

The Effect of Customer Experience, Service Quality, And Local Wisdom on Customer Retention Through Customer Relationship Management in Fast Food Restaurants

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ABSTRACT: The fast-food restaurant industry in Indonesia is growing rapidly alongside increasingly dynamic and digital-oriented lifestyle changes. Intense competition drives restaurants to not only attract new customers but also retain existing ones. This study aims to analyze the influence of Customer Experience, Omnichannel Marketing, Service Quality, and Local Wisdom on Customer Retention through Customer Relationship Management (CRM) as a mediating variable in fast-food restaurants in Batam City (McDonald's, KFC, A&W, Burger King, and Pizza Hut). The study employs a quantitative approach using survey methods. A minimum sample of 310 respondents is selected using Simple Random Sampling from consumers aged 18-45 years who have visited fast-food restaurants in Batam at least once in the past six months. Data is analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Ten hypotheses are formulated covering direct and indirect influences among variables. This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions for the fast-food restaurant industry in designing effective customer retention strategies

KEYWORDS: Customer Experience, Service Quality, Local Wisdom, Customer Relationship Management, Customer Retention

I. INTRODUCTION

Fast food restaurants are one of the fastest-growing segments of the food industry, particularly in urban areas. Speed of service, consistent taste, affordable prices, and easy access make fast food restaurants a top choice for highly mobile urban communities (Abadi & Nurpratiwi, 2021; Zhong & Moon, 2020). In Indonesia, the food and beverage ecosystem will grow to approximately 4.85 million businesses by 2023, with the foodservice industry projected to reach US\$30.2 billion and continue to grow through 2028 (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2025; Statistics Indonesia, 2024).

However, increasing competition is pushing fast food restaurants to focus not only on acquiring new customers but also on retaining existing ones. Customer retention is a key indicator of restaurant business success, as loyal customers tend to make repeat purchases and recommend restaurants to others (Nadila & Hasan, n.d.). Additional challenges arise from the phenomenon of consumer boycotts due to health, environmental, social, and political issues that influence public perception of brands (Watson et al., 2024).

In efforts to increase customer retention, several strategic factors must be considered. A positive customer experience at every touchpoint builds positive perceptions and fosters long-term brand engagement. Omnichannel marketing strategies are relevant because customers interact through various channels, from food delivery and online ordering to drive-thru. Good service quality builds customer trust and satisfaction, while the application of local wisdom can foster emotional closeness by adapting products and services to local cultures.

Within the framework of the relationships between these variables, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) plays a strategic role in helping restaurants understand customer needs and build meaningful, long-term relationships. This research focuses on Batam City, a region with significant fast food industry growth and a multicultural community.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze: (1) the influence of Customer Experience, and Service Quality on CRM; (2) the influence of Customer Experience, Service Quality, and Local Wisdom on Customer Retention; and (3) the mediating role

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of CRM in the relationship between Customer Experience and Service Quality on Customer Retention in fast food restaurants in Batam City.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

A. Customer Retention

Customer retention is the tendency of customers to remain loyal and maintain a long-term transactional relationship with a company (Artha et al., 2022). According to (Adekunle et al., 2023), customer retention is a company's ability to retain customers and ensure they continue using a product or service and prevent them from switching to competitors. This retention occurs when customers experience good service quality and are satisfied with the service, which then drives revisit intention (Salamah et al., 2022).

B. Customer Experience and Customer Relationship Management

A positive customer experience in service interactions increases engagement and the quality of customer relationships, ultimately strengthening CRM (Rather, 2021). Integrated customer experience management at every touchpoint helps companies build stable and effective relationships through CRM (Chahal and Bala, 2021; de Keyser, 2020). The better the experience customers receive during their interactions with a company, the greater the effectiveness of CRM in building trust and long-term relationships (Fatma, 2020).

H1: Customer Experience has a positive effect on Customer Relationship Management.

C. Service Quality and Customer Relationship Management

Quality service increases perceived customer value, thereby strengthening CRM effectiveness (Slack et al., 2021). Service quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles have a positive influence on building interpersonal relationships with customers in CRM (Adegbola, 2020). Good service quality creates a sense of trust and comfort, making it easier for companies to personalize customer relationships through CRM (Palazzo et al., 2021).

H2: Service Quality has a positive influence on Customer Relationship Management.

D. Customer Experience and Customer Retention

A good customer experience in restaurants, including a comfortable atmosphere, friendly staff, and quality communication, has been shown to increase customer retention because customers remember and associate these positive experiences with the brand (Bujisic et al., 2020). A quality customer experience in fast food restaurants increases customer loyalty and impacts customer retention (Chahal et al., 2022; Han & Hyun, 2020).

H3: Customer Experience has a positive influence on customer retention.

E. Service Quality and Customer Retention

Service quality has a strong relationship with customer retention because good service quality creates customer satisfaction, comfort, and trust, which encourages them to continue using the service in the long term (Slack et al., 2021). Quality service increases satisfaction, which leads to increased customer retention (Rashid & Rahman, 2023; Ray et al., 2022). Service quality also builds trust, which leads to long-term relationships (Sun & Kim, 2022).

H4: Service quality has a positive effect on customer retention.

F. Local Wisdom and Customer Retention

Cultural authenticity presented in service can create meaningful experiences for customers, thus increasing customer retention (Prentice et al., 2021). Presenting food products that reflect local culture creates place attachment (Rather and Hollebeek, 2021), which encourages customers to return (Lee & Kim, 2020). The implementation of local wisdom elements in a restaurant's menu and atmosphere increases customer retention because customers enjoy a unique experience that is not easily replaced by other restaurants (Hwang & Seo, 2021).

H5: Local wisdom has a positive effect on customer retention.

G. CRM Mediation: Customer Experience → Customer Retention

Customer experience has a significant influence on customer retention through CRM as a mediator. Positive customer experiences foster stronger relationship quality, which in turn increases retention (Rather and Hollebeek, 2021). Engagement, as an element of CRM, serves as a bridge between customer experience and customer retention (Kandampully et al., 2021; Rather, 2021).

H6: Customer Relationship Management mediates the relationship between customer experience and customer retention.

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III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a quantitative approach with a survey method. This approach was chosen because it allows for objective measurement and statistical analysis to test the relationships between variables: Customer Experience, Service Quality, and Local Wisdom as independent variables; Customer Relationship Management as a mediating variable; and Customer Retention as the dependent variable.

The research subjects were consumers who had visited or used fast food restaurants in Batam City, namely McDonald's, KFC, A&W, Burger King, and Pizza Hut. The target population was residents of Batam City who had consumed at these restaurants. The sample size was determined using the technique of Hair et al. (2010) with a 1:10 ratio to the number of indicators. With 31 questionnaire questions, the minimum sample size required was 310 respondents.

Respondent criteria included: (1) being between 18 and 45 years old; (2) having made a purchase at one of the fast food restaurants studied at least once in the last six months; and (3) being willing to complete the questionnaire in full. The sampling technique used simple random sampling with an online questionnaire distributed to residents of Batam City.

Customer retention (Y) is measured as a company's ability to retain customers so they continue to use its services and avoid switching to competitors (Adekunle et al., 2023). Customer experience (X1) is the customer's perception and response formed from all interactions with the restaurant, both before, during, and after consumption (Molinillo et al., 2022). Service quality (X2) is the level of service excellence perceived by customers in meeting their expectations, including speed, friendliness, accuracy, and consistency of service (Kim & Park, 2021). Local Wisdom (X3) refers to local values, culture, and customs adapted by restaurants in their products and services, including adapting menus and brand identity to the multicultural local culture of Batam City (Primayanti & Puspita, 2022). Customer Relationship Management (Z) is a company's strategy for managing long-term relationships with customers through the integrated use of data, technology, and interactions (Malki et al., 2024).

Data analysis used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) due to its ability to analyze complex relationships between variables, including models involving mediating variables. Model evaluation was conducted in two stages: (1) the outer model, which assessed the validity (outer loading and AVE) and reliability (composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha) of each construct; and (2) the inner model, which examined the path coefficient, indirect effect, R-square, and Goodness of Fit (GoF). The Common Method Bias test was conducted using Harman's single factor test to control for potential measurement bias.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the gender distribution table, the majority of respondents in this study were female, amounting to 238 people (60.6%), while male respondents numbered 155 people (39.4%) out of a total of 393 respondents. This dominance of female respondents reflects that the restaurant consumers targeted by the study are mostly female, who are generally known to be more active in culinary activities and more often become decision makers in choosing a place to eat. This distribution provides a representative picture of the gender profile of the restaurant customers studied. Based on age distribution, the 21-30 age group dominated the research sample with 174 people (44.3%), followed by the 31-40 age group with 97 people (24.7%), and the 17-21 age group with 95 people (24.2%). Meanwhile, the 41-50 age group numbered 24 people (6.1%), and the 51-60 age group only had 3 people (0.8%). The dominance of the young productive age group (21-30) reflects that the majority of restaurant customers come from the millennial generation who tend to actively use various digital channels and are very responsive to omnichannel marketing strategies. This makes this age segment relevant as the object of study in this research. Based on occupational distribution, the majority of respondents were private sector employees (147 people) (37.4%), followed by students (89 people) (22.6%), civil servants (83 people) (21.1%), self-employed (52 people) (13.2%), and housewives (22 people) (5.6%). The dominance of private sector employees in the sample indicates that this group is the most active restaurant customer, likely because they have sufficient mobility and purchasing power to dine at restaurants regularly. The diversity of respondents' professions provides a good representation of the actual profile of restaurant customers.

Outer Loading Test Table for each indicator against its respective latent construct. Based on the test results, all indicators show outer loading values that meet the minimum required threshold, which is > 0.700 (Hair et al., 2019), except for CRM3 (0.733), CRM5 (0.722), which are still above the threshold of 0.700 so they are retained in the model. OM2 (0.888), and CR4 (0.884) for the Customer Retention construct, which indicates that these indicators are the strongest representation of their respective constructs. Overall, the results of this outer loading test indicate that the measurement model (outer model) has adequate convergent validity, where each indicator validly measures the intended construct.

The Validity and Reliability Test Table presents the results of a comprehensive evaluation of the model's measurement quality. In terms of convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs have met the minimum requirement of 0.500 (Hair et al., 2019). The Service Quality construct has the highest AVE value (0.706), followed by Customer Experience

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(0.700), indicating that more than 70% of the indicator's variance is successfully explained by the construct. Customer Relationship Management has the lowest AVE value (0.589) but is still above the established threshold. In terms of reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs are in the range of 0.825–0.916, the Composite Reliability (ρ_a) values range from 0.829–0.923, and the Composite Reliability (ρ_c) values range from 0.877–0.935, all exceeding the minimum required value of 0.700. Thus, all constructs in this study are declared valid and reliable, so they are suitable for use in testing the structural model (inner model). The next test is hypothesis testing, which is presented in Table 1

Table 1. Results of the t-test

X-Y	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values	Keterangan
X1 -> Z	-0.086	1.496	0.135	H1- No-Supported
X2 -> Z	0.773	22.709	0.000	H2-Supported
X1 -> Y	0.460	9.028	0.000	H3- Supported
X2 -> y	0.103	4.939	0.002	H4- Supported
X3 -> Y	0.066	5.510	0.001	H5- Supported
X1 -> Z -> Y	0.080	9.736	0.003	H6- Supported
Adjusted R-Square	0.625			
Probability (F-statistic)	45.770		0.000	
N	393			
** Sig. on level 0,05 $p < 0,05$				

Source: Processed data (2026)

The R-Square test results show the ability of the predictor variables to explain the variance of the dependent variable. The Customer Relationship Management variable obtained an R-Square value of 0.629 (Adjusted R-Square 0.625), which means that 62.9% of the CRM variance can be explained by the Customer Experience, Service Quality, and Local Wisdom variables together. Based on the criteria of Sarstedt et al. (2020), this value is included in the substantial influence category (≥ 0.50). Meanwhile, the Customer Retention variable obtained an R-Square value of 0.597 (Adjusted R-Square 0.596), which means that 59.7% of the Customer Retention variance can be explained by the variables in the model. This value also falls into the substantial influence category, indicating that the model has strong explanatory power for both dependent variables.

The test results show that Customer Experience has no significant effect on Customer Relationship Management (t-value = 1.496; $p = 0.135$), so H1 is not accepted. This finding contradicts theoretical studies that state that positive customer experiences at every touchpoint can strengthen CRM effectiveness (Chahal and Bala, 2021; de Keyser, 2020). However, this result is understandable in the context of fast food restaurants in Batam City, where customer interactions tend to be transactional and brief, so customer experience does not necessarily directly encourage the formation of long-term relationships managed through CRM. This finding is in line with research (Mokha & Kumar, 2022) which found that the relationship between Customer Experience and CRM is indirect and dependent on the service context. Furthermore, (Suharto & Yuliansyah, 2023) stated that Customer Experience only impacts CRM if the company actively manages customer interaction data systematically.

The test results show that Service Quality has a significant effect on Customer Relationship Management (t-value = 1.739; $p = 0.082$), thus H2 is accepted. This finding is consistent with the theoretical argument of (Adegbola, 2020) which states that service quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles have a positive effect on building customer interpersonal relationships through CRM. This significance may be due to the behavioral patterns of fast food restaurant consumers in Batam who prioritize speed and price over long-term relationships based on service quality. (Al-Gasawneh et al., 2021) in their research also found that the effect of Service Quality on CRM varies depending on the type of industry and customer characteristics. (Palazzo et al., 2021) added that Service Quality will only strengthen CRM if supported by an adequate customer data management system, which is not necessarily available in all fast food restaurants.

The results of the indirect effect test indicate that CRM significantly mediates the relationship between Customer Experience and Customer Retention (t-value = 9.936; $p = 0.003$), thus the t-Hypothesis is accepted. This result relates to the significant influence of Customer Experience on CRM (H1). Because the first path from Customer Experience to CRM is significant, the mediation effect through CRM is also statistically insignificant. (Rather and Hollebeek, 2021) state that CRM mediation between Customer Experience and Customer Retention will only occur if customer experience is actively translated into a

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customer relationship management system. In the context of fast food restaurants, this indicates that there is still a gap between the perceived customer experience and the CRM system formally managed by the restaurant (Kandampully et al., 2021).

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzes the influence of Customer Experience, Service Quality, and Local Wisdom on Customer Retention through Customer Relationship Management (CRM) as a mediating variable in fast food restaurants in Batam City. Based on the results of PLS-SEM testing on 310 respondents, the following conclusions can be drawn.

Customer Experience does not have a significant effect on Customer Relationship Management in fast food restaurants in Batam City. This indicates that the transactional and short-lived customer experience in the fast food restaurant context is not strong enough to directly influence the effectiveness of customer relationship management through CRM.

Service Quality has a significant effect on Customer Relationship Management. In the context of fast food restaurants in Batam, customer perceived service quality appears to have a greater impact on immediate satisfaction than on fostering long-term relationships through the CRM system.

Local Wisdom has a positive and significant effect on Customer Relationship Management and indirectly impacts Customer Retention. The application of local wisdom in restaurant products and services has been shown to build emotional closeness that strengthens customer relationships and encourages retention, particularly in the multicultural city of Batam.

Customer Relationship Management has a positive and significant effect on Customer Retention, with the highest path coefficient (0.773). These findings confirm that CRM is the most important determinant factor in customer retention in the fast food restaurant industry in Batam City. Effective CRM creates a sense of care and appreciation in customers, thus encouraging them to continue using the restaurant's services.

Customer Relationship Management significantly mediates the relationship between Customer Experience and Customer Retention, as well as the relationship between Service Quality and Customer Retention. This is consistent with the insignificant direct effect of these two variables on CRM. Conversely, CRM significantly mediates the effect of Local Wisdom on Customer Retention, indicating that these two variables play a key role in driving CRM effectiveness in the context of this study.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has several limitations that require consideration. First, the scope of the study was limited to fast food restaurants in Batam City, so generalizing the results to other regions or restaurant types requires caution. Second, the data were collected through self-report questionnaires, so the potential for Common Method Bias could not be completely eliminated, despite Harman's single-factor test. Third, this study did not include demographic variables such as age, income, or frequency of visits as potentially influential control variables. Future research is recommended to expand the scope to other cities, include moderating variables such as customer satisfaction or digital usage intensity, and explore dynamic models that can measure changes in customer behavior over time.

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