

## The Effect of Gender on Consumer Satisfaction and Loyalty in Modern Retail Stores

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**Abstract.** Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah terdapat perbedaan kepuasan dan loyalitas konsumen laki-laki dan perempuan pada toko ritel Alfamart Cabang Mujur, Praya Timur. Sebanyak 140 responden ikut berpartisipasi dan analisis data yang digunakan adalah Uji MANOVA dengan SPSS 17. Dari beberapa hipotesis yang diajukan didapatkan temuan bahwa ketiga hipotesis alternative ditolak atau dengan kata lain tidak terdapat perbedaan, baik itu secara parsial maupun simultan, antara kepuasan dan loyalitas konsumen laki-laki dan perempuan. Berdasarkan temuan ini, Alfamart Cabang Mujur harus tetap fokus dalam mengembangkan strategi pemasaran dan layanan yang berorientasi pada konsumen, tanpa perlu melakukan pembedaan layanan atau perlakuan bagi konsumen laki-laki maupun konsumen perempuan.

**Kata Kunci:** Gender, Kepuasan konsumen, Loyalitas konsumen, Toko ritel modern.

**Abstract.** This study aimed to determine whether there were differences in the satisfaction and loyalty of male and female consumers at the Alfamart Mujur branch of the retail store in East Praya. A total of 140 respondents participated, and the data analysis used was the MANOVA Test with SPSS 17. From the several hypotheses proposed, it was found that the three alternative hypotheses were rejected. In other words, there was no difference, either partially or simultaneously, between the satisfaction and loyalty of male consumers. - male and female. Based on these findings, Alfamart Branch Mujur must remain focused on developing consumer-oriented marketing and service strategies without the need to differentiate services or treatment for male and female consumers.

**Keywords:** Gender, Consumer Satisfaction, Consumer Loyalty, Modern retail store.

### Introduction

The era of digitalization has changed people's behavior on almost all sides. Starting from the way of life, work, and even interacting with each other. This situation puts today's companies in the toughest competitive position they have ever experienced (Aditia & Suhaji, 2012). The modern retail industry is one among many businesses facing competitive pressure from various channels (offline and online), various retail store formats (hypermarkets, supermarkets, minimarkets, etc.), and changing consumer behavior patterns themselves (Disfani et al., 2017). Retailers are faced with a major challenge that must be considered in running their business, namely how to provide the needs and wants as close as possible to customer expectations (Ngatmo & Bodroastuti, 2012).

On the other hand, what is no less important is how to maintain customer retention (Disfani et al., 2017). This, in turn, requires retailers to develop planning and implementation of marketing strategies based on customer relationship management to create customer satisfaction (Sukmana & Maryanti, 2019). If customer satisfaction increases, it will result in customer loyalty which is the ultimate goal of every company (Audrain-Pontevia & Vanhuele, 2016).

In general, the differences in the offerings made by modern retail stores have almost no significant meaning in the eyes of consumers, so monitoring customer satisfaction and loyalty are considered vital for retailers to stay competitive in the highly competitive retail industry (Audrain-Pontevia & Vanhuele, 2016). The power of retailers today is largely determined by the ability to attract and retain customers. The literature states that customer satisfaction and loyalty provide benefits to form customer retention, increase cash flow directly, and ultimately lead to higher firm value (Audrain-Pontevia & Vanhuele, 2016). Therefore, today's retail managers cannot underestimate the ability and sensitivity to design an effective loyalty program.

In fact, instead of allocating investments to the most profitable consumers, managers often fail to identify variables that can be used as guidelines in creating customer satisfaction and loyalty (Audrain-Pontevia & Vanhuele, 2016). In the retail industry, which is based on service, experts suggest that accuracy in designing a suitable service for the segment and the uniqueness of the target market is very important (Wang & Kim, 2019). Quality service can be perceived differently in different segments and lead to dissatisfaction and low customer loyalty. Gender is one of the most important factors that can influence consumer perceptions of the services provided (Sharma et al., 2012). Recent research reveals that men and women have many differences in shopping expectations and consumption behavior (Wang & Kim, 2019). Kotler and Keller revealed that consumer behavior is influenced by gender, which is the basis for differences in attitudes or norms (Kotler & Keller, 2009), so the level of satisfaction and loyalty between men and women may be different (Kusuma, 2018). Kotler and Armstrong stated that in conducting segmentation efforts for its consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008), the company also conducted initial segmentation based on demographic factors where gender was the main element (Juniarti & Ikatrinasari, 2014).

Alfamart is one of the many modern retail stores in Lombok. Although this retail store has outlets spread nationwide and sells various daily necessities with the motto of affordable prices, this does not make Alfamart free from intense competition. The marketing and service programs that have been implemented so far have not been able to make Alfamart seen as far superior to other competitors.

Based on the explanation above, this study groups consumers based on gender to know whether there are differences in the satisfaction and loyalty of male and female consumers at the modern retail store Alfamart Mujur Branch, East Praya District. Alfamart consumers are used as

objects in this study because they are sufficient to represent modern retail stores and are easily accessible by researchers. Furthermore, this study is expected to help modern retail management better understand consumer behavior to be able to develop marketing and service strategies that are right on target and lead to the achievement of the organization's ultimate goals.

## Research Method

### Conceptual Frameworks and Hypothesis Development

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic is enough to make the modern retail industry take a beating; not even a few have chosen to close some of their outlets. Nevertheless, fierce competition in the retail industry will not diminish; this is reinforced by the explanation of the former deputy chairman of the Indonesian Retail Entrepreneurs Association (Aprindo) that grocery retail stores (minimarkets) recorded good growth, which was 12% due to selling daily necessities. -day and close to the community (Hadyan, 2019).

The modern retail store industry is characterized by very competitive competition with almost the same offers; therefore, monitoring customer satisfaction is considered vital for retailers (Audrain-Pontevia & Vanhuele, 2016). Many companies consider customer satisfaction the guiding principle in developing marketing tactics and activities. In addition, satisfied consumers have a great opportunity to repurchase the products or services offered (Cloud & Rehman, 2014). Theoretically, Schiffman and Kanuk define consumer satisfaction as the result of an evaluation related to whether the products and services purchased are following their expectations or not (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). If the products and services follow what is expected, consumers will feel satisfied, and vice versa (Putro, 2014).

Experts also agree that the better a company provides satisfaction to its customers, the higher the return on investment and profits obtained (Fornell et al., 2006). Modern retail stores are a service business; therefore, paying attention to service quality is important in this industry. Zeithaml (Zeithaml et al., 1996) states that customer satisfaction can be influenced by the quality of services provided (Wang & Kim, 2019). Many studies have tested customer satisfaction through service quality dimensions (Teeroovengadum, 2020).

Therefore, this study also measures consumer satisfaction at Alfamart retail stores using a service quality instrument known as the SERVQUAL instrument with a modified version; where this instrument was developed by Parasuraman et al. (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and had five dimensions, namely physical appearance (tangible), responsiveness (responsiveness), reliability (reliability), and assurance (assurance) and attention (empathy) (Slack & Singh, 2020).

Creating and maintaining customer loyalty provides many advantages for the company. Many researchers have confirmed that consumer loyalty can provide benefits in reducing marketing costs and increasing profits (Han & Ryu, 2009). In addition, loyal consumers tend to

spread positive word of mouth; even consumer loyalty has been considered an important asset for an organization (Nature & Noor, 2020). In literature, Oliver (Oliver, 1999) defines *consumer loyalty* as a firm commitment to buy or re-subscribe to a popular brand, service, or store consistently in the future without considering marketing strategies that might influence behavior (Melnyk, 2014). Next up, Oliver (Oliver, 1999) and Zeithaml (Zeithaml, 2000) mention that the concept of consumer loyalty can be seen from two perspectives, namely, the perspective of attitude and behavior (Sivapalan & Jebarajakirthy, 2017).

From an attitude point of view, consumer loyalty is the customer's emotional commitment to purchase or subscribe to a particular product or service. Meanwhile, from a behavioral point of view, consumer loyalty can be seen as an actual choice behavior that focuses on the frequency of repeat purchases (Nature & Noor, 2020). The characteristics of loyal consumers can be seen in purchases repeatedly made regularly, buying between product and service lines, referring back to others, and being resistant to competitors (Putro, 2014).

Many studies have made the differences between the sexes (gender) the subject, especially concerning their attitudes and behavior. Gender differences can be explained from a biological and social perspective (Teeroovengadum, 2020). However, in this study, the gender differences in question are those that lead to a social perspective. Social variables may explain gender differences according to their position in society, so knowledge of gender disparities can be used in the consuming process (Teeroovengadum, 2020).

Gentry (Gentry et al., 2003) defines *gender* as something different with a complete understanding of biology, but gender is an attribute of the symbolic role of gender differences (Juniarti & Ikatrinasari, 2014). Gender is one of the demographic or socioeconomic variables that has been used for many years for customer classification and product market segmentation (Helgesen & Nettet, 2010). Not surprisingly, gender plays an important role for marketing researchers and retail store management in helping to understand consumer behavior.

Many kinds of literature have emphasized that creating customer satisfaction and loyalty can shape customer retention, thereby increasing cash flow directly, which will lead to higher corporate value and future strategic growth (Audrain-Pontevia & Vanhuele, 2016). This is very important for retailers' survival in the highly competitive modern retail store industry. However, the problem faced is that customer satisfaction and loyalty is difficult to define and measure clearly (Wang & Kim, 2019). Retailers often fail to create customer satisfaction and loyalty, even though they have created a loyalty program with a large budget (Yavas & Babakus, 2009). Therefore, researchers usually use behavioral and attitude measures to assess it (Wang & Kim, 2019).

Differences between genders, especially those related to their behavior and attitudes, have attracted the attention of researchers, especially their impact on differences in consumer

satisfaction and loyalty. Kumar stated that customer satisfaction and loyalty are influenced by demographic factors, where gender is one (Kumar et al., 2018). Research conducted by Yuen and Chan (Yuen & Chan, 2010) found that gender differences can influence customer loyalty to a store.

A study conducted in the banking sector shows a difference in satisfaction in terms of gender, where female customers are more satisfied than male customers (Aljasser & Sasidhar, 2016). Several authors have shown that gender moderates the effect of satisfaction on loyalty (Audrain-Pontevia & Vanhuele, 2016). Kotler (Kotler & Keller, 2009) revealed that consumer behavior is influenced by gender, which is the basis for differences in attitudes or norms, so the level of satisfaction and loyalty between men and women may be different (Kusuma, 2018). There are many differences in men's and women's spending expectations and consumption behavior (Wang & Kim, 2019).

Borges et al. (Borges et al., 2013) found that women were more sensitive than men to hedonic store attributes. Likewise, Danaher (Danaher, 1998) observed that female customers tended to be more interested in their interactions with service employees, whereas men were more interested in their convenience (Teeroovengadum, 2020). So what about the consumers of the Alfamart Mujur branch of the retail store, East Praya? Do gender differences show different perceptions of their satisfaction and loyalty to Alfamart?. Based on the description above, there are several hypotheses proposed in this study, namely:

H1: there is a difference in satisfaction between male consumers and female consumers at the Alfamart branch of the Mujur retail store

H2: there is a difference in loyalty between male consumers and female consumers at the Alfamart Mujur branch of retail stores

H3: there is a simultaneous difference in satisfaction and loyalty between male consumers and female consumers at the Alfamart Mujur branch of retail stores

### **Research Design**

This study obtained primary data by distributing questionnaires filled out by consumers of the Alfamart Mujur branch, East Praya District, Central Lombok. Before the questionnaire was distributed, the researcher first conducted a reliability test (as indicated by the Cronbachs Apla value  $> 0.60$ ) and a validity test (as indicated by the correlation value of each indicator to the total score of significant variables/constructs) (Gozali, 2005). The research questionnaire consists of two important items, namely preliminary questions, and core questions. Preliminary questions include respondents' demographic questions, including gender and frequency of visits to Alfamart, at least 1 to 3 visits, or even more during the past month. At the same time, the core questions are

respondents' responses to questions related to their satisfaction and loyalty. The questionnaire related to customer satisfaction was developed based on the SERVQUAL instrument proposed by Parasuraman (Slack & Singh, 2020) with a slight modification that includes questions of physical ability (tangible), responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and overall satisfaction (outcomes). Likewise, the consumer loyalty questionnaire was developed based on indicators from Griffin (Putro, 2014) with modifications that have been adjusted, which include repurchase, consumer resistance, telling positive things by word of mouth (WOM), and referring to others. So, there are 24 question items to measure customer satisfaction and loyalty. Consumer satisfaction and loyalty are measured using a five-point Likert scale consisting of a score of 1 to express strongly disagree to a score of 5 to strongly agree. A total of 165 questionnaires were distributed, but only 140 questionnaires were declared valid, consisting of 70 male and 70 female respondents.

### Data Analysis Tools

Furthermore, the primary data collected will be processed using the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) analysis tool using SPSS 17. This follows the researcher's needs, namely wanting to see the relationship between the independent variable (categorically based on gender) and the dependent variable (interval, in terms of gender). This is customer satisfaction and loyalty). Several assumptions must be met in the MANOVA statistical test, namely the normality test, multicollinearity test, and homogeneity of variance (Gozali, 2005).

## Results and Discussion

### Test the Validity and Reliability of the Research Questionnaire

The research questionnaire is considered valid if the r count is greater than the r table (Gozali, 2005). The r table is obtained at 0.3610, while the r count for the customer satisfaction and loyalty questionnaire can be seen in table 1. and table 2. below.

**Table 1.** Test the Validity of the Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire

No	Indicator	r count	r table	Decision
1	Tangible	0.561	0.3610	Valid
2	Responsiveness	0.831	0.3610	Valid
3	Reliability	0.787	0.3610	Valid
4	Assurance	0.751	0.3610	Valid
5	Empathy	0.778	0.3610	Valid
6	Outcomes	0.872	0.3610	Valid

Source: Data processed

**Table 2.** Consumer Loyalty Questionnaire Validity Test

No	Indicator	r count	r table	Decision
1	Repurchase	0.884	0.3610	Valid

2	Resistance	0.894	0.3610	Valid
3	WOM	0.856	0.3610	Valid
4	Recommendation	0.888	0.3610	Valid

Source: Data processed

The research questionnaire is considered reliable according to Nunnally if the Cronbachs Alpha value shows a number greater than 0.60 (Gozali, 2005). The customer satisfaction and loyalty questionnaires were reliable in this study, as indicated by the Cronbachs Alpha value of 0.878 for consumer satisfaction and 0.90 for consumer loyalty.

### Prerequisite Test for MANOVA Analisis Analysis

#### Normality test

Tests for the normality of the data should be carried out for each multivariate analysis. The normality test was conducted to test whether the data obtained were normally distributed. The dependent variable is normally distributed in each category of the independent variable. To see if the data on customer satisfaction and loyalty are normally distributed, the Zskew and Zkurt values must be compared with the critical value, which is  $\pm 1.96$  for an alpha of 0.05 (Gozali, 2005). Pay attention to Table 3. below.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistics	Statistics	Statistics	Statistics	Std. Error	Statistics	Std. Error
Consumer Satisfaction	140	3	5	-0.274	0.205	0.112	0.407
Consumer Loyalty	140	2	5	0.118	0.205	-0.383	0.407
Valid N (listwise)	140						

Source: Data processed

$$\text{Zskew Consumer Satisfaction} = -0.274 / (\sqrt{6/140}) = -1.324$$

$$\text{Zkurt Consumer Satisfaction} = 0.112 / (\sqrt{24/140}) = 0.271$$

$$\text{Zskew Consumer Loyalty} = 0.118 / (\sqrt{6/140}) = 0.570$$

$$\text{Zkurt Consumer Loyalty} = -0.383 / (\sqrt{24/140}) = -0.925$$

Based on the above calculations, it was found that the Z value, both for the variable consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty, resulted in a value that was below the critical value, namely  $\pm 1.96$ , so it can be said that the data for the two variables were normally distributed and met the assumptions of the MANOVA test.

#### Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test will be tested on the two dependent variables: customer satisfaction and loyalty. This aims to determine whether the dependent variable is linear or not. The result required in MANOVA is that there is no linearity between the two dependent variables and is indicated by a value less than 0.8. Based on the results of the calculation of multicollinearity on the variables of customer satisfaction and loyalty, the value is 0.485 and less than 0.8; it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity, and the MANOVA assumption is fulfilled. Pay attention to Table 4. below.

**Table 4.** Correlations

		Consumer Satisfaction	Consumer Loyalty
Consumer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.485**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	140	140
Consumer Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.485**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	140	140

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Data processed

**Table 5.** Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices(a)

Box's M	F	df1	df2	Sig.
7.69	2,523	3	3427920	0.056

Source: Data processed

**Table 6.** Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Consumer Satisfaction	13,795	1	138	.000
Consumer Loyalty	0.421	1	138	0.518

Source: Data processed

### Homogeneity of variance test

This test was conducted to see whether the dependent variable, which in this case is customer satisfaction and loyalty, has the same variance in each category of the independent variable (gender). The homogeneity of variance test results can be seen in Table 5. above. Based on Table 5. it can be seen that the Box's M test value is 7,690. The F test value is 2,523 with a significance level of 0.056, which is greater than 0.05, so it can be said that there is the same variance in each category of independent variables and fulfills the assumptions of the MANOVA test.

In addition to Box's M test, we can also see Levene's test, as shown in table 6. to test the



homogeneity of the variance. Where can be seen that the value of sig. of consumer loyalty of 0.518 is greater than 0.05, then there is the same variant. But the value of sig. of customer satisfaction is 0.000 and less than 0.05, so it violates the assumption of MANOVA, which requires the same variant. MANOVA is still robust, so that the analysis can be continued (Gozali, 2005).

### Research Hypothesis Testing

After all of MANOVA assumptions have been met, the next step is to test the proposed research hypothesis. Based on the results of the MANOVA test, as shown in Table 7, the F test value for the relationship between gender and consumer satisfaction is 1.755 with a significance value of 0.187, where this value is greater than 0.05, so it can be said that the alternative hypothesis is rejected and accepts the hypothesis. Zero or, in other words, there is no difference in satisfaction between male and female consumers at the Alfamart Mujur branch of the retail store.

**Table 7.** Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Consumer Satisfaction	.457a	1	0.457	1,755	0.187
	Consumer Loyalty	.114b	1	0.114	0.326	0.569
Intercept	Consumer Satisfaction	2021.6	1	2021.6	7761.787	.000
	Consumer Loyalty	1659,457	1	1659,457	4728,719	.000
Gender	Consumer Satisfaction	0.457	1	0.457	1,755	0.187
	Consumer Loyalty	0.114	1	0.114	0.326	0.569
Error	Consumer Satisfaction	35,943	138	0.26		
	Consumer Loyalty	48,429	138	0.351		
Total	Consumer Satisfaction	2058	140			
	Consumer Loyalty	1708	140			
Corrected Total	Consumer Satisfaction	36.4	139			
	Consumer Loyalty	48,543	139			

Source: Data processed

**Table 8.** Multivariate Test

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	df error	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	0.984	4296,449a	2	137	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	0.016	4296,449a	2	137	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	62,722	4296,449a	2	137	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	62,722	4296,449a	2	137	.000
Gender	Pillai's Trace	0.013	.874a	2	137	0.419
	Wilks' Lambda	0.987	.874a	2	137	0.419
	Hotelling's Trace	0.013	.874a	2	137	0.419
	Roy's Largest Root	0.013	.874a	2	137	0.419

Source: Data processed

Then for the relationship between gender and consumer loyalty, based on Table 7. the F test value is 0.326 with a significance value of 0.569 or greater than 0.05, which means that the alternative hypothesis is rejected and accepts the null hypothesis or there is no difference in loyalty between consumers. Male and female consumers at the Alfamart branch of the Mujur retail store.

Finally, by looking at the Multivariate Test in Table 8. SPSS output provides 4 kinds of multivariate significance tests, namely Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root. Because this study uses two dependent variables, namely customer satisfaction, and loyalty, it is sufficient to only focus on the significant value seen in Hotelling's Trace. The multivariate test results show that the F test value for Hotelling's Trace is 0.874 and a significance value of 0.419, which indicates a significant value above 0.05; this means that the alternative hypothesis is also rejected and accepts the null hypothesis or not. There is a simultaneous difference in satisfaction and loyalty between male and female consumers at the Alfamart Mujur branch of the retail store.

## Discussion

Based on the hypothesis testing above shows the results of rejecting all alternative hypotheses in the three research hypotheses proposed. This means that there is no difference, either simultaneously or partially, between the satisfaction and loyalty of male consumers and

female consumers at the Alfamart Branch Mujur retail store. This finding contradicts the research conducted by Yuen and Chan (Yuen & Chan, 2010) and quoted in (Kumar et al., 2018), namely that gender differences can affect customer loyalty in a store. Similarly, Aljasser and Sasidhar's research found that gender can lead to differences in satisfaction in the banking sector, where female customers are more satisfied than male customers (Aljasser & Sasidhar, 2016). This study is also not in line with Borges et al. (Borges et al., 2013), stating that women are more sensitive than men to hedonic store attributes. In other words, consumers of the Alfamart Mujur branch, both male and female, have a perception that can be said to be no different from the hedonic store attributes.

Similarly, the research results conducted by Danaher (Danaher, 1998) also mentioned (Teeroovengadum, 2020) that female customers are more interested in interaction with service employees, and men are more interested in interaction convenience. In contrast, the results of this study found things that were not in line with Danaher's research, where male and female consumers may have the same interests both in terms of interaction with service employees and in terms of convenience. Lastly, the research conducted by Audrain (Audrain-Pontevia & Vanhuele, 2016) found that store managers should focus more on the functional aspects of dealing with male customers and focus on the relational aspects of dealing with female customers. However, in this study, male and female consumers may have no different perceptions regarding functional and relational aspects that are equally important.

## **Conclusion**

This research is important to increase knowledge and insight for retail business players regarding their efforts to win the competition by creating marketing programs that are more satisfying and can retain and attract more loyal consumers in the long term. The findings in this study indicate that there is no difference in satisfaction and loyalty between male and female consumers at the Alfamart Branch Mujur retail store.

Thus, this study yields different findings from several studies that raise the same issue (Aljasser & Sasidhar, 2016; Audrain-Pontevia & Vanhuele, 2016; Danaher, 1998; Kumar et al., 2018; Teeroovengadum, 2020; Yuen & Chan, 2010). However, these differences in findings do not become something that is seen as negative but can be an alternative perspective that adds to our treasury, insight, and knowledge regarding the topics raised in this study.

This study cannot generalize one research finding that can be used for all situations, locations, or certain objects. This is because consumer behavior in each region or country is influenced by different cultural variables (Kopalle et al., 2010), leading to unequal satisfaction and loyalty from one country to another (Kursunluoglu, 2014). Therefore, in the case of the Alfamart Branch Mujur retail store, managers do not have to develop different loyalty programs

for male and female consumers. Managers only need to develop service-based marketing strategies, such as providing service to employees ready to interact with consumers. On the other hand, it must also create convenience in shopping so that both relational and functional aspects can be realized together.

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