

The Influence of Antecedents Online Relationship Quality and Its Impact on Customer Loyalty in E-commerce

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ABSTRACT

Despite the abundance of e-commerce marketplace in Indonesia, their interplay with online relationship quality is scarce. The purpose of this study is to investigate the antecedents of online relationship quality and their consequences on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty as the outcomes in the e-commerce marketplace industry. The study is an cross-sectional study and data were collected from 769 e-commerce marketplace customers in Indonesia that participated in this study by completing online survey. The research hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling-partial least squares (SEM-PLS). The results showed that 10 out of 11 hypotheses that measured the direct effect of antecedents online relationship quality on consequences online relationship quality are supported, it exhibits that website information quality, website service quality, online relational bonds and perceived vendor reputation affected online relationship quality. However 1 hypotheses, website system quality effect on online relationship quality is not supported, it showed that website system quality on e-commerce marketplace does not affect their customer online relationship quality. This study provides wides antecedents of online relationship quality and their consequences towards attitudinal and behavioral loyalty for e-commerce marketplace, through being aware of them e-commerce marketplace could adjust their suitable guideline to maintain and increase their relationship quality with online customers to help increasing customer attitudinal and behavioral loyalty.

Keywords: “Relationship Quality”, “Loyalty Program”, “Attitudinal Loyalty”, “Behavioral Loyalty”, “e-commerce”.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of advanced technology affects people's behavior, including how the community receives information. Nowadays, the trend has raised the allure of loyalty based on relationships toward many companies. Online trends enhanced customer's expectations to obtain different features such as a decrease in perceived risk, a new level of trust, and flexibility in relationship-based communications. Certain situations usually fascinate both stakeholders, the buyers also the merchants, to build relationships in the transactions [1]. In the online space, including e-commerce platforms, even though the challenge in building and preserving connections contrasted to the physical space, some connections can be observed. Previous research indicates that e-commerce with good relationship quality will provide a connection for the dynamics of forming the quality of long-term customer relationships [2]. Overall, this can be seen that what happened with offline customers, which is how to retention and the maintenance of online buyers are believed to be a factor to obtain a competitive advantage for the companies in the online form [3]. According to the viewpoint of most experts, the determining factor toward securing a solid relationship with buyers is

relationship quality that also could improve the company's performance [4]. The information acquired in online purchases guides to the extra indication of quality from online relationships between buyers and companies [5].

The importance of customer loyalty is undeniable; many companies seem to have adhered to this fact, as more than 90% of the customers using dedicated marketing solutions. Thus the current study builds on the online relationship antecedents [4], and the result of relationship quality [4][6] theories to discuss the relationship between online relationship quality antecedents to attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. The maturity of relationship quality in conventional transactions is affected by several circumstances, includes shared benefits, communication, buyer relationship investment, seller expertise, the relationship length, market familiarization, and relationship advantages. According to previous research, relationship quality and loyalty program are known to influence consumer loyalty, repurchase, and word of mouth advertisement [4][7]. The present research conducted referenced upon relationship marketing concept with the aim to improve some understanding of the interplay between antecedents regarding online

relationship quality and their impact on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty on the e-commerce industry.

In this research, there are two main contributors to particular current literature. First, the research investigates the antecedents regarding online relationship quality, second their impact on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. The importance of this study for e-commerce businesses is explained that it could provide a broad series from the antecedents and the impact of online relationship quality. Therefore, by being knowledgeable of the antecedents and impact, e-commerce can determine a suitable guideline to maintain their relationship with their customers and eventually gain customer loyalty to create value and strengthen their competitive advantage. This research demonstrates that there are factors that are more important for improving how well e-commerce connection quality with their users as a customer and the improvement of online relationship quality. The research also sees customers show various responses in building excellence for e-commerce.

This research begins with a review of essential theories from the literature. The next step, the theoretical structure is conferred upon on how the hypotheses are developed. The selected methodology is reviewed and accompanied by the delivery of the observed results as well as the implications to the e-commerce and online based industry. The paper concludes with research limits and prospective recommendations for the future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Online Relationship Quality

Relationship quality according to Henning-Thurau is an evaluation of the emotional bond between consumers and brands [8]. There are three important elements for measuring relationship quality; trust, satisfaction, and commitment [9]. Based on the previous research conducted by Kwiatek et al., relationship quality is a characteristic of dyadic relationships that are assessed from the buyers' point of view [7]. Trust in an online environment is described as a subjective state where the person is placed in a vulnerable position due to the action of conducting an electronic transaction [10][4]. The customer may feel vulnerable or concerned about their online purchase as they cannot physically touch to the products. The second element is satisfaction, Huang and Kou stated that satisfaction from the buyer is the total evaluation in their experience of buying from the online site [11]. Beside satisfaction, commitment is also considered a necessary component in a thriving long term relationship [12][4]. Roberts et al., define that, those emotional commitment defines how many buyers are compliant to maintain their relationship in online form with the online business company, amidst the different types of commitment [4].

2.2. Website Quality

Lin in Kousheshi explained that the quality of a website is a multi-dimensional latent that covers the quality from the web information, web system, and the web service [4]. This research adopts the state factors and the relevant questionnaire items of the secure website quality model to evaluate the perceived quality of the website. Online system quality is believed to increase consumer confidence in conducting online transactions with the convenience and security of e-commerce. Online information quality as part of the website quality dimension, defined as the content accuracy, delivery time, publishability, and reliability of the information. In the online form business, information quality give a strong and meaningful impact upon the quality of online relationships [5]. These previous studies from Wu & Hsu and Kousheshi et al., have shown that online information quality can positively impact online relationship quality [13][4]. The third dimension, online service quality, also has an important role by giving services which is the response speed and punctual delivery time, ease of products return, and facilitation of ease of buying, in the electronic purchasing process. Thus the hypotheses are affirmed as follows:

H1: Online system quality has a positive effect on online relationship quality

H2: Online information quality has a positive effect on online relationship quality

H3: Online service quality has positive effect on online relationship quality

2.3. Online Relationship Bond

According to Berry (1995) there are three stages in relational bonds; financial bond, social bonds, and structural bonds [14]. Financial bonds are defined as incentives used to drive customers to use products and increase customer loyalty within financial incentives [14]. Social bonds according to Han are a situation where a strong relationship brings retailers and customers closer unitedly in the form of person (sentimental-emotional) relationships [4]. The third stage, structural bonds are defined as bridges relating to structure, leadership, and administrative norms in relationships [4]. The effort is viewed as an effort by the company to build psychological results and constitutional relationships. Thus the hypotheses are affirmed as follows:

H4: Financial bonds have a positive effect on online relationship quality

H5: Social bonds have a positive effect on online relationship quality

H6: Structural bonds have a positive effect on online relationship quality

2.4. Perceived Vendor Reputation

Vendor reputations as in research are e-commerce marketplace company, defined that company image and reputation, described as the buyers' thoughts of how the

e-commerce marketplace company endeavors buyers' thoughts of how the company attempts to maintain buyers and sustain their welfare and comfort [15]. According to several studies, the reputation and image of online vendors have a positive and significant impact on online relationship quality [4]. Thus the next hypothesis is stated as follows:

H7: The perceived vendor reputation has a positive effect on online relationship quality.

2.5. Brand Loyalty

Peter & Olson defined brand loyalty as a fundamental commitment to repeatedly buying a certain brand [16]. Loyalty describes customer loyalty as having two components, namely attitude and behavior [17]. Attitudinal loyalty corresponds with word-of-mouth, where customer loyalty to a brand can produce positive word-of-mouth, create a barrier for competitors, strengthen the company in facing competition, and generate more sales [18]. The digital use on online shopping platforms make it possible to look at the cognitive dimension of loyalty [19]. Furthermore, behavioral loyalty represents repeated purchases and the amount or part of the volume attributed to the brand is a share of category requirements [17]. Customer behavior that has been formed becomes loyal over a certain period of time, produces several characteristics, including making repeated purchases on a regular basis, and showing immunity to competitors. [20]

2.6. EWOM

Blut et al., defined electronic word of mouth or known as EWOM, as the development from word-of-mouth and also described as common communication from customers within internet-based technology linked to applications or features of certain products, services, or sellers [4]. The previous study has shown that online relationship quality has a positive and significant effect on EWOM. Hence, in this present research, the hypothesis is stated as follows:

H8: Online Relationship quality has a positive effect towards EWOM.

2.7. Online Customer Review

Previous study conducted by Kousheshi et al., has revealed that online relationship quality found to has a positive and significant effect on online customer reviews. In online transactions, the reviews from fellow buyers are considered by the other potential buyers more relevant than the knowledge given by the sellers, who tend to favor their product traits [21]

H9: Online Relationship quality has a positive effect towards online customer reviews.

2.8. Online Customer Share

Begalle define customer share in online form associates with a particular percent of an online customer's buying

of a company's goods or services in an online form during a particular time [4]. Research conducted by Kousheshi et al., shows that online relationship positively influences online customer share. Thus, the hypothesis is stated as follows:

H10: Online Relationship quality has a positive effect towards online customer share

2.9. Online Customer Loyalty

Cyr et al., defined online loyalty as the buyers a sustainable mental sense of bearing from a buyers toward an online business provider [22]. Research conducted by Zhang et al., and Kousheshi et al., have revealed that online relationship quality is shown to has a positive impact on online customer loyalty [23][4]. Thus, the hypothesis in this research as follows:

H11: Online Relationship quality has a positive effect towards online customer loyalty

2.10. E-commerce

E-commerce or electronic commerce points to the financial and informational that electronically mediated transaction within a company and any third party it deals with [24]. E-commerce marketplace as the main object of this research revealed as a transactional e-commerce site. Transactional site enables customers to buy products on a website or applications in online form. The sellers also support providing information for customers [24]. In the e-commerce marketplace, relationship quality, such as trust can be more important than in the conventional marketplace [25].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data Collection

The hypothesis in this research used a quantitative method with a descriptive design that included survey questionnaires shared online to measure the online relationship marketing and its impact on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty.

3.2 Procedure

This research was conducted in Indonesia. The research was designed based on relevant theories and measurements that had been previously used in various research. The questionnaires were collected using a cross-sectional design where one respondent only submitted one answer. Samples from this research are e-commerce users that have brought items of physical goods from e-commerce marketplace in the past 6 months. This research used non-probability sampling Number of the sample used in this research, calculated from Hair et al., theories where n indicator 10 times [27]. The final questionnaire was shared on social media and received 769 respons that match the criteria to

continue the questionnaire. 83,5% of the respondents were female and 43,6% were within the ages of 23 – 27.

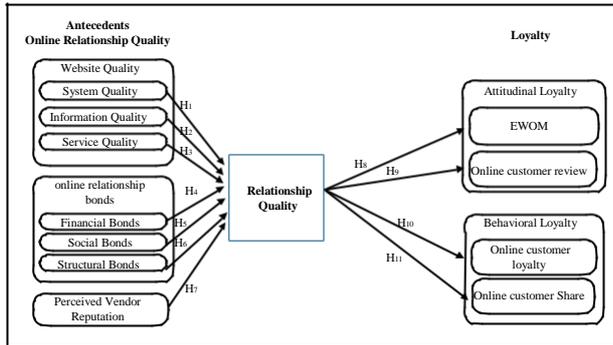


Figure 1 Research Model

3.3 Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was composed using measurement items generated from the literature and previous research. This research used 5 point Likert-type scales, following the previous study. The use of existing scales indicators ensured the reliability and validity of the survey instrument. The researchers questioned respondents to indicate the e-commerce platforms they usually use and then indicate their responses to their relationship quality with those e-commerce platforms.

To measure three dimensions of website quality, this research used 14 items from pervious study conducted by Tsao & Lin and Nilashi et al., [28][29]. Furthermore, to asses online relationship bonds, this study used 17 items from Nath & Mukjerjee [30] for calculating the financial, social and structural bonds dimensions. There were three items used for measuring perceived vendor reputation adapted from Zhang et al [23]. Online relationship quality was measured with 11 items from Soni, Hsu et al., and Liang and Chen [31][5][32] in which those 11 items were used for measuring three online relationship dimensions. This research assessed attitudinal loyalty using EWOM and online customer review as dimension and utilizing 9 items from Roy et al., [33] and Kousheshi et al., [4]. While to asses behavioral loyalty this research used 6 items from Lam & Wong [34] and Tsao & Lin, [28] to assess online customer share and online customer loyalty dimensions.

The items were measured for validity and reliability tests. Structural equation modeling (SEM) will be used for measuring model acceptance. The SEM will be conducted in SmartPLS software to see the inner and outer model connection.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Measurement Model

Data obtained from online surveys were coded into SPSS to perform the validity and reliability checks as a pre-test for 30 respondents to evaluate the

measurements in the measurement model before testing the hypothesis in the structural model. The validity test using KMO score and component matrix needs to be above 0,5 [26] and reliability test using the Cronbach's alpha score must be above 0,6 [26]. The results showed that all the items used are valid and reliable.

Table 1 Descriptive statistic and correlation constructs

Variables	M		CR	AVE
WSQ	4,20	0,871	0,906	0,658
WIQ	4,17	0,882	0,910	0,629
WSEQ	4,25	0,845	0,890	0,617
OFB	3,75	0,781	0,860	0,606
OSOB	3,64	0,819	0,870	0,579
OSTB	4,05	0,867	0,901	0,604
PVR	4,36	0,891	0,924	0,753
ORQ	4,22	0,930	0,941	0,618
EWOM	4,11	0,900	0,924	0,673
OCR	4,01	0,724	0,844	0,644
OCL	4,27	0,907	0,942	0,844
OCS	4,42	0,821	0,891	0,733

Notes: M = Mean; = Cronbach's Alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; WSQ = Web system quality; WIQ = Web Information Quality; WSEQ = Web Service Quality; OFB = Online Financial Bonds; OSOB = Online Social Bond; OSTB = Online Structural Bonds; PVR = Perceived vendor reputation; ORQ = Online Relationship Quality; EWOM = Electronic word of mouth; OCR = Online customer Review; OCL = Online Customer loyalty; OCS = Online Customer Share.

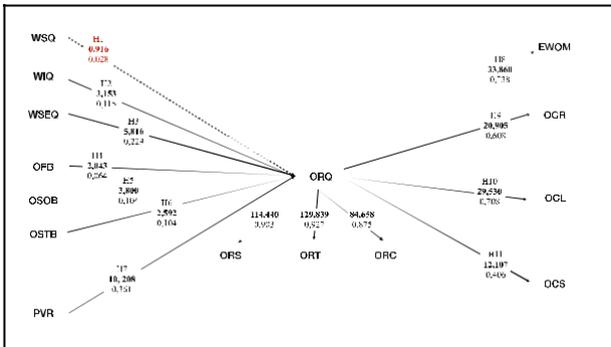
AVE Presents satisfying values within the range of 0,579 to 0,844 for the latent variables of EWOM, Online customer Review (OCR), Online Customer loyalty (OCL), Online Customer Share (OCS), Loyalty Program, Online Relationship Quality, Online Financial Bonds, Social Bond, Structural Bonds, Web Information Quality, Web Service Quality, and Web System Quality; all variables that were above the 0,5 threshold and the composite reliability of the latent variables that were above 0,7 were deemed acceptable [35]. The discriminant validity in this research was evaluated using the Fornell and Larcker criterion [36]. The calculation of the square root of ACE exceeded the correlations within a composite, and all other composites variable tested, discriminant validity among the measurement construct was confirmed. regarding the impact of system, information, and service quality

show that the results are different from the previous studies [28]

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

All hypotheses were tested and analyzed using SmartPLS [37]. SmartPLS was chosen because the data was found to be not normally distributed [38]. Calculated statistics and confidence levels were estimated using bootstrap method in SmartPLS with the maximum 5.000 samples [38]. To assess predictive relevance (Q2), a blindfolding algorithm was conducted. The Q2 result shown that all variables Q2 values range from 0,25 to 0,66. The results occurs to be above the zero thresholds as recommended by Chin to explain and verify if the model explains great predictive significance [39].

Figure 2 Hypothesis Results



Hypothesis testing results are provided in Figure 2. The results of the study indicated that Hypotheses 2 – 7 as antecedents of Online relationship quality were significant ($p < 0.005$), while Hypothesis 1, website System Quality (WSQ) has not shown a positive and significant direct impact on Online Relationship Quality (ORQ). The results of hypothesis 8 – 11 as the consequence of online relationship were significant ($p < 0,005$). The results from testing the hypothesis indicate that web system quality as the dimension of website quality has no positive impact towards online relationship quality. While two other dimensions, website information and website service quality, have a positive impact on online relationship quality. Therefore, H1 was not supported and the second & third hypotheses were supported.

The system quality does not affect the online relationship quality, previous study explained that personal attributes, with the tendency to remain static throughout the lives of individuals or evolve slowly, such as gender, age, and domicile are known to influence the behavior of consumers [40]. In this study, the dominance of female respondents can influence how they view the system of reliable e-commerce websites. Verifying that information quality on online customer relationship quality explained the need of information with a better quality, that includes information with completeness, exactness, and the comprehensibility [4]. Meanwhile, comparing the test outcome gained from this research

Table 2 Hypothesis Testing Results

	T-Values	P Values	Remarks
WSQ -> ORQ	0,916	0,181	Not Supported
WIQ -> ORQ	3,153	0,001	Supported
WSEQ -> ORQ	5,816	0,000	Supported
OFB -> ORQ	2,043	0,021	Supported
OSOB -> ORQ	3,800	0,000	Supported
OSTB -> ORQ	2,592	0,000	Supported
PVR -> ORQ	10,208	0,000	Supported
ORQ -> EWOM	33,860	0,000	Supported
ORQ -> OCR	20,905	0,000	Supported
ORQ -> OCL	29,530	0,000	Supported
ORQ -> OCS	12,107	0,000	Supported

Notes: **WSQ** = Website system quality; **WIQ** = Website Information Quality; **WSEQ** = Website Service Quality; **OFB** = Online Financial Bonds; **OSOB** = Online Social Bond; **OSTB** = Online Structural Bonds; **PVR** = Perceived vendor reputation; **ORQ** = Online Relationship Quality; **EWOM** = Electronic word of mouth; **OCR** = Online customer Review; **OCL** = Online Customer loyalty; **OCS** =Online Customer Share;

Moreover, the results from this research demonstrate that online relationship bonds have a positive and significant effect on online relationship quality; that means Hypothesis 4, 5, and 6 are accepted. The result of financial bonds on online relationship quality shows that financial incentive to stimulates buyers for making a transaction on e-commerce marketplace and develops the relationship between the customer and the e-commerce. The results of social bonds on online relationship quality show that there is an existing outcome of interactions between the customer and the e-commerce company. The third bonds also have a positive and significant effect towards online relationship quality. Amidst the dimensions of relationship bonds, social bonds tend to have the strongest rate of positive and significant effect towards online relationship quality. The results were in accordance with the other study [4][30]. Furthermore, the results show that the e-commerce marketplace interactions, communication, supports, empathy, and responses are supporting factors that create relationship between customer and e-commerce.

The results show that the reputation and image of e-commerce marketplace companies have a significant positive effect towards online relationship quality, where they not just simply show their objective for their customers but additionally differentiate them from the competitors. E-commerce marketplace platforms should

endeavor to build and maintain a great reputation and image branding to gain buyer trust and reassure the buyer to make another transaction. The outcomes from this research is in line with the previous study [4][23]. The results of this research demonstrate that online relationship quality has a positive and significant impact towards attitudinal loyalty, namely EWOM, online customer review, and towards behavioral loyalty, namely online customer loyalty and online customer share. The outcomes explain wheres an increase in customer satisfaction, trust, buyers commitment with e-commerce and their overall positive evaluation of online relationship quality that let them give free advertisements and reviews of the e-commerce marketplace to maintain their relationship by generating more transaction in the e-commerce to show their loyalty [4].

However according to the study, the results found out that a relation of online relationship quality with online customer share as the dimension of behavioral loyalty have a lower impact corresponded to its impact toward online customer loyalty. The outcome means that to improve and gain buyers share e-commerce marketplace needs more than obtaining the dimension of online relationship quality. Contrasting the present outcome with the other study that resembles this research [4][34]. Moreover, the results also reveal the impact of online relationship quality towards online buyers review as the dimension of attitudinal loyalty is shown lower value compared to its effect toward EWOM. Concerning the outcomes of online relationship quality towards online customer review, explains that customer habitually uses the reviews stated by other customer and the ranks in the e-commerce marketplace web that are capable of increasing sales, reducing price sensitivity, increasing satisfaction after purchase and reducing some uncertainty regarding the performance of the product features [4][21]

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of the present research, simultaneously with the previous verdicts, explained that companies require to have more consideration for the long-term relationship in online form, as the core of online relationship marketing. Online relationship quality is a connection within the buyers and e-commerce attitudes and behaviors loyalty. In e-commerce marketplace business, to maintain a long-term relationship with customers, e-commerce marketplace companies need to investigate to develop and developing online relationship and provide themselves with steps that could guide to increasing relationship quality. E-commerce companies also need to consider the other marketing areas that could develop more value for the online customer than their competitors.

As suggestions, according to the results in the present research, and according to the online relationship quality dimensions which is trust, commitment, and satisfaction, e-

commerce marketplace web specialists should hold a long-term relationship-oriented perspective, base their information and service approach on relationship marketing, where they concentrate on the buyer as the success factors from e-commerce and attempt to create a long term relationship with buyers. As an attempt to improve the website quality, website specialist should have several features that confirm their reliable information is capable of gaining customer trust. Moreover, the service and products of e-commerce should be presented as guaranteed, and once the buyers encounter difficulties during their transaction, the e-commerce have to settle the problem instantly. For the growth of online relationship quality, e-commerce should secure buyers privacy and information. Furthermore, updated proper and secure information should be given for buyers to obtain precise judgments.

Regarding the EWOM it shown as one of the signs of e-commerce marketplace's reputation. An e-commerce marketplace website can entice their customer to do EWOM for them by giving discount vouchers for financial bonds as a return. Furthermore, e-commerce should investigate to build a delightful purchasing experience for their buyers that is proficient of generating positive EWOM from the customers.

This study encountered a number of limitations, such as using the Indonesian e-commerce marketplace as the object, a cross-sectional study that could give more knowledge if using a longitudinal study, and the dominance of female respondents. Preventing certain conditions and also carrying corresponding studies which can perform a more powerful role in further enriching online relationship marketing article. This research, considered relationship quality in online form as a second-order latent with trust, satisfaction, and commitment. Nevertheless, to produce better outcomes, prospective studies could separate three dimensions of online relationship quality on the consequences of online relationship quality.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

N.R. carried out the research. T.E.B. supervised the process and the findings of this work. All authors provided critical feedback and helped shape the research and analysis.

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