Gender as Moderating Effect of Switching Barriers on Customer Satisfaction and Word-of-Mouth Behavior (Studies on BlackBerry Mobile Phone Customer in Malang)

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of Switching Barriers on Customer Satisfaction, determine the effect of Customer Satisfaction and Switching Barriers directly on Word-of-Mouth, determine whether Customer Satisfaction as a mediating influence of Switching Barriers on Word-of-Mouth, and find out if gender as the moderating effect of Switching Barriers on Customer Satisfaction, Customer Satisfaction moderating influence of the Word-of-Mouth, and moderating influence of Switching Barriers on Word-of-Mouth. The populations in this study are the BlackBerry users in Malang city in early adult age category (20-40 years old) who had been using the BlackBerry service facility for not less than 12 months. 250 respondents are set as the sample consisting of 125 female respondents and 125 male respondents. Analysis GSCA (Generalized Structured Component Analysis) is used to answer the hypotheses which multigroup moderating variable analysis is used to determine whether there is influence of gender as a moderating variable. The results of this study showed that gender is not a moderating variable on the effect of Switching Barriers on Customer Satisfaction, Customer Satisfaction on Word-of-Mouth, and Switching Barriers on Word-of-Mouth. The results also showed that Switching Barriers have direct and positive impacts on the Word-of-Mouth. Note also, Customer Satisfaction mediates the relationship of Switching Barriers and Word-of-Mouth. Even the influence of Switching Barriers on Word-of-Mouth becomes stronger if there is Customer Satisfaction as a mediating variable.

Keywords: Switching Barriers, Customer Satisfaction, Word-of-Mouth Motivation, Gender

1. Introduction
BlackBerry brand mobile phone market which has increased rapidly in recent years is a challenge for the companies to retain their existing customers. The challenge is to retain customers’ growth after BlackBerry launched a new strategy, namely BBM cross-platform where the facilities can be installed on i-phone and Android Smartphone. Retain consumers who have owned much cheaper but also more difficult than looking for new customers. Therefore, the company should be able to give satisfaction to the consumers so that they do not switch to other brands. Turkyilmaz and Ozkan (2007) define customer satisfaction as a post-purchase evaluation performed by the consumer to the product or service. The key reason why companies should improve customer satisfaction as customer satisfaction can reduce the price elasticity, lowering costs (business cost), reduces the cost of failure, and reduce the cost to acquire new customers. Fornell (1992) suggests another reason, that is the higher the customer satisfaction, the stronger its competitive position, which also led to the higher market share and profits made. Although lately the phenomenon of the presence of i-phone or Android Operating System (OS Android) based phone become more frequent, a loyal BlackBerry consumer will tend to stick with the BlackBerry brand. The consumer also has the potential to inform and recommend the BlackBerry brand to others (communication word-of-mouth). Logically, communication Word-of-Mouth BlackBerry brand is very likely done by existing loyal customers due to the attraction to build community through the facilities of the BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) in addition to other facilities.
Many studies claim that the influence of antecedent consumer loyalty to repurchase intentions and attitudinal loyalty are different. Therefore, many studies use repurchase intentions and attitudinal loyalty as distinct constructs to evaluate loyalty (Boulding et al., 1993; Ganesh et al., 2000; Julander and Soderlund, 2003; Lam, Shun Yin, 2004; Qian, Su et al., 2011). According to Fornell et al. (1996), customer satisfaction is generally assumed as a determinant of repeat sales, positive word-of-mouth, and customer loyalty. Consumers who are satisfied will buy again and again, as well as his experience in taking products to others. Communication in the form of Word-of-Mouth presented by Reicheld (1996) as the key features related to customer loyalty. Reicheld (1996) concludes that the longer the relationship is established, consumers will do better word-of-mouth. These consumers tend to be able to describe the advantages and disadvantages of the product when compared to the communication through advertising or through the company paid staff. Word-of-Mouth has to do with providing recommendations to others who communicates that the product quality is higher than competitor. However, creating switching barriers which are too high can cause negative word-of-mouth and dissatisfaction. While creating barriers which are too weak facilitate the customers to make the rejection of these barriers (Julander and Soderlund, 2003). Therefore, the creation of switching barriers which are appropriate with product characteristics is very important to note.

Above description gives a preliminary view that there is a relationship among switching barriers, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth. The differences in customer behavior of male and female for a while is expected has a function as a moderating variable in the relationship among switching barriers, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth. Therefore, this study seeks to explain the role of gender in moderating the relationship between switching barriers, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth on the BlackBerry brand mobile products. Malang is chosen as the research location because malang is education city whose community has possessed modern lifestyle.

2. Review of Theory

2.1 Customer Behavior.

According to Hawkins et al. (2001) customer behavior is the study of individuals, groups or organizations and the processes they use to select, acquire, use and specify the goods, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy their desires and impacts arising of these processes on the customer and the community.

2.2 Customer Satisfaction.

Oliver (1997) states that customer satisfaction is customer responses to the fulfillment of their needs. It means, an assessment of the distinctive shape of a product, in terms of providing a level of comfort related to the fulfillment of a need, may be under the expectations fulfillment of meeting the needs of customers or exceed customer expectations. When the performance of the product is equal/exceeding the expectations of the customer, then the customer will be satisfied/very satisfied. But if the performance of the product does not meet the expectations of customers, then customers are not satisfied.

2.3 Communication Theory of Word-of-Mouth

Lindberg-Repo and Grönroos (2000) states that: first, Word-of-Mouth that involves customer loyalty reflects the strong recommendation and partnership behavior. Second, communication Word-of-Mouth consists of a more complete description of the company, description of his experience when consuming the product and perceived satisfaction. Third, loyal customers who do Word-of-Mouth are willing to communicate "justification" prices for the services, because value for money which is offered by the product is equivalent to the perceived satisfaction.

2.4 Relationship Theory in Word-of-Mouth Perspective

Relationship Theory (in Word-of-Mouth Perspectives) is adopted from Ernest Dichter (1966) and Lindberg-Repo and Grönroos (2000). Ernest Dichter is the originator of Relationship-Oriented Theory.
The basis of this theory is the existence Relationship customer demand for information products which is reliable, without the financial mainstream (non-commercial), and "friendly advice". Close and intimate relationship will create a feeling of confidence in the product, sense of security and reduce customer worry toward commercialization as the main tendencies.

2.5 Customer-Brand Relationship
Engel et al. (1994) reveals that the brand has three dimensions, namely (1) the physical attributes such as color, price, material, etc., (2) the functional attributes or consequences of the use of a brand, and (3) characteristics, namely the brand personality as perceived by customers. Therefore, it can be said that the customer-brand relationship is an emotional connection. According to Aaker (1997) the relationship between customer-brand this kind can be formed based on the relationship between individuals or between groups. If there is a match between the brand personality with the customer's personality, then match will form: (1) a very strong relationship will develop customer loyalty, (2) a relatively intermediate relationship would pose a threat to the brand switching action, (3) a weak relationship will make a tendency relationship which is has certain characteristics. Thus the personality of the brand is a series of human characteristics which is by the customers associated with the brand, such as personality, appearance, values, preferences, gender, size, shape, ethnicity, intelligence, socioeconomic class, and education.

2.6 Switching Barriers
According to Ranaweera and Phrabu (2003), switching barriers is customers' assessment of the resources and opportunities required to do brand switching (switching act), or in other words the barriers to prevent switching act.

2.7 Gender Roles
Gender is a matter of concern in this study because it has an important role in the discussion of customer behavior. Male and female have different behavior in purchasing and addressing satisfaction in consuming a product. According to Sanchez-Franco et al. (2009), males are more motivated to self-fulfillment and more independent. They would rather show their identity and status. Females are more expressive, more skillful in capturing the non-verbal messages and more concerned with the feelings of others.

3. Research Method
This research was explanatory which aimed to obtain explanation of the relationships between variables and test the formulated hypothesis (Cooper and Emory, 1995). This research was conducted in Malang. The populations of the research are BlackBerry mobile phone users who: (1) are included in the early adult age group, in the range of 20-40 years old living in Malang, and (2) has used BlackBerry for not less than 12 months. The samples in this research were 250 respondents, which consisted of 125 male and 125 female respondents. The data analysis in this research used Generalized Structured Component Analysis (GSCA).

4. Result
Testing for moderating variables was performed with multigroup approach, considering gender as a variable of categories data, which was nominal scale. Table 4.1 showed that gender was not moderating variable, considering the magnitude of path coefficient of male and female groups were about the same and significant. These happened in all relationship either in Switching Barriers effect on Customer Satisfaction and WoM or Customer Satisfaction effect on WoM.
Table 4.1. Results of Hypothesis Testing and Moderating Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Relationships between variables</th>
<th>Path Coefficient</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Switching Barriers</td>
<td>Customer Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.821*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Customer Satisfaction</td>
<td>WOM</td>
<td>0.550*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Switching Barriers</td>
<td>WOM</td>
<td>0.198*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * = significant at α 5%; ns = not significant

However, Switching Barriers path to Customer Satisfaction and Customer Satisfaction path to Word-of-Mouth should be tested using Fisher’s Z test. Based on Table 4.1, there were 3 lines obtained, namely (1) Switching Barriers path to Customer Satisfaction; (2) Customer Satisfaction path to Word-of-Mouth; and (3) Switching Barriers path to Word-of-Mouth.

On Switching Barriers path to Customer Satisfaction, path coefficients of female group (F) and male groups (M) were equally significant, then it should be tested using Fisher’s Z test to decide whether gender is moderating variable in the relation of Switching Barriers and Customer Satisfaction.

On Customer Satisfaction path to Word-of-Mouth, path coefficient of female (F) and male (M) groups were equally significant, then it should be tested using Fisher’s Z test to decide whether gender is moderating variable in the relation of Customer Satisfaction and Word-of-Mouth.

On Switching Barriers path to Word-of-Mouth, path coefficient of female (F) and male (M) groups was not equally significant. It showed that gender was not moderating variable in the relationship of Switching Barriers and Word-of-Mouth.

Fisher’s Z test results for the effect of Switching Barriers variable on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Satisfaction variable influence on the Word of Mouth was shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Results of Fisher Z test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect of variables</th>
<th>Path Coefficient</th>
<th>Fisher’s Z Test Score</th>
<th>p value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SB -&gt; CS</td>
<td>F 0.819</td>
<td>M 0.825</td>
<td>0.146ns</td>
<td>0.884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS -&gt; WoM</td>
<td>F 0.560</td>
<td>M 0.559</td>
<td>0.005ns</td>
<td>0.996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ns = not significant at α 5%

Based on Table 4.2, the gender was not moderating variable either in the effect of Switching Barriers on Customers Satisfaction or the effect of Customer Satisfaction on Word of Mouth as the score of Fisher Z test on both of these paths < Z Table (1,96). So, the score of Fisher’ Z test was not significant. Thus, it might be said that gender was not a moderating variable in all relationships found in this research model.
Testing for Customer Satisfaction Variable as mediating variable was conducted using Sobel-test method. The magnitude of path coefficient and error standard was gained from GSCA (Appendix 6). The Sobel-test result was provided in Table 5.22.

Table 4.3. Testing Results of Mediating Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Path Coefficient</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>a x b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>5.692*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.819</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>3.736*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td>0.559</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>3.790*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: a = effect of Switching Barriers on Customer Satisfaction;  
b = effect of Customer Satisfaction on WoM  
* Significant at α 5%

Based on Table 4.3, Switching Barriers had positive and significant effects on Customer Satisfaction. It denoted that higher levels of BlackBerry Switching Barriers were associated with higher level of Customer Satisfaction.

The next direct effect testing was direct effect of Customer Satisfaction on Word-of-Mouth (combined data). It was known that Customer Satisfaction had positive and significant effects on Word-of-Mouth.

While for the test of indirect effect between Switching Barriers and Word-of-Mouth by means of Consumer Satisfaction was significant. In other words, high Switching Barriers tended to cause high behavior of Word-of-Mouth through BlackBerry Customer Satisfaction.

For the female group data, it could be seen that Switching Barriers had positive and significant relationship with Customer Satisfaction. The next testing is a direct effect of customer satisfaction on Word-of-Mouth. It was known that customer satisfaction had a positive and significant relationship to the Word-of-Mouth. Testing of indirect influence between Switching Barriers and Word-of-Mouth through Consumer Satisfaction mediation parameters was significant. In other words, for the female group, high Switching Barriers were tended to cause high behavior of Word-of-Mouth through BlackBerry Customer Satisfaction.

For the male group, it could be seen that Switching Barriers had positive and significant relationship with Customer Satisfaction. The next testing is a direct effect of customer satisfaction on Word-of-Mouth. It was known that customer satisfaction had a positive and significant relationship to the Word-of-Mouth. Testing of indirect influence between Switching Barriers and Word-of-Mouth through Consumer Satisfaction mediation parameters was significant. In other words, for the female group, high Switching Barriers were tended to cause high behavior of Word-of-Mouth through BlackBerry Customer Satisfaction.
The result of hypothesis testing was provided in the form of path diagram of Figure 4.1 as follows.

**Figure 4.1**

![Path diagram](image)

C = Combined, F = Female; M = Male; s = significant; ns = not significant

5. Discussion

1. **Switching Barriers effects on Customer Satisfaction**

Switching Barriers had positive and significant effects on Customer Satisfaction. The findings indicated that Switching Barriers in the category of a high enough leded customer satisfaction are also at the level of quite satisfied. That is, customers felt that using BlackBerry was more appropriate than choosing other brands of Smartphone.

The findings here complemented Julander and Soderlund (2013) statement that too high Switching Barriers might result to dissatisfaction, whereas too low Switching Barriers leded to the rejection of such barriers.

2. **Customer Satisfaction effects on Word-of-Mouth**

Customer Satisfaction had positive and significant effects on Word-of-Mouth. The findings showed that Customer Satisfaction at the level of quite satisfied leded the consumers be quite motivated to do Word-of-Mouth. This research showed that Word-of-Mouth was not only performed for people who have not been using BlackBerry but also for those who wanted to switch their phone to another brand of Smartphone (defection).

The findings of this research complement Athan assopulos et al. (2000) who stated that Customer Satisfaction had positive effect on Word-of-Mouth.

3. **Switching Barriers effects on Word-of-Mouth**

Switching Barriers has directly contributed significant and positive effects on Word-of-Mouth. This suggested that the higher Switching Barriers leded to the higher consumer’s motivation to do Word-of-Mouth to others. The findings of this study indicated that high enough Switching Barriers caused consumers be motivated enough to do the Word-of-Mouth to others.

The findings of this study complement the results of Julander and Soderlund (2003) research which stated that too high switching barriers lead to dissatisfaction and negative Word-of-Mouth, while creating too weak switching barriers are even easier for consumers to reject such barriers.
4. Customer Satisfaction as mediation on the effect of Switching Barriers on Word-of-Mouth
Customer Satisfaction mediated the relationship between Switching Barriers and Word-of-Mouth. This explained that Switching Barriers had strong effect on Word-of-Mouth by means of Customer Satisfaction. That was to say that the motivation of behavior of Word-of-Mouth along with increased Customer Satisfaction.

a. The findings of this research reinforced Julander and Soderlund’s (2003) statement that Customer Satisfaction mediated the effect of Switching Barriers on Word-of-Mouth.
b. The findings also complemented Julander and Soderlund’s research results (2003), namely:
   • This research proved that high enough Switching Barriers caused the level of customer satisfaction be in satisfied enough level and consumers be motivated enough to do the Word-of-Mouth to others.
   • This research proved that there was a direct effect of Switching Barriers on Word-of-Mouth (Customer Loyalty). Though, Julander and Soderlund (2003) did not examine the direct effect of Switching Barriers on Customer Loyalty.

5. Gender as the effect moderation of Switching Barriers on Customer Satisfaction
Gender was not effect moderation of Switching Barriers to Customer Satisfaction. This showed that both female and male did not differ in giving effect on the relationship of Switching Barriers to Consumer Satisfaction.

6. Gender as the effect moderation of Switching Barriers on Word-of-Mouth
Gender was not effect moderation of Consumer Satisfaction to Word-of-Mouth. This showed that both female and male do not differ in effect on the relationship of Switching Barriers to Word-of-Mouth. The findings of this study reinforced the research of Tat et al. (2011).

7. Gender as the effect moderation of Switching Barriers on Word-of-Mouth
Gender was not the effect moderation of Switching Barriers to Word-of-Mouth. This showed that both female and male do not differ in effect on the relationship of Switching Barriers to Word-of-Mouth.

The findings of this study contrasted with the result of the research of Sanchez-Franco et al. (2009) which stated that the effect of switching barriers on loyalty was stronger in female than male.

6. Suggestion
There are several suggestions for the future research, such as:
1. The future research can be carried out by analyzing the same variables but after BBM platform has lasted at least 1 year, so the segment will be clearly known.
2. The future research is suggested to analyze BlackBerry consumers’ behaviors who are involved in e WoM since it has been applied by many gadget users.
3. The future research is suggested to increase the sample size for testing hypotheses obtained from combined data path are significant, but the coefficient path of female and male is not insignificant.

Suggestions for the practitioners are as follows:
1. The findings indicate the effect of Switching Barriers on Word-of-Mouth is stronger by means of Customer Satisfaction. Meanwhile, Switching Barriers, Customer Satisfaction, and Word-of-Mouth are “only” in high enough categories. These categories are very risky considering the level of
customer satisfaction tends to increase over time. Therefore, BlackBerry parties are advised to improve their product Switching Barriers so that their Customer Satisfaction increased and the increase the motivation of Word-of-Mouth.

Switching Barriers that can be created by BlackBerry, for instance:

a. Forming a virtual BBM group facilitated by BlackBerry App World which accommodates all complaints, suggestions, consumer desires, and etc. It is recommended that this application is only available in BlackBerry App World (not available in Play Store or i-Store) to differ it with cross-platform BlackBerry.

b. Developing qwerty-virtual keypads based phone as its previous type that has been launched. This can make customer feels more comfortable using BBM in BlackBerry than in Android or i-phone.

c. Developing partnerships with cellular operators in terms of cheaper BBM tariff in BlackBerry handset than in BBM cross-platform.

2. The findings of this study indicate the main competitor of BlackBerry is Android Smartphone. Therefore, it is suggested to develop Defensive Marketing strategies (for example Switching Barriers or Management Complaint) to anticipate customer turnover/switching behavior. This is urgently needed since cross-platform BBM has been downloaded by many Android and iPhone users.

References


