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Prioritizing Customer Loyalty Strategies Using Customer Journey Mapping and Analytic Hierarchy Process

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Background (General): The rapid growth of Indonesia’s culinary sector has intensified competition, making customer loyalty a key determinant of business sustainability and competitiveness. **Background (Specific):** Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), such as Jatinangor House, face challenges in maintaining loyalty due to inconsistent marketing strategies, limited resources, and underutilization of digital platforms. **Knowledge Gap:** While Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) and Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) have been studied individually, their integrated application in the Indonesian SME food sector to analyze and prioritize loyalty strategies remains underexplored. **Aims:** This study investigates the dominant strategy for enhancing customer loyalty at Jatinangor House Ketintang Branch by combining CJM to identify experiential gaps and AHP to prioritize strategic interventions. **Results:** Findings reveal that standardization of service, portion size, and cleanliness is the most critical priority (weight 0.365), followed by improvement of online menu information and digital promotion, whereas loyalty programs are less effective without operational consistency. **Novelty:** The study uniquely integrates CJM and AHP to provide structured, customer-centric marketing strategies for SMEs in the Indonesian food industry. **Implications:** These results emphasize that improving fundamental service quality and digital visibility must precede loyalty initiatives, offering both practical recommendations for SME management and theoretical contributions to marketing strategy research

Highlights:

- Integration of CJM and AHP reveals service quality as the top loyalty driver.
- Digital visibility and menu information are crucial for customer consideration.
- Loyalty programs are ineffective without operational consistency.

Keywords: Customer Journey Mapping, Analytic Hierarchy Process, Customer Loyalty, Marketing Strategy, SMEs

Introduction

The culinary sector in Indonesia has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, exemplified by the rapid expansion of Jatinangor House, a local fried chicken chain that grew from a small café into more than 100 outlets nationwide [1]. Despite this success, sustaining customer loyalty

remains a challenge as competition intensifies. Customer loyalty is critical for ensuring business continuity, building brand reputation, and fostering positive word-of-mouth promotion [2][3].

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) such as Jatinangor House play a vital role in Indonesia's economy, contributing significantly to employment and GDP [4][5]. However, many SMEs struggle with consistent marketing strategies, particularly in the digital era. Research has shown that while digital platforms offer significant opportunities, SMEs often fail to optimize their use, leading to limited customer engagement [6].

Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) is a strategic tool that helps businesses visualize and analyze customer experiences across different touchpoints, thereby identifying pain points and opportunities for improvement [7][8]. Meanwhile, Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) provides a robust framework for multi-criteria decision-making, allowing firms to prioritize strategies based on structured pairwise comparisons [9]. While both methods have been widely studied, their integration in analyzing customer loyalty strategies within Indonesian SMEs, particularly in the food sector, remains limited. This study addresses this gap by applying CJM and AHP to evaluate and prioritize loyalty strategies for Jatinangor House Ketintang Branch.

Customer loyalty has been extensively studied as a cornerstone of sustainable business growth, particularly in highly competitive industries such as food and beverages. Previous research emphasizes that loyal customers are less price-sensitive, more likely to make repeat purchases, and willing to recommend products to others [3]. In the Indonesian context, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) face unique challenges in cultivating loyalty due to limited resources, inconsistent service delivery, and underutilization of digital platforms [6][4].

Several studies have explored different approaches to strengthen customer loyalty in SMEs. [10] analyzed shrimp paste home industries and highlighted the importance of business development strategies tailored to local contexts. [11] demonstrated how customer journey mapping can significantly improve customer experience when applied to perfume products, while [1] emphasized structured catering business strategies as key to survival and expansion. Despite these insights, few studies have combined customer experience analysis with structured decision-making models to prioritize loyalty strategies.

This research attempts to bridge that gap by integrating Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) and Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). While CJM provides a visual representation of customer pain points, AHP enables systematic prioritization of improvement strategies. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on an Indonesian fried chicken SME chain, Jatinangor House, which represents a rapidly growing local brand but still faces customer retention challenges. This integration is expected to provide both practical recommendations for management and theoretical contributions to SME marketing literature.

Methods

This research was conducted at Jatinangor House Ketintang Branch in Surabaya between January and May 2025. The study applied a case study approach with primary data collected via structured questionnaires distributed to customers who had purchased within the last year. Employee insights were also included to enrich the analysis. Validity and reliability were tested using Pearson Product Moment and Cronbach's Alpha to ensure instrument consistency [12][13].

Customer journey refers to a series of stages that consumers go through when interacting with a product or service. This process begins when customers first become aware of a brand and continues through to the stages of purchase, product usage, and ultimately loyalty formation. Each interaction point or touchpoint that occurs during this process plays a vital role inS shaping customers' perceptions and overall experiences.

In every phase of the customer journey—from awareness, consideration, to post-purchase—the experiences perceived by customers significantly influence their satisfaction and long-term relationship with the business. This method commonly employs quantitative measurement scales, such as a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, which is used to assess customer satisfaction (experience score) at each stage, where 1 indicates very poor and 5 indicates very good. Therefore, companies must manage and optimize every aspect related to this journey, such as service quality, ease of information access, and responsiveness to customer feedback. An effective strategy will create positive impressions and strengthen customer attachment to the brand.

Moreover, the customer journey encompasses various communication and interaction channels used by customers, both direct and digital, such as websites, social media, applications, physical stores, and customer service. By understanding the flow and key touchpoints within the journey, businesses can identify areas that need improvement and create greater added value. Ultimately, this will help companies build a more effective and sustainable customer experience [7].

Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) is a strategic management tool used to visualize the sequence of consumer interactions with an organization throughout the purchasing and service usage process. CJM illustrates the series of events or touchpoints experienced by consumers, both before, during, and after the service. Through this mapping, management can better understand the critical points of customer experience and identify opportunities for service innovation at each stage. Beyond functioning as a graphical representation, CJM also serves as a cross-functional collaboration tool involving marketing, human resources, operations, and information technology, enabling organizations to improve the quality of interactions with customers in a more integrated manner [8].

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a decision-making approach developed by Thomas L. Saaty in the 1970s. This method is widely used because it is capable of addressing complex and uncertain problems, particularly in decision-making situations that involve multiple criteria.

Two main analytical methods were employed. First, Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) was used to examine consumer experiences across five key stages: Awareness, Consideration, Purchase, Experience, and Loyalty [7][11]. Each stage was evaluated to identify customer satisfaction levels and potential service gaps. Second, the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) was applied to prioritize alternative strategies. The hierarchy consisted of the overall goal (enhancing loyalty), criteria (e.g., service quality, digital visibility, process efficiency), and alternatives (strategic options). Pairwise comparisons were performed, and eigenvalue calculations were used to derive weights and assess consistency [9].

Results and Discussion

The integration of CJM and AHP offers a dual advantage: CJM highlights experiential gaps while AHP provides a systematic approach to prioritization. These findings support previous studies emphasizing that effective marketing strategies must combine service quality, digital marketing, and structured decision-making [10][8]. Furthermore, the results align with research showing that SMEs' competitiveness is significantly influenced by their ability to adopt structured business development strategies and maintain strong partnerships [14][15].

By addressing weaknesses at multiple customer journey stages and prioritizing actionable strategies, the study contributes both theoretically and practically. It extends the application of CJM and AHP in SME contexts and provides practical recommendations for improving customer loyalty in a competitive food service market.

The validity test aims to ensure that the questionnaire items truly measure the customer experience by applying the Pearson Product-Moment correlation method between the item score (X) and the total score (Y), with the criterion of r-calculated > r-table (0.361; n = 30, $\alpha = 0.05$).

Item	r -calculated	Status
Saya mengetahui keberadaan outlet ayam ini dari media sosial.	0,507	Valid
Saya tertarik mencoba outlet ayam ini setelah melihat promosi yang menarik.	0,618	Valid
Informasi mengenai outlet ini mudah ditemukan secara online.	0,507	Valid
Saya merasa harga yang ditawarkan cukup terjangkau dibandingkan dengan produk serupa.	0,772	Valid
Saya mempertimbangkan untuk mencoba outlet ini karena banyak rekomendasi dari teman/keluarga.	0,450	Valid
Menu yang ditawarkan beragam dan menarik perhatian saya.	0,711	Valid
Proses pemesanan di outlet ini mudah dan tidak membingungkan.	0,513	Valid
Waktu penyajian makanan cukup cepat dan sesuai ekspektasi.	0.400	Valid
Outlet ini memberikan pelayanan yang ramah saat saya memesan.	0,642	Valid
Rasa ayam yang disajikan sesuai dengan harapan saya.	0,606	Valid
Porsi makanan yang diberikan sesuai dengan harga yang dibayarkan.	0,461	Valid
Outlet nyaman dan bersih.	0,633	Valid
Saya ingin kembali membeli makanan dari outlet ini di masa depan.	0,670	Valid
Saya bersedia merekomendasikan outlet ini kepada orang lain.	0,750	Valid
Outlet ini memberikan kesan yang baik secara keseluruhan.	0,837	Valid

Table 1. *Results of the Validity Test for the CJM Questionnaire*

If r-calculated > r table (0,361) *item valid*

The calculation results show that all questionnaire items have correlation values greater than the r-table. For example, the item *“I know the existence of this fried chicken outlet from social media”* produced an r-calculated value of 0.507, which is higher than 0.361, and therefore declared valid. Thus, it can be concluded that all questionnaire items are valid and appropriate for use in the subsequent analysis stage.

The reliability test aims to ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaire using the Cronbach’s Alpha method, with the criterion that the Cronbach’s Alpha value must be greater than 0.7. Since the Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.870, which is higher than 0.7, the questionnaire is declared reliable and can be used for further analysis.

The independent variable is the variable that influences or causes the emergence of the dependent variable. In this research, the independent variable is the Business Development Strategy applied at each stage of the Customer Journey Mapping (CJM), which includes the strategies implemented during the awareness, consideration, purchase, experience, and loyalty stages.

The dependent variable is the variable that is influenced or caused by the independent variable. In this research, the dependent variable is customer loyalty, which is reflected through increased awareness, higher purchase intention, customer satisfaction, customer retention, and other related indicators.

Stage	Touchpoints	Customer Experience	Improvement Opportunities
Awareness	Social media, Friends/Family recommendations	Most respondents learned about the outlet from social media, but promotional effectiveness was not optimal.	Optimization of digital promotion
Consideration	Online information, Visual promotions, Menu variety	Some respondents found it difficult to access online information, and the attractiveness of promotions as well as menu variety were inconsistent.	Improvement of online menu information & visual appeal
Purchase	Pricing, Ordering process, Payment methods	Pricing was relatively competitive, but ordering convenience and payment methods were inconsistent among respondents.	Digitalization of ordering & payment processes
Experience	Serving time, Staff service, Taste & portion, Outlet cleanliness	Service and serving time were satisfactory, but complaints arose regarding portion size and outlet cleanliness.	Standardization of service, portion size & cleanliness SOP
Loyalty	Repurchase intention, Recommendations, Final impression	Respondents did not fully demonstrate loyalty, and the final impression was still weak.	Development of loyalty & customer retention programs

Table 2. *Jatinangor House Ketintang CJM Analysis*

To proceed to the AHP stage based on the CJM results, the formulation can be presented in the following table :

Criteria (C)	Alternative (A)
Awareness (C1)	Digital Promotion Optimization (A1)
Consideration (C2)	Improvement of Online Menu Information & Visuals (A2)
Purchase (C3)	Digitalization of Ordering & Payment Processes (A3)
Experience (C4)	Standardization of Service, Portion Size & Cleanliness SOP (A4)
Loyalty (C5)	Customer Loyalty & Retention Programs (A5)

Table 3. *Criteria and Alternatives Derived from CJM*

The criteria and alternatives in Table 3.3 above will be used as elements in the questionnaire distributed to the internal staff of Jatinangor House Ketintang Branch. These inputs will be weighted and serve as the basis for data processing in the AHP stage.

Criteria	Weight
C1	0,144
C2	0,174
C3	0,130
C4	0,333
C5	0,219

Table 4. *Criteria Weight Normalization Table*

CR = 0,033 > 1 = Consistent

Criteria	Weight
C1	0,144
C2	0,174

C3	0,130
C4	0,333
C5	0,115

Table 5. *Normalized Alternative Weights for Criterion 1*

CR = 0,022 > 1 = Consistent

Criteria	Weight
C1	0,144
C2	0,174
C3	0,130
C4	0,333
C5	0,108

Table 6. *Normalized Alternative Weights for Criterion 2*

CR = 0,024 > 1 = Consistent

Criteria	Weight
C1	0,144
C2	0,174
C3	0,130
C4	0,333
C5	0,111

Table 7. *Normalized Alternative Weights for Criterion 3*

CR = 0,025 > 1 = Consistent

Criteria	Weight
C1	0,144
C2	0,174
C3	0,130
C4	0,333
C5	0,105

Table 8. *Normalized Alternative Weights for Criterion 4*

CR = 0,016 > 1 = Consistent

Criteria	Weight
C1	0,144
C2	0,174
C3	0,130
C4	0,333
C5	0,216

Table 9. *Normalized Alternative Weights for Criterion 5*

CR = 0,047 > 1 = Consistent

The final weight of each alternative is obtained by multiplying the criterion weight with the

alternative weight for each criterion, and then summing all the results.

Ranking	Alternative	Global Weight
1	Standardization of Service, Portion Size & Cleanliness SOP (A4)	0,365
2	Improvement of Online Menu Information & Visuals (A2)	0,184
3	Digital Promotion Optimization (A1)	0,171
4	Digitalization of Ordering & Payment Processes (A3)	0,148
5	Customer Loyalty & Retention Programs (A5)	0,132

Table 10. *Alternative Strategy Ranking*

The CJM analysis revealed five key stages: awareness, consideration, purchase, experience, and loyalty. At the awareness stage, customers primarily knew the outlet from social media, yet promotional content was not sufficiently engaging [6]. In the consideration stage, lack of detailed menu information and limited visual appeal discouraged some potential customers. Purchasing processes showed inconsistencies in payment methods, while the experience stage highlighted concerns regarding portion size and cleanliness. Loyalty indicators, including repeat purchase intentions and recommendations, remained weak.

The AHP synthesis provided global priority weights for alternative strategies. The top priority was Standardization of Service, Portion Size, and Cleanliness SOP (0.365), followed by Improvement of Online Menu Information and Visuals (0.184), and Digital Promotion Optimization (0.171). Lower weights were assigned to Digitalization of Ordering and Payment Processes (0.150) and Customer Loyalty & Retention Programs (0.130).

These results suggest that customers place the greatest emphasis on consistent service quality, which resonates with earlier findings by [2] that service delivery is the most critical determinant of loyalty in SMEs. The second priority, improving online menu visibility, highlights the growing relevance of digital platforms for customer decision-making (Elisa, 2024). Interestingly, loyalty programs were ranked lowest, suggesting that without addressing basic service quality and customer experience, retention initiatives may not be effective.

Comparing with previous studies, this aligns with [8], who noted that addressing customer pain points must precede marketing interventions. Moreover, [14] stressed the importance of operational standardization in ensuring SME sustainability. Thus, the integration of CJM and AHP in this study reinforces the idea that effective loyalty strategies require both customer-centric insights and structured prioritization mechanisms.

Conclusion

The integration of Customer Journey Mapping and Analytic Hierarchy Process in this study highlights that improving customer loyalty requires addressing both customer experiences and strategic prioritization. The findings reveal that service quality standardization is the most critical priority, followed by improvements in online information and digital promotions. These results emphasize that SMEs must focus on strengthening operational fundamentals before implementing retention programs.

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