E-Communication Strategies of Bogor's Indie Musicians to Resist Marginalization in the Music Industry
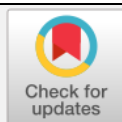
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ABSTRACT

This study examines how the e-communication-based marketing mix (7Ps) influences customer loyalty among Spotify listeners engaging with indie musicians from Bogor. Data were collected from 400 respondents using a quantitative approach and analyzed through Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression. The results indicate that all marketing mix elements significantly affect customer loyalty, with Promotion (β = 0.216) and People (β = 0.195) having the most substantial impact. Place was not statistically significant (p = 0.07), suggesting that geographical origin is becoming less relevant in fostering digital music loyalty. The Cooperation indicator recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.34) and showed a moderate positive correlation with the loyalty construct (R = 0.457), underscoring the importance of active listener participation. These findings suggest that emotional engagement, relational marketing, and symbolic branding are more influential in building loyalty within digital ecosystems than functional attributes such as pricing or product features. The study contributes to digital marketing and indie music research by proposing an expanded interpretation of the 7Ps framework that emphasizes emotional value creation, visual identity, and participatory community engagement. Practical recommendations are also offered for indie musicians, including emotional storytelling, consistent fan interaction, and visual branding strategies to strengthen listener loyalty. The study illustrates how indie musicians can resist platform-driven marginalization in highly competitive streaming environments.

1. Introduction

The mainstream music industry's marginalization of indie musicians remains a persistent issue, despite the growing presence of digital platforms (Jian, 2018; Pilati et al., 2025). Musicians supported by major labels continue to dominate access to income-generating opportunities such as album sales, festival bookings, and brand sponsorships. In contrast, indie musicians often rely on limited earnings from donations or streaming royalties (Pilati et al., 2025). Although indie music is widely regarded as a symbol of artistic authenticity and creative freedom, it still struggles to maintain visibility and sustainability outside commercial circuits (Aji et al., 2021; Biasioli, 2020; Lau, 2021; Phillips-Hutton, 2018).

The emergence of digital platforms such as Spotify has opened alternative pathways for indie musicians to distribute their work, engage directly with fans, and pursue independent careers (Hracs & Webster, 2021; Hviid et al., 2018; Schreiber & Rieple, 2018). With over 626 million active users worldwide, Spotify dominates the global music streaming market, surpassing competitors such as Apple Music and YouTube Music (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers, 2024; Iqbal, 2024; Kari, 2025). Younger listeners, in particular, are drawn to Spotify's personalized features and expansive music catalog (Lau, 2021; Phillips-Hutton, 2018). While these platforms promise to democratize music access and production, many indie musicians continue to face challenges related to unequal visibility and limited commercial returns (Pilati et al., 2025).

In this context, cultivating customer loyalty has become increasingly vital for indie musicians seeking to maintain independence and resist marginalization driven by mainstream industry structures. Customer loyalty has emerged as a counterforce to structural exclusion, enabling musicians to build sustainable careers based on committed audience support (Maasø & Hagen, 2020; Schreiber & Rieple, 2018). Indie music often targets niche audiences, which have a high potential for long-term loyalty (Larsen, 2019; Obiegbu et al., 2019). Previous research has suggested that indie artists must adopt direct and participatory e-communication strategies to foster sustained fan relationships (Daskalopoulou & Skandalis, 2019; Fonseca et al., 2021).

The marketing mix, particularly the 7P framework, is widely recognized as a comprehensive tool for analyzing marketing communication effectiveness (Anjani et al., 2019; Pradipta, 2022; Purnomo, 2022b; Ryńca & Ziaeian, 2021). However, few studies have examined how these strategies relate to broader marketing principles as mechanisms to enhance audience loyalty (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016, p. 39). While some research has explored general branding and audience development strategies among indie musicians (Fonseca et al., 2021; Hracs & Webster, 2021), the application of integrated marketing frameworks such as the 7Ps remains underexplored. Moreover, prior studies often overlook the localized application of marketing strategies within specific digital and cultural environments (Daskalopoulou & Skandalis, 2019; Pilati et al., 2025). This gap limits our understanding of how indie musicians navigate marginalization through strategic marketing in diverse geographical and cultural contexts.

This study addresses that gap by investigating how the 7P marketing mix influences customer loyalty among Spotify users engaging with indie musicians in Bogor. It offers insights into the evolving role of e-communication marketing in enabling indie musicians to overcome marginalization. Bogor provides a compelling local context to explore these dynamics, given its urban transformation and cultural diversity. With over 150 musicians featured in Spotify's "The Sound of Bogor Indie" playlist (Spotify, 2021), the city has emerged as an important hub for indie music in Indonesia. This study emphasizes the need to examine local urban contexts to understand how indie musicians utilize global platforms such as Spotify to sustain independent careers amid industry consolidation.

The primary objective of this study is to test the influence of all seven elements of the 7P marketing mix on customer loyalty toward Bogor-based indie musicians on Spotify. It explores how e-communication marketing strategies function as tools to resist marginalization and support creative autonomy. The research addresses the following central question: How do the seven elements of the 7P marketing mix influence customer loyalty toward indie musicians on Spotify in the context of Bogor? By answering this question, the study provides theoretical and practical insights into how indie musicians can build loyal audiences and challenge the dominance of the mainstream music industry through strategic e-marketing approaches.

2. Literature Review

2.1. E-Communication Marketing Elements (7Ps) and Indie Musicians

Digital marketing has transformed the landscape for independent musicians, particularly regarding audience engagement and market access. Digital platforms have redefined market intermediation and reshaped power relations within the music industry. (Wahid, 2021). Although the digitalization of music has expanded access to production and distribution tools, it has also introduced new forms of gatekeeping and intensified competition. These developments underscore the persistence of structural constraints within an environment that appears increasingly democratized (Collet & Rémy, 2023).

The shift from label-based marketing to digital platforms requires musicians to produce consistent creative content and engage actively with audiences to remain relevant (Frenneaux, 2023). Recent scholarship challenges the traditional divide between artistic expression and commercial activity, suggesting that musicians now view these domains increasingly integrated. Connecting with record labels, peers, and audiences has become a strategic imperative. Digital marketing in this context involves leveraging social media, cultivating a distinct artistic identity, and continuously innovating in creative practices (Sanders et al., 2022). Earlier research has emphasized that while digital platforms create new opportunities for indie musicians, they also present complex competition and technological adaptation challenges.

Effective communication and digital marketing are now essential for indie musicians striving to establish their presence. Social media has evolved into a dual-purpose platform: a vehicle for promotion and a space for cultural interaction (Wahid, 2021). Creating emotional value through social media is beneficial and essential for sustaining digital music ventures (Standing et al., 2016). E-communication tools can significantly expand reach, foster online communities, and build meaningful emotional connections through digital interaction (Standing et al., 2016). In this context, musicians promote their work and co-create value with their audiences (Choi & Burnes, 2017).

This study adopts the 7Ps marketing mix framework originally proposed by Booms and Bitner (1981), which extends the traditional 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) by incorporating three additional components: People, Process, and Physical Evidence (Shirahada & Kosaka, 2012). The 7Ps framework is a strategic tool for enhancing customer engagement and loyalty (Lupiyoadi, 2013; P. Kotler & G. Armstrong, 2010; Shirahada & Kosaka, 2012).

Product refers to the physical item or service and the value it offers to the customer (Blythe, 2009; Islam et al., 2013). Effective product development should be guided by customer needs and expectations (Kushwaha & Agrawal, 2015). Product quality encompasses various dimensions, including performance, reliability, features, design, brand image, and perceived value (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Price represents the value customers perceive and is influenced by four indicators: affordability, price suitability, price competitiveness, and the match between price and benefits

(Abdurrahman, 2015; Ding et al., 2010; P. Kotler & G. Armstrong, 2010). In online music, price refers to the cost of purchasing a song, album, or subscription to a streaming platform (Kusumawati et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020).

Place concerns the distribution channel through which music reaches listeners. Spotify, for instance, serves as a digital platform for disseminating indie music. This study also includes audience perceptions of the musicians' geographic origin (Bogor City and Regency) and how it influences listener loyalty.

Promotion involves strategic communication efforts to increase product awareness and drive sales (Abdullah, 2012; Abdurrahman, 2015; Purnomo, 2022a). Promotional strategies may include advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, community relations, and digital campaigns (Kotler & Keller, 2012). On Spotify, subscriber count and streaming engagement can indicate promotional success and public recognition.

Physical Evidence includes the tangible elements representing the service, such as visual aesthetics, branding, physical environment, and digital presentation (Blythe, 2009). In the context of indie musicians, this includes visual components such as logos, colors, stage setups, merchandise, and other identity-forming materials.

People refer to all individuals involved in delivering services and interacting with customers. Service quality in this domain is typically measured through reliability, responsiveness, and empathy (Lupiyoadi, 2013). In digital settings, the consistency and responsiveness of musicians' interactions with fans significantly influence loyalty (Prentice et al., 2020; Tri Atmojo & Widodo, 2022).

The process involves the service delivery procedures and mechanisms (Heizer & Render, 2006). It includes workflows, schedules, and systems facilitating content distribution and audience interaction (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Previous studies have shown mixed results regarding the impact of the 7Ps on customer loyalty. Some findings suggest that when implemented effectively, the marketing mix can enhance loyalty, while others indicate a weak or inverse relationship (C. W. Hidayat, 2021). If e-marketing strategies successfully integrate all seven elements, they can strengthen loyalty among listeners.

H1:   The 7Ps marketing mix positively and significantly affects customer loyalty.

2.2. Customer Loyalty in Streaming Services

Various factors influence customer loyalty in streaming services, including emotional connection, curated experiences, and brand perception. Positive brand experiences strengthen user and brand relationships, leading to higher loyalty and greater financial commitment (Anisa & Tjhin, 2023). In streaming services like Netflix, brand experience and attachment significantly influence consumers' willingness to pay premium prices and their overall brand loyalty (Santos & Schlesinger, 2021).

Competing platforms like Apple Music and Spotify offer tailored content and pricing strategies to create compelling and personalized user experiences. These efforts deepen engagement and foster loyalty (Hracs & Webster, 2021). For independent musicians, direct engagement and digital interaction have become essential for maintaining fan relationships and securing long-term listener loyalty within the evolving streaming ecosystem (Wahid, 2021).

Although brand image has been shown to positively affect customer loyalty, some studies reveal that brand experience and viral marketing do not significantly influence loyalty among Spotify users. This suggests that emotional and experiential factors may vary depending on

cultural and market-specific contexts (Philip et al., 2023). These findings indicate that customer loyalty in streaming services is shaped by a complex interplay of emotional, experiential, and situational factors.

Customer loyalty is both an outcome and a predictor of customer satisfaction (Budur & Poturak, 2021; Dam & Dam, 2021; El-Adly, 2019). It reflects customers' likelihood of repurchasing and their willingness to maintain long-term relationships with a company (Aldion et al., 2020). Loyalty is characterized by a customer's commitment to a brand or platform, which is typically reflected in repeat purchases and positive attitudes over time (R. Hidayat, 2009). According to Griffin, loyalty arises from the combination of high or low emotional attachment and frequent or infrequent repurchase behavior (Griffin, 2002).

This study adopts five indicators to measure customer loyalty:
1) Trusting, which reflects the customer's confidence in the service provider;
2) Emotional commitment, defined as the psychological attachment of the customer to the brand;
3) Switching cost, referring to the perceived burden or inconvenience associated with changing platforms;
4) Word-of-mouth, which involves customers voluntarily promoting the service to others; and
5) Cooperation refers to customer behavior that reflects active collaboration or support for the platform (R. Hidayat, 2009).

In online market settings, price, product quality, and trust have all been found to influence repurchase intentions significantly (Angel & Pasaribu, 2022; Antwi, 2021).

2.3. E-Communication Strategy for Fighting Marginalization

This study examines the application of the 7Ps marketing mix as key variables communicated by Bogor-based indie musicians through Spotify. In this context, Spotify functions as the primary medium of communication. The indie musicians act as message senders, delivering marketing elements—product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence—to listeners, who serve as the receivers. This communication model represents a strategic effort by music entrepreneurs to sustain their careers in a competitive digital environment (Daskalopoulou & Skandalis, 2019; Fonseca et al., 2021).

E-communication serves as the foundation of digital marketing, enabling musicians to convey their artistic and brand identity directly to audiences (P. Kotler & G. Armstrong, 2010). The effectiveness of this strategy significantly influences listener reception and engagement (Biasioli, 2020; Phillips-Hutton, 2018; Wahid, 2021). Communication competence is essential for building and maintaining customer relationships in digital spaces (Syamsudin et al., 2021). Accordingly, this study investigates how customer loyalty is shaped by the ongoing communication process between indie musicians in Bogor and their listeners on Spotify.

The 7Ps marketing mix is a widely adopted strategy among businesses of various scales, including small-scale artists and larger commercial entities (P. Kotler & G. Armstrong, 2010). Bogor's indie musicians must compete with mainstream music industry players on the same platform. Despite this competition, their strategic objective remains to foster customer loyalty (P. Kotler & G. Armstrong, 2010). Within digital streaming, customer loyalty is a counterforce to the marginalization imposed by dominant industry structures (Hracs & Webster, 2021; Maasø & Hagen, 2020; Schreiber & Rieple, 2018).

Indie musicians in Bogor have the potential to resist marginalization by the mainstream music industry when their communication of the 7Ps marketing mix successfully enhances

listener loyalty. Therefore, this study assesses the relationship between the marketing mix and customer loyalty.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach. Quantitative methods aim to test specific theories by examining relationships among variables (Arikunto, 2006). The primary data source comprised questionnaire responses related to dependent and independent variables. The survey questions were adapted from prior research identified during the literature review. A closed-ended questionnaire design was used, providing predefined answer choices. Responses were measured using a Likert scale to assess individuals' or groups' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions regarding social phenomena (Alabi & Jelili, 2023; Chyung et al., 2017). Respondents were asked to select one of the predetermined options from a five-point scale.

The value categorization followed an interval calculation for each category (5–1), where the interval is 0.8. The validity of the questionnaire was tested using Pearson's product-moment correlation. The population targeted in this study was Spotify's global subscriber base, reaching approximately 158 million (including premium and free users) in the first quarter of 2021. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 95% confidence level, yielding 399.99 or 400 respondents (Susanti et al., 2019; Tejada et al., 2012). This confidence level strikes a balance between accuracy, cost, and the time required to conduct the research, while still ensuring representativeness of the broader population (Tejada et al., 2012).

Respondents were recruited from five indie music fan communities in Bogor. Following outreach through WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook, the research team conducted face-to-face interviews with participants. This direct engagement enabled the collection of deeper insights and facilitated stronger rapport with the respondents. **Table 1** presents the gender distribution of the respondents.

Table 1. Respondent Distribution by Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	237	59.2%
Female	163	40.8%

The validity test results showed that all variable indicators had a Pearson correlation (R) value greater than the critical R table value, indicating that the indicators were valid. The reliability test produced a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.966, which exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.60 for acceptable reliability (Bujang et al., 2018; Taber, 2018).

The data's normality was tested using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method on standardized residuals. The significance value obtained was 0.200, which is greater than the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the data for all variables were normally distributed.

Pearson correlation analysis assessed the strength of linear relationships between each indicator (e.g., X1.1) and its associated latent variable (e.g., X1). Both variables were continuous and used to evaluate construct validity (Schober et al., 2018). The correlation formula is as follows:

$$r = \frac{\sum(X_i - \overline{X})(Y_i - \overline{Y})}{\sqrt{\sum(X_i - \overline{X})^2} \times \sqrt{\sum(Y_i - \overline{Y})^2}}$$

In addition, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the simultaneous effects of independent variables (X1–X7) on the dependent variable (Customer Loyalty, Y). This method allowed the study to determine the relative contribution of each independent variable. The regression equation is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \varepsilon$$

The R-value (Pearson correlation coefficient) for each indicator represents the strength of its relationship with the associated latent variable. The mean value indicates the average score, reflecting the general tendency of respondent responses. **Table 2** summarizes each variable's indicators, corresponding mean scores, and R-values.

Table 2. Variables, Indicators, Mean Scores, and R-values

Variable	Indicator	Mean	R-value
Product (X1)	Design (X1.1)	4.15	0.352
	Brands of other products (X1.2)	3.47	0.460
	Product quality (X1.3)	3.93	0.434
	Performance (X1.4)	4.07	0.344
	Reliability (X1.5)	4.09	0.419
	Feature (X1.6)	4.16	0.369
	Perceived quality (X1.7)	4.19	0.369
Price (X2)	Price affordability (X2.1)	4.11	0.606
	Price suitability (X2.2)	4.05	0.418
	Price competitiveness (X2.3)	4.09	0.531
	Price–benefit suitability (X2.4)	4.12	0.513
Place (X3)	Origin of musician (X3.1)	3.32	0.464
Promotion (X4)	Advertising (X4.1)	4.19	0.437
	Promotion strategy (X4.2)	4.36	0.440
	Personal selling (X4.3)	4.18	0.488
	Direct selling (X4.4)	4.15	0.390
	Community relationship (X4.5)	4.07	0.475
Physical Evidence (X5)	Equipment (X5.1)	3.73	0.513
	Logo (X5.2)	3.60	0.486
	Color (X5.3)	3.53	0.477
	Atmosphere (X5.4)	3.91	0.478
People (X6)	Reliability (X6.1)	4.09	0.561
	Responsiveness (X6.2)	4.07	0.595
	Empathy (X6.3)	4.04	0.568
Process (X7)	Procedures (X7.1)	3.90	0.432
	Activities (X7.2)	3.96	0.449
	Tasks (X7.3)	3.83	0.476

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Variable	Indicator	Mean	R-value
	Schedules (X7.4)	3.84	0.366
	Routine mechanisms (X7.5)	3.93	0.544
Customer Loyalty (Y)	Trust (Y1)	4.03	0.411
	Emotional commitment (Y2)	3.87	0.402
	Switching cost (Y3)	3.85	0.450
	Word of mouth (Y4)	4.11	0.475
	Cooperation (Y5)	4.34	0.457

4. Results

4.1. E-Communication Marketing Element (7P)

The Pearson correlation test revealed that each variable within the marketing mix framework was supported by moderately strong indicators, each contributing to varying degrees. All indicators under the Product variable (X1) demonstrated moderate correlations (R = 0.344–0.460), with product quality emerging as the most influential dimension in shaping respondents' perceptions of the product construct. This finding suggests that sound quality and musical arrangements were crucial in shaping listeners' evaluation of indie musicians on Spotify.

For the Price variable (X2), indicators such as price competitiveness and price suitability with benefits displayed relatively stronger correlations (R = 0.606 and 0.551, respectively). These results indicate that affordability and perceived value play key roles in influencing consumer decision-making when engaging with digital music platforms.

The Place variable (X3), which refers to the geographical origin of musicians, specifically Bogor City and Regency, showed only a moderate correlation (R = 0.464). This finding suggests that location has a limited influence on customer loyalty in digital music environments.

Among the indicators assessed in the Promotion construct (X4), community relationships and personal selling exhibited relatively higher correlations, with values reaching up to R = 0.488. These results emphasize the importance of continuous fan engagement and direct communication, rather than solely relying on conventional advertising.

Within the Physical Evidence construct (X5), the indicators color and logo showed the highest moderate correlations (R = 0.513 and 0.495). These findings underscore the significance of tangible branding elements in shaping perceptions of professionalism and artistic identity among indie musicians.

The People variable (X6) exhibited some of the strongest correlations across all constructs, particularly for responsiveness (R = 0.595) and empathy (R = 0.568). These results suggest that emotional attentiveness and consistent interaction are essential to building listener trust and fostering loyalty on platforms like Spotify.

In the Process dimension (X7), routine mechanisms demonstrated the most substantial influence (R = 0.544), while scheduling was the least influential (R = 0.366). This indicates that well-structured and predictable management practices contribute more significantly to listener loyalty than the timing or frequency of content releases.
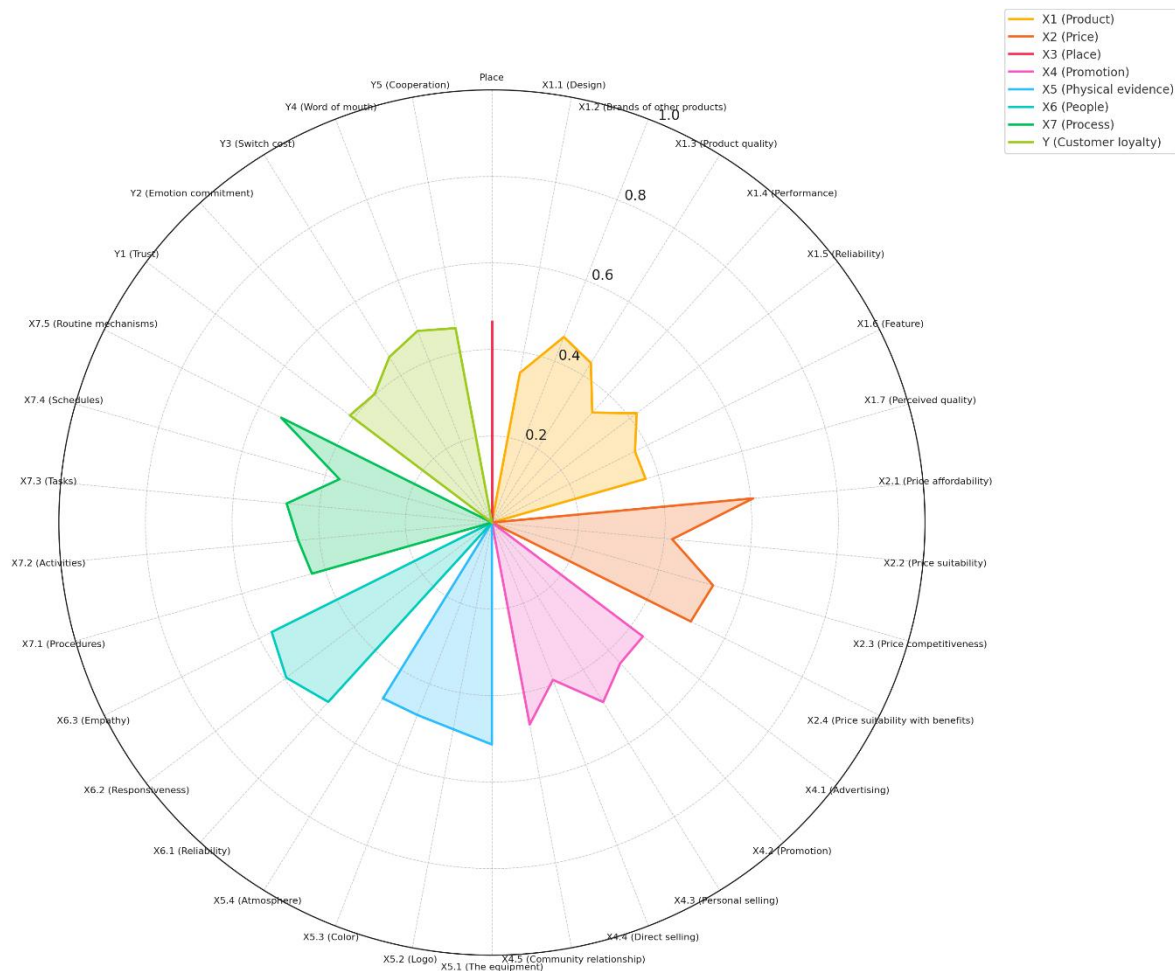
Figure 1. R-Value of Indicators and Variables

The test results confirmed that specific indicators within each e-communication marketing mix element had varying levels of influence in shaping customer perceptions and loyalty within the digital music ecosystem. Product quality was the most impactful among product attributes, reaffirming that producing high-quality musical content is fundamental for audience engagement (Blythe, 2009; Hracs & Webster, 2021; Kotler & Keller, 2012). For the pricing element, price competitiveness and perceived value were the strongest contributors, supporting the idea that value perception and trust significantly affect consumer engagement with streaming services (Abdurrahman, 2015; Kusumawati et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020).

Conversely, musicians' geographical origin had only a moderate influence on listener perceptions, suggesting that physical locality is becoming less relevant in the context of streaming platforms such as Spotify (Suryana, 2013).

The Promotion, Physical Evidence, and People dimensions highlighted the centrality of emotional and experiential factors in cultivating customer loyalty. Indicators such as community relationships and personal engagement made notable contributions to promotional effectiveness, indicating that relational marketing strategies are more successful in encouraging loyalty than traditional advertising (Ahmed & Rahman, 2015; Kotler & Keller, 2012). Tangible brand components such as color and logo were found to enhance brand recognition and perceived credibility in digital environments moderately (Blythe, 2009).

Among the People indicators, responsiveness had the highest correlation, suggesting that frequent, meaningful interaction and emotional sensitivity are critical in developing listener trust, especially among younger audiences (Lau, 2021; Phillips-Hutton, 2018).

Not all process elements contribute equally to shaping customer perceptions. Routine mechanisms were identified as the most impactful, while scheduling practices contributed the least to the overall construct (Heizer & Render, 2006; Kotler & Keller, 2012). These findings emphasize the need for indie musicians to implement structured, consistent engagement practices to remain competitive in the dynamic and fast-paced digital music environment (Daskalopoulou & Skandalis, 2019; Fonseca et al., 2021).

4.2. Customer Loyalty

Trust refers to respondents' belief that Bogor-based indie musicians can consistently engage them through their music on Spotify. Emotional commitment indicates a long-term psychological attachment to the musicians and their artistic expression. Switching costs reflect the respondents' preference to remain loyal, even when alternatives are available. Word of mouth denotes the willingness to recommend the musicians to others, while cooperation reflects active support for the artists' continued presence and growth on the platform.

The mean scores for all indicators were relatively high, particularly for *cooperation* (M = 4.34) and *word of mouth* (M = 4.11), suggesting a strong level of listener engagement and advocacy. Pearson correlation analysis showed moderate relationships between each loyalty indicator and the overall customer loyalty construct, with R-values ranging from 0.402 to 0.475. These results confirm that each indicator contributes meaningfully to the perception of loyalty, although none emerged as a singularly dominant dimension.

These findings reinforce the understanding that customer loyalty is shaped by satisfaction and emotional bonds, advocacy behaviors, and sustained psychological commitment (Budur & Poturak, 2021; Griffin, 2002; R. Hidayat, 2009). On digital music platforms, such loyalty reflects a deeper relational dynamic between users and content creators, particularly when listeners perceive trust, value alignment, and shared identity with the musicians they follow (Anisa & Tjhin, 2023; Wahid, 2021).

4.3. The Influence of E-Communication Marketing Element (7P) on Customer Loyalty

The multiple linear regression analysis results revealed that the Promotion and People variables had the most substantial impact on customer loyalty, with standardized coefficients of 0.216 and 0.195, respectively. This finding suggests that well-executed promotional strategies and effective human engagement are essential to building and sustaining customer loyalty.

The Product variable (β = 0.192) and Price (β = 0.146) also demonstrated meaningful effects, highlighting the importance of product quality and price affordability in shaping positive consumer perceptions. Physical Evidence contributed positively (β = 0.100), although to a lesser extent. Meanwhile, Process (β = 0.058) and Place (β = 0.050) had the lowest influence among the predictors; however, most of these effects remained statistically significant.

The model explained 45.1% of the variance in customer loyalty, indicating that the combined influence of the 7Ps marketing mix is a moderately strong predictor. The overall pattern of influence is consistent with findings reported in previous studies. The p-values for most variables ranged from 0.01 to 0.02, indicating statistical significance at the 95% confidence level. However, the Place variable recorded a p-value of 0.07, suggesting that its effect on customer loyalty is not statistically significant in this context.
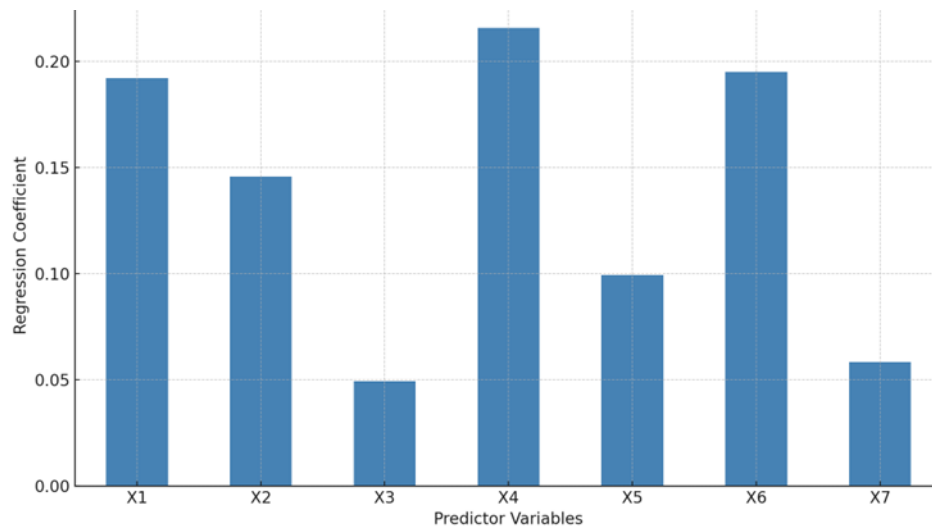
Figure 2. Regression Coefficient of Predictor Variables

These results indicate that the null hypothesis (H_0)—which posits that the 7P marketing mix has no significant effect on customer loyalty—must be rejected. Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, confirming that the 7P marketing mix has a statistically significant and positive effect on customer loyalty.

4.4. The Roles of Marketing Mix and Customer Loyalty as an Insight into Indie Musicians' E-Marketing Communication Strategy for Fighting Marginalization: A Discussion

The results showed that all indicators within the e-communication marketing mix (7P) received high category ratings, except for the Place variable, which was categorized as fair. Regression analysis confirmed that Promotion and People had the strongest effects on customer loyalty, whereas Place had the weakest and was statistically insignificant. This finding indicates that the geographical origin of musicians, specifically from Bogor City and Regency, did not significantly enhance the perceived value of indie music products (Collet & Rémy, 2023; Wahid, 2021). This outcome reflects the declining importance of physical location in shaping loyalty within digital-native contexts and suggests that emotional connection now holds greater influence than geographic proximity (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Spotify listeners showed strong acceptance of other components of the marketing mix. While product and price also influence loyalty, their effects are secondary to promotion and people. This suggests that functional attributes such as product quality and price competitiveness remain relevant but are not sufficient on their own. Without emotional and relational engagement, these factors are unlikely to sustain long-term loyalty (Lau, 2021; Phillips-Hutton, 2018). Listeners acknowledged the value of indie music from Bogor (Blythe, 2009; Ding et al., 2010; Islam et al., 2013; P. Kotler & G. Armstrong, 2010), yet their loyalty was largely driven by emotional resonance rather than rational evaluation alone.

Promotion strategies, particularly community relationships and personal selling, fostered loyalty. These findings agree that relational marketing is more effective than traditional advertising in cultivating loyalty toward cultural products (Daskalopoulou & Skandalis, 2019; Pilati et al., 2025; Wahid, 2021). Practical promotional efforts carried out on Spotify and across social media platforms enabled musicians to maintain direct, ongoing engagement with their audiences, thereby strengthening emotional bonds (Abdullah, 2012; Abdurrahman, 2015; Kusumawati et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020).

Although digitalization has enabled music to be consumed without physical presence, listeners still place considerable value on tangible branding elements. Respondents considered musical quality and performance, equipment, visual identity, cover designs, logos, and color schemes (Blythe, 2009). This challenges the assumption that digital music consumption is purely auditory and supports the view that visual identity remains a significant social marker in digital environments (Philip et al., 2023). In Indonesia's collectivist cultural context, such visual representations may function as communal symbols, reinforcing loyalty (Aji et al., 2021; Wahid, 2021).

The People variable showed the highest internal correlations among all indicators, particularly for responsiveness and empathy. These results affirm the theoretical perspective that human interaction and service quality dimensions play a critical role in shaping customer perceptions (Lupiyoadi, 2013). Indonesian Spotify users favored musicians who consistently engaged with their audience, reflecting cultural preferences for emotional proximity rather than detached admiration (Lau, 2021; Wahid, 2021). Unlike many Western indie scenes, which often emphasize artistic autonomy and emotional distance (Standing et al., 2016), Indonesian indie audiences tend to expect closeness, co-creation, and relational solidarity.

In the Process dimension, routine mechanisms were more influential than scheduling practices. However, consistency in operations alone was insufficient to generate loyalty unless paired with emotional engagement strategies (Kotler & Keller, 2012). This finding suggests that while operational efficiency builds initial trust, emotional storytelling and narrative continuity are necessary to cultivate deeper loyalty (Heizer & Render, 2006).

The emergence of cooperation as the strongest indicator of customer loyalty, with the highest mean score, highlights a distinctive form of fandom. Listeners were not merely passive consumers, but rather active participants in promoting and sustaining the visibility of indie musicians (Budur & Poturak, 2021; Griffin, 2002; R. Hidayat, 2009). This phenomenon contrasts with global indie markets, where audiences often prioritize artistic independence over direct engagement (Frenneaux, 2023; Sanders et al., 2022). In Indonesia, indie music fandom is characterized by community involvement, mutual support, and emotional co-creation, reflecting broader collectivist cultural patterns (Wahid, 2021).

These findings carry broader theoretical implications. First, the limited significance of the Place variable suggests that the 7P framework may require adaptation for digital-native cultural industries. Specifically, physical location should be reframed into symbolic and emotional geographies (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Suryana, 2013). Second, the dominance of relational dimensions such as Promotion and People indicates that loyalty on digital platforms like Spotify is driven less by transactional marketing and more by emotionally embedded and community-oriented strategies (Anisa & Tjhin, 2023; Santos & Schlesinger, 2021).

While digitalization has democratized access for indie musicians, it has also introduced new structural barriers, including algorithmic bias and platform-controlled visibility (Collet & Rémy, 2023). Therefore, emotionally loyal audiences may not guarantee visibility or commercial success unless musicians adopt strategic digital positioning and hybrid marketing approaches (Hracs & Webster, 2021; Standing et al., 2016). Future research should explore these structural challenges more thoroughly by investigating how platform algorithms and commercialization trends interact with emotional loyalty dynamics.

Although the 7P marketing mix remains a relevant framework, it should be complemented by models emphasizing emotional value creation, symbolic branding, and participatory community engagement. Such integrated approaches are essential to fully capture the processes of loyalty formation in the Indonesian indie music ecosystem.

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5. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that the e-communication marketing mix (7P) plays a significant role in shaping customer loyalty within the digital music ecosystem, providing indie musicians in Bogor with a strategic avenue to resist marginalization by the mainstream music industry. In contrast to traditional marketing frameworks that emphasize functional attributes, the findings revealed that emotional engagement, particularly through the Promotion and People dimensions, has become central to the formation of customer loyalty. This suggests that the classical 7P framework should be expanded to incorporate elements such as emotional value creation, symbolic branding, and participatory audience engagement, especially in indie music marketing.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the broader discourse on digital marketing and cultural production by proposing that loyalty within streaming platforms is shaped more by relational dynamics than by transactional exchanges. Emotional closeness, community support, and collaborative engagement emerged as key characteristics of loyalty among Indonesian indie music listeners. These traits distinguish Indonesian indie audiences from the more individualistic loyalty patterns commonly observed in Western music scenes and highlight the influence of cultural context, particularly collectivist social values, on loyalty formation in digital spaces.

The findings suggest indie musicians should adopt hybrid marketing strategies that integrate emotional storytelling, consistent visual identity, and sustained audience interaction. Beyond producing music, indie musicians are encouraged to invest in visual branding through compelling cover art, distinctive logos, and consistent color schemes. They should also maintain emotionally resonant communication with their audience via social media and design participatory experiences that position fans as co-creators of artistic value. Indie musicians must balance creative storytelling, strong branding, and active community involvement to thrive in algorithm-driven digital platforms.

While this study offers valuable insights, it acknowledges a key limitation: its exclusive focus on Spotify users. This focus may constrain the generalizability of the findings to other streaming services that operate under different algorithmic systems and audience dynamics. Future research should therefore investigate loyalty formation across multiple platforms to better understand how digital ecosystems shape listener behavior. Additionally, further inquiry is needed into how AI-based recommendation systems, commercialization trends, and platform governance structures interact with emotional loyalty. Such research would deepen understanding of how indie musicians can preserve artistic integrity while navigating the evolving landscape of digital cultural production.

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The author has declared no potential conflicts of interest regarding this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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