

## The Influential Factors in Purchasing Goods in Convenience Stores: The Cases of Alfamart and Indomaret in Jakarta

Dahlia Darmayanti<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Halim<sup>2</sup>

Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia<sup>1,2</sup>

Corresponding author: [ddarmayanti@binus.edu](mailto:ddarmayanti@binus.edu)

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5471-4533

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the factors that cause Indonesian consumers to purchase products in convenience stores. This study investigates the influential factors such as social media reviews, brand satisfaction, service operations, and price promotions toward customer satisfaction that leads to consumers' intentions to repeat buying in convenience stores. The survey questionnaires were distributed online. There were 117 respondents who lived in Jakarta, Indonesia, as the valid respondents. The research hypotheses were tested using SEM-PLS. The findings revealed that brand satisfaction and service operations influence customer satisfaction. Also, customer satisfaction is an influential factor that drives customers to engage in repeat purchases in convenience stores. Meanwhile, social media reviews and price promotions do not influence customer satisfaction in convenience stores. The findings give insights into the factors that influence Indonesian consumers' behavior towards customer satisfaction that leads them to do repeat buying.

**Keywords:** Brand Satisfaction; Customer Satisfaction; Price Promotions; Service Operations; Social Media Reviews

## **INTRODUCTION**

Convenience stores are one type of retailers that have shown rapid expansion in Indonesia. There are various business actors in Indonesia such as Indomaret, Alfamart, Circle K, Family Mart, and others. However, two local brands of convenience stores that dominate the market are Alfamart and Indomaret, as they compete with each other to gain market shares in Indonesia. From 2018 to 2021, Indomaret's revenue was slightly higher than Alfamart which was approximately 43.2%, while Alfamart's revenue was about 40.8% of the total revenue of the convenience store market in Indonesia.

In order to acquire more customers, increase profit, and maintain brand loyalty, convenience stores also conduct marketing strategies related to promotions such as using social media, apply price tactics, and enhance their service operations. The importance of marketing is beneficial for both the business and the customers (Kee et al., 2021). For example, they always keep up with the times such as by having social media to show the promotions or new products to keep in touch with their consumers.

Social media is a tool where a group of people can share their moments, creativity, social life, and others. Social media gives information about anything, including reviews of the store. In social media, people comment on products, services, and other aspects that are provided by the store. Thus, currently, it is used as feeder information or knowledge for future customers (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). It can be a good opportunity for the retail sector because it has a big potential to increase sales. It can depict the advantages of the store over other stores which could make many people more interested in going to the store. However, it could also be a threat for the store if the reviews are bad.

A brand is very important for a company to represent their products in one image. It is a feature that identifies one product from other products. Therefore, a brand is used as recognition, so people can recognize the product just through the brand (Pride & Ferrel, 2016). Most of the brands preferred by customers have a good brand image. Selling preferred brands attracts customers, increases the loyalty of the customers toward the store, and improves the credibility of the store (Pride & Ferrel, 2016). By selling a well-known brand, the trust of the customers will be higher than before because their "feeling of safety" will be well secured.

Service operations are a controllable element that can give convenience to customers as efficiently as possible. These include the variants of payment methods, the location of the store, the parking slots, and others (Berman & Evans, 2012). The conveniences that stores offer are also connected to the shopping decisions of the customers because consumers require a range of interlinked services (Ramanathan, Subramanian, & Parrot, 2017). It means that the good service operations of a store has the potential to affect consumer behavior which could lead them to shop at the store more often than before.

Price promotions are one of the strategies to influence more people to come. Price promotions help the retail industry to increase sales (Totten & Block, 1994). This happens because there is a possibility where the customer switches from one store to another store that provides better price promotions (Narasimhan et al., 1996). Having frequent promotions can decrease consumers' price references for a certain brand or product. This means that if the price promotion is no longer used, the product's sales will be lower than it was when having a regular price (Lattin & Bucklin, 1989). Therefore, the time of the promotion must be considered because it has an after effect on the long-term promotion.

Variables such as social media reviews, brand satisfaction, service operations, and price promotions are very important for convenience store operators or owners. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine whether the effects of social media reviews, brand satisfaction, service operations, and promotions have a positive impact on customer satisfaction that leads them to engage in repeat purchases in convenience stores or not. For this research, Indomaret and Alfamart are the convenience stores that will be analyzed. The benefit of the study is to give the convenience store operators knowledge that they can increase customer satisfaction while shopping in their convenience stores and customer loyalty.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Retailers including convenience stores use social media reviews, service operations, brand satisfaction, and promotions to enhance customer satisfaction.

### **Social Media Reviews**

Social media enables people to communicate easily with each other and has the power for marketers to influence and interact with people (Appel et al., 2020). Other than that, social media also provides a lot of information. Therefore, people look for information often because social media reviews have become a progressively suitable technique for adopting new products (Rosario et al., 2019). The reviews that consumers hear or read will influence their intentions and decisions, which in turn influence the firm's performance (Kim et al., 2016), because customers rely on online recommendations by other customers who use certain products or services (Magnani, 2020). Therefore, a good review of the store will attract many people to come but, if the reviews are bad, the consumers will express an unwillingness to purchase. However, there is no proof or research that shows social media reviews also have an impact toward convenience stores. Thus, the researcher will examine whether social media reviews have an impact toward customers of convenience stores or not.

H1: Social media reviews have a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

### **Brand Satisfaction**

Brand satisfaction is a connection between the brand of the product and the consumer (Ramanathan & Ramanathan, 2013). Therefore, the product that the retailer offers also has an impact on customer satisfaction. The retailer that sells a product that has a certain preferred brand will attract more consumers to come. A preferred brand also increases the credibility of the store. The credibility that the store offers to the customers is very important. Therefore, selling a preferred brand is very useful and helpful for the store to acquire more customers. Other than attaining credibility, it also can encourage more customers because the likability of the customers towards the brand will be high. The likability of the customers towards the brand is a personal bond between the brand and the customers themselves. According to Aaker (1997), the customers identify themselves with a brand or adopt a brand because it reflects their personality. Therefore, consumer choice is an emotionally charged experience for them (Rosenbaum-Elliott & Percy, 2012). Moreover, the attachment between the brand and the customer also develops over time. Also, the degree of attachment is often based on the interactions between the person and the object itself (Baldwin et al., 1996; Thomson et al., 2005). That means creating a positive brand attitude will increase the desired behavior toward the brand and also increase the satisfaction of the customer (Arora & Stoner, 1996; Zhu, 2011). Therefore, there is a possibility where brand satisfaction could have a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

H2: Brand satisfaction has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

### **Service Operations**

Service operations are a controllable element of the store, for example, the selling style of the store, the pricing and merchandise strategies, the location of the retail store, and other elements (Ramanathan, Subramanian, & Parrot, 2017) that could offer convenience for the customers to access and buy the products in the retail store. Moreover, retailers also like to make their stores attractive largely through controllable elements (Berman & Evans, 2012) because being attractive, preferable, and favorable could lead the store to be more successful. Other than that, there are characteristics of the store that could affect the satisfaction of the customer, which are an assortment of the brand, atmosphere, and location (Bloemer & Odekerken-Schröder, 2002). Furthermore, according to Martenson (2007), facilities such as service quality, store attraction, and availability of the brand are part of customer satisfaction. Therefore, based on those service operation elements, it conveys that service operations could have a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

H3: Service operations have a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

### **Price Promotions**

Prices are a very sensitive issue for customers, so price promotions could be a strategy that can be used for convenience stores. An atmosphere full of promotions is also very attractive for customers, and the atmosphere in an outlet is a one-of-a-kind element in the retail marketing mix (Ma'ruf, 2006). It will make the customer passionate to come and buy a product because it increases the interest of the consumer in the product.

Moreover, some researchers also discovered that price promotions have a positive impact on a product. It increases the perceived quality (Villarejo-Ramos & Sánchez-Franco, 2005) and brand evaluation (Chung, 2006), which could lead them to be satisfied and want to return to the store more often. This implies that price promotions have a positive impact on customer satisfaction while shopping in retail stores. Therefore, based on past studies, price promotions could have a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

H4: Price promotions have a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

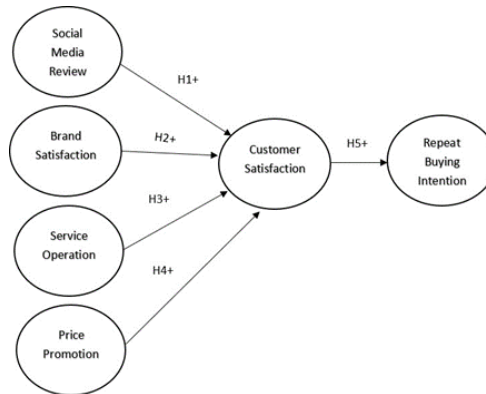
### **Customer Satisfaction**

Satisfaction is a response where the degree of satisfaction depends on the difference between the expectation of the consumer and the real experience that the store provides (Cortés et al., 1999). Satisfaction arises when the expectations are met. Dissatisfaction occurs when the expectations are not confirmed (Oliver, 1980). Moreover, consumer satisfaction has a direct impact (Bou-Llusar et al., 2001; Yi & La, 2004; Tsiotsou, 2006) and has a positive impact (Calvo, 2001; Hansen & Solgaard, 2001; Sanzo, 2003; Grunert, 2004) on buying intention. That means there is a possibility where customer satisfaction has a positive impact on repeat purchase intention.

H5: Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on repeat buying intention.

Based on the hypothesis development above, the proposed research framework is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Proposed Research Framework



## RESEARCH METHOD

This research used SEM-PLS to test the hypotheses. Convenience sampling was adopted for the data collection. Visser, Krosnick, and Lavrakas (2000) argued that convenience sampling is effective and efficient for collecting important data, in terms of readiness, availability, and time efficiency. Questionnaires were distributed online using Indonesian language. The respondents were men and women who lived in Jakarta, with ages between 17 and 56 years old.

The internal consistency among the items had to be conducted to determine reliability. Therefore, Cronbach's alpha measurement and composite reliability were used to test the reliability. The consistency of the test was represented by numbers between 0 and 1. To be considered as reliable data, the value of the Cronbach's alpha had to be over 0.7 for each variable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The composite reliability was also calculated to test or measure the internal consistency of each variable in a particular component, much like the Cronbach's alpha measurement. A validity test was performed and interpreted as the results of a distinct instrument reflecting different meanings. This method tested the hypotheses using a statistical test to determine the sufficiency of the model to fit the data. The method used to perform the convergent validity analysis in this research was Averaged Variance Extracted (AVE). The valid value of the AVE needed to be 0.5 or above. To measure the variables, a four-point Likert scale was adopted.

## RESULTS

There were 117 valid respondents for this study, who consisted of 41 women and 76 men. In regards of their age, the majority of the respondents (57) were between 22 and 41 years old. This was followed by those who were 17 to 21 years old that consisted of 47 respondents. The last group was respondents aged 42 to 56 years old who accounted for 13 people. Of the 117 respondents, 72 respondents have visited Indomaret more often than Alfamart. Moreover, 64 respondents visit the convenience store every week or every two weeks, while 30 and 20 respondents visit it every 3 or 4 weeks and above 4 weeks, respectively. Only 3 respondents visit the convenience store every day.

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used to determine the reliability of the scale. Table 1 displays the results of the reliability, which is greater than 0.7. Thus, it indicates that the constructs are reliable and have high internal consistency.

**Table 1.** Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>
Brand Satisfaction	0.802	0.884
Social Media Reviews	0.851	0.894
Service Operations	0.93	0.940
Price Promotions	0.874	0.914
Customer Satisfaction	0.831	0.888
Intention to Do Repeat Buying	0.836	0.891

The convergent validity was calculated using the AVE. An AVE value of 0.5 or above is accepted. Table 2 lists the values of the AVE of the construct of the present study.

**Table 2.** Values of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</b>
Brand Satisfaction	0.718
Social Media Reviews	0.679
Service Operations	0.613
Price Promotions	0.727
Customer Satisfaction	0.664
Intention to Do Repeat Buying	0.672

Path coefficients were used in the structural equation model of the research. The values of the path coefficients helped to test the hypotheses, as it showed the relationships between the variables. The significant value for the path coefficients, t-values, and p-values was 0.05. If the p-value of the variable was less than 0.05, it was accepted and considered statistically significant, which means there was a relevancy between the first variable and the second variable. This research proposed five hypotheses to evaluate the relationships among the proposed variables. Table 3 displays the path coefficients, t-values, and p-values of the present study.

**Table 3.** Path Coefficients

Variable	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	T-value	p-values
Social Media Reviews on Customer Satisfaction (H1)	0.040	0.084	0.473	0.636
Brand Satisfaction on Customer Satisfaction (H2)	0.363	0.358	3.642	0.000
Service Operations on Customer Satisfaction (H3)	0.381	0.101	3.779	0.000
Price Promotions on Customer Satisfaction (H4)	0.158	0.118	1.342	0.180
Customer Satisfaction on Intention to Do Repeat Buying (H5)	0.789	0.047	16.868	0.000

H1. Social media reviews have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. The results indicate that the path coefficient between social media and customer satisfaction was 0.040, the t-value was 0.473, and the p-value was 0.636, which was above the threshold value of 0.05. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is rejected.

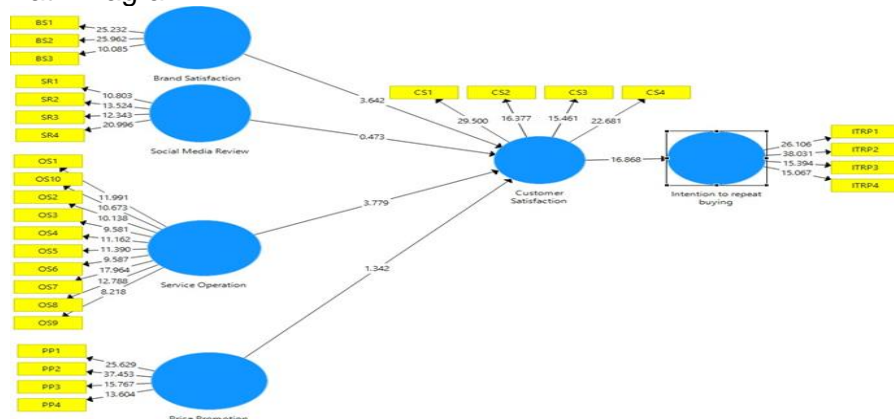
H2. Brand satisfaction has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. The p-value for brand satisfaction on customer satisfaction is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This means that there is a positive relationship between brand satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Thus, hypothesis H2 is accepted.

H3. Service operations have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. The p-value for service operations is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This means that there is a positive relationship between service operations and customer satisfaction. Consequently, hypothesis H3 is accepted.

H4. Price promotions have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. The p-value for price promotions on customer satisfaction was 0.180, which is greater than 0.05. This means that hypothesis H4 is rejected.

H5. Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on repeat buying intention. The p-value for customer satisfaction on repeat buying intention was 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This means that there is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and the intention to do repeat buying. As a result, hypothesis H5 is supported. Figure 2 below represents the path coefficient diagram of each relationship.

**Figure 2.** Path Diagram



## **DISCUSSION**

Based on the research findings, social media reviews do not have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. This does not align with research done by Ramanathan, Subramanian, and Parrot (2017). From the current research findings, it reveals that social media is not the biggest factor for consumers to go to a convenience store. According to the responses of consumers that were surveyed by the researcher, the factor that has the biggest effect on consumers is the distance of the convenience store.

The results identified that customers have their own favorite brands which Indomaret and Alfamart provide. Consumers in Indonesia are emotionally attached to several products such as noodles and drinking water with Indomie and Aqua as their favorite brands. The customers prefer to buy these products because of the interactions between the products and the consumers who have consumed them over the years (Baldwin et al., 1996). Moreover, the products also have created positive brand attitudes for a long time which induce desired behavioral responses to their brands and increase satisfaction (Arora & Stoner, 1996). Therefore, they prefer to buy these products than others which gives them satisfaction when they find the brands in the store. In another finding, service operations have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. All elements of service operations affect consumer satisfaction because according to the results of the questionnaire, all the elements are important for them.

The consumers like to have good service operations in convenience stores because it gives them comfort while shopping in the stores. Store convenience has a major influence on shopping decisions as consumers require a variety of interrelated services including parking, flexible opening hours, and convenient payment methods. Moreover, according to Bloemer and Oderken-Schroder (2002), an assortment of brands, a comfortable atmosphere, and a good location also influence the perceived level of customer satisfaction.

The promotions do not positively impact customer satisfaction. The findings of this study do not align with the original research findings by Huang, Change, Yeh, and Liao (2014). In addition, the biggest convenience stores do not really implement price promotions too much, but the sales are still high. Therefore, in this research the price promotions do not influence consumers' attitudes toward convenience stores in Indonesia. Price promotions also have a negative impact in some cases. For example, it has been found that price promotions are negative in forming tourist loyalty to tour operators. It has negative effects which decrease the perceived quality, satisfaction, and consumer loyalty (Campo & Yague, 2008).

As for customer satisfaction, the variable has a positive impact on the intention to do repeat buying. It is identified by the effects of customer satisfaction toward the intention to do repeat buying, which is high at 78.9%. This implies that consumers in Indonesia will most probably do repeat buying if they are satisfied with the store.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study was able to provide better insights on Indonesian consumers of Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z towards convenience stores. Convenience stores are steadily growing in Indonesia. Many convenience stores can be found easily in Indonesia. The growth of convenience stores is high, which means the consumption toward convenience stores is also high in Indonesia. Consumers from Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z influence the sales of convenience stores. Due to the increasing

demand in convenience stores, they need to maintain service operations such as the stock, opening times, and other aspects that could help customers anytime.

Consumers prefer to shop from stores that sell their favorite brands. In this research, social media reviews did not have a big effect on the consumers, so the managers could pay more attention to this variable because social media is used by numerous people. However, the promotions were not socialized well. Thus, the social media of convenience stores must provide the most recent updates of promotions, which could have more of an impact on the satisfaction of consumers. Convenience stores also need to pay attention to people's favorite brands because according to the study results, most of the interviewees were interested in having promotions for their favorite brands. It is also suggested that convenience stores focus on customer satisfaction. By creating satisfaction for the customers, it will lead the customers to repeat buying in the same store and spread good word-of-mouth to other people.

### LIMITATIONS

There were several limitations in this study, which include the topic of convenience stores has not been well researched in the past. The study was conducted in Jakarta. There were challenges in finding theories and research that covered convenience stores. Moreover, there were also difficulties in finding information in secondary research that covers Indonesian consumers' behavior and attitudes towards convenience stores in Indonesia.

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