



Customer Loyalty in the case of Business-to-Business Company: Will Marketing Mix Still Work?

Muhammad Azka Prasetya¹, Anita Maharani², Shine Pintor Siolemba Patiro³

^{1,3}Open University, Indonesia

²Universitas Bina Nusantara, Indonesia

Correspondent: anita.maharani@binus.edu²

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ABSTRACT: Through this research, researchers highlighted the role of the marketing mix in influencing customer loyalty in business-to-business (B2B) companies. Researchers also highlighted the role of purchase decisions as a mediator between marketing mix and customer loyalty. From the conceptual perspective, marketing mix is generally considered more appropriate for B2C type companies, however, a number of studies show that marketing mix can also be applied as a marketing strategy for B2B but in a more complex context. In terms of methodology, this research approach is quantitative, and uses Partial Least Square analysis techniques. The analysis units involved are individuals who have been customers of B2B companies for at least 3 years and are spread across Jabodetabek. Due to limited B2B customers, the survey distribution technique was carried out using the snowball sampling method. The distribution of questionnaires was carried out for six months from September 2023-February 2024. The results obtained show that purchasing decisions cannot mediate between marketing mix and customer loyalty, however marketing mix can influence customer loyalty in B2B type companies. The managerial implication of the results of this research is that B2B companies can implement a marketing mix to encourage customer loyalty.

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Purchase Decision, Customer Loyalty, B2B



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INTRODUCTION

Business-to-business (B2B) has the potential to continue to grow over time. For those involved, B2B provides big opportunities compared to business-to-consumer or B2C in terms of the volume and profits it will generate. In marketing, one effort to encourage a business to gain profits is by practicing a marketing mix strategy. The marketing mix includes controlled marketing components to influence consumer responses in the target market and is coordinated effectively in marketing

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tasks and activities [\(Ardiati, 2021\)](#). Then, the marketing mix is also a marketing strategy consisting of product, price, promotion, place, people, process and physical evidence which aims to achieve company goals [\(Christine & Budiawan, 2017\)](#). So far, research attention on the marketing mix has focused more on B2C, while on the other hand, B2B can actually carry out marketing strategies, only in a complex context.

As part of the marketing strategy, the marketing mix connects the company's marketing strategy which connects the company, market and stakeholders [\(Wichmann, Uppal, Sharma, & Dekimpe, 2022\)](#). Through the use of a marketing mix, companies can find out what the market really wants and the process of marketing the product in the target market. The use and combination of marketing mix variables helps companies to reach the target market and persuade consumers to be interested in the product, want to try the product and ultimately make a purchasing decision. The marketing mix, consisting of price, product, promotion, and place, is crucial for a company's success in developing countries [\(Gupta, 2013\)](#).

Companies in B2B fields adapt marketing mix variables to build long-term relationships with clients, using product, price, promotion, and placement strategies to achieve success [\(Aher, 2014\)](#). Research also indicates a significant positive relationship between the marketing mix and consumer loyalty [\(Setiawan, 2020\)](#). So, there is a possibility that this research could be continued by involving other factors.

In connection with business, one type of business that has a B2B type is medical B3 waste transportation services, which has the task of collecting waste and delivering the waste to a disposal site that does not endanger the public. The medical B3 waste transportation services business has become popular, especially since COVID-19. Predictions about the potential of this business are also quite interesting [\(Consulting, 2022\)](#). Medical B3 waste transportation services business practices in Indonesia are outlined in the due diligence document [\(Bank, 2019\)](#). One of the studies on the medical B3 waste transportation services business is the implementation of marketing mix strategies [\(Fristanto, Syah, Indradewa, & Fajarwati, 2020\)](#).

This research focuses on the use of the marketing mix in medical B3 waste transportation services. This business experienced business growth, especially during the presence of Covid-19 in society at the end of 2019. High public awareness of health protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 caused the use and demand for medical equipment to increase. Health equipment related to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic includes personal protective equipment such as masks and hand sanitizers to equipment for checking SARS-CoV-2 virus infection such as swab test equipment. Medical equipment that is no longer used will become material, dangerous and toxic waste (B3 waste) and will have a negative impact if its handling does not meet the requirements [\(Yustina, Nurmadiansyah, Saraswati, & Simandjuntak, 2024\)](#).

From the explanation above, there is still research on B2B. This research not only analyzes the marketing strategies implemented by B2B but also examines whether the marketing mix variables implemented by B2B influence purchasing decisions and customer loyalty. This research is unique because it includes a quantitative perspective on the influence of the marketing mix on sales as a

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share of market share. Meanwhile, no research has been conducted on companies specifically operating in the field of transporting B3 medical waste. Therefore, this research can be called the first research to observe specific companies operating in this field.

Main questions for this research is “is customer loyalty affected by marketing mix, while purchase decision will play roles as mediation?”

Marketing Mix

Marketing mix, commonly understood as the combination of four essential variables in the marketing system: product, price, promotion and place (distribution) [\(Sari & Gultom, 2019\)](#). Along with its development, in 1981, researcher added three marketing variables, namely people (human/HR), process (process), and physical evidence (physical evidence) [\(Akroush, 2011\)](#). This changes the marketing mix from 4P to 7P so that the marketing mix not only includes how a good or service is sold to the public but also how the company distributes the benefits of the good/service.

Purchase Decision

Purchase decisions define as the stages that consumers go through in deciding to purchase a product [\(Kotler & Keller, 2012\)](#). Moreover, purchase decisions is a process of combining attitudes and knowledge in evaluating alternatives and choosing one of them [\(Peter & Olson, 2000\)](#). From the two definitions above, it can be stated that a purchasing decision is a process where consumers search for and combine information, evaluate, and ultimately purchase a product from the available alternatives.

Customer Loyalty

In the context of the relationship between customers and products/services, loyalty is a form of commitment formed by consumers deeply to buy products/services and support preferred products/services in the future [\(Kotler & Keller, 2012\)](#). Loyalty is a bonded relationship between customers and products/services and is an indicator of consumer loyalty to a product/service.

Loyalty is created from positive interactions between goods/services so that it continuously creates a sense of trust in these goods/services [\(Riskita, 2022\)](#). Positive interactions in this context are someone's satisfaction with the benefits provided by the product/service. This positive interaction can also take the form of after-sales services such as service and repairs where consumers see that the company providing the product/service is able to handle problems that occur with the product/service.

Hypothesis Development

Marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) and trust significantly influence firms' purchase decisions [\(Rafdinal & Amalia, 2019\)](#). Price, place, and promotion variables positively affect customer satisfaction and purchase decisions in B2B customers [\(Sinaga & Husda, The effect](#)

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of the marketing mix on purchase decisions and customer satisfaction, 2023). Therefore the first hypothesis statement as follow

Hypothesis 1: the marketing mix as strategy will affect purchase decision within B2B's customers

All four aspects of the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) are equally important, and their balance can impact customer satisfaction and loyalty (Nuseir & Madanat, 2015). The marketing mix helps companies better relate to their target market, affecting customer loyalty and sales (Gilaninia, Taleghani, & Azizi, 2013). Basically, customer loyalty is more about consumer behavior than attitude (Griffin, 2005). On the other hand, the main goal of using a consumer mix is to create the desired response from the target market (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Through the implementation of the consumer mix, companies are required to increase purchases of the products/services offered and create loyalty by providing good quality and useful products and satisfying services. From the consumer side, consumers have different behavior in responding to persuasive messages sent by the company. Therefore the second hypothesis statement as follow

Hypothesis 2: the marketing mix as strategy will affect B2B's customer loyalty

Price, place, and promotion variables positively affect purchase decisions, which in turn positively affect customer satisfaction (Sinaga & Husda, The Effect of the Marketing Mix on Purchase Decision and Customer Satisfaction, 2023). Marketing mix factors price, place, and promotion directly influence purchasing decisions for products, while product has a positive but insignificant effect (Mulyati, 2023). Product and promotion variables positively impact purchasing decisions and customer loyalty, while price and place variables have a positive but not significant effect on products (Suparto, 2020). The services marketing mix (7Ps) positively impacts tourist satisfaction and loyalty, with consumer purchase intentions and company profitability partially mediating this relationship (Elgarhy & Mohamed, 2023). Therefore the third hypothesis as follow

Hypothesis 3: purchase decision will mediate the effect of marketing mix to B2B's customer loyalty

The following picture is the research model

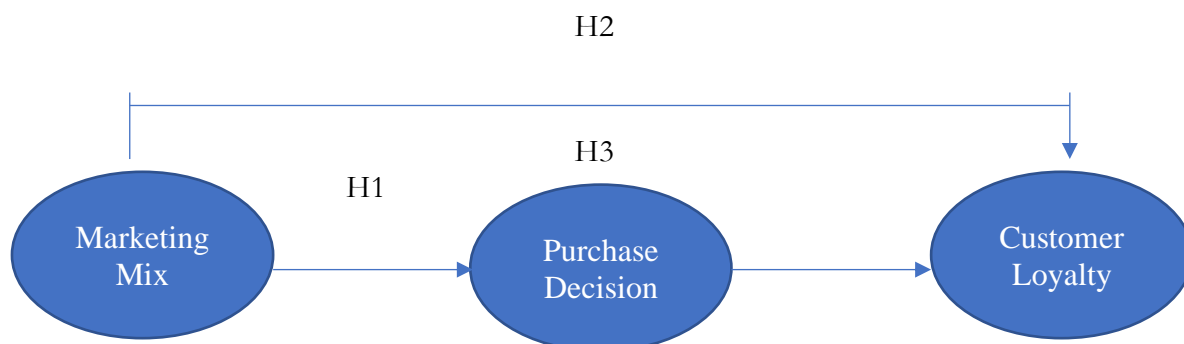


Figure 1. Research model

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METHOD

This type of research is quantitative descriptive, which is an approach aimed at describing a situation objectively using numbers starting from the stages of data collection, data interpretation, and presentation of results [_\(Arikunto, 2006\)](#). The sample for this research is users of services offered by companies providing waste transport services in Jakarta. The number of samples for this research are 32 clients. The unit of analysis for this research is individuals, and the respondents involved must be consumers of companies providing waste transport services in Jakarta who have been consumers for more than 3 years. Data was collected within six months, from September 2023-February 2024.

There are three variables in this research, namely the endogenous variable, namely marketing mix, the dependent variable or customer loyalty and the mediating variable or purchase decision, which will be measured with the following indicators. To measure marketing mix, there are seven indicators (product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence) [_\(Nurhayaty, 2022\)](#), then to measure purchase decisions, there are four indicators (purchasing steadiness, purchase decision, purchasing due to necessity, purchase after recommendation) [_\(Komalasari, Christianto, & Ganiarto, 2021\)](#), and last to measure customer loyalty, there are three indicators (repeated purchases, purchase retention, referrals) [_\(Ramaseshan, Wirtz, & Georgi, 2017\)](#). This research uses a five-point Likert Scale which is an ordinal scale.

This research data was collected by distributing surveys aimed at respondents, and then the research data analysis technique was Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling or PLS-SEM. There are two steps in the analysis, namely the first step is testing the measurement model where the output is construct validity, discriminant validity, then the second is testing the structural model where the output is bootstrapping [_\(Hair, et al., 2021\)](#).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent analysis is used to provide an overview of the characteristics of sample respondents who participated in the research and filled out the questionnaire. The characteristics of the respondents who participated in the research did not influence the results of the research. The characteristics that this article will describe can be divided into two, namely the respondent's gender and length of work.

Table 1. Respondent's Profile

No.	Gender	N	Percentage
1	Male	22	68,75%
2	Female	10	31,25%
	Total	32	100%

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No.	Business establishment	N	Percentage
1	>5 years	14	43,75%
2	<5 years	18	56,25%
	Total	32	100%

Based on table 1, it can be seen that the majority of respondents involved in this research are B2B clients located in Jakarta, male and the majority have been running a business for less than five years.

Next, after describing the respondent profiles above, the data obtained from the survey collection results is processed using the SmartPLS application. To explain the results of the analysis, it is divided into two, namely the first is the measurement model and the second is the structural model, as will be explained below.

Measurement Model

In this section, the measurement model will be presented, and the researcher will present two important things, namely those related to construct reliability and validity and then discriminant validity.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Customer Loyalty	0,950	0,955	0,962	0,834
Marketing Mix	0,941	0,962	0,952	0,741
Purchase Decision	0,929	0,946	0,946	0,779

Based on Table 2, above, it can be seen that all the items involved in the questionnaire meet construct reliability and validity, so that they can proceed to the next stage, namely discriminant validity, which was chosen by referring to HTMT.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

	Customer Loyalty	Marketing Mix	Purchase Decision
Customer Loyalty			
Marketing Mix	0,462		
Purchase Decision	0,886	0,561	

Based on Table 3, above, all variables tested meet discriminant validity and this allows data analysis to proceed to the next stage, namely the structural model. The following is a visual image for the measurement model (Figure 2).

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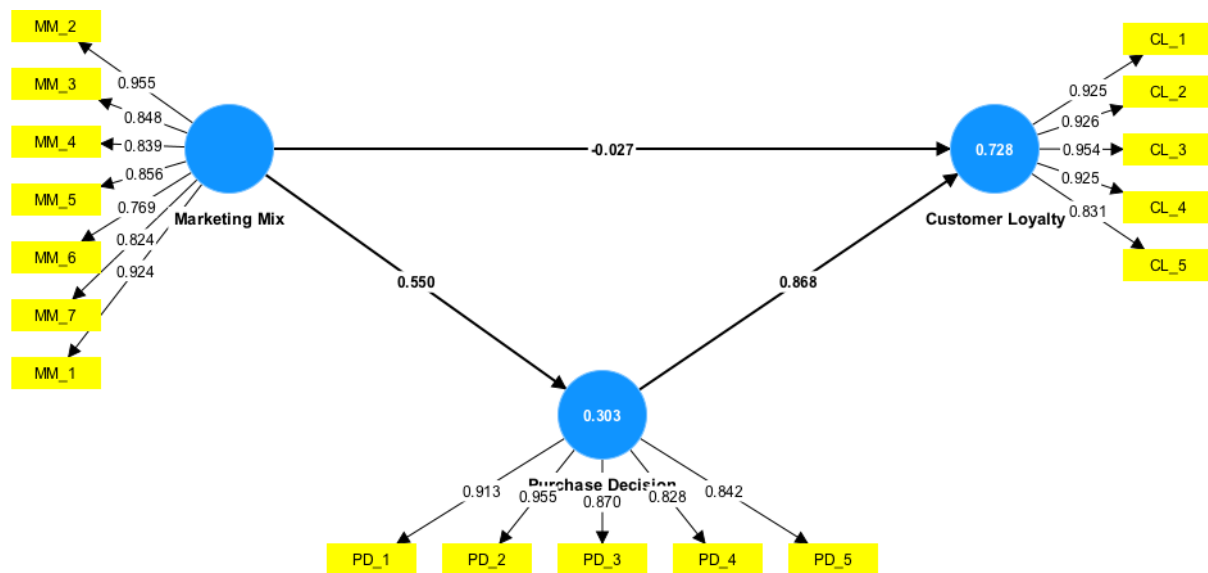


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Structural Model

In the structural model, there are two things that will be displayed in this section, namely the test results regarding R-Square and bootstrapping which will show whether the hypothesis proposed in the previous section is supported or not.

Table 4. R-Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Customer Loyalty	0,736	0,717

From the results above, it can be seen that this research model has the ability to predict factual conditions in the field of 73.6 percent. In the R-Square interpretation, predictive ability that is close to the number one or 100% means a high proportion of variation, or the independent variable has a strong relationship with the dependent variable. After these results show the level of confidence in the research model, the analysis will then proceed to the final stage in the structural model, namely bootstrapping. At this stage, bootstrapping is applied with a two-way approach, because the hypothesis does not have a specific direction regarding the influence of endogenous variables on exogenous variables.

Table 5. Bootstrapping

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P-Values	Decision
Marketing Mix -> Purchase Decision	0,550	0,577	0,130	4,230	0,000	Supported

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Marketing Mix -> Customer Loyalty	-0,027	-0,022	0,096	0,277	0,782	Not supported
Marketing Mix -> Purchase Decision -> Customer Loyalty	0,478	0,504	0,128	3,736	0,00	Supported

Based on Table 5, above, it can be seen that one hypothesis is supported while one hypothesis is not supported. In other words, the hypothesis that is supported is the second hypothesis which addresses the role of purchase decisions as a mediator between the influence of the marketing mix on customer loyalty. Then to visualize the bootstrapping results, it is shown in Figure 3, below.

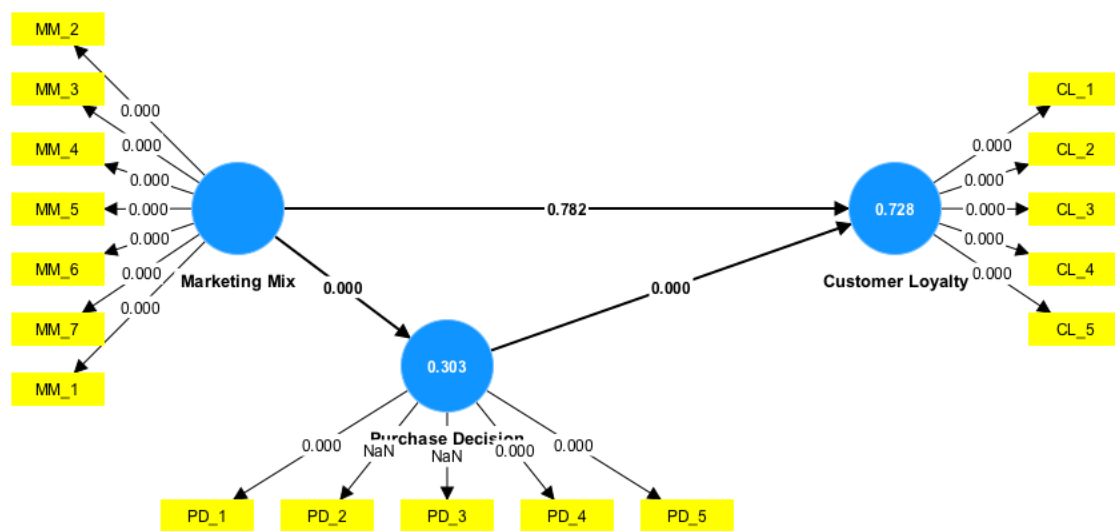


Figure 3. Structural Model

Hypothesis test results show the marketing mix as strategy will affect B2B's purchase decision is supported. The results of this study show that companies with a B2B business type have the opportunity to encourage purchase decisions by implementing a marketing mix strategy. In this study, the marketing mix strategy referred to is 7P.

Hypothesis test results show the marketing mix as strategy will affect B2B's customer loyalty is not supported. The results of this research indicate that if B2B implements a marketing mix strategy to support its business it cannot affect customer loyalty. Although this study does not include an analysis stage to look at marketing mix elements that do not influence customer loyalty, data analysis shows otherwise.

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Essentially, customer loyalty is about consumer behaviour rather than mindset [_\(Griffin, 2005\)](#). On the other hand, the primary purpose of adopting a consumer mix is to elicit the desired reaction from the target market [_\(Kotler & Keller, 2012\)](#). Companies must adopt the consumer mix in order to enhance product/service purchases and generate loyalty by delivering high-quality and helpful items as well as gratifying services. Consumers respond differently to compelling messages offered by companies. Logically, a person will be highly loyal to the product/service they use if they believe it is the best fit for their requirements.

Then, the third hypothesis result shows purchase decision will mediate the effect of marketing mix to B2B's customer loyalty is supported. Purchase decisions had a beneficial impact on purchasing loyalty [_\(Azizah & Hadi, 2020\)](#) and purchase decision may be stimulated through online interactions [_\(Koskinen, 2021\)](#). Customer loyalty as the behavioural expression of "decision-making units that make continuous purchases of a company's goods/services [_\(Griffin, 2005\)](#)." Of the five stages of purchasing decisions, the last two are purchasing decisions, in which customers finally buy one product/service from a group of alternatives that they believe is most suitable to meet their needs, and post-purchase behaviour, in which customers have a high likelihood of purchasing the same product/service repeatedly [_\(Kotler & Keller, 2012\)](#).

Customers like to buy their favourite brands while ignoring rivals' brands. Sales promotion may work in retailer marketing programme with the purpose of driving sales, increasing sales, or keeping customers interested and purchasing [_\(Kwan, 2016\)](#). However, this research will also look at whether the practices commonly applied for B2C companies are also relevant for B2B companies. Sales promotion refers to a variety of offers and incentives made available to buyers in order to elicit specific behaviours. Brand loyalty is widely considered to encourage customers to buy the same brand on a frequent basis, preventing them from moving to another brand. Brand loyalty encourages customers to buy the same brand on a frequent basis, limiting them to one brand. This set of processes ultimately results in brand equity, which boosts the company's sales and profits.

In relation to medical B3 waste transportation services as a type of business that represents B2B to be studied in this research. The results of this research indicate that companies operating in the medical B3 waste transportation services sector have no relevance to the marketing mix strategy if they want to encourage customer loyalty. However, interestingly, purchase decisions can mediate the influence of the marketing mix on customer loyalty, in other words, consumers of companies operating in the medical B3 waste transportation service sector can have an important role in encouraging the creation of customer loyalty, regardless of the strategy being practiced is a marketing mix.

To strengthen the results of this study, researchers also tried to explore consumers who are relevant to companies operating in the medical B3 waste transportation services sector. From searching various sources, it is known that health facilities are the main customers of the medical B3 waste transportation services business. In Jakarta itself, health facilities consist of community

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health centers or PUSKESMAS, integrated service posts or POSYANDU and hospitals, both private and government managed hospitals.

CONCLUSION

This research proposes three hypotheses that describe the relationship between marketing mix strategies in B2B and purchase decisions and customer loyalty. From the results of data analysis, there are two hypotheses that are supported and one hypothesis that is not supported. The supported hypothesis is that B2B marketing mix strategies can influence purchase decisions (hypothesis 1) and purchase decisions mediate B2B marketing mix strategies on customer loyalty (hypothesis 3). Meanwhile, the marketing mix strategy in B2B which is considered to influence customer loyalty is not supported (hypothesis 2), or in other words, the determinants of B2B being loyal to one vendor are not influenced by the marketing mix strategy.

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