

# Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in Islamic bank: customer engagement as a mediator

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between customer satisfaction towards customer loyalty with the customer engagement as a mediator. This study is to measure the effectiveness of customer engagement as the control variable between customer satisfaction towards customer loyalty. This study is related to customer at the Islamic bank in Indonesia. The study is to measure the factors that lead to customer loyalty as the industry is facing tough competition and relatively new as compared to a commercial and conventional bank. The population of this research is customer who currently owned an account with any of the selected Islamic bank in Indonesia. They must already be a customer as the research is to measure between the customer satisfaction towards customer loyalty. 200 respondents were approached to participate in the survey. Questionnaire distributed outside the bank areas upon customer completing their banking activities. All respondents participated on a voluntary basis. This research uses a structural equation modeling (SEM) technique together with AMOS. The findings resulted that customer engagement mediated the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Both customer satisfaction and customer engagement have a positive relationship towards customer loyalty. It is recommended by Islamic bank in Indonesia as well as any other bank to implement and exercise more practical customer engagement activities that may raise the strong relationship between customer and bank.

**Keywords:** Service quality, Customer loyalty, Religiosity, Customer satisfaction, Customer engagement, Islamic bank

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as the largest number of Muslim in the world with more than 10% of the total Muslim population. The huge numbers are actually promised high possibility of success of the products based on total target market. At current there are more than 10 Islamic bank operated in Indonesia however the overall market share is only at 5% only (Marimin & Romdhoni, 2017). It shows that the Islamic bank in Indonesia is facing multi type of competitions where the service providers need to promote the services by creating more product awareness as well as to compete among the industry players over the market share (Hasan, 2012). Such situation was admitted by the statement made by Toni Eko Boy Subari, president director of PT Bank Syariah Mandiri. "Even with Muslims making up almost 90% of Indonesia's 265 million population, Shariah financial products have struggled to gain much ground as conventional banks dominated the financial industry".

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Based on the current scenario, Islamic bank players in Indonesia need to be more focused by putting more effort in keeping their current customer. Bank should have concentrated in provide good services that may satisfied customer (Marimin & Romdhoni, 2017). Bank at the same time perhaps can review their marketing strategy towards market driven so that they are more focused on customer and service delivery. Islamic bank in Indonesia at the same time need to proceed with their acquisition campaign to attract more new customer to port in. Marketing scholars claimed that getting new customer is 20 times more expensive than getting new one. It means that Islamic bank in Indonesia need to retain their satisfied customer by doing more engagement activities (Kasri, 2012). The purpose of the engagement program is to prosper satisfied customer towards the loyalty. Customer engagement according to past researches is effective in keeping customer satisfied and stand a chance to promote loyalty level.

Overall, Islamic bank in Indonesia need to find ways of increasing their market share in the overall banking industry and at the same time focused on keeping customer by providing positive customer experiences (Rama, 2013). The current 5% of market share from the overall population need to be taken care so that they remain in the customer lifecycle. Islamic banking players need to keep customer and engaged with them in order to keep them as a loyal customer. Customer loyalty according to marketing gurus lead to advantages over the long term,

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Customer loyalty**

The competition among market player's industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is very stiff. Industry players compete among each other to gain market share and market growth. Most of the time competition is among the limited market population. Such situation leads to a more creative competition by adding more value added to their products and offerings. Past research (Mohd Farid Shamsudin & Razali, 2015) indicates that getting new customer is 20 times more expensive that keeping the current customer. Service providers should not forget to keep the customer satisfied by multiple retentions program that may keep the customer longer in the life cycle. The benefits of having customer loyalty according to (Quoquab, Mohamed Sodom, & Mohammad, 2019) is that service provider may have enjoyed share of wallet. Loyal customer tends to spend more over a period of times. Loyal customer has high tendency to purchase repeatedly and such action contribute to a better financial positions of the service provider (M. F. M. F. Shamsudin, Esa, & Ali, 2019). (Izogo, 2017) stated that in order for service provider to flourish the share of wallet among the loyal customer is by communicating to target customers. Service providers should continuously communicate to their customer so that customer realized that they are important and being noticed of their existing. Service providers at the same time according to (Özkan, Süer, Keser, & Kocakoç, 2019) should identify the potential customers that are spending more and stay longer in the life cycle. Service provider should have a list of their most high spending or investing for a communication and marketing purposes.

Acquiring new customer is very costly (M. F. Shamsudin, Shabi, & Salem, 2018). Service providers need to spend more marketing budget in terms of promotion, advertising and trade events in order to recruit new customer. Such thing will consume more time and lot of effort rather than focusing on the current available customer. It is very important for the service provider to let the customer know that the firms are acknowledged their presence in terms of their length of stay, spending and supports towards the products or services. The benefits of having loyal customer is that they willing voluntarily recommend the firms product or services to other people especially within their circle family and friends. Such action according to (Quoquab et al., 2019) will bring benefits to the service providers as most customer buy or subscribe products based on recommendation or feedback from other customers especially among their trusted members.

Banking services especially need a very strong support from customers as the longer length of stay can be translated in into the lifetime value to the bank. Loyal customer indirectly contributed to the increase of revenue or profit to the firms. Customer who stay longer may provide the benefits to the firms in terms of competition. Loyal customer tends to stay with the firms regardless how tense is the competition. A large set of loyal customers may lead to a strong positioning in the market. Besides that, according to (Izogo, 2017) firms may reduce the competition among the market players. (M. F. Shamsudin, Razak, & Salem, 2018) stated that loyal customer may help the expansion of the business by giving referrals to their family, friends and the people surrounding them. (Özkan et al., 2019) claimed that loyal customer provides positive feedback and thus important to attract more new customers.

From the other perspective, (Izogo, 2017) revealed that loyal customer may increase the motivation of firm's employee. The existence of loyal customer may indicate to the employee that the firms is doing well and profitable. Employee is working hard to support the firm's goals and performance. (M. Shamsudin et al., 2015) also indicates that good treatments from employee may be one of the strong reasons why customer stay loyal. The positive relationship that they build overtime creates a special relationship and bonding among the two parties. From another perspective (Shankar & Jebarajakirthy, 2019) shows that high loyal customer may bring positive brand image in the market. Firms with high loyal customer may enjoyed a constant market share and business growth. Such situations strengthen the brand image of the firms in the industry.

Recent research conducted by (Izogo, 2017) indicates that customer loyalty provides a positive words of mouth about the firm's services and products. Loyal customer can be the mobile ambassador to the firms as they liked to communicate about their satisfaction and positive experiences. (Razak & Shamsudin, 2019) supported the situation and added that loyal customer not only communicate and share the good of the firms but reduce the customer interest towards competitor products and offerings. Loyal customer can be a source of references from other people in the market. Customer today is very knowledgeable as they have access to information. New customer normally will have asked for feedback and comment from the existing customer before they make decision to buy, subscribes or register as a customer to the service providers.

Quoquab et al., 2019, stated that firms that have loyal customer may have high chances of success when they introduce new products. The reason of that is because loyal customer will continues support the product or services of their current firms as they have trust and relationship. Loyal customer believed that the firms have high service quality and the service is exceeding their expectations. The advantage of having loyal customer according to (M. F. M. F. Shamsudin et al., 2019) is getting a feedback from their customers. Firms especially service provider should listen and gather feedback from the loyal customer as they may share their experienced based on the customer perspective. Today, any service providers may need to works hard to understand what actually customer wants from the service provider? Engagement with loyal customer may provide excellent feedback and information that can be used in the firms marketing strategy, policy and customer services (Thakur, 2019).

Overall, customer loyalty is important as it helps the firms especially the banking institute to compete and growth positively. Today customer have more bargaining power as they have more choices. Customer also have more information that enable them to make a better decision. As such keeping the loyal customer and cultivate them may bring a lots of positive returns to the service providers especially banking institute specifically in this context of research (Kamath, Pai, & Prabhu, 2019).

## **2.2 Customer engagement**

As mentioned by (Kanje, Charles, Tumsifu, Mossberg, & Andersson, 2019) that business survival and competition is getting tough with customer having more bargaining power in determined the best services and offering to them. Based on that service provider need to maintains communicate with their target market and current customer through engagement

activities. Customer engagement according to (Sallaudin Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019) is a communication activity between the service providers and their customers. The engagement can be in many forms of activities or responses such as interaction or reaction towards their customer. (Petzer & van Tonder, 2019) claimed that customer engagement leads to positive overall customer experience. Past research (Mohd-Ramly & Omar, 2017) claimed that customer engagement brings positive feedback from customers as they acknowledged the effort from the service providers in appreciating them as a customer (Thakur, 2019).

One important findings from past research (M. F. Shamsudin, Nurana, Aesya, & Nabi, 2018) highlighted that customer engagement may reduce churn. It means that switching behavior may be reducing the needs for churn from existing to other service providers. (M.F. Shamsudin, Ali, Ali, & Shabi, 2019) supported the findings on the churn reduction as trust from customer increased through the customer engagement activities. Report from (Mohd-Ramly & Omar, 2017) stated that customer engagement may also increase the upselling and cross selling of the firm's products or services. Banking institute may get customer to increase their investment or increase the saving amount. AT the same time current customer may also help banking institute to add more services from one to another such as insurance, car loan, personal loans and many more. Customer engagement allowed customer to get the first hand information about the service provider. They get more information and got to know the direction and objectives of the firms (S. Hassan, Shamsudin, & Mustapha, 2019). Such activities may increase the level of loyalty among the existing customers (Thakur, 2019).

From the banking perspective, the engagement activities may start from the awareness campaign by the banks to their target customer. (B. Kadir & Shamsudin, 2019) stated that customer will only have interest to buy or subscribes to a products or services once they have information about the offerings. (Petzer & van Tonder, 2019) claimed that banks need to promote their services regularly so that customer know what is the latest product available in the market. (Mohd-Ramly & Omar, 2017) claimed that competition in banking is a bit tough as customer normally will bind by a long term product for a numbers of years. (Akroush & Mahadin, 2019) stated that customer who took a hire purchase loan may not or unable to withdraw from the relationship until the contract ended. Such things create a high switch barrier among the customer to switch (M. F. Shamsudin, Razak, et al., 2018). Information about products is important as it may spark the interest and desire of customer to the products or services.

Customer engagement may cultivate and encourage acquisition drives to the bank institute. Information feed to customer may create clear explanation and invite the interest of getting the service (Baharudin Kadir, Shamsudin, Nurul, & Mohd, 2020). There are however a group of customer who did not have clear information about certain products because of their limitations such refused to search for information, reluctant to ask and difficult to change (Petzer & van Tonder, 2019). Customer engagement may help the service providers to communicate directly with potential customers and provide more information. (Petzer & van Tonder, 2019) reported that customer engagement lead to customer satisfaction. Customer express their gratitude towards the efforts by the firms that shows the value of customer (Mohd-Ramly & Omar, 2017). Achieving customer expectation is definitely important in today business competition. In other words, according to (Mohd Farid Shamsudin, Ali, Wahid, & Nadzri, 2019), the firms have managed to meet the expectation of customer by fulfilling their needs and wants.

Customer engagement according to (Matute, Palau-Saumell, & Occhiocupo, 2019) may resulted to acquiring new customers or conversion of customers. That is how the power of communication activities between the business owner or service providers to their potential customers (M. F. Shamsudin, Shabi, et al., 2018). Conversion of customer may increase sales, revenue and profit (Petzer & van Tonder, 2019). (Kosiba, Boateng, Okoe Amartey, Boakye, & Hinson, 2018) highlighted

that firms need to focused on customer retention in order to sustain and growth in the market. Customer retention is important as it may lead to customer loyalty. The important of customer retention have been studied by many past researchers (Shankar & Jebarajakirthy, 2019). Firms need to emphasis on customer retention as it is parts of the strategy to keep the current customer for a long term customer life time value (Kosiba et al., 2018).

As mentioned by (Salem, Shawtari, Shamsudin, & Hussain, 2016) customer engagement may also leads to customer referrals during the sessions. Firms may have enjoyed advantage in getting more referrals that may show interest towards the products or services. (B. Kadir & Shamsudin, 2019) claimed that customer engagement activities are important as part of the firm's activities to share their products and services with customer (Thakur, 2019). The effectiveness of the customer engagement activities is far more compared to advertisements as customer engagement will normally involve a two way communications that enable customer to asked, argue and give feedback.

Overall, the customer engagement activities are important especially for the firms to create awareness and provide more information to clear doubt or to instill trust. Islamic banking for example may need a lot of engagements activities as they are a gap in knowledge that may lead to ignorance from the customer (Akroush & Mahadin, 2019; Kamath et al., 2019; Shankar & Jebarajakirthy, 2019).

### **2.3 Customer satisfaction**

Studied on customer satisfaction have been done by many past researchers (Hirata, 2019) and it is firmed that customer satisfaction brings benefits to service providers, (M. F. Shamsudin, Razak, et al., 2018) stated that customer satisfaction is a situation where customer judge the overall customer experiences over the expectations. (M. F. M. F. Shamsudin et al., 2019) stated that customer will get satisfied if the service provided is more than what the customer is expecting. Customer however will get dissatisfied if the service delivered is below the customer expectations (Liu et al., 2019). Customer satisfaction according to past researches (Borishade et al., 2018) provide the advantage to service providers and firms in terms of profits. Customer satisfaction according to (Sallaudin Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019) contribute to high profits to the firms. At the same time (Hirata, 2019) highlighted that customer satisfaction may also lead to firm's performance. The firm's performance can be measured from various aspects but basically according to (Borishade et al., 2018) satisfied customer will tend to repeat purchase and tendency to stay with the networks or service providers longer regardless the availability of switching barrier or not (Liu et al., 2019).

Past research (Borishade et al., 2018; Hirata, 2019) also highlighted that satisfied customer is more tolerates against the price. There are said as price insensitive (Sallaudin Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019; M. F. M. F. Shamsudin et al., 2019). Slight increase in price will not change their decision towards the service providers. Service providers may have advantage against competitor should they have more satisfied customer (Liu et al., 2019). Satisfied customer is also having high tendency of being loyal and not prone to switch or get influenced over competitor advertisements. Competitor especially over limited market may lead to creative ways of attracting new customer especially from the competitors (Borishade et al., 2018). Customer satisfaction according to research will contributes to increase in profit. Beside that it will also help to expand the market share and market growth (Hirata, 2019).

Satisfied customer enables service provider to expand business using cross selling and upselling (M. F. Shamsudin, Nurana, et al., 2018). Such actions can increase the business profit and increase market share. Satisfied customer is also known as good supporter to the business organization should there is any new products or services launched (Hasim, Shamsudin, Ali, & Shabi, 2018). Satisfied customer at the same time is very proactive to support the service provider by providing feedback and comments. Service provider can also make used the satisfied customer to increase their customer spending by

introducing one stop centre. Satisfied customer have more trust towards service provider and thus they are more prone to support their preferred brand.

Major advantage of having customer satisfaction is that service provider may have enjoyed free advertisements through words of mouth (Chicu, Pàmies, Ryan, & Cross, 2019). Satisfied customer will help service provider to communicate and share their experiences over their social media and other digital platform. Today customer not even used social media to express their feeling through word of mouth but can even share the live video to share the excitements and feeling online (Zhang, Zhang, & Zhang, 2019). The effectiveness of digital word of mouth is that it can be spread over wider coverage as compared to a traditional word of mouth. The advantage of having satisfied customer is that it provides two major advantages in terms of business growth and profits (M. F. Shamsudin, Nurana, et al., 2018). Those can lead to high impacts on the service providers specially to strengthen the service provider position over competitor.

Service provider according to recent research may need to improve their services in order to increase customer satisfaction (Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, & Pihlström, 2012; Petzer & van Tonder, 2019; Thakur, 2019). The service provider may develop a customer service community in order to provide a better platform for them to share their experiences and easy for the service provider to conduct engagement. Establishing of customer service department is very important to provide customer services to handle all matters related to customer especially on the post sales services (Akroush & Mahadin, 2019; Kamath et al., 2019; Shankar & Jebarajakirthy, 2019). The best that service provider in taking care the current customer is by regularly conduct survey and measuring the level of customer satisfaction.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This is a quantitative study used to measure the relationship between customer satisfaction towards customer loyalty. This study also attempts to measure the role of customer engagement as mediator between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Questionnaire was used to collect data with overall 21 questions divided into 2 sections. Section A is more on respondent profile while section B is about the topic of study for each variable namely customer engagement, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. All items are measured using 5-point Likert-scale, ranging 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Customer satisfaction was measured using 5 items and the same goes with customer engagement. Customer loyalty was measured with only four items. All items were adapted from the past study. Data was collected among the customer of selected banks and only 200 respondents participated in this research. Collection of data was done based on random sampling with a small token of souvenir worth USD 2 for every participant. Relationship analysis was done using structural model using structural equation modelling.

### IV. FINDINGS

Table 1: Respondent profile

Descriptions	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	135	67.50%
Female	65	32.50%
Employer		
Government	75	37.50%
Private	65	32.50%
Self-employed	60	30.00%

Age		
<20 years	2	1.00%
20 - 29 years	45	22.50%
30 - 39 years	84	42.00%
40 - 49 years	66	33.00%
50 and above	3	1.50%
Length of stay		
< 1 year	4	2.00%
1 - 4 years	103	51.50%
7 - 10 years	73	36.50%
>10 years	20	10.00%
Education level		
Secondary school	54	27.00%
Bachelor degree	86	43.00%
Master degree	56	28.00%
Doctorate	4	2.00%

Table 1 is the summary of respondent profile who participated in the research exercises. 67.5% were male while female is 32.5%. Of the 200 respondents, 37.5% are working with governments sectors followed by 32.5% at private sectors and the rest is self-employed. Majority age was from 30 -39 years' old which representing 42% followed by 40 – 49 years old (33%). 98% have been with the bank for more than 1 year and 46.5% have been the more than 7 years. The respondent profiles also show that majority of the bank customer possessed at least a degree or more.

Table 2: Overall reliability of the constructs and factors loadings of indications

Items	Factor loading	t-value	MSV	ASV	AVE	CR
Customer satisfaction			0.74	0.55	0.9	0.97
CSAT1	0.96	22.5				
CSAT 2	0.98	23.24				
CSAT3	0.91	20.49				
CSAT4	0.84	19.54				
CSAT5	0.78	18.69				
Customer engagement			0.72	0.6	0.91	0.97
CE1	0.95	21.9				
CE2	0.96	22.21				
CE3	0.95	21.9				
CE4	0.83	19.34				
CE5	0.81	19.14				

Customer loyalty			0.53	0.45	0.92	0.97
CLO1	0.94	21.29				
CLO2	0.91	20.04				
CLO3	0.72	14.04				
CLO4	0.73	14.67				

Notes: Cho-square=124.21, df=48, p-value=0.0000, RMSEA=0.073, GFI=0.93, AGFI=0.89, SRMR=0.023, CFI=0.99, IFI0.99

AVE represents average variance extracted; MSV represents maximum shared variance; ASV represents average shared variance; CR represents composite reliability; \*\*\* denotes significance level of 0.001.

In this study, the discriminant validity was also assessed. According to Hair et al. (2010), the square root of the AVE value for each structure should be larger than the shared relationship coefficients to establish the discriminant validity of the factors in the model. Table 3 confirmed the discriminant validity. These results also demonstrated that all measures were reliable (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Means, standard deviations and correlations of latent variables are presented in Table 3. The results in Table 3 indicate that all correlations are significant.

Table 3: Means, standard deviations and correlations of study constructs

	Mean	SD	Customer satisfaction	Customer engagement	Customer loyalty
Customer satisfaction	4.28	0.74	(0.95)		
Customer engagement	4.32	0.81	0.86	(0.96)	
Customer loyalty	4.03	0.79	0.61	0.78	(0.86)

Notes: All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed test). SD: Standard Deviation. The numbers in the cells of diagonal line are squared root of AVE

The results in Table 3 indicate that all correlations are significant. Table 3 confirmed that the discriminant validity in which two conceptually similar concepts are distinct. These results also demonstrated that all measures were reliable (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Means, standard deviations and correlations of latent variables are presented in Table III. The results in Table III indicate that all correlations are significant.

Table 4: Path estimates of structural models

Hypothesis		Standardized path coefficients	t-values	Result
H1	Customer satisfaction -> Customer loyalty	0.23	5.69	Supported
H2	Customer satisfaction -> Customer engagement	0.27	4.75	Supported



H3	Customer engagement -> Customer loyalty	0.51	6.61	Supported
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In the present study, the hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling. Therefore, the fit indices values of the appropriate model, the values for path estimates are shown in Table 4. Customer satisfaction influences customer loyalty positively ( $\beta = 0.23$   $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H1.

Further, customer satisfaction influences customer engagement positively ( $\beta = 0.27$   $p < 0.001$ ), thereby supporting H2. H3 indicates that customer engagement influences customer loyalty ( $\beta = 0.51$   $p < 0.001$ ), therefore it is also supported.

Figure 1: Results of the hypothesized model

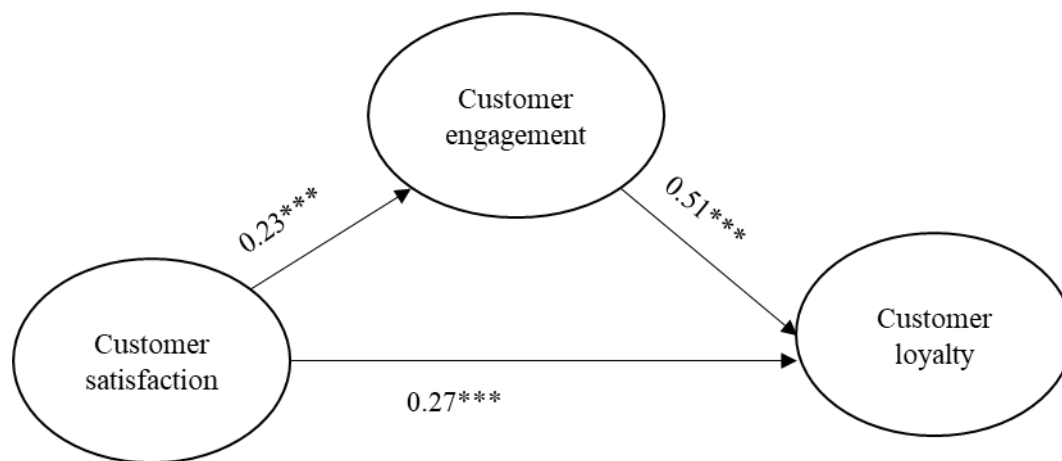


Table 5: Path estimates of structural models

	Standardized path coefficients value			
	Full mediation model		Partial mediation model	
	$\beta$	t-value	$\beta$	t-value
Customer satisfaction -> Customer loyalty			0.23	5.69
Customer satisfaction -> Customer engagement	0.29	12.36	0.27	4.75
Customer engagement -> Customer loyalty	0.75	20.12	0.51	6.61

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that all variables are equally important in order to obtain customer loyalty. The results indicate that both customer satisfaction and customer engagement are positively related to customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction in Islamic banks based on this study shows that customers will remain to support the bank with no intention to switch. The results are similar with a few other studies conducted in the retail bank outside Indonesia. Most of the popular reasons why customers did not switch banks is because customers already feel convenient with the current bank. The feeling could come from the relationship between customers with banks' employees or the external environments such as parking, locations and distance. Customers are also reluctant to switch banks because they need to do many things in order to create an account including long queues for new account registrations. Customers at the same time need to close the current account and transfer the whole things to the new account. Everything seems hassle and costly. There is also research that claimed customers did not switch because all banks are the same from the customer perspective. That could be true or not depends on the customer

experiences. Most of the past study however agreed that customer stay loyal because they are satisfied with the bank. Based on that, it can be concluded that customer satisfaction can lead to customer loyalty in the case of Islamic bank in Indonesia. Customer engagement is also playing positive role in mediating the customer loyalty. The role of customer engagement helps to strengthen the relationship between bankers and customer. Such relationship will make the customer more satisfied and continue to loyal. Based on the study it can be concluded that customer engagement plays important role in mediating the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

All banks especially related to Islamic bank should look further on the engagement activities that may bond the relationship between customer and banks. There are many activities that bank can apply such as sending promotional messages more often as compared to transactional messages. Get the customer involvement in survey and feedback and develop more customer focused strategies. Such activities will indirectly help current customer to stay loyal but brings more benefits to banks in terms of increase revenue, cross and upselling and good branding positioning.

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