



The Influence Of Emotional Value, Functional Value, And Social Value On Customer Retention Among Smartfren Service Users In Lhokseumawe City, Aceh Province

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Info Artikel	Abstract
Received: 2026-04-18	<i>This study aims to analyse the influence of emotional, functional, and social values on customer retention (study on Smartfren service users). Data for this study were collected through a survey using a questionnaire as a data collection instrument. The respondents in this study were 96 respondents from Lhokseumawe. This study uses a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The results of the study indicate that emotional value has a positive and significant effect on customer retention among Smartfren service users in Lhokseumawe City, functional value has a positive and significant effect on customer retention among Smartfren service users in Lhokseumawe City, and social value has a positive and significant effect on customer retention among Smartfren service users in Lhokseumawe City. Emotional, functional, and social values simultaneously influence customer retention.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of telecommunication technology has significantly impacted telecommunication service companies in Indonesia, especially in the mobile services sector. Competition in mobile services continues to intensify, and more than 50% of the world's population owns a mobile phone. These mobile services include voice calls, short message services, Internet access, and various other data services. Network operators strive to ensure that consumers can access the Internet and carry

out a variety of formal, informal, educational, commercial, scientific, and other activities online. Companies will continue to innovate and offer superior features in their products. For consumers, the main choices are Internet service with a stable network, comprehensive features, suitable data package options, easy access, and affordable prices.

However, increasingly fierce competition demands that mobile service providers maintain customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Currently, several mobile operators dominate this market. In 2017, the total number of subscribers reached 371.55 million, with Telkomsel leading the market with 196.32 million subscribers, followed by Indosat with 110.2 million, XL Axiata with 53.5 million, and Smartfren with 11.53 million. However, in 2018, the number of subscribers dropped to 288.16 million. Telkomsel remained the market leader even though its subscribers fell to 162.99 million. Indosat also saw a decline to 58 million subscribers, while XL Axiata decreased slightly to 54.9 million subscribers, and Smartfren increased slightly to 12.27 million subscribers. In 2019, the number of subscribers rose to 310.56 million.

Telkomsel and XL Axiata showed an increase in subscribers to 171.11 million and 56.7 million, respectively. Indosat also increased to 59.3 million subscribers, while Smartfren continued to grow to 23.46 million subscribers. In 2020, the number of subscribers reached 315.63 million. Telkomsel experienced a slight decrease to 169.54 million subscribers. Indosat and XL Axiata both increased to 60.3 million and 57.89 million subscribers, respectively. Smartfren also rose to 27.89 million subscribers. The year 2021 recorded an increase in the number of subscribers to 331.14 million. Telkomsel climbed again to 175.98 million subscribers, while Indosat and XL Axiata grew to 62.9 million and 57.9 million, respectively. Smartfren continued to increase to 34.37 million subscribers. In 2022, the number of subscribers peaked at 352.51 million. Telkomsel decreased slightly to 156.81 million subscribers, but Indosat saw a significant increase to 102.2 million subscribers. XL Axiata and Smartfren also showed increases to 57.5 million and 36.01 million subscribers, respectively. In 2023, the number of subscribers fell slightly to 349.26 million. Telkomsel had 153.26 million

subscribers, Indosat dropped slightly to 100 million subscribers. XL Axiata and Smartfren had 58 million and 38 million subscribers, respectively. This has made the competitive structure increasingly fierce, and the winners will be those companies that possess strong and sustainable competitiveness. The development of mobile operators can be seen in the following chart:



Figure 1.1 Number of Mobile Operator Customers

To face this highly competitive environment, every internet service industry manager strives to highlight the advantages of the products they manage. Intense competition drives companies to win the competition by implementing the right competitive strategies in order to achieve and realize their goals as expected. Companies that are unable to create new innovations will find it difficult to win the competition at a global level. In addition, a reliable and forward-looking competitive strategy is required, which demands careful and serious strategic planning. Companies must understand what consumers want now and in the future.

The main objective is to create high customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customers are considered a key element for the brand, reinforcing the company's efforts to retain them through satisfaction that exceeds expectations and lasting relationships between the brand and customers. With customer relationship management, companies analyze customer needs to fulfill them, increase satisfaction, and maintain customer retention. Customer retention refers to the preferences, trust,

attachment, and commitment of customers to a brand, as well as their willingness to recommend it to others, or the process that creates customer loyalty toward a particular brand as reflected in repeat purchase behavior (Hanaysha, 2017).

Customer retention is considered one of the main objectives of service that ensures the effectiveness of marketing strategies. It is important for companies to win the competition for growth and survival. In general, customer retention demonstrates the value received and perceived from consuming a product, making customers feel attached because the product is able to compete among others (Massoud, 2023). The factors that influence customer retention are customer value, which consists of emotional, functional, and social value.

Emotional value comes from certain feelings or emotional responses toward a product or service. This value can evoke feelings in consumers that fulfill their psychological needs, which is one of the most important factors influencing consumer preferences. Emotionally, when consumers feel the need for and are attached to a product, they greatly enjoy using it. Emotional value also reflects greater self-confidence when using a product. This shows that customer retention occurs because the company is able to provide services that meet consumer needs, causing consumers to become emotionally attached to Smartfren's service. In addition to emotional value, when it comes to retaining customers, another factor that needs attention is functional value (Yeh et al, 2016).

Functional value indicates a consumer's choice to use a product or service because the function it provides meets their expectations and needs. Functional value can also refer to the perceived benefits of a product in terms of durability, reliability, and price. If a product has high functional value, it can be said that the product is of high quality and delivers good performance for consumers, which in turn will increase customer retention. In addition to emotional and functional value, customer retention can also be influenced by social value. Social value is the benefit of a product or service that aims to satisfy a person's desire to gain social recognition or pride. Customers who prioritize social value will choose products or services that

communicate an image in line with their peers or project the social image they wish to display,(Eka & Hamdani, 2018). The social value perceived by consumers can be observed when a certain brand becomes a symbol or status, or a source of pride, associated with its use.

The phenomena observed indicate that customer retention in mobile services is often linked to customer engagement based on emotional, functional, and social values. Mobile services can foster strong customer retention by building a solid user community. Smartfren can strengthen emotional value by establishing an active user community through online platforms or offline events. Encouraging positive interactions, sharing experiences, and organizing contests or community activities can enhance customers' emotional attachment. However, customers still often experience dissatisfaction when they encounter issues such as network quality problems, frequent disconnections, or slow internet speeds.

Additionally, mobile services that consistently deliver innovations based on customer needs hold significant retention potential. New features, useful app updates, and solutions that address customer problems create sustainable functional value. For example, launching flexible data packages, improving network speeds, or integrating additional services relevant to customers' lifestyles can be key drivers of retention. Similarly, Smartfren must continue to innovate in providing services that meet customer needs. Offering flexible data packages, increasing network speeds, and integrating new features in line with technological advancements are ways to maintain functional value. If Smartfren fails to offer innovations that keep pace with technological developments and customer needs, this could result in loss of interest and low customer retention.

Furthermore, mobile services can enhance customer retention by fostering sustainable social engagement. Charity campaigns, volunteer activities involving users, or social activity-based promotions can activate customer participation. Customers who feel that they are supporting social causes together with their mobile

service provider are more likely to maintain their engagement in the long term. Smartfren must focus on creating an integrated user experience, as poor customer service or lack of technical support can lead to customer frustration and disappointment, which may threaten retention.

Based on existing research, the variables of emotional value, functional value, and social value have different effects on customer retention. In the study by Tama & Untoro (2016), emotional value and functional value did not have a significant influence on brand loyalty, which indirectly affects customer retention. However, social value in this study was proven to have a positive impact on brand loyalty and customer retention. The research by Yeh et al. (2016) also supports this finding, showing that social value has a positive effect on smartphone brand loyalty, which ultimately leads to increased customer retention. Furthermore, the study by Esti, Lubis, and Wijayanto (2013) found that customer value, which includes social value, has a significant influence on customer retention.

This research was conducted on Smartfren service users in the city of Lhokseumawe. According to the survey, customer retention for Smartfren services remains very low. This is also due to the fact that Smartfren services in Lhokseumawe are still very limited and are unable to reach every region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Customer Retention

Customer retention refers to a company's ability to maintain long-term relationships with its customers and encourage repeat purchases over time. According to Reichheld and Sasser (1990), retaining customers is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones, as loyal customers tend to generate stable revenue and contribute to long-term profitability. Furthermore, customer retention is often associated with customer satisfaction, trust, and perceived value, making it a critical indicator of business success (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

2. Value Dimensions in Customer Behavior

The concept of customer value suggests that consumers evaluate products or services based on multiple dimensions of value. Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) identified several key value dimensions that influence consumer behavior, among which emotional, functional, and social values are the most prominent. Emotional Value refers to the feelings or affective states generated by a product or service, such as pleasure, enjoyment, and excitement (Mathwick et al., 2001). Emotional engagement strengthens the relationship between customers and brands. Functional Value relates to the practical or utilitarian benefits obtained from a product or service, including quality, reliability, and performance (Zeithaml, 1988). Customers are more likely to remain loyal when a service consistently meets their functional expectations. Social Value is derived from the ability of a product or service to enhance social self-concept, status, or group affiliation (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Social recognition and acceptance can significantly influence customer decisions and loyalty.

3. The Effect of Emotional Value on Customer Retention

Emotional value plays a significant role in building strong customer relationships. When customers feel emotionally connected to a brand, they are more likely to remain loyal and continue using the service. Emotional attachment also reduces the likelihood of switching to competitors and increases tolerance toward service failures (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

4. The Effect of Functional Value on Customer Retention

Functional value directly affects customer retention through perceived quality and performance. When customers perceive that a product or service delivers consistent and reliable benefits, they develop trust in the brand. This trust becomes a key driver of repeat purchase behavior and long-term retention (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000).

5. The Effect of Social Value on Customer Retention

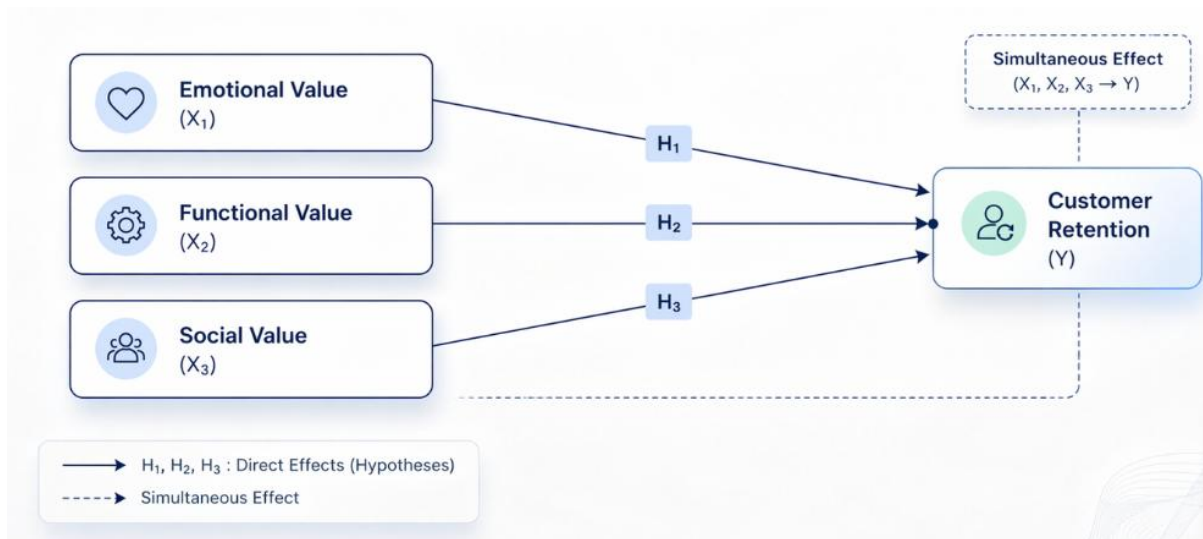
Social value contributes to customer retention by enhancing customers' social identity and sense of belonging. Products or services that improve social image or

provide opportunities for social interaction tend to create stronger customer attachment. As a result, customers are more likely to maintain their relationship with the brand (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

6. Simultaneous Effect of Value Dimensions

While each value dimension independently influences customer retention, their combined effect is often stronger. Customers typically evaluate services holistically, meaning that emotional, functional, and social values work together to shape overall perceived value. Studies suggest that the integration of these three dimensions leads to higher satisfaction and stronger retention (Brodie et al., 2013).

7. Hypotheses Development



Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses can be proposed:

- H1: Emotional Value has a positive effect on Customer Retention.
- H2: Functional Value has a positive effect on Customer Retention.
- H3: Social Value has a positive effect on Customer Retention.
- H4: Emotional Value, Functional Value, and Social Value simultaneously have a positive effect on Customer Retention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in Lhokseumawe. The objects of the study are functional, emotional, and social values, as well as customer retention. The subjects

are Lhokseumawe residents who use Smartfren services. The population for this research is large and its exact number is uncertain. The sample used consists of 96 respondents. This study uses primary data, which is data collected directly from the source (Sugiyono, 2019). Data analysis transforms the data into information that is easy to understand and useful for finding solutions to the research problem. According to Sugiyono (2015), data analysis is carried out after all the data has been collected. In this study, the data analysis technique used is multiple linear regression analysis. Multiple linear regression is used when there is one dependent variable and two or more independent variables. This study utilizes the SPSS version 26 data processing application. The equation used in this study can be seen as follows:
 $Y = \alpha + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + \epsilon$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis method used in this study is multiple linear regression analysis. The purpose of conducting this research is to test the hypothesis of emotional value, functional value, and social value toward customer retention using multiple linear regression analysis. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2 Results of Multiple Linear Regression

Coefficients ^a											
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error				Beta	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	1.268	.607		2.088	.040					
	Nilai Emosional	.201	.098	.191	2.048	.043	.231	.209	.188	.966	1.035
	Nilai Fungsional	.297	.095	.289	3.137	.002	.299	.311	.288	.995	1.005
	Nilai Sosial	.204	.068	.279	2.984	.004	.330	.297	.274	.964	1.037

a. Dependent Variable: Retensi pelanggan
 Source: Processed research results (2024)

Based on Table 4.13 above, the equation in this study is written as follows: $Y = 1.268 + 0.201 (X_1) + 0.297 (X_2) + 0.204 (X_3)$. The constant value of 1.268 means that if the emotional value, functional value, and social quality value are constant, then customer retention will

have a fixed value of 1.268. The regression coefficient for the emotional value variable is a positive 0.201, indicating a positive relationship, meaning that any change in emotional value will lead to an increase in customer retention in line with the increase in emotional value. The regression coefficient for the functional value variable is a positive 0.297, indicating a positive relationship, meaning that any change in functional value will lead to an increase in customer retention in line with the increase in functional value. The regression coefficient for the social value variable is a positive 0.204, indicating a positive relationship, meaning that any change in social value will lead to an increase in customer retention in line with the increase in social value.

Based on the table above, the results of the partial tests are explained as follows, Partially, emotional value has a positive effect on customer retention for Smartfren service users in Lhokseumawe City, where statistically $t\text{-count} > t\text{-table}$ or $2.048 > 1.985$ with a significance level of $0.043 < 0.05$, thus it can be concluded that H1 is accepted. Partially, functional value has a positive and significant effect on customer retention for Smartfren service users in Lhokseumawe City, where statistically $t\text{-count} > t\text{-table}$ or $3.137 > 1.661$ with a significance level of $0.002 < 0.05$, thus it can be concluded that H2 is accepted. Partially, social value has a positive and significant effect on customer retention for Smartfren service users in Lhokseumawe City, where statistically $t\text{-count} > t\text{-table}$ or $2.984 > 1.985$ with a significance level of $0.004 < 0.05$, thus it can be concluded that H3 is accepted.

Discussion

The Influence of Emotional Value on Customer Retention of Smartfren Services in Lhokseumawe City

Based on the results of hypothesis testing (H1), it was shown that the emotional value variable has a positive influence on customer retention of Smartfren services in Lhokseumawe City. Based on the calculations performed, the $t\text{-count}$ value was 2.048 and the $t\text{-table}$ value was 1.985 with a significance level of 0.043. Thus, it can be concluded that the statistical test result accepts H1. Emotional value is one of the important factors that can influence customer retention. In telecommunications services such as Smartfren, the emotional relationship formed between the customer and the brand can increase customer loyalty. Customers who feel satisfied and happy with the services provided tend to remain loyal to those services. Positive experiences felt by customers, such as consistent service quality, ease of

communication, and responsive customer service, can enhance emotional value. When customers feel valued and appreciated, they will have a strong emotional attachment to the brand, ultimately increasing customer retention.

Research shows that emotional value has a positive and significant influence on Smartfren customer retention. Customers who feel emotionally connected to Smartfren services tend to be more loyal and are less likely to switch to other service providers, even if there are alternatives that may be cheaper or more innovative. Customers who have an emotional relationship with the brand tend to recommend the service to their friends and family, thus creating a positive word-of-mouth marketing effect. This helps Smartfren maintain its market share in Lhokseumawe City. This is supported by previous research conducted by Esti, Lubis, and Wijayanto (2013), which concluded that customer value affects customer retention. It is also supported by research done by Darmawan, Arifin, and Purwanto (2020), which concluded that customer value affects customer retention.

The Influence of Functional Value on Customer Retention of Smartfren Services in Lhokseumawe City

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing (H2), it is shown that the functional value variable has a positive and significant effect on customer retention of Smartfren services in Lhokseumawe City. Based on the calculations performed, the computed t-value is 3.137 and the t-table value is 1.985 with a significance level of 0.002. Therefore, it can be concluded that the statistical test results support the acceptance of H2. Social value refers to the benefits of a product or service aimed at satisfying someone's desire for recognition or social pride; customers who prioritize social value will choose products or services that communicate an aligned image or convey the social image they wish to present,(Eka & Hamdani, 2018).

The social value perceived by consumers can be observed when a particular brand induces symbols or status and pride associated with its use. Customers who feel that Smartfren's services meet their needs and expectations in terms of network quality and affordable prices tend to be more loyal and less likely to switch to other service providers. Smartfren, by providing high-performance services at competitive prices, will find it easier to retain its customers. Smartfren needs to continue

innovating and improving its network infrastructure to ensure reliable and high-quality services. By maintaining high functional value, Smartfren can reduce the churn rate (customer turnover) and increase customer loyalty. This is crucial for maintaining market share amid intense competition. This is supported by previous research conducted by Esti, Lubis, and Wijayanto (2013), which concluded that customer value affects customer retention. Similarly, research conducted by Darmawan, Arifin, and Purwanto (2020) also concluded that customer value affects customer retention.

The Influence of Social Values on Smartfren Service Customer Retention in Lhokseumawe City

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing (H3), it was found that the variable of social value has a positive and significant influence on customer retention. According to the calculations carried out, the t-value obtained was 2.984 while the t-table value was 1.661, with a significance level of 0.004. Therefore, it can be concluded that, statistically, H3 is accepted. Social value relates to the customer's perception of the status or recognition they gain from using a service. In telecommunications services, social value can arise from brand associations with a certain status, social trends, or a strong user community. In the city of Lhokseumawe, research shows that social value has a positive and significant influence on Smartfren customer retention. Customers who feel that using Smartfren services gives them social recognition or elevates their status within the community tend to be more loyal and less likely to switch to other services. A strong user community and positive brand associations can increase social value. For instance, if Smartfren is associated with a modern and innovative lifestyle, customers will feel proud to be part of that community. This increases customer loyalty and retention. This is supported by previous research conducted by Esti, Lubis, and Wijayanto (2013), who concluded that customer value influences customer retention. On the other hand, the results of this research also support findings by Darmawan, Arifin, and Purwanto (2020), who concluded that customer value has an influence on customer retention.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that, partially, emotional value has a positive and significant effect on customer retention among Smartfren service users in

Lhokseumawe, as indicated by the value of $t_{count} > t_{table}$ ($2.048 > 1.6855$) with a significance level of $0.043 < 0.05$, thus H1 is accepted. Furthermore, functional value is also proven to have a positive and significant effect on customer retention, with a $t_{count} > t_{table}$ value ($3.137 > 1.6855$) and a significance level of $0.002 < 0.05$, so H2 is accepted. Likewise, social value partially has a positive and significant effect on customer retention, with a $t_{count} > t_{table}$ value ($2.984 > 1.6855$) and a significance level of $0.004 < 0.05$, so H3 is accepted. Simultaneously, emotional value, functional value, and social value have a significant effect on customer retention, as evidenced by the $F_{count} > F_{table}$ value ($8.802 > 2.688$) and a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$, thus H4 is accepted.

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