

## Perceived Value as a Mediator of Customer Loyalty to Food Delivery Adoption

Jumiatul Mulya<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Yunia Wardi<sup>3</sup>, Abror Abror<sup>4</sup>, Vidyarini Dwita<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,3,4,5</sup>Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>STIE Perdagangan, Padang, Indonesia

E-mail: <sup>1)</sup> [jumiatulmulya89@gmail.com](mailto:jumiatulmulya89@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

The increasingly competitive growth of the online food delivery industry demands a deeper understanding of consumers' psychological mechanisms in building loyalty, specifically through the role of perceived value as a link between service experience and customer behavior. This study aims to explore the function of Perceived Value as a mediating factor in customer loyalty. The method used is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) by taking article sources from ScienceDirect, Scopus, Web of Science, SpringerLink, Taylor and Francis, Wiley Online Library, Emerald Insight, Google Scholar, and others during 2020–2026. Twelve (12) relevant articles were found for further analysis. The findings of this study indicate that Perceived Value contributes significantly in bridging the relationship between service quality, customer experience, digital marketing, trust, and customer loyalty. Those with high perceived value are more likely to repeat purchases, provide good recommendations, and maintain long-term relationships with the company. This study concludes that factors that shape customer loyalty include not only service quality, but also the value and experience perceived by customers. For further research, it is recommended to add variables related to psychological and emotional aspects to enrich the customer loyalty model.

Keywords: Customer Loyalty, Food Delivery Adoption, Perceived Value, Systematic Literature Review

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Digital advancements have revolutionized the food service industry through the rise of Food Delivery Adoption (FDA), enabling consumers to order meals seamlessly via mobile platforms like GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood. Initially accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic as a safer alternative to conventional transactions (Prasetyo et al., 2021), FDA utilization maintains a positive trajectory in the post-pandemic landscape, driven by consumer habituation to its convenience and efficiency (Ray et al., 2019; Tandon et al., 2021). This market expansion, however, has triggered aggressive competition among service providers. To sustain a competitive advantage, firms must prioritize customer loyalty over simple user acquisition (Louisa & Simbolon, 2023; Suhartanto et al., 2020). In digital commerce, maintaining an established customer base is vital for financial viability due to its lower cost relative to acquisition strategies (Sidharta et al., 2021); yet, securing this loyalty persists as a critical hurdle for the FDA sector. The characteristics of the digital industry allow customers to switch from one application to another very quickly due to the wide variety of platforms offering relatively similar promotions, discounts, and features (Louisa & Simbolon, 2023). This situation means that customer loyalty cannot be built solely through price or promotions; it also requires a deeper understanding of how customers assess the overall service experience (Hasibuan & Dirbawanto, 2024). Therefore, researchers have begun to focus on the concept of perceived value as a crucial factor in explaining the formation of customer loyalty in FDA services.

Driven by the dynamic nature of the digital marketplace, consumers can switch between mobile food delivery applications with minimal friction, attracted by rival platforms that offer highly comparable features and promotional incentives (Louisa & Simbolon, 2023). Under these conditions, transactional factors like discounts are inadequate for securing long-term customer loyalty. Rather, firms must comprehend the multi-

faceted ways in which users evaluate their overall service experience. For this reason, scholarly attention has shifted toward perceived value as a paramount determinant capable of elucidating customer loyalty dynamics in the digital food delivery landscape

Perceived value is conceptually defined as a consumer's comprehensive assessment of the utility of a product or service based on the trade-off between perceived benefits and the sacrifices incurred (Khasbulloh and Suparna, 2022; Mulya and Dwita, 2024). Within the context of Food Delivery Adoption (FDA), these benefits encompass mobile application usability, delivery expedience, food quality, transactional security, informational completeness, payment convenience, and the holistic user experience (Konuk, 2021). Conversely, the perceived sacrifices involve monetary costs, waiting times, potential order inaccuracies, and data privacy risks. When consumers perceive that the cumulative benefits outweigh these sacrifices, they develop a high level of perceived value toward the platform (Ray et al., 2019). This mechanism can be theoretically elucidated through the Theory of Consumption Values formulated by Sheth et al. (1991), which posits that consumer choices are driven not merely by functional utility, but also by emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional values derived during consumption. Consequently, FDA users evaluate more than just the core delivery function; they actively weigh the convenience, emotional engagement, and social utility of digital adoption, positioning perceived value as a pivotal determinant that bridges customer experience with loyal attitudes and behaviors.

Robust empirical evidence indicates that perceived value plays a critical role in shaping customer loyalty within digital service contexts. Specifically, Ray et al. (2019) demonstrated that value perception serves as a primary driver for the continuous intention to use food delivery platforms, while Konuk (2021) confirmed that consumers with elevated value perceptions exhibit stronger repurchase intentions. Furthermore, contemporary literature underscores that the relationship between marketing antecedents and customer loyalty is often indirect. Prior scholarly work suggests that constructs such as e-service quality, trust, customer experience, information quality, and perceived ease of use typically determine the evaluation of service value before translating into long-term loyalty (Alalwan, 2020; Kapoor & Vij, 2018). Consequently, perceived value functions as a pivotal mediating mechanism that elucidates how consumer experiences are psychologically processed to ultimately manifest as loyal behaviors.

Illustrating this mechanism, Alalwan (2020) found that dimensions of electronic service quality, such as intuitive app navigation, system responsiveness, and fulfillment accuracy, act as critical drivers of perceived value, ultimately fostering customer loyalty. This is mirrored in the study by Alkufahy et al. (2023), which reveals that favorable customer experiences in digital marketing environments optimize value perceptions, consequently reinforcing continuous adoption. Additionally, Konuk (2021) identified that transactional security and platform trust substantially bolster perceived value, thereby functioning as key catalysts for subsequent consumer loyalty.

Despite the growing body of literature examining perceived value and customer loyalty within the Food Delivery Adoption (FDA) sector, empirical findings remain highly inconsistent regarding the strength and nature of these inter-variable relationships. For instance, several studies report that perceived value functions as a full mediator, whereas other investigations demonstrate only a partial mediating effect (Konuk, 2021). Furthermore, prevailing research has predominantly focused on the direct impact of perceived value on customer loyalty, thereby under-exploring the deeper, nuanced mediating mechanisms embedded within this construct a gap that contrasts with the preliminary insights offered by Katili et al. (2024), Khasbulloh and Suparna (2022), Sidharta et al. (2021), Uikey et al. (2026), and Yuen et al. (2023). This empirical ambiguity highlights a critical research gap that warrants further scholarly investigation. Consequently, a more systematic analysis is imperative to elucidate these structural pathways and develop a more comprehensive conceptual framework.

While numerous studies on loyalty based on Social Exchange Theory (SET), which focus on the comparison of costs and benefits, this study aligns more closely with Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT). In light of these considerations, perceived value constitutes a pivotal variable capable of explaining how various service attributes including e-service quality, user experience, trust, and information accuracy interact to foster customer loyalty in the digital food delivery landscape. Therefore, analyzing the mediating role of perceived value on customer loyalty within FDA environments is of paramount relevance. This study

yields profound insights into the dynamics of digital consumer psychology while equipping service providers with the strategic insights necessary to cultivate long-term customer loyalty.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Customer Loyalty

Contemporary customer loyalty extends beyond mere repurchase behavior; it encompasses psychological commitment, emotional attachment, brand trust, advocacy through recommendations, and resilience against competitive poaching. In the modern business landscape, loyalty serves as a critical strategic asset, given that retaining existing clients is substantially more cost-effective than acquiring new ones. Prior literature indicates that loyalty is driven by a complex configuration of factors, including service quality, customer experience, satisfaction, trust, digital marketing, and perceived value (Diwayanti et al., 2025; Kazmi and Fatima, 2024; Kusumawati and Rahayu, 2019). Within FDA systems, loyalty is cultivated through specific structural attributes such as application quality, navigational ease, transactional security, food quality, e-service quality, and the overall digital user experience (Alalwan, 2020; Suhartanto et al., 2020; Tandon et al., 2021).

Furthermore, social dynamics including online reviews, social media engagement, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) exert a profound influence on contemporary loyalty patterns Bushara et al. (2023; Odemis (2023). Empirical evidence from Alkufahy et al. (2023), Hanaysha et al. (2025), Massoudi et al. (2025), and Zaheer et al. (2024) confirms that perceived value acts as a vital mechanism that translates service excellence, technology, social media marketing, and relational dynamics into sustainable customer loyalty. This highlights that modern consumers engage in both rational and emotional decision-making, weighing not only functional utility but also emotional resonance, personalization, corporate transparency, social value, and sustainability (Uikey et al., 2026; Yuen et al., 2023). Nevertheless, prevailing literature predominantly conceptualizes loyalty through linear relationships, thereby neglecting the reality that digital loyalty is heavily contingent upon rapidly evolving technological dynamics, shifting social trends, and volatile consumer expectations.

### 2.2. Perceived Value

Perceived value represents a cornerstone concept in modern consumer behavior, elucidating the cognitive process wherein customers evaluate received benefits against multifaceted sacrifices, including monetary costs, time, perceived risks, and expenditure of effort during consumption. Scholarly evolution indicates that perceived value has transcended purely functional or economic dimensions, developing into a multidimensional construct that integrates emotional, social, experiential, and symbolic values. In digital ecosystems such as online food delivery, e-commerce, omnichannel environments, and social media consumers assess utility based on technological seamlessness, information quality, transactional security, service personalization, and the convenience of the digital user experience (Alalwan, 2020; Kapoor and Vij, 2018; Tandon et al., 2021). Empirical insights from Bushara et al. (2023), Hanaysha et al. (2025), Kusumawati and Rahayu (2020), Mulya and Dwita (2024), and Zaheer et al. (2024) confirm that perceived value serves as a critical determinant that amplifies customer satisfaction, trust, repurchase intentions, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and ultimate brand loyalty. Consequently, modern consumers do not merely purchase a product or service; rather, they acquire the holistic value and experiential utility derived during firm interactions.

Synthesizing these perspectives, prior research underscores that perceived value functions as a strategic mechanism for cultivating customer loyalty within highly competitive, experience-driven digital economies. Within this paradigm, loyalty is rarely generated directly from service quality, marketing initiatives, or technology deployment; instead, it is mediated through the value perceived by the customer (Alkufahy et al., 2023; Kazmi and Fatima, 2024; Menidjel and Bilgihan, 2021). Nevertheless, conventional literature predominantly conceptualizes this relationship through linear frameworks, failing to capture contemporary consumer behavior, which is dynamic and continuously swayed by emotional, psychological, social, and technological disruptions. Concurrently, the proliferation of digital alternatives renders loyalty increasingly volatile if firms fail to deliver relevant, personalized, and value-driven experiences. Therefore, enterprises must pivot toward strategies that transcend core product or service quality, focusing instead on sustainable

value co-creation through integrated, emotional, and relationship-oriented experiences. This positions perceived value as a sustainable competitive advantage that dictates customer retention and recurring purchase decisions.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

EDT explains that loyalty is formed when a service meets or exceeds pre-existing expectations, a crucial framework for evaluating marketing and perceived value efforts in the service industry (Pamuji & Suroso, 2025). The article selection process began with a search using the keyword "Perceived Value Mediation Loyalty Customer" from ScienceDirect for the period 2020 to 2026, yielding 147 articles. The selection process was then conducted based on article type, yielding 140 articles for review and 110 articles for research. A review of the subject area further narrowed the number of articles to 117. Finally, open access and open archive articles were searched to identify relevant articles, resulting in a final total of 12 articles.

The articles successfully retrieved from ScienceDirect after the selection process, fewer than 10 were found to be relevant. Therefore, the search was expanded by adding data sources from various other academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, SpringerLink, Taylor and Francis, Wiley Online Library, Emerald Insight, and Google Scholar. The search was conducted using Boolean combinations of the keywords "Perceived Value," "Loyalty," "Customer Perceived Value," "Customer Loyalty," "Mobile Food Delivery," "Online Food Delivery," "Food Delivery App," and "Perceived Value as a Mediator of Customer Loyalty." Ultimately, a total of 12 articles were analyzed.

The data analysis process for the selected articles was conducted through content analysis and thematic coding, focusing on: a. The theoretical framework used. b. The variables and relationships tested. c. The empirical context and setting. d. The reported results and identified gaps. These categories helped identify existing findings and highlight research gaps for future exploration.

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. Research Results**

According to Rueda-Lopez et al. (2026), perceived value acts as a vital bridge toward establishing visitor loyalty, indicating that travel motivations and experiential factors shape destination loyalty indirectly by first elevating consumers' value perceptions. Consequently, tourists who experience superior value show higher levels of satisfaction, a stronger likelihood of returning to the destination, and a greater willingness to offer favorable recommendations to prospective travelers.

Research by Diwayanti et al. (2025), perceived value acts as a vital mediating mechanism bridging service attributes with customer loyalty. Rather than exerting a direct impact, service quality and customer experience foster loyalty indirectly by first elevating the value perceived by consumers. In a pharmacy setting, when individuals experience meaningful functional and emotional benefits, they exhibit higher retention rates, characterized by recurring purchase decisions, ongoing service adoption, and positive word-of-mouth advocacy. Consequently, this research highlights perceived value as a cornerstone construct for converting operational performance and experiential quality into sustainable customer loyalty.

Hanaysha et al. (2025), Prior research demonstrates that perceived value acts as a critical mediating mechanism in determining online loyalty. When consumers derive high perceived value from their digital shopping experiences, it significantly amplifies customer satisfaction, fosters platform trust, and bolsters repurchase intentions. Consequently, online customer loyalty is not merely a direct consequence of website attributes or service quality; rather, its effects are systematically channeled through the cognitive and affective value perceptions developed throughout the online shopping journey.

Consumers' perceptions of a firm's long-term relationship-building initiatives significantly elevate their perceived value. Furthermore, Massoudi et al. (2025), demonstrate that perceived value substantially bolsters customer loyalty. Collectively, these findings establish that perceived value effectively mediates the relationship between perceived relationship investment and customer loyalty; consequently, consumers who

derive superior value from their ongoing relationship with an enterprise are highly predisposed to exhibit stronger behavioral and attitudinal loyalty toward that organization..

A critical finding from the study conducted by Apriyadhi et al. (2024) underscores the role of perceived value as a vital mediating variable that effectively bridges the relationship between omnichannel experience quality and customer loyalty. As consumers perceive greater functional, emotional, and social utilities, their propensity to maintain brand loyalty significantly increases. This investigation demonstrates that perceived value functions as a key psychological mechanism that reinforces the linkage between the omnichannel user experience and behavioral loyalty, particularly in a digital era that highly demands integrated and personalized customer journeys.

Research by Zaheer et al. (2024) demonstrates that perceived value functions as a critical mediating variable toward electronic loyalty (e-loyalty). This implies that the strategic attributes of an e-commerce platform do not directly generate customer retention; rather, their effects are routed through the cultivation of consumers' value perceptions. As users derive greater utility and positive experiences from a Online Food Delivery Adoption (OFDA) application, their propensity to continuously utilize the platform, engage in recurring purchases, and provide favorable recommendations to others increases significantly.

Kazmi & Fatima (2024), establish that perceived value operates as a significant mediating construct within the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. This implies that objective service quality does not directly generate user retention; instead, its operational effects are channeled through the cultivation of consumers' value perceptions regarding the received product or service. Consequently, an elevated level of perceived value substantially increases the likelihood of consumers engaging in recurring purchases, offering positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and sustaining long-term relational commitment with the firm.

Alkufahy et al. (2023) demonstrate that perceived value functions as a critical mediating variable that drives customer loyalty. As consumers derive higher perceived value from a firm's e-marketing initiatives and service delivery, their long-term loyalty toward the organization increases commensurately. Consequently, enterprises must strategically prioritize the co-creation of value-driven digital experiences to effectively cultivate sustainable customer retention and loyalty.

Empirical findings by Bushara et al. (2023) demonstrate that perceived value serves as a significant mediating construct within the relationship between social media marketing and various customer loyalty behaviors. Consumers who hold elevated value perceptions toward a restaurant exhibit higher levels of brand trust, satisfaction, and emotional attachment. This socio-psychological alignment subsequently drives behavioral retention, motivating patrons to consistently favor the same establishment, engage in positive word-of-mouth advocacy, and demonstrate a willingness to pay a price premium in exchange for superior experiential utility and perceived benefits.

Odemis (2023) examines the impact of online consumer reviews on destination brand loyalty, positioning perceived value as a critical mediating variable. This implies that electronic word-of-mouth and online reviews do not directly generate tourist loyalty; rather, their operational effects are routed through the cultivation of consumers' value perceptions regarding the tourism destination. This investigation underscores that within the contemporary digital landscape, perceived value serves as a pivotal determinant for cultivating destination brand loyalty, driven by the strategic influence of digital communication and user-generated reviews.

Perceived value operates as a critical mediating variable toward customer loyalty, as Menidjel and Bilgihan (2021), assert that when consumers recognize a firm's investment in relationship cultivation manifested through personalized attention, effective communication, preferential treatment, or supplemental benefits they experience elevated relational value. This amplification in value perceptions subsequently functions as a vital psychological mechanism that drives long-term customer retention. Consequently, it can be concluded that perceived value serves as the primary generative pathway through which corporate relationship investments are successfully translated into sustainable customer loyalty.

Kusumawati and Rahayu (2020), examine how experience quality influences customer loyalty through the dual mediating roles of customer perceived value and customer satisfaction. Their framework establishes that a superior experience does not automatically generate brand loyalty; rather, its operational effects are

initially routed through the enhancement of consumers' value perceptions. When individuals perceive that the accumulated benefits of an experience outweigh the associated costs or sacrifices, they develop a strong behavioral commitment to engage in recurring purchases, offer positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and maintain long-term brand retention.

## **4.2. Discussion**

The findings of this systematic literature review confirm that perceived value represents a fundamental psychological mechanism that transforms various service attributes into customer loyalty across diverse industry contexts. This finding aligns with previous empirical studies demonstrating that loyalty is not generated directly from service quality, marketing activities, or technological features, but rather through consumers' evaluation of whether the benefits obtained exceed the sacrifices incurred during consumption. Consistent with the Theory of Consumption Values proposed by Sheth et al. (1991), consumers evaluate value based on functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional dimensions. In digital service contexts, particularly online food delivery platforms, perceived value is shaped by convenience, efficiency, usability, accessibility, information quality, and transactional security. Previous studies support this mechanism, where Alalwan (2020) found that electronic service quality dimensions, including system responsiveness, navigation ease, and fulfillment accuracy, enhance perceived value, which subsequently influences satisfaction and continued usage intentions. Similarly, Tandon et al. (2021) demonstrated that convenience, time-saving benefits, and functional utility are essential value dimensions influencing food delivery application adoption. Furthermore, Kusumawati and Rahayu (2020) as well as Apriyadhi et al. (2024) confirmed that customer experience and omnichannel experience influence loyalty indirectly through perceived value and satisfaction, indicating that superior experiences create loyalty only when consumers perceive meaningful benefits relative to the costs involved. These findings are further supported by Hanaysha et al. (2025) and Zaheer et al. (2024), who demonstrated that website quality, service attributes, customer reviews, and strategic features of online food delivery applications enhance electronic loyalty through perceived value.

Moreover, this study highlights that the configuration of perceived value differs according to industry characteristics and consumer behavioral contexts. In tourism settings, perceived value is primarily influenced by emotional experiences, destination attractiveness, and cultural aspects, as demonstrated by Rueda-Lopez et al. (2026), whereas in digital commerce environments, value perceptions are predominantly driven by technological convenience, efficiency, information transparency, and security (Alalwan, 2020; Hanaysha et al., 2025). In relationship-oriented contexts, perceived value is strengthened through personalized interactions, relational investment, and customer engagement, as confirmed by Menidjel and Bilgihan (2021). However, although previous studies consistently establish perceived value as a critical mediator, this review identifies a theoretical limitation whereby most research continues to conceptualize perceived value as a single mediating construct. Consistent with Kazmi and Fatima (2024) as well as Diwayanti et al. (2025), customer loyalty is influenced not only by perceived value but also by complementary psychological mechanisms such as trust, emotional attachment, brand experience, relationship quality, and perceived security. Therefore, future research should develop more comprehensive structural models incorporating these socio-psychological variables to better explain the complexity of loyalty formation. From a managerial perspective, firms operating in competitive digital ecosystems, particularly online food delivery platforms, should move beyond reliance on price promotions and technical improvements by focusing on sustainable value co-creation strategies. As supported by Bushara et al. (2023) and Alkufahy et al. (2023), long-term loyalty is achieved when companies deliver integrated value experiences combining functional convenience, emotional engagement, trust, personalization, and meaningful customer relationships.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Synthesizing prior literature, perceived value emerges as a primary mechanism that elucidates how service excellence, customer experience, digital marketing, corporate interactions, and omnichannel touchpoints are effectively converted into customer loyalty. Loyalty does not stem automatically from core product or service quality; rather, it is mediated by the consumer's systematic evaluation of perceived benefits relative to monetary costs, time, risks, and behavioral effort. This indicates a paradigm shift in contemporary consumer behavior, wherein customers transcend purely functional utility to seek deeper emotional, social, symbolic, and meaningful experiential values. Empirical evidence from previous studies supports this

cohesive pattern, demonstrating that elevated customer perceived value substantially strengthens repurchase intentions, positive recommendation behaviors, long-term relational commitment, and even premium price tolerance. Thus, perceived value functions not merely as a statistical mediator, but as a critical psychological determinant governing a firm's capacity to sustain customer retention in an increasingly volatile and digitized marketplace.

The predominant operationalization of perceived value as a mediating variable across numerous empirical studies implies that many firms remain excessively focused on objective technical service enhancements, while neglecting how consumers subjectively interpret their shopping journeys. High service quality does not guarantee loyalty if consumers fail to perceive a net value that aligns with their idiosyncratic needs and expectations. Furthermore, current literature predominantly evaluates loyalty through restrictive linear lenses, failing to account for the reality that digital-era loyalty is highly dynamic, multidimensional, and contingent upon complex psychological factors such as brand trust, emotional bonding, brand experience, and social identity. Consequently, future research must develop more comprehensive structural models to capture the holistic nature of consumer loyalty. From a managerial perspective, enterprises must pivot from competing solely on product features or operational efficiency toward co-creating personally relevant, emotionally resonant, and continuous value. Firms that fail to consistently cultivate perceived value will face severe hurdles in retaining consumers, particularly within digital business ecosystems characterized by low switching costs and an abundance of market alternatives.

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