Salesperson Role Model in Creating Customer Loyalty at Department Store

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ABSTRACT: Building customer relationships is a top priority for many firms. Building customer relationship is to increase satisfaction and loyalty, increasing favorable word of mouth and purchases. Customers who have relationships with service provider not only expect to receive satisfactory delivery of core service, but they are likely to receive additional benefits from the relationship. This research examines the customer's benefits from relationships with salesperson in department store. This study test the relationship of functional and social benefits that customer derive from a retail salesperson on levels of satisfaction and loyalty. Analysis result indicates significant effect of perceived functional benefit in associated with satisfaction to salesperson, perception of social benefit in associated with satisfaction to department store, satisfaction to department store associated with loyalty to department store, salesperson loyalty in associated to department store loyalty. **Key Words:** Functional Benefits, mediating, Structural Equation Modeling

I. INTRODUCTION

Many companies build a close relationship with customer. It has gained attention both in academia and among practitioners. Popularity of relationship marketing term comes from an assumption that building a strong relationship with customer will create positive thing in form of customer satisfaction, loyalty, word of mouth, frequency and amount of purchase (share of purchase). Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) stated that study of relationship marketing in consumer market is still relatively little. Research of Reynolds and Beatty (1999) of consumer relationship and salesman at a retail company shows that relationship generate benefits and value to customers, not only on satisfaction, but also on loyalty. Research finding also showed that when consumers perceive social benefits and high functional, the consumer will be satisfied by salesperson (Reynolds and Beatty, 1999). Consumers choose products or services based on desired benefits (Gutman, 1982). Darden and Dorsch (1990) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) states that consumers can also get benefits such as product or information or social interaction in their shopping activity. Consumers can benefit from interpersonal relationships to meet their needs. The relationship with salesperson or service providers can provide benefits that can meet the essential needs of man (Gwinner et al., 1998). Gwinner et al. (1998) state that consumer's relationship with service providers not only expects to obtain satisfaction from the services offered but also to obtain additional benefits. They conducted two studies to identify the benefits of consumer's relationship between consumers and service providers. Research result show significant correlation between service benefits and outcomes such as loyalty, positive word of mouth and satisfaction with services. Mc Kenna (1991); Reichheld (1993); Vavra (1992) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) show that building strong relationship with customers becomes a way to get a competitive advantage. Clark and Payne (1994) and Reichheld (1996) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) encourage customer loyalty to increase revenue for company, flow of profits and generate additional purchases of goods and services, especially encourage low customer turnover (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990) and generate new business for company through word of mouth recommendations (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Zeithaml, et al., 1996). Jarvis and Wilcox (1997); O'Boyle (1983); Reichheld (1993) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) show that a loyal customer can decrease costs for service and sales, marketing, and setup cost can be amortized over the life of consumer. Beatty et al. (1996) stated consumers receive benefits from the relationship with salesperson in context of upscale department store. It includes two main categories, namely functional benefits and social benefits. Both benefits are supported by other researchers (Berry, 1995; Bitner. 1995; Dwyer et al., 1987; Gwinner et al., 1998).

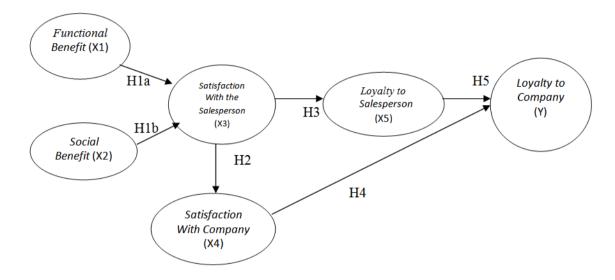
Social Benefit

II. MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Benefit is criteria sought by consumers and important in purchase decision on one brand or another (Assael, 1998). Main determinants of consumer satisfaction is perception of quality or performance, these are seen as the suitability of a product with consumers desires (Fornell et al, 1996; Anderson et al., 1994). Maddox (1977) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) state that institutional models of customer satisfaction in retail retailing provide consumers with different satisfaction of products they sell.

Beatty et al. (1996) stated that consumer's benefits from relationship with salesperson in context of upscale department store include two main categories, namely functional and social benefits social benefits. Both benefits are supported by other researchers (Berry, 1995; Bitner, 1995; Dwyer et al., 1987; Gwinner et al., 1998). Social benefit is defined as *"enjoying the salesperson's company and/or the close relationship, having a good friend"* (Reynolds and Beatty, 1999). Salesperson services give benefits to consumers as mutually enjoyable relationship.

Figure 1. Research Model



Functional Benefit

Interactions between consumers and salesman and the role played by both and consumers view about the dynamics are central to satisfaction (Crosby et al., 1990). Consumers want to receive benefits of a salesman who can improve and add value to product owned (Beatty et al., 1996; Bitner, 1995). Consumers will also consider to expand the benefits received and having desire to build relationships with salesman. Gwinner et al. (1998) found that benefits perception in service relationship positively correlated with services satisfaction. Understanding the functional benefits are "time savings, convenience, fashion advice and better purchase decisions" (Reynolds and Beatty, 1999).

Consumer Satisfaction to Salesperson

Satisfaction with salesperson correlates to satisfaction with company (Reynolds and Beatty, 1999). Reynolds and Beatty (1999) argues that "customer's positive feelings toward their salesperson often 'transferred' to the company". Customer satisfaction with salesperson correlates to customer satisfaction with company, in this case the department store.

Singh (1991) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) states that consumers have different expectation in interaction with different objects, so the object will be evaluated differently. For example, consumer who uses health care services would separate evaluation of satisfaction from physicians, hospitals, and insurers. Researchers use these perspectives and find differences in causes and consequences of satisfaction with salesperson and satisfaction with convenience stores. A consumer gets satisfaction of all their experience with store and interaction with salesperson, and among other things. Although satisfaction with salesperson and convenience stores are related, Reynolds and Beatty (1999) sees this as a different construct.

H1a: Perceived functional benefits have a positive effect to customer satisfaction on convenience store salesperson.

H1b: Perceived social benefits have a positive effect to satisfaction Consumer on department store salesperson.

Consumer Satisfaction to Department Store

Reynolds and Beatty (1999) conducted a study on relationship between benefits and consequences at setting up a store-level. The model used for this research focus on the relationship and its resulting benefits as the genesis for important consequences, namely satisfaction, loyalty, word of mouth and share of total clothing purchases. This research result shows that all of the hypothesized relationships between salesperson satisfaction and the consequences were supported.

Reynolds and Beatty (1999) states that consumer satisfaction to salesperson affects on customer satisfaction with department stores. Goff et al. (1997) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) stated that overall satisfaction with a specific product or manufacturing was preceded by satisfaction with other areas on product purchased, such as satisfaction with salesperson or satisfaction with dealer. Beatty et al. (1996) observed that customer's positive feelings with a salesperson will be transferred to customer's satisfaction with department store. Goff et al. (1997) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) showed that consumer satisfaction with salesperson has positive effect customer satisfaction with car dealer. Oliver and Swan (1989) and Crosby et al. (1990) support these findings. H2: Consumer satisfaction to salesperson has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with department store.

Consumer Loyalty To Salesperson and Consumer Loyalty to Department Store

Most retailers do not want customers only once come to store and then never come back again, but customers return is something to be desired. Store loyalty is desire and shopping behavior of customers return that deeply affected by environmental regulation, particularly infrastructure support (Peter and Olson, 1996).

Reynolds and Beatty (1999) examined the loyalty construct in associated with various levels of association at a retail establishment: person-to-person and person-to-firm. Oliver (1997) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) states that "interpersonal loyalty" or loyalty to salesperson is more substantial than other forms of loyalty, such as brand loyalty or loyalty to store. This is due to loyalty at interpersonal level tends to build a foundation of trust, attachment, and deeper commitment human relationships (Czepiel, 1990).

There are several important concepts to distinguish between loyalty to salesperson and loyalty to store. Beatty et al. (1996) found that primary consumers loyalty to salesperson positively affect customer loyalty to store. Highly satisfied customer is a loyal customer (Fornell, 1992; Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1987; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990) and it creates loyalty (Bitner, 1990; Dick and Basu, 1994; Fornell et al., 1996; Oliva et al., 1992). Satisfaction becomes an effective cause of loyalty (Dick and Basu, 1994). Macintosh and Lockshin (1997) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) show that customer satisfaction with store is the cause of consumer loyalty to store and customer satisfaction with services positively affect on customer retention (Gwinner et al., 1998).

H3: Customer satisfaction to salesperson has a positive effect on consumer loyalty to salesperson.

H4: Customer satisfaction to department store has a positive effect on customer loyalty to department store.

Consumer's positive feelings to salesman will lead to company (Beatty et al., 1996). Reynolds and Beatty (1999) states that when a consumer has a high loyalty to salesperson, the consumer also has a high loyalty to company.

H5: Consumer loyalty to salesperson has a positive effect on customer loyalty to department store.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Population and Sample

These study populations were visitors of department store at Yogyakarta City. Convenience sampling technique is used to samples encountered anywhere and anytime (Cooper & Schlinder, 2001) and target sample are 300 respondents.

Data Collection

Data was obtained from survey by distributing 300 questionnaires to respondents of Department Store visitors in Yogyakarta. Questionnaires were filled in correctly are 271 questionnaires.

Reliability Test

Reliability test was done to know accuracy of instrument measurement with item statements. Reliability is related to accuracy and consistency of measurement procedure. A measurement instrument is considered reliable if it shows consistent results over time. Reliability test of respondents indicated that research instruments in actual research are reliable.

Variables	Cronbach	Description
	Alpha	
Functional benefit (X1)	0,836	Reliable
Social benefit (X2)	0,831	Reliable
Satisfaction to salesperson(X3)	0,829	Reliable
Satisfaction to Department store (X4)	0,847	Reliable
Loyalty to salesperson (X5)	0,70	Reliable
Loyalty to Department store (X6)	0,880	Reliable

Table 1. Reliability Test Results

Source: Primary data processed

Validity test

Validity test was done by confirmatory factor analysis methods were performed through SPSS software. Factors analysis was used because it was multivariate statistical methods whose sole purpose to summarize or reduce the data or variables that will need to be analyzed. Researcher tested the research instrument to respondents. Test result shows the factor scores were above 0.6 and valid, as shown in table 2.

Variables	Questions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Functional benefit (X1)	X11	0,768					
	X12	0,795					
	X13	0,844					
	X14	0,790					
Social benefit (X2)	X21		0,748				
	X22		0,780				
	X23		0,827				
	X24		0,752				
Satisfaction to salesperson(X3)	X31			0,822			
	X32			0,867			
Satisfaction to Department store (X4)	X41				0,877		
	X42				0,820		
Loyalty to salesperson (X5)	X51					0,780	
	X52					0,814	
	X53					0,796	
	X54					0,750	
Loyalty to Department store (X6)	X61						0,840
	X62						0,823
	X63						0,790
	X64						0,829

 Table 2. Validity Test Results

Source: Primary data processed

Hypothesis Testing Procedure

Testing the hypothesis transactions are carried out to get an overview of relationship between construct studied. To test the hypothesis, researcher uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Analysis of Sample Size

IV. STRUCTURAL MODEL TEST

Samples of this study were 271 respondents. It more than enough to meet the minimum required number of samples in testing the model by using SEM as many as 5 times the number of parameters, which equal to 230 samples.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To analyze the model with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), indicators of each construct should have a significant loading. It was tested by confirmatory factor analysis of measurement model. Measurement model used to determine construct validity, whether the indicators used as parameters can predict the corresponding constructs theorized (Sekaran, 2000). Goodness of fit indicators generally indicates that measurement model used is acceptable based on test results of measurement model. Test results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Goodness of Fit Model Measurements

Goodness of Fit Index	Cut-off Value	Index	Description	
(χ^2)	Should small	141.740		
Df	Positive	23	Good	
Probability Level	$\geq 0,05$	0.000		
RMSEA	$\leq 0,08$	0.138	Marginal	
GFI	$\geq 0,90$	0.902	Good	
AGFI	$\geq 0,90$	0.809	Marginal	
CMIN/DF	\leq 2,00 / \leq 3,00	6.170	Marginal	
CFI	$\geq 0,90$	0.835	Marginal	
TLI	$\geq 0,90$	0.741	Marginal	
RMR	$\le 0,03$	0.850	Marginal	
NFI	\geq 0,90	0.812	Marginal	

Source: Primary data processed

Interpretation of Structural Model

Table 3 show the values (χ^2) - chi-square of 141.906 with a significance level of 0.000. This shows there is no difference between the sample covariance matrix and estimated population covariance matrix (Hair et al., 1998). SEM analysis is not single statistical test. Interpretation is based on several indices suitability. Goodness of fit at Table 3 shows RMSEA, AGFI, CMIN / DF, CFI, TLI, RMR, and NFI at marginal level. GFI value shown good results. Therefore, it can be concluded that model in this study can be accepted; analysis can be continued for regression weight analysis of structural relationship of research model.

	Unstandardized Estimate	CR	Standardized Estimate
X3←X1	0.190	5.560	0.367
X3←X2	0.012	0.330	0.022
X4 ← X3	0.545	10.381	0.534
X5 ← X3	0.375	5.199	0.296
Y ← X4	0.278	4.571	0.229
Y ← X5	0.517	10.579	0.531

Table 4. Regression Weight of Measurement Model

Source: Primary data processed

Figure 2. Hypothesis Test Results

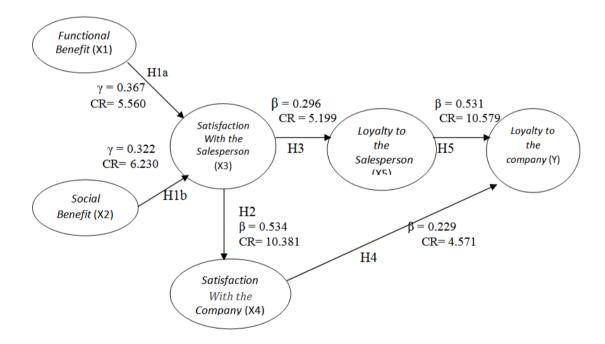


Table 7. Hypothesis Test Result

Hypothesis	Relationship	Standardized Estimate	CR	Description	Hypothesis Decision
H1a: X3←X1	+	0.367	5.560	Significant	Ho rejected
H1b: X3←X2	+	0.322	6.230	Significant	Ho rejected
H2: X4←X3	+	0.534	10.381	Significant	Ho rejected
H3: X5←X3	+	0.296	5.199	Significant	Ho rejected
H4: X6←X4	+	0.229	4.571	Significant	Ho rejected
H5: X6←X5	+	0.531	10.579	Significant	Ho rejected

Source: Primary data processed

Hypothesis 1a that perceived functional benefits have a positive effect on customer satisfaction with salesperson at Department store was accepted. It is based on hypothesis test results that value of CR for effect of customer satisfaction with salesperson at Department store on salesperson Department store was 5.560.

Hypothesis 1b that perceived social benefits have a positive effect to satisfaction consumer on department store salesperson was accepted. It is based on hypothesis test results that CR value for effect of social benefits on customer satisfaction at Department store salesperson was 0.330.Hypothesis 2 that consumer satisfaction with salesperson has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with department store was accepted. It is based on hypothesis test results that CR values the effect of customer satisfaction to department store salesperson at 10.381.Hypothesis 3 customer satisfaction to salesperson has a positive effect to customer loyalty to salesperson was accepted. It is based on hypothesis test results that CR value the effect of customer loyalty to salesperson has a positive effect to customer loyalty on salesperson at 5.199.Hypothesis 4 that customer satisfaction to department store has a positive effect on customer loyalty to department store was accepted. It is based on hypothesis test results that CR value the effect of customer satisfaction to department store has a positive effect on customer loyalty to department store was accepted. It is based on hypothesis test results that CR value the effect of customer satisfaction to department store has a positive effect on customer loyalty to department store was accepted. It is based on hypothesis test results that CR value the effect of customer satisfaction to department store has a positive effect on customer loyalty to department store was accepted. It is based on hypothesis test results that CR value the effect of customer satisfaction to department store salesperson has a positive effect on customer loyalty to salesperson has a positive effect on customer loyalty to salesperson has a positive effect on customer loyalty to department store was accepted. It is based on hypothesis test results that CR value the effect consumer loyalty to salesperson has a positive the effect of customer loyalty to salesperson has a positive the effect of customer lo

VI. CONCLUSION

This study examined the salesperson role model in a department store and analyzing both social and functional benefits that consumers receive from the relationship with department store salesperson. This study takes place at department stores in Yogyakarta. Based on results obtained it can be concluded that the entire proposed hypothesis were proven. Efforts to improve salesperson service are company service policy in achieving customer satisfaction. Service is also one of factors to determine company success. Salesperson service improvement should be able to create the customers perception that services provided by company in accordance or even greater than what given by customers to company. This is related to an acceptable value to customer. Consumers want and receiving the benefits of a salesperson who can improve and add value to product ownership (Beatty et al, 1996; Bitner, 1995). Consumers will also consider to expand the benefits received and desire to build building relationships with salesperson. Aspects measured in functional benefit is benefit feeling of consumers in respect of comfort when the consumer makes a purchase, time to purchase if served by a salesperson, advice given by a helpful salesperson in buying process to make better decisions after receiving advice from salesperson. Therefore, company must increase its functional benefits provided by salesperson as it relates to primary function of a salesperson.

Implication

Salesperson service provides benefits to consumer as a mutually enjoyable social relationship. Measured aspects of social benefits are consumer sentiment in a friendship with salesperson. If a friendship is not important or very important when interact with salesperson, whether happy or not happy served by salesperson; appreciation the personal relationship with salesperson, do not appreciate or very appreciative, and good feeling when accompanied by salesman. For middle-level department stores, aspects of social benefits received less attention from company. It makes salespersons have less personal relationships with consumers they serve. Consumer satisfaction to salesperson affect on customer satisfaction to department store. Goff et al (1997) in Reynolds and Beatty (1999) stated that overall satisfaction with a specific product or product manufacturing were preceded by satisfaction with other areas on product purchased, such as satisfaction with salesperson or satisfaction with dealer. Beatty et al (1996) observed that consumer's positive feelings with a salesperson will be transferred to customer's satisfaction with department store or company. So it becomes very important for companies to be able to serve customers rightly, which starts from salesperson service to consumers, because if consumers are satisfied with service they receive from the salesperson, it will be transferred to customer's satisfaction to department stores or companies, so initial steps to achieve customer satisfaction is started from how salesperson can serve the customers rightly.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that require further research in future. Some of these limitations are:

1. The data were obtained only based on questionnaire collection, so it possible to create perception differences with real situation. This study only gives the answers according to choices given. Interview with respondent needs to be done to sharpen the results interpretation of statistical analysis. Some theoretically construct relationship significantly was not supported. This requires a more in-depth explanation from interviews.

- 2. This research choose department store at Yogyakarta. Respondents were highly differ, both of level of education, age, gender, and income. Therefore, questionnaire fulfillment is likely occur with differ perceptions with real situation.
- 3. Questionnaire was distribute to respondents when they were paying at checkout counter, so it is possible that the fulfillment is done with a hurry situation. This causes the respondents were unable to think calmly and will provide answers to a questionnaire that may differ from actual situation. So further research needs techniques questionnaire where respondent can fill with a calmer situation, so respondents provide appropriate answers to real situation.

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