



# THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN MEDIATING THE EFFECT OF PERCEIVED VALUE ON GOJEK CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN MEDAN CITY

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## Article Info

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## ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of app-based transportation services in Indonesia has intensified competition and increased customer switching, making loyalty a critical challenge for market leaders such as Gojek. This study investigates how perceived value influences customer loyalty and examines the mediating role of customer satisfaction among Gojek users in Medan City. A quantitative explanatory design was employed using an online survey administered from 6–20 November 2025. Data were collected from 375 respondents selected through purposive sampling and analyzed using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS). The findings show that perceived value positively and significantly affects customer loyalty ( $\beta = 0.350$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and strongly predicts customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.691$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Customer satisfaction also has a significant positive effect on loyalty ( $\beta = 0.553$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Mediation analysis confirms that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between perceived value and loyalty ( $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = 0.382$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the value–loyalty link is predominantly realized through satisfaction. The study reinforces the value–satisfaction–loyalty chain in digital service contexts and highlights that strengthening multidimensional perceived value—especially experiential and emotional components—can enhance satisfaction and sustain customer loyalty in highly competitive online transportation markets.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of business activities in the era of Industry 4.0 has fundamentally transformed consumer behavior and market dynamics. Consumers increasingly expect services that are fast, efficient, and easily accessible, particularly in fulfilling daily needs. This transformation has accelerated the growth of technology-based service industries, positioning digital platforms as key drivers of competitiveness and innovation (Subiantoro, 2020). Among these sectors, online transportation services have emerged as one of the most prominent industries benefiting from advances in information and communication technology (Farisi et al., 2020; Indainanto et al., 2023; Sikumbang et al., 2023).

Transportation plays a vital role in supporting individual mobility, including passenger transportation, logistics, and service delivery. The integration of digital technology into transportation services has enabled companies to offer online-based alternatives that enhance convenience, efficiency, and accessibility for consumers (Farida et al., 2016). In Indonesia, Gojek stands out as a pioneer in technology-based motorcycle

transportation services. Since its establishment in 2010, Gojek has expanded its services beyond transportation to include food delivery, digital payments, logistics, and various on-demand services, thereby embedding itself in the daily activities of Indonesian society (Nasution & Nasution, 2021).

The growth of Gojek has been particularly notable in urban areas, including Medan City, where it began operating in 2015. The city's high population density, traffic congestion, and increasing safety concerns have made online transportation services an attractive alternative to conventional transportation modes (Silitonga et al., 2024). By offering efficiency, affordability, and perceived safety, Gojek has attracted a diverse user base ranging from students to working professionals (Hidayah & Nurhayati, 2024). However, despite its widespread adoption, Gojek operates in an increasingly competitive market characterized by the presence of rival platforms such as Grab, Maxim, and InDriver (Ginting et al., 2024).

Intensifying competition in the online transportation industry has shifted consumer behavior toward greater selectivity and price sensitivity. Although market data indicate that Gojek remains the most widely used platform in Indonesia, with a usage rate of 82%, consumer loyalty has become increasingly fragile due to the low switching costs between competing services (Ramli & Djumaena, 2022). This phenomenon is reflected in the growing tendency of users to simultaneously utilize multiple platforms, a behavior commonly referred to as brand switching or "swinger" behavior (Destiyanto & Setyabudi, 2018). Consequently, maintaining customer loyalty has become a critical strategic challenge for Gojek.

Customer loyalty is widely recognized as a key determinant of long-term business sustainability, as loyal customers are more likely to engage in repeat usage, resist competitor offerings, and generate positive word-of-mouth (Lovelock & Wright, 2016; Kim et al., 2020). Prior studies have consistently demonstrated that customer loyalty is closely linked to customer satisfaction, which arises from the alignment between consumer expectations and actual service performance (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Oktavia et al., 2022). When service quality meets or exceeds expectations, customers experience satisfaction that strengthens their commitment to the service provider.

Beyond satisfaction, perceived value has been identified as a crucial antecedent of customer loyalty. Perceived value reflects consumers' overall assessment of the benefits received relative to the costs incurred, encompassing functional, emotional, social, and monetary dimensions (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Moliner, 2007). In highly competitive digital service markets, consumers continuously evaluate whether the price paid corresponds to the quality and benefits received. When perceived value is high, customer satisfaction increases, thereby reinforcing loyalty intentions (Ali et al., 2015; Sutisna et al., 2023).

Empirical observations among Gojek users in Medan reveal mixed perceptions regarding service quality, pricing consistency, and promotional strategies. While some users express satisfaction due to convenience and frequent promotions, others report dissatisfaction related to price fluctuations and inconsistent service quality. These divergent perceptions indicate the importance of examining how perceived value influences customer loyalty through the mediating role of customer satisfaction (Ritonga et al., 2024).

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of customer satisfaction in mediating the effect of perceived value on customer loyalty toward Gojek services in Medan City. By addressing this relationship, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in the online transportation industry and provide strategic insights for service providers in strengthening customer loyalty amid intensifying competition.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the relationships among perceived value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in the context of online transportation services. The research was conducted in Medan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia, focusing on users of Gojek services. Data collection was carried out online using a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms from 6 to 20 November 2025. The quantitative approach was selected to statistically test hypothesized relationships between variables and to assess the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty.

All research variables were measured using standardized scales adapted from previous validated studies. Perceived Value was measured using a scale developed by Malini et al. (2017), based on the PERVAL model proposed by Sweeney and Soutar (2001). The scale consists of 20 items covering four dimensions: functional value (quality/performance), functional value (price/value for money), emotional value, and social value. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency with a reliability coefficient of 0.881. Customer Loyalty was measured using a modified version of the scale developed by Hasibuan (2016), based on Barnes' (2003) loyalty framework, encompassing proportion of spending, willingness to recommend, and

emotional attachment. The scale consists of 16 items measured on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument showed strong reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.942. Customer Satisfaction was assessed using a scale developed by Malini et al. (2017), derived from indicators proposed by Syamsiah (2009), including sense of pleasure, satisfaction with service, and satisfaction with the system. The scale consists of 15 items measured on a four-point Likert scale and demonstrated satisfactory reliability with a coefficient of 0.843.

The study included three main variables:

1. Independent Variable (X): Perceived Value, defined as customers' overall evaluation of the benefits received relative to the costs incurred when using Gojek services.
2. Mediating Variable (M): Customer Satisfaction, defined as the level of pleasure or fulfillment experienced after comparing expectations with actual service performance.
3. Dependent Variable (Y): Customer Loyalty, defined as customers' commitment to repeatedly use Gojek services, recommend them to others, and maintain emotional attachment to the brand.

Higher scores on each scale indicate stronger perceived value, higher satisfaction, and greater loyalty, respectively. The population of this study comprised all Gojek users in Medan City. Due to the absence of publicly available data on the exact number of users, the population size was considered unknown. Accordingly, non-probability purposive sampling was employed. The sampling criteria were as follows:

1. Aged 17 years or older
2. Residing in Medan City
3. Having used Gojek services at least three times in the last three months
4. Having experience using other online transportation platforms

Based on SEM-PLS requirements, the sample size was determined using the 10-times rule (Hair et al., 2017). To enhance statistical power and generalizability, a total of 375 respondents were included in the final sample. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was selected due to its suitability for complex models, its robustness with non-normal data, and its effectiveness in mediation analysis. The analysis involved: Measurement model evaluation (outer model) to assess validity and reliability, and Structural model evaluation (inner model) to test hypothesized relationships among variables, including the mediating effect of customer satisfaction

The research procedure consisted of three stages: preparation, implementation, and data processing. The preparation stage involved literature review, hypothesis development, and instrument adaptation. During implementation, data were collected online from respondents who met the sampling criteria. The data processing stage included data cleaning, validity and reliability testing, descriptive analysis, and structural model testing using SmartPLS. The results were then interpreted in relation to existing theories and prior empirical studies.

### 3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

#### **The Influence of Perceived Value on Gojek Customer Loyalty in Medan**

Theoretically, perceived value is defined by Zeithaml (1988) as a consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product or service based on their perceptions of what is received and what is sacrificed. Within the framework of consumer behavior theory, perceived value is positioned as an important antecedent for the formation of customer loyalty, as emphasized by Kotler and Keller, who argue that loyalty arises when customers perceive superior value compared to other alternatives. The empirical results of this study indicate that perceived value has a positive and significant effect on Gojek customer loyalty in Medan ( $\beta = 0.350$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This empirical evidence confirms that Gojek customers tend to remain loyal when they perceive Gojek services to provide value that is commensurate with or greater than the cost, time, and effort expended. However, the f-square value of 0.211, which is in the moderate category, indicates that perceived value alone is not strong enough to directly generate loyalty, thus requiring further psychological mechanisms in the process of building customer loyalty.

#### **The Influence of Perceived Value on Gojek Customer Satisfaction in Medan**

According to expectancy disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1980), customer satisfaction is formed from a comparison between initial expectations and perceived actual performance. Perceived value plays a key role in this process, as it reflects the extent to which customer service benefits meet or exceed their expectations. Empirical findings indicate that perceived value has a very strong influence on customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.691$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) with an f-square value of 0.913 (a large effect). This empirically confirms that Gojek customer satisfaction in Medan is primarily shaped by perceived value, not solely by functional aspects such as price or technical quality. IPMA data further supports this finding by showing that perceived

value is the most important, but its performance is relatively lower than customer satisfaction, making it a strategic priority for improvement.

### **The Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Gojek Customer Loyalty in Medan**

According to Oliver's (1999) customer loyalty theory, satisfaction is the initial stage before customers achieve affective and conative loyalty. Satisfied customers tend to develop positive attitudes, commitment, and repeat intentions to use a brand or service. The results of this study empirically demonstrate that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on Gojek customer loyalty in Medan ( $\beta = 0.553$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) with an f-square value of 0.528 (large effect size). This fact indicates that customer satisfaction is a primary driver of loyalty, reflected in repeat purchase behavior, recommendations to others, and proportion of purchases. Therefore, in other words, the empirical data confirms that Gojek customer loyalty is built more through consistent experiences of satisfaction than simply direct value assessments.

### **The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction Through Perceived Value on Gojek Customer Loyalty in Medan**

From the perspective of the value satisfaction loyalty chain theory, perceived value is viewed as an antecedent of satisfaction, while satisfaction is the primary mediator in the formation of customer loyalty. This model is widely used in the context of digital services and services because it emphasizes the holistic role of customer experience. The empirical results of this study indicate that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty ( $\beta$  indirect = 0.382;  $p < 0.001$ ). The total effect value of perceived value on loyalty is 0.732, categorized as a large effect, indicating that the majority of perceived value's influence on loyalty occurs through customer satisfaction. This empirical evidence indicates a strong partial mediation, where perceived value remains a direct influence, but the indirect pathway through customer satisfaction is more dominant. Thus, this research data empirically confirms that Gojek customer loyalty in Medan City is not formed instantly from perceived value, but rather through an evaluative process that culminates in customer satisfaction. These findings strengthen the validity of the value-satisfaction-loyalty theory in the context of transportation services and app-based digital services.

### **Theoretical Implications of the Research**

This research provides several important theoretical implications for the development of consumer behavior studies, particularly in the context of application-based digital services. First, the results empirically corroborate the Value Satisfaction Loyalty Chain model, which states that perceived value acts as a primary antecedent of customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction is a primary determinant of customer loyalty (Zeithaml, 1988; Oliver, 1999).

Second, the finding that perceived value influences customer loyalty predominantly through customer satisfaction confirms that loyalty is not formed directly, but rather through customers' evaluative and affective processes. This broadens theoretical understanding that, in the context of digital services like Gojek, customer satisfaction serves as the primary psychological mechanism transforming perceived value into loyal behavior.

Third, the use of second-order constructs of perceived value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty has been shown to explain the loyalty phenomenon more comprehensively. Thus, this research contributes to enriching the conceptual approach to measuring multidimensional latent constructs in service marketing and information systems research.

### **Empirical Facts on Gojek Customer Loyalty in the Medan City Context**

Empirically, this research data shows that Gojek customer loyalty in Medan is shaped more by user experience than solely transactional factors. The high role of emotional value and customer satisfaction reflects the characteristics of Medan consumers who place a high emphasis on relational aspects, convenience, and trust in using services. The fact that perceived value is the most dominant variable overall indicates that Gojek customers in Medan are not only price-sensitive but also assess the overall benefits they receive. This confirms that customer loyalty in this region is relational and experiential, rather than simply rational-economic. This research has several limitations. First, the data was collected using a cross-sectional approach, which does not capture the dynamics of long-term changes in customer loyalty. Second, the use of a perception-based questionnaire has the potential to introduce subjective bias in respondents. Third, the research model does not include other variables that could potentially influence customer loyalty, such as trust, brand image, and switching costs.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Perceived value has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on Gojek customer loyalty in Medan. These findings indicate that customer perceptions of the value of the service they receive, including functional benefits, price appropriateness, emotional value, and social value, play a crucial role in shaping customer loyalty. The higher the perceived value of Gojek services compared to the sacrifices made, the greater the likelihood of customers continuing to use the service and exhibiting loyal behavior. The results of this study indicate that good customer perceptions of Gojek service value can increase customer satisfaction levels. Customers who perceive Gojek services as providing benefits that meet their expectations, both in terms of service quality, ease of use, and price, tend to feel satisfied after using the service. This satisfaction emerges from customers' evaluations of the overall service experience. These findings indicate that customer satisfaction is a crucial factor in establishing and maintaining customer loyalty. Customers who are satisfied with Gojek services tend to have a positive attitude toward the company, repeat their use, and are less likely to switch to other transportation providers. Thus, customer satisfaction serves as a psychological foundation for building long-term relationships between customers and Gojek. The results of this study indicate that perceived value not only directly influences customer loyalty but also has an indirect effect through customer satisfaction. This means that customers' perceived value first increases satisfaction, which in turn drives customer loyalty. Thus, customer satisfaction is a crucial mechanism bridging the relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty. These findings confirm that efforts to increase customer loyalty are inseparable from strategies for creating perceived value and sustainably managing customer satisfaction. A positive perceived value will be more effective in building loyalty if accompanied by a high level of customer satisfaction. Conversely, customer satisfaction built through positive perceived value will strengthen customer loyalty in the long term.

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