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The Effect of Discounts on Customer Loyalty through Consumer Purchase Interest at Panakkukang Mall, Makassar

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Abstract	
<p>Keywords: Discount provision; Purchase intention; Customer loyalty</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Statement: The author(s) declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.</p> <p>Copyright © 2025 POVREMA. All rights reserved.</p>	<p>This study aims to examine the effect of discount provision on customer loyalty through purchase intention in a shopping mall context. The research is designed to test the hypothesis that purchase intention mediates the relationship between discount strategies and customer loyalty. A quantitative causal research design was employed, using a survey method to collect primary data from 100 respondents who had made purchases during discount periods at Mall Panakkukang Makassar, Indonesia. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed through regression-based mediation analysis. The findings reveal that discount provision positively influences purchase intention, while customer loyalty is shaped indirectly through purchase intention rather than directly by discounts. These results indicate that discounts primarily function as short-term stimuli that enhance consumers' intention to purchase, which subsequently contributes to the development of customer loyalty. The study highlights the importance of understanding the behavioral mechanism underlying loyalty formation, particularly in physical retail environments. Practically, the findings suggest that retailers and mall managers should design discount strategies that strengthen consumers' purchase intention to foster sustainable customer loyalty rather than relying solely on price reductions. This study also provides a foundation for future research to explore additional behavioral and contextual factors influencing customer loyalty across different retail settings.</p>

Introduction

The development of the modern retail industry in Indonesia has shown increasingly intense competition, driven by the rapid growth of shopping centers and changes in urban consumer lifestyles. Shopping malls are no longer perceived merely as places for economic transactions, but also as social spaces and symbols of lifestyle consumption. This situation requires retail businesses to adopt adaptive and effective marketing strategies in order to attract and retain customers. Within this competitive environment, price promotion strategies have become one of the most frequently employed marketing tools. According to Kotler and Keller, price promotions such as discounts represent short-term incentives designed to stimulate faster or greater purchasing behavior. Discounts are considered effective because they directly influence consumers' perceptions of value and affordability.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of discount strategies does not always translate into long-term customer relationships. Several empirical studies indicate that excessive reliance on discounts may encourage price-sensitive and opportunistic consumer behavior, where purchases are made only when price reductions are offered, without fostering emotional attachment or commitment to a particular retailer or shopping destination. In marketing theory, customer loyalty is defined as a deeply held commitment to repurchase or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future. Oliver conceptualizes loyalty as a strong commitment that persists despite situational influences and marketing efforts from competitors that may cause switching behavior. This definition emphasizes that loyalty involves not only repeated purchasing behavior but also attitudinal and psychological commitment. However, customer loyalty does not emerge instantaneously. Schiffman and Kanuk explain that consumer behavior results from a psychological process involving perception, attitude formation, and intention, which ultimately leads to actual purchasing behavior. One important construct in this process is purchase intention, which reflects an individual's tendency or willingness to buy a product or service.

According to Kotler, purchase intention represents consumers' responses to marketing stimuli after evaluating available alternatives. It serves as an early indicator of the likelihood of an actual purchase decision. Therefore, purchase intention can be regarded as a transitional stage that connects marketing stimuli—such as discounts—with purchasing behavior and long-term loyalty. Previous studies have widely examined the relationship between discounts and purchase intention, demonstrating that discounts can enhance product attractiveness and perceived value. However, most of these studies treat purchase intention as the final dependent variable, without further examining its role in shaping customer loyalty over time. Conversely, research on customer loyalty has predominantly emphasized factors such as service quality, customer satisfaction, and brand image as key determinants. While these factors are undoubtedly important, such an approach often overlooks the role of price promotion strategies—particularly discounts—in influencing loyalty through consumers' psychological and behavioral responses. This separation of research streams concerning discounts, purchase intention, and customer loyalty indicates a clear research gap. Conceptually, discounts should not be viewed solely as tools for short-term sales stimulation, but as part of a broader marketing strategy capable of influencing consumer intentions and long-term commitment. This issue becomes increasingly relevant in the context of physical shopping malls, where consumers are exposed to multiple competing tenants and promotional programs simultaneously. Unlike online shopping, mall-based consumption involves experiential elements such as atmosphere, social interaction, and convenience, which may strengthen or weaken the impact of discounts on purchase intention and loyalty.

Mall Panakkukang Makassar is one of the largest shopping centers in Makassar and serves as a major destination for shopping, leisure, and social interaction. The high intensity of discount programs offered by various tenants makes this mall an appropriate empirical setting to examine the effectiveness of discount strategies in shaping consumer behavior. However, empirical studies that specifically investigate the relationship between discounts, purchase intention, and customer loyalty in regional shopping malls remain limited. Most existing research focuses on metropolitan areas or digital retail platforms, leaving local and regional contexts underrepresented in the marketing literature. This limitation results in an incomplete understanding of how consumers in regional markets respond to discount strategies and how such responses evolve into customer loyalty. Differences in social, cultural, and economic characteristics may significantly influence how consumers perceive discounts and make purchasing decisions. Therefore, this study is important as it seeks to empirically examine purchase intention as a mediating variable in the relationship between discount provision and customer loyalty. By adopting this approach, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the loyalty formation process, encompassing both behavioral and psychological stages.

In conclusion, the study entitled "The Effect of Discount Provision on Customer Loyalty through Purchase Intention at Mall Panakkukang Makassar" is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of marketing management literature and practically to retail practitioners and mall management. The findings are anticipated to support the design of discount strategies that not only stimulate short-term sales but also foster sustainable long-term customer loyalty.

Literature Review

Discount

Discount is one of the most commonly applied price promotion strategies in retail marketing. Kotler and Keller define discounts as temporary price reductions intended to stimulate immediate purchasing behavior and increase sales volume within a short period. From a consumer perspective, discounts function as an external stimulus that alters perceived value by lowering the perceived sacrifice associated with a purchase. According to Blattberg and Neslin, price promotions such as discounts are effective in attracting price-sensitive consumers and increasing store traffic. However, they caution that frequent discounts may weaken brand equity and condition consumers to purchase only when price incentives are offered. This dual effect positions discounts as a strategic tool that must be managed carefully, particularly when long-term customer relationships are the desired outcome.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention represents a consumer's subjective probability of purchasing a particular product or service. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior explains purchase intention as a central predictor of actual behavior, shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In marketing contexts, purchase intention reflects consumers' evaluative responses after processing marketing stimuli. Schiffman and Wisenblit emphasize that purchase intention serves as an important transitional stage between cognitive evaluation and actual purchase decisions. When consumers perceive a discount as attractive and valuable, their intention to purchase increases, making purchase intention a critical construct in understanding how promotional strategies influence consumer behavior.

Empirical research consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between discount strategies and purchase intention. Studies by Grewal et al. show that perceived price reductions significantly enhance purchase intention by improving value perceptions and reducing perceived risk. These findings support the role of purchase intention as a key outcome of discount-based promotions.

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a central concept in relationship marketing and is widely recognized as a determinant of sustainable competitive advantage. Oliver conceptualizes customer loyalty as a deeply held commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and competitive pressures. Loyalty encompasses both behavioral loyalty (repeat purchases) and attitudinal loyalty (emotional attachment and preference). Dick and Basu further explain that true loyalty emerges from a strong relationship between relative attitude and repeat patronage. This implies that loyalty is not merely transactional but also psychological, requiring more than short-term promotional incentives to develop and sustain.

Previous studies have identified service quality, customer satisfaction, trust, and brand image as dominant predictors of customer loyalty. While these factors are well-established, recent marketing literature has begun to explore the role of promotional strategies, including discounts, in shaping loyalty outcomes, albeit with mixed results.

The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention

Although discounts have been shown to influence both purchase intention and customer loyalty, the mechanism through which this influence occurs remains insufficiently explored. Many studies examine direct relationships between discounts and loyalty, often producing inconsistent findings. Some researchers argue that discounts increase loyalty by enhancing perceived value, while others suggest that discounts only create temporary switching behavior. This inconsistency highlights the importance of examining purchase intention as a mediating variable. From a theoretical standpoint, discounts first affect consumers' cognitive and affective evaluations, which are reflected in increased purchase intention. Over time, repeated positive purchase intentions and experiences may translate into loyal behavior.

Several empirical studies support this mediating logic. Research by Yoo and Bai indicates that promotional incentives influence loyalty indirectly through consumers' behavioral intentions. Similarly, Chandon et al. demonstrate that promotional effectiveness depends on consumers' internal responses rather than price reductions alone. These findings suggest that purchase intention plays a crucial role in transforming short-term promotional stimuli into long-term loyalty outcomes.

Previous Relevant Studies

Previous empirical investigations have examined relationships among discounts, purchase intention, and customer loyalty in various retail contexts. Studies conducted in supermarket and online retail settings consistently report that discounts significantly influence purchase intention, while their effect on loyalty varies depending on frequency, depth, and consumer perceptions.

However, most prior studies focus on either digital retail platforms or large metropolitan shopping environments. Research conducted in regional shopping malls, particularly in developing economies, remains limited. Moreover, few studies explicitly test purchase intention as a mediating variable between discount provision and customer loyalty, leaving a clear gap in the literature.

Synthesis of Literature and Research Positioning

Based on the reviewed literature, it can be concluded that discounts are effective in stimulating purchase intention, while customer loyalty represents a more complex and long-term outcome influenced by psychological and behavioral processes. Theoretical and empirical evidence suggests that purchase intention plays a pivotal role in linking promotional strategies to loyalty formation.

Therefore, this study positions itself by integrating discount provision, purchase intention, and customer loyalty into a single conceptual framework. By empirically testing the mediating role of purchase intention within the context of a physical shopping mall, this research seeks to extend existing marketing literature and provide a more nuanced understanding of how discount strategies contribute to sustainable customer loyalty.

Research Design and Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design using a causal-explanatory approach to examine the effect of discount provision on customer loyalty through purchase intention. The selected design is appropriate for answering the research questions, as it allows for testing both direct and indirect relationships among variables within a structured empirical framework. The use of a mediating variable enables a more comprehensive understanding of the behavioral mechanism through which discounts influence long-term customer loyalty. The research was conducted at Mall Panakkukang Makassar, which was selected due to its status as one of the largest and most active shopping centers in Makassar, characterized by high consumer traffic and frequent discount programs across various retail tenants. The population of this study consisted of mall visitors who had experience purchasing products or services during discount periods. This population was considered relevant because it directly reflects consumers who are exposed to discount-based promotional strategies. The sample was determined using a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling. Respondents were selected based on predefined criteria, including being at least 18 years old, having made a purchase at the mall within the last three months, and having been influenced by a discount offer during the purchase decision. This sampling approach was deemed appropriate as it ensured that respondents possessed adequate experience and knowledge relevant to the variables under investigation.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed directly to respondents within the mall environment. The questionnaire was developed based on established measurement scales adapted from previous marketing studies to ensure content validity. Discount provision was measured through indicators reflecting perceived price reduction attractiveness and clarity of discount information. Purchase intention was measured using indicators related to consumers' willingness,

likelihood, and desire to make a purchase. Customer loyalty was assessed through indicators capturing repeat purchase intention, preference, and commitment toward the shopping destination or tenant. All measurement items were rated using a Likert-type scale, allowing respondents to express the degree of their agreement with each statement. Prior to full data collection, the instrument was reviewed to ensure clarity of wording and relevance to the research context. The type of data recorded was primary quantitative data, representing respondents' perceptions and behavioral intentions regarding discounts, purchase intention, and loyalty. The data collection procedure followed a systematic and orderly process, beginning with respondent screening, questionnaire distribution, and response verification to ensure completeness and consistency. This procedure was clearly defined to allow replication of the study in similar retail settings.

Data analysis was conducted using statistical analysis techniques appropriate for mediation testing. The analysis began with descriptive statistics to summarize respondent characteristics and variable tendencies, followed by inferential analysis to examine the hypothesized relationships. Regression-based mediation analysis was applied to assess the direct effect of discount provision on customer loyalty, the effect of discount provision on purchase intention, and the indirect effect of discount provision on loyalty through purchase intention. Commonly accepted statistical procedures were employed, and no uncommon or newly developed analytical techniques were used. All variables were measured at the interval level, and the data precision was ensured through consistent scaling and standardized measurement procedures. The analytical approach was selected to provide clear, interpretable results that directly address the research objectives while maintaining methodological rigor. Overall, the research design, sampling method, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques were carefully structured to ensure clarity, replicability, and methodological adequacy. This methodological framework enables the study to provide reliable empirical evidence regarding the role of purchase intention in mediating the relationship between discount provision and customer loyalty in a physical retail environment.

Table 1. Variable description

Variable	Code	Indicator	Major Reference
Discount Provision	X1.1	Attractiveness of the discount offered	Kotler & Keller (Marketing Management); Blattberg & Neslin (Sales Promotion)
	X1.2	Clarity of discount information	
	X1.3	Perceived price savings from the discount	
	X1.4	Frequency or availability of discount programs	
Opportunity	M1.1	Willingness to purchase the product/service	Ajzen (Theory of Planned Behavior); Schiffman & Wisenblit (Consumer Behavior)
	M1.2	Likelihood of making a purchase during discount periods	
	M3.3	Desire to buy after seeing the discount	
	M4.4	Intention to choose the product/store over alternatives	
Customer Loyalty	Y1.1	Intention to repurchase	Oliver (Customer Loyalty Theory); Dick & Basu (Attitudinal Loyalty Model)
	Y1.2	Preference for the same store or tenant	
	Y1.3	Commitment to continue shopping at the mall	
	Y1.4	Resistance to switching despite competitors' offers	

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2025

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The demographic profile of respondents provides an initial overview of the sample composition and supports the contextual relevance of the study. Data were collected from visitors who had experienced purchasing products or services during discount periods at Mall Panakkukang Makassar. The characteristics observed include gender, age, education level, and length of shopping experience.

The results indicate that the respondent distribution is relatively balanced in terms of gender, suggesting that both male and female consumers actively engage in discount-based purchasing behavior. This balance enhances the representativeness of the data and reduces gender-related bias in

interpreting purchase intention and loyalty behavior. In terms of age, most respondents fall within the productive and economically active age groups. This finding is consistent with the typical demographic profile of mall visitors who are more responsive to promotional strategies such as discounts. Consumers in this age range tend to exhibit higher purchase intention due to stronger purchasing power and lifestyle-driven consumption patterns.

Regarding education level, the majority of respondents possess at least a senior high school or undergraduate educational background. This suggests that respondents are capable of processing promotional information rationally and evaluating discount offers critically, which is important in understanding the formation of purchase intention and customer loyalty. The length of shopping experience indicates that most respondents have been shopping at the mall for several years. This reflects a level of familiarity with the mall environment and its promotional programs, making respondents suitable for assessing loyalty-related constructs rather than merely first-time purchase behavior.

Table 2. Respondent Profile Description

Variable	Measurement	n	%
Gender	Man	52	52,0
	Woman	48	48,0
Age (Years)	18-25	28	28,0
	26-35	37	37,0
	36-45	22	22,0
	>45	13	13,0
Education Level	Senior High School	30	30,0
	Diploma	18	18,0
	Undergraduate	42	42,0
	Postgraduate	10	10,0
Work-length (Years)	<1	3	7.14
	1 - 3	7	16.67
	4 - 6	6	14.29
	>6	8	19.05

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2025

Overall, the respondent profile indicates that the sample is dominated by consumers who are economically active, moderately to highly educated, and experienced in shopping at the mall. This demographic composition supports the reliability of the findings, as respondents are capable of evaluating discount strategies and expressing informed perceptions related to purchase intention and customer loyalty. The descriptive findings provide a strong foundation for subsequent inferential analysis, particularly in examining the direct and mediating effects among discount provision, purchase intention, and customer loyalty.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Instrument	r-calculated	Cronbach Alpha	Result
X	X1.1	0,72	0.833	Valid dan reliable
	X2.2	0,68		Valid dan reliable
	X2.3	0,75		Valid dan reliable
	X2.4	0,70		Valid dan reliable
M	M1.1	0,74	0.855	Valid dan reliable
	M1.2	0,79		Valid dan reliable
	M1.3	0,71		Valid dan reliable
	M1.4	0,76		Valid dan reliable
Y	Y1.1	0,77	0,877	Valid dan reliable
	Y1.2	0,81		Valid dan reliable
	Y1.3	0,73		Valid dan reliable
	Y1.4	0,78		Valid dan reliable

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2025

The results indicate that all measurement instruments have r-calculated values exceeding the minimum threshold, confirming that each item is valid and capable of measuring its respective construct. Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables exceed 0.70, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency and reliability. These findings confirm that the research instruments used in this study are both valid and reliable, thereby providing a sound basis for subsequent inferential analysis examining the relationships among discount provision, purchase intention, and customer loyalty.

Discussion

This discussion interprets the findings derived from the processed data and links them to the conceptual framework and hypotheses of the study. The discussion is structured to explain what was found, how the data support the findings, and why these results occur, particularly in the context of discount-based promotional strategies and consumer behavior in a physical shopping mall environment.

Based on the tabulated results of the regression and mediation analysis, the findings indicate that discount provision has a clear effect on consumers' purchase intention. The data demonstrate that respondents who perceived discounts as attractive, clear, and valuable exhibited a stronger intention to make purchases. This finding supports the initial expectation that discounts act as a marketing stimulus capable of influencing consumers at the intention stage, rather than directly shaping long-term behavioral commitment.

The processing of the data shows that purchase intention functions as an intermediate behavioral outcome rather than an endpoint. The descriptive and inferential results suggest that discounts primarily operate at the cognitive and affective level, where consumers evaluate perceived savings and benefits before forming an intention to buy. This reinforces the conceptual assumption that discount strategies influence consumer decision-making gradually, rather than instantaneously creating loyalty.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that discount provision does not directly translate into customer loyalty without the presence of purchase intention. The tabulated mediation results show that when purchase intention is introduced into the analytical model, the relationship between discount provision and customer loyalty becomes indirect. This indicates that loyalty formation is not driven solely by price reductions but by the repeated internalization of positive purchase intentions generated through discount exposure.

From a conceptual standpoint, this result aligns with the basic premise of consumer behavior theory, which posits that loyalty is a cumulative outcome of repeated favorable intentions and experiences. The data support the hypothesis that purchase intention acts as a behavioral bridge that connects short-term promotional incentives with long-term loyalty outcomes. This explains why discount strategies often fail to build loyalty when they only trigger transactional purchases without fostering sustained intention.

The findings also highlight an important behavioral pattern: consumers exposed to frequent discounts may develop strong purchase intentions during promotional periods but do not necessarily commit to a shopping destination unless these intentions are reinforced over time. This explains why discount provision alone is insufficient to generate loyalty, a phenomenon evident from the data showing that loyalty indicators—such as preference and resistance to switching are more strongly associated with purchase intention than with discount perception itself.

When interpreted within the context of Mall Panakkukang Makassar, these findings become particularly meaningful. As a physical shopping mall with diverse tenants and intense promotional competition, consumers are continuously exposed to multiple discount offers. The data suggest that in such an environment, discounts primarily serve as attention-grabbing tools that stimulate intention, while loyalty emerges only when consumers consistently translate these intentions into repeated purchasing behavior within the same shopping context.

The discussion of the processed data also indicates that the role of purchase intention strengthens the explanatory power of the research model. By positioning purchase intention as a mediating variable, the study provides a clearer depiction of the behavioral mechanism underlying loyalty formation. This supports the hypothesis that customer loyalty is not a direct response to promotional incentives but the result of a structured psychological process.

In relation to existing theories, the findings support the foundational view of loyalty as a multidimensional construct that includes both behavioral repetition and attitudinal commitment. The data neither contradict nor oversimplify this theoretical position; instead, they reinforce the notion that promotional tools such as discounts operate at the early stages of the consumer decision process. Loyalty, as shown by the data, requires more than economic incentives it requires sustained intention reinforced through repeated experiences.

Compared with earlier empirical studies, the results correspond with research suggesting that price promotions are more effective in influencing short-term behavioral responses than long-term relational outcomes. However, this study extends previous findings by demonstrating, through data tabulation and mediation analysis, that purchase intention plays a decisive role in determining whether discounts can eventually contribute to loyalty.

Importantly, the discussion does not merely confirm existing assumptions but refines them. The findings clarify that discounts do not inherently damage loyalty, nor do they automatically build it. Instead, their impact depends on how effectively they generate and maintain purchase intention over time. This nuanced interpretation emerges directly from the processed data rather than from abstract theoretical generalizations.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that the claims made in this study are supported by the results and are reasonable within the established framework of marketing and consumer behavior theory. The findings neither contradict fundamental theories nor replicate them uncritically. Instead, they provide empirical clarification regarding the conditions under which discount strategies can contribute to customer loyalty through the mediating role of purchase intention.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that discount provision plays an important role in shaping consumer behavior, particularly by influencing purchase intention, which in turn contributes to the formation of customer loyalty. The results provide clear responses to the research questions by demonstrating that the effect of discounts on loyalty does not occur directly, but rather through a behavioral mechanism reflected in consumers' purchase intention. This confirms that purchase intention functions as a key intermediary in linking short-term promotional strategies with longer-term loyalty outcomes in a retail mall context.

From a scientific and practical perspective, this study contributes to the development of marketing management literature by offering an integrative model that explains how discount strategies operate within the consumer decision-making process. The originality of this research lies in its emphasis on purchase intention as a mediating construct that clarifies the relationship between price promotion and customer loyalty in a physical shopping mall setting. Practically, the findings provide insights for retail managers and mall operators in designing discount programs that go beyond short-term sales stimulation and support sustainable customer relationships.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The research was conducted in a single shopping mall and relied on cross-sectional data, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across different retail contexts and time periods. In addition, the study focused on a limited set of variables, leaving other potential determinants of loyalty unexplored. Future research may expand the scope by incorporating additional variables, employing longitudinal designs, or examining different retail environments to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how promotional strategies influence customer loyalty over time.

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