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AUTHORS

Abdul Jumaat bin Mahajar
Jasmani Binti Mohd Yunus

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Abdul Jumaat Bin Mahajar (Malaysia), Jasmani Binti Mohd Yunus (Malaysia)

The relationship between customer commitment and satisfaction on the loyalty card program of department stores in Malaysia

Abstract

Loyalty card programs are currently increasing its popularity around the world. The aim of this research is to identify the effectiveness of loyalty card program towards customer loyalty. Besides, it also aims to prove customer attitude, trust, commitment and satisfaction has impact on customer loyalty towards store. There are 160 respondents selected from two different department stores/supermarkets which are Jusco Store and Tesco superstore determine through convenience sampling method. Personal data were analyzed by descriptive analysis while hypotheses study were tested by Pearson correlation test. Analysis results revealed that all null hypotheses were successfully rejected and relationship between tested variables are significant. There is a significant value between loyalty card program and customer's loyalty. Test value between other variables such as between attitude, trust, commitment and satisfaction with customer's loyalty are significant. Hence, customers who possess loyalty cards would influence their loyalty towards the store. Therefore, loyalty card program should be encouraged to increase the customer loyalty level. Besides, this study has strengthened the significant relationships between customer's attitude, trust, satisfaction, commitment and customer's loyalty. However, there are still some respondents who do not support their most frequented department stores despite owning loyalty card. Finally, research out stands the importance of loyalty card program to contribute to customer loyalty. For research limitations, study was only done within Klang Valley provinces for Jaya Jusco and Malaysia Tesco department stores/supermarkets. As a result, study could not be generalized widely to other locations or countries. Sample has excluded all non-card holders with age below 18 years old. Therefore, sample of this study could also be broaden among non-members of loyalty card program to achieve a more accurate and efficient result. In conclusion, this study showed that customer loyalty is greatly affected by loyalty card program.

Keywords: loyalty, satisfaction, trust and attitude.

JEL Classification: M1.

Introduction

Loyal customers are crucial to all business. What is the meaning of loyalty? According to Smith (1996), it is referred as customers having a sense of belonging and repeat purchases. Based on consumer style inventory, there are 8 basic characteristics which determines consumer decision-making. Those characteristics are: 1) perfectionist and high-quality conscious consumer; 2) price-equal-quality conscious consumer; 3) novelty- and fashion-conscious consumer; 4) recreational and shopping-conscious consumer; 5) value-for-money conscious consumer; 6) impulsive and careless consumer; 7) confused by over-choice consumer; and 8) brand-loyal and habitual consumer (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). Each factors represents different style of consumer behavior. For instance, consumers who concern more on the quality of a product will be categorized in the perfectionist, high-quality consumer characteristics. They always aim for best quality goods and never satisfy with "good enough" product. Therefore, they will never rush in doing shopping and carefully compare the quality of every product (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). Due to this, it is difficult to turn customer into loyal customers. Customers' loyalty is important because it would contribute to better performance of a company.

Customer satisfaction also has significant relationship with customer loyalty. This is true as Noordhoff et al. (2004) has emphasized that store satisfaction contribute significantly to store loyalty. Past research had proved that positive relationship between store satisfaction and store loyalty for department stores. For example, customers who are very satisfied with the grocery retailing store would show higher levels of commitment and repurchase behavior (Bloemer and De Ruyter, 1998).

In Malaysia, the global chains such as Carrefour, Giant, Tesco and Jusco operated since 1990s. Carrefour is the number one retailer in Europe and the second-largest retailer in the world. It is a leading hypermarket chain selling a wide range of household grocery products ranging from frozen goods and fresh products to textiles, garments and shoes, as well as electrical goods such as home kitchen items and audio-visual appliances. Carrefour brands are comparable in quality of perhaps better-known market leaders. Yet, they boast of innovative, value-added features that enhances the quality of life.

Tesco clubcard. In 1995, Tesco introduced the loyalty Clubcard in UK that was to offer benefits to regular shoppers while helping the company discover more about its customer needs (Turner and Wilson, 2006). However, Malaysia's Tesco stores Sdn Bhd was launched the loyalty club card in 2007 and it is their way of saying "Thank you" to their customer for shopping with their. Turner and Wilson (2006) emphasize the Clubcard's success

stating, “Tesco’s clubcard loyalty program is almost legendary in the grocery world.

Introduced this Tesco clubcard program enables loyal shoppers to get reward point each time they shop at any of the store outlets nationwide. These points can be used to redeem a range of gifts. Clubcard is available at all Tesco stores, free to join and points do not

expire. Every quarter, if customers have collected 150 points or more, Tesco will send clubcard cash vouchers to customer. The reward point is 1 point for every RM 2 customer spends in store and each point is worth 1 sen. Figure below shows the example of reward point redemption program.



Fig. 1. Example of reward point redemption program offer by Tesco

Jusco card. In Malaysia, AEON CO. (M) BHD (formerly known as Jaya Jusco Stores Bhd) was launched the J-card program on 1995. The J-card was functioned as a privilege card with rebates purchases in the department store or supermarket. The J-card is renewable at annual membership RM 12. The advantages of issuing such loyalty cards on the spot are that Jusco store is able to produce the cards upon membership application which reduces the inconvenience of outsourcing and long waiting time.

Table 1. Great and exciting J-card benefits as a member

Benefit	
J-card members' privileged shopping partners program	At over 200 shopping partners around Malaysia.
Earn points to redeem gifts	Present J-card, while paying and every ringgit spent will be converted to a point which can be used to redeem exciting gifts.
Rebate gift vouchers	Earn J-card rebates each time shop at Jusco general merchandise store (GMS). Every 6 months (January-June & July-December) rebates will be total and converted to Jusco gift vouchers.
Exclusive invitations and mailers	For J-card members' day invites, activities & promotions.
Free pearl magazine	Present your J-card at any J-card customer service centre to receive this bi-monthly lifestyle magazine.
Free insurance coverage	Including full reimbursement for damaged or lost items (up to RM5000), locksmith charges (up to RM100) and PA worth RM5000.
Free parking	For J-card members enjoys the free parking on selection shopping centre
Specially priced supermarket items	For J-card members only at Jusco supermarkets to help you save while customer shop.
Exclusive birthday card	Let us celebrate customer birthday with an exclusive birthday card and special promotions.

Source: www.jusco.com.my

Problem statement. Business grows in a fast and ever-changing environment. Every second stands millions and billions worth of business transaction and there business world is always busy. At the same time, business is exposed to endless changes and risk due to the emergence of countless competitors. Department stores or supermarket are mushrooming in the industry and have even expanded to hypermarkets, mega malls and so on. Due to this, problem and method to retain more loyal customers has been serious among store retailers. Retailers have realized that one of the main problem arise now is store satisfaction and insufficient to keep customers loyal although customers. Hence, pro-active loyalty card programs seem to be required to enhance customer’s loyalty (Noordhoff et al., 2004). Loyalty card programs have also become a popular trend in Malaysia. However, a customer loyalty card program does not necessarily promise good and positive feedback because sales do depend on some other external and internal factors.

Customer loyalty programs pose a negative perspective. In the perspective of retailers, the loyalty card program is just merely an interface between the retailer’s database and the customer (Reichheld, 1996). In other words, they doubt the effectiveness and importance of loyalty card program toward creating loyal customers. However, the truth is the loyalty card program has more positive effects than negative effects and will increase sale revenues of the company through purchase or usage levels (Uncles et al., 2003).

Objective. There are several aims of this study which are:

1. To examine the effectiveness of loyalty card program towards customer loyalty in department store or supermarket.

2. To determine the significant relationship between loyalty card program and customer loyalty in department store or supermarket.
3. To determine the relationship between customer attitude and customer loyalty.
4. To determine the relationship between customer trust and customer loyalty.
5. To determine the relationship between customer commitment and customer loyalty.
6. To determine the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Hypothesis. The null hypotheses for this study are shown below:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between loyalty card program and customer loyalty.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between customer attitude and customer loyalty.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between customer trust and customer loyalty.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between customer commitment and customer loyalty.

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Conceptual framework

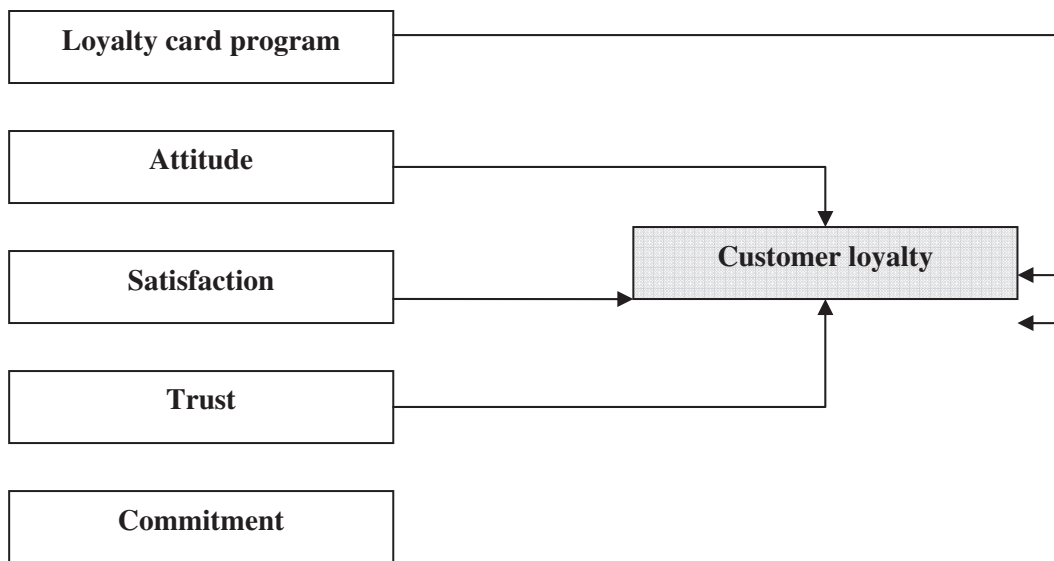


Fig. 2. Conceptual framework of the study: the effectiveness of loyalty card program towards customer loyalty in department store or supermarket

1. Literature review

In the business perspective, customer loyalty has become an increasingly prevalent construct in marketing and service-related research. Many firms readopt a customer focus and often through a formal program of customer relationship management (Uncles et al., 2003). Based on traditional marketing strategies, most department store or supermarket will continuously increase awareness and attract more customers. According to Leverin and Liljander (2006), the main purposes of customer relationship management is a way for firms to develop mutually beneficial and valuable long-term relationship with customer. Today, loyalty programs are a marketing strategy based on offering an incentive with the aim of securing customer loyalty to a retailer (Gomez et al., 2006).

As an important component of firm’s customer relationship management strategy, loyalty programs aim to increase customer loyalty by rewarding customers for doing business with a firm. Achieving reward has relation with purchasing

frequency, so these types of programs are also known as frequent purchases programs or reward programs (Gomez et al., 2006). According to Malley (1998), the objectives of loyalty programs are to developed a variety of reasons, including to reward loyal customers, to generate information and manipulate consumer behavior.

Technological developments over the past decade have opened new opportunities for loyalty programs. When the customer joins the loyalty scheme they may be asked to complete a form which asks for details such as their name and address, these are, subsequently, entered into a database (Rowley, 2005). Once a customer has an entry in the database, further records of customer purchases can be added, so that ultimately it is possible to build a profile of individual customer purchasing habits. This database of customer purchase profiles can be used then to segment the retailer’s customer base, for purposes of direct marketing and tailoring other marketing communications and special offers to customer requirement. The information held on

individual customers can also be linked with data from a variety of other sources such as geo-demographics, lifestyle, and credit history in order to build up a fairly accurate picture of a customer's life (Malley, 1998).

Traditionally, marketing has emphasized the need to attract new customers. However, organizations today recognize that profitability has more to do with retaining existing customers and increasing their spending than trying to attract new customers (Richards, 1998). Today, the use of loyalty programs as a technique for companies to enhance loyalty is extremely popular as it is believed that both consumers and companies can reap benefits from it (Luxton, 1998). According to Barnes (2001), gas stations, hotels, airlines, department stores, supermarket, drug stores, mutual fund companies, coffee shops and even liquor stores do launch loyalty programs in order to keep customers coming back, to collect information or simply because of competition.

In conclusion, loyalty programs play as a supplier's structural effort to increase customers' attitudinal and behavioral commitment to the supplier's market offering (Sharp and Sharp, 1997). However, customers perceive this loyalty program as an organized marketing activity which offers the additional rewards or benefit (De Wulf et al., 2003). Thus, loyalty program in consumer markets and supposedly result in customer commitment and retention (Noordhoff et al., 2004).

2. Methodology

The sources of the research data were a combination of both primary and secondary data gathered as follows.

2.1. Primary data. In primary data collection, collect the data using methods such as interviews and questionnaires. It refers to the data collected directly from the original sources for specific purpose. The primary data for this research will gather through the distribution of questionnaires to select customers of departmental stores or supermarket in Klang Valley, Malaysia.

2.2. Secondary data. Among the sources for this data were the latest journals and articles from Internet or online journal.

2.3. Location of the study. The sampling frame of this research would be restricted to Klang Valley, Malaysia. This is due to budget and time constraint which leads the sample of the research to be obtained in the area of Klang Valley only. Klang Valley was chosen as the research location

because it possesses rapid development and growth of various types of highly competitive industries and private organizations. It has been the center or "heart" for development of various industries and organizations for the past 20 years. Among the highly developed industries here are hotels, banking and finance, manufacturing plants and shopping complexes. Thus, this caters the belief that households of large cities would urbanites high department store patronage and visitations records. Besides, Klang Valley's population was selected to be analyzed because respondents would be more familiar with shopping outlets and, therefore, able to relate their shopping experience and attitude behavior. Loyalty card program is a common and generally-known activity held by most department chain stores, supermarkets and shopping malls in Klang Valley. In addition, this location was chosen also due to its huge population of approximately 1.8 million people. Thus, the sample drawn is hoped to be consisted of fairly diverse demographically and socio-economic background of individual. Next, the survey would be narrowed down to two retail outlets or department stores which are Jaya Jusco/AEON Co Berhad and Tesco store. These two popular retail stores in Klang Valley that offers loyalty card program to enable researcher to capture and obtain data from shoppers who are membership card holders as well as non-members. The study was conducted in January 2009.

2.4. Sampling method. A total of 160 respondents were involved in this study. The respondents were chosen from two main department stores which are Jaya Jusco/AEON Co Berhad and Tesco store. With this, a number of 80 respondents were studied from each department store, respectively. All respondents that participated in this research would be at the age of 18 and above, and must hold the departmental store's or supermarket's loyalty card program. Questionnaires were personally distributed to respondents in random manner. So, respondents were personally assisted to fill up the questionnaires or interviewed them if necessary. This study targeted on respondents who are walk-in shoppers, window shoppers or curious on-lookers in the vicinity of targeted retail stores.

2.5. Data collection. In this study, data were collected through the distribution of questionnaire. That questionnaire was developed according to the objective and needs of the study. Questions were constructed clearly and directly for respondents' easy understanding. It was also being prepared in English language format for the convenience of respondents. Under convenience sam-

pling method, questionnaires were distributed randomly to respondents and they were personally assisted in order to provide them assistant to fill in questionnaire fully. Interviews were also conducted in certain situation, depending on the acceptance and response of respondents. Overall, the data collection process was obtained from the combination of intercept interviews, personal interviews and one-to-one distribution. This would increase the accuracy of data or information gathered.

2.6. Questionnaire design. The objective of this paper is to present the findings of an exploratory study that design to identify the effectiveness of loyalty card program in department store or supermarket. The survey focuses on attitude, trust, commitment satisfaction and loyalty variables. The questionnaire that was used in this research was modified of previous research done by Gomez et al. (2006). The questionnaires will also be divided into four sections. They were:

1. **Section A:** Respondent’s profile.
2. **Section B:** Respondent’s shopping behavior.
3. **Section C:** Respondent’s behavior and experiences towards department store/super-market loyalty program.
4. **Section D:** Respondent’s perception on their most frequented department store/super-market, as they are contextualized in the environment that they were evaluating.

2.7. Reliability test. The questions have been adapted from a Marketing Scales Handbook (Bruner et al., 2001) and modified by previous research, done by Gomez et al. (2006), which are to test their reliability by previous researcher. Although the used questions had been tested, the questionnaires are still being distributed to 30 respondents for pre-testing to validate the reliability of the questionnaire by pilot testing in Malaysian context.

Pilot test was carried out in Jaya Jusco shopping centre. Although these individuals were not of the exact make-up of the actual respondents, still the pilot test will valid as they were holding similar position to that of the actual respondents. The original set of questionnaire was amended due to difficulties and misunderstanding encountered by respondents. Therefore, this was done through pilot testing and cross examination. The reliability analysis should indicate Cronbach’s alpha values of more than 0.7 in order to indicate the consistency or stability of the measurement.

From the pilot test that had been conducted, the results of reliability test for each variable are as follows.

Table 2. Reliability test for pilot testing

Variable	Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Loyalty card program	5	0.898
Customer attitude	5	0.913
Customer trust	5	0.772
Customer commitment	5	0.932
Customer satisfaction	5	0.919
Customer loyalty	5	0.906

2.8. Data analysis. In this study, multiple regression analysis was used to study the relationship between the independent variables (loyalty card program, customer attitude, customer trust, customer commitment and customer satisfaction) and the dependent variable (customer loyalty).

Table 3. Correlation between independent variables and customer loyalty

Variable	Customer loyalty	Loyalty card program	Customer attitude	Customer trust	Customer commitment	Customer satisfaction
Customer loyalty	1	0.862(**)	0.846(**)	0.802(**)	0.825(**)	0.832(**)
Loyalty card program	0.862(**)	1				
Customer attitude	0.846(**)		1			
Customer trust	0.802(**)			1		
Customer commitment	0.825(**)				1	
Customer satisfaction	0.832(**)					1

Note: ** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between loyalty card program and customer loyalty.

To consider whether customers are loyal to the department store/supermarket because owning loyalty card, the research used Pearson correlation analysis and produced the result $r = 0.862$ and $p < 0.01$, which confirmed there was a significant relationship between loyalty card program and customer loyalty. Therefore, null hypothesis 1 is successfully rejected. This result indicates that loyalty card program does have a significant influence on customer loyalty. This finding is supported by the past studies conducted by Turner and Wilson (2006), where it was also suggested that owning of a loyalty card was positive significant correlation exists between and loyalty to store. Beside that, past research by Sharp and Sharp (1997) also supported that the loyalty card has become an important component to the developing of increasing customer loyalty. In addition, Noorhoff et al.

(2004) also found a relationship between the possession of a loyalty card and loyalty. Results of Pearson correlation between loyalty card program and customer loyalty have shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Relationship between loyalty card program and customer loyalty (Pearson correlation)

		Loyalty card program	Customer loyalty
Loyalty card program	Pearson correlation	1	0.862(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	160	160
Customer loyalty	Pearson correlation	0.862(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	160	160

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between customer attitude and customer loyalty.

According to the analysis of Pearson correlation, hypothesis test result indicates that there is significant relationship between customer's attitude and customer loyalty at the value of $p < 0.01$ and $r = 0.846$. This indicates that customer's attitude will effect the customer loyalty to store. Therefore, it fails to accept the null hypothesis that stated: there is no significant relationship between customer's attitude and customer loyalty. In other words, null hypothesis 2 is successfully rejected. This finding is supported with past research done by Parker and Worthington (2000) that customer's attitude was positive significant correlation exists between customer attitude and customer loyalty which means customer loyalty is likely to be affected by relative attitude. Table 5 shows the result of Pearson correlation between customer attitude and customer loyalty.

Table 5. Relationship between customer attitude and customer loyalty (Pearson correlation)

		Customer attitude	Customer loyalty
Customer attitude	Pearson correlation	1	0.846(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	160	160
Customer loyalty	Pearson correlation	0.846(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	160	160

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between customer trust and customer loyalty.

Based on Table 6 the outcome from Pearson correlation analysis has found that significant relationship exist between customer trust and customer loyalty to

store which produces the result of $r = 0.802$ and $p < 0.01$. Therefore, the findings fail to accept the null hypothesis. This means, null hypothesis 3 is successfully rejected. In addition, this finding is supported by past researcher (Gomez et al., 2006) that found customer trust will influence loyalty to store and serve as a key component in making a customer loyal.

Table 6. Relationship between customer trust and customer loyalty (Pearson correlation)

		Customer trust	Customer loyalty
Customer trust	Pearson correlation	1	0.802(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	160	160
Customer loyalty	Pearson correlation	0.802(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	160	160

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between customer commitment and customer loyalty.

Result reveals that there is a significant relationship between customer commitment and customer loyalty at the value of $p < 0.01$ and $r = 0.825$. This implies that those who are committed to departmental store/supermarket will have higher loyalty towards it. Therefore, null hypothesis 4 is successfully rejected. This result supports the saying that commitment will produce higher customer loyalty (Yi & La, 2004). Besides, past research conducted by Gomez et al. (2006) also found that commitment is widely considered as a key component to achieve successful customer relationship at long term which means creating customer loyal to store. Table 7 shows the result of Pearson correlation analysis between customer commitment and customer loyalty.

Table 7. Relationship between customer commitment and customer loyalty (Pearson correlation)

		Customer commitment	Customer loyalty
Customer commitment	Pearson correlation	1	0.825(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	160	160
Customer loyalty	Pearson correlation	0.825(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	160	160

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Based on Table 7, results indicated the last hypothesis that there was a significant relationship between

customer satisfaction and customer loyalty which produced the result $r = 0.832$ and $p < 0.01$. Therefore, the findings reveals that it fails to accept the null hypothesis 5. This means, null hypothesis 5 is successfully rejected. Research finding is supported by past researcher (Ruyter et al., 1999) that customer satisfaction to be on the important criteria for customer loyalty as a determinant for positive work-of-mouth referrals. In addition, Andreassen and Lindestad (1998) also have found a positive correlation between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Table 8. Relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Pearson correlation)

		Customer satisfaction	Customer loyalty
Customer satisfaction	Pearson correlation	1	0.832(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	160	160
Customer loyalty	Pearson correlation	0.832(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	160	160

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 9. Summary of hypothesis test

Null hypothesis	Statistic method	Value	Result
H ₀ 1: There is no significant relationship between loyalty card program and customer loyalty.	Pearson Correlation	$r = 0.862$ $p = 0.000$	$p < 0.01$ H ₀ 1 rejected
H ₀ 2: There is no significant relationship between customer attitude and customer loyalty.	Pearson Correlation	$r = 0.846$ $p = 0.000$	$p < 0.01$ H ₀ 2 rejected
H ₀ 3: There is no significant relationship between customer trust and customer loyalty.	Pearson Correlation	$r = 0.802$ $p = 0.000$	$p < 0.01$ H ₀ 3 rejected
H ₀ 4: There is no significant relationship between customer commitment and customer loyalty.	Pearson Correlation	$r = 0.825$ $p = 0.000$	$p < 0.01$ H ₀ 4 rejected
H ₀ 5: There is no significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.	Pearson Correlation	$r = 0.832$ $p = 0.000$	$p < 0.01$ H ₀ 5 rejected

Table 10. Model summary of multiple regression analysis for loyalty card program, customer attitude, customer trust, customer commitment, customer satisfaction vs. customer loyalty

R	R-square	Adjusted r-square	Standard error the estimate
0.915 a	0.836	0.831	0.33010

Note: Predictors: constant, customer satisfaction, customer trust, loyalty card program, customer attitude, customer commitment; dependent variable: customer loyalty.

Based on the F -value of 157.474, and p -value of 0.001, the findings reveals that it fails to accept the null hypothesis. The value of F reflects to the value of p (the higher of F -value the smaller of the p -value). Since the p -value obtained 0.0001 is less than 0.05, therefore, the conclusion is a linear relationship

between the five independent variables (loyalty card program, customer attitude, customer trust, customer commitment and customer satisfaction) and dependent variable (customer loyalty). Table 11 shows the ANOVA analysis between independent variables and dependent variable.

Table 11. ANOVA (b)

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	85.799	5	17.160	157.474	0.0001(a)
Residual	16.781	154	0.109		
Total	102.580	159			

Note: Predictors: constant, customer satisfaction, customer trust, loyalty card program, customer attitude, customer commitment; dependent variable: customer loyalty.

Table 11 displayed the coefficients which of the five independent variables influences most the variance in customer loyalty (i.e. is the most important). By looking at the column beta under standardized coefficients, the higher number is 0.347 for loyalty card program which is significant at the 0.000 level. Therefore, results show that there was significant relationship between loyalty card program, attitude, trust, commitment and customer loyalty at the $p < 0.05$. The positive beta weight indicates that if loyalty card program, customer attitude, customer trust and customer commitment are increased, which are necessary to enhance customer loyalty, customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.086$, $p = 0.380$) variable has no significant effect on customer loyalty ($p > 0.05$).

The results of the multiple regression analysis suggested that loyalty card program is the most influential factor or strongly effect in explaining respondents' perception towards loyal to store. In addition, enhance the loyalty card program done by marketers will influence the customer loyal to store.

Table 12. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta	B	Std. error
Constant	-.378	0.157		-2.414	0.017
Loyalty card program	0.346	0.066	0.347	5.234	0.000
Attitude	0.244	0.079	0.214	3.096	0.002
Trust	0.220	0.060	0.205	3.651	0.000
Commitment	0.190	0.090	0.161	2.122	0.035
Satisfaction	0.086	0.098	0.071	0.881	0.380

Note: Dependent variable: loyalty.

Conclusion and recommendation

Analysis result of this study has out stands the significant relationship between attitude, trust, satisfaction, commitment and customer loyalty. It emphasizes that attitude, trust, satisfaction and commit-

ment play as the key factors that contributes to high customer loyalty. Results revealed that majority respondents of this study possess positive responses and perceptions toward their most frequented department stores. This group of respondents views the particular department store as a trustable shopping spot with friendly and helpful staffs. Due to this, they feel satisfied and committed to their most frequented department store/supermarket. Hence, majority respondents involved in this study reflected to have high customer loyalty to the supermarket they support most. This research result can be supported by past research on Spanish chain stores written by Gomez et al. (2006) that stressed attitude, trust, satisfaction and commitment as the key components in the development of affective loyalty. Therefore, this research proves that significant relationship between attitude, trust, satisfaction, commitment and customer loyalty is not only applicable in western countries like Spain only, but Asian countries as well.

Although overall research results appear to be positive, some respondents do have contradict perceptions towards their most frequented departmental stores. For example, study found that small portion (15.0%) of respondents stated that they like to switch between different department store and supermarket. In addition, there are another 6.90% respondents that have admitted not loyal to their most frequented department store. This finding is wierd but common because consumers can shop at any supermarkets they like and they have the right to choose and compare. According to consumer-interest literature, a few key consumer decision-making characteristics ranging from rational shopping and quality consciousness to impulsiveness and information overload (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Eight basic consumer style inventory has been identified. They are perfectionistics high-quality consumer, conscious price-equal-quality consumer, novelty and fashion-

conscious consumer, recreational and shopping-conscious consumer, value-for-money conscious consumer, impulsive and careless consumer, confused by overchoice consumer and habitual and brand-loyal consumer (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Each factors represents different style of consumer behavior. Therefore, these shape consumers to be more careful with high expectations on retailers. Some consumers would shop at different stores to broaden their choices and varieties.

Moreover, findings also prove that loyalty program such as loyalty card offers by departmental stores contributes to enhance customer loyalty. Based on past research, their relationship has been unclear because some research supported this statement, but some did not. However, a result of this study has proved the influence and importance of loyalty card program towards customer loyalty. Gomez et al. (2006) has supported this finding by stressing that loyalty programs attract most loyal retailer customers. Most importantly, loyalty card program function to retaining customers already shows loyalty to the company. The strategy is also useful as a means of reinforcing the emotional bonds that link the customer to the point of sale (Sharp & Sharp, 1997).

In the business perspective, loyalty card programs aim to increase customer loyalty by rewarding customers. It is essential to further customers' understanding of loyalty programs system and how retailers serve the diverse customer's needs. Despite the importance of loyalty program, there have been little studies and information about loyalty program aspect related to the customer loyalty in Malaysia retailers. At present, there is not much data to indicate the level of customer loyalty to retailer in Malaysia. Thus, replication of study pertains these dimensions should definitely be compliant with up-to-date context or issues.

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