Effect of Service Quality and Social Media Promotion on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty in Christian Church

Kezia Vanessy Soebijantono

Management, Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, Indonesia

Singgih Santoso

Management, Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, Indonesia

singgih.santoso@gmail.com

*Corresponding author: singgih.santoso@gmail.com

Abstract

Service quality is widely used to assess service given by both manufacturing and service industries. Previous research has debated whether service quality affects customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. However, the researcher found a research gap as the variables barely tested in religious site context. Thus, the researcher intended to study service quality in a Christian church and its effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Another variable which is social media promotion is added to the variables tested in the research. In order to approach the finding, the researcher applies quantitative research. Population in this research is Christian followers devoted to GBI Aletheia Magelang. Then, a sample derived from the population is regulated based on purposive random sampling technique. Data in this research is gathered from a questionnaire and analyzed using SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1988).

Keywords: Service Quality, Social Media Promotion, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Church.

INTRODUCTION

There are hundreds of religions and beliefs lived by Indonesian citizens. However, there are only six religions recognized by the local government: Islam, Christian, Catholic, Buddhist, Hinduism, and Confucianism. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Home Affair, 10,47% of citizens declared themselves as Christian which made Christian the second biggest religion after Islam. Although Christian is not the main nor biggest religion, it keeps developing. There are a number of church denominations and organizations which differ based on regions, liturgy, and history (Aritonang, 2018). Despite the different beliefs on how to worship, these churches provide and promote service, which is generally believed as a manifestation of Christian's value taught by Jesus Christ (Chirugu & Petrov, 2022). People may refer to church as a place to worship yet it has deeper responsibility to the society as the concept of serving people is contrasted with serving God (Obidinma et al., 2019). Churches projected clearly that they focus on serving thus they name people who serve in their event as servants.

People cannot separate Christianity, church and service. Service is what every church focuses on since it is one of the ways Christian followers worship their God. Ross (2015) stated that Christians possessed the idea that the followers can develop their personal relationships with each other, strengthen their solidarity and improve their spirituality through the given service. Moreover, the fact that churches give the best service quality is in line with the economic perspectives that classify churches as part of the service industry. In other words, products sold by churches are intangible products needed to fulfill humans' needs. In this case, churches specifically aim to fulfill humans' spiritual needs. Churches sell care, nurture, guidance, and maturity as they are philanthropic organizations (Adedibu, 2020). Therefore, churches have to pay attention to their quality of service in order to gain and retain as many followers as they can.

As the time passes by and modernization hits, the perception of service in churches has become more complex. Pop & Pop (2023) mentioned that service provided by the churches needs to reach the level of their followers' personal concerns or values. Therefore, not only the preach and worship activity that matters, but also the service has to have an impact on everyday life. That needs to happen in order to satisfy and maintain the longevity of the followers. In this era, technology interferes with the factors that affect the satisfaction and loyalty of the followers as churches' customers (Frunza, 2023). A lot of churches have joined social media such as Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, etc. The growth in numbers of social media operated by churches increased due to COVID-19 outbreak that forced a total lockdown. Their accounts most likely used to share contents including their activities, information related to service hour and daily bread. The churches also maximize the use of social media for faster promotion and more effective communication (Gould, 2013). White, et al. (2016) argued that contents uploaded in the social media can be a tool that triggers current followers to engage regularly in religious activities conducted by the churches and new followers to come physically to the church. Social media can also facilitate the followers to ask about detailed information or communicate their needs to the church. Therefore, the contents of churches' social media might really influence the overall followers' satisfaction and longevity (Pop & Pop, 2023).

The researcher aims to study the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Even though service quality and social media promotion are not new variables to be studied related to its effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, the researcher found a research gap about the variables tested in religious sites context. The researcher also adds social media promotion as a variable to be tested on its effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the service industry. Thus, the researcher aims to research the variables further in a Christian church as it runs the service industry. This research

uses one of the Christian churches to be the object of the research with their followers as the population or respondents of this research.

The researcher decided to study the relationship between the variables by investigating a Christian church in Magelang namely GBI Aletheia Magelang. This church has been serving since July 21st, 2000. Presently, the church serves more than 300 Christian followers from various backgrounds. GBI Aletheia Magelang used to be a branch of another church before it finally became an independent church. Consequently, it has set its own standard of service in serving Christian followers devoted to it. The researcher chose this church because this church not only runs the service, but also owns social media accounts in several platforms and actively uploads regular contents to their accounts. Moreover, there are three contributions made by this research: first, filling the research gap on Christian churches' service, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty; second, providing empirical evidence for the effect of service quality and social media promotion on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in religious sites context; third, providing the church management with helpful insight on how to improve their service and maintain the loyalty of their followers.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

A. Literature Review

1. Service Quality & Customer Satisfaction

The term "service" is commonly used in a lot of situations, especially in running a business. Every business is competing to give the best service to their customers. Parasuraman et al. (1988) defined service quality as an assessment obtained from comparing customer perceived expectation and the actual service. Service quality has become a studied variable over the years because it can be applied both in manufacture and service industry. It will also provide insight about what customers like and dislike after experiencing the given service (Woodside et al, 1989). Service quality can be measured justly in several ways. PZB model of SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1988) widely used by previous research to measure service quality. The PZB model involves five dimensions to evaluate service quality that cover tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Michel (2001) added that they are obligated to have a quick recovery strategy just in case they sense dissatisfaction from the customer for the purpose of maintaining a good relationship with the customers.

It can be seen that service quality affects customer satisfaction and customer loyalty directly and indirectly. Service quality has been discussed by many researchers as the variable preceding customer satisfaction over the years. Nevertheless, a long discussion on how it truly affects customer satisfaction is still going on. It happens because some research proved that service quality positively affects customer satisfaction while the others proved opposite or partially opposing results. Recent researchers still show different findings on their research. De Keyser & Lariviere (2014), Makarem & Al-Amin (2014), Prabakhar (2014), Joudeh & Dandis (2018) found that service quality, both technical and functional, affects positively on customer satisfaction. Wongrukmit & Thawesaengskulthai (2014), Jiang & Zhang (2016), Meesala & Paul (2018), Kasiri et al. (2018) found that customer satisfaction is not fully affected by service quality since only functional service gives the effect and other variables might affect customer satisfaction more.

Christian churches are included in pure service industry. Thus, there are no other things they can offer except service. The service quality is expected to be exceptional and excellent so that the followers, who are their customers, feel satisfied. Applying PZB model of SERVQUAL in Christian churches context, the dimensions are defined as follow: tangibility measures the churches' building and facilities; reliability measures the ability to perform promised service; responsiveness measures the readiness to help the followers fulfilling their needs or solving their problems; assurance measure knowledge and expertise in conveying the service; empathy measures the connectivity with or attention to the followers.

2. Social Media Promotion

Social media is not a new term for people nowadays. Carr & Hayes (2015) characterized something as social media by using criteria such as internet-based, interactive, support social interaction especially asynchronous interaction, and connect one to share something to a large number of audience. Volderer et al. (2018) argued that it is difficult to define social media because of its rapid evolution; and the vast range that covers both mass media and interpersonal communication. Social media manifests itself through many platforms such as Instagram, X (previously known as Twitter), TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp, Line, etc. Despite its debatable effects on people's psychology, social media has reached and facilitated almost every aspect in life (Bayer et al, 2020). There are billions of people all over the world who have referred themselves as active users of those social media platforms (Appel et al, 2020). It means these active users spend hours of their days to engage in activities happening on the platforms.

Realizing that social media is doing numbers, businesses ride the wave by utilizing social media as a marketing tool. It is not impossible to use internet-based platforms to do business activities including transactions, however, social media is most likely used by businesses to maintain the relationship with their customers after purchasing their products. (Infante & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Besides, doing social media promotion means that businesses are able to have two-ways empathetic communication and trigger customers' higher attention to any content uploaded by the businesses (Jara et al, 2014; Dwivedi et al, 2015). Constantinides (2014) argues that social media helps businesses to approach the market both actively and passively. Passive approach helps the businesses to understand demand in the market, while active approach means businesses can directly sell their product and preserve customers' intention to purchase (customer loyalty).

In Christian churches context, social media also used to share the service-related information, devotion material, and any special religious events. These kinds of contents will equip the churches to promote their products which are services and communities for the purpose to attract new Christian followers. The churches can also use social media platforms to communicate with both old and new followers if they need particular service such as counselling, praying, joining communities, etc. Moreover, by uploading contents regularly with creative designs or interactive features, the churches can prolong the followers' willingness to be engaged in the church activities. Social media might act as hands to reach more Christian followers for the churches. Therefore, Constantinides (2014) added that it is necessary for social media to be customer-oriented, functional, trustworthy, effective, and integrated.

3.   Customer Loyalty

Loyalty refers to the act done by the customers involving habitual re-purchase, willingness to recommend to other people, and resistance to promotion by other similar businesses (Griffin, 1995). Bowen & McCain (2015) indicated that customer satisfaction is connected to customer loyalty. Nonetheless, loyalty shown by the customer implies further action than their satisfaction. Customer satisfaction tends to stop in the behavior to re-purchase the product while customer loyalty prevents them from buying products from rival businesses. Maintaining customer loyalty brings more advantage in the context of cost or it profits the business. As suggested by Khadka & Maharjan (2017), it will not cost as much as the attempt to attract new customers. It is possible because loyal customers will have the businesses they are being loyal with on the top of their minds every time they want to purchase particular products. Furthermore, the businesses should only do what they usually do. On the other hand, gaining new customers takes time and needs some investment yet the result is uncertain. However, making sure both new customers satisfy and existing customers to stay loyal are indeed key to sustain a business (Kotler, 2003).

Gronholdt et al. (2000) gave out ways to evaluate customer loyalty concerning several dimensions. The dimensions involve repurchase intention, willingness to recommend to others, price tolerance, and cross-buying intention. Customer loyalty in this research can also be divided into two degrees. Attitudinal loyalty refers to customer toleration to the price of a product and degree of self-recognized loyalty. Behavioral loyalty refers to repurchase intention, cross-buying intention, and willingness to recommend to others (Huang et al., 2019). Nevertheless, this research does not assess customer degree of loyalty separately or specifically. The research intends to study the effect of customer satisfaction to customer loyalty in general. In this research, the customer loyalty concept is applied to Christian churches' context. The researcher desired to study how the degree of satisfaction felt by Christian followers who are devoted in GBI Aletheia Magelang affects their loyalty. The loyalty refers to their intention to come to the services or events held by the church and their willingness to recommend the church to other Christian followers.

B. Hypothesis Development

This study tried to examine the effect of service quality and social media promotion on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in Christian churches. To describe the result data, the researcher was supported by several theories presented above. These theories were used by the researcher to be the base of hypotheses formulation and the questionnaire questions. Since the researcher intended to assess the service quality and social media promotion, especially their effects on customer loyalty, the researcher also investigated customer satisfaction as the mediator on the relationship among service quality, social media promotion and customer loyalty. The framework architecture or model of the research presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Based on the theoretical framework written above, the study set forth the hypotheses. The first hypothesis is related to the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in Christian churches. The second hypothesis focuses on the relationship between social media promotion and customer satisfaction in Christian churches. The third hypothesis focuses on customer satisfaction
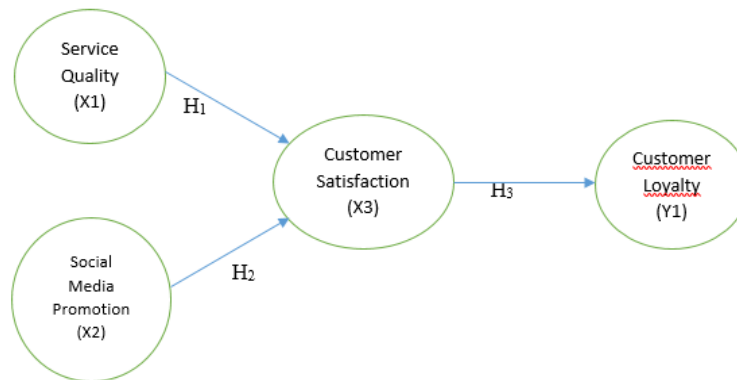
which leads to customer behavior exhibiting loyalty in Christian churches. The hypotheses of the study are as follow:

H_1: Service quality positively affects customer satisfaction in Christian churches.

H_2: Social media promotion positively affects customer satisfaction in Christian churches.

H_3: Customer satisfaction positively affects loyalty in Christian churches.

RESEARCH METHOD

A.   Research Method

The type of research method used in this research to approach the finding about the effect of service quality and social media promotion on customer satisfaction and loyalty was quantitative research. The aim of quantitative research is to provide concrete examples of phenomena relying on empirical evidence (Hoy & Adams, 2015). Kerlinger (1979) on Hoy & Adams (2015) defines empirical as evidence acquired by doing scientific research and careful observation. Watson (2015) mentioned that quantitative research has a systematic method to investigate social phenomena by involving some measurements which later all data are provided numerically. Quantitative research enables the researcher to get objective answers of "what" and "how" situations as it unveils majority behavior and trends of a population or focus group (Goertzen, 2017). Both Watson (2015) and Goertzen (2017) affirmed that quantitative research limitation is that it cannot reveal why a population acts, feels and thinks in a particular way in the finding.

The nature of quantitative research is its deductive approach which moves from general to specific. It goes in a sequence started from the broad understanding from the theories and sets scientific assumptions based on the theories named as hypotheses to a more specific conclusion after measuring the obtained data from questionnaire (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013). In conducting the research, the researcher was encouraged to understand the phenomena where customers hold the crucial role of the longevity of a business. This research aimed to grasp the understanding related to the impact service quality and social media promotion have toward customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Therefore, the researcher decided to approach the research problem using a quantitative research approach.

B.   Research Population and Sample

A group of people considered as population in a research should have similar characteristic (Creswell, 2014). A research should have a population to be studied. According to Sutisna (2020), population is a group of people, as a whole, treated as an object of research. Therefore, the group of people considered as a population in a research should have similar characteristics which interests the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Populations define the context of the research to the readers as well as set the limits of the research for the researcher (Hossan et al, 2023). The similarity of the population of this research is Christian followers who are devoted in GBI Aletheia Magelang. The researcher chose them as the population because not only have they experienced the service given by GBI Aletheia Magelang during events and Sunday services, but also exposed to the church's social media contents.

In order to study the population further, the researcher takes a sample. Quantitative research offers several types of sampling which can be used to generalize or represent the population (Sugiyono, 2012). Samples should be specific to minimize the chance of getting information that does not suit the focus of the research (Sharma, 2017). Otzen & Manterola (2017) mentioned that researchers can freely choose any type of sampling to be applied in their research since the purpose is originally to be able to understand the relationship among variables in the population. The researcher uses purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling which is a part of non-random or non-probability sampling technique. This type of sampling enables researchers to select the unit they want do in-depth study by considering the similar criteria possessed by individuals, such as knowledge, experience, expertise, willingness to participate, etc. (Acharama, 2013; Rai & Thapa, 2015). The advantages of using this type of sampling are that the sample is suitable for the purpose of the research and it prevents the research from any random probability (Campbell et al, 2020).

C.   Data Gathering Technique

For the purpose of gathering the data, the researcher uses an instrument which is a questionnaire. The questionnaire is commonly used as a tool to collect quantitative data (Choy, 2014). Choy (2014) also added that it is widely used in research of social science and business management to approach customers' response. In gathering the data, the researcher dropped the survey to the Christian followers devoted to GBI Aletheia Magelang. The survey does not take place because it is conducted online (online survey). The survey is conducted using Google Form. The researcher shared the link to the Christian followers devoted to GBI Aletheia Magelang. Online surveys allow the respondents or the participants to fill the survey comfortably and are efficient. All of the questions are written in Bahasa Indonesia to prevent misunderstanding. The survey contained 34 questions (Appendix A) including 20 questions related to five dimensions of service quality, 4 questions related to social media promotion, 6 questions to measure customer satisfaction, and 4 questions related to customer loyalty.

D. Measurement

Variables are very crucial in a research. It helps the researcher to clarify the focus terms in the research to prevent vague understanding of the whole research. Kaur (2013) stated that variables are connected to each other. There are two types of variables in quantitative research, those are independent and dependent variables. Independent is the antecedent. Thus, dependent variable measurements are influenced by independent ones (Watson, 2015). There are four variables in this research which are service quality, social media promotion, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Service quality and social media promotion are the independent variables while customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are the dependent variables. Moreover, variables can be grouped into mediating and moderating variables. Mediating variable acts as the mediator of an independent variable to another dependent variable (Sandi et al., 2021). Service quality and social media promotion indirectly influence customer loyalty as it influences it through customer satisfaction. Thus, customer satisfaction has a role as a mediating variable.

Kaur (2013) also mentioned that variables are the measurable factors in a research. In order to measure the variables in the research, the researcher applies several theories. Service quality is measured using five SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al. (1988) which covered tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. As for the social media promotion, the researcher applies measurement by Kietzmann (2011) which involves identity, presence, communication, and sharing. Customer satisfaction was measured according to Zeithaml & Bitner (1996) theory that evaluates service quality, tangible quality, and personal factors. Customer loyalty is measured by customers' behavior of showing loyalty using Gronholdt et al. (2000).

E. Data Analysis Technique

The data obtained from the questionnaire are analyzed in a sequence. The first step is ensuring validity and reliability. According to Aithal & Aithal (2020), validity refers to the extent an instrument measures what it is supposed or planned to measure. Data of this research was used to assess factors, thus the researcher applied varimax rotation as it is the most common rotation to convert dimensional vectors linked with principal component analysis and factor analysis (Osborne, 2015). The researcher keeps the factors that commonality resulted more than 0.5 in the measurement and shows noteworthy mean correlation coefficients to indicate the significance factors (Huang et al., 2019). The second step is checking the reliability of the data. Bajpai & Bajpai (2014) and Souza et al. (2017) stated that reliability is a fundamental measurement and consistency of the result in repeated measurement for the same population to ensure the result's quality. Moreover, validity of the data depends on its reliability. In order to guarantee the reliability of the data, the researcher applied Cronbach's α coefficient that was set at 0.8 to show the adequate reliability. The application of skewness and kurtosis that was set at 0.5 was to show that it followed the null hypothesis. The third step was interpreting the measurement.

Heidegger on Moran (2000) claimed that the interpretation of the data is essential and that it needs to be involved in writing the description. In accordance with the theory, the researcher wrote the interpretation in the form of description for each measurement result in order to provide clear explanation and further understanding.

The analysis tool uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), with several stages of data processing. The first is to define the existing construct, then develop a measurement model. After that, the process continues with testing the measurement model. Then a structural model specification is carried out and an assessment of the validity of the structural model is carried out. Several goodness of fit criteria have been developed to interpret a structural equation model, to determine the degree of suitability of a model to the empirical data obtained. The commonly used goodness of fit criteria are based on a comparison of the observed data covariance matrix with the estimated covariance matrix, with several measures, including Chi-Square, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Non-Normed Fit Index or Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and CFI. For the Chi-Square ($\chi2$) criterion, a low $\chi2$ number and a probability level above 0.05 indicate that there is no difference between observed data and estimated data. However, the size of the $\chi2$ number is sensitive to sample size; if the sample exceeds 200, the $\chi2$ number tends to increase. In addition, the $\chi2$ number is also sensitive to deviations from the data normality assumption. To minimize the impact of sample size, a criterion for the ratio of $\chi2$ to degrees of freedom (df) was developed; the $\chi2$ / df ratio for a good model is between 2:1 to 3:1 (Hooper et al., 2008). Several measures of the feasibility of a model are specified in this research model:

Criteria	Expected value
RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation)	< 0,08
GFI (Goodness of fit index)	> 0,9
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of fit index)	> 0,9
CMIN / df	2 - 5

Source: Hair *et al.*, 2010; Hooper *et al.*, 2008.

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