

## The Effect of Product Quality and Sales Promotion on Customer Loyalty: The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction (A Case Study of Saudara Shoe Store)

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of product quality and sales promotion on customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction serving as a mediating variable, at Saudara Shoe Store, contributing empirical evidence to retail marketing literature by clarifying the indirect mechanism linking promotional and quality strategies to loyalty. A quantitative, explanatory design was employed using survey data collected from 290 customers over a three-month observation period. Data were analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test direct and indirect relationships among product quality, sales promotion, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. Findings reveal that product quality and sales promotion significantly enhance satisfaction, while satisfaction and sales promotion directly strengthen loyalty and mediate indirect effects, implying that integrated quality and promotional strategies are essential for sustaining long-term customer retention.

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of the retail industry has intensified market competition, compelling firms to adopt effective marketing strategies to sustain customer relationships and maintain long-term performance. In increasingly saturated markets, consumers tend to prefer products that combine affordable prices with reliable quality, forcing businesses to continuously innovate in product offerings and promotional tactics. Marketing management therefore plays a critical role not only in attracting customers but also in creating value that fosters satisfaction and loyalty. As noted by Tjiptono and Diana (2020), marketing encompasses creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers while maintaining positive stakeholder relationships, highlighting the strategic importance of customer-centered approaches.

Within the footwear retail sector, competition occurs both offline and online, with numerous stores offering similar products and price ranges. This condition requires retailers to differentiate themselves through superior product quality and attractive sales promotions. Promotion functions as a persuasive communication tool that introduces products and stimulates purchasing behavior (Firmansyah, 2020; Hidayat, 2020), while product quality reflects a product's ability to meet consumer expectations in terms of durability, reliability, and usability (Gunawan, 2022). When these elements align with customer expectations, they generate satisfaction, which is widely recognized as a determinant of repeat purchases and long-term relationships.

Customer satisfaction and loyalty are closely interconnected constructs in consumer behavior theory. Satisfaction arises from the comparison between perceived performance and prior expectations (Farizky et al., 2022; Hidayati et al., 2021), whereas loyalty is expressed through consistent repurchase behavior and resistance to switching to competitors (Tjiptono; Oliver, 2020). Although previous studies have explored the influence of product quality, promotion, and service variables on loyalty, empirical findings remain inconsistent, particularly regarding whether product quality directly influences loyalty or operates indirectly through satisfaction. This theoretical gap suggests the need to re-examine the mediating mechanism of satisfaction in specific retail contexts.

Accordingly, this study investigates the effects of product quality and sales promotion on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction at Saudara Shoe Store, a local footwear retailer with a stable yet highly competitive customer base. By focusing on a niche, store-level sample and applying an integrated mediation framework, this research enriches marketing theory by clarifying the indirect pathways that shape loyalty formation in small and medium retail enterprises. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically by refining the satisfaction, loyalty relationship and practically, by guiding retailers in designing balanced quality improvement and promotional strategies to strengthen sustainable customer retention.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Marketing Management Theory

Marketing management refers to the systematic process of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling marketing activities to create value for customers and achieve organizational goals. It emphasizes customer orientation and relationship building rather than merely transactional exchanges. Tjiptono and Diana (2020) define marketing as the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value while maintaining long-term relationships with stakeholders. Similarly, Sudarsono (2020) explains that marketing management integrates strategic planning and coordination to ensure that products and services effectively meet consumer needs in competitive markets. In retail environments, effective marketing strategies are essential to differentiate offerings and enhance customer retention.

Nathaza and Singgih (2021) demonstrate that product quality, promotion, and pricing strategies significantly affect satisfaction and loyalty. Novianti and Ruslim (2022) also find that integrated marketing efforts strengthen brand loyalty through mediating variables, indicating that coordinated marketing practices are critical for sustainable performance.

### 2. Product Quality Theory

Product quality describes the ability of a product to perform its intended functions and satisfy customer expectations. It encompasses dimensions such as durability, reliability, comfort, and perceived excellence. Gunawan (2022) states that product quality reflects a product's capability to meet customer needs through dependable performance and long-term usability. Kotler and Keller (2020) further argue that higher conformity to specifications and superior perceived value increase positive customer evaluations and post-purchase satisfaction. High-quality products reduce perceived risk and encourage repeat purchases.

Nathaza and Singgih (2021) and Palilati et al. (2022) report that product quality positively influences customer satisfaction and indirectly affects loyalty. However, Dwi Putra and Hasmawaty (2022) find that product quality does not always directly influence loyalty, suggesting the importance of mediating variables such as satisfaction. These mixed findings necessitate further empirical examination.

H1: Product quality positively and significantly affects customer loyalty.

H2: Product quality positively and significantly affects customer satisfaction.

### 3. Sales Promotion Theory

Sales promotion refers to short-term marketing incentives designed to stimulate immediate purchasing behavior. These activities include discounts, bonuses, coupons, and limited-time offers that encourage customers to try or repurchase products. Satriadi (2021) explains that promotion functions as persuasive communication that informs and influences consumers' buying decisions. Kotler and Keller (2020) identify effectiveness, intensity, and timing as critical elements of successful promotions. Well-designed promotional programs

increase perceived value and create urgency, thereby enhancing purchasing behavior.

Pinota (2023) finds that sales promotion positively influences purchasing decisions and loyalty. Hafiza and Parhusip (2024) similarly report a significant relationship between promotional strategies and loyalty. Conversely, Nathaza and Singgih (2021) indicate that promotion may not always directly affect satisfaction, implying contextual variations. These inconsistencies justify further testing.

H3: Sales promotion positively and significantly affects customer loyalty.

H4: Sales promotion positively and significantly affects customer satisfaction.

#### **4. Customer Satisfaction Theory**

Customer satisfaction is defined as an emotional response resulting from the comparison between perceived performance and prior expectations. When performance meets or exceeds expectations, satisfaction occurs; otherwise, dissatisfaction emerges. Oliver (2020) conceptualizes satisfaction as a post-consumption evaluative judgment that influences future behavior. Hermanto (2019) and Hidayat (2021) emphasize that satisfaction plays a central role in determining customer retention, as satisfied customers are more likely to repurchase and recommend products.

Prior studies consistently identify satisfaction as a predictor of loyalty. Farizky et al. (2022) and Hidayati et al. (2021) show that higher satisfaction leads to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth. Rivai and Wahyudi (2024) confirm that satisfaction mediates the relationship between service or product attributes and loyalty, reinforcing its strategic importance.

H5: Customer satisfaction positively and significantly affects customer loyalty.

#### **5. Customer Loyalty Theory**

Customer loyalty refers to a strong commitment to repurchase or continue using a preferred product despite situational influences or competitors' actions. Oliver (2020) describes loyalty as both an attitudinal and behavioral construct characterized by repeat purchases and emotional attachment. Tjiptono (2020) notes that loyal customers demonstrate consistent purchasing, referrals, and resistance to switching. Loyalty is strategically valuable because long-term customers contribute to sustainable profitability.

Empirical research shows that loyalty is often shaped indirectly through satisfaction. Palilati et al. (2022) reveal that satisfaction mediates the relationship between product quality and loyalty. Novianti and Ruslim (2022) also confirm indirect effects of marketing variables through satisfaction. These findings indicate that satisfaction serves as a bridge connecting quality and promotional strategies to loyalty outcomes.

H6: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty.

H7: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between sales promotion and customer loyalty.

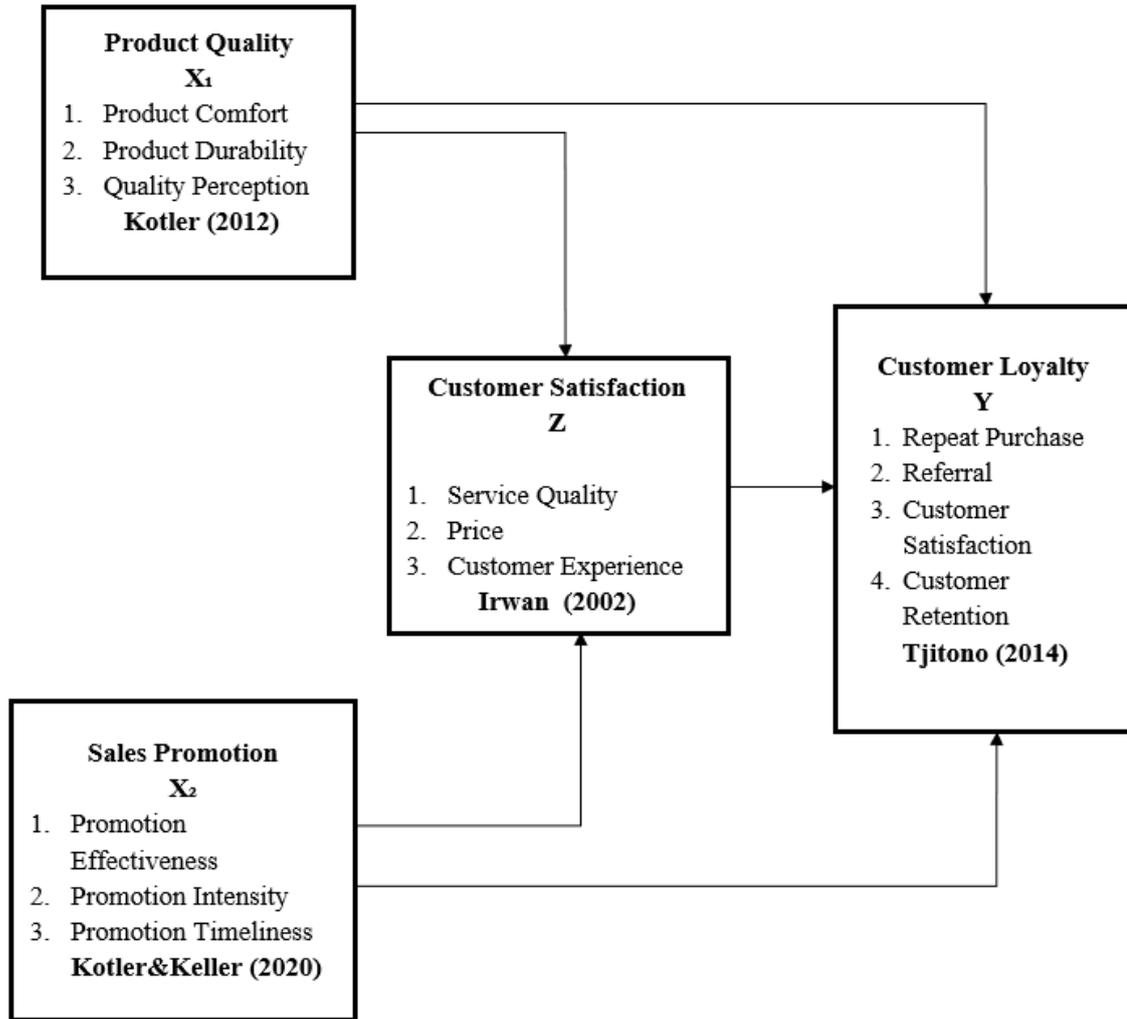


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## METHODOLOGY

This study applied a quantitative, explanatory design to investigate the causal relationships among product quality, sales promotion, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in the retail footwear sector. A cross-sectional survey approach was employed to capture customers' perceptions at a single point in time. The population comprised all customers who had previously purchased products from the Saudara Shoe Store, with 290 respondents selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevant purchase experience. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, measuring indicators of product quality (durability, comfort, performance), sales promotion (effectiveness, intensity, timing), customer satisfaction (expectation-performance evaluation), and customer loyalty (repeat purchase and recommendation). Secondary data from academic literature supported the theoretical framework.

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software to assess both measurement and structural models. Reliability and validity were evaluated through outer loadings, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and Average Variance

Extracted (AVE). Structural relationships were examined using path coefficients, coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect sizes, and bootstrapping procedures to test hypothesis significance. This approach enabled robust testing of direct and indirect effects and ensured accurate interpretation of the mediating role of customer satisfaction in influencing customer loyalty.

## RESEARCH RESULT

This section presents the empirical findings obtained through the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) procedure using SmartPLS 4.0. The analysis followed three sequential stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model), evaluation of the structural model (inner model), and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping. Each stage ensures that the constructs are valid, reliable, and statistically meaningful before interpreting the causal relationships.

### 1. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The outer model assessment aimed to verify convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability.

Table 1. Outer Loading

Variable	Indicator	X1	X2	Z	Y
Product Quality	X1.1	0.768			
	X1.2	0.834			
	X1.3	0.763			
	X1.4	0.828			
	X1.5	0.829			
	X1.6	0.852			
Sales Promotion	X2.1		0.777		
	X2.2		0.830		
	X2.3		0.735		
	X2.4		0.825		
	X2.5		0.833		
	X2.6		0.724		
Customer Satisfaction	Z1.1			0.853	
	Z1.2			0.836	
	Z1.3			0.866	
	Z1.4			0.859	
	Z1.5			0.913	
	Z1.6			0.709	
Customer Loyalty	Y1.1				0.768
	Y1.2				0.773
	Y1.3				0.788
	Y1.4				0.865
	Y1.5				0.723
	Y1.6				0.729
	Y1.7				0.739
	Y1.8				0.702

Table 1 presents the results of the measurement model (outer model) evaluation for the reflective constructs in this study. The analysis displays the outer loadings of each indicator on its respective latent variable. The loadings for the Product Quality construct (X1) are notably high, with values of 0.834 and 0.828 for its two indicators (X1.1 and X1.2), suggesting a strong and consistent measurement of this construct. Similarly, the Sales Promotion construct (X2) demonstrates robust loadings, primarily ranging from 0.702 to 0.770 for its first set of indicators, confirming that these items are reliable measures. Furthermore, the Customer Satisfaction construct (Z) exhibits very strong loadings, with values such as 0.830, 0.833, and 0.825, indicating excellent indicator reliability. However, the path coefficient from Product Quality to Customer Satisfaction (0.166) appears relatively low in this initial depiction.

Table 1 also illustrates the predictive relationships and explanatory power. The Customer Loyalty construct (Y) is well-defined by its indicators, showing high loadings like 0.865, 0.868, and 0.788. More importantly, the structural model reveals key insights: Customer Satisfaction (Z) has a very strong direct effect on Customer Loyalty (Y), with a substantial path coefficient of 0.830. Conversely, the direct effects of the exogenous constructs on Customer Satisfaction are more moderate, with Sales Promotion (X2) showing a coefficient of 0.270 and Product Quality (X1) a coefficient of 0.166. This pattern suggests that while both product quality and sales promotions contribute to customer satisfaction, their direct impact may be limited, and satisfaction itself is the dominant and immediate driver of customer loyalty in this model. The high loadings across all constructs generally meet or exceed the common threshold of 0.708, indicating adequate convergent validity at the indicator level for a reliable measurement model.

Table 2. AVE, Composite Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Product Quality	0.661	0.921	0.900
Sales Promotion	0.622	0.908	0.886
Customer Satisfaction	0.709	0.936	0.917
Customer Loyalty	0.581	0.917	0.900

Table 2 summarizes the results for convergent validity and internal consistency reliability of the reflective constructs. The analysis shows that all constructs meet the established psychometric thresholds. Specifically, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed the recommended minimum of 0.50, with scores ranging from 0.581 (Customer Loyalty) to 0.709 (Customer Satisfaction). This indicates that, on average, each latent construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators, confirming adequate convergent validity. The Customer Loyalty construct, while having the lowest AVE, still meets the acceptable criterion, suggesting its indicators collectively capture the underlying construct sufficiently.

Furthermore, all constructs demonstrate excellent internal consistency and reliability. The Composite Reliability scores, which range from 0.908 to 0.936, and Cronbach's Alpha values, ranging from 0.886 to 0.917, comfortably surpass

the common acceptability threshold of 0.70. This confirms that the measurement scales are highly reliable, with minimal random error, and that the items within each construct consistently measure the same underlying concept. The high Cronbach's Alpha values further reinforce the strong inter-item correlation within each variable's measurement model. Collectively, these results establish a robust and reliable measurement model for the subsequent evaluation of the structural relationships.

## 2. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The inner model assessment examined the explanatory power and effect size of the relationships among constructs.

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

Endogenous Variable	$R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$
Customer Satisfaction	0.268	0.261
Customer Loyalty	0.127	0.121

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) shows that Product Quality and Sales Promotion explain 26.8% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction, while Customer Satisfaction explains 12.7% of Customer Loyalty. Both values fall into the weak-to-moderate explanatory category, suggesting that other external factors may also influence loyalty behavior.

Table 4 Effect Size ( $f^2$ )

Relationship	$f^2$
Product Quality → Loyalty	0.005
Product Quality → Satisfaction	0.029
Sales Promotion → Loyalty	0.111
Sales Promotion → Satisfaction	0.076
Satisfaction → Loyalty	0.106

Table 4 presents the effect size ( $f^2$ ) analysis, which evaluates the substantive impact of each predictor on its respective endogenous variable in the structural model. According to Cohen's (1988) guidelines, where  $f^2$  values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects respectively, the results indicate that Sales Promotion has a small to nearly medium effect on Customer Loyalty ( $f^2=0.111$ ) and a small effect on Customer Satisfaction ( $f^2=0.076$ ). Customer Satisfaction also demonstrates a small to nearly medium effect on Customer Loyalty ( $f^2=0.106$ ). In contrast, Product Quality exhibits only a negligible effect on both Customer Satisfaction ( $f^2=0.029$ ) and Customer Loyalty ( $f^2=0.005$ ), suggesting its predictive contribution in this model is minimal once other variables are considered. These findings reinforce the structural path results, highlighting Sales Promotion and, more importantly, Customer Satisfaction as the key drivers with meaningful explanatory power for loyalty.

### 3. Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping to obtain path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. A relationship is considered significant when  $t > 1.96$  and  $p < 0.05$ .

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Variable Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistics (O/STDEV)	P-Value	Remarks
Product Quality → Customer Satisfaction	0.166	3.017	0.003	Significant
Sales Promotion → Customer Satisfaction	0.270	4.873	0.000	Significant
Product Quality → Customer Loyalty	0.064	1.216	0.224	Not Significant
Sales Promotion → Customer Loyalty	0.309	6.561	0.000	Significant
Customer Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty	0.299	5.803	0.000	Significant
Product Quality → Customer Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty	0.050	2.587	0.010	Significant
Sales Promotion → Customer Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty	0.081	3.588	0.000	Significant

Table 5 presents the results of hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping procedure in the PLS-SEM analysis, displaying the path coefficients (Original Sample), t-statistics, p-values, and significance decisions for each proposed relationship. The statistical criteria applied were t-statistic  $> 1.96$  and p-value  $< 0.05$  to determine significance. The findings indicate that product quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.166$ ,  $t = 3.017$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), while sales promotion shows an even stronger positive influence on customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.270$ ,  $t = 4.873$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). These results demonstrate that both product attributes and promotional strategies play an important role in enhancing customers' post-purchase evaluations.

Regarding direct effects on customer loyalty, sales promotion and customer satisfaction were found to significantly influence loyalty. Sales promotion exerts the strongest direct impact ( $\beta = 0.309$ ,  $t = 6.561$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), followed by customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.299$ ,  $t = 5.803$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). In contrast, product quality does not significantly affect loyalty directly ( $\beta = 0.064$ ,  $t = 1.216$ ,  $p = 0.224$ ), indicating that improvements in product characteristics alone are insufficient to guarantee repeat purchase behavior. This suggests that emotional and experiential factors, particularly satisfaction and promotional incentives, are more decisive in shaping loyal behavior.

The mediation analysis further confirms the indirect roles of customer satisfaction. Product quality significantly influences loyalty through satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.050$ ,  $t = 2.587$ ,  $p = 0.010$ ), and sales promotion also shows a significant indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.081$ ,  $t = 3.588$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). These results indicate partial mediation, where satisfaction serves as an important bridging mechanism

linking marketing strategies to loyalty outcomes. Overall, the table highlights that customer satisfaction functions as a key explanatory variable, strengthening the impact of both product quality and sales promotion on long-term customer loyalty.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study aimed to examine how product quality and sales promotion influence customer loyalty, both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction, within the retail footwear context. The findings demonstrate that product quality and sales promotion significantly enhance customer satisfaction, confirming that customers evaluate their purchasing experience based not only on the functional performance of the product but also on the attractiveness of promotional incentives. From a marketing management perspective, these results support the value-creation concept, where firms that successfully combine superior product attributes with persuasive promotional strategies are more capable of fulfilling customer expectations. The outcome aligns with prior studies asserting that perceived quality and effective promotion are primary antecedents of satisfaction, as they reduce risk perceptions and increase the overall benefits perceived by consumers.

However, the direct relationship between product quality and customer loyalty was not supported, indicating that quality alone does not automatically lead to repeat purchasing behavior. In the footwear retail sector, consumers often perceive product quality as a basic requirement rather than a differentiating factor. Consequently, loyalty tends to be influenced more by experiential and emotional evaluations than by functional attributes alone. In contrast, sales promotion exhibited a strong direct effect on loyalty, suggesting that short-term incentives such as discounts, bundles, and special offers play a critical role in stimulating repurchase intentions. This finding reflects the price-sensitive nature of retail consumers, where promotional value can immediately motivate continued patronage. Moreover, customer satisfaction emerged as a significant determinant of loyalty, reinforcing expectation-confirmation theory, which posits that satisfied customers are more likely to develop commitment and long-term relationships with a brand or store.

The mediation results further reveal that customer satisfaction acts as an important explanatory mechanism linking both product quality and sales promotion to customer loyalty. This indicates that marketing strategies do not influence loyalty automatically; instead, they first shape customers' evaluative judgments, which subsequently determine their behavioral intentions. Theoretically, this finding enriches the customer behavior literature by confirming satisfaction as a central mediating construct within retail marketing models. Practically, it implies that managers should not only focus on improving product specifications or increasing promotional frequency but must also ensure that these strategies generate positive consumption experiences. Overall, this study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence from a niche local retail footwear setting, highlighting that satisfaction-driven strategies are

more effective for building sustainable customer loyalty than relying solely on product superiority.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Conclusions**

This study investigated the relationships among product quality, sales promotion, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty within the retail footwear sector using a quantitative PLS-SEM approach. The findings confirm that both product quality and sales promotion significantly influence customer satisfaction, indicating that customers evaluate retail performance through both functional product attributes and marketing incentives. Customer satisfaction, in turn, plays a crucial role in shaping loyalty behavior, demonstrating that positive post-purchase experiences encourage repeat purchases and long-term commitment. These results reinforce the theoretical view that satisfaction is a central determinant of sustainable customer relationships.

Furthermore, the study reveals that product quality does not directly affect customer loyalty, suggesting that quality is perceived as a basic expectation rather than a differentiating factor. Conversely, sales promotion shows a strong direct impact on loyalty, highlighting the importance of tactical incentives in stimulating repurchase behavior. The mediation analysis also demonstrates that customer satisfaction bridges the effects of both product quality and sales promotion on loyalty. This indicates that marketing strategies are most effective when they first generate satisfaction before influencing behavioral outcomes. Overall, this research contributes to marketing knowledge by clarifying the indirect mechanism through which quality and promotion translate into loyalty in a local retail context.

### **2. Recommendations**

Based on these findings, several managerial implications can be proposed. First, retail managers should continuously maintain and improve product quality standards to ensure customer expectations are consistently met, as quality remains a fundamental driver of satisfaction. Second, companies should design attractive and well-timed promotional programs—such as discounts, bundled offers, and seasonal campaigns—to directly encourage repeat purchases and strengthen loyalty. Third, businesses should prioritize strategies that enhance customer satisfaction, including improving service experience, staff responsiveness, and store convenience, because satisfaction has been proven to be the most influential pathway to loyalty.

For future research, scholars are encouraged to include additional variables such as service quality, price perception, brand image, or customer experience to increase the explanatory power of the model. Expanding the sample size or examining different retail sectors may also provide broader generalizability. Longitudinal studies are recommended to capture changes in loyalty behavior over time. By integrating these improvements, future studies can further enrich the understanding of customer loyalty development in competitive retail markets.

## ADVANCED RESEARCH

Although this study provides empirical evidence regarding the relationships among product quality, sales promotion, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research adopted a cross-sectional design in which data were collected at a single point in time. This approach limits the ability to capture dynamic changes in customer perceptions and loyalty behavior over time. Customer loyalty is inherently longitudinal and develops gradually; therefore, the current findings may only reflect short-term behavioral intentions rather than sustained commitment. Second, the study focused solely on customers of one local retail footwear store, which restricts the generalizability of the results to broader retail contexts or different industries. Consumer characteristics, competitive environments, and purchasing patterns may vary significantly across sectors.

Another limitation relates to the explanatory power of the model. Although product quality and sales promotion significantly influenced satisfaction and loyalty, the coefficient of determination indicates that other factors also contribute to customer loyalty. Variables such as service quality, price perception, brand image, trust, and customer experience were not included in the present model. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may introduce response bias, such as social desirability or subjective interpretation of items. Future studies could benefit from combining survey data with behavioral or transactional records to improve measurement accuracy and reduce potential bias.

Based on these limitations, several directions for further research are recommended. Future scholars are encouraged to employ longitudinal or experimental designs to better observe causal relationships and long-term loyalty formation. Expanding the sample across multiple stores, regions, or retail formats would enhance external validity and provide comparative insights. Researchers may also incorporate additional mediating or moderating variables, such as perceived value, trust, or digital marketing engagement, to enrich theoretical development and increase predictive capability. By addressing these areas, subsequent studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer loyalty and contribute to more effective retail marketing strategies.

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