

# Building Sustainable Customer Loyalty: A Systematic Review of Key Determinants and Challenges Across Sectors

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**Abstract.** In the midst of intense business competition and rapidly changing consumer preferences, sustainable customer loyalty has become increasingly crucial for companies aiming to maintain long-term competitive advantage. This study conducts a systematic review to identify the key factors influencing sustainable customer loyalty and uncover gaps and inconsistencies in the existing literature. The findings reveal that service quality, brand equity, customer engagement, sustainable practices, and customer identification and personalization are the main determinants of sustainable customer loyalty. However, there is an urgent need for further research focused on specific sectors, the development of integrated frameworks, and the analysis of the impacts of dynamic market conditions and evolving regulations. This study provides valuable guidance for academics and practitioners in developing effective strategies to build and sustain customer loyalty over the long term.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Customer Loyalty; Service Quality; Brand Equity; Customer Engagement; Sustainable Practices; Systematic Review

## 1 Introduction

The contemporary business environment is characterized by intense competition, rapidly evolving consumer preferences, and technological advancements [1, 2, 3]. In such a dynamic landscape, achieving and maintaining customer loyalty has become increasingly challenging [4,5]. Companies are constantly seeking innovative ways to engage and retain their customers [6, 7, 8]. Sustainable customer loyalty, which encompasses long-term commitment and repeat patronage, is essential for businesses aiming to secure a competitive advantage and ensure long-term success. Despite its critical importance, the determinants of sustainable customer loyalty are not fully understood [9]. Existing research has provided valuable insights into various factors that may influence customer loyalty, yet there is a need for a comprehensive synthesis of these findings. This gap in understanding presents a significant challenge for both scholars and practitioners.

The concept of customer loyalty has evolved significantly over the years [10,11]. Early theories primarily focused on repeat purchase behavior and customer retention [12]. However, recent research has expanded the definition to include emotional and psychological dimensions of loyalty [13,14]. Sustainable customer loyalty is now understood as a multi-dimensional construct that encompasses both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty [15,16,17]. Behavioral loyalty refers to the actual repeat purchase behavior [18,19], while attitudinal loyalty involves the emotional and psychological commitment to a brand [19]. This evolution in understanding underscores the complexity of the factors that contribute to customer loyalty and the need for a comprehensive review of the literature.

One of the key challenges in studying customer loyalty is the diversity of factors that influence it. Different industries, markets, and customer segments exhibit unique loyalty drivers [20]. For example, in the retail industry, factors such as product quality, pricing, and convenience play a significant role in shaping customer loyalty [21,22,23]. In the service industry, customer interactions, service quality, and relationship management are critical determinants [24,25]. Therefore, understanding the specific context and industry-specific factors is crucial for developing effective loyalty strategies. However, existing research is often fragmented, with studies focusing on specific industries or factors, leading to a lack of a holistic understanding.

Given the complexity and variability of customer loyalty determinants, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive synthesis of existing research. Such a synthesis can help to consolidate fragmented findings and provide a clearer understanding of the factors that drive sustainable customer loyalty across different contexts. By identifying common themes and patterns, this synthesis can offer valuable insights for both academics and practitioners seeking to enhance customer retention strategies.

A systematic review (SR) is an ideal approach to achieve this synthesis. An SR involves a structured and rigorous process of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant studies on a particular topic [26,27,28,29]. The primary objective of this systematic review is to address the gaps in understanding the determinants of sustainable customer loyalty. This review seeks to consolidate and synthesize existing research on sustainable customer loyalty, providing a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge. Moreover, this study seeks to contribute to the academic discourse on customer loyalty by identifying key areas for future research. By highlighting gaps and inconsistencies in the existing literature, this study aims to guide future research efforts toward addressing these issues and expanding the body of knowledge on sustainable customer loyalty. This contribution to the academic field can help to develop more robust theoretical frameworks and models, furthering the understanding of customer loyalty dynamics.

To address the gaps in understanding the determinants of sustainable customer loyalty and to provide a comprehensive synthesis of existing research, this systematic review will be guided by the following research questions:

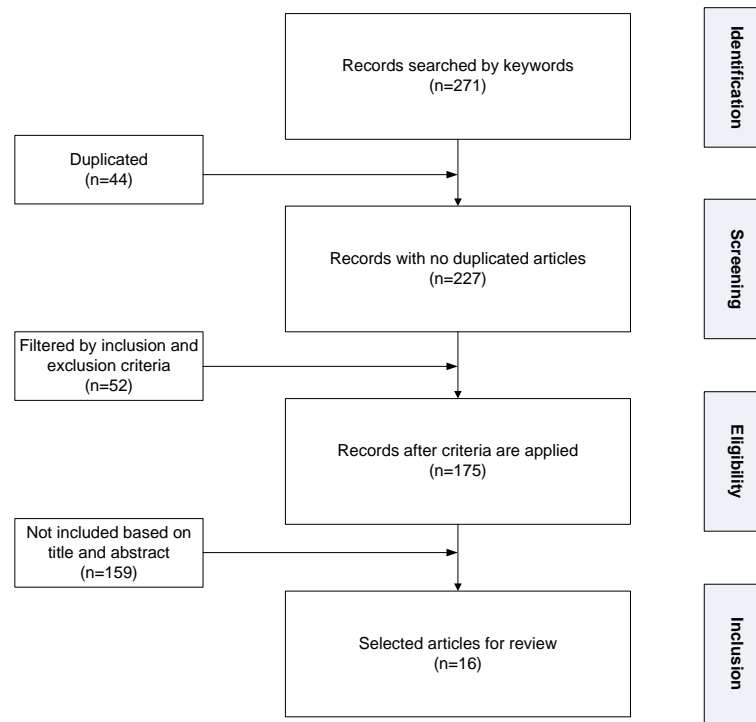
*RQ1: What are the key determinants of sustainable customer loyalty identified in existing literature?*

*RQ2: What gaps and inconsistencies exist in the current literature on sustainable customer loyalty, and what areas require further investigation?*

## **2 Methodology**

This study conducts a systematic review to explore the key determinants of sustainable customer loyalty and to provide a comprehensive synthesis of existing research. The review provides a comprehensive overview of various scholarly contributions to date, employing replicable methods [30]. Easterby-Smith and colleagues identified two primary processes for systematic reviews [31]. The first involves defining review protocols and the relevance of research studies within specific fields, while the second process focuses on identifying key findings to address knowledge gaps in the field. To ensure comprehensive coverage, systematic review methods such as the PRISMA flow diagram were considered for selecting relevant articles [32]. The PRISMA method facilitates the identification and selection of high-quality articles through four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion [33].

Drawing on previous research, this literature review is structured into two phases. The first phase involves using the PRISMA method to create a flow diagram that aids in identifying and selecting relevant articles for analysis. In the second phase, a detailed analysis is conducted on the selected articles.



**Figure 1. Flowchart of research methodology using PRISMA**

#### Identification stage

The literature search involved a thorough exploration of multiple academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. Keywords used in the search included “sustainable customer loyalty” and “sustainability” AND “customer loyalty.” The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last 20 years (2003-2024) to ensure the relevance and currency of the findings.

#### Screening stage

Studies were selected based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria included empirical studies, theoretical papers, and reviews that specifically addressed determinants of sustainable customer loyalty. Articles need to be published in English and accessible in full text. Exclusion criteria encompassed studies that did not focus directly on customer loyalty, were not peer-reviewed, or were considered opinion pieces without empirical support.

#### Eligibility stage

Data from the selected studies were extracted using a standardized form to ensure consistency. Information collected included the study’s objectives, research questions,

methodology, key findings, and identified determinants of sustainable customer loyalty. This process allowed for a systematic comparison and synthesis of the literature.

**Inclusion stage: Data synthesis and analysis**

The extracted data were analyzed using a thematic synthesis approach. Key themes and patterns were identified across the studies, focusing on the determinants of sustainable customer loyalty. These themes were then grouped into broader categories to provide a structured overview of the findings. The analysis also involved identifying gaps and inconsistencies in the literature, which informed the development of recommendations for future research.

**3 Results**

**Descriptive analysis**

The research findings are presented descriptively to understand trends and general information about the selected articles for review. This analysis is detailed and presented in several following subsections.

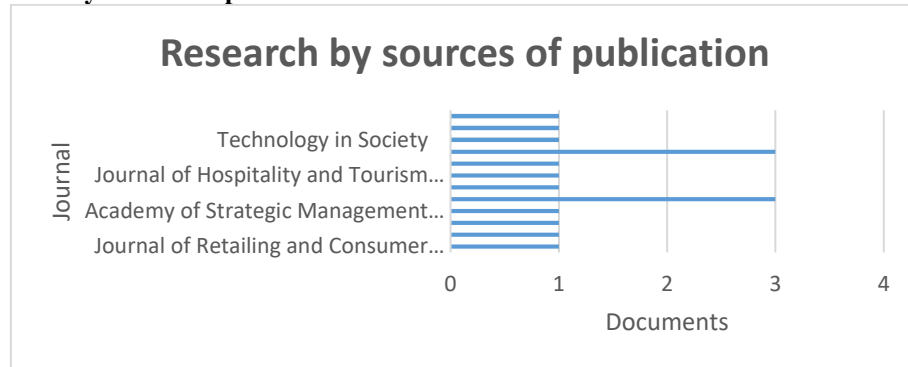
**Research by time**



**Figure 2. Research Trends on Sustainable Customer Loyalty from 2015 to 2024**

The “Research by Time” graph in Figure 2 illustrates the development of the number of research documents published from 2015 to 2024. In 2015, only one research document was published, and there was no related research activity in the following two years. In 2018, the number remained stable with only one document published. However, there was a significant surge in 2019, with the number of research documents reaching four, indicating a sudden increase in research activity. The following year saw a decline, with consistent activity from 2020 to 2022, where only two documents were published each year. Nevertheless, research activity picked up again in 2023, with the number of research documents increasing to five, marking the highest year of research activity in the analyzed period. The graph shows a trend of increasing research from 2015 to 2024, despite some fluctuations. The significant increases in 2019 and 2023 indicate more intensive research activity periods, possibly reflecting increased resources, interest, or research needs in specific areas.

### Research by sources of publication

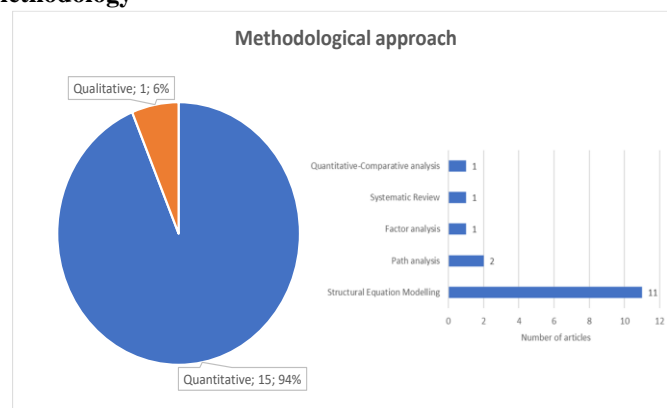


**Figure 3. Publication Distribution of Research Documents Across Journals and Conferences**

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of research documents based on the journals and conferences where they were published. There are various publication sources contributing to the dissemination of this research. One of the primary sources is “Sustainability (Switzerland)” and “International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning,” each with the highest number of publications at three documents. This indicates that these conferences are important platforms for disseminating related research.

Meanwhile, several other journals and conferences such as “Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services,” “Economic Research-Ekonomska Istrazivanja,” “Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies Journal,” “Academy of Strategic Management Journal,” “South African Journal of Business Management,” “Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management,” “Biological Conservation,” “Technology in Society,” “E3S Web of Conferences,” and “WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs” each have one research document. This shows that the research is spread across various platforms, indicating diversification in publication sources and reflecting broad interest across different fields of study.

### Research by methodology



**Figure 4. Research Methodology Distribution in Sustainable Customer Loyalty Studies**

The distribution of research methodologies used in studies related to sustainable customer loyalty shows a clear preference for quantitative approaches. Based on Figure 4, out of the total analyzed articles, 94% employ quantitative methods, while only 6% utilize qualitative approaches. This indicates that research in this field tends to rely on numerical data and statistical analysis to test hypotheses and understand relationships between variables.

The most frequently used method is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), employed in 11 articles. SEM is chosen for its ability to test complex relationships among various variables within a well-structured model. Apart from SEM, several other methods are also employed in this research, albeit in much smaller numbers. Path analysis is used by two articles, while factor analysis, systematic review, and quantitative comparative analysis are each used by one article.

### Content analysis

In this content analysis phase, a detailed analysis was conducted on the content of 16 articles selected for review. This review encompasses various issues discussed in the literature on sustainable customer loyalty. Furthermore, the mapping of these articles can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1. Summary Table of Articles on Determinants of Sustainable Customer Loyalty**

Author(s)	Title	Journal	Year	Key Determinants of Sustainable Customer Loyalty
Ayodeji, Y., Rjoub, H., Özgüt, H. [15]	Achieving sustainable customer loyalty in airports: The role of waiting time satisfaction and self-service technologies	Technology in Society	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waiting time satisfaction (WTS)</li> <li>• Self-service technologies (SST)</li> <li>• Prospective waiting time (PRWT)</li> <li>• Retrospective waiting time (RWT)</li> <li>• Waiting environment (WE)</li> </ul>
Justavino-Castillo, M.E., Gil-Saura, I., Martinez, L., Fuentes-Blasco, M., Moliner-Velázquez, B., Servera-Francés, D. [34]	Managing sustainable practices and logistics value to improve customer loyalty: importers vs. freight forwarders	WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable practices (economic, social, and environmental sustainability)</li> <li>• Logistics value (productivity, importance, and quantification)</li> <li>• Perceived value</li> </ul>
Shchekoldin, V., Tsoy, M., Shevtsov, V. [35]	Identifying consumers of pharmaceutical products and developing their sustainable loyalty	E3S Web of Conferences	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate identification of loyal customers</li> <li>• Cost reduction</li> <li>• Expansion of customer base</li> </ul>
Dananjoyo, R., Udin, U. [36]	The Effect of Sustainable Brand Equity on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty	International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable brand equity (brand awareness, brand identification, physical quality, staff behavior, lifestyle congruence, ideal self-congruence)</li> <li>• Customer trust</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction</li> </ul>
Dananjoyo, R., Cahaya, F.R., Udin, U. [37]	The Role of Sustainable Service Quality in Achieving Customer	International Journal of Sustainable	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable service quality (sustainability construction, reliability, assurance,</li> </ul>

Author(s)	Title	Journal	Year	Key Determinants of Sustainable Customer Loyalty
	Loyalty in the Residential Housing Industry	Development and Planning		tangible, empathy, responsiveness) • Customer satisfaction
Zhang, G., Li, Z. [38]	The Influence of Online Brand Community Identity and Trust on Sustainable Customer Loyalty	International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning	2022	• Brand community identity • Community trust • Customer engagement
Lipka, A., Król, M. [39]	Sustainable loyalty of employees in poland as a result of the covid-19 pandemic	Sustainability	2021	• Organizational culture • Organizational commitment • Trust • Routine
Meschini, M., Machado Toffolo, M., Caroselli, M. [40]	Educational briefings in touristic facilities promote tourist sustainable behavior and customer loyalty	Biological Conservation	2021	• Environmental education • Customer satisfaction • Tourist engagement
Kim, M.J., Hall, C.M. [41]	Can sustainable restaurant practices enhance customer loyalty? The roles of value theory and environmental concerns	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	2020	• Sustainable tourism practices
Worlu, R.E., Adeniji, A.A., Atolagbe, T.M., Salau, O.P. [17]	Total Quality Management (TQM) as a Tool for Sustainable Customer Loyalty in a Competitive Environment: A Critical Review	Academy of Strategic Management Journal	2019	• Continuous product improvement • Top management commitment • Customer satisfaction
Wong, H.S.M., Wong, R.K.H., Leung, S. [42]	Enhancing Sustainability in Banking Industry: Factors Affecting Customer Loyalty	Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies Journal	2019	• Customer satisfaction • Brand preference • Switching costs
Hadi, N.U., Aslam, N., Gulzar, A. [43]	Sustainable service quality and customer loyalty: The role of customer satisfaction and switching costs in the Pakistan cellphone industry	Sustainability	2019	• Switching costs • Sustainable service quality
Jaiyeoba, O.J., Sivotwa, D.T., Roberts-Lombard, M. [44]	Precursors and outcome of customer satisfaction/delight in business-to-consumer relationships in Botswana	South African Journal of Business Management	2020	• Customer satisfaction • Customer experience
Lee, Y.-L., Pan, L.-Y., Hsu, C.-H., Li, T. [45]	Exploring the sustainability correlation of value co-creation and customer loyalty-A case study of fitness clubs	Sustainability	2019	• Value co-creation behavior
Moisesescu, O.-I. [46]	From perceptual corporate sustainability to customer loyalty: A multi-sectorial	Economic Research-Ekonomska Istrazivanja	2018	• Customer-based perceptual corporate sustainability

Author(s)	Title	Journal	Year	Key Determinants of Sustainable Customer Loyalty
	investigation in a developing country			
Chen, R.J.C. [47]	From Sustainability to Customer Loyalty: A Case of Full-Service Hotels' Guests	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecofriendly practices</li> <li>• Technological innovation</li> <li>• Customer experiences</li> </ul>

## 4 Discussion

*RQ1: What are the key determinants of sustainable customer loyalty identified in existing literature?*

Previous research identifies several key determinants of sustainable customer loyalty across various sectors. These determinants can be grouped based on themes and common concepts discussed in existing studies. One major factor identified is service quality and customer satisfaction. Satisfaction with waiting time, for example, is a crucial aspect influencing customer loyalty, particularly in industries with significant wait times such as aviation. Studies conducted by [15] indicate that satisfaction with waiting time has a significant positive correlation with customer loyalty, underscoring the importance of wait time management in the aviation industry and other similar service sectors. In the context of aviation, customers often spend considerable time waiting during check-in, boarding, or baggage claim upon arrival. Satisfaction with waiting time reflects how satisfied customers are with the duration and experience of waiting for these services. Factors such as comfort in waiting areas, speed and efficiency of service processes, as well as clear and effective communication during waiting times, all contribute to satisfaction with waiting time. When customers are satisfied with the time they spend waiting, it can significantly influence their overall perception of the quality of service received.

In addition to satisfaction with waiting time, sustainable service quality also plays a crucial role in building sustainable customer loyalty [37]. Integrating sustainable practices in service delivery has been shown to significantly enhance customer loyalty. These sustainable practices include various initiatives undertaken by companies to ensure their operations are environmentally, socially, and economically friendly. For example, adopting environmentally friendly practices such as renewable energy use, carbon emission reduction, and efficient waste management not only helps protect the environment but also enhances the company's image in the eyes of customers who are increasingly concerned about environmental issues. Sustainability certifications, such as ISO 14001 certification for environmental management, also provide additional confidence to customers that the company is committed to responsible business practices.

[37] highlight that sustainable service quality not only serves to enhance customer loyalty but also creates strong competitive differentiation in the market. Companies capable of integrating sustainable practices into their operations often have a stronger competitive advantage compared to competitors who do not do the same. This is because customers are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainability and tend to support companies whose values align with theirs. Thus, service quality and customer satisfaction, especially concerning waiting time and the integration of sustainable practices, are key determinants of sustainable customer loyalty. These factors not only enhance customer satisfaction and experience but also



strengthen the company's image and reputation as a responsible and sustainable entity. Therefore, companies aiming to build sustainable customer loyalty should focus on effective wait time management and the integration of sustainable practices in every aspect of their operations.

Brand equity and corporate image are also critical determinants of sustainable customer loyalty. Sustainable brand equity, which includes brand awareness, brand loyalty, and perceived quality, greatly influences customer loyalty. When a brand can communicate its commitment to sustainability, it not only enhances positive perceptions but also reinforces customer loyalty, as customers feel they are supporting a company that shares their values [36]. Strong brand equity provides a solid foundation for companies to develop long-term relationships with customers. This is because customers tend to be more loyal to brands they know and trust. In the sustainability context, sustainable brand equity reflects the company's commitment to responsible and environmentally friendly business practices, which is increasingly important to modern customers who are more conscious of environmental and social issues [36].

Furthermore, customer engagement and experience are key in creating sustainable loyalty. Self-service technology, for example, has become a crucial tool in enhancing customer engagement. The implementation of this technology allows customers to access services more efficiently and satisfactorily, thereby increasing their loyalty. With self-service technology, customers can access services anytime and anywhere, without depending on operational hours or staff availability [34]. This not only enhances convenience but also gives customers greater control over their experience. Moreover, self-service technology enables companies to gather data on customer preferences and behaviors, which can be used to optimize services and offer more personalized experiences. Service personalization can also include customized product recommendations, special offers, and relevant communication based on customer interests. All of these contribute to creating a more satisfying experience and building stronger relationships with customers [34].

Customer experience management also plays a crucial role in creating sustainable loyalty. Managing and optimizing every customer touchpoint to create a positive experience can strengthen customer loyalty. This includes all interactions customers have with the company, from their initial awareness of the brand to post-purchase interactions. Each interaction is an opportunity for the company to demonstrate its values and build a stronger relationship with customers [34]. Consistent and positive customer experiences can enhance customer satisfaction and trust, which in turn fosters long-term loyalty. In the sustainability context, customer experiences that include elements such as transparency, social responsibility, and environmentally friendly services can provide significant added value to customers [34].

Sustainable practices encompassing economic, social, and environmental aspects are also found to be important determinants of sustainable customer loyalty. The company's commitment to sustainable practices, such as efforts to reduce carbon footprint, fair business practices, and corporate social responsibility, can enhance customer loyalty. Customers increasingly appreciate companies that demonstrate responsibility towards the environment and society, which is reflected in their loyalty to the company. For instance, companies investing in green technology and promoting fair business practices often receive appreciation from customers concerned about sustainability. This commitment shows that the company is not only focused on short-term profits but also on the long-term impact on society and the environment [34].

Research also indicates that identifying and personalizing customers play a crucial role in creating sustainable loyalty. Techniques for accurately identifying and targeting loyal customers enable companies to provide more tailored and relevant services, thereby enhancing

customer loyalty [35]. Identifying loyal customers can be done through customer data analysis, allowing companies to understand customer preferences, needs, and behaviors. With this information, companies can offer more personalized and relevant services, which increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Service personalization can also include customized product recommendations, special offers, and relevant communication based on customer interests. All of these efforts help create a more satisfying experience and build stronger relationships with customers [35].

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the determinant variable of sustainable customer loyalty are:

- 1) Waiting Time Satisfaction (WTS)
- 2) Sustainable Service Quality
- 3) Sustainable Brand Equity
- 4) Customer Experience Management
- 5) Sustainable Practices: Economic, Social, and Environmental Practices
- 6) Accurate Identification of Loyal Customers

*RQ2: What gaps and inconsistencies exist in the current literature on sustainable customer loyalty, and what areas require further investigation?*

While there has been considerable research on sustainable customer loyalty, there are several gaps and inconsistencies indicating areas that need further investigation. One major gap is the lack of empirical studies focusing on specific sectors, such as the aviation and maritime logistics industries. Deeper empirical research is needed to understand specifically how these factors interact in sector-specific contexts [15, 34]. For instance, the aviation industry has very specific dynamics related to wait times, customer satisfaction, and sustainable service quality. Further research is needed to explore how these factors interact and influence customer loyalty within the aviation industry. Similarly, the maritime logistics industry presents unique challenges and opportunities that are not fully understood. [34] Highlight the importance of understanding logistics value and sustainable practices in B2B contexts to enhance customer loyalty.

Additionally, there is an urgent need to develop and test an integrated framework that incorporates various determinants of sustainable customer loyalty. Existing studies often focus on only one or a few factors without considering the complex interactions among them. For example, [36] indicate that sustainable brand equity and service quality are two critical factors that should be considered together to build customer loyalty. An integrated framework that combines these factors with elements such as customer experience and self-service technology can provide a more comprehensive understanding of what drives sustainable customer loyalty.

Existing research also often fails to explore the chain reactions of sustainable practice implementation throughout the service delivery process and its impact on customer loyalty. [34] Emphasize the need for further study to understand how sustainable practices applied at various service stages can affect overall customer loyalty. Sustainable practices such as renewable energy use, efficient waste management, and corporate social responsibility need deeper analysis to understand their impact on customer perceptions and loyalty. Further research is needed to explore how the combination of various sustainable practices can create added value for customers and drive long-term loyalty.

Challenges related to regulations and compliance across different regions are also often overlooked in these studies. These challenges can affect the implementation and effectiveness of sustainable practices in enhancing customer loyalty. [35] underline the need for further research to explore how companies can address regulatory and compliance challenges,

especially in highly regulated industries like pharmaceuticals. This research should include an analysis of how companies can adapt to regulatory changes while maintaining their commitment to sustainable practices and customer loyalty.

The impact of dynamic and fluctuating market conditions on sustainable customer loyalty is also under-researched. [35] highlight that rapidly changing market conditions, as seen in the pharmaceutical sector, can influence customer loyalty. Further research is needed to understand how companies can maintain customer loyalty in fluctuating market conditions. Such studies should consider factors such as product innovation, pricing strategies, and adaptation to market trends to see how companies can remain relevant and maintain customer loyalty in a dynamic environment.

Another gap is the lack of longitudinal studies that can provide deeper insights into the long-term impacts of sustainable practices on customer loyalty. Existing studies tend to be cross-sectional and only provide a snapshot of the relationship between various factors. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore how changes in sustainable practices and market conditions affect customer loyalty over time. For example, longitudinal research can help identify trends and patterns that are not visible in cross-sectional studies, providing richer and more comprehensive insights into sustainable customer loyalty.

Research also indicates variability in the implementation of sustainable practices across different sectors. For instance, studies [41] show that sustainable tourism practices have varying levels of implementation across different tourism sectors, which affect customer loyalty differently. Further research is needed to understand the factors influencing this variability and how companies can develop consistent and effective strategies for implementing sustainable practices.

Technology and innovation play a crucial role in shaping sustainable customer loyalty. However, existing studies often do not deeply explore how new technology and innovation can be used to enhance customer loyalty. For example, the use of self-service technology and innovation in customer experience management can provide significant competitive advantages for companies. Further research is needed to explore how this technology can be integrated with sustainable practices to create better customer experiences and enhance loyalty.

Research on sustainable customer loyalty could also benefit from a multidisciplinary approach. Integrating perspectives from various disciplines such as marketing, operations management, environmental science, and sociology can provide more comprehensive and holistic insights into the factors influencing customer loyalty. For example, research combining theories from marketing and environmental science can help identify new ways to integrate sustainability into marketing strategies and enhance customer loyalty.

Overall, despite significant progress in research on sustainable customer loyalty, there are still many gaps and inconsistencies that need to be addressed. Further research is needed to explore specific sectors, develop integrated frameworks, understand the chain reactions of sustainable practices, address regulatory challenges, and consider the impact of dynamic market conditions. Longitudinal studies, analysis of implementation variability, the influence of technology and innovation, and multidisciplinary approaches are also critical areas that require further attention. By exploring and addressing these gaps, future research can provide deeper and more comprehensive insights into achieving and maintaining sustainable customer loyalty.

## **5 Conclusions and Future Research Agenda**

The synthesis of existing literature on sustainable customer loyalty reveals several critical determinants that influence long-term customer commitment across various sectors. Key

determinants include service quality and customer satisfaction, brand equity and corporate image, customer engagement and experience, sustainable practices, and the accurate identification and personalization of customers.

Firstly, service quality and customer satisfaction, particularly related to waiting time and the integration of sustainable practices, emerge as vital components. Waiting time satisfaction significantly affects customer loyalty, especially in industries with considerable waiting periods like aviation. Moreover, sustainable service quality, which encompasses environmental, social, and economic dimensions, enhances customer loyalty by aligning with customers' values and expectations for responsible business practices.

Secondly, brand equity and corporate image play a crucial role. Sustainable brand equity, which includes brand awareness, loyalty, and perceived quality, strengthens customer loyalty by reflecting the company's commitment to sustainability. Customers tend to remain loyal to brands that communicate their dedication to sustainable practices, as it resonates with their values. Thirdly, customer engagement and experience management are pivotal. The use of self-service technologies and the effective management of customer experiences at every touchpoint contribute to higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Providing efficient, personalized, and consistent customer experiences reinforces positive perceptions and long-term loyalty.

Furthermore, sustainable practices that address economic, social, and environmental aspects are essential. Companies committed to reducing their carbon footprint, promoting fair business practices, and engaging in corporate social responsibility activities are more likely to gain and retain loyal customers. These practices demonstrate a long-term vision that resonates with environmentally and socially conscious customers. Lastly, the accurate identification and personalization of customers through data analytics enhance loyalty. By understanding customers' preferences, needs, and behaviors, companies can tailor their services and communications to meet specific expectations, thereby fostering deeper customer relationships and loyalty.

Despite the extensive research on sustainable customer loyalty, several gaps and inconsistencies remain, highlighting areas for further investigation:

- 1) There is a need for more empirical research focused on specific sectors, such as aviation and maritime logistics, to understand how the identified determinants interact within these industries. Future studies should explore the unique factors influencing customer loyalty in these contexts and provide tailored strategies for enhancing loyalty.
- 2) Developing and testing integrated frameworks for sustainable customer loyalty is crucial. Future research should aim to create holistic models that consider multiple determinants and their interactions, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving customer loyalty across different sectors.
- 3) Limited research exists on the chain reaction effects of implementing sustainable practices throughout the service delivery process and their impact on customer loyalty. Further studies should investigate how sustainable practices at various stages of service provision influence overall customer loyalty.
- 4) Future research should explore the challenges related to regulation and compliance in different regions, which can affect the implementation and effectiveness of sustainable practices. Understanding how companies can navigate these challenges will provide valuable insights for enhancing customer loyalty.
- 5) The impact of dynamic and fluctuating market conditions on sustainable customer loyalty is under-researched. Future studies should examine how companies can

maintain customer loyalty in rapidly changing markets, particularly in sectors like pharmaceuticals, where market conditions can shift quickly.

By addressing these gaps, future research can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of sustainable customer loyalty, offering valuable recommendations for both academics and practitioners. This will help develop more robust theoretical frameworks and practical strategies, ultimately enhancing the sustainability of customer loyalty in various industries.

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