



Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Strategies and Service Quality in Building Customer Loyalty

A Case Study of the Grab Application in Bojonegoro, East Java, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

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The expansion of application-based online transportation services has intensified competition across platforms at national and global levels, compelling companies to adopt strategies that foster long-term customer loyalty. This study examines the effects of CRM and service quality on customer loyalty toward Grab in Bojonegoro Regency, Indonesia. This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method, in which data were collected through questionnaires distributed to Grab customers. The data analysis techniques included validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression analysis, and hypothesis testing using the *t*-test, *F*-test, and the coefficient of determination (R^2). The results indicate that CRM has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Service quality is also found to have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Furthermore, CRM and service quality simultaneously have a significant effect on Grab customer loyalty. The coefficient of determination indicates that CRM and service quality explain part of the variation in customer loyalty, while the remaining variation is influenced by other factors outside the research model. These findings underscore the importance of integrating CRM strategies and enhancing service quality in fostering customer loyalty within the online transportation industry. This study is expected to provide an empirical contribution to the development of service marketing management literature and serve as a practical reference for online transportation

companies in designing sustainable customer retention strategies within both regional and global market contexts.

Keywords

CRM

Customer Loyalty

Customer Relationship

Management

Grab

Service Quality

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Introduction

The development of app-based transportation services has significantly transformed patterns of public mobility. Online motorcycle taxis are perceived as a more practical, faster, and efficient mode of transportation, capable of tailoring services to user needs through the utilization of digital technology [1]. This transformation not only impacts travel patterns but also shifts the indicators of transportation service success from functional aspects to user perceptions and experiences as the primary benchmarks of service quality [2]. In the context of increasingly intense competition among online transportation platforms, a company's ability to maintain customer loyalty has become a key factor for business sustainability [3]. Customer loyalty constitutes a strategic asset in the service industry, as it directly contributes to revenue stability and the company's competitive advantage [4]. Loyalty reflects customers' commitment to continuously use a service, which is shaped by satisfaction, quality of interactions, and ongoing user experiences [5]. In the context of online transportation, Grab has become the second-largest service provider in Southeast Asia, operating as a super app with an integrated service ecosystem headquartered in Singapore. Ride-hailing services such as Grab have become an integral part of urban transportation systems and play a role in transforming mobility behaviors in developing countries [6]. However, the increasingly competitive market, particularly with the presence of Gojek and Maxim, requires Grab to not only rely on service expansion but also to strengthen sustainable customer retention strategies [7].

Several empirical studies indicate that Grab's customer loyalty has not yet been firmly established. Previous research has found that service quality and customer satisfaction do influence loyalty; however, these effects are partial and not always consistent [8]. Other studies suggest that service quality cannot directly foster customer loyalty without satisfaction as a mediating factor, especially when customers compare Grab with major competitors offering more competitive pricing and promotions [9]. Furthermore, operational issues such as fare discrepancies, service delays, and inconsistencies in driver quality may prompt customers to switch to other online transportation platforms [10]. These conditions indicate that Grab's customer loyalty remains vulnerable and requires an integrated strategic approach through CRM.

CRM is regarded as a crucial strategic approach in building and maintaining long-term customer relationships within digital platform-based industries [11]. CRM functions not only as a technological system but also as a managerial mechanism to foster engagement, trust, and sustainable relationships between companies and customers [12]. Effective CRM implementation enables companies to understand customer behavior patterns and personalize services, thereby contributing to enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty [13], [14]. This aligns with Relationship Marketing Theory [15], which emphasizes the importance of continuous interaction, trust, and commitment in building customer loyalty.

Service quality remains a key determinant in shaping customer loyalty in online transportation services. Cross-context studies indicate that digital service quality—including system reliability, service responsiveness, security assurance, and empathy—significantly influences the loyalty of customers on app-based [16]. Service quality reflects the professionalism and consistency of service providers in meeting customer expectations, as emphasized in Service Quality Theory [17]. Therefore, service quality acts as a reinforcing factor for the effectiveness of CRM in fostering Grab's customer loyalty.

Nevertheless, most studies on CRM and service quality have primarily focused on the banking, automotive, and digital financial service sectors, both at national and global levels [18], [19], [20]. Empirical research examining the influence of CRM and service quality on customer loyalty in the online transportation industry—particularly in non-metropolitan areas and emerging markets—remains limited.

This research gap underscores the importance of studies that integrate CRM and service quality to explain Grab's customer loyalty in a regional context.

Based on this research gap, the present study aims to analyze the effects of CRM and service quality on Grab's customer loyalty. This study is expected to provide an empirical contribution to the development of customer relationship management literature in the context of the platform economy, while also offering practical implications for the sustainable management of online transportation services at the regional level.

Literature Review

A. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty refers to a customer's commitment to a company, which is reflected in attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate a willingness to repeatedly use the company's products or services [21]. Putri et al. [22] stated that customer loyalty can be measured using four main indicators: repeat purchase, purchase across the product line, retention, and recommendation. Repeat purchase reflects customers' habitual repurchasing behavior as an expression of sustained trust in a company's products or services. Purchase across the product line refers to customers' tendency to buy various products or services offered by the same company, demonstrating broader engagement beyond a single transaction. Retention describes customers' ability to remain loyal and continue using the company's offerings despite attractive alternatives presented by competitors. Finally, recommendation represents customers' willingness to suggest the company's products or services to others, indicating positive experiences, high satisfaction levels, and strong emotional attachment to the brand.

B. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

CRM is an integrated strategy in marketing, sales, and service that aims to build long-term relationships with customers in order to create shared value for both customers and companies [12]. Azis et al. [23] stated that CRM can be measured using three main indicators: commitment, communication, and complaint handling. Commitment reflects a sustained intention to maintain a valuable and mutually beneficial relationship between the customer and the company, demonstrating long-term relational orientation. Communication refers to the continuous exchange of information between the company and its customers to build mutual understanding,

strengthen relationships, and generate insights from interactions and purchasing behavior. Effective communication ensures transparency and responsiveness, which are essential components of successful CRM implementation. Complaint handling represents the company's ability and willingness to address customer problems efficiently, resolve dissatisfaction, and maintain trust. Proper complaint management not only restores customer confidence but also contributes to service improvement and long-term relationship sustainability.

C. Service Quality

Service quality is an established concept that positions customer satisfaction as a key determinant of business success, thereby encouraging companies to continuously improve their service standards [16]. Kholik et al. [24] stated that service quality can be measured using five main indicators: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Tangibles refer to the physical appearance of facilities, equipment, and employees, which reflect the company's professionalism and readiness in delivering services. Reliability describes the company's ability to provide accurate, consistent, and dependable services in accordance with promised commitments. Responsiveness indicates employees' willingness and promptness in assisting customers and addressing their needs efficiently. Assurance reflects employees' competence, courtesy, and professional attitude in building customer confidence and trust in the services provided. Empathy demonstrates the company's ability to provide individualized attention, understand customer needs, and create meaningful and sustainable relationships through personalized service.

D. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is presented in the diagram below:

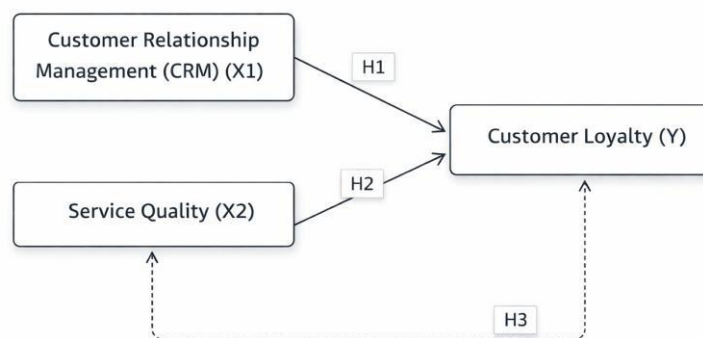


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on the conceptual framework, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows.

The Effect of CRM on Customer Loyalty

CRM has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty by fostering continuous communication, understanding customer needs, and building trust, thereby strengthening company–customer relationships and promoting long-term loyalty [25]. These findings align with previous studies, which assert that customer trust serves as a key mechanism reinforcing the effect of CRM on customer loyalty in the service industry [26].

H1 : CRM influences Grab's customer loyalty.

The Effect of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty

Service quality is a key factor determining the level of customer loyalty. When the services received exceed customer expectations, it encourages repeat usage and prompts customers to recommend the service to others [27]. Empirical research indicates that service quality also influences customer loyalty through a company's ability to maintain strong and sustainable customer relationships in the service and digital platform industries [28].

H2 : Service quality influences Grab's customer loyalty.

The Effect of CRM and Service Quality on Customer Loyalty

Salsabila et al. [29], revealed that CRM and service quality complement each other in fostering customer loyalty. CRM builds emotional closeness through personal interactions, while service quality enhances satisfaction through directly experienced service encounters. The synergistic integration of these two aspects has been shown to strengthen customer loyalty sustainably, as also supported by empirical findings across various service and digital platform industry contexts [28].

H3 : CRM and service quality simultaneously influence Grab's customer loyalty.

Material and Methods

This study employs a quantitative approach with an associative research design, aimed at analyzing the relationships among the study variables. A quantitative approach was chosen because it indicates systematic, planned, and structured procedures [30]. Creswell & Creswell [31] stated that this approach enables the objective measurement of relationships among variables through statistical analysis. Therefore, the study analyzes the effects of CRM (X1) and Service Quality (X2) on

Grab's customer loyalty (Y) in Bojonegoro, East Java, Indonesia. Mushofa et al. [32] define a population refers to a set of objects or subjects that possess specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The research population includes all active Grab service users aged 15–35 years, and the sample was selected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique.

The Rao Purba method was used to calculate the minimum sample size based on the collected data. This study involved 112 active Grab users in Bojonegoro, East Java, Indonesia, who were selected through questionnaire distribution using a 5-point Likert scale instrument. Subsequently, the data were analyzed to ensure unbiased and accountable research findings. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was used throughout the analysis procedures, assisting the researchers in processing the data more efficiently and accurately. The following table presents the research indicators and questionnaire items:

Table 1. Research Indicators and Questionnaire Items

No.	Variable	Indicators	Questionnaire Statement
1.	CRM (X1) [23].	1. Commitment	I perceive that Grab strives to maintain a longterm relationship with me as a user.
		2. Communication	Grab provides clear information regarding promotional services and features through its application.
		3. Complaint Handlin g	Grab provides a clear channel for submitting complaints or issues, such as a help center within the application.
2.	Service Quality (X2) [24].	1. Tangibles	Grab's services are consistently punctual, in accordance with the estimated times displayed in the application.
		2. Reliability	Grab drivers respond promptly and efficiently in serving passengers.
		3. Responsiveness	I feel safe and comfortable when using Grab's services.
		4. Assurance	Grab drivers behave in a friendly and polite manner towards customers.
		5. Empathy	The vehicles used in Grab's services are consistently clean and in good condition.
3.	Customer Loyalty (Y) [22].	1. Repeat Purchase	I frequently use Grab's services repeatedly.
		2. Purchase across the product line	I am interested in trying other Grab features, such as GrabFood or

	GrabExpress.
3. Retention	I continue to choose Grab despite the availability of other transportation applications.
4. Recommendation	I would recommend Grab's services to friends or family.

Results

A. Validity Test

Validity is used to assess the accuracy of indicators in measuring research constructs. An indicator is considered valid if the r-count value exceeds the r-table value and the significance level is below 0.05 [33].

Table 2. Validity Test Results

(CRM) (X1)	R-count	R-table	Service Quality (X2)	R-count	R-table	Customer Loyalty (Y)	R-count	R-table
X1.1	0.772	0.185	X2.1	0.802	0.185	Y.1	0.772	0.185
X1.2	0.748	0.185	X2.2	0.874	0.185	Y.2	0.776	0.185
X1.3	0.824	0.185	X2.3	0.771	0.185	Y.3	0.788	0.185
			X2.4	0.832	0.185	Y.4	0.796	0.185
			X2.5	0.731	0.185			

Based on the validity test results, all statement items for the CRM, service quality, and customer loyalty variables have r-count values exceeding the r-table value of 0.185 with significance levels below 0.05. Therefore, all research indicators are declared valid.

B. Reliability Test

The reliability test is used to measure the consistency of the research instrument, ensuring that each indicator functions as a stable measurement tool [34]. An instrument is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.60.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Notes
CRM	0.680	Reliable
Service Quality	0.861	Reliable
Customer Loyalty	0.783	Reliable

Based on the reliability test results presented in Table 3, all research variables have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeding 0.60. These values meet the reliability criteria; therefore, the research instrument is considered reliable.

C. Multiple Linear Regression Test

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to examine the relationship between one dependent variable and the independent variables, as well as to determine the magnitude of the effect of each variable [35].

Based on the regression results, the CRM coefficient (β_1) equals 0.458 and the service quality coefficient (β_2) equals 0.213, both showing positive values. These findings demonstrate that effective CRM implementation and improved service quality significantly enhance customer loyalty. A higher CRM coefficient suggests stronger influence compared to service quality, indicating relationship management plays a more dominant role. Nevertheless, both variables remain important predictors and should be continuously strengthened to maintain long term customer loyalty and competitive advantage in markets today.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

		Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		Beta			
(Constant)		6.072	1.542	3.939			.000	
1	CRM	.458	.155	.302	2.960		.004	
	Service Quality	.213	.077	.284	2.783		.006	

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

D. Classical Assumption Test

1. T-Test (Partial)

The t-test is employed to examine the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable partially. A variable is considered significant if the significance value is less than 0.05 [18].

Table 5. T-Test (Partial) Results

		Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		Beta			
(Constant)		6.072	1.542	3.939			.000	
1	CRM	.458	.155	.302	2.960		.004	
	Service Quality	.213	.077	.284	2.783		.006	

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

Based on the t-test results, the t-value for CRM (X1) was $2.960 > 1.982$, with a significance value of $0.004 < 0.05$. The t-value for Service Quality (X2) was $2.783 > 1.982$, with a significance value of $0.006 < 0.05$. Therefore, CRM (X1) and Service Quality (X2) partially influence Customer Loyalty (Y).

F-Test (Simultaneous)

The F-test is employed to ensure that all combined independent variables have a substantial effect on the dependent variable [36]. In this study, the F-test was used to determine the extent to which CRM and Service Quality jointly influence Customer Loyalty. Table 6. F-Test (Simultaneous) Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression 159.127	2	79.563	20.748	.000 ^b
	Residual 417.980	109	3.835		
	Total 577.107	111			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality, CRM					

Based on the F-test results, the calculated F-value is 20.748 with a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. This indicates that customer loyalty is simultaneously influenced by CRM and service quality.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2) Test

The coefficient of determination (R^2) test is used to assess the extent to which CRM and Service Quality contribute to explaining the Customer Loyalty variable in the research model [37].

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) Test Results

Model Summary				
Model	Adjusted R	Std. Error of R-Square	Square the Estimate	
1	.525 ^a	0.276	0.262	1.95823

a. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality, CRM

Based on the results of the analysis, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.262, indicating that 26.2% of the Customer Loyalty variable is simultaneously explained by CRM and Service Quality. The remaining 73.8% is influenced by other factors beyond the variables examined in this study.

Discussions

Based on the partial and simultaneous test results, CRM and service quality are proven to have a positive and significant effect on Grab customer loyalty in Bojonegoro. The coefficient of determination indicates that customer loyalty is also influenced by factors beyond the research model; however, this finding confirms

that CRM and service quality are key determinants in building customer loyalty in the context of application-based transportation services. The acceptance of hypotheses H1 and H2 indicates that customer loyalty is not formed by chance, but rather results from systematically managed relational strategies and service experience quality.

Berry [15] proposed Relationship Marketing Theory, which emphasizes that long-term relationships between firms and customers serve as the fundamental foundation for building customer loyalty. Oliver [4] proposed the Customer Loyalty Theory, which conceptualizes customer loyalty as a sequential process encompassing cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions. In the context of this study, the implementation of CRM through personalized promotions and responsive feedback management can be understood as a mechanism that fosters customers' affective attachment, thereby strengthening their commitment to the continued use of Grab's services.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Attas et al. And Choirulloh et al. [11], [18], which demonstrate that CRM plays a significant role in enhancing customer loyalty through an in-depth understanding of individual needs and preferences. Furthermore, these results are supported by the study of Sulaiman et al. [38] in Selangor, Malaysia, which demonstrates that effectively managed CRM not only enhances customer loyalty but also contributes to firm profitability. The consistency of findings across contexts indicates that the strategic role of CRM is universal, although its implementation needs to be adapted to industry characteristics and local customer behavior.

In addition, Gazi et al. [39], emphasizes that the effect of CRM on customer loyalty operates through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable. These findings provide a conceptual understanding that CRM does not operate directly or mechanically, but rather through customers' psychological processes in evaluating service experiences. Thus, CRM in the context of Grab cannot be narrowly defined as merely a data management system, but should be understood as a relational strategy that requires consistency between digital service promises and the actual customer experience in practice.

On the other hand, service quality has been shown to play a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between CRM and customer loyalty. Parasuraman et

al. [17] developed the SERVQUAL model, which emphasizes reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles as the primary determinants of perceived service quality. Agiesta et al. [27] and Rohmial [40], show that directly perceived service quality has a significant effect on customer loyalty, thereby reinforcing the argument that loyalty arises not only from the sophistication of digital systems but also from the consistency of human interactions.

The consistency of these findings is also reflected in the study by Sulaiman et al. [41] in China, which found that ease of use and perceived usefulness of digital services mediate the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. These findings are relevant to the integrative CRM-IRIS approach proposed by Budiman & Muryati and Chalmeta [42], [43], from Spain—often associated with comparative studies in Australia and Europe—which emphasizes the integration of business strategy and technology to avoid implementation failure. In the context of Grab, this indicates that the success of CRM largely depends on the company's ability to integrate application technology with the service quality of driver partners, who serve as the frontline of direct interaction with customers.

From a managerial perspective, the regression, t-test, and F-test results in this study imply that companies need to manage CRM and service quality in an integrated manner, rather than as standalone strategies. Budiman & Muryati [42], emphasize that continuity marketing, one-to-one marketing, and partnering programs are able to create sustainable customer value, while [44], highlights CRM as a strategic investment for customer retention amid increasingly intense industry competition. Therefore, Grab needs to ensure that data-driven CRM strategies and service personalization are aligned with improvements in the quality of driver-partner interactions, such as friendliness, safety, and professionalism.

Thus, the findings of this study confirm that customer loyalty toward Grab in Bojonegoro is formed through a combination of effective CRM strategies and superior service quality. These findings not only strengthen the empirical validity of the study but also provide a theoretical contribution by emphasizing the importance of integrating relational relationships, service quality, and digital technology in explaining the mechanisms underlying customer loyalty formation in app-based transportation services.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that all hypotheses proposed in this research are accepted. The results of the partial test (t-test) indicate that CRM has a positive and significant effect on Grab customer loyalty in Bojonegoro Regency, as evidenced by a calculated t-value of 2.960, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.982, with a significance level of $0.004 < 0.05$. These findings indicate that the implementation of CRM strategies through effective communication, organizational commitment, and optimal customer complaint handling is able to enhance Grab customer loyalty. Furthermore, the partial test results for the service quality variable also indicate a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, as evidenced by a t-value of 2.783 exceeding the t-table value of 1.982 and a significance level of $0.006 < 0.05$. This finding confirms that service quality, as reflected in reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible aspects of service, plays a crucial role in building customer trust and satisfaction, which ultimately leads to customer loyalty. Furthermore, the results of the simultaneous test (F-test) demonstrate that CRM and service quality jointly have a positive and significant effect on Grab customer loyalty, as indicated by a significance value less than 0.05. Therefore, the third hypothesis is accepted. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.262 indicates that CRM and service quality explain 26.2% of the variance in customer loyalty, while the remaining 73.8% is influenced by other variables outside the research model.

The implications of this study are cross-contextual and relevant for online transportation companies as well as digital platforms operating in both emerging and global markets. The study findings confirm that the integration of CRM strategies and the enhancement of service quality are key factors in building customer loyalty in platform-based industries. Theoretically, the findings of this study reinforce the relevance of Relationship Marketing Theory and Service Quality Theory in explaining customer loyalty within the digital economy ecosystem. Practically, this study provides implications for international companies to optimize the use of customer data, develop technology-based service personalization, and maintain consistent service quality across regions to enhance competitiveness and business sustainability.

Conflict of Interest

The author affirms that there are no personal or institutional conflicts of interest that could influence the results and objectivity of the study.

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