

EFFECT OF LOYALTY PROGRAM ADVANTAGES TOWARDS SATISFACTION AND BRAND LOYALTY: INDONESIAN BUBBLE TEA INDUSTRY

Hong Fu Sheng^{1*}, Innocentius Bernarto²

¹Graduate School of Management, Universitas Pelita Harapan Jakarta
Email: Dylan.hong32@gmail.com

² Graduate School of Management, Universitas Pelita Harapan Jakarta
Email: bernarto227@gmail.com

*penulis korespondensi

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengevaluasi hubungan antara berbagai jenis program loyalitas (praktis, hedonis dan simbolik), kepuasan program dan loyalitas e-commerce (loyalitas program dan loyalitas e-commerce) terkait dengan minuman bubble tea Indonesia. Sebanyak 389 kuesioner dikumpulkan di antara anggota pelanggan bubble tea Indonesia menggunakan purposive sampling. Hubungan antara variabel-variabel yang diusulkan diuji dengan menggunakan model Persamaan Struktural Partial Least Square (PLSSEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa di antara ketiga keunggulan (praktis, hedonis, dan simbolik), hanya keunggulan hedonis dan simbolik yang berpengaruh positif signifikan terhadap kepuasan program. Selain itu, kepuasan program telah terbukti memberikan kontribusi yang signifikan dan positif terhadap program dan loyalitas merek. Ditemukan pula bahwa loyalitas program berpengaruh positif terhadap loyalitas merek.

Kata Kunci: Keunggulan Praktis, Keunggulan Hedonis, Keunggulan Simbolik, Loyalitas Program, Loyalitas Merek

ABSTRACT

The study aims to shed light on the connection between different type of loyalty programs (practical, hedonic and symbolic), towards program satisfaction and customer loyalty (loyalty to the program and loyalty to the brand) related to Indonesian bubble tea beverages. A total of 389 questionnaires were collected amongst members of the Indonesian bubble tea customers using convenience sampling. The degree of significance between variables was tested using a Partial Least Square Structural Equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Acquired data and analysis infer that among the three advantages (practical, hedonic, and symbolic), only hedonic and symbolic advantages have a significant positive impact on program satisfaction. In addition, program satisfaction has been shown to make a significant and positive contribution to program and brand loyalty. Finally, it is found that program loyalty has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

Keywords: Loyalty Program, Practical Advantages, Hedonic Advantages, Symbolic Advantages, program Loyalty

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

Loyal customer is an essential factor in company's sustainability (Berezan et al., 2015; Han & Ryu, 2009; Hendrawan & Anggraeni, 2020; Jang & Mattila, 2005; Mimouni-Chaabane & Volle, 2010; Pratika & Sutikno, 2017; Robinson, 2013; Sharp & Sharp, 1997). For that reason many companies are using various approaches in order to win the market by maximizing customer "Stickiness" to the brand (Drèze & Hoch, 1998; Steyn et al., 2010; Suh & Yi, 2012). Previous studies have proven that approaches that focuses to customer retention can be more profitable in the long-run for business because it promotes advocacy, cross-selling, and positive reviews from the customers. Leading to a more long-term transaction between customers and brands (Kwiatek & Thanasi-Boçe, 2019; Permatasari B. & Jaelani, 2021).

Problem Statement

Loyalty programs are one the tools that can be used in order to achieve higher customer retention, and trigger long-term loyalty (Moe & Fader, 2004; To et al., 2007). Loyalty program has been proven to increase brand loyalty for several industries such as: Restaurant (To et al., 2007), Travel agents (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002), and supermarkets. Grab.com (2018) reported that there is a spike of growth in Bubble Tea order, as high as >8500% growth during the course of Jan 2018 to Dec 2018. Moreover, an average people in Indonesia ordered an average of 4 cup of bubble tea per month. However, despite the huge market and numerous researches concerning the loyalty of the customers and the programs made to achieve it, very few studies have examined the detailed advantages of the loyalty program in bubble tea Industry. In this research, program advantages are classified into 3 type: practical advantages, hedonic advantages, and symbolic advantages based on previous researches and focuses to bubble tea industry.

The study examines the relationship of those 3 group of advantages as an antecedent of satisfaction and loyalty, especially towards millennial customers. Through this research, we will answer the following 1) Do program advantages increase customers' Satisfaction? And 2) how do program advantages and satisfactions relate to program and brand loyalty?

Considering previous premises, the purpose of the research is to examine the connection between the advantages offered from the loyalty programs (practical, hedonic and symbolic advantages) towards the satisfaction of the customers to the program, and further, how it affects the loyalty of customers towards the program and the brand itself. The results of this study will complement the body of knowledge with the learning obtained regarding how different type of program benefit that is felt by the program participants are connected with to the satisfaction and loyalty of the respective members, especially in the context of bubble tea industry in Indonesia

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Relationship between Practical Advantages and Program Satisfaction

Loyalty programs are customer retention programs which are sponsored by brands or retailers, which main objective is promote repeat purchase among their customers. This can be done in various way from offering rewards, vouchers, discounts, or other gifts. In general, the loyalty program will incentivize customers who are intensely engaged to the program and the brands. Usually the value of the reward offered is directly proportional to the amount of effort required to achieve it. Thus, the more money, energy, time spend from customer side will typically result in a better reward. (C. Anderson et al., 2001).

In loyalty programs, practical advantages (PA) are the type of advantages that acquired through cost-saving (e.g. coupons and cash-back offers) (Kaynak et al., 2008). According to previous research (Vesel & Zabkar, 2009), highly transactional customers such as such as "deal hunters" are more drawn to loyalty programs that offers practical advantages. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1 : PA are positively related to PS

Relationship between Hedonic Advantages and Program Satisfaction

Hedonic Advantages (HA) are abstract, subjective (Permatasari B. & Jaelani, 2021), and often associated with pleasure and fun (Kwiatek & Thanasi-Boçe, 2019). Hedonic customers can go to a store with no target product in mind and purchase by an impulse (Moe & Fader, 2004) whereas practical advantages seekers can be seen as more rational and money-oriented (To et al., 2007). There are some arguments from previous research (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002) that identify hedonic advantages as a more effective type of advantages when it comes to loyalty program with hassle (require certain call to action such as downloading apps, signing-in, etc). Bearing this in mind, this hypothesis is proposed:

H2 : HA are positively related to PS.

Relationship between Symbolic Advantages and Program Satisfaction

Symbolic advantages are the advantages that customer feels when they get some kind of recognition or increment in social status through the given loyalty programs (Kaynak et al., 2008). In society, some customers strive for higher social status than their surroundings (C. Anderson et al., 2001). This can be true also for loyalty programs Advantages, as members of loyalty programs belong to an exclusive community, and hence, demand special treatments (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002). Considering these, following hypothesis is proposed:

H3 : SA are positively related to PS

Relationship between Program Satisfaction, Program Loyalty, and Brand Loyalty

Program satisfaction (PS) is a measure of how a specific program established by a company meet or surpass their audience's expectation (Vesel & Zabkar, 2009). According to (Hendrawan & Anggraeni, 2020), PS can be measured through "the number of customers, or percentage of total customers, whose reported experience with a firm's program, its products, or its services (ratings) exceeds specified satisfaction goals".

In the context of food retail industry, a study from (Demoulin & Zidda, 2008) found that customers are tend not have sensibility in terms of product price when the loyalty program reward is fulfilling their expectations. The research aim to answer whether PS is positively correlated with PL and ultimately BL. The following hypotheses are then proposed:

H4a : PS have significant and positive relationship with PL

H4b : PS have significant and positive relationship with BL

Relationship between Program Loyalty and Brand Loyalty

Maintain the stores' existing customer base by increasing customer perceived value and satisfaction through a more intimate brand-to-customer relationship is one of the purpose of a loyalty program (Bolton et al., 2004). Previous research suggest that program loyalty can be measured as the likelihood to engage in the program, recommend the program, and strength of affection towards a loyalty program (Petrick, 2004). Hence, this hypothesis was stipulated:

H5 : PL is positively related to BL.

Conceptual Model

The research is conducted in the context of bubble tea industry in Indonesia with focus on one brand, company XYZ. Conceptual framework for the research is demonstrated in Figure 1



Figure 1. Conceptual Model

The model suggests that high degree of program advantages will lead to high program satisfaction, and high degree of program satisfaction will lead to higher program loyalty and brand loyalty. Thus it recognize PS and PL as the predecessor of BL

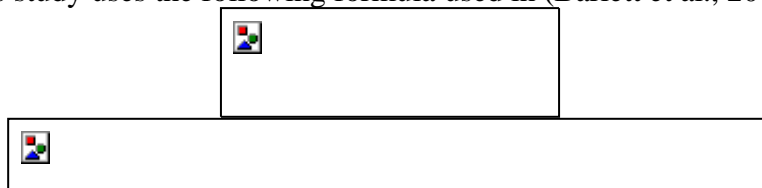
Research Methods

The study utilizes online survey method as a mean to gain information directly from customers who belong to company XYZ loyalty program. Target population on the research is all company XYZ consumers in Western Java who belongs to major city such as Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi and are part of bubble tea member and have one or more bubble tea membership card. Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi was chosen as the focused geographical region in the research due to the massive consumption of bubble tea in those areas, as depicted in Image 1.



Image 1. Bubble Tea Drinker Heatmap Southeast Asia
(Source: Grab.com, 2018)

In order to minimize the sampling errors and generalize a random sample, the researches must have an adequate sample size. This adequacy often create a confusion to the researchers because it depends on several factors as mentioned by Taherdoost (2016). In regards to the sample size determination, this study uses the following formula used in (Barlett et al., 2001):



Number of respondents in the research is 389. The research uses convenient sampling to distribute the questionnaire by email blast. Respondents who are willing to participate in the research were given a link of the questionnaire and given small souvenir as an appreciation for their effort. The questionnaire only focuses in the loyalty program offered by company XYZ as one of the biggest bubble tea company in Indonesia. The loyalty program that belong to the particular company are a point-based loyalty programs, which involves the member to collect and redeem points to obtain specific merchandise or a free bubble tea at certain points.

The research Questionnaire is adapted from several studies (Jones et al., 2006; Mimouni-Chaabane & Volle, 2010; Omar, Aziz, et al., 2011; Omar, Che Wel, et al., 2011) which recognized that successful implemen-tation of loyalty programs are influenced not only by the program’s Advantages and rewards, but also by the bond that created between the loyalty program members and the program itself. Analysis was done by PLS-SEM using Smart PLS software.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondents Descriptive

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics collected from consumer in the region of Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi who have a membership card and register their email prior to become a member and have gender, age, educational background, monthly earnings, and membership duration information.

Table 1. Respondents Descriptive

	Description	Qty	%
Gender	Male	162	42
	Female	227	58
Age	15-24	15	4
	25-34	204	52
	35-44	170	44
Educational Background	SMA	29	7
	Sarjana	281	72
	S2	79	20
Monthly Earnings	Between Rp.2 - Rp. 7 Mio	60	15
	Between Rp.8 - Rp. 13 Mio	211	54
	Between Rp.14 - Rp. 19 Mio	76	20
	>Rp.20 Mio	42	11
Membership Duration	<1 year	65	17
	1-2 years	196	50
	3-4 years	85	22
	4-5 years	33	8
	>5 years	10	3

As seen on Table 1, the distribution of gender is relatively balance between male and female with 58% sample being female and 42% male. Furthermore, almost all (96%) respondents are in the age of 25-34 and 35-44. This is also mentioned in the research done by (Ali H. & Purwandi L., 2017) that Y generations in Indonesia have a tendency of being in a group and demand

exclusivity (especially in big cities). More than half of the respondents (52%) are in the range of 8 Mio to 13 Mio in monthly income and have been a member of company XYZ loyalty program for 1-2 years.

Measurement Model Evaluation

Table 2 illustrates the measures devised to test the research hypotheses. All questions were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, where respondents indicated their degree of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. A reliability analysis revealed Outer Loading Cronbach alphas of 0.900, 0.905, 0.767, 0.589, 0.813, and 0.554 for program practical Advantages, program hedonic Advantages, program symbolic Advantages, program satisfaction, program loyalty, and brand loyalty, respectively, indicating a high degree of internal consistency.

Table 2. Composite Reliability Test



Aside of reliability testing, data validity is essential to know that the research measure what it supposed to measure (accuracy). Table 3 shows the result of discriminant validity test

Table 3. Result of Discriminant Validity Test

	BL	HA	PL	PS	SA	PA
BL	0.845					
HB	0.465	0.851				
PL	0.412	0.480	0.652			
PS	0.500	0.667	0.358	0.687		
SB	0.306	0.456	0.577	0.211	0.754	
UB	0.332	0.461	0.509	0.308	0.346	0.550

The correlation between the same variable (top most diagonal value) should be the highest compared to its adjacent value to be considered valid (J. C. Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Looking at the table we could say that the data collected is valid.

A. Structural Model Evaluation

The next step to justify the research findings is to estimate the coefficient of determinant or R^2 . Table 4 informed the collective result of R^2 test on the research.

Table 4. R^2 test result

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Program Satisfaction	0.455	0.451
Program Loyalty	0.128	0.126
Brand Loyalty	0.312	0.309

Table 4 informed that the R2 adjusted of program satisfaction, program loyalty, and brand loyalty are 0.451, 0.126, and 0.309 (45.1%, 12.6%, and 30.9%) respectively. This means that the item Program satisfaction can be explained by Practical Advantages, Hedonic Advantages, and symbolic Advantages by 45.1%, and the rest can be explained by other factors. Furthermore, Program loyalty can be explained for as high as 12.6% with the factor of program satisfaction, which means the rest can be explained by other factors.

Finally, according to the results shown in Table 4, brand loyalty can be explained by the portion of 30.9% with program satisfaction and program loyalty combined. Leaving the remaining 69.1% to be explained by other factors and therefore, possess the opportunity of future studies. Aside from the R2 test, patch coefficient test is also essential to pull out managerial decision from the acquired results, therefore path coefficient test was also conducted and the result can be seen in Table 5.

H1, H2, and H3 assess the correlation between loyalty program advantages, such as the practical, hedonic, and symbolic advantages on program satisfaction. H4a and H4b assess the correlation between PS on PL and BL. H5 assess the correlation between PL and BL.

According to the acquired result, practical advantages of loyalty program ($p = 0.350$) did not have significant effect on program satisfaction. However, program hedonic and Symbolic Advantages ($p = 0.000$ and 0.003 respectively) have significantly positive influence on program satisfaction. Therefore, H2 and H3 are accepted.

Moreover, hypotheses 4a and 4b. suggest that PS have positive relationship on PL and BL. And based on the results we can conclude that PS does have significant ($p = 0.000$) positive relationship on PL and BL. Table 5 summarize the patch coefficient test results between variables

Table 5. Result of Path Coefficient Test

H	Hypothesized Path	Standardized Coefficient	P Values	Decision
H ₁	Relationship between Practical Advantages and Program Satisfaction	0.022	0.350	Not Supported
H ₂	Relationship between Hedonic Advantages and Program Satisfaction	0.712	0.000	Supported
H ₃	Relationship between Symbolic Advantages and Program Satisfaction	-0.121	0.003	Supported
H _{4a}	Relationship between Program Satisfaction and Program Loyalty	0.358	0.000	Supported
H _{4b}	Relationship between Program Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty	0.500	0.000	Supported
H ₅	Relationship between Program Loyalty and Brand Loyalty	0.267	0.000	Supported

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 assess the influence of loyalty program advantages, such as the practical, hedonic, and symbolic advantages on program satisfaction. Hypothesis 4a and 4b assess the influence between program satisfaction on program loyalty and brand loyalty. Finally, hypothesis 5 assess the influence between program loyalty and brand loyalty. The results showed that program utilitarian benefits ($p = 0.350$) did not have significant effect on program satisfaction. However, program hedonic and Symbolic benefits ($p = 0.000$ and 0.003 respectively) have a significant effect on program satisfaction. Therefore, H2 and H3 are accepted.

Moreover, hypotheses 4_a and 4_b. suggest that program satisfaction have positive relationship on program loyalty and program satisfaction, based on the results we can conclude that program satisfaction does have significant ($p = 0.000$) positive relationship on program loyalty and brand loyalty. Finally, Program loyalty have positive and significant relationship towards brand loyalty.

Discussion

The analysis between variables are carried out in two stages. First, the validity of the analytics instrument was tested with reliability and validity testing, in accordance to (Hair et al., 2019). Secondly, the analysis on the proposed hypothesis was done (J. C. Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The analysis was carried out using PLS-SEM and the help of SmartPLS software in order to evaluate the data fit to conceptual framework (Bollen, 2014).

SmartPLS software was used to confirm the relationship of the six constructs; (PA, HA, SA, PS, PL, BL). Before the collected data can be used, it must be consistent, one way to test it is through reliability test. By looking at Table 2, according to (Purwantfo A. & Sudargini Y., 2021). Value of composite reliability > 0.700 is considered a reliable. Therefore, the data could be used for further testing.

The processed data from the analysis shows how three dimension of program advantages influence PS, and how PS is related to PL and BL. Particularly in the landscape of bubble tea industry in Indonesia. In addition, the study also shows a significant and positive correlation between PL and BL. Other Information that could be drawn from the research is on the relationship between membership duration and the age of the respondents involved in the research. From the respondent descriptive it is known that 67% of the respondents are in a membership for less than two years. In addition, we also identify that more than half (52%) of the respondents belong to an age group between 25 to 34 years old.

Therefore, as suggested by previous studies (Ali H. & Purwandi L., 2017; Arbore & Estes, 2013; BAKIRTAŞ et al., 2015; Nielsen, 2013), age have an opposite relationship with hedonic value. Where higher value over the hedonic aspect is more likely to be exhibited in younger customers compared to older customers. These age group might be a determining factor that contributes to the significant correlation between HA and PL. Contrary to our expectations, practical Advantages are not significantly related to program satisfaction. This result may be explained by looking at the monthly income of the respondents. 85% of the respondents have monthly income greater than Rp. 8 Million. Which is almost 3 times of Indonesian minimum standard wages, these categorized company XYZ loyalty program members as “group A” customers, which is less sensitive to price and have more value on service and exclusivity (Al-Mamun and Rahman, 2014; Faith and Agwu, 2014; Kotler and Keller, 2016).

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In the academic view, this research contributes to the evaluation of brand loyalty by assessing the relationship of the antecedents of brand loyalty in a form of variables in the research. Firstly, by examining the relationship between the advantages of loyalty program in consumer perception (practical, hedonic and symbolic advantages) towards the satisfaction of the program. In addition, the influence of program satisfaction towards loyalty of the program and loyalty of the brand was also analyzed. The study showed that both the hedonic advantages and the symbolic advantages of the program are significantly and positively correlated to program satisfaction. However, we note that the practical advantages of the program do not affect the satisfaction of the program.

The research results suggest several implications for the bubble tea seller who is interested in loyalty programs, as such, instead of focusing solely on economic benefits (currency awards by points of points), bubble tea sellers must analyze customer processes and experiences as they become a members of a loyalty program. Through the study it is found that the intangible,

aspects of experiences related to loyalty program (Hedonic and symbolic advantages), which promotes the satisfaction of the members. Improving the program and brand loyalty (Dorotic et al., 2012; Hill & Christine Green, 2012).

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In the making of the research, some limitations were encountered. First, the research relies on a sample drawn from a limited geographical area in Indonesia. Thus, more research concerning geographical areas which are not analyzed in this research might be essential in order to enrich the findings of the research. Second, the convenience sampling used in the research may not represent the entire population of Indonesia and therefore requires replication. Random sampling could also be used in order to get more accurate and representative data from respondents.

Moreover, the research did not ask whether or not the respondents belong to another membership from competitor, therefore research bias may occur. Further question regarding number of membership could be added to the questionnaire in order to strengthen the validity of the result and minimize the bias. Another limitation might occur from the analysis software chosen to conduct the data processing. In this research, smartPLS was used to analyze the data, and one weakness of smartPLS software is that it assumes that the collected data is in normal distribution. Therefore, analysis using a different software could be beneficial to add robustness to the research results.

Finally, this research based the analysis on the high percentage of loyalty programs in the beverages sector, specifically bubble tea drinks, which prevents generalization of the results. Based on the limitations of this study, future research can replicate the models to another country or area to increase its generalizability or extend the proposed model within different study contexts.

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