

E-Service Quality and E-Loyalty in Online Travel Platforms: Evidence from East Indonesian Users

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Abstract

*This study wants to find out how electronic service quality (e-servqual) affects electronic loyalty (e-loyalty) among Traveloka users in Kendari City, Indonesia. The study looks at how the quality of digital services offered by an online travel platform affects users' loyalty, especially their plans to use the site again and tell others about it. While prior research has extensively examined the correlation between service quality and client loyalty in e-commerce, empirical investigations concentrating on online travel platforms in emerging nations are still somewhat scarce. Specifically, research examining the influence of electronic service quality on user loyalty within online travel agents (OTAs) in Eastern Indonesia remains limited. This study adds to the body of research by looking at how the quality of e-services affects e-loyalty in the digital travel service environment. **Methods:** This study used a survey method and a quantitative explanatory approach. We got information from 100 people who had used the Traveloka app in Kendari City. We employed purposive sampling to get the data, and we used structured questionnaires to do so. We used SPSS software to look at the association between e-service quality and e-loyalty by using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. **Results:** The findings demonstrate that e-service quality exerts a favorable and significant influence on e-loyalty among Traveloka users. This shows that customers are more likely to stick with the platform if it has better service, a more reliable system, is easier to use, and is safer for transactions. What it means: The results show how important it is to improve the quality of electronic services in order to keep customers coming back in the competitive online travel company operations. **Implications:** The results highlight the importance of improving electronic service quality in order to strengthen customer loyalty in the competitive online travel industry. Practically, the findings suggest that online travel platforms should continuously enhance system performance, usability, and security features to maintain long-term user engagement and loyalty.*

INTRODUCTION

The fast growth of internet technology has changed modern society in big ways, and it is now a necessary part of everyday life. The internet is a global communication network that lets people share information quickly, widely, and effectively. The internet is a global network that links millions of personal, business, government, and organizational networks. Its growth has had a big effect on social and economic activities, especially in the business world, where it has pushed organizations to use digital technology as strategic tools to boost performance and stay competitive (Strauss & Frost, 2014).

The Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) did a survey in 2021–2022 and found that roughly 210 million individuals in Indonesia used the internet, which is about 77.02% of the total population. This number shows that more than half of the population now

uses the internet, and that number is growing every year. Businesses have a lot of chances to grow, come up with new ideas, and be a part of the digital economy as more and more people utilize the internet. As a result, businesses must be able to adapt to changes in technology if they want to stay competitive in a market that is becoming more dynamic.

In a business setting, marketing is an integral part of the strategy for reaching commercial goals. The goal of marketing is to find out what customers want and need so that businesses may make products and services that meet those demands (Lutfiani, 2019). According to Sudaryono (2017), marketing is the act of planning and carrying out product development, price, promotion, and distribution in order to create exchanges that are beneficial to both customers and businesses. So, marketing isn't only about making sales; it's also about developing long-term relationships with customers.

Marketing communication is more vital than ever in a market that is getting more and more competitive. These days, customers have a lot of choices when it comes to products and services from many different companies that offer similar features and benefits. So, businesses need to come up with good ways to communicate that set them apart and give customers value. Changes in communication and information technologies have also changed how manufacturers talk to and work with customers. Before, spreading information mostly depended on one-way communication through traditional media like newspapers, radio, and TV. But now, technology based on the internet let people easily find information, compare options, and interactively evaluate things (Ustadiyanto, 2002).

The fast spread of internet technology has also led to the rise of electronic commerce (e-commerce), which lets enterprises do business online. E-commerce lets people buy things and services online without having to meet in person with the seller. Laudon and Traver (2017) say that e-commerce may be broken down into many types, such as business-to-consumer (B2C), business-to-business (B2B), consumer-to-consumer (C2C), mobile commerce (m-commerce), and social commerce. These many types of e-commerce show how adaptable digital platforms are when it comes to serving the needs of different customers.

Statistics Indonesia (2021) says that by the end of 2020, about 25.25% of enterprises in Indonesia used e-commerce. By the middle of 2021, that number had grown to 25.92%. Even if more and more people are using digital platforms, businesses have to keep up with developments in technology and changes in what customers want. Many firms have moved away from traditional marketing methods and toward online platforms in the digital age since they reach more people, allow for interactive contact, and are more efficient (Asse, 2018).

The growth of e-commerce has had a big impact on the tourism business. Online travel sites make it easy for people to book flights, trains, hotels, and other travel-related services all in one place. People think these services are better than traditional booking methods since they are easier, faster, and more efficient (Refiyanti, 2020). Traveloka is one of the most well-known online travel platforms in Indonesia. It offers a wide range of travel services that are all part of a digital ecosystem.

From 2020 to 2022, Traveloka was always at the top of the list of online airline ticket buying and hotel reservation platforms in Indonesia, with a Top Brand Index that kept going up. Even if it has a solid market position, many user evaluations say that there are still problems with service performance, such as slow customer support, application system faults, and worries about data security. These problems show how important it is to keep high levels of electronic service quality to make sure that users have good experiences.

In the world of online services, electronic service quality (e-service quality) is very important for how people think and act. Good electronic services can make users happier and more likely to keep using a certain platform. In digital markets where switching costs are cheap, it gets harder and harder to keep customers because they can easily shift to other platforms that offer better experiences.

E-loyalty, or electronic loyalty, is when a person promises to use a certain online platform again and over again and tell other people about it (Hur et al., 2011). Companies that do business online need to build strong e-loyalty because loyal clients are more likely to buy from them again and tell others about their good experiences. So, businesses need to keep making their digital services better and better if they want to keep their users for a long time.

Because more and more people are using online travel services and service quality is vital for keeping customers, it's important to look at how electronic service quality affects user loyalty in the context of online travel services. Also, the fact that more and more people in Eastern Indonesia, especially Kendari City, are using Traveloka makes now a good time to look into this connection.

So, the goal of this study is to find out how the quality of e-services affects e-loyalty among Traveloka users in Eastern Indonesia. The results are likely to add to the body of knowledge on digital marketing and give online travel platform providers useful ideas for how to improve service quality and keep customers coming back.

METHODS

Design Of The Study

This study used a quantitative research method with an explanatory research design. The goal of explanatory research is to look at how variables are related to each other and to test theoretical assumptions through hypothesis testing. The study looks at how the quality of electronic services (e-service quality) affects users' electronic loyalty (e-loyalty) on online travel platforms, with an emphasis on Traveloka. The study took place in Kendari City, which is in Eastern Indonesia and is one of the areas where the usage of online travel apps has grown a lot in the last few years.

We gathered data by sending out a structured questionnaire to people who fit the research criteria. Survey-based research is common in marketing studies because it lets researchers get information directly from people about how they think, feel, and act about the things being examined.

Population and Sample

The people who took part in this survey were those who lived in Kendari City and had used the Traveloka online travel platform. It wasn't possible to find out how many people in Kendari City utilize Traveloka, thus the population size was considered unknown.

We used the Lemeshow method to figure out the sample size. This technique is often used when the population size is unknown or thought to be huge. The minimal number of people that

needed to answer was about 96. This was based on a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), an estimated proportion of 0.50, and a 10% margin of error. This study got replies from 100 people who met the research criteria in order to have enough data for statistical analysis.

Convenience sampling was the method utilized in this investigation. We chose people to answer the poll based on how easy it was for them to do so and how willing they were to do so. To be eligible, people had to live in Kendari City, have utilized the Traveloka platform, and have made at least two online travel purchases through the app.

Research Variables and Operational Definitions

This study examined two primary variables: e-service quality as the independent variable and e-loyalty as the dependent variable. E-service quality is how users feel about the overall quality of the electronic services that the Traveloka platform offers to help with online travel transactions. Parasuraman et al. (2005) suggested the E-S-QUAL dimensions for measuring e-service quality. These dimensions include efficiency, fulfillment, system availability, and privacy.

E-loyalty means that people are committed to utilizing the online travel platform and are prepared to tell others about it. E-loyalty shows that people plan to use the platform again and talk about it in a good way. Based on research on electronic service quality and online consumer behavior, all variables were measured using more than one indicator.

Data Collection Technique

A systematic questionnaire with closed-ended questions was used to gather data. The five-point Likert scale used in the questionnaire ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and was meant to find out what people thought about the quality of e-service and e-loyalty. Likert scales are often used in behavioral research because they let people show how much they agree with certain assertions about the research variables. Traveloka users in Kendari City might fill out the questionnaire online and offline to get more people to take part.

Instrument Testing

Using SPSS software, the research tool was checked for validity and reliability before the primary analysis was done. We used the Pearson product-moment correlation method to do the validity test. If the correlation coefficient (r -value) was higher than 0.30 and the significance level was lower than 0.05, the item was legitimate. We used Cronbach's Alpha to check how reliable the tool was. A construct was deemed reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha score surpassed 0.60, signifying that the measurement items exhibited internal consistency.

Data Analysis Technique

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data in this study. The analysis used both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to

characterize the characteristics of the respondents and their opinions on the research variables by looking at mean values and frequency distributions.

We used simple linear regression to do an inferential statistical analysis to see how e-service quality affects e-loyalty. The researcher chose regression analysis because it lets them look at the direction and degree of the link between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The hypothesis was tested with a significance level of 0.05. If the p-value was less than 0.05, it was thought that the hypothesis was statistically supported.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Research Object

Traveloka is one of the biggest online travel sites in Indonesia. It offers a wide range of travel services through a digital ecosystem. The company started in 2012 as a website where anyone could search for and book airline tickets. As more people in Indonesia used the internet and smartphones, Traveloka added more services and made a mobile app available in 2014 to make it easier for consumers to get about.

The Traveloka app is accessible for both Android and iOS devices. It offers a wide range of travel services, such as buying airline tickets, hotel rooms, rail tickets, airport transportation, travel activities, special deals, and digital payment alternatives. Traveloka is a one-stop travel platform that lets consumers take care of all their travel needs in one app thanks to these combined services.

Profile Of The Respondent

This survey included 100 people who have utilized the Traveloka platform in Kendari City.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	45	45%
	Female	55	55%
Age	< 25 years	48	48%
	25–35 years	32	32%
	> 35 years	20	20%
Education	High School	18	18%
	Bachelor Degree	71	71%
	Postgraduate	11	11%
Traveloka Usage	1–2 years	21	21%
	3–5 years	46	46%
	> 5 years	33	33%

The findings show that most of the people who answered were women (55%), were younger than 25 (48%), and had a bachelor's degree (71%). Most of the people who answered had used Traveloka for three to five years.

Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

A five-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, was used to measure all of the research variables. We used descriptive analysis to find out how respondents felt about each part of the research model.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Research Variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Category
E-Service Quality	3.10	5.00	4.25	High
E-Loyalty	3.00	5.00	4.21	High

The table shows that respondents generally perceive the quality of Traveloka's electronic services as high. Similarly, user loyalty toward the platform is also categorized as high.

Instrument Testing

Validity Test

Variable	Item	r-value	Sig.	Result
E-Service Quality	ESQ1	0.612	0.000	Valid
	ESQ2	0.654	0.000	Valid
	ESQ3	0.703	0.000	Valid
	ESQ4	0.671	0.000	Valid
E-Loyalty	EL1	0.698	0.000	Valid
	EL2	0.724	0.000	Valid
	EL3	0.681	0.000	Valid

All items have r-values greater than 0.30 and significance values below 0.05, indicating that all questionnaire items are valid.

Reliability Test

Table 4. Results of the Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Standard	Result
E-Service Quality	0.842	>0.60	Reliable
E-Loyalty	0.801	>0.60	Reliable

The Cronbach's Alpha values are higher than the suggested minimum of 0.60, which means that the tools used to measure are reliable.

Regression Analysis

Table 5. Results of Simple Linear Regression

Variable	B	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.234	0.421	2.93	0.004
E-Service Quality	0.718	0.082	8.75	0.000

The findings of the regression show that the quality of e-service has a big and favorable effect on e-loyalty ($\beta = 0.718, p < 0.05$). This indicates that when Traveloka improves the quality of its electronic services, users are more likely to stay loyal.

Coefficient of Determination

Table 6. Summary of the Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.698	0.487	0.482	0.413

The R^2 value of 0.487 means that e-service quality explains 48.7% of the change in e-loyalty, while other factors not included in the model account for the other 51.3%.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the quality of electronic services has a big positive effect on how devoted users are to online travel sites. This conclusion shows that people are more likely to keep using the platform and tell others about it if they think the digital services it offers are fast, dependable, and safe. High-quality electronic services help people feel more sure about online transactions and the platform itself. Previous research has also shown that the quality of service in digital settings is very important for how loyal customers are to e-commerce and online service platforms (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Blut, 2016).

The findings indicate that the quality of digital service interactions substantially improves users' overall experience on online travel platforms. Customers think the service is better when it has features like easy-to-use interfaces, quick booking systems, correct information, and stable system performance. Users are more likely to give a platform a good rating when the booking procedure is easy and quick. This finding is in line with other studies that showed that better electronic service quality makes customers think they are getting more value and are happier with online services overall (Zeithaml et al., 2002; Santos, 2003).

Also, security and reliability are very important factors that affect how much customers trust a site and how likely they are to make more purchases. Online travel sites deal with money and personal information, therefore keeping the system secure is vital for keeping users' trust. Users are more likely to stay loyal to a platform if it has safe payment mechanisms, accurate booking confirmations, and dependable customer service. These results back up earlier research that shows how important system stability, privacy protection, and transaction security are for users' plans to keep using the system (Gefen et al., 2003; Kim et al., 2009).

From a management point of view, the results mean that businesses in the online travel industry need to keep making their digital services better if they want to stay competitive. The internet travel business is quite fast-moving, and there is a lot of rivalry between platforms that offer similar services. To keep users loyal, it is important to offer fast system performance, helpful customer support, and safe transaction processes. Previous studies have also shown that making digital services better can greatly improve long-term customer connections and make people use online platforms more often (Collier & Bienstock, 2006; Blut et al., 2015).

In general, this study backs up the assumption that the quality of electronic services is a major factor in keeping customers loyal in digital service settings, especially on online travel platforms. Companies like Traveloka can improve user experiences and build long-term client loyalty by constantly making their systems faster, easier to use, and safer.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to look at how the quality of electronic services affects user loyalty on online travel sites, with a focus on Traveloka users. The results demonstrate that e-service quality exerts a favorable and significant influence on e-loyalty. This research shows that the quality of digital services is a big factor in how devoted people are to online travel sites.

Users have a better experience on the platform when the electronic service quality is high, which includes fast system performance, easy navigation, accurate information, and safe

transactions. Users are more likely to keep using and suggest a platform if they think it offers reliable and easy-to-use services.

The results also suggest that making digital services better could help users and online travel companies build stronger long-term relationships. Traveloka and other firms like it need to keep improving the quality of their online services in order to keep customers coming back and stay ahead of the competition in an increasingly competitive digital economy.

But there are some problems with this study. The study only looks at one independent variable, which is e-service quality, and it only includes a small number of people who answered. Future research should incorporate additional variables, such customer trust, customer satisfaction, perceived value, or user experience, to achieve a more thorough comprehension of the aspects affecting client loyalty in online travel platforms.

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