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Determinants of customer satisfaction and loyalty in the Turkish e-commerce sector

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Introduction: The rapid development of digital technologies has significantly transformed consumer behavior, making social media platforms essential marketing tools. However, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the combined effects of social media marketing, price promotions, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) attitudes on customer satisfaction and loyalty in e-commerce.

Methods: A quantitative research design was adopted. Data were collected from 761 e-commerce customers in Turkey who are active social media users. Validated scales from the literature were used, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied for data analysis.

Results: The findings indicate that social media marketing and price promotions have a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Attitudes toward CSR positively affect customer satisfaction but do not have a direct effect on customer loyalty.

Discussion: The study enriches the literature on digital consumer behavior by integrating CSR into loyalty models and emphasizing the mediating role of satisfaction. Practical recommendations are provided for e-commerce businesses. Future research is encouraged to explore cultural differences and sector-specific dynamics in social media marketing and promotional strategies.

KEYWORDS

social media marketing, price promotion, corporate social responsibility, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, e-commerce

Introduction

Customer satisfaction and loyalty remain central pillars of modern marketing strategies, serving as essential indicators of long-term business sustainability. Organizations must continually adjust their marketing practices to foster stronger consumer relationships in an increasingly competitive and dynamic marketplace. To this end, strategies like social media marketing, price promotions, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives have become key drivers of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Social media marketing is a strategic approach that enables brands to engage directly with their customers, promote interaction, and improve the overall customer experience. Modern consumers tend to prefer communicating with brands through social media platforms rather than traditional channels. This type of marketing can enhance customer satisfaction by promoting direct interactions between brands and consumers. Numerous studies in the literature explore the relationship between social media marketing, customer loyalty, and satisfaction (Banerji and Singh, 2024; Khoa and Huynh, 2023; Yolsal et al., 2023). Additionally, price promotion strategies significantly enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty by

influencing consumers' purchasing decisions, as demonstrated by various studies (Cesur and Memiş, 2021). Furthermore, CSR practices are designed to build customer trust by positively shaping consumer perceptions of brands, with numerous studies investigating the impact of these activities on customer satisfaction and loyalty. While studies examine the impact of each activity on customer satisfaction and loyalty, an integrated examination of these factors remains scarce in the current literature.

This article focuses on the impact of social media marketing, along with strategies related to price promotion, and CSR conducted on social media platforms, on customer satisfaction and loyalty. CSR practices are said to play a vital role in enhancing a brand's image and reputation (Fraihat et al., 2023). Thus, CSR can also positively influence customer satisfaction and loyalty. Social media platforms that facilitate meaningful interactions with their target audiences serve as a pivotal mechanism for brand engagement. These platforms have emerged as indispensable tools for businesses across various sectors in their marketing and branding efforts. With billions of active users globally, social media provides a substantial audience that enterprises can leverage to connect with potential customers (Jeswani, 2023). As a result, social media platforms are now essential channels for businesses in their sales and marketing efforts directed at their target audiences.

Recent empirical studies highlight customer satisfaction as a crucial factor influencing customer loyalty across diverse industries and cultural contexts. Mehnaz et al. (2024) demonstrated that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between perceived CSR and customer loyalty, particularly in the banking sector. Likewise, Hussain et al. (2024) illustrated that satisfaction is essential for outcomes in relationship marketing, positively affecting customer retention and loyalty in service environments. In their research on the banking industry, Mainardes and Freitas (2023) indicated that perceived value shapes satisfaction, which enhances customer loyalty in traditional banks and fintech services. Additionally, Agarwal and Dhingra (2023) found a significant direct impact of satisfaction on loyalty, revealing its mediating role between service quality and loyalty in digital services. Further supporting these findings, Utami et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review of 200 Scopus-indexed studies, concluding that the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is consistently validated through quantitative evidence across various sectors.

While extensive research has been conducted on customer satisfaction and loyalty separately, studies that jointly analyze the influence of social media marketing, price promotions, and CSR in e-commerce are still limited. Existing research often isolates these constructs or applies them within traditional retail settings. Moreover, few studies have explored these dynamics in the context of emerging digital markets. With digitalization, societal expectations surrounding CSR have evolved. Previously linked to traditional practices, CSR now encompasses new channels in the e-commerce sector. Companies that prioritize social responsibility are viewed as more trustworthy by consumers. The growing emphasis on data privacy, environmental sustainability, and ethical practices has made CSR a key factor in shaping customer perceptions and loyalty in the digital marketplace. Turkey represents one of the fastest-growing e-commerce markets in the world, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, with high digital penetration and a dynamic consumer base (Orman and Teker, 2024). Its unique sociocultural and economic environment provides

an ideal context to investigate the interplay between digital marketing strategies and consumer behavior. This study addresses this gap by developing an integrative framework that examines the combined effects of these variables on consumer behavior. By focusing on Turkish e-commerce consumers—a rapidly growing digital market—it provides both theoretical insights into multi-dimensional consumer engagement drivers and practical recommendations for firms navigating post-pandemic digital environments.

This research, conducted with e-commerce customers who are active social media users, explores the impacts of social media marketing, price promotions, and CSR on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The aim is to provide practical contributions to marketing strategies for businesses within the e-commerce sector while also enhancing academic discourse on the subject. By analyzing how these relevant variables influence consumer behavior, the study seeks to offer valuable strategic insights that can help e-commerce companies boost customer satisfaction and loyalty, thereby creating a competitive advantage. Moreover, by highlighting the significance of social media marketing, price promotions, and CSR initiatives in shaping customer experiences, this research aspires to assist e-commerce companies in developing effective strategies for sustainable growth. Although previous studies have examined various factors affecting customer satisfaction and loyalty, there is a notable absence of research that collectively addresses these specific variables. This study fills a literature gap by including customer satisfaction as a mediator in a model of social media marketing, price promotions, and CSR, which has not been tested in emerging markets like Turkey.

The study is structured as follows: it begins with a comprehensive review of the literature on social media marketing, price promotions, CSR, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, citing previous research in these domains. Next, the analysis will present descriptive statistics alongside the findings from reliability and validity assessments of the collected data. Subsequently, a structural equation model incorporating the research variables will be developed, and the associated hypotheses will be tested. Finally, the study will culminate in a discussion of both theoretical and practical contributions, acknowledge its limitations, and provide recommendations for future research.

Literature review

Social media marketing

Social media platforms greatly influence the daily lives of individuals, especially because of the innovations driven by digitalization. Since these platforms became common in individuals' daily lives, they have also become essential tools for businesses to achieve their goals. Social media is claimed to be a complex and dynamic platform that organizations can strategically use in their marketing activities to enhance engagement, create comprehensive communication plans, and thoroughly assess performance metrics (Febrianti et al., 2021). Unlike traditional communication methods, social media facilitates two-way interactions, allowing brands to effectively market their products and services to their target audiences. According to a study by Datareportal in 2024, 63.8% of the global population are social media users (Global Social Media Statistics, 2024). This data indicates that social media has reached a level of

widespread adoption globally and has become a vital component of digital communication. Additionally, social media has evolved into an essential tool for companies and brands, facilitating key functions such as public relations, advertising, marketing, customer relationship management, and crisis management. This research also presents the motivations behind users' participation in these platforms. Notably, the primary reason for using social media is to stay connected with friends and family, expressed by 51.8% of social media users. In addition, people use social media for many reasons, including searching for products to buy (26.9%), seeking inspiration for doing activities and shopping (26.7%), and reviewing content from their favorite brands (22.3%). In this way, while social media platforms foster communication among individuals, they also significantly influence the purchasing behavior of internet users. Consequently, these platforms are used by both businesses and individuals for various purposes.

Social media marketing involves a comprehensive set of organizational activities strategically crafted to leverage insights into customer motivations related to brand engagement on social media. These intentional engagement practices aim to turn social media networks and user interactions into valuable assets for reaching specific marketing objectives (Li et al., 2021). This new marketing approach, which emerged with digital platforms, offers the opportunity to reach a wide audience at lower costs compared to traditional marketing methods. Additionally, marketing activities conducted on digital platforms enable reaching the right audience through precise targeting and ongoing optimization by measuring performance with advanced analytics. They also foster a stronger connection between brands and consumers by enhancing interaction (Dubey, 2022). It is also possible to develop one-to-one customer relationships and receive instant feedback from customers through these platforms (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Therefore, social media marketing can be described as the marketing activities that organizations or businesses engage in to connect with their target audiences through digital platforms. Today, it is stated that businesses use social media platforms to communicate with their current customers, attract new customers, protect brand reputation, increase brand awareness, and establish a trust-based relationship with their target audience (Mills, 2012). Compared to traditional marketing channels, social media platforms provide many advantages to businesses. Brands can use social media platforms to establish direct communication and reach a broad audience through their sales and promotional efforts (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). These platforms are considered to be an important communication tool for brands to interact with their target audiences in a faster way. So, businesses can evaluate customer feedback and gain insight into their needs faster. Thus, the activities carried out during the execution of marketing activities can be measured, and changes can be made if necessary.

Prior to the advent of digital platforms, marketing communication activities such as promotion, public relations, advertising, and sponsorship were often prohibitively expensive for businesses. However, it has been suggested that these activities can now be conducted at significantly lower costs through social media platforms (Aslan and Güz, 2015). Moreover, social media platforms are very important in terms of data about the social media users. Social media platforms allow businesses to utilize both online and offline data to develop their marketing strategy. Many data, ranging from the likes of individuals on digital platforms to the brands they

follow, their locations, and the purchases they have made, can be accessed by businesses today. In this respect, data-driven marketing, which makes it possible to obtain deeper insights in order to create effective marketing strategies for the target audience, is preferred by businesses (Rosário and Dias, 2023). This enables a more accurate analysis of the target audience through the data and makes it possible to carry out more specific marketing activities. As a result, social media marketing is a strategy that emphasizes a marketing process based on data analysis instead of relying on predictions.

In marketing literature, five key aspects of SMMAAs—entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth (WoM)—have been shown to influence customer reactions significantly (Godey et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2020). Numerous studies have explored entertainment as a reason for using social media (Al-Menayes, 2015; Hatamleh et al., 2024). Interaction refers to sharing information and exchanging opinions, trendiness denotes contemporary and fashionable content shared by brands, customization reflects the personalized information and services provided through social media, and WoM captures users' willingness to share and create brand-related content online (Godey et al., 2016). While entertainment and trendiness capture attention, interaction and customization build relational value, and positive WoM boosts credibility and reach, all of which can drive satisfaction and loyalty.

Social media marketing activities (SMMAAs) significantly foster customer loyalty, primarily by shaping internal customer experiences like satisfaction. Research indicates that satisfaction is a crucial link between marketing efforts and loyalty outcomes. Customers who perceive value and engagement through their interactions on social media are more inclined to cultivate enduring loyalty (Banerji and Singh, 2024; Jamil et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2020). Studies investigating social media platforms' impact on consumer behavior have established that social networks significantly influence purchasing decisions (Gonçalves et al., 2024). Moreover, many social media users are swayed by advertisements, comments, and the experiences others share on these platforms (Arslan, 2020). Further supporting this perspective, Cheung and Thadani (2012) noted that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) communication on social media has a considerable effect on consumer behavior. This highlights the necessity for businesses to actively manage their social media presence and engage with consumers to shape brand perceptions and positively influence purchasing decisions. Consequently, social media marketing has become a vital component of modern consumer engagement strategies.

Price promotion

Price refers to the amount of money charged for a product or service, or the total value that customers exchange to gain the benefits of using or owning the product or service (Kotler and Armstrong, 2018). The promotional tools aimed at generating an immediate desire to purchase among consumers are commonly referred to as promotions, sales incentives, or sales encouragement (Cesur and Memiş, 2021). Price promotions refer to direct incentives that provide additional value to the sales team, distributors, or consumers in order to expedite the movement of a product through the distribution channel (Shila, 2019). In other words, price promotions are described as unique low-price deals set up by manufacturers or distributors to

boost demand (Gerstner and Hess, 1991). Implementing an effective price promotion strategy is considered important for retaining existing customers (Elgarhy, 2023), attracting potential ones, and maintaining competitive strength (Kwistianus et al., 2022). In this context, the primary objective of price promotions is to boost sales. However, price promotions can serve various objectives, such as increasing the store traffic (Gerstner and Hess, 1991), encouraging consumers to purchase at a higher rate, promoting the habit of paying in advance, and enhancing the efficiency of intermediaries in the distribution channel (Kardeş, 1986). In this regard, price promotion is a marketing strategy that can be employed for various purposes.

Price promotions come in various forms, such as coupons, shelf price reductions, and mail-in rebates. These promotions primarily target either the distribution channel, referred to as “trade promotions,” or the end consumer, known as “consumer promotions.” Statistics show that these initiatives constitute a considerable portion of a company’s marketing budget (Banks and Moorthy, 1999). Accordingly, price promotions are crucial in the marketing strategies of many businesses.

Brands employ price promotion as a key tactic to secure a competitive edge in the market (Yumuşak et al., 2022). Price significantly influences consumer perceptions of a product or brand. A substantial body of literature has examined the multifaceted impacts of price promotions on various business dimensions. Research indicates that these promotional strategies can significantly influence not only the financial metrics of companies, such as revenues and profits, but also critical intangible assets, including brand equity and customer loyalty (Kuntner and Teichert, 2016). The implications of these findings underscore the need for firms to carefully evaluate their promotional tactics to balance short-term financial gains with the potential long-term effects on their brand’s value and customer relationships.

Brands achieve their objectives through price promotions, allowing customers to purchase desired products at reduced prices. As a result, an effective price promotion can increase sales volumes and improve profitability; however, customers may also find satisfaction in the reduced prices. While businesses achieve their objectives, customers feel satisfied and develop positive attitudes toward the brand. Numerous studies have shown that price promotions positively influence customer satisfaction and loyalty (Cesur and Memiş, 2021; Jaya Saputra and Djumarno, 2021; Marinescu et al., 2010; Sugiono and Aisyah, 2021; Uyar, 2019). In this regard, price promotions serve as an effective marketing tool to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, the target audience’s buying habits can also be positively influenced.

Corporate social responsibility

CSR includes comprehensive initiatives organizations undertake to fulfill their obligations towards society, the environment, and all other stakeholders, going beyond the sole purpose of making a profit. In this respect, CSR is an activity that strengthens the ties between businesses and their stakeholders. Stakeholder theory examines the interrelationships between a business and its diverse stakeholder groups, encompassing customers, suppliers, employees, local communities, financial institutions, investors, and management. This theory emphasizes the importance of understanding how business

activities can generate value for these interconnected groups [Freeman, 2010; as cited in Tran, 2022]. In this context, CSR significantly contributes to ensuring stakeholder satisfaction for brands.

As Carroll (1991) states, CSR includes various dimensions, such as economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic. Essentially, CSR acts as a strategic framework to minimize negative environmental impacts while positively contributing to the community (Islam et al., 2021). CSR initiatives often have a substantial effect on consumer purchasing decisions. Research conducted by David et al. (2005) indicates that consumers are more inclined to support brands that are committed to social and environmental causes. By cultivating a reputation as a socially responsible entity, businesses not only secure the loyalty of their existing customers but also attract new ones who prioritize ethical consumption. Being socially responsible goes beyond profit maximization; it plays a crucial role in contributing to societal well-being. For example, organizations focusing on environmental protection and addressing social issues are key traits of socially responsible businesses. Moreover, this commitment is reflected in their adherence to ethical standards when interacting with various stakeholders, including retailers, consumers, and employees (Hanaysha, 2017). In summary, while the primary goal of CSR initiatives is to advance societal well-being, they are also strategically aligned with the organization’s long-term objectives, fostering a symbiotic relationship between corporate success and the greater good. CSR activities are vital communication tools for businesses as they engage with the societies in which they operate. Brands that demonstrate sensitivity to societal issues tend to earn greater appreciation from customers. Thus, beyond the quality of products or services offered, a brand’s positive impact on society significantly influences customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Social expectations for businesses have intensified alongside industrialization and continue to evolve over time. As in the past, societies continue to have social expectations from companies today. Moreover, neglecting CSR could harm customer satisfaction and loyalty towards brands. Numerous studies have explored the impact of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Altunoğlu and Saraçoğlu (2013) observed that CSR initiatives positively influence customer loyalty. However, Leclercq-Machado et al. (2022) found that CSR activities indirectly affect customer loyalty through the mediating role of customer trust. Islam et al. (2021) also emphasized that mediating variables such as corporate reputation, customer trust, and customer satisfaction influence the relationship between CSR and customer loyalty. Supporting this perspective, Singh et al. (2024) argued that while CSR may not have a direct effect on customer loyalty, it can exert an indirect influence when customer satisfaction and trust serve as mediating factors. From this perspective, CSR initiatives are crucial for businesses as they can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In Turkey, the majority of e-commerce transactions are conducted through online marketplaces, with leading platforms including Trendyol (36%), Hepsiburada (17%), AmazonTR (12%), and Çiçeksepeti (8%) shaping consumer preferences as of 2023 (Kaya, 2025). These marketplaces’ CSR practices differ significantly from those associated with traditional retail models, reflecting an increased emphasis on sustainability and social impact. For instance, Trendyol has implemented initiatives aimed at reducing carbon footprints, improving sustainable packaging and waste management, ensuring

ethical sourcing, promoting gender equality, and supporting educational initiatives (Trendyol, 2025). Meanwhile, Hepsiburada is actively involved in projects focused on community development, environmental conservation, and animal welfare (Hepsiburada, 2025). Additionally, according to a report prepared by the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Turkey, it is stated that there is a growing trend towards sustainability-driven consumer behavior (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2025). The report notes that Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) e-commerce is projected to reach a volume of 9.8 billion TL in 2024, with 53.25% of these transactions occurring in the fashion sector, indicating an increasing interest in circular economy practices. Moreover, the PwC report of 2021 underscores a change in Turkish consumer priorities since the pandemic, shifting from an emphasis on reducing plastic use to a broader expectation for brands to act with strong social responsibility and positively impact societal well-being (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2021). These sector-specific practices and the evolving expectations of local consumers highlight the influence of CSR in shaping trust, satisfaction, and loyalty within Turkey's dynamic e-commerce landscape.

Customer satisfaction and loyalty

Customer satisfaction is a crucial measure that reflects how well customers' experiences with a product or service align with their expectations (Oliver, 1999). Product or service quality and the perceived value significantly influence customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction involves more than just the purchase of a product or service. Factors such as product quality, customer service communication, and the overall shopping experience shape customers' perceptions. These elements contribute significantly to customer satisfaction. Furthermore, customer loyalty refers to a customer's commitment to a specific brand. Although there may be many competing brands for a particular product or service, a customer's continued preference for a particular brand indicates that he or she is loyal to that brand. This loyalty is evident in a customer's willingness to consistently choose one brand over others (Bayuk and Küçük, 2014). Today's marketing environment is highly dynamic. In this respect, businesses carry out activities involving both traditional and digital marketing strategies in order to create a loyal customer base. A loyal customer portfolio not only positively affects the sales of the product but also positively affects the reputation of the brand. In this respect, digital platforms offer brands the opportunity to manage their own image and reputation as well as achieve their marketing goals. This makes digital platforms strategic for businesses.

Academic studies indicate that customer satisfaction and loyalty offer substantial advantages for businesses, including cost benefits (Uyar, 2019) simplified sales processes (Gümüş, 2014), higher turnover and profitability, robust customer relationships, and positive word-of-mouth marketing. Customer satisfaction is seen as a factor affecting repurchasing intentions and actions, influencing an organization's potential sales income (Tu and Chih, 2013). From this perspective, it can be stated that customer satisfaction and loyalty are essential for the sustainability of businesses. Sustaining customer satisfaction encourages repeat purchasing behavior (Sharma and Singh, 2023). This aligns with the marketing objectives of brands. Thus, customer satisfaction and loyalty, which refers to a process of value transfer through long-term relationships rather than a one-time

sale of a product or service, is important for the long-term marketing and sustainability goals of businesses.

Methodology

This study aims to fill an existing gap in the literature by determining the effect of social media marketing, price promotion, and attitude toward CSR on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The population for this study consists of e-commerce customers living in Türkiye who are over 18 and have at least one social media account. The participants were selected using the convenience sampling method, one of the random sampling techniques, considering the feasibility and accessibility conditions of the fieldwork process. Before starting data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee for Social and Human Sciences at Mersin University (meeting date: November 4, 2024; meeting no: 10; decision no: 335). All participants were informed about the research's purpose, and their involvement required voluntary, written informed consent, aligning with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Data for the study were collected through face-to-face surveys, a quantitative research technique, from December 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025. A total of 805 questionnaire forms were distributed; 44 incomplete or incorrect forms were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a final sample size of 761 participants.

While the method employed in the study offers an efficient solution regarding time and cost in reaching a broad audience, it does have certain limitations. Primarily, since the data collected through convenience sampling originates from a sample with limited representativeness, caution is warranted when generalizing the findings to all e-commerce users in Turkey. Additionally, the demographic and behavioral characteristics of the participants may not accurately reflect those of larger consumer groups. Furthermore, the study utilizes cross-sectional data, meaning it was gathered during a single time period, which limits the ability to observe changes or causal relationships over time (Malhotra, 2004). Consequently, while the analyses reveal relationships between variables, drawing causal conclusions from these relationships is methodologically impractical. This represents another significant limitation that should be acknowledged when interpreting the study's findings. Therefore, the results should be considered with attention to the sample group's characteristics and the data's cross-sectional nature. Research data were analyzed with SPSS 24 and AMOS 23 statistical programs. According to Ural and Kılıç (2006), 384 data will be sufficient for universes larger than 10,000 people in determining the sample size.

The research survey consists of two parts. In the first section, the social media marketing scale with 6 statements and the price promotion scale with 5 statements were designed using five-point Likert-type scales of the research variables, which were adapted from Hanaysha (2017). In addition, the attitudes towards CSR scale in this section includes 5 statements adapted from Kang and Hustvedt (2014), and the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty scales consist of 5 pieces, each statement adapted from Leninkumar (2017). In the second part of the questionnaire, age, gender, income status, most preferred social media platform, amount of daily use of social media, and perception questions about the frequency of online shopping were categorically asked to explain the demographic, social

media use, and shopping frequency characteristics of the participants. The descriptive questions in the research questionnaire form are given in Table 1 and the statements including the relevant variables are given in Table 2.

This study seeks to address a significant gap in the existing literature by investigating the combined effects of independent variables—social media marketing, price promotion, and CSR attitudes—on the dependent variables of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty within a comprehensive model. Previous research typically examines these variables either in isolation or focuses on their individual impacts on customer satisfaction or loyalty. Building on the work of Hanaysha (2017), this research proposes an integrated approach that concurrently explores the influence of relevant marketing strategies on both customer satisfaction and loyalty. In this context, the hypotheses formulated based on the model proposed in this study are empirically tested to illustrate how this gap is

effectively addressed. Notably, the joint evaluation of both direct and indirect effects of these marketing activities on customer satisfaction and loyalty represents a unique contribution of this study to the literature. Consequently, the research model, which conceptualizes the relationships among the relevant variables and delineates their effects in line with the study's scope and objectives, is illustrated in Figure 1.

As a result of the literature review, no study examined social media marketing, price promotion, and CSR together with customer satisfaction and loyalty variables. Therefore, to contribute to the research by addressing a gap in the literature, the research model that conceptualizes the relationship between the relevant variables, in line with the scope and purpose of the research, and suggests the effects between these variables is illustrated in Figure 1.

Seven hypotheses were formulated for analysis within the research scope. The hypotheses are listed below.

TABLE 1 Characteristics of the sample.

Variables		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Female	475	62.4
	Male	286	37.6
Age	18–23	342	44.9
	24–34	204	26.8
	35–45	126	16.6
	46–55	61	8.0
	55 and above	28	3.7
Monthly income	5,000 TL and below	226	29.7
	5,001 TL – 10000 TL	171	22.4
	10,001 TL – 20000 TL	142	18.7
	20,001 TL – 40000 TL	179	23.5
	40,001 TL and above	43	5.7
	5,000 TL and below	226	29.7
Most preferred social media platform	Facebook	158	20.8
	Instagram	367	48.2
	Tiktok	77	10.1
	Twitter	98	12.9
	Youtube	51	6.7
	Other.	10	1.3
Social media duration of use	1 h and less	208	27.3
	1–3 h	220	28.9
	3–5 h	133	17.5
	5–7 h	139	18.3
	7 h and more	61	8.0
Frequency of shopping	3 and below	401	52.7
	4–6 times	212	27.9
	7–9 times	71	9.3
	10 and above	77	10.1
Total		761	100

H1: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.

H2: Price promotion has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.

H3: Attitude towards corporate social responsibility has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.

H4: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

H5: Price promotion has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

H6: The attitude toward corporate social responsibility has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

H7: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on loyalty.

Analysis of results

The characteristics of the sample of participants are given in Table 1.

Upon reviewing the findings presented in Table 1, it is clear that the age group with the highest representation among participants is the 18–23 range, which accounts for 44.9%. Furthermore, the data indicates that 62.4% of participants identified as female, whereas 37.6% identified as male. Regarding income distribution, the largest segment is the category of 5,000 Turkish Liras and below, comprising 29.7% of respondents. The study, which focused on social media users, revealed that Instagram emerges as the most preferred platform, with 48.2% of participants selecting it as their choice. When analyzing the duration of social media usage, it was observed that 28.9% of participants engage with social media for 1–3 h. Additionally, in terms of online shopping behaviors, 52.7% of participants reported making three or fewer purchases monthly, while 27.9% made four to six purchases, 9.3% made seven to nine, and 10.1% indicated they made 10 or more purchases each month.

TABLE 2 Factor and reliability analyses of the scales.

Factors	Item	Factor loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach Alpha
Social media marketing	[...]’s brand’s social media ads are interesting.	0.735	0.564	0.838	0.838
	[...] brand’s social media ads are performing well compared to other e-commerce brands.	0.763			
	[...] brand offers ads that appeal to me on social media.	0.768			
	[...] brand’s social media ads are memorable.	0.739			
Price promotion	I think [...]’s price reductions or discount coupons are satisfactory.	0.738	0.585	0.808	0.803
	[...] brand offers price deals quite often	0.824			
	The price deals offered by the [...] brand help me manage my purchasing budget.	0.731			
A. T. Corporate social responsibility	[...] brand uses part of its profits to help non-profit organizations.	0.748	0.609	0.861	0.860
	[...] brand contributes a portion of its profits to the communities in which it operates through corporate social responsibility activities.	0.840			
	[...] brand integrates its philanthropic contributions to society into its business activities.	0.768			
	[...] brand institutionally involved in activities aimed at increasing the welfare of society.	0.763			
Customer satisfaction	It was a wise decision to choose the [...] brand.	0.792	0.637	0.840	0.838
	Overall, I am satisfied with the decision to use the [...] brand.	0.837			
	I think I did the right thing when I decided to use the brand [...] for my online shopping needs.	0.765			
Customer loyalty	I would recommend the [...]’ brand to others.	0.783	0.604	0.819	0.816
	I encourage my friends and relatives to use the [...] brand.	0.838			
	When I think of shopping online, my first choice is [...]	0.705			

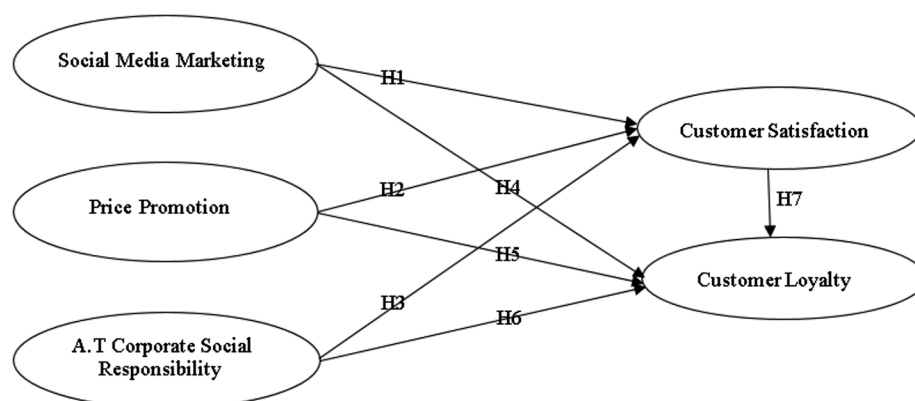


FIGURE 1
Research model. Source: Research model developed by the authors.

Reliability and validity analyses

Within the scope of this research, the data obtained from e-commerce customers were subjected to a comprehensive set of analyses, starting with reliability analysis, continuing with factor analysis,

and concluding with hypothesis testing through the development of a structural model. Afterward, a structural model was constructed, and hypotheses were tested. The validity and reliability of the scales employed in the study were evaluated by examining Cronbach's Alpha (α), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR)

values. The results of the reliability and factor analysis for the relevant variables are summarized in Table 2. The findings from the reliability analysis indicated that the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for the various scales were as follows: 0.838 for the social media marketing scale, 0.803 for the price promotion scale, 0.860 for the attitude towards CSR scale, 0.838 for the customer satisfaction scale, and 0.816 for the customer loyalty scale. When the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient values fall within the range of 0.70 to 1.00, it signifies that the scales are considered highly reliable (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018).

Following the reliability analysis, the relevant data were analyzed through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The findings indicated that certain statements from the social media marketing scale (SMM1 and SMM2), price promotion scale (PP1 and PP2), attitude towards CSR scale (CSR1), customer satisfaction scale (CS1 and CS5), and customer loyalty scale (CL1 and CL5) exhibited low factor loadings and were subsequently removed from the analysis before re-assessment. Upon examining the confirmatory factor analysis results for the scales included in the research model, it was found that the factor loadings ranged from 0.701 to 0.840, with AVE values between 0.564 and 0.637, and CR values between 0.808 and 0.861. According to the established guidelines by Hair et al. (1998), the AVE coefficient indicates convergent validity and is recommended to exceed 0.5, while CR and factor loadings should be 0.70 or higher. The results indicated that both convergent and divergent validity were achieved. Furthermore, the goodness of fit indices for the analysis were CMIN = 305.246, DF = 109, $p = 0.000$, CMIN/DF = 2.800, RMSEA = 0.049, RMR = 0.47, GFI = 0.956, CFI = 0.969, and TLI = 0.961, all without modification. These values demonstrate that the model exhibits excellent and acceptable goodness of fit (Meydan and Şeşen, 2011).

Structural equation model and hypothesis testing

Regression analyses were conducted to investigate the relationships among relevant variables. This study utilized

Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) with AMOS software, aligning with the proposed theoretical framework. The primary reasons for selecting the CB-SEM approach include the study's robust theoretical foundation and its objective to test and validate the proposed theory. Additionally, this method allows for comparing competing theoretical models and is particularly suited for the relatively large sample size of 761 participants, enhancing the results' consistency. Furthermore, given that reflective measurement models were employed in this study, CB-SEM was determined to be the most appropriate choice. Consequently, CB-SEM was utilized to bolster the scientific rigor and reliability of the research findings. The structural equation model resulting from these analyses is illustrated in Figure 2.

In analyzing the relationship between social media marketing, price promotion, and attitudes toward CSR, as well as their effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty, the research determined that the goodness of fit values for the structural model were both excellent and acceptable. The specific values obtained were as follows: CMIN = 268.279, DF = 107, $p = 0.000$, CMIN/DF = 2.507, RMSEA = 0.045, GFI = 0.960, CFI = 0.974, and TLI = 0.957. The results of the study's regression and hypothesis are detailed in Table 3.

Results

The findings of this study indicate that marketing strategies employed by e-commerce businesses—specifically social media marketing, price promotions, and CSR initiatives—significantly influence customer satisfaction. Among these strategies, social media marketing has the most substantial positive effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.400$; $p < 0.001$). This highlights the importance of engaging content, real-time interactions, and personalized marketing messages on social media in enhancing consumer satisfaction within the e-commerce sector. Price promotions also contribute meaningfully to customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.241$; $p < 0.001$), suggesting that price-sensitive online shoppers respond positively to promotional offerings,

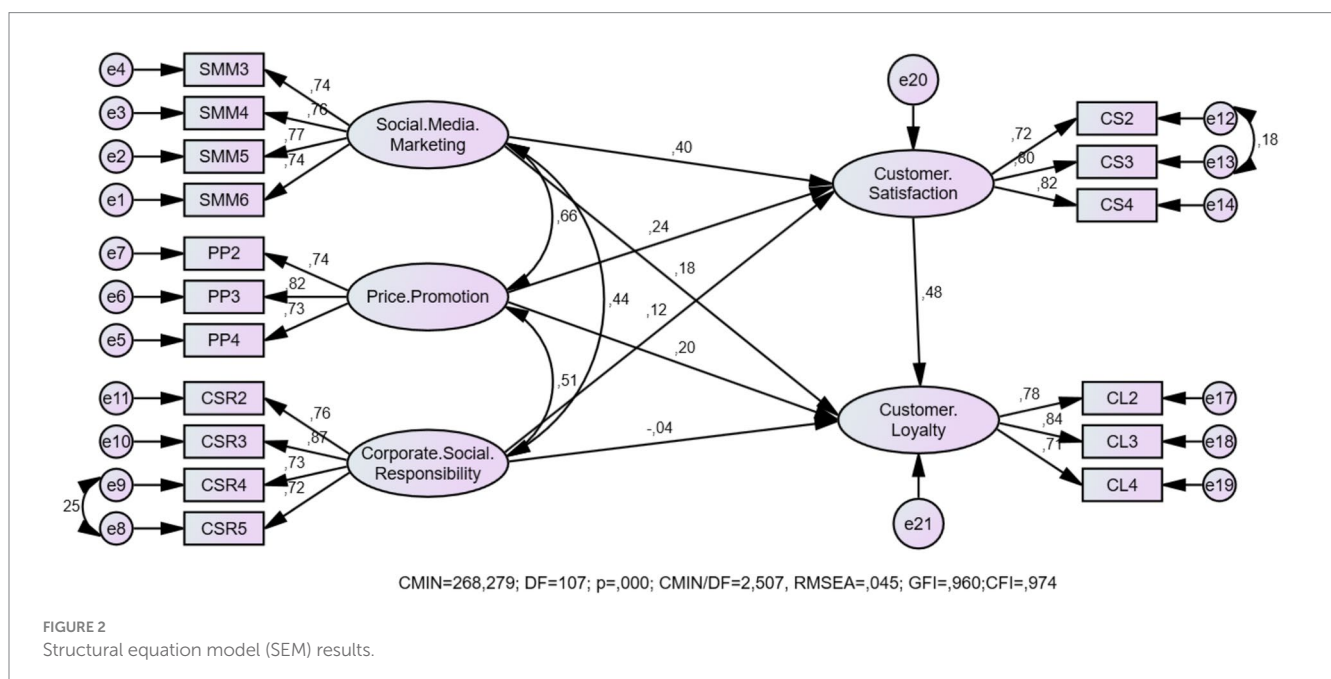


TABLE 3 Standardized regression coefficients and hypothesis test results.

Dependent variable		Independent variable	Regression coefficient	p	Hypothesis results
Customer satisfaction	←	Social media marketing	0.400	***	H1 Supported
Customer satisfaction	←	Price promotion	0.241	***	H2 Supported
Customer satisfaction	←	Attitude towards corporate social responsibility	0.121	0.007	H3 Supported
Customer loyalty	←	Social media marketing	0.180	0.002	H4 Supported
Customer loyalty	←	Price promotion	0.200	***	H5 Supported
Customer loyalty	←	Attitude towards corporate social responsibility	−0.037	0.368	H6 Unsupported
Customer loyalty	←	Customer satisfaction	0.485	***	H7 Supported

*** $p < 0.001$.

thereby making these incentives effective for improving satisfaction levels. In contrast, consumer perceptions of CSR initiatives have a relatively weaker yet still significant positive impact on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.121$; $p = 0.007$). This indicates that while consumers who are socially and environmentally conscious appreciate CSR efforts, the overall effect of such initiatives on customer satisfaction remains modest.

In terms of customer loyalty, both social media marketing ($\beta = 0.180$; $p = 0.002$) and price promotions ($\beta = 0.200$; $p < 0.001$) demonstrated direct and positive impacts. Additionally, customer satisfaction emerged as a significant predictor of loyalty ($\beta = 0.485$; $p < 0.001$), highlighting its mediating role in nurturing long-term consumer relationships in the digital marketplace. Nonetheless, no statistically significant correlation was found between attitudes toward CSR and customer loyalty ($\beta = -0.037$; $p = 0.368$). This indicates that consumers' positive or negative views on CSR do not significantly affect their loyalty intentions in e-commerce settings. This finding aligns with [Bhattacharya and Sen \(2004\)](#), who noted CSR alone may not directly foster loyalty without trust-building; it also supports [Singh et al. \(2024\)](#), who argued CSR's effects are often indirect, mediated through satisfaction or trust.

These results underscore the essential function of customer satisfaction in mediating between marketing efforts and customer loyalty. Both social media marketing and price promotions have direct impacts on loyalty, as well as indirect effects through their influence on satisfaction. In contrast, CSR seems to affect loyalty solely through satisfaction, and even then, the impact is somewhat limited. As a result of these findings, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H7 are confirmed, whereas H6 is not confirmed. The findings demonstrate a comprehensive relationship among the studied constructs, reinforcing the multidimensional nature of customer loyalty in the digital context.

Discussion

This study's findings support and build on existing literature regarding marketing strategies, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in e-commerce. Specifically, the significant impact of social media marketing on customer satisfaction and loyalty aligns with previous research. For example, [Jamil et al. \(2022\)](#) found that SMMA activities influence consumer intentions through social identification and

satisfaction, highlighting satisfaction's mediating role. Similarly, [Banerji and Singh \(2024\)](#) showed that interactive elements like word-of-mouth on social media enhance customer loyalty, emphasizing customer relationship quality (CRQ) as crucial for loyalty development. Overall, this study confirms that social media marketing directly and indirectly affects customer loyalty, primarily through its positive impact on customer satisfaction.

The current research indicates that price promotions positively impact customer satisfaction and loyalty. This supports the findings of [Rahmawati and Rahyuda \(2023\)](#), who stated that pricing strategies are crucial for retaining consumers. Similarly, [Shanmuga et al. \(2018\)](#) noted that price discounts effectively attract customers and build loyalty. The results of this study affirm that these promotional strategies continue to be successful in engaging price-sensitive consumers and improving their satisfaction, which in turn fosters loyalty. The impact of CSR on customer satisfaction is notably present but less influential when it comes to fostering customer loyalty, which was found to be statistically insignificant. This observation aligns with the work of [Bhattacharya and Sen \(2004\)](#), who argued that while CSR can positively affect how a brand is perceived, converting that perception into real loyalty requires more profound and sustained trust-building efforts. Thus, while CSR may enhance customer satisfaction, it is not sufficient to ensure lasting loyalty without additional relational strategies in place. Consequently, customer satisfaction is a crucial mediator in the relationship between CSR and loyalty, supporting the theoretical model established by [Baron and Kenny \(1986\)](#).

Additionally, the pivotal role of customer satisfaction in linking marketing efforts to customer loyalty is reinforced by research conducted by [Homburg and Giering \(2001\)](#) and [Oliver \(1999\)](#). They found that satisfied customers are more inclined to repeat purchases and exhibit loyalty. This study adds to existing literature by empirically showing that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the impact of social media marketing and price promotions on loyalty. This emphasizes that loyalty arises not only from temporary promotions but also from comprehensive, long-term strategies that foster relational value. These findings highlight the importance of e-commerce companies implementing a comprehensive marketing strategy, balancing promotional techniques with more profound, satisfaction-focused, and relationship-building methods. In the ever-evolving digital marketplace, customer satisfaction is a vital strategic

priority, mediating the effects of diverse marketing initiatives and underpinning long-lasting loyalty.

Conclusion and implications

In today's environment, companies that focus only on financial profits are unlikely to be welcomed by the communities they serve. Most businesses appreciated by society today are those that provide sustainable solutions to problems in their local areas. From this point of view, CSR activities are still considered crucial in the digital age. CSR initiatives are important in increasing social welfare, raising environmental awareness, and encouraging businesses to create strategies based on ethical standards. CSR initiatives enhance the brand image of companies and contribute to customer satisfaction and loyalty by building trust. The growth of digitalization allows businesses to share their social responsibility projects with a broader audience and interact more effectively with consumers. Thus, CSR practices are crucial in digital marketing activities, just as in traditional marketing.

Digitalization is significantly changing companies' marketing strategies and relationships with consumers. Today, marketing activities conducted solely through traditional channels may no longer be sufficient. In this regard, marketing activities on digital platforms are essential for two-way communication between brands and target audiences. Social media marketing, price promotions, and CSR practices are key to increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The study improves existing models by integrating CSR into digital loyalty frameworks and verifies that customer satisfaction is a crucial mediator between marketing efforts and loyalty. The findings of this study may help e-commerce businesses refine their marketing strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. It emphasizes that social media marketing and price promotions have a significant impact, while CSR practices appear to have limited direct influence. Businesses should view social media as a tool for enhancing customer experience and personalizing communication, rather than just for promotion. Engaging customers through interactive campaigns, real-time support, and user-generated content can help build long-term loyalty. Although price promotions are effective, they should be integrated into broader loyalty strategies, such as coupon systems or subscription models, to ensure sustainable retention. The limited effectiveness of CSR initiatives suggests a need for better visibility and emotional connection, with messaging aligned to customer values. Finally, employing real-time analytics and customer feedback can help companies adapt their strategies dynamically, ensuring relevance and responsiveness in their marketing efforts.

Limitations

While the current study offers valuable insights into the impact of social media marketing, price promotions, and CSR practices on customer satisfaction and loyalty, it does have certain limitations. The use of convenience sampling, though practical for participant access, restricts the sample's

representativeness and consequently limits the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design prevents any causal inferences regarding the observed relationships. The sample consisted predominantly of young and female respondents, which may further influence the external validity of the results. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for bias, particularly due to common method variance and social desirability effects. Researchers and practitioners should carefully consider these limitations when interpreting the findings or applying them to broader or more demographically diverse populations.

Future research directions

Future research exploring the dynamic relationship between marketing and digitalization holds significant potential to advance the field. While some studies have begun examining the impact of digitalization on marketing strategies, existing research remains relatively limited. Future investigations across diverse geographic contexts will be crucial for deepening our understanding of the implications of digitalization in marketing. Additionally, exploring topics such as digital customer experience, the conversion of social media interactions into customer loyalty, and the effectiveness of integrated digital strategies will further enrich the literature. Employing multi-group analysis or longitudinal approaches could help capture behavioral changes over time and across various demographic groups. In addition to digitalization, this study's findings on CSR offer further avenues for future exploration. While attitudes toward CSR do not directly influence customer loyalty, they exert an indirect effect through customer satisfaction. Future research could also investigate this mediation mechanism across different sectors and cultural contexts and incorporate additional potential mediating or moderating factors—such as perceived service quality, brand reputation, and trust—to gain deeper insights into CSR's effects on customer behavior and to further refine theoretical models in this domain.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee for Social and Human Sciences at Mersin University (meeting date: November 4, 2024; meeting no: 10; decision no: 335). All participants were informed about the research's purpose, and their involvement required voluntary, written informed consent.

Author contributions

MY: Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. İÇ: Conceptualization, Data curation,

Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Generative AI statement

The authors declare that Gen AI was used in the creation of this manuscript. Grammarly application was used to correct the English grammar mistakes.

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Appendix

TABLE A1 Measurement scales of constructs.

Code	Social media marketing
SMM1	I often see social media ads for the brand [...].
SMM2	The level of social media advertisements of the brand [...] meets my expectations.
SMM3	[...]’s brand’s social media ads are interesting.
SMM4	[...] brand’s social media ads are performing well compared to other e-commerce brands.
SMM5	[...] brand offers ads that appeal to me on social media.
SMM6	[...] brand’s social media ads are memorable.
Price promotion	
PP1	Price deals are offered on most of the products on [...].
PP2	I think [...]’s price reductions or discount coupons are satisfactory.
PP3	[...] brand offers price deals quite often
PP4	The price deals offered by the [...] brand help me manage my purchasing budget.
PP5	I think the [...] brand has better pricing opportunities than its competitors.
Attitudes towards corporate social responsibility	
CSR1	[...]’ brand is a socially responsible online shopping (e-commerce) platform.
CSR2	[...] brand uses part of its profits to help non-profit organizations.
CSR3	[...] brand contributes a portion of its profits to the communities in which it operates through corporate social responsibility activities.
CSR4	[...] brand integrates its philanthropic contributions to society into its business activities.
CSR5	[...] brand institutionally involved in activities aimed at increasing the welfare of society.
Customer satisfaction	
CS1	Based on all my experience with the [...] brand, I am very satisfied with the online shopping (e-commerce) services it offers.
CS2	It was a wise decision to choose the [...] brand.
CS3	Overall, I am satisfied with the decision to use the [...] brand.
CS4	I think I did the right thing when I decided to use the brand [...] for my online shopping needs.
CS5	The services provided by the [...] brand are generally very good.
Customer loyalty	
CL1	I tell others positive things about [...]
CL2	I would recommend the [...] brand to others.
CL3	I encourage my friends and relatives to use the [...] brand.
CL4	When I think of shopping online, my first choice is [...]
CL5	I plan to shop from [...]’ brand in the next few years.