Original Article

The Effect of Satisfaction on Loyalty: Word of Mouth Intervening Variable

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Abstract - *The main purpose of this study is to test and analyze the role of word of mouth mediation in the influence of satisfaction on Loyalty. The data was collected using questionnaires from 195 students of the Private Health College in Kendari City. Students who sampled the research were obtained with a population of 4202 students using the Slovin formula (precision level 7.5%) using the multistage sampling method. The data was analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) AMOS 23.0. The analysis found that variable word of mouth plays a role in mediating the effect of satisfaction on student loyalty. Another finding is positive and significant satisfaction with word of mouth and Loyalty. Word of mouth is positive and significant to Loyalty.*

Keywords - *satisfaction, ; Loyalty.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are a forum for the establishment of human resources quality to prepare the necessary human resources for future development. Law No. 20 of 2003 opens the opportunity to establish private educational institutions ranging from primary education to higher education. Therefore increasing the number of students becomes very important concerning Loyalty.

Customer loyalty is the Loyalty of a party that uses products or services either for its purposes or as an intermediary for the other party to continue to subscribe to a company in the long term, by purchasing and using products or services repeatedly and willingly recommending the company's products and services to its peers. Loyal or loyal customers according to (Andreassen and Lindestad, 1998; Bowen and Chen, 2001; Evan and Laskin, 1994) are the people who repurchase from the same company, as well as providing positive information to other potential parties by word of mouth.

A consumer can be a loyal customer due to several factors that determine Loyalty to a product or service. In building and increasing customer loyalty, companies should pay attention to the factors that affect them. According to Robinette (2001), factors that affect customer loyalty are caring, trust, length of patronage, and overall satisfaction. The caring factor, the company must be able to see and overcome all needs, expectations, and problems faced by customers. With that in turn, customers will become satisfied with the company and re-transaction with the company, and in the end, they will become loyal corporate customers. The more the company shows its attention, the greater the customer loyalty it appears.

Student loyalty is defined as the student's Loyalty to the institution, which is that Loyalty is formed from a positive impression of, pride, willingness to write positive impressions of the campus on social media, have no intention of moving to another campus. The awakening of the student's Loyalty is directly determined by the student's satisfaction with the services provided by the institution.

Hoffman & Bateson (2010) states that if there is no correspondence between customer satisfaction and the services offered, then it leads to short-term satisfaction while the quality of service builds a customer's long-term attitude towards the organization. Suppose the student has a high level of satisfaction. In that case, it will continue to use the service and in the long term lead to the onset of positive behaviour in the form of willingness to convey good or positive things to others and ultimately lead to student loyalty to the institution.

On the other hand, customer satisfaction is a demonstrative reaction from buyers to brand goods or services (Oliver, 1997). Further (Oliver, 1997) states that this emotional reaction can be positive or negative. The quality of service is well defined by Bitner and Hubberts (1994) as the overall consumer impression of the relative excellence of the organization and its services. Customer satisfaction is a customer's instant reaction to an organization's service, or the quality of service is a shopper's assessment that helps distinguish between predictable services and expected services ([1]).

There have been many researchers who analyzed the effect of satisfaction and word of mouth on Loyalty but based on empirical search results, and few have tested and analyzed the role of word of mouth in affecting satisfaction with Loyalty using specific subjects. This research begins with recommendations [2], specific college objects, and adding a variable word of mouth in the models it has tested.

The main purpose of the study was to test whether WOM played a significant role as an intervening variable in the influence of satisfaction on Loyalty. The relationship between variables in the research model is built on the meta results of previous research analyses. The relationship between satisfaction and WOM is based on the results of [3]; [4]; [5]; [6]; [1]; [7]; [8]; [9] which found that satisfaction had a significant effect on *word of mouth.*

Furthermore the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is based on the results of [2]; [10] [11] [12] [5]; [13] [14]; [15] [16]; [17]; [18]; [19] [20]; [21] [15], which found that satisfaction had a significant influence on loyalty. And the relationship between WOM and loyalty is based on the [5]; [22] [1], which found that WOM had a significant influence on loyalty.

In addition, empirical studies found empirical gaps in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Research results [2]; [10] [11]; [12] [5]; [13] [14]; [15] [16]; [17]; [18]; [19] [20]; [21] [15], which found that satisfaction had a significant influence on loyalty. While result this research is not in line with saragih research (2001), Tamara, Leli. (2014), which found that satisfaction had no significant effect on loyalty.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

[13] confirmed the positive and significant effect of student satisfaction on student loyalty. Other studies conducted by [23] [13] in improving student loyalty. It can be predicted that the higher the quality of service, the higher the student satisfaction. Besides, a better quality of service also increases student loyalty both directly and indirectly. [24] a study of universities in Portugal, the results showed a positive effect of quality of service on student satisfaction.

[25] learn how leadership competencies affect employee performance, which affects responsiveness and ultimately organizational performance. [25] observing that specific leadership competencies lead to greater employee satisfaction and thus, employees serve customers better, which in turn, results in customer loyalty. Besides, they also found a positive influence on student satisfaction on student loyalty. The same results also apply to current students and alumni. Loyal students make a positive contribution to the college in determining the most effective promotional strategies and development plans to maintain long-term success for students and alumni. It is found by [2] using public and private universities in Riau Province.

Some other research results supporting the formulation of one hypothesis are: [3]; [4]; [5]; [6]; [1]; [7]; [8]; [9] which found that satisfaction had a significant effect on the

word of mouth. And what supports the second hypothesis is: [2]; [10] [11]; [12] [5]; [13] [14]; [15] [16]; [17]; [18]; [19]; [20]; [21]; [15] which found that satisfaction had a significant influence on loyalty. Therefore, the hypothesis of this research is as follows:

H1: Satisfaction affects Word of Mouth students of Private Health College in Kendari City

H2: Satisfaction affects the Loyalty of private health universities in Kendari City

A. *Word of Mouth's Role In The Effect of Satisfaction On Loyalty*

The effect of satisfaction, in addition to directly affecting Loyalty, also has an indirect effect on Loyalty through word of mouth. Word of mouth or communication of student information arises due to the satisfaction of students over the increasing quality of service and the inherent image of institutions in the minds of students. Students will felt satisfaction as a result of the quality of service following student expectations and the formation of the image through communication and student experience.

[26] formulate that satisfaction is a thorough response that affects the difference between previous expectations and what is felt after the service product is consumed or after-purchase evaluation, where the perception of the performance of the selected service meets the customer's expectations. Customer satisfaction can only be formed if the customer is satisfied with the service received.

Customer satisfaction can affect performance outcomes, including WOM communication or reference and loyalty interests. Therefore, customer satisfaction encourages the creation of WOM communication as found by [27]. [28] stated that customer satisfaction had a positive effect on WOM's interests. Customer satisfaction is positively related to WOM ([28], [9]). When consumers are satisfied, a positive WOM will be created, and they prefer to give purchase recommendations to others [29]. In the research conducted by [4] results, namely customer satisfaction, can encourage customers to do positive WOM. When consumers are satisfied, then they will give a positive WOM and recommend others to make a purchase.

Some other research results supporting the formulation of the third hypothesis are [5]; [22] [1], which found that WOM had a significant influence on Loyalty. Based on the statements that have been put forward, the tenth hypothesis formula in this study is:

H3: Word of mouth Effects the Loyalty of students of Private Health College in Kendari City

H4: Word of mouth plays a role in mediating the effect of satisfaction on the Loyalty of students of Private Health College in Kendari City

III. METHOD

A. Population and Samples

The subjects of this study are students of the Private College of Health in Kendari City consisting of Health Polytechnic, namely: Avicena, Stikes Mandala Waluya, Stikes Karkes, Stikes Pelita Ibu Kdi, Akl Mandala Waluya, and Poltek Binhus which numbered 4202 students. The number of samples that are considered to represent the population is determined by using the Slovin formula with the number of 195 students and sample members determined using the *multistage sampling method.*

a) Research Instruments

Research instruments are questionnaires designed using the Likert scale using five items of choice of answers, namely Strongly Disagree (STS), Disagree (TS), Disagree (KS), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Agree (SS). The list of statements is compiled by referring to the measurements referred to in the variable measurements that have been tested through research. The operationalization of variables used in this study is seen in the table below.

Table 1 Operationalization of Research Variables

No.	Construct	Indicator or indicator variables	Reference Source
1.	Satisfaction (X)	1. Feeling satisfied with the fast and precise service ($X_{.1}$), 2. Feeling satisfied with the completeness of the facilities (X_2), 3. Feeling satisfied with the guarantee of quality service (X_3), • Perasaan satisfied with the hospitality of the service (X_4)	[30]; [23]; [31]
2.	Word of Mouth (Y_1)	1. Mills others positive things about his college ($Y_{1.1}$) 2. Provide information to others when they are asked about a good college ($Y_{1.2}$) 3. Recommend to others who need information about a qualified college ($Y_{1.3}$) • Invite others to use their college ($Y_{1.4}$)	[31]; [32]
3.	Loyalty Y_2)	• Trust ($Y_{2.1}$), • Psychological Commitment ($Y_{2.2}$), • Switching Cost ($Y_{2.3}$), dan • Coorporation ($Y_{2.4}$)	[13]; [33];[2]

a. Analysis of Data

To test the formulated hypothesis, the analysis technique used is Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with the help of AMOS 23.0 software. Based on variable operationalization, the conceptual research model can be described in the complete path model below.
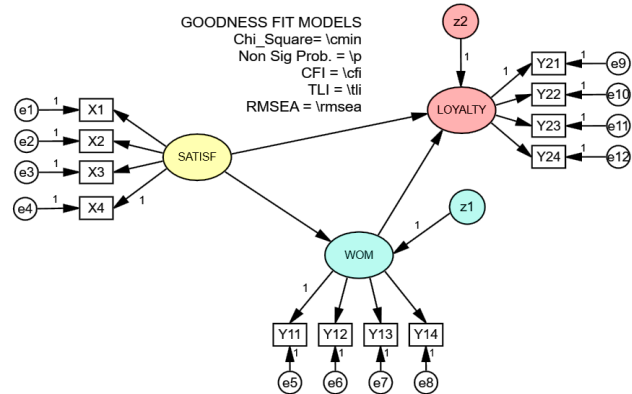

Fig. 1 Full Path Model

Before the hypothesis test is done, it is necessary to do a series of tests, namely: SEM assumption test, goodness fit of models described as:

1. SEM Assumption Test

This test was conducted to obtain that the measurement results of variable satisfaction, word of mouth, and Loyalty have normal distribution both univariate and multivariate. And also the resulting data is free from the symptoms of outliers.

2. Goodness Fit of Models

This test was conducted to find out if the models built in this study were by the research data. Cut of the value of each parameter used is seen in the table below:

Table 2 Criteria of Goodness Fit of Models

Godness of index	*Cut of value*
χ^2-Chi Square	Expected to be small
Non Significance probability	≥ 0.05
CMIN/DF	≤ 2.00
GFI	≥ 0.90
TLI	≥ 0.95
RMSEA	≤ 0.08

Source: [34]

After SEM assumption test and model conformity test, then further done confirmatory factor test and structural model test described as follows:

1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Test

CFA is used to test whether the variable measurement model found in the research model corresponds to the measurement model referenced from the previous study.

CFA test criteria are to compare *the loading factor* value of each indicator variable latent satisfaction, word of mouth, and Loyalty must be greater than 0.5

2. Structural Model Test

Structural model tests are the same as hypothetical tests. From the research model, it is known that there are three hypotheses, namely: two direct influences and one indirect influence.

The direct influence between exogenous variables (satisfaction) on word of mouth and Loyalty was tested by comparing the critical ratio with the alpha value of 5%. If the probability value of the critical ratio is smaller than 0.05 (5%), then the proposed hypothesis is accepted.

Further, to measure the significance of the role of word of mouth mediation is carried out using the Sobel test seen in the image below. Sobel test format is seen in figure 2.
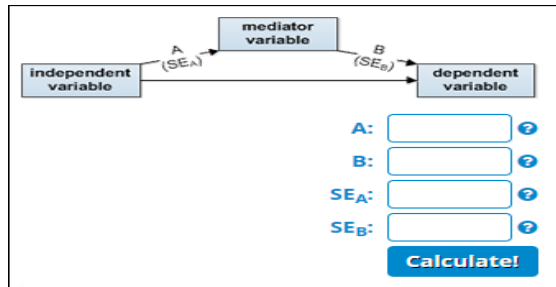

Fig. 2 Calculator Sobel Test

The test criterion is that if the probability value of Z is smaller than the alpha value of 5%, then there is a word of mouth mediation role in the effect of satisfaction on Loyalty.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the hypothesis formula, before the hypothesis test will be carried out a series of SEM usage tests, namely: SEM assumption test, complete path model, direct influence test, and variable word of mouth mediation role test.

A. SEM Assumption Test

SEM assumption test results (*assessment of normality and outliers data) are* seen in the table below.

Table 3 Normality Test Results

Variable	Skew	CR.	Kurtosis	CR.
Y24	-0.0284	-0.1620	-0.3792	-1.0809
Y23	0.0062	0.0355	-0.3013	-0.8588
Y22	-0.1624	-0.9261	0.1631	0.4650
Y21	0.1110	0.6326	-0.2753	-0.7848
Y11	-0.1500	-0.8551	-0.2890	-0.8236
Y12	-0.0897	-0.5114	-0.1420	-0.4047
Y13	-0.0593	-0.3383	0.1969	0.5612
Y14	-0.0845	-0.4818	-0.1322	-0.3769
X1	-0.1600	-0.9123	0.3067	0.8741
X2	-0.0787	-0.4484	0.2075	0.5916
X3	-0.2017	-1.1497	0.2997	0.8542
X4	-0.1839	-1.0483	0.0333	0.0949
Multivariate			2.827	1.077

Source: Primary Data Processed Authors (2020)

Table 3, shows that the *absolute value of Critical Ratio* (CR) skewness and kurtosis is no more than 1.96 so that the data used in this study are distributed normally. Furthermore, Mahalanobis results obtained a maximum value of Mahalanobis (28.3434) no more than 68,669, so the research data had no symptoms of outliers. Based on the results of normality tests and outliers, it can be concluded that the data is normal and free of outliers.

B. Full Path Model

Based on the results of data processing, the results of SEM analysis with AMOS 23.0 software are seen in figure 3.
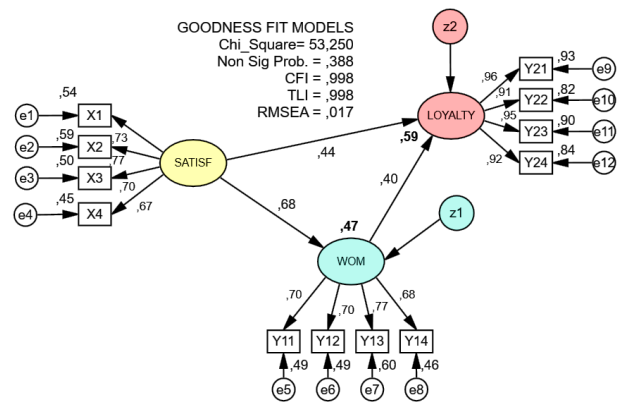

Fig. 3 Hasil Model Path Lengkap

C. The goodness of Fit Models

Conformity test results between data and sem model of research are seen in the table below

The result of model conformity (Table) indicates that all cut of value is eligible so that it can be concluded that there is conformity between the data and the SEM model.

D. Direct Influence Test Results

Based on data processing with AMOS 23.0 program presented a direct influence between latent variable satisfaction, word of mouth, and Loyalty seen in the table below.

Table 4 Direct Influence Test Results

Inter-influence Variable Let			Standardize Regression Weights	Estimate	SE.	CR.	P
WOM	<--	SATISF	0.682	0.801	0.138	58052	***
LOYA	<-	SATI	0.438		0.4	392	**

LTY	--	SF		16,089	10	51	*
LOYALTY	<--	WOM	0.397	12,410	0.334	371 91	***

***= Smaller 0.01

Source: Primary Data Processed Authors (2020)

(1) Hypothesis 1: The Effect of Satisfaction on Word of Mouth

Based on Table 4, it is known that the amount of satisfaction influence on Word of Mouth (WOM) is 0.682 with a probability value (p) of ***(smaller than alpha 1%). Thus it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant influence of satisfaction on WOM. This means that to improve WOM, one of them is to increase student satisfaction.

The results of this study are in line with the findings of the [3]; [4]; [5]; [6]; [1]; [7]; [8]; [9] which found that satisfaction had a significant effect on *word of mouth.*

(2) Hypothesis 2: The Effect of Satisfaction on Loyalty

Based on Table 4, it is known that the amount of satisfaction influence on Loyalty is 0.438 with a probability value (p) of ***(smaller than alpha 1%). Thus it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant influence of satisfaction on Loyalty.

The results of this study are in line with the findings of the [2]; [10] [11]; [12] [5]; [13] [14]; [15] [16] [17]; [18]; [19] [20]; [21] [15], which found that satisfaction had a significant influence on loyalty. While result this research is not in line with saragih research (2001), Tamara, Leli. (2014), which found that satisfaction had no significant effect on loyalty.

(3) Hypothesis 3: Wom's Influence on Loyalty

Based on Table 4, it is known that the amount of word of mouth influence on Loyalty is 0.397 with a probability value (p) of ***(smaller than alpha 1%). Thus it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant influence from WOM on Loyalty. This means that to increase student loyalty can be done by increasing positive WOM.

The results of this study are in line with the findings of the [5]; [22] [1], which found that WOM had a significant influence on Loyalty.

E. Word of Mouth Mediation Role Test Results

To test whether word of mouth variables play a significant role in mediating the effect of satisfaction on Loyalty is done with calculator Sobel test. Based on Table 4, the test results can be seen in the diagram below.
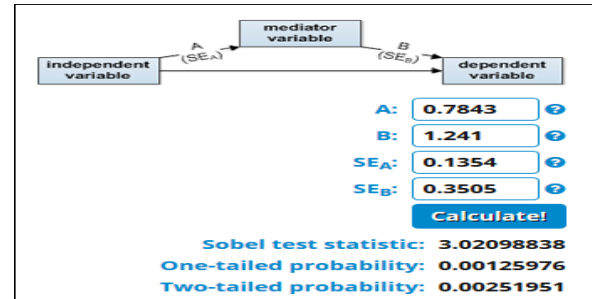

Fig. 4 Result of Sobel Test

The results of the Sobel test in figure 4 indicate that the probability value of Z of both the two-tail test and one tail is smaller than 0.05. thus it can be concluded that there is a significant mediation role of WOM in the influence of satisfaction on Loyalty. The results of this study prove that to increase Loyalty is not only directly influenced by satisfaction, but can also be indirectly through WOM. Positive communication (WOM) created from the onset of positive behaviour of satisfied students can significantly increase student loyalty.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Conclusion

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded as follows:

1. Satisfaction has a positive and positive influence on the word of mouth of students of The Private Health College in Kendari City.
2. Satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on the Loyalty of students of Private Health College in Kendari City.
3. Word of mouth has a positive and significant influence on the Loyalty of students of Private Health College in Kendari City.
4. Word of mouth plays a significant role in mediating the effect of satisfaction on the Loyalty of students of Private Health College in Kendari City.

B. Recommendation

Although this study uses specific or relatively homogeneous subjects, the results only apply at the time of this study, so that further research can conduct longitudinal research to retest the consistency of the results of this study. That variable satisfaction is operated in general, so to get more maximum results, the operationalization of satisfaction variables is more explicit, for example, satisfaction due to the quality of service following customer expectations or satisfaction due to the improving image of the institution.

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