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Determinants of Sustainable Customer Loyalty: Evidence from 3M Dynamo Product Customers in Medan

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ABSTRACT

Loyalty among buyers of industrial products is rarely formed in a single transaction. It accumulates through repeated use, as customers judge whether a product keeps performing and whether the brand behind it deserves their continued patronage. This study investigates how Product Quality, Brand Trust, and Customer Satisfaction relate to Sustainable Customer Loyalty among customers of 3M dynamo products in Medan, Indonesia. Survey data from 80 purposively selected customers who had used the products for at least six months were analysed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Customer Satisfaction showed a positive and significant path to Sustainable Customer Loyalty (β = 0.304, p = 0.007), whereas the paths from Product Quality (β = 0.169, p = 0.125) and Brand Trust (β = 0.211, p = 0.076) were positive but not significant. Together, the three predictors explained 29.4% of the variance in loyalty. The pattern indicates that, in this industrial setting, loyalty intentions are tied more closely to how customers experience the product than to their separate judgements of quality or trust. Suppliers are advised to manage satisfaction actively through performance monitoring, complaint handling, and after-sales support.

Keywords: *Product Quality, Brand Trust, Customer Satisfaction, Sustainable Customer Loyalty, 3M Dynamo Products*.

INTRODUCTION

Firms that sell technical products work in markets where competitors can often match specifications and prices within a short time. In such markets, keeping existing customers is usually less costly than replacing them, and loyal buyers contribute through repeat orders and recommendations to others (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021). Dick & Basu, (1994) argue that genuine loyalty combines repeated patronage with a favourable relative attitude, which matters when customers can move to another supplier with little effort.

Dynamo products show why this distinction matters. Electric motors and generators are bought for operational use, and a breakdown can disrupt work at a cost well beyond the price of the unit. Buyers therefore judge them on durability, reliability, and after-sales support, and they do so gradually during use. For businesses supplying 3M dynamo products in Medan, the practical question is which of these evaluations actually keeps customers returning.

Two theoretical perspectives frame this question. Oliver, (1999) describes loyalty as developing in phases, beginning with cognitive judgements about product attributes, moving to affective satisfaction, and only later settling into a commitment to rebuy. Commitment-trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) adds a relational view in which exchange relationships endure when one party regards the other as reliable and honest. Read together, the two perspectives imply that quality, trust, and satisfaction may all contribute to loyalty, but not necessarily to the same degree or through the same route.

Indonesian studies have tested these variables many times, mostly in consumer markets. Research on skincare (Nabila & Rustam, 2024; Rahmawati & Hasan, 2023; Utama & Susila, 2024), fashion retail (Gunawan et al., 2024), smartphones (Rohmat et al., 2022), and laptops (Martin & Yenita, 2022) has linked product quality and brand trust with loyalty. A large share of this work places customer satisfaction between the predictors and loyalty as a mediating variable (Iqbal et al., 2024; Meliana et al., 2023; Rizky & Hariasih, 2024), which implies that quality may influence loyalty partly through the customer's experience instead of acting on it directly. Evidence on brand trust, meanwhile, comes from settings as different as e-commerce and personal care products (Ayuningtyas & Rahayu, 2023; Nofrizal et al., 2023), so its role in a technical product setting cannot simply be assumed.

The gap addressed here is contextual rather than a claim that the topic is unexplored. The relationships among quality, trust, satisfaction, and loyalty are well documented, but mainly for products bought on personal preference, repurchased frequently, and easy to switch. Industrial dynamo products differ on each of these points. They are purchased less often, their performance is assessed over months, and the consequences of a poor choice fall on the buyer's operations. Whether findings from consumer markets carry over to this setting is an empirical matter that the existing literature does not resolve. Because suppliers of operational equipment care about whether the relationship continues, this study uses the term Sustainable Customer Loyalty to denote the intended continuity of that relationship, not environmental sustainability.

Accordingly, the study examines the relationships of Product Quality, Brand Trust, and Customer Satisfaction with Sustainable Customer Loyalty among customers of 3M dynamo products in Medan. Its contribution is deliberately specific. It tests whether three predictors that are frequently reported as significant in consumer research retain their explanatory power in an industrial product context, and by estimating them jointly, it identifies which of them carries unique explanatory weight once the others are taken into account.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Product Quality

Product quality is the capacity of a product to perform its intended function, reflected in attributes such as reliability, durability, performance, conformity to specification, and physical condition (Kotler et al., 2022). For equipment such as dynamos, these attributes are difficult to judge at the moment of purchase. Customers build their assessment over time as the product either runs consistently or begins to show faults. Studies in consumer markets associate perceived quality with satisfaction and loyalty (Intan et al., 2024; Nabila & Rustam, 2024; Saputra & Nurlinda, 2024), and this association underlies H1.

Brand Trust

Brand trust is the willingness of customers to rely on a brand's ability to perform its stated function (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Trust reduces perceived risk, which is especially relevant when product failure has operational consequences (Aaker, 1996). Commitment-trust theory treats trust as a precondition for commitment, because customers are reluctant to stay with a partner they regard as unreliable (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Indonesian studies have associated brand or customer trust with loyalty in several settings (Martin & Yenita, 2022; Nirawati et al., 2020; Prihatini et al., 2024; Rohmat et al., 2022; Widiastuti, 2024). These arguments support H2.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the evaluation customers form after comparing a product's actual performance with what they expected (Oliver, 2014). Performance that meets or exceeds expectations makes customers more willing to repurchase and to recommend the product. Oliver, (1999) cautions, however, that satisfaction does not turn into loyalty automatically; it must be repeated and reinforced before it develops into commitment. Empirical work reports that satisfaction is associated with loyalty across different purchasing situations (Gustina et al., 2023; Mofokeng, 2021). This reasoning underlies H3.

Sustainable Customer Loyalty

Sustainable Customer Loyalty is defined here as customers' stated intention to maintain their relationship with 3M dynamo products. It is measured with four indicators: repurchase intention, brand loyalty, willingness to recommend, and resistance to switching. These indicators reflect the attitudinal and intentional components of loyalty emphasised by Dick & Basu, (1994). As the data were collected at a single point in time, the construct captures reported intentions rather than observed long-term purchasing.

The research model in Figure 1 positions Product Quality (X1), Brand Trust (X2), and Customer Satisfaction (X3) as independent variables and Sustainable Customer Loyalty (Y) as the dependent variable

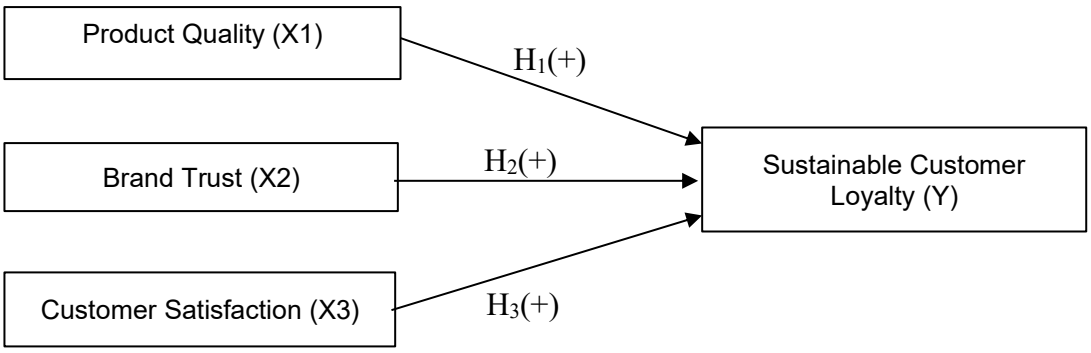


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses Development:

H1: Product Quality has a positive relationship with Sustainable Customer Loyalty.
H2: Brand Trust has a positive relationship with Sustainable Customer Loyalty.
H3: Customer Satisfaction has a positive relationship with Sustainable Customer Loyalty.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. Respondents were customers in Medan who purchase and use 3M dynamo products, selected through purposive sampling. Two criteria applied: respondents had bought the product themselves and had used it for at least six months. The six-month threshold ensured sufficient usage experience to evaluate quality and satisfaction.

Data were collected from August to mid-September 2026 through a structured questionnaire created in Google Forms and distributed via WhatsApp. Of the 81 responses received, 80 were retained for analysis. The questionnaire contained 16 items,

with four items for each construct. The sample exceeds the minimum implied by the ten-times rule, although Hair Jr. et al., (2022) treat this rule as a lower bound rather than a guarantee of adequate power.

The data were analysed with PLS-SEM in SmartPLS. This method suits prediction-oriented research with relatively small samples and does not require multivariate normality (Hair et al., 2019). The measurement model was evaluated through outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015). The structural model was evaluated through inner VIF, bootstrapped path coefficients, effect sizes (f^2), and the coefficient of determination (R^2). Hypotheses were tested with two-tailed tests at the 5% significance level.

RESULT

Table 1.
Convergent Validity Test

Code	Product Quality	Brand Trust	Customer Satisfaction	Sustainable Customer Loyalty
X1.1	0.792			
X1.2	0.894			
X1.3	0.884			
X1.4	0.875			
X2.1		0.878		
X2.2		0.840		
X2.3		0.897		
X2.4		0.912		
X3.1			0.846	
X3.2			0.805	
X3.3			0.827	
X3.4			0.789	
Y.1				0.840
Y.2				0.868
Y.3				0.817
Y.4				0.835

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2026

Outer loadings range from 0.789 (X3.4) to 0.912 (X2.4). Every indicator exceeds the 0.70 threshold, meaning that each item shares more than half of its variance with its construct, so convergent validity at the indicator level is satisfied (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2.
HTMT Test

Code	Product Quality	Brand Trust	Customer Satisfaction	Sustainable Customer Loyalty
Product Quality		0.538	0.475	0.430
Brand Trust	0.538		0.444	0.467
Customer Satisfaction	0.475	0.444		0.535
Sustainable Customer Loyalty	0.430	0.467	0.535	

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2026

All HTMT values lie well below the conservative threshold of 0.85. The highest value, 0.538, appears between Product Quality and Brand Trust. The four constructs can therefore be treated as empirically distinct (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 3.
Reliability Test

Code	Cronbach's alpha	Rho_A	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Product Quality	0.886	0.920	0.920	0.743
Brand Trust	0.905	0.918	0.933	0.778
Customer Satisfaction	0.834	0.838	0.889	0.668
Sustainable Customer Loyalty	0.861	0.863	0.906	0.706

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2026

Cronbach's alpha (0.834 to 0.905), rho_A (0.838 to 0.920), and composite reliability (0.889 to 0.933) all exceed 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. AVE values between 0.668 and 0.778 are above the 0.50 criterion and confirm convergent validity at the construct level.

Table 4.
Bootstrapping Test

Code	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	CI 2,5%	CI 97,5%
PQ -> SCL	0.169	0.168	0.110	1.535	0.125	-0.045	0.380
BT -> SCL	0.211	0.217	0.119	1.777	0.076	-0.017	0.451
CS -> SCL	0.304	0.299	0.112	2.708	0.007	0.082	0.515

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2026

The bootstrapping results in Table 4 show that the path from Product Quality to Sustainable Customer Loyalty is positive but not significant (β = 0.169, t = 1.535, p = 0.125), and its 95% confidence interval includes zero (−0.045 to 0.380). H1 is not supported.

Brand Trust follows a similar pattern. Its coefficient is positive (β = 0.211) but not significant at the 5% level (t = 1.777, p = 0.076), and the confidence interval again spans zero (−0.017 to 0.451). H2 is not supported. A non-significant result of this kind means that the sample provides insufficient evidence for the relationship; it does not show that the relationship is absent. Customer Satisfaction is the only predictor with a significant path (β = 0.304, t = 2.708, p = 0.007). Its confidence interval lies entirely above zero (0.082 to 0.515), so H3 is supported.

Table 5.
Results of Structural Model Evaluation

Code	Inner VIF	f^2 Effect Size
Product Quality -> Sustainable Customer Loyalty	1.417	0.029
Brand Trust -> Sustainable Customer Loyalty	1.408	0.045
Customer Satisfaction -> Sustainable Customer Loyalty	1.278	0.103

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2026

Inner VIF values range from 1.278 to 1.417, well under the threshold of 5 and also under the stricter value of 3, so collinearity among the predictors does not bias the path estimates (Hair et al., 2019).

Following Hair Jr. et al., (2022), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 mark small, medium, and large effects. All three predictors fall in the small range: Product Quality (0.029), Brand Trust (0.045), and Customer Satisfaction (0.103). Customer Satisfaction makes the largest contribution, although it remains below the medium benchmark.

Table 6.
Coefficient of Determination Results R^2

Endogenous Variable	R^2
Sustainable Customer Loyalty	0.294

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2026

An R^2 of 0.294 means that the three predictors jointly account for 29.4% of the variance in Sustainable Customer Loyalty. This value sits above the 0.25 benchmark for weak explanatory power and below the 0.50 benchmark for moderate power (Hair et al., 2019). The remaining 70.6% is attributable to factors outside the model.

DISCUSSION

The Relationship between Product Quality and Sustainable Customer Loyalty

Product Quality was positively but not significantly related to Sustainable Customer Loyalty, so H1 is not supported. The positive sign shows that customers who rated quality higher also tended to report somewhat stronger loyalty, yet the association was too weak, relative to its sampling variability, to be distinguished from zero in a sample of 80.

One plausible reading follows the sequence described by Oliver, (1999). Quality judgements are cognitive and tied to specific attributes, and they may shape loyalty mainly by producing a satisfying usage experience rather than by acting on loyalty directly. When satisfaction is included in the same model, the unique contribution of quality is likely to shrink. The HTMT value of 0.475 between Product Quality and Customer Satisfaction indicates that the two constructs are related while remaining distinct, which is consistent with this reading. Because the present model estimates direct paths only, the indirect route remains a proposition for future testing rather than a finding of this study.

The product category offers a second consideration. For operational equipment, adequate quality may be regarded as a basic requirement that customers expect from any established brand. If most respondents see 3M dynamo products as meeting that standard, quality ratings would vary little and would explain little of the variation in loyalty. Consumer-market studies often treat quality as a direct antecedent of loyalty (Nabila & Rustam, 2024; Saputra & Nurlinda, 2024), an assumption this result suggests should be tested rather than transferred. Rezeki et al., (2021), studying CV. Makmur Auto Sejahtera in Medan, focused on product differentiation and distribution channels, which hints that in business-oriented markets loyalty may depend as much on how products are supplied as on their attributes.

The Relationship between Brand Trust and Sustainable Customer Loyalty

Brand Trust was positively related to Sustainable Customer Loyalty but did not reach significance at the 5% level, so H2 is not supported. Of the two non-significant paths, this one lies closest to the threshold ($p = 0.076$), and its confidence interval only narrowly

includes zero. The result is better described as inconclusive than as evidence against a role for trust.

From the standpoint of commitment-trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), trust builds commitment over time, and its influence may be partly absorbed by satisfaction when both are modelled together, since a satisfying track record is one of the main sources of trust. The comparison with Rezeki et al., (2026), who examined customer trust and loyalty in e-commerce, is instructive. Online buyers often cannot inspect a product before purchase, so trust stands in for direct experience, whereas dynamo buyers gather first-hand experience over months of use and may rely less on trust as a separate basis for loyalty.

The Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Sustainable Customer Loyalty

Customer Satisfaction showed a positive and significant relationship with Sustainable Customer Loyalty, supporting H3. Respondents who reported more favourable experiences with 3M dynamo products also reported stronger intentions to repurchase, recommend, and remain with the product. Its effect size ($f^2 = 0.103$) was the largest of the three, though still small.

The finding fits the view of satisfaction as a summary judgement. It condenses a customer's experience of performance, reliability, and service into an overall evaluation, and this evaluation, rather than any single attribute, appears to sustain the relationship. The result agrees with Gustina et al., (2023), who found a positive and significant relationship between satisfaction and loyalty among customers of Jhon Electro, and with Akbar & Situmorang, (2022), who observed a comparable relationship among MSMEs in North Sumatra. Given the cross-sectional design, the relationship remains an association; loyal customers may also rate satisfaction more generously, and this reverse direction cannot be excluded.

Overall Interpretation and Theoretical Implications

Taken together, the results point to an ordering among the predictors. Satisfaction was the only significant correlate of sustainable loyalty, while quality and trust carried positive but statistically uncertain coefficients. Rather than making quality and trust unimportant, this suggests that their contribution to loyalty may be expressed largely through the experience of using the product. In theoretical terms, the study adds evidence from an industrial product context to a literature dominated by consumer goods and shows that direct paths reported in those settings cannot be generalised without testing. For subsequent modelling, the results support specifying Customer Satisfaction as a mediator between quality, trust, and loyalty, as several consumer studies have done (Iqbal et al., 2024; Rahmawati & Hasan, 2023). Lazuardi et al., (2025) further argue that sustainable competitive advantage increasingly depends on how firms manage customer touchpoints across channels, which points to service-related variables that the current model leaves out.

CONCLUSION

Among 80 purposively selected customers of 3M dynamo products in Medan, Customer Satisfaction was positively and significantly related to Sustainable Customer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.304$, $p = 0.007$), supporting H3. Product Quality ($\beta = 0.169$, $p = 0.125$) and Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.211$, $p = 0.076$) showed positive but non-significant relationships, so H1 and H2 were not supported. The model explained 29.4% of the variance in loyalty. In this setting, loyalty intentions appear to rest primarily on customers' overall experience with the product.

For suppliers and distributors of dynamo products, the practical message is that satisfaction should be monitored and managed rather than assumed. Regular feedback collection, prompt complaint handling, follow-up on product performance after installation, and accessible after-sales service are concrete ways of doing so. Investments in quality and brand reputation remain worthwhile, but they should be judged by whether they improve the customer experience.

Several limitations qualify these conclusions. Purposive sampling and a sample of 80 restrict generalisation beyond the respondents surveyed and limit the power to detect small effects, which is relevant to the two non-significant paths. The cross-sectional design captures loyalty intentions rather than actual repurchase and cannot establish causal direction. The model contains only three predictors and leaves 70.6% of the variance unexplained. Future studies could test satisfaction as a mediator, add constructs such as service quality, price perception, and switching costs, use larger samples of industrial buyers, and track whether stated loyalty becomes repeat purchasing.

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