

## **The Influence of Digital Marketing Strategy, Customer Orientation, and Trust on Customer Loyalty through Shopee Customer Satisfaction in Makassar City**

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### **Abstract**

The rapid growth of digital marketplaces has encouraged companies to focus not only on customer acquisition but also on building sustainable customer loyalty. Intense competition makes customer loyalty a strategic issue, particularly for e-commerce platforms such as Shopee. This study aims to analyze the effects of digital marketing strategy, customer orientation, and trust on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction among Shopee users in Makassar City. This research adopts a quantitative approach using a survey method. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 211 Shopee users in Makassar City using purposive sampling. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the data. The results reveal that digital marketing strategy, customer orientation, and trust have positive effects on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, customer satisfaction has a significant positive effect on customer loyalty and serves as a mediating variable that strengthens the influence of digital marketing strategy, customer orientation, and trust on customer loyalty. These findings indicate that customer loyalty in digital marketplaces is not solely driven by promotional activities but is primarily built through customer orientation and trust that foster sustained customer satisfaction.

**Keywords:** *digital marketing strategy, customer orientation, trust, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of digital technology has driven significant transformations in marketing practices and consumer consumption patterns. Digitalization has shifted marketing orientation from a transactional approach to a relational one that emphasizes engagement, experience, and long-term relationships with customers (Verhoef et al., 2021). In this context, e-commerce and marketplaces have become key arenas for business competition, requiring companies to develop innovative and customer-centric digital marketing strategies to maintain business sustainability. Customer loyalty is no longer viewed solely as a result of satisfaction, but rather as a consequence of the complex interaction between digital marketing strategies, customer orientation, trust, and the overall customer experience (Kumar & Gupta, 2021).

Theoretically, customer loyalty is a multidimensional construct that reflects a customer's commitment to repeat purchases and maintain a relationship with a brand or platform (Sweeney & Johnson, 2022). In a digital environment, building loyalty becomes increasingly challenging due to customers' numerous choices, low switching costs, and high levels of information exposure. Therefore, companies need to optimize digital marketing strategies that include content personalization, omnichannel communication, social media utilization, and data-driven promotional programs to create perceived customer value (Kim & Lee, 2020; Verhoef et al., 2021). An effective digital marketing strategy is believed to enhance perceived value and service quality, ultimately contributing to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2020). In addition to digital marketing strategies, customer orientation is a crucial foundation in modern marketing management. Customer orientation reflects the extent to which a company understands customer needs, preferences, and expectations and responds proactively to them (Sweeney & Johnson, 2022). Research shows that companies with a high level of customer orientation tend to create more positive customer experiences, increase satisfaction, and strengthen long-term loyalty (Paluch & Wunderlich, 2021). In the marketplace context, customer orientation is reflected in ease of app navigation, speed of customer service response, clarity of product information, and fair and transparent return policies.

Consumer trust is a crucial factor in digital transactions due to the high perceived perceptual risks customers face, such as data security, product quality, and seller reliability (Raja et al., 2022). Trust not only influences initial purchase intentions but also determines the sustainability of customer relationships with digital platforms. Empirical studies show that trust plays a prerequisite for satisfaction and loyalty, particularly in e-commerce contexts involving indirect interactions between sellers and buyers (Nguyen & Simkin, 2021; Luo & Bhattacharya, 2020). Therefore, trust is often positioned as a strategic variable that bridges the influence of digital marketing on customer loyalty.

Within the framework of the relationship between these variables, customer satisfaction plays a central role as a mediating mechanism. Customer satisfaction reflects customers' cognitive and affective evaluations of their shopping experience (Zhao et al., 2020). Satisfied customers tend to have positive attitudes toward a brand or platform, exhibit higher emotional attachment, and are more likely to remain loyal (Kim & Lee, 2020). Several studies confirm that customer satisfaction serves as an important mediator in the relationship between marketing strategy, trust, and customer loyalty, particularly in a highly competitive digital environment (Kumar & Gupta, 2021; Raja et al., 2022). This phenomenon is particularly relevant in the context of Shopee, one of the largest marketplaces in Indonesia. Shopee aggressively implements various digital marketing strategies, such as flash sales, free shipping, thematic campaigns, gamification, and collaborations with influencers and celebrities. In Makassar City, a major economic and trade center in Eastern Indonesia, the growth of e-commerce users shows a significant trend. However, local consumer characteristics, digital literacy levels, and the intensity of competition among sellers create different dynamics compared to other metropolitan areas (Nguyen & Simkin, 2021). This situation requires a deeper empirical understanding of the factors influencing Shopee customer satisfaction and loyalty at the local level.

Despite the rapid growth of digital marketing literature, several research gaps remain to be addressed. First, many studies examine the effect of digital marketing

strategies on customer loyalty directly, without considering the mediating role of customer satisfaction (Zhao et al., 2020; Kumar & Gupta, 2021). Second, research integrating customer orientation and trust into a single empirical model is still relatively limited, particularly in the marketplace context (Paluch & Wunderlich, 2021; Raja et al., 2022). Third, most studies were conducted in developed countries, so the results may not be fully relevant to the characteristics of emerging markets like Indonesia, particularly in Eastern Indonesia (Verhoef et al., 2021). Based on these gaps, the novelty of this research lies in the development of an integrative model that examines the influence of Digital Marketing Strategy, Customer Orientation, and Trust on Customer Loyalty, with Customer Satisfaction as a mediating variable, in the specific context of Shopee customers in Makassar City. This research not only expands the empirical study of digital marketing in emerging markets, but also provides a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of marketplace customer loyalty formation through satisfaction and trust.

In line with the aforementioned description, the purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of Digital Marketing Strategy, Customer Orientation, and Trust on Shopee Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty in Makassar City, and to examine the role of Customer Satisfaction as a mediating variable in the relationship between these variables. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of digital marketing management literature and practical contributions for marketplace managers in designing more effective, customer-oriented, and sustainable marketing strategies.

## METHODOLOGY

This study systematically explains how the research process is carried out to achieve the stated objectives. The approach used in this study is a **quantitative approach** with a **descriptive verification design**. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study aims to empirically test the causal relationship between variables through numerical data processing and statistical analysis. The descriptive design is used to provide an overview of the characteristics of respondents and the conditions of the research variables, namely digital marketing strategy, customer orientation, trust, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. Meanwhile, the verification design is used to test the validity of the research hypothesis regarding the direct and indirect influence between the variables studied. The research methods used are **descriptive survey** and **explanatory survey**. The descriptive survey aims to obtain an overview of Shopee customers' perceptions in Makassar City towards digital marketing strategy, customer orientation, trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. The explanatory survey is used to explain the structural relationship between variables and test the causal influence in the research model, especially the role of customer satisfaction as a mediating variable between digital marketing strategy, customer orientation, and trust on customer loyalty, as suggested in quantitative survey-based research (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). The population in this study is **all active Shopee users in Makassar City**. Given the very large and unknown population size, this study uses a **non-probability sampling technique** with a **purposive sampling approach**. Respondents were selected based on certain criteria, namely domiciled in Makassar

City, having made transactions on the Shopee platform within a certain period, and having experience using Shopee service features. Determination of the number of samples refers to the provisions of **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)** analysis, which requires a minimum sample size of 5–10 times the number of indicators used. Based on the number of indicators in this study, the number of samples used has met the sample adequacy requirements for SEM analysis.

Data collection was conducted through **the distribution of structured questionnaires** to respondents. The research instrument was developed based on theoretical studies and previous research relevant to each research variable. Each statement was measured using a **five-point Likert scale**, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to capture the level of respondent agreement with each indicator. Before being used in the main analysis, the research instrument was tested through validity and reliability tests to ensure that each statement item was able to measure the intended construct accurately and consistently. The collected data were analyzed using **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)** because this method is able to test simultaneous relationships between latent variables and accommodates testing of direct and indirect effects in one integrated model. SEM analysis allows researchers to evaluate the suitability of the measurement model and the structural model, thus providing a comprehensive picture of the mechanisms that shape Shopee customer satisfaction and loyalty in Makassar City. The entire analysis process was carried out with the help of statistical software appropriate to the needs of SEM analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The characteristics of the respondents in this study are presented to provide a general overview of the profile of the respondents involved in the study. Information on respondent characteristics includes gender, age, highest level of education, and duration of use of the Shopee platform. Presenting these characteristics aims to clarify the respondents' backgrounds and ensure that the data obtained represents the research subjects' conditions in accordance with the stated research objectives.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

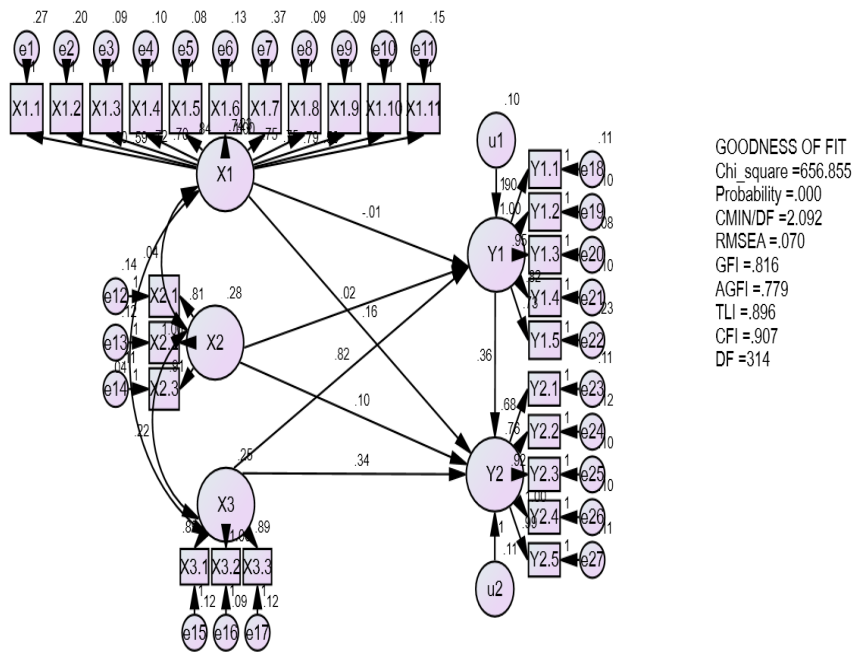
| Characteristics       | Category                      | Number of people) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>Gender</b>         | Man                           | 102               | 48.34          |
|                       | Woman                         | 109               | 51.66          |
|                       | Total                         | 211               | 100            |
| <b>Age (Years)</b>    | 17–25                         | 62                | 29.38          |
|                       | 26–35                         | 89                | 42.18          |
|                       | 36–45                         | 44                | 20.85          |
|                       | >45                           | 16                | 7.59           |
|                       | Total                         | 211               | 100            |
| <b>Last education</b> | High School/Vocational School | 78                | 36.97          |

|                                |                   |     |       |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----|-------|
|                                | Diploma (D3)      | 34  | 16.11 |
|                                | Bachelor degree)  | 86  | 40.76 |
|                                | Postgraduate (S2) | 13  | 6.16  |
|                                | Total             | 211 | 100   |
| <b>Length of Use of Shopee</b> | < 1 year          | 39  | 18.48 |
|                                | 1-3 years         | 97  | 45.97 |
|                                | 4-6 years         | 53  | 25.12 |
|                                | > 6 years         | 22  | 10.43 |
|                                | Total             | 211 | 100   |

Based on the characteristics of the respondents, it is known that of the total 211 respondents, the majority were female, namely 109 people or 51.66 percent, while male respondents numbered 102 people or 48.34 percent. This shows that the participation of female respondents in using the Shopee platform in Makassar City is relatively more dominant than male respondents. Viewed from the age aspect, respondents are dominated by the 26–35 age group with a total of 89 people or 42.18 percent. The 17–25 age group is in second place with a total of 62 people or 29.38 percent, followed by the 36–45 age group with 44 people or 20.85 percent. Meanwhile, respondents over the age of 45 numbered 16 people or 7.59 percent. This composition shows that the majority of respondents are in the productive age group who have a high level of digital technology adoption and online transaction activity.

Based on their last level of education, the majority of respondents were Bachelor's (S1) graduates with a total of 86 people or 40.76 percent. Respondents with high school/vocational high school education numbered 78 people or 36.97 percent, while respondents with Diploma (D3) graduates numbered 34 people or 16.11 percent. Respondents with postgraduate (S2) education numbered 13 people or 6.16 percent. This composition of education levels shows that most respondents have a secondary to higher educational background, which allows for a good understanding of the use and features of digital marketplace services. Furthermore, based on the length of use of the Shopee platform, the majority of respondents have used Shopee for 1–3 years, namely 97 people or 45.97 percent. Respondents who have used Shopee for 4–6 years numbered 53 people or 25.12 percent, while respondents with a length of use of less than 1 year numbered 39 people or 18.48 percent. Meanwhile, 22 respondents, or 10.43 percent, have used Shopee for more than six years. This indicates that most respondents have sufficient experience using Shopee to provide relevant assessments of digital marketing strategies, customer satisfaction, and loyalty.

**Figure 1. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)**



Based on the results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis shown in the structural model image, it can be explained that the relationship between the variables of digital marketing strategy (X1), customer orientation (X2), and trust (X3) on customer satisfaction (Y1) and customer loyalty (Y2) forms an integrated and statistically feasible model. This model is designed to test the direct and indirect effects between variables, with customer satisfaction acting as a mediating variable. The path estimation results show that digital marketing strategy (X1) has a direct effect on customer satisfaction (Y1), although the coefficient of influence is relatively small compared to other variables. This indicates that the digital marketing strategies implemented by Shopee, such as digital promotions, ease of application access, and the intensity of marketing communications, still contribute to shaping customer satisfaction, but their influence is highly dependent on customer perceptions of the quality of the overall shopping experience.

Furthermore, customer orientation (X2) showed a positive influence on customer satisfaction (Y1). This finding indicates that Shopee's attention to customer needs, speed of service, ease of transaction processing, and responsiveness to customer complaints are important factors in increasing satisfaction levels. A strong customer orientation enables companies to create a more relevant shopping experience that aligns with consumer expectations. The trust variable (X3) showed the strongest influence on customer satisfaction (Y1). This confirms that customer trust in transaction security, system reliability, and seller credibility on the Shopee platform are the main determinants in shaping customer satisfaction. In the context of a digital marketplace, trust is the main foundation of long-term relationships between customers and the platform.

In addition to their influence on customer satisfaction, the analysis also shows that digital marketing strategy (X1), customer orientation (X2), and trust (X3) have a direct influence on customer loyalty (Y2), both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction. The path from customer satisfaction (Y1) to customer loyalty

(Y2) shows a fairly strong coefficient, indicating that satisfied customers tend to exhibit loyal behavior, such as repurchase intentions, recommendations to others, and commitment to continue using the Shopee platform. The role of customer satisfaction as a mediating variable is proven significant in this model. Customer satisfaction strengthens the influence of digital marketing strategy, customer orientation, and trust on customer loyalty. This shows that a company's efforts to increase customer loyalty cannot rely solely on marketing strategies or trust, but must be accompanied by the creation of consistent and sustainable customer satisfaction.

Based on the results of the goodness of fit test, the SEM model used in this study showed a good level of fit. The Chi-square value of 656.855 with a probability of 0.000 indicates sensitivity to sample size, but other model feasibility indicators show adequate results. The CMIN/DF value of 2.092 is within acceptable limits ( $<3.00$ ), the RMSEA value of 0.070 indicates a level of approximation error that is still in the good category, and other fit index values such as CFI (0.907), TLI (0.896), and IFI (0.907) approach or exceed the recommended minimum limit. Thus, it can be concluded that the constructed structural model is suitable for use in explaining the relationships between variables in this study. Overall, the results of the SEM analysis confirm that Shopee customer loyalty in Makassar City is influenced by a combination of digital marketing strategies, customer orientation, and trust, with customer satisfaction as the main mechanism that bridges the relationship. These findings underscore the importance of an integrated, customer-experience-oriented digital marketing approach to building sustainable customer loyalty amidst increasingly fierce marketplace competition.

Table 1. Evaluation of the Goodness of Fit Indices Overall Model criteria

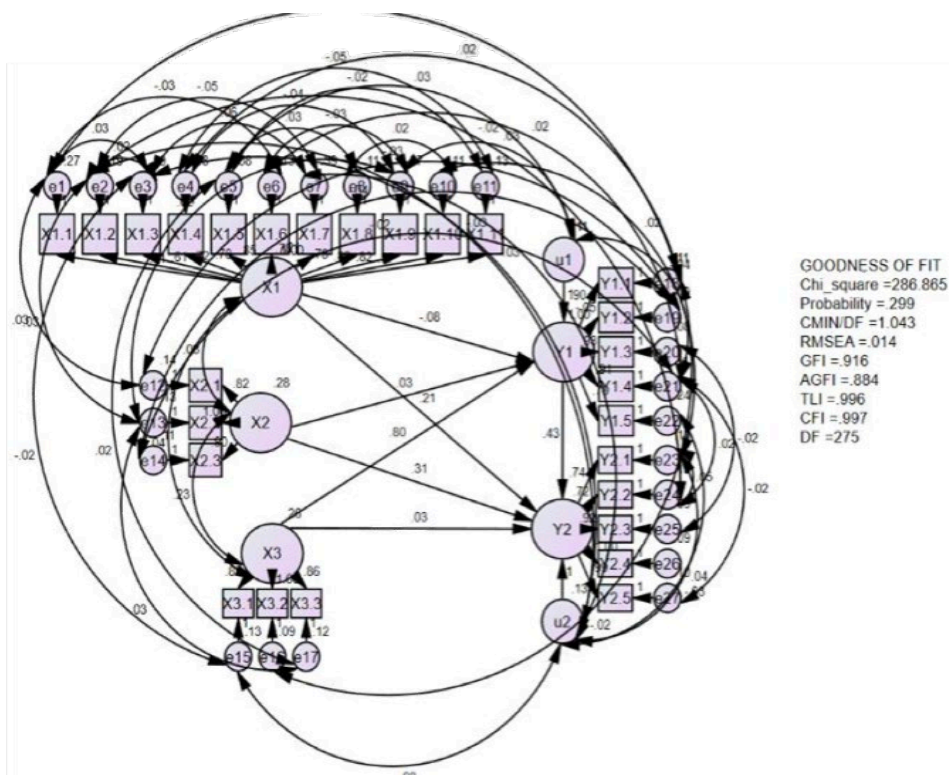
| Goodness of fit index | Cut-off Value        | Model Results*               | Information |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Chi_Square            | Expected to be small | 286,865<br>(0.05:275=314.67) | Good        |
| Probability           | $\geq 0.05$          | 0.299                        | Good        |
| CMIN/DF               | $\leq 2.00$          | 1,043                        | Good        |
| RMSEA                 | $\leq 0.08$          | 0.014                        | Good        |
| GFI                   | $\geq 0.90$          | 0.916                        | Good        |
| AGFI                  | $\geq 0.90$          | 0.884                        | Marginal    |
| TLI                   | $\geq 0.94$          | 0.996                        | Good        |
| CFI                   | $\geq 0.94$          | 0.997                        | Good        |

Based on the results of the goodness of fit test on the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) model used in this study, it was found that overall the model showed a good level of fit and was suitable for use in hypothesis testing. The Chi-Square value of 286.865 was smaller than the Chi-Square table value at a 5 percent significance level ( $\chi^2_{0.05; df = 275}$ ) of 314.67, so it can be concluded that the model built was not significantly different from the empirical data. In addition, the probability value of 0.299 which was greater than 0.05 indicated that the model had a good fit with the

research data. The CMIN/DF value of 1.043 was below the recommended maximum limit ( $\leq 2.00$ ), which indicated that the level of model complexity was comparable to the model's ability to explain the data. These results indicate that the structural model used had a very good level of simplicity and accuracy. Furthermore, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.014 is also far below the maximum limit of 0.08, which indicates that the level of model approximation error to the population is very small.

Other fit indices also showed satisfactory results. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) value of 0.916 has met the minimum criteria of  $\geq 0.90$ , indicating that the proportion of variance and covariance in the data can be well explained by the model. Meanwhile, the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) value of 0.884 is slightly below the recommended cut-off value, so it is categorized as a marginal fit. However, an AGFI value close to the minimum limit is still acceptable, especially since other fit indices show excellent results. Furthermore, the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) value of 0.996 and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value of 0.997 have each exceeded the cut-off value of  $\geq 0.94$ . This indicates that the research model has a very good level of fit compared to the baseline model (null model). Thus, overall the results of the goodness of fit test show that the SEM model built in this study meets the model feasibility criteria (good fit) and can be used to interpret the structural relationship between digital marketing strategies, customer orientation, trust, customer satisfaction, and Shopee customer loyalty in Makassar City.

Figure 2. Final Stage Structure Model



Based on the results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) estimation on the final model as shown in the figure, it can be explained that the constructed structural model has met the feasibility criteria (goodness of fit) and is able to adequately represent the relationship between variables in the study. This model

integrates the variables of digital marketing strategy (X1), customer orientation (X2), and trust (X3) as exogenous variables, customer satisfaction (Y1) as a mediating variable, and customer loyalty (Y2) as an endogenous variable. The test results show that digital marketing strategy (X1) has an influence on customer satisfaction (Y1), although the magnitude of the influence is relatively smaller compared to other variables. This finding indicates that digital marketing activities carried out by Shopee, such as online promotions, ease of application access, and the intensity of marketing communications, contribute to shaping customer satisfaction, but do not stand alone. The effectiveness of digital marketing strategies is greatly influenced by how customers perceive the value and real benefits of the shopping experience provided by the platform.

Furthermore, customer orientation (X2) showed a positive influence on customer satisfaction (Y1). This confirms that the company's attention to customer needs, ease of transaction processing, clarity of product information, and responsiveness of customer service are important factors in increasing satisfaction. A strong customer orientation allows Shopee to tailor its services to local consumer expectations in Makassar City, creating a more relevant and satisfying shopping experience.

The trust variable (X3) significantly contributes to customer satisfaction (Y1). Customer trust in the security of the payment system, personal data protection, and seller credibility on the Shopee platform are the dominant factors in shaping satisfaction. In the context of a digital marketplace, trust is the main foundation of long-term relationships between customers and the platform, because transactions are carried out without direct meetings between buyers and sellers. The analysis results also show that customer satisfaction (Y1) has a strong and positive influence on customer loyalty (Y2). This indicates that customers who are satisfied with their shopping experience on Shopee tend to exhibit loyal behavior, such as the intention to make repeat purchases, a willingness to recommend Shopee to others, and a commitment to continue using the platform. Thus, customer satisfaction is proven to be a major determinant in the formation of customer loyalty.

In addition to the indirect influence through customer satisfaction, several exogenous variables also show a direct influence on customer loyalty (Y2). This finding indicates that Shopee customer loyalty is not only formed through satisfaction alone, but is also influenced by customer perceptions of the quality of digital marketing strategies, customer orientation, and the level of trust in the platform. However, the presence of customer satisfaction as a mediating variable strengthens this relationship and clarifies the mechanism of customer loyalty formation more comprehensively. Based on the results of the goodness of fit test on the final model, a Chi-Square value of 286.865 was obtained with a probability of 0.299, indicating that the model has a good fit with the empirical data. The CMIN/DF value of 1.043, RMSEA of 0.014, and other fit indices such as GFI (0.916), TLI (0.996), and CFI (0.997) indicate that the model is in the good fit category. Although the AGFI value of 0.884 is in the marginal fit category, this condition is still acceptable because it is supported by other very good fit indicators. Thus, the constructed structural model is declared feasible and can be used to interpret the relationships between variables in this study. Overall, the results of the SEM analysis in the final model confirm that Shopee customer loyalty in Makassar City is influenced by digital marketing strategies, customer orientation, and trust, both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction. These findings

indicate that efforts to increase customer loyalty need to be carried out in an integrated manner, not only through intensifying digital marketing, but also through strengthening customer orientation and building sustainable trust, with customer satisfaction as the main key to the success of digital marketplace marketing strategies.

The discussion in this study The discussion in this study is directed at answering the problem formulation and research questions regarding the influence of digital marketing strategies, customer orientation, and trust on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction among Shopee users in Makassar City. The results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis indicate that all relationships proposed in the research model can be explained empirically, both through direct and indirect influences, thus providing a comprehensive understanding of the mechanism of customer loyalty formation in the context of the digital marketplace. The first problem formulation related to the influence of digital marketing strategies on customer satisfaction and loyalty can be answered by the finding that digital marketing strategies have an effect on customer satisfaction, although their contribution is relatively weaker compared to other variables. This finding is obtained from the path estimation results in the SEM model which shows a positive but non-dominant influence coefficient. Empirically, this indicates that Shopee's digital marketing activities—such as online promotions, discount campaigns, and digital communications—function more as triggers of initial customer interest than as the main determinant of long-term satisfaction. Interpretation of these findings suggests that in a highly competitive marketplace environment, digital marketing strategies are easily imitated by competitors and quickly become saturated with customers. Therefore, digital marketing does not automatically generate loyalty if it is not supported by a consistent quality shopping experience. This finding confirms the views of Verhoef et al. (2021) and Kumar and Gupta (2021), who stated that the effectiveness of digital marketing depends heavily on its ability to create real value for customers. Therefore, the results of this study strengthen digital marketing theory, which positions promotion as a supporting factor, not a primary factor in shaping loyalty. The second research question, regarding the influence of customer orientation on customer satisfaction and loyalty, is answered by the finding that customer orientation has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction, which in turn impacts customer loyalty. This finding is obtained from the large path coefficient, which indicates a stronger relationship than digital marketing strategy. This indicates that the company's attention to customer needs, ease of transaction processing, and responsiveness of service play a central role in shaping satisfaction.

The interpretation of these findings confirms that marketplace customers evaluate platforms not only based on price and promotions, but also on the extent to which the company understands and meets their needs. These results align with customer orientation theory, which states that customer-focused companies are able to create superior value and long-term relationships (Sweeney & Johnson, 2022). Thus, the findings of this study confirm customer-oriented marketing theory and demonstrate its relevance in the context of e-commerce in emerging markets. The third research question, regarding the influence of trust on customer satisfaction and loyalty, is answered by the finding that trust is the variable with the strongest influence on customer satisfaction. This finding is obtained from the SEM path estimation results, which show the largest influence coefficient compared to other variables. This

indicates that customer trust in transaction security, data protection, and seller credibility are key prerequisites for establishing satisfaction.

The interpretation of these findings reinforces the theory of trust in e-commerce, which states that the high level of perceptual risk in digital transactions places trust as a fundamental factor in customer-platform relationships (Nguyen & Simkin, 2021; Raja et al., 2022). Thus, the results of this study not only confirm existing theories but also emphasize that in the context of marketplaces like Shopee, trust plays a more dominant role than digital marketing strategies in shaping customer loyalty. The fourth research question, regarding the role of customer satisfaction as a mediating variable, is answered through the finding that customer satisfaction has a strong influence on customer loyalty and significantly mediates the relationship between digital marketing strategy, customer orientation, and trust on customer loyalty. This finding is obtained from the results of the indirect path test in the SEM model, which shows that the influence of exogenous variables on loyalty becomes stronger when it passes through customer satisfaction. The interpretation of these findings suggests that customer satisfaction functions as a psychological mechanism that transforms customer perceptions of service into actual loyal behavior. These results align with expectation–confirmation theory, which states that satisfaction arises when actual experiences meet expectations, which then drives repurchase intentions and loyalty (Zhao et al., 2020). Thus, customer satisfaction not only acts as a result of marketing strategies and trust but also as a key link to loyalty.

Theoretically, this study confirms and strengthens relationship marketing and digital marketing theories by demonstrating that marketplace customer loyalty is formed through the mediation mechanism of customer satisfaction. These findings also provide a conceptual modification to digital marketing theory by placing trust and customer orientation as more dominant factors than digital promotions alone. In this context, the study does not reject the existing theory, but rather enriches and expands it with empirical evidence from developing markets, particularly in Eastern Indonesia. Thus, this discussion emphasizes that customer loyalty in digital marketplaces cannot be explained in isolation but must be understood as the result of the integration of digital marketing strategies, customer orientation, and trust, which operate through customer satisfaction as the primary mechanism for loyalty formation.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the influence of digital marketing strategies, customer orientation, and trust on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction among Shopee users in Makassar City. Based on the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that digital marketplace customer loyalty is the result of an integrated process and is not formed directly, but rather through the mechanism of customer satisfaction as a key variable. The results show that digital marketing strategies play a role in shaping customer satisfaction, but their contribution is supportive and not dominant. These findings indicate that in the context of a highly competitive marketplace, digital promotions and marketing campaigns are not enough to create long-term loyalty if not accompanied by a quality shopping experience. Thus, digital

marketing strategies are more effective as a tool for acquiring and strengthening initial customer perceptions.

Customer orientation has been shown to have a stronger influence on customer satisfaction. A company's attention to customer needs, convenience, and expectations is a crucial factor in creating a positive shopping experience. These findings confirm that a customer-centric marketing approach is the primary foundation for building long-term relationships between customers and marketplace platforms. Trust emerged as the most crucial determinant in shaping customer satisfaction. The level of confidence in transaction security, data protection, and seller credibility are key prerequisites for customer satisfaction and willingness to maintain a relationship with the platform. These findings emphasize that in a digital ecosystem rife with perceptual risks, trust plays a strategic role that goes beyond the mere technical functions of the system.

Furthermore, customer satisfaction has been shown to act as a mediating mechanism that strengthens the influence of digital marketing strategies, customer orientation, and trust on customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction is the meeting point between customer perceptions of service and loyal behavior demonstrated in the form of repeat purchases, recommendations, and long-term usage commitments. Based on these overall findings, new ideas can be developed that digital marketplace customer loyalty is not solely shaped by the intensity of digital marketing, but rather by the synergy between customer orientation and trust that results in sustainable customer satisfaction. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of a paradigm shift from promotion-based marketing to relationship-based and trust-based marketing in digital marketplace management, particularly in the context of developing markets such as Makassar City.

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