

THE INFLUENCE OF KEY OPINION LEADERS (KOL) AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY WITH CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE IN IBOX

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Keywords

Key Opinion Leader (KOL), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, IBOX

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on IBOX customer loyalty and satisfaction, as well as the role of customer satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between KOLs and CRM with loyalty. This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to test the cause-and-effect relationship between key opinion leaders, CRMs, and customer loyalty as independent variables, the mediating role of Customer Satisfaction (KP), and the mediator role of the customer satisfaction (LP). The study population consists of Greater Jakarta residents aged 19-55 years who are active in using the internet, with a sample selected by purposive sampling of 250 respondents. The results show that customer satisfaction has a significant influence on customer loyalty (P0.05), with each variable showing a p-value smaller than 0.05, namely 0.000 and 0.011, respectively. In addition, this study also revealed that Customer Service Management (CRM) has an important influence on Customer Loyalty (LP), with the p value of 0.000. This shows that KOL and CRM not only affect customer satisfaction, but also play an important role in building customer loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology and social media has revolutionized the way consumers interact with brands and products, especially in the highly competitive electronics retail industry. The retail market in Indonesia is projected to grow by USD 37.32 billion during the 2021-2025 period, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 4% (Technavio, 2021). This growth is driven by the expansion of the retail landscape, although challenges such as underdeveloped infrastructure remain. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has also been significant, with some industries experiencing a decline in demand while others have remained stable and showing promising growth opportunities.

One of the phenomena that emerges from the change is the increasing influence of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) in shaping consumer opinions and preferences (Putri et al., 2023). KOLs, often influential individuals on social media, have the ability to create deep resonance with their audience (Fajriani & Mulyana, 2022; Huang, 2023; Jin et al., 2023; Lu, 2023; Tran & Uehara, 2023). In the world of technology, figures like Gadgetin have become an important example. Gadgetin, as one of the famous KOLs on YouTube with a focus on gadget reviews, has a significant influence in directing consumer opinions regarding electronic products. Their influence can be leveraged by retailers of premium Apple products such as IBOX to increase customer loyalty. Previous research has shown that KOLs can influence purchasing decisions and customer loyalty in various industries (Alotaibi et al., 2019; Hasan & Noor Liana, 2022; Le, 2022; Ng et al., 2023; Putri et al., 2023).

In addition to KOLs, customer relationship management (CRM) also plays an important role in increasing customer loyalty. An effective CRM can strengthen the relationship between IBOX and its customers, increase satisfaction, and ultimately drive sustainable loyalty (Khan et al., 2022; Nuseir & Refae, 2022).

iBox is one of the official retailers of Apple products in Indonesia that offers a wide range of products including iPhone, iPad, MacBook, Apple Watch, and other Apple accessories (PT Erajaya Swasembada Tbk, 2023). In recent years, iBox has shown significant growth in sales. Data from the annual report shows that iPhone sales continue to increase along with the launch of the latest models, while other products such as MacBooks and iPads are also experiencing steady growth.

iPhone sales from 2017 to 2021 have experienced significant fluctuations. In 2017 and 2018, iPhone sales were stable at 216.7 million and 217.7 million units. However, there was a sharp decline in 2019 with only 187.2 million units sold, this decline was caused by the Covid-19 pandemic that occurred. Sales began to rise again in 2020, reaching 196.9 million units, probably due to the launch of a new model, namely the more innovative iPhone 12 series. The peak occurred in 2021 with sales jumping drastically to 242 million units, indicating a strong recovery and a possible positive market response to Apple's latest products with the launch of the iPhone 13 series.

The phenomenon of increasing influence of KOLs in digital marketing is not only limited to direct influence on purchase decisions, but also includes how they shape brand perception and long-term loyalty (Nurulita & Primadini, 2021). Social media users often look for recommendations from KOLs they trust before making a purchase decision. KOLs with large and loyal followers have the ability to effectively shape market trends and preferences.

In addition, CRM is playing an increasingly important role in the competitive electronics retail industry. In the context of iBox, an effective CRM can include loyalty programs, personalized communication, and responsive customer service (Syahputro et al., 2023). A good CRM implementation can result in increased customer satisfaction, which in turn can increase loyalty and repeat purchases.

Although many studies have addressed the positive impact of KOLs and CRMs on customer loyalty separately, studies specifically examining the mediating role of customer satisfaction between KOLs, CRMs, and customer loyalty in the context of IBOX are still limited. This study aims to fill this gap by testing whether customer satisfaction can be a bridge between the influence of KOLs and CRM on IBOX customer loyalty.

By understanding this mechanism, IBOX can design more effective and targeted marketing strategies. For example, IBOX can collaborate with KOLs who have an audience that matches their target market. In addition, IBOX can also develop a personalized CRM program and provide added value for customers, thereby increasing their satisfaction and loyalty.

This study aims to examine the influence of Key Opinion Leader (KOL) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on IBOX customer loyalty and satisfaction, as well as the role of customer satisfaction mediation in the relationship between KOLs and CRM with loyalty. This research is expected to provide benefits for authors in the development of marketing science and research skills, as well as provide companies with in-depth insights into customer behavior, which can be used to optimize marketing strategies and improve competitiveness. In addition, this research can be a reference and basis for further research in related fields.

The hypotheses used in this study are:

- 1) H1: Key Opinion Leader (KOL) has an effect on IBOX customer satisfaction.
- 2) H2: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has an effect on IBOX customer satisfaction.
- 3) H3: Customer satisfaction affects IBOX customer loyalty.
- 4) H4: Key Opinion Leader (KOL) has an effect on IBOX customer loyalty.
- 5) H5: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) affects IBOX customer loyalty.
- 6) H6: Key Opinion Leader (KOL) has an effect on IBOX customer loyalty with customer satisfaction as an intervention.
- 7) H7: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) affects IBOX customer loyalty with customer satisfaction as an intervening

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to test the cause-and-effect relationship between Key Opinion Leader (KOL) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) as independent variables, customer satisfaction as a mediating variable, and customer loyalty as

a dependent variable. Primary data was collected through an online survey of IBOX customers in Greater Jakarta. The design of the explanatory research was chosen to explain how KOLs and CRMs affect customer loyalty as well as the role of customer satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship. The variables of this study are operationalized using indicators measured by a 5-point Likert scale, involving aspects such as credibility, trust, attractiveness of KOLs, as well as personalization, communication, and CRM loyalty programs.

The research population consists of Greater Jakarta residents aged 19-55 years who are active in using the internet, with a sample selected by purposive sampling of 250 respondents. Primary data was obtained from online questionnaires, while secondary data came from journals and other literature. This study uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method to analyze the data, which includes the evaluation of the outer model for the validity and reliability of indicators, as well as the evaluation of the inner model for the prediction of structural models against endogenous latent variables. Descriptive analysis techniques are also used to describe the characteristics of the data obtained.

RESULTS

F Square

Table 1. F Square Test Result

	CRM	KOL	KP	LP
CRM			0.047	0.192
KOL			0.154	0.104
KP				0.444
LP				

So based on the F Square value table above, it can be interpreted as follows:

- KOL has an influence of 0.154 or can be said to have a moderate influence because the influence value is > 0.15 and < 0.35 .
- CRM has an influence of 0.047 or can be said to have a small influence because the influence value > 0.02 and < 0.15 .
- KOL has an influence of 0.104 or can be said to have a small influence because the influence value is > 0.02 and < 0.15 .
- CRM has an influence of 0.192 or can be said to have a small influence because the influence value is > 0.02 and < 0.15 .
- LP has an influence of 0.444 or can be said to have a great influence because the influence value > 0.35 .

NFI (Model Fit)

Table 2. NFI Test Result

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.080	0.080
d_ULS	2.078	2.078
d_G	1.645	1.645
Chi-square	2069.927	2069.927
NFI	0.667	0.667

From this data, pay attention to the NFI value and the value is used as a percentage. So it was found that the NFI value was 0.667 or 66.7%.

Path Coefficient (T- Statistic)

Table 3. Path Coefficient Test Result

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
CRM -> KP	0.255	0.253	0.100	2.559	0.011
CRM -> LP	0.331	0.329	0.070	4.750	0.000
KOL -> KP	0.463	0.467	0.096	4.821	0.000
KOL -> LP	0.256	0.255	0.087	2.934	0.003
KP -> LP	0.416	0.418	0.090	4.614	0.000

Based on the table in the above, the P value is as follows:

- 1) The Key Opinion Leader (KOL) variable on Customer Satisfaction (KP) has a p value of 0.000 < 0.05 so that it can be concluded that there is an influence between Key Opinion Leader (KOL) and Customer Satisfaction (KP).
- 2) The variable Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on Customer Satisfaction (KP) has a p value of 0.011 < 0.05 so that it can be concluded that there is an influence between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Customer Satisfaction (KP).
- 3) The variable Customer Satisfaction (KP) to Customer Loyalty (LP) has a p value of 0.000 < 0.05 so that it can be concluded that there is an influence between Customer Satisfaction (KP) and Customer Loyalty (LP).
- 4) The variable Key Opinion Leader (KOL) on Customer Loyalty (LP) has a p value of 0.003 < 0.05 so that it can be concluded that there is an influence between Key Opinion Leader (KOL) and Customer Loyalty (LP).
- 5) The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) variable on Customer Loyalty (LP) has a p value of 0.000 < 0.05 so that it can be concluded that there is an influence between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Customer Loyalty (LP).

Specific Indirect Effect (T - Statistics)

Table 4. T Statistics Test Result

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
CRM -> KP -> LP	0.106	0.105	0.046	2.329	0.020
KOL -> KP -> LP	0.193	0.198	0.067	2.884	0.004

In the variable Key Opinion Leader (KOL) on Customer Loyalty (LP) with Customer Satisfaction (KP) as an intervening has a p value of 0.004 < 0.05 so that it can be concluded that there is an influence between Key Opinion Leader (KOL) on Customer Loyalty (LP) and Customer Satisfaction (KP) as an intervention.

The variable Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on Customer Loyalty (LP) with Customer Satisfaction (KP) as an intervening has a p value of 0.020 < 0.05 so that it can be concluded that there is an influence between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on Customer Loyalty (LP) and Customer Satisfaction (KP) as an intervening.

Q2 (Predictive Relevance)

Table 5. Q2 Test Result

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
CRM	1750.000	1750.000	0.000
KOL	1750.000	1750.000	0.000
KP	1250.000	861.231	0.311
LP	1500.000	693.637	0.538

Based on the data in the table above, it can be seen that the Q square value in the intervening variable is 0.311 and in the dependent variable is 0.538. By looking at this value, it can be concluded that it has a good/good observation value because the value of Q square > 0 (zero).

CONCLUSION

The study found that Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) significantly affect customer satisfaction (KP), with each variable showing a p-value smaller than 0.05. KOLs and CRMs directly affect customer loyalty, with p-values of 0.003 and 0.000, respectively. Future research could explore moderating factors, cross-industry or cross-cultural comparisons, long-term effects of KOLs and CRM on customer loyalty, and the role of digital and social media platforms in amplifying KOL and CRM impact. These findings could help businesses understand which platforms are more effective in leveraging KOLs and CRM efforts.

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