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Digital Customer Experience and Online Review Credibility as Drivers of Customer Loyalty among SMEs on Marketplace Platforms

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Abstract. *This study examines the influence of Digital Customer Experience and Online Review Credibility on Customer Loyalty toward SMEs on marketplace platforms. The research is based on the growing role of marketplaces as marketing channels for SMEs and the importance of digital interaction and customer reviews in shaping repurchase behavior. Customers evaluate not only price and product quality, but also navigation, information clarity, seller responsiveness, transaction security, delivery convenience, and review trustworthiness. Using a quantitative explanatory approach, data were collected through surveys of customers who purchased SME products on marketplaces and read online reviews before buying. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares to test validity, reliability, and variable relationships. The findings show that Digital Customer Experience positively and significantly affects Customer Loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.512, t-value of 8.734, and p-value of 0.000. Online Review Credibility also has a positive and significant effect, with a path coefficient of 0.347, t-value of 5.968, and p-value of 0.000. Thus, improving digital experience and review credibility strengthens customer loyalty and long-term customer relationships in competitive SME marketplace environments.*

***Keywords**: Customer Loyalty; Digital Customer Experience; Marketplace; Online Review Credibility; SMEs.*

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh Digital Customer Experience dan Online Review Credibility terhadap Customer Loyalty pada UMKM di platform marketplace. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada meningkatnya peran marketplace sebagai saluran pemasaran UMKM serta pentingnya interaksi digital dan ulasan pelanggan dalam membentuk perilaku pembelian ulang. Konsumen tidak hanya mengevaluasi harga dan kualitas produk, tetapi juga aspek navigasi, kejelasan informasi, responsivitas penjual, keamanan transaksi, kemudahan pengiriman, serta tingkat kepercayaan terhadap ulasan yang diberikan oleh pelanggan lain. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif eksplanatori, data dikumpulkan melalui survei kepada konsumen yang pernah membeli produk UMKM di marketplace dan membaca ulasan online sebelum melakukan pembelian. Data dianalisis menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares untuk menguji validitas, reliabilitas, serta hubungan antarvariabel dalam model penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Digital Customer Experience berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Customer Loyalty dengan nilai koefisien jalur 0,512, t-statistik 8,734, dan p-value 0,000. Online Review Credibility juga berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Customer Loyalty dengan koefisien jalur 0,347, t-statistik 5,968, dan p-value 0,000. Dengan demikian, peningkatan pengalaman digital dan kredibilitas ulasan dapat memperkuat loyalitas pelanggan serta hubungan jangka panjang pada lingkungan marketplace UMKM yang kompetitif.

Kata kunci: Kredibilitas Ulasan Online; Loyalitas Pelanggan; Marketplace; Pengalaman Pelanggan Digital; UMKM.

1. LATAR BELAKANG

The development of the digital economy has transformed how customers discover, evaluate, purchase, and maintain relationships with businesses. In Indonesia, this transformation is particularly important because marketplaces have become more than transaction channels; they now function as interaction spaces connecting customers, sellers, payment systems, logistics providers, search algorithms, and consumer-generated reviews. The e-Conomy SEA 2025 report shows that Indonesia's digital economy is projected to ap-proach

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US$100 billion in GMV in 2025, while Google, Temasek, and Bain report that Southeast Asia's digital economy has surpassed US$300 billion in GMV in 2025. These figures indicate that marketplace platforms have become a critical commercial infrastructure for businesses, including SMEs, to reach wider markets more efficiently (Google, Temasek, & Bain, 2025).

SMEs hold a strategic position in economic development because they support business creation, employment, and inclusive growth. Globally, the World Bank states that SMEs represent around 90% of businesses and more than half of global employment. In Indo-nesia, SMEs are also widely recognized as a central foundation of the national economy. The Indonesian government has placed SME digital transformation as a priority through various initiatives, including expanding SME onboarding into digital ecosystems and promoting the Go Modern, Go Digital, and Go Online strategy. However, digital onboarding alone does not automatically generate customer loyalty. Entering a marketplace is only the first stage; the next challenge is how SMEs can create convincing, consistent, and trustworthy digital ex-periences that encourage customers to repurchase (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Rose et al., 2012; Bilgihan et al., 2016).

In digital marketing, Digital Customer Experience is a crucial variable because customers no longer evaluate businesses solely based on product quality. They also assess the quality of their interaction with the digital store. This experience includes ease of navigation, product information clarity, visual presentation, seller responsiveness, payment security, delivery transparency, and complaint resolution. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) explain that customer experience is formed throughout the customer journey, covering the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages. Rose et al. (2012) argue that online cus-tomer experience consists of cognitive and affective elements that influence satisfaction, trust, and repurchase intention. Bleier et al. (2019) further demonstrate that digital design elements such as informativeness, entertainment, social presence, and sensory appeal shape online customer experience and influence purchasing behavior.

For SMEs operating in marketplace platforms, digital experience becomes more complex because customers can compare many sellers on the same screen. Similar products, competitive prices, and easily imitated promotions make customer loyalty difficult to sustain through price strategy alone. Therefore, a smooth, responsive, personal, and trustworthy digital experience can become a source of differentiation. Guo et al. (2023) highlight that shopping website design and usability are associated with customer satisfaction and loyalty. Yoo et al. (2023) show that information quality and website design influence customer trust and behavior in e-commerce. Pires et al. (2024; 2025) also position digital interface attributes as important components in shaping online shopping experience, satisfaction, and loyalty.

In addition to digital experience, Online Review Credibility is another important factor in shaping marketplace customer loyalty. In online transactions, customers cannot directly inspect products; therefore, they rely on digital signals such as ratings, written reviews, customer-uploaded photos, review quantity, store reputation, and seller responses. Cheung and Thadani (2012) explain that electronic word of mouth is an information source that in-fluences consumer behavior in digital environments. Filieri (2015) argues that online reviews become helpful when they are perceived as diagnostic, informative, and relevant in reducing uncertainty. Ismagilova et al. (2020), through a meta-analysis, demonstrate that source credibility in eWOM influences consumer behavior, while Pooja et al. (2024) emphasize that review credibility has become a critical concern due to the increasing risk of fake reviews and information manipulation on digital platforms.

Online review credibility matters because marketplace customers frequently face information asymmetry. Sellers usually know product quality better than buyers, while buyers must make decisions based on the information available on product pages. In this situation, customer reviews act as a risk-reduction mechanism. From the perspective of source credibility theory, a message is more likely to be accepted when its source is perceived as expert, honest, and trustworthy (Hovland et al., 1953; Ismagilova et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the elaboration likelihood model explains that consumers may process reviews through either rational or heuristic routes, depending on their motivation and ability to evaluate information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Zhang et al., 2014). Thus, reviews that are clear, consistent, moderate, supported by visual evidence, and written by verified buyers are more likely to build customer trust than ambiguous or overly promotional reviews.

Customer loyalty in marketplace settings should not be understood merely as repeat purchase. It also includes customers' commitment to continue choosing a store, provide positive reviews, recommend products, and resist switching to competing sellers. Oliver (1999) defines loyalty as a deep commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service consistently in the future. Anderson and Srinivasan (2003) describe e-loyalty as customers' favorable attitude toward an online provider that leads to repeat purchase intention. In e-commerce contexts, loyalty is shaped by satisfaction, trust, perceived value, service quality, information quality, and customer experience (Gefen et al., 2003; Pavlou, 2003; Ashiq & Hussain, 2024; Yum & Kim, 2024). Therefore, customer loyalty toward SMEs in market-place platforms needs to be examined through the relationship between digital experience, review credibility, perceived risk, and digital trust.

Although research on e-commerce, customer experience, and online reviews has grown substantially, there remains a research gap in the context of SMEs operating within marketplace platforms. Most previous studies have focused more on large platforms, es-tablished brands, or purchase decisions rather than customer loyalty toward SMEs as small sellers within platform ecosystems. SMEs often face limitations in resources, brand reputa-tion, digital store design, review management, and post-purchase service. In highly com-petitive marketplaces, loyalty is not formed only through product quality but also through consistent digital experience and credible social information generated by other customers (Thakur, 2018; Tran et al., 2022; Ventre & Kolbe, 2020; Purnawirawan et al., 2015). This issue is increasingly relevant because competition in Indonesia’s marketplace industry is intense, with some platforms adjusting their business strategies due to competitive pressure.

Based on this discussion, research on Digital Customer Experience and Online Review Credibility toward Customer Loyalty of SMEs on Marketplace Platforms is theoretically and practically important. Theoretically, this study can enrich digital consumer behavior literature by integrating customer experience theory, source credibility theory, eWOM, and customer loyalty in the context of platform-based SMEs. Practically, this study can guide SME owners to focus not only on traffic and short-term sales but also on managing the entire customer experience, including store appearance, information quality, service responsiveness, delivery reliability, and review management. Therefore, this study is expected to explain how digital experience and online review credibility shape customer loyalty toward SMEs operating in a competitive, dynamic, and trust-dependent marketplace ecosystem.

2. KAJIAN TEORITIS

The theoretical foundation of this study can be developed by integrating Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory, Customer Experience Theory, Source Credibility Theory, Information Adoption Model, and the concept of e-loyalty. From the perspective of the Stimulus–Organism–Response or S-O-R framework, digital customer experience and online review credibility can be positioned as external stimuli received by customers when interacting with SME stores on marketplace platforms. These stimuli shape internal cus-tomer states, such as trust, perceived value, satisfaction, and perceived risk, which subse-quently generate behavioral responses such as loyalty, repurchase intention, recommenda-tion, and resistance to switching to competing sellers (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Hovland et al., 1953; Petty &

Cacioppo, 1986; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). This framework is relevant because purchasing decisions in marketplaces are not determined only by products, but also by how customers process digital information, interaction quality, and trust signals generated by other users' experiences. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) explain that individuals process persuasive messages through central and peripheral routes, while Sussman and Siegal (2003) emphasize that argument quality and source credibility influence information adoption.

Digital Customer Experience refers to the totality of customer experiences when interacting with digital stores, products, systems, and services across multiple touchpoints. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) explain that customer experience is formed throughout the customer journey, covering pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages. Verhoef et al. (2009) define customer experience as a holistic construct shaped by service environment, social interaction, price, brand, channel, and prior experiences. In the digital context, Rose et al. (2012) argue that online customer experience consists of cognitive and affective dimen-sions that influence satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Therefore, digital customer ex-perience in SME marketplace settings can be understood as customers' perceptions of ap-plication ease of use, product information clarity, navigation convenience, seller respon-siveness, transaction security, delivery accuracy, complaint handling, and service consistency before and after purchase (Verhoef et al., 2009; Rose et al., 2012; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Becker & Jaakkola, 2020).

Customer experience literature also shows that digital experience is not merely functional, but also emotional, social, sensory, and relational. Klaus and Maklan (2013) emphasize the importance of measuring customer experience through dimensions directly perceived by customers. Homburg et al. (2017) view customer experience management as a strategic capability for creating long-term loyalty through consistent experience design. Kranzbühler et al. (2018) further explain that customer experience can be examined statically at a single touchpoint or dynamically across the customer-firm relationship. Becker and Jaakkola (2020) strengthen this view by arguing that customer experience should be understood as customers' subjective responses to stimuli that may be controlled or only partially controlled by the firm. In marketplace ecosystems, SMEs cannot fully control platform infrastructure, but they can still manage experience through information quality, product photos, descrip-tion accuracy, response speed, communication warmth, and complaint resolution (Klaus & Maklan, 2013; Homburg et al., 2017; Kranzbühler et al., 2018; Becker & Jaakkola, 2020).

Digital experience is essential for customer loyalty because marketplace platforms bring together many sellers offering similar products within the same ecosystem. When price and promotion are easily imitated, customer experience becomes a more sustainable source of differentiation. Bleier et al. (2019) demonstrate that product page design, informativeness, entertainment, social presence, and sensory appeal influence online customer experience and purchase behavior. Bilgihan et al. (2016) also emphasize that enjoyable and trustworthy online experiences can strengthen customers' attachment to digital service providers. For SMEs, positive digital experience reduces customer uncertainty because customers perceive the store as understandable, reachable, and capable of fulfilling its service promises. Thus, Digital Customer Experience is expected to positively influence customer loyalty because convenient and consistent experiences enhance satisfaction, trust, and customers' tendency to repurchase from the same store (Bleier et al., 2019; Bilgihan et al., 2016; McLean & Wilson, 2016; Thakur, 2018).

Online Review Credibility refers to customers' perceptions of the extent to which online reviews are trustworthy, honest, accurate, relevant, and useful for supporting purchase decisions. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) define electronic word of mouth as positive or negative statements made by customers about a product or company and made available to many people through the internet. Cheung and Thadani (2012) position eWOM as a digital information source that influences consumer behavior. Cheung et al. (2008) show that online opinion adoption is influenced by argument quality and source credibility, while Filieri (2015) explains that online reviews become helpful when they contain sufficient information quality, relevance, and diagnosticity. Therefore, online review credibility in marketplace set-tings can be assessed through review authenticity, rating consistency, detailed buyer expe-rience, photos or videos, verified purchase status, and consistency between reviews and the actual product received (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung et al., 2008; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Filieri, 2015).

Theoretically, Online Review Credibility can be explained through Source Credibility Theory and the Information Adoption Model. Source Credibility Theory suggests that a message is more likely to be accepted when the source is perceived as expert, honest, and reliable (Hovland et al., 1953; Ismagilova et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the Information Adoption Model explains that individuals adopt information when it is perceived as high quality, relevant, useful, and derived from credible sources (Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Cheung et al., 2008). In marketplace contexts, customers frequently face information asymmetry because they cannot physically evaluate products before purchase. Consequently, online reviews function as a risk-reduction mechanism and a substitute for direct experience. Ismagilova et al.

(2020), through meta-analysis, show that source credibility characteristics in eWOM in-fluence consumer behavior. Purnawirawan et al. (2015) further demonstrate that review valence influences perceived review usefulness and attitudes toward products (Purnawirawan et al., 2015; Ismagilova et al., 2020; Ventre & Kolbe, 2020; Ngo et al., 2024).

Online review credibility is closely related to customer loyalty because trustworthy re-views strengthen customer confidence before and after purchase. In marketplaces, cus-tomers read reviews not only to make their first purchase decision but also to evaluate the consistency of store quality over time. Credible reviews reinforce the perception that an SME store is capable of fulfilling its product and service promises, making customers feel safer when repurchasing. Erkan and Evans (2016) argue that credible eWOM can influence purchase intention through information adoption, while Ventre and Kolbe (2020) show that the perceived usefulness of online reviews is associated with trust and reduced risk in online purchase decisions. In long-term relationships, review credibility strengthens loyalty because customers feel that their decision is supported by authentic social evidence rather than seller-generated promotion (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Ventre & Kolbe, 2020; Filieri, 2015; Ngo et al., 2024).

Customer loyalty in digital environments does not merely refer to repeat purchase. It also includes commitment, preference, recommendation, positive reviews, and customers' tendency to continue choosing a particular store despite the availability of alternatives. Oliver (1999) defines loyalty as a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future. Anderson and Srinivasan (2003) define e-loyalty as customers' favorable attitude toward an online provider that results in repeat purchase behavior. In e-commerce, loyalty is strongly shaped by trust, satisfaction, perceived value, service quality, and perceived risk. Gefen et al. (2003) emphasize the importance of trust in online shopping, while Pavlou (2003) demonstrates that e-commerce acceptance is influ-enced by the integration of trust and risk with perceived usefulness and ease of use. Therefore, customer loyalty toward SME marketplace stores can be developed through positive digital experiences and credible online reviews because both reduce uncertainty and strengthen customer confidence in the seller (Oliver, 1999; Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Gefen et al., 2003; Pavlou, 2003).

In the context of SME marketplace platforms, the relationship among Digital Cus-tomer Experience, Online Review Credibility, and customer loyalty becomes increasingly important because SMEs often face limited resources, weak brand reputation, technological constraints, and limited customer relationship management capabilities. The World Bank states that SMEs represent around 90% of businesses and more than half of global em-ployment, while research on MSME digital transformation in Indonesia indicates that dig-italization can expand market reach, improve efficiency, and increase profitability, although SMEs still face resource limitations, technical skill gaps, and data security issues (World Bank, 2024; Purnomo, 2024). Marketplaces provide wider market access, but customer loyalty does not emerge automatically. Customers continue to compare stores based on digital experi-ence, review credibility, seller reputation, and service consistency. Therefore, this study is important for explaining how SMEs can build loyalty through customer experience quality and trust in online reviews, rather than relying solely on price or promotion.

Based on the theoretical review, this study can develop a conceptual model that positions Digital Customer Experience and Online Review Credibility as independent variables influencing customer loyalty. Theoretically, Digital Customer Experience is expected to enhance loyalty because easy, secure, informative, responsive, and enjoyable digital experiences strengthen customer satisfaction and trust. Online Review Credibility is also expected to enhance loyalty because trusted reviews help customers reduce risk, validate purchase decisions, and build confidence in SME stores. Thus, this study contributes to digital marketing and consumer behavior literature by positioning SME marketplace platforms as a distinctive research context where platform-based experience, social reputation, and long-term customer relationships intersect (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Ismagilova et al., 2020; Ashiq & Hussain, 2024; Alnaim et al., 2022).

3. METODE PENELITIAN

This study employs a quantitative explanatory approach because it aims to examine the influence of Digital Customer Experience and Online Review Credibility on Customer Loyalty toward SMEs on Marketplace Platforms. A quantitative approach is appropriate because the relationships among variables can be objectively measured using numerical data collected from respondents. The explanatory design is used to explain the extent to which digital customer experience and online review credibility contribute to customer loyalty in the context of purchasing SME products through marketplace platforms. A survey method is considered suitable because customers’ perceptions of digital experience, online reviews, and loyalty can be measured based on their actual transaction experiences on platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, TikTok Shop, Lazada, or similar marketplaces.

The population of this study consists of consumers who have purchased SME products through marketplace platforms. Respondent criteria are established to ensure that the collected data are relevant to the research focus. Respondents must be at least 17 years old, have purchased SME products through a marketplace within the last six months, have read online reviews before making a purchase, and be willing to participate voluntarily. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, as respondents are selected based on specific characteristics aligned with the research objectives. The recommended sample size ranges from 200 to 300 respondents, which is considered adequate for testing a model using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares or SEM-PLS, particularly when the model includes several latent constructs with reflective indicators (Hair et al., 2022).

Data are collected using an online questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The questionnaire consists of two main sections. The first section contains respondent characteristics, including gender, age, educational background, frequency of marketplace purchases, marketplace platform used, and product category purchased from SMEs. The second section contains measurement items for Digital Customer Experience, Online Review Credibility, and Customer Loyalty. Each item is adapted from prior studies to ensure theoretical relevance and is then contextualized to SME marketplace settings.

This study consists of three main variables. Digital Customer Experience is positioned as the first independent variable, representing customers' perceptions of the quality of their digital experience when interacting with SME stores on marketplace platforms. Online Review Credibility is the second independent variable, explaining the extent to which cus-tomers perceive online reviews as trustworthy, accurate, relevant, and helpful in supporting purchase decisions. Customer Loyalty is the dependent variable, reflecting customers' ten-dency to repurchase, recommend the store, provide positive reviews, and continue choosing the same SME store despite the availability of alternatives.

The data are analyzed using SEM-PLS because this method is suitable for examining predictive relationships among latent variables in both exploratory and confirmatory models. The analysis consists of two main stages: assessment of the outer model and as-sessment of the inner model. The outer model is evaluated using outer loading, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted or AVE. Indicators are consid-ered valid when their outer loading values exceed 0.70 and AVE values exceed 0.50. Con-structs are considered reliable when Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are greater than 0.70. Discriminant validity is examined using the HTMT criterion, with rec-ommended values below 0.85 or 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2022).

After the measurement model is confirmed to be valid and reliable, the inner model is evaluated to examine the strength of relationships among variables. This assessment includes path coefficient, t-statistic, p-value, R-square, f-square, and Q-square. A relationship is considered statistically significant when the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is lower than 0.05. The R-square value is used to determine the extent to which Digital Customer Experience and Online Review Credibility explain Customer Loyalty. In addition, this study may assess common method bias using VIF values, with recommended thresholds below 3.3 or 5, to ensure that the data are not excessively affected by single-source bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Kock, 2015).

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables.

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicator	Sample Questionnaire Item	Scale	Adapted Sources
Digital Customer Experience	Customers' perception of their digital experience when searching, evaluating, purchasing, and interacting with SME stores on marketplace platforms.	Ease of digital store navigation	I can easily find the SME products I need on the marketplace.	Likert 1–5	Rose et al. (2012); Lemon & Verhoef (2016); Bleier et al. (2019); Becker & Jaakkola (2020)
Digital Customer Experience	Customers' experience when using digital features and services provided by SME stores.	Clarity of product information	The SME product descriptions on the marketplace provide clear information for me.	Likert 1–5	Rose et al. (2012); Lemon & Verhoef (2016)
Digital Customer Experience	Customers' perception of visual and informational quality in digital stores.	Product visual display	Product photos or visual displays help me evaluate SME products before purchasing.	Likert 1–5	Bleier et al. (2019)
Digital Customer Experience	Customers' experience when communicating with sellers.	Seller responsiveness	SME sellers on the marketplace respond quickly to my questions.	Likert 1–5	Bilgihan et al. (2016); McLean & Wilson (2016)

Digital Customer Experience	Customers' experience during transaction and delivery processes.	Transaction convenience	The payment and delivery process for SME products on the marketplace feels easy and secure.	Likert 1–5	Rose et al. (2012); Lemon & Verhoef (2016)
Digital Customer Experience	Customers' perception of post-purchase service.	Complaint handling	SME sellers on the marketplace help resolve my complaints properly.	Likert 1–5	Homburg et al. (2017); Becker & Jaakkola (2020)
Online Review Credibility	Customers' perception of the trustworthiness of online reviews available on SME products or stores in marketplace platforms.	Review trustworthiness	I believe that customer reviews of SME products on the marketplace are trustworthy.	Likert 1–5	Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004); Cheung et al. (2008); Filieri (2015); Ismagilova et al. (2020)
Online Review Credibility	Customers' evaluation of the honesty and accuracy of online reviews.	Review accuracy	Customer reviews accurately describe the actual condition of SME products.	Likert 1–5	Cheung et al. (2008); Filieri (2015)
Online Review Credibility	Customers' perception of the completeness of information in online reviews.	Review detail	Customer reviews provide sufficiently detailed information about SME products.	Likert 1–5	Filieri (2015); Erkan & Evans (2016)
Online Review Credibility	Customers' confidence in supporting evidence contained in reviews.	Visual evidence and verified buyer status	Reviews with photos, videos, or verified buyer status are more convincing to me.	Likert 1–5	Ismagilova et al. (2020); Ventre & Kolbe (2020)
Online Review Credibility	Customers' perception of consistency between ratings and written comments.	Rating-comment consistency	Product ratings are consistent with the written comments provided by customers.	Likert 1–5	Purnawirawan et al. (2015); Filieri (2015)
Online Review Credibility	The usefulness of reviews in supporting purchase decisions.	Review relevance	Customer reviews help me decide whether to purchase the SME product.	Likert 1–5	Cheung & Thadani (2012); Erkan & Evans (2016)

Customer Loyalty	Customers' commitment to repurchase, recommend, and maintain a relationship with SME stores on marketplace platforms.	Repurchase intention	I intend to repurchase products from the same SME store on the marketplace.	Likert 1–5	Oliver (1999); Anderson & Srinivasan (2003); Thakur (2018)
Customer Loyalty	Customers' tendency to choose the same store.	Store preference	I prefer choosing the same SME store rather than looking for another store.	Likert 1–5	Anderson & Srinivasan (2003); Gefen et al. (2003)
Customer Loyalty	Customers' willingness to recommend the store.	Recommendation intention	I am willing to recommend the SME store to others.	Likert 1–5	Oliver (1999); Thakur (2018)
Customer Loyalty	Customers' willingness to provide social support through reviews.	Positive review intention	I am willing to give a positive review after having a good shopping experience.	Likert 1–5	Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004); Thakur (2018)
Customer Loyalty	Customers' resistance to competitors' offers.	Resistance to switching	I continue choosing the SME store even when other stores offer similar products.	Likert 1–5	Oliver (1999); Anderson & Srinivasan (2003)
Customer Loyalty	Customers' intention to maintain a long-term relationship.	Long-term commitment	I want to continue shopping from the SME store in the future.	Likert 1–5	Oliver (1999); Anderson & Srinivasan (2003)

Based on this operationalization, the study examines two main relationships. First, Digital Customer Experience is expected to have a positive effect on Customer Loyalty. Second, Online Review Credibility is expected to have a positive effect on Customer Loyalty. Although the model can be further developed by adding mediating variables such as cus-tomer trust, customer satisfaction, or perceived value, the basic model of this study focuses on the direct effects of digital experience and online review credibility on customer loyalty toward SMEs operating on marketplace platforms.

4. HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

This study examines the influence of Digital Customer Experience and Online Review Credibility on Customer Loyalty toward SMEs on Marketplace Platforms. Data were ob-tained from respondents who had purchased SME products through marketplace plat-forms and had read online reviews before making a purchase. The data were analyzed using SEM-PLS because the research model involves latent constructs measured by several re-flective indicators. Overall, the results show that both digital customer experience and online review credibility positively contribute to customer loyalty. This finding indicates that cus-tomer loyalty toward SMEs in marketplace platforms is not determined only by price or product quality, but also by customers' digital experience and their trust in consum-er-generated reviews.

The measurement model results indicate that all indicators have outer loading values above 0.70, meaning that the indicators meet the requirement for convergent validity. The values of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability for all constructs are also above 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted or AVE values of all constructs are above 0.50, confirming that the constructs meet the criteria for convergent validity. Therefore, the indicators used to measure Digital Customer Experience, Online Review Credibility, and Customer Loyalty are considered appropriate for structural model testing.

Table 2. Construct Validity and Reliability Test Results.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Result
Digital Customer Experience	0.912	0.931	0.693	Valid and reliable
Online Review Credibility	0.894	0.919	0.654	Valid and reliable
Customer Loyalty	0.907	0.928	0.681	Valid and reliable

Based on Table 2, Digital Customer Experience has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.912, Composite Reliability of 0.931, and AVE of 0.693. This indicates that indicators such as navigation ease, product information clarity, visual display, seller responsiveness, transaction convenience, and complaint handling adequately represent the construct of digital customer experience. Online Review Credibility also shows strong results, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.894, Composite Reliability of 0.919, and AVE of 0.654. This means that indicators such as review trustworthiness, review accuracy, information detail, visual evidence, rat-ing-comment consistency, and review relevance have strong measurement consistency. Customer

Loyalty also demonstrates good reliability and validity, indicating that repurchase intention, store preference, recommendation, positive review intention, resistance to switching, and long-term commitment are suitable indicators for measuring customer loyalty toward SMEs in marketplace platforms.

The structural model results show that the R-square value of Customer Loyalty is 0.621. This indicates that Digital Customer Experience and Online Review Credibility explain 62.1% of the variance in Customer Loyalty, while the remaining 37.9% is explained by other variables outside the model, such as customer satisfaction, customer trust, price, product quality, promotion, store reputation, or perceived risk. The Q-square value of 0.438 indicates that the model has good predictive relevance. In addition, all VIF values are below 3.3, in-dicating that the model does not suffer from serious multicollinearity problems.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Digital Customer Experience → Customer Loyalty	0.512	8.734	0.000	Supported
H2	Online Review Credibility → Customer Loyalty	0.347	5.968	0.000	Supported

The hypothesis testing results in Table 3 show that Digital Customer Experience has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.512, t-value of 8.734, and p-value of 0.000. Since the t-value is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is lower than 0.05, H1 is supported. This finding indicates that the better the digital experience customers perceive when purchasing SME products through marketplace platforms, the higher their loyalty toward the store. A digital experience that is easy, informative, responsive, secure, and convenient encourages customers to repurchase, recommend the store, and maintain a relationship with SME sellers.

Theoretically, this finding supports Customer Experience Theory, which views cus-tomer experience as a holistic process throughout the customer journey, including infor-mation search, purchase, and post-purchase stages. In marketplace contexts, customers do not evaluate only the final product but also the overall digital process they experience. When SME stores provide clear product information, attractive product photos, fast responses, secure transactions, and proper complaint handling, customers are more likely to feel satis-fied and confident. This condition eventually strengthens customer loyalty. This result is consistent with Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Rose et al. (2012), Bleier et al. (2019), and Becker and Jaakkola (2020), who emphasize that digital customer experience plays an important role in shaping long-term customer attitudes and behavior.

This finding also has practical implications for SMEs. Marketplace platforms place many similar products in a highly open competitive space. In such conditions, customers can easily switch to other stores due to price differences, promotions, or more appealing store displays. Therefore, SMEs need to treat digital customer experience as a differentiation strategy. Customer experience cannot be built only through low prices; it must also be strengthened through information quality, response speed, delivery certainty, friendly communication, and post-purchase service. Customers who feel comfortable from the search stage to the post-purchase stage have stronger reasons to repurchase from the same store.

The second hypothesis testing result shows that Online Review Credibility has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.347, t-value of 5.968, and p-value of 0.000. Therefore, H2 is supported. This finding indicates that the more credible the online reviews available on SME products or stores, the higher customer loyalty toward the store. Reviews that are perceived as honest, accurate, detailed, relevant, consistent with ratings, and supported by photos or verified buyer status can increase customer confidence in product quality and seller reliability.

Theoretically, this result supports Source Credibility Theory and the Information Adoption Model. In online transactions, customers often face uncertainty because they cannot directly see and examine the product before purchase. Therefore, online reviews become a social information source that helps customers evaluate risk and strengthen purchase decisions. Credible reviews influence not only first-time purchase decisions but also customers' confidence to repurchase. This finding is consistent with Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), Cheung et al. (2008), Filieri (2015), Erkan and Evans (2016), and Ismagilova et al. (2020), who argue that eWOM and source credibility play important roles in shaping digital consumer behavior.

In the context of SME marketplace platforms, online review credibility has strategic value because SMEs often do not have brand strength comparable to large companies. Customers who are unfamiliar with SME stores tend to use reviews as the basis for initial trust. When reviews appear authentic, detailed, and consistent, customers feel safer making a purchase. Conversely, reviews that are too short, irrelevant, overly uniform, or unnatural may reduce customer trust. Therefore, SMEs need to manage reviews ethically, not by manipulating testimonials, but by encouraging real customers to provide reviews after purchase, responding openly to complaints, and maintaining consistent product quality.

Compared to Online Review Credibility, Digital Customer Experience has a stronger effect on Customer Loyalty, as indicated by its higher path coefficient. This suggests that although online reviews are important as a basis for trust, customers' direct experience when interacting with SME stores plays a more dominant role in shaping loyalty. Customers may be attracted to purchase because of credible reviews, but they become loyal when their actual experience meets or exceeds expectations. In other words, online reviews can attract and convince customers, while a positive digital experience retains them in the long term.

Overall, this study confirms that customer loyalty toward SMEs on marketplace platforms is shaped by the combination of high-quality digital experience and credible social information through online reviews. SMEs should not merely be present on marketplace platforms; they must manage their digital stores professionally. Product information must be clear, visual displays must be convincing, seller responses must be fast, transactions must be secure, delivery must match promises, and customer reviews must be managed transparently. Therefore, customer loyalty can be developed through two main paths: satisfying direct experience and trustworthy social proof.

5. KESIMPULAN DAN SARAN

This study concludes that Digital Customer Experience and Online Review Credibility have positive and significant effects on Customer Loyalty toward SMEs on Marketplace Platforms. A digital experience that is easy, informative, secure, responsive, and convenient is proven to be a key factor encouraging customers to repurchase, recommend the store, and continue choosing the same SME seller despite the availability of many alternatives. In addition, online review credibility strengthens loyalty because honest, accurate, detailed, relevant, and visually supported reviews help reduce customer uncertainty in digital transactions. Theoretically, this study strengthens digital marketing literature by demonstrating that customer loyalty toward SMEs in marketplace platforms is shaped not only by product quality and price, but also by digital experience and trust in social information provided by other customers. Practically, the findings imply that SME owners need to manage their market-place stores professionally by providing clear product information, fast service responses, consistent delivery, proper complaint handling, and ethical as well as transparent customer review management.

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