sellers and buyers out of 2,529,714, with a growth of 61.5% on average from 2019 to 2021.

To reach its consumers, Crocs provides online purchases on e-commerce platforms, such as Shopee Indonesia, through the official Crocs shop on Shopee. It was found that the rating level, number of followers, and chat performance of the official shop displayed can make it easier for consumers to find product information, such as the availability of goods providing answers to questions asked or helping customers choose the right product. This will provide a memorable shopping experience to customers and potential customers (Tanuwijaya et al., 2023). Prior to making a purchasing choice, prospective consumers will engage in a crucial phase, including gathering information about products from multiple sources. Consumers can obtain the information they need regarding the goods purchased through explanations provided by the vendor or by communicating directly with the seller via the chat option in online transactions (Rosyidah, 2022). However, there are many complaints on the review page for each Crocs product, ranging from late delivery, products that do not match the order, and a complicated return process to items that cannot be exchanged. According to Yuki et al., (2023), Service quality is an effort made by

a company to satisfy its customers' needs. Therefore, service quality and promotions through online stores, such as online chat, insurance, and fast delivery times, are very important to increase customer satisfaction and repeat purchases (Arisinta & Ulum, 2023). In many cases, service quality is often positively associated with purchasing decisions.

Crocs can be classified as a middle to upper brand; this shows that Crocs products have high value and may be considered luxury goods by some people, but their image is threatened by the rise of imitation products (Permana, 2023). This can harm consumer confidence and needs to be addressed with efforts to combat counterfeit products and improve brand image. According to Utama & Syaefulloh, (2024) Selling fake products and varying product quality can be detrimental to genuine brands. Brand trust can be influenced by consumers' opinions and perceptions of the brand, and reviews and testimonials on a platform can influence the brand's trust. According to Parasari et al., (2024), Consumers who are satisfied and trust a brand will be more likely to buy again, remain loyal, recommend, and be easily tempted to buy products or services from that brand because brand trust encourages loyalty and repeat purchases. Building brand trust requires continuous efforts to provide high-quality products, good customer service, and transparent communication. By building brand trust, companies can increase sales and customer retention (Asy'ari & Karsudjono, 2021).

Based on consumer reviews regarding Crocs services at Shopee, the level of customer satisfaction with Crocs products at Shopee also varies. Some customers are satisfied with the quality and comfort of Crocs products, but some are disappointed with the service they receive. These influences purchasing decisions because customers who are satisfied with services and products will become loyal customers and promote them to others. Apart from that, important factors influencing customer satisfaction are friendly and good service, high product quality, trusted brands, and affordable prices. Competition, attractive offers, and references from people closest to you (Mufid & Syaefulloh, 2023). According to (Nurjamad & Zalikho, 2023), customer satisfaction is important for businesses to increase purchasing and customer loyalty. Businesses that want to succeed must consistently provide high-quality services that meet or exceed customer expectations.

To support this research, researchers use a bibliometric analysis method using VOSviewer software, which can analyze trends in individual research or a field of study and can provide evidence of the impact of individual research or a field of study, as well as finding new research fields that are trending and developing. This is Following the results and discussion:



Figure 3. Co-Occurance Network Visualization

Based on Figure 3, this research uses keyword analysis and bibliographic maps to identify patterns and relationships between trending and developing topics in certain fields of study. Through the 26 keywords analyzed, it was found that purchase decisions had 43 relationships with keywords, including service quality, product quality, and customer satisfaction.

Based on the background that has been explained, a problem formulation is proposed: 1. How big is the influence of service quality on purchase decisions? 2. How big is the influence of brand trust on purchase decisions? 3. How big is the influence of customer satisfaction on purchase decisions, and 4. . How big is the influence of service quality and brand trust on purchase decisions through customer satisfaction?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Quality

Service quality is an assessment of the suitability of the service received with the expected service (Prayogo & Ariadi, 2024). According to Kuswibowo et al., (2023), service quality is an activity, or a group of certain activities, which are usually intangible, which occur through the relationship between the service facilitator and the service user as well as the physical resources used to support the services provided by the service facilitator. Service quality is the quality of service provided to consumers and is one of the prerequisites for generating customer satisfaction (Fil Khoirin et al., 2023). In this research, we adopted the dimensions used in research (Desfitriady & Insanny, 2023), namely tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Brand Trust

Brand trust is a sense of safety and confidence of the consumer in a particular brand because they consider the brand to be reliable and responsible for the interests and safety of consumers (Hera & Fourqoniah, 2023). The study Sari & Arifin, (2021) explains that the brand trust dimensions are categorized into five, namely, brand predictability, brand liking, brand competence, brand reputation, and trust in the company. The research results stated that the five

dimensions influence brand loyalty and influence consumer purchasing decisions. This is corroborated by a study conducted byGangga Dewi et al., (2023), which asserts that a higher level of brand trust is positively correlated with the likelihood of making a purchase choice.

Purchase Decision

According to Rizki Fajar et al., (2023), a purchase decision is a pre-purchase process with source factors from consumers related to the value and needs of a brand. Based on research from (Siek & Nawawi, 2024), consumer decisions in purchasing a product are influenced by various factors, which can be from within themselves or outside, such as the environment. (Oentoeng & Muslih, 2021) Explain that dimensions, product options, choice of brand, reseller choice, purchase time, purchase amount, and payment method can influence consumer purchasing decisions on a product.

Customer Satisfaction

According to Suwarno, (2022), customer satisfaction is the feeling that arises after comparing product performance with expectations. Performance below expectation produces dissatisfaction, while performance that exceeds expectations produces satisfaction. According to Bekti Kumoro & Denpharanto Agung Krisprimandoyo, (2023) maintaining a good attitude may enhance the probability of customers making repeat purchases, but unhappiness might negatively impact brand loyalty. Adverse experiences have the potential to erode self-assurance and influence decision-making. Comprehending and controlling consumer satisfaction is crucial for exerting influence over purchase choices. Hartanto et al., (2022) stated that online customer satisfaction is the key to business success as it encourages re-purchase, loyalty, positive recommendations, and improving customer retention, long-term growth, and buying intent. The customer satisfaction dimension employed was selected based on a study Kurniawan Ho & Sugiharto, (2017), where client satisfaction is the last appraisal of the consumer towards a product or service, defined by three dimensions, namely, Fulfillment, Pleasure, and Ambivalence.

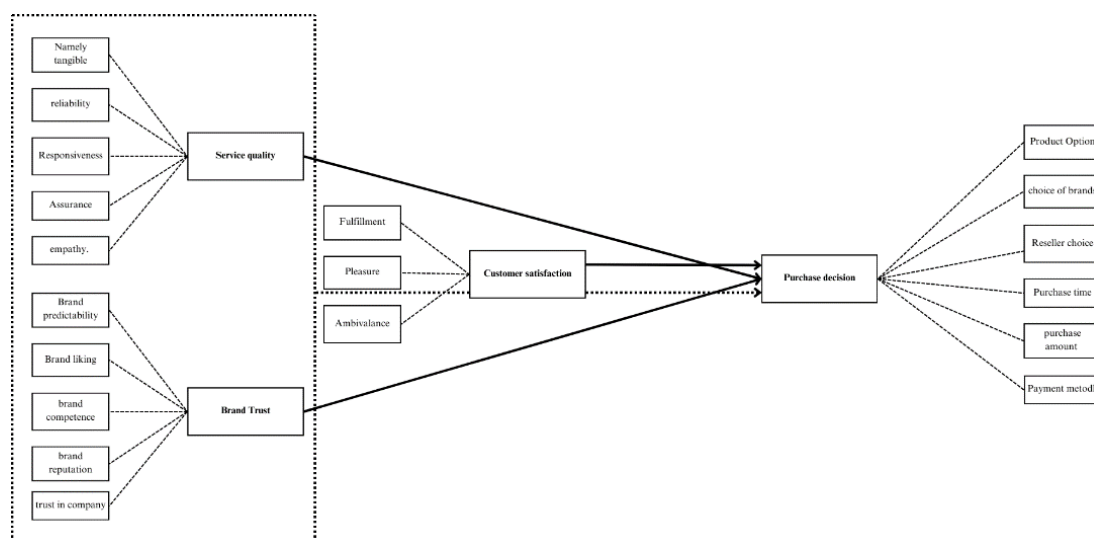


Figure 4. Theoretical Framework

Figure 4 shows the theoretical framework developed in this study. Service quality and brand trust directly form the purchase decision, but customer satisfaction is the variable that mediates between service quality and Brand trust in the purchase decision.

Research from Prayogo & Ariadi, (2024) has stated that service quality influences purchase decisions, but customer satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between service quality and purchase decisions. However, other research has found that customer satisfaction mediates service quality in purchase decisions (Bekti Kumoro & Denpharanto Agung Krisprimandoyo, 2023). Hypothesis 1: Service quality has a positive effect on purchasing decisions. Based on previous research, used as a reference in this research, Utama & Syaefulloh, (2024) explain that brand trust does not influence purchase decisions. However, brand trust influences purchase decisions through customer satisfaction. From the research results, it is concluded that brand trust plays an important role in consumer purchasing decisions, especially for well-known products. Brands that build trust through consistency and positive experiences will benefit in terms of purchases and customer loyalty. Hypothesis 2: Brand trust has a positive effect on purchasing decisions

Research (Ervinna et al., 2023) found that customer satisfaction positively influences purchase decisions. Other research states that (Bhaskara et al., 2014) satisfied customers tend to develop an emotional bond with the product, ultimately fostering customer loyalty. This customer loyalty means they will continue to buy products from the company, increasing purchase decisions and profits for entrepreneurs. Hypothesis 3: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on purchasing decisions. Hypothesis 4: Service Quality and brand trust positively affect product purchasing decisions through customer satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This type of research is quantitative research that analyzes the relationship between service quality and brand trust mediated by customer satisfaction in purchase decisions. The sample population consists of people who live in Bandung and who know or have bought Crocs products at Shopee. The sample for this research will be selected using purposive sampling with a non-probability sampling method. A Partial Least Squares (PLS) in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to analyze the data collected using the help of smart PLS 3.0 software. SEM-PLS is a statistical analysis method used to validate structural equation models that include latent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Online shopping is one of the easiest methods to increase consumer consumption power. With the availability of online shopping, consumers can provide reviews about the services and products they will get or have already received. This is an attraction for potential consumers who will buy Crocs products on the Shopee platform and also provides satisfaction and perception of the Crocs brand. This can greatly impact the decision to purchase Crocs products on Shopee. Ease of use is one of the key elements customers utilize while looking for information about the goods, services, or services they desire.

Platforms such as Shopee make it easier for consumers to find related information by providing an online review feature that contains reviews of consumers who have used a product or service (Halim & Tyra, 2021). Trust in a brand is very important for building loyalty because trust develops high-value associations, strengthening the bond between consumers and the brand (Molinillo et al., 2017). Consumers will need a product and service that meets their expectations and desires. Therefore, brands must maintain and improve services to ensure customer satisfaction (Nurjamad & Zalikho, 2023). Reviews about services or products consumers provide through a platform impact consumer confidence in buying a product from that brand (Tanuwijaya et al., 2023). Apart from that, paying attention to feedback and managing complaints can increase consumer satisfaction, impacting product purchasing decisions (Hariyanti et al., 2023). In this way, consumers with a high level of satisfaction will tend to make repeat purchases, and consumers who make repeat purchases can contribute to company growth (Ervinna et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This research explores the relationship between service quality, brand trust, Purchase Decisions, and customer satisfaction, so statistical results have yet to be available for this research. This model indicates that service quality and brand trust are the most important influencing variables and are mediated by the customer satisfaction variable impacting purchase choices. Service quality has a significant association in influencing purchasing choices because this impacts consumer happiness and relates to trust in a brand, particularly service quality and brand trust, and is mediated by customer contentment. Participate in buying choices.

Recommendations

This research suggests that businesses prioritize customer satisfaction obtained from product reviews and brand trust through superior products and services, good customer service, consistent brand messages, strong brand personality, and effective brand symbolism, which can increase consumer purchasing decisions toward a company's products offered.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has many things that could be improved, such as the number of samples and other variables that may need to be added, so further research is still needed on various e-commerce or other online shopping platforms. Also, the shortcomings of this research are found in the location of this research, namely only in the Bandung area.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to thank the SWT researchers for their gift and guidance so that this journal could be completed, as well as Salawat and special greetings addressed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the researchers would like to thank all interested parties for their diligent contribution so that they succeeded in completing the diary. This research.

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