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Brand Loyalty in the Subscription Economy

Challenges for Marketers: An Integrated Oliver's Loyalty Model and Expectation Confirmation Model Perspective

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Abstract
This research examines the key factors influencing brand loyalty in the subscription economy and the challenges faced by marketers in retaining customers within subscription-based business models. As access-based consumption increasingly replaces traditional ownership, industries such as streaming services, software platforms, online education, and digital applications rely heavily on recurring subscription revenue. Despite the rapid growth of subscription services, sustaining long-term customer loyalty remains a major concern because of intense competition, low switching costs, and rising customer expectations. Grounded in Oliver's Loyalty Model and the Expectation Confirmation Model, the study evaluates how Brand Trust, Brand Satisfaction, Brand Experience, Brand Value, Brand Personality, and Brand Reputation influence Brand Loyalty, and how Brand Loyalty in turn affects Subscription Retention Intention. A quantitative research design was adopted, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 200 active users of subscription-based services using convenience sampling. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and multiple linear regression in SPSS. The regression model explained a substantial proportion of variance in Brand Loyalty ($R^2 = .798$, Adjusted $R^2 = .791$), but only Brand Trust ($\beta = .336$, $p < .001$) and Brand Experience ($\beta = .405$, $p < .001$) emerged as statistically significant predictors; Brand Satisfaction, Brand Value, Brand Personality, and Brand Reputation did not reach significance once entered jointly. The findings indicate that loyalty in subscription-based services is driven primarily by consistent, trustworthy service experience rather than by conventional branding attributes such as image, personality, or reputation. The study concludes that sustaining brand loyalty in the subscription economy requires continuous value delivery, transparent communication, and dependable service performance, and offers practical guidance for marketers seeking to reduce churn and strengthen long-term subscriber relationships.

Keywords Brand Loyalty; Subscription Economy; Brand Trust; Brand Experience; Customer Retention Intention; Oliver's Loyalty Model; Expectation Confirmation Model

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction

Consumer buying behaviour has changed drastically in the current business environment because of the growing shift from ownership-based consumption to access-based consumption. Rather than purchasing products or services outright, consumers increasingly subscribe to services that provide recurring access and continuous benefit. This shift reflects a broader change in consumption patterns in which convenience and continued value matter more than outright ownership, and it has spread across industries worldwide, reshaping conventional business models and consumer-company relationships [11]. The subscription concept is now well established in video and music streaming, software services, mobile applications, online education, food delivery, health and wellness, and personal care.

The popularity of subscription services is driven largely by consumers' rising need for convenience, flexibility, and cost efficiency. Subscription plans reduce large upfront payments and allow customers to pay smaller, recurring amounts for continuous access, while also offering regular updates and personalised offerings that enhance perceived value and satisfaction [12]. For businesses, subscription models create stable, predictable revenue streams and long-term customer relationships. However, as more organisations adopt subscription strategies, competition has intensified, and customers can easily compare similar offerings and switch providers.

This has made brand loyalty a central problem in the subscription economy. Unlike traditional markets, where loyalty is shaped by habitual purchasing or a lack of alternatives, subscription customers can cancel or switch providers with minimal effort at any time. Even minor changes, such as a price increase, a service outage, or a decline in perceived value, can trigger cancellation [10]. This flexibility weakens the stability of customer loyalty and lowers the cost of switching, meaning loyalty in subscription businesses must be actively sustained through consistent value delivery and positive service experiences. For marketers, this raises the stakes of customer relationship management: beyond acquiring new subscribers, they must keep existing ones engaged over the long term through service quality, trust, transparency, personalisation, and emotional connection [13].

B. Background of the Study

The subscription economy has expanded rapidly over the past decade as consumer preferences shift toward access, convenience, and flexibility rather than permanent ownership, prompting businesses across entertainment, software, education, food delivery, fitness, and personal care to adopt subscription-based models [11]. Digitalisation high-speed internet, smartphones, mobile applications, and online payment systems has been central to this growth, making it easy for customers to subscribe, renew, or cancel services, while also enabling companies to gather usage data and personalise offerings. This has simultaneously raised customer expectations for continuous service quality, transparent pricing, and constant innovation [12].

Traditional purchase relationships were largely transactional, with limited contact between customer and brand after the point of sale. Subscription relationships, by contrast, are ongoing and dynamic: customers reassess the value of a service at every billing cycle and can cancel immediately if quality, relevance, or value is perceived to decline [10]. This continuous review means that customer retention has become more critical than acquisition for subscription-dependent businesses. The ease of switching to competing services compounds this challenge, since customers face an abundance of comparable subscriptions with similar features and prices a dynamic that classic marketing literature on brand loyalty has not fully addressed, underscoring the need for research specific to subscription-based business models.

C. Research Problem

The inability to sustain long-term brand loyalty is one of the most pressing issues facing subscription-based businesses. Because subscriptions can be cancelled, paused, or switched with minimal friction, customers hold greater power, and loyalty becomes volatile and contingent on short-term satisfaction rather than long-term commitment [10]. High customer churn is a direct consequence: many customers cancel after a limited period once they perceive diminishing value, and cancellations can be triggered by comparatively minor issues such as price increases, absent new content, or poor customer support [11].

Rising customer acquisition costs compound this problem. Subscription businesses invest heavily in advertising, free trials, and promotional discounts to attract subscribers, but these investments generate limited long-term returns if customers fail to remain loyal, pressuring firms to keep spending on acquisition instead of strengthening existing relationships [12]. Issues of trust and transparency such as unclear pricing, hidden charges, and data-privacy concerns further erode customer confidence and accelerate cancellation intent [13]. Although brand loyalty has been studied extensively in traditional marketing, research specifically addressing loyalty within subscription-based business models remains limited, leaving a gap in understanding of the factors that drive loyalty and the difficulties marketers face in retaining subscribers.

D. Research Questions and Objectives

Guided by the research problem outlined above, this study addresses the following research questions:

1) What are the key factors that influence customer loyalty towards subscription-based services?
2) How does continuous value delivery service quality, regular updates, and personalisation affect customers' decisions to continue or cancel subscriptions?
3) What are the major challenges faced by marketers in maintaining brand loyalty in the subscription economy?
4) How do trust and transparency, including pricing clarity and communication, influence customer loyalty in subscription-based businesses?
5) What role does customer experience play in shaping long-term loyalty towards subscription services?

In line with these questions, the objectives of the study are:

1) To identify the key factors that influence customer loyalty towards subscription-based services.
2) To examine the impact of continuous value delivery on customers' subscription renewal decisions.
3) To analyse the major challenges faced by marketers in maintaining brand loyalty in the subscription economy.
4) To study the role of trust and transparency in influencing customer loyalty.
5) To understand customer behaviour related to subscription continuation and cancellation.
6) To suggest strategies that can help subscription-based businesses improve retention and reduce churn.

E. Significance of the Study

This research contributes to marketing literature by extending the discussion of brand loyalty into subscription-based business models, which involve continuous customer contact and recurring renewal decisions rather than the episodic contact typical of traditional retail. It clarifies how continuous value delivery, trust, personalisation, and customer experience drive loyalty in a subscription context, providing a foundation that future researchers can build on when studying loyalty in digital and subscription markets.

Practically, the findings assist marketers, managers, and owners of subscription-based businesses in understanding why customers renew or cancel subscriptions, enabling more effective retention strategies rather than an over-reliance on new-customer acquisition. Insights on service quality, customer experience, transparency, and trust can help organisations reduce churn, maximise customer lifetime value, and build the stable, long-term relationships needed for sustainable revenue growth in an increasingly competitive subscription landscape.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Overview

The subscription economy has grown into a distinctive competitive arena in which loyalty cannot be assumed to operate the way it does in traditional retail. Because subscription relationships are continuous rather than transactional, and because switching costs are typically low, customers reassess their commitment at every billing cycle rather than making a single purchase decision [4], [10]. This chapter reviews the theoretical foundations relevant to loyalty formation and continuance in subscription contexts, synthesises literature on the constructs central to this study, develops the research hypotheses, and identifies the gap that this research addresses.

B. Theoretical Foundations

Oliver's Loyalty Model conceptualises loyalty as developing through four progressive stages cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty indicating that genuine brand loyalty is a psychological commitment rather than mere repetitive behaviour [9], [15]. Cognitive loyalty arises when customers judge a brand as superior based on attributes, features, or price; it is the weakest form because it is easily disrupted by competitive offers. Affective loyalty develops when positive experiences generate favourable attitudes and emotional attachment, extending beyond functional comparison. Conative loyalty reflects a behavioural intention or commitment to continue, while action loyalty converts that commitment into repeated renewal behaviour and a willingness to overcome barriers to continue the relationship. This staged view is well suited to subscription businesses, where customers reconsider their commitment at recurring intervals and where different factors may influence loyalty at different stages [16].

The Expectation Confirmation Model (ECM) explains continued-usage intentions through a cycle of initial expectations, usage, perceived performance, confirmation or disconfirmation of those expectations, and resulting satisfaction, which in turn shapes continuance intention [17]. Positive confirmation reinforces satisfaction and continuance, whereas negative disconfirmation produces dissatisfaction and potential churn. This process is inherently repetitive in subscription services because it recurs at every billing cycle rather than occurring once, and perceived usefulness can change over time as consumption patterns, competitive alternatives, and customer needs evolve [3]. Combined with Oliver's model, the ECM provides a complementary lens: Oliver's model explains the psychological progression toward loyalty, while the ECM illuminates the cognitive-affective evaluation that recurs at each renewal decision.

C. Subscription Loyalty and Customer Retention

Brand loyalty is traditionally understood as a customer's resistance to switching brands despite situational influences and competitive marketing [1]. In subscription contexts, however, loyalty takes on distinctive characteristics: every billing cycle represents an active or passive retention decision, and low switching costs create what has been described as friction-free cancellation [7]. Customers can also fall prey to a flat-rate bias overestimating planned usage relative to actual usage and, as awareness of their own consumption grows, may cancel subscriptions they once found appealing. Subscription fatigue, in which customers accumulate more subscriptions than they can justify and periodically prune lower-priority ones, adds a further competitive dimension in which services compete not only within their category but against the customer's entire subscription budget.

Retention refers to the continuity of service consumption expressed through repeated renewal decisions, and while it is related to loyalty, the relationship is not strictly linear; the two constructs are mediated by usage behaviour, switching costs, and commitment type (affective, continuance, or normative) [6]. Research indicates that retention gains can disproportionately improve profitability in subscription-based businesses, but the relationship between satisfaction and retention is often complicated by inertia and auto-renewal defaults, which can generate retention without genuine satisfaction. Perceived value, similarly, is reassessed continuously rather than once at the point of purchase, meaning even objectively good subscriptions can be cancelled once customers no longer perceive proportionate benefit.

D. Perceived Service Quality and Value

Service-quality dimensions relevant to subscriptions extend beyond traditional models to include platform reliability, personalisation quality, content or feature quality, usability, customer-support quality, frequency of updates, and pricing transparency. Reliability failures or unexpected costs can prompt swift cancellation consideration, while personalisation enabled by continuous usage data has been linked directly to satisfaction and retention through enhanced perceived value and reduced search costs. Perceived value itself is dynamic in subscriptions, combining utilitarian, hedonic, economic, convenience, social, and discovery dimensions that are continually re-evaluated rather than fixed at the point of purchase [8], [14]. Value can also erode over time as novelty fades or as customers accumulate multiple subscriptions, generating a form of value dilution that pressures marketers to sustain rather than merely establish perceived value.

E. Customer Engagement, Switching Barriers, and Price Sensitivity

Engagement in subscription contexts is expressed through usage intensity, platform interaction, content creation, and social participation, all of which have been linked to reduced churn; conversely, engagement fatigue can occur when interaction demands become excessive [2]. Switching barriers in subscriptions differ from those in traditional markets: financial switching costs are often minimal, but customer lock-in can arise from accumulated personal data, learned habits, and integration with other tools or ecosystems, alongside contractual commitments in some pricing tiers. At the same time, the ready availability of free trials and promotional rates lowers the risk of experimenting with competitors, intensifying competitive pressure. Price sensitivity is amplified by the visibility of recurring charges, comparisons against alternative acquisition methods, and the cumulative burden of multiple subscriptions, all of which shape ongoing value-for-money assessments that traditional, one-time purchase models do not require.

F. Relationship between Brand-Related Variables and Brand Loyalty

Brand trust reflects customers' confidence that a subscription service will consistently deliver value, handle recurring payments appropriately, and protect personal data. Because subscriptions involve repeated financial commitments, trust reduces perceived risk and uncertainty and has been linked to lower churn and stronger emotional commitment [1], [6].

Brand satisfaction is the cumulative affective and cognitive evaluation formed across repeated service encounters, billing cycles, and usage experiences rather than a single transaction. Satisfaction has been associated with repurchase intention, tolerance of minor service lapses, and reduced sensitivity to competitor offers, as well as stronger word-of-mouth and premium-tier adoption.

Brand experience captures the cumulative sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses generated across the customer journey from sign-up and onboarding through ongoing use, support interactions, and recurring billing. Positive, seamless experiences have been linked to stronger attitudinal and behavioural loyalty and to lower perceived risk in continuing a subscription relationship.

Brand value reflects customers' overall assessment of functional, emotional, and monetary benefit relative to repeated cost. Because subscription value is reassessed continuously, consistent value perception has been associated with greater trust, tolerance of price increases, and reduced likelihood of cancellation.

Brand personality refers to the human-like traits customers attribute to a subscription brand, which can support emotional bonding and self-expressive value, particularly where core service delivery is easily replicated by competitors. Personality-brand congruence with a customer's self-concept has been linked to stronger attitudinal loyalty and advocacy.

Brand reputation represents the cumulative impressions customers and other stakeholders hold regarding a brand's reliability, quality, and trustworthiness. In subscription contexts, reputation can reduce perceived risk associated with recurring payments and long-term reliance on a single provider, and has been linked to renewal intention and tolerance of occasional service issues.

G. Hypothesis Development

Based on the literature reviewed above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1) Brand Trust has a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty in subscription-based services. (H1)
2) Brand Satisfaction has a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty in subscription-based services. (H2)
3) Brand Experience has a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty in subscription-based services. (H3)
4) Brand Value has a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty in subscription-based services. (H4)
5) Brand Personality has a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty in subscription-based services. (H5)
6) Brand Reputation has a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty in subscription-based services. (H6)

H. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework integrates Oliver's Loyalty Model and the Expectation Confirmation Model, positing that six brand-related constructs Brand Trust, Brand Satisfaction, Brand Experience, Brand Value, Brand Personality, and Brand Reputation each exert a direct effect on Brand Loyalty, which subsequently drives Subscription Retention Intention as the ultimate outcome variable.

Brand Trust	
Brand Satisfaction	**Brand Loyalty**

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Brand Experience	↓
Brand Value	**Subscription Retention Intention**
Brand Personality	
Brand Reputation	

Fig. 1. Theoretical Framework (Source: Developed for research)

I. Research Gap

Although Oliver's Loyalty Model and the Expectation Confirmation Model offer useful theoretical lenses, neither was originally developed for subscription contexts, and the applicability of Oliver's four-stage progression to businesses where loyalty must be proactively renewed at every billing cycle remains under-examined [9], [16]. Conventional loyalty metrics, such as repeat-purchase rate or share of wallet, also map imperfectly onto subscription environments where customers may hold either a single exclusive subscription or a portfolio of subscriptions across categories, and where attitudinal loyalty and behavioural retention can diverge because of inertia or auto-renewal defaults.

Much of the existing brand-loyalty literature has examined satisfaction, perceived value, brand personality, and reputation in traditional retail or transactional service settings characterised by episodic customer contact. Comparatively little empirical work has jointly tested these constructs, alongside trust and experience, within the continuous, low-switching-cost environment of subscription services, and even less has done so with reference to Malaysian subscription users. This study addresses that gap by empirically testing an integrated model of six brand-related antecedents of Brand Loyalty and its downstream effect on Subscription Retention Intention among active subscribers.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Introduction

This chapter describes how the theoretical framework and hypotheses developed in Section II were translated into a measurable, empirically testable research design. It presents the research framework, operational definitions of the study variables, the sampling design and data-collection procedure, the structure of the research instrument, and the statistical techniques used to analyse the data.

B. Operational Definitions of Research Variables

Variable	Operational Definition
Brand Loyalty	Psychological devotion and behavioural intention to remain subscribed, expressed through renewal intention, resistance to alternatives, and positive advocacy.
Brand Trust	Confidence in the reliability, integrity, and ability of the provider to deliver promised value while safeguarding customer interests and data.
Brand Satisfaction	Cumulative evaluation of satisfaction with subscription experiences across interactions and billing cycles.
Brand Experience	Subjective sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses evoked across the subscription journey, including onboarding.
Brand Value	Customer assessment of benefits obtained relative to price paid, based on perceived quality and value-for-money.
Brand Personality	Human traits attributed to the subscription brand that foster emotional bonding, identity expression, and relational attachment.
Brand Reputation	Combined perceptions of credibility, quality, reliability, and market standing based on cumulative brand performance.
Subscription Retention Intention	The outcome variable reflecting a customer's behavioural intention to continue a subscription, as influenced by Brand Loyalty.

TABLE I OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF RESEARCH VARIABLES

C. Research Framework and Hypotheses

The research framework connects theory with empirical investigation, positing that Brand Trust, Brand Satisfaction, Brand Experience, Brand Value, Brand Personality, and Brand Reputation each exert a direct effect on Brand Loyalty, which in turn is expected to shape Subscription Retention Intention. Hypotheses H1 through H6, presented in Section II-G, are formulated and tested empirically on this basis.

D. Sources of Research Data

The study relies primarily on primary data, since only direct responses from active subscription users can adequately capture loyalty and retention behaviour. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to users of subscription-based services. Secondary data academic journals, industry reports, and prior theses were used to support theory development, refine measurement scales, and interpret the empirical results.

E. Sampling Design

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used, appropriate given the impracticality of constructing a complete sampling frame of subscription users. Respondents were required to be actively using at least one subscription-based service to ensure data relevance. A sample of 200 respondents was collected, a size considered sufficient to support reliability testing and multiple regression analysis. While convenience sampling limits statistical generalisability, it is well suited to exploratory research on consumer attitudes in a fast-growing area such as the

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subscription economy, and it supports examination of relationships between variables rather than population-level generalisation.

F. Research Instrument and Data Collection

Data were collected through a self-administered online questionnaire comprising three sections. Section A captured demographic and subscription-usage information (gender, age, education, occupation, income, frequency of use, types of subscription used, monthly spending, and most frequently used platform). Section B measured the six independent variables Brand Loyalty (8 items), Brand Trust (6 items), Brand Satisfaction (8 items), Brand Experience (12 items), Brand Value (4 items), Brand Personality (25 items across sincerity, excitement, ruggedness, competence, and sophistication sub-dimensions), and Brand Reputation (5 items) using established scales adapted from prior marketing and consumer-behaviour research. Section C measured Subscription Retention Intention as the dependent outcome. All items used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was distributed online, with respondents assured of anonymity and confidentiality and informed of the study's academic purpose.

G. Data Analysis

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Frequency analysis described the demographic and subscription-usage profile of respondents. Reliability analysis used Cronbach's Alpha to assess internal consistency, interpreted as: 0.91–1.00 excellent, 0.81–0.90 good, 0.71–0.80 good and acceptable, 0.61–0.70 acceptable, and 0.01–0.60 non-acceptable. Multiple linear regression analysis was then used to test the hypothesised relationships between the six independent variables and Brand Loyalty, with Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) diagnostics used to check for multicollinearity among predictors.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section presents the analysis of data collected from 200 valid respondents using IBM SPSS Statistics. It begins with the demographic and subscription-usage profile of respondents, followed by reliability analysis, multiple regression analysis, and the summary of hypothesis testing.

A. Profile of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	157	78.5
Female	43	21.5
Total	200	100

TABLE II GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
21–30 years	192	96.0
31–40 years	3	1.5
41–50 years	3	1.5
51–60 years	2	1.0
Total	200	100

TABLE III AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Higher Secondary	8	4.0
Undergraduate	22	11.0
Postgraduate	168	84.0
Others	2	1.0
Total	200	100

TABLE IV EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Student	175	87.5
Employed	16	8.0
Self-Employed	5	2.5
Homemaker	4	2.0
Total	200	100

TABLE V OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

Monthly Spending	Frequency	Percent
Below 500	129	64.5
501–1,500	56	28.0
1,501–3,000	11	5.5
Above 3,000	4	2.0
Total	200	100

TABLE VI MONTHLY SPENDING ON SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

Most-Used Platform	Frequency	Percent
OTT Platforms	108	54.0
Music Platforms	42	21.0
Food Delivery	31	15.5
Learning Platforms	13	6.5
Fitness Apps	6	3.0
Total	200	100

TABLE VII MOST FREQUENTLY USED SUBSCRIPTION PLATFORM

The demographic profile shows that the sample was predominantly male (78.5%) and concentrated in the 21–30 age bracket (96.0%), reflecting a young, digitally engaged population. Most respondents held postgraduate qualifications (84.0%) and were students (87.5%), consistent with the predominantly lower income levels reported. Video-streaming (OTT) platforms were the most frequently used subscription category, and most respondents (64.5%) spent below 500 per month on subscriptions, indicating a preference for affordable, cost-efficient plans. Overall, the sample represents young, educated, moderately price-sensitive consumers who are active users of digital subscription services an appropriate population for examining loyalty formation in the subscription economy, though the concentration in a single age and occupation band should be borne in mind when interpreting the results.

B. Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Brand Loyalty	0.815	8
Brand Trust	0.720	6
Brand Satisfaction	0.801	8
Brand Experience	0.880	12
Brand Value	0.661	4
Brand Personality	0.932	25
Brand Reputation	0.677	5

TABLE VIII RELIABILITY STATISTICS

All constructs recorded Cronbach's Alpha values above the 0.60 acceptability threshold. Brand Personality (0.932) and Brand Experience (0.880) demonstrated the strongest internal consistency, while Brand Value (0.661) and Brand Reputation (0.677) met the acceptable, though comparatively lower, range. These results confirm that the measurement items reliably captured their intended constructs and were suitable for subsequent regression analysis.

C. Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the combined and individual effects of the six independent variables on Brand Loyalty.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.893	.798	.791	.23291

TABLE IX REGRESSION MODEL SUMMARY

Predictors: (Constant), Brand Trust, Brand Experience, Brand Value, Brand Personality, Brand Satisfaction, Brand Reputation.

The model shows a strong positive relationship between the combined predictors and Brand Loyalty ($R = .893$). The predictors jointly explain 79.8% of the variance in Brand Loyalty ($R^2 = .798$; Adjusted $R^2 = .791$), and the closeness of R^2 to the adjusted value indicates a well-fitted model that is not overfitted.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	34.778	6	5.796	106.855	.000
Residual	8.788	162	0.054		
Total	43.566	168			

TABLE X ANOVA

The regression model as a whole is statistically significant ($F(6,162) = 106.855$, $p < .001$), confirming that the combined set of independent variables significantly predicts variation in Brand Loyalty.

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	VIF
(Constant)	-0.017	0.209		-0.081	.935	
Brand Trust	0.358	0.060	.336	5.971	<.001	2.45
Brand Experience	0.411	0.085	.405	4.859	<.001	2.88
Brand Value	0.107	0.080	.102	1.339	.182	2.31
Brand Personality	0.133	0.140	.116	0.952	.343	3.02
Brand Satisfaction	-0.037	0.038	-.035	-0.961	.338	1.89
Brand Reputation	0.020	0.093	.018	0.221	.826	3.15

TABLE XI REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty. VIF values below 5 indicate no serious multicollinearity.

Brand Trust ($\beta = .336$, $p < .001$) and Brand Experience ($\beta = .405$, $p < .001$) emerged as statistically significant, positive predictors of Brand Loyalty, with Brand Experience showing the strongest standardised effect in the model. Brand Value ($\beta = .102$, $p = .182$), Brand Personality ($\beta = .116$, $p = .343$), Brand Satisfaction ($\beta = -.035$, $p = .338$), and Brand Reputation ($\beta = .018$, $p = .826$) did not reach statistical significance once all predictors were entered jointly, despite positive bivariate associations reported in the literature. All VIF values remained below 5, indicating that multicollinearity did not distort the coefficient estimates.

D. Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	p-value	Result
H1: Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	<.001	Supported
H2: Brand Satisfaction → Brand Loyalty	.338	Not Supported
H3: Brand Experience → Brand Loyalty	<.001	Supported
H4: Brand Value → Brand Loyalty	.182	Not Supported
H5: Brand Personality → Brand Loyalty	.343	Not Supported
H6: Brand Reputation → Brand Loyalty	.826	Not Supported

TABLE XII SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Only two of the six hypothesised relationships were supported. H1 (Brand Trust) and H3 (Brand Experience) were both statistically significant, confirming that trust and experience are key drivers of loyalty in subscription-based services. H2, H4, H5, and H6 were not supported once all predictors were considered jointly, indicating that Brand Satisfaction, Brand Value, Brand Personality, and Brand Reputation do not exert an independent, statistically significant effect on Brand Loyalty in this model, even though each showed a positive coefficient direction.

V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Findings of the Study

The regression results show that Brand Experience ($\beta = .405$, $p < .001$) and Brand Trust ($\beta = .336$, $p < .001$) are the strongest and only statistically significant predictors of Brand Loyalty among the six variables tested, together with the other predictors explaining 79.8% of the variance in loyalty. This indicates that customers remain loyal to subscription services primarily when they have positive, consistent service experiences and place confidence in the brand's reliability, rather than because of satisfaction, perceived value, brand personality, or reputation considered in isolation.

Continuous value delivery is closely tied to the strength of the Brand Experience effect: because customers reassess their subscription at every billing cycle, sustained service quality, personalisation, and engagement are critical to renewal, consistent with the Expectation Confirmation Model's emphasis on ongoing confirmation of expectations. The non-significance of Brand Satisfaction, Brand Value, Brand Personality, and Brand Reputation in the joint model represents one of the central challenges for marketers: customers can be satisfied, perceive good value, or hold a favourable brand image and still switch providers, meaning conventional branding levers alone are insufficient to secure retention in a low-switching-cost environment.

The significant effect of Brand Trust confirms that customers are more inclined to remain loyal when they are confident about billing accuracy, data protection, and the brand's overall reliability concerns that are amplified by the recurring, automatic-renewal nature of subscription payments. Demographically, respondents were concentrated among young, price-conscious, frequent users of OTT platforms, suggesting that continuation decisions for this segment are closely tied to whether the service continues to feel engaging, convenient, and trustworthy relative to its recurring cost.

B. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

Theoretically, the study extends Oliver's Loyalty Model and the Expectation Confirmation Model into the subscription context, showing that loyalty in recurring-revenue settings is shaped more by ongoing experiential and trust-based evaluation than by the cognitive brand-image variables (satisfaction, value, personality, reputation) that dominate traditional loyalty research. This adds a experience-and-trust-centred perspective to the literature on digital and subscription-based consumer behaviour.

Managerially, subscription-based businesses should prioritise consistent, high-quality customer experience across every touchpoint onboarding, usage, support, and billing over reliance on promotional or brand-image campaigns. Firms should also invest in transparent billing, clear communication of subscription terms, and robust data-privacy safeguards to build the trust that underpins long-term renewal. Because Brand Personality and Brand Reputation were not significant predictors, marketing spend directed purely at brand-image building is unlikely, on its own, to reduce churn as effectively as investment in service reliability and experiential quality.

C. Study Recommendations

1) Invest in customer-experience management, including usable, well-designed digital interfaces and consistent service quality at every touchpoint across the subscription journey.
2) Strengthen trust mechanisms through transparent billing, clear communication of subscription terms, and strong data-privacy protections.
3) Shift marketing emphasis from brand-image campaigns toward continuous service innovation and personalised engagement.
4) Track experience-based feedback and usage signals continuously to identify dissatisfaction early and intervene before cancellation.
5) Tailor retention strategies to price-sensitive, digitally native segments by maintaining affordable, flexible plan options.

D. Limitations of the Study

The sample of 200 respondents was concentrated in the 21–30 age group and predominantly composed of students, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other age groups, income levels, or occupational segments. The cross-sectional design captured perceptions at a single point in time and cannot reveal how loyalty evolves across multiple renewal cycles. The model was also restricted to six brand-related variables and did not incorporate other potentially relevant factors such as switching costs, perceived risk, technological usability, or promotional incentives. Finally, reliance on self-reported survey data raises the possibility of social-desirability or response bias.

E. Scope for Future Research

Future research could employ larger, more demographically diverse samples spanning a wider range of ages, incomes, and occupations to improve generalisability. Longitudinal designs would help clarify how trust and experience shape loyalty across multiple subscription renewal cycles. Incorporating additional variables such as switching costs, perceived risk, technological usability, and emotional attachment and comparing findings across subscription categories (OTT, SaaS, fitness, e-learning) could yield a more comprehensive model. Qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could further illuminate the motivations behind subscription renewal and cancellation decisions.

F. Conclusion

This study examined the antecedents of brand loyalty in the subscription economy using an integrated framework grounded in Oliver's Loyalty Model and the Expectation Confirmation Model. Of the six hypothesised brand-related variables, only Brand Trust and Brand Experience emerged as statistically significant predictors of Brand Loyalty, together with the full model explaining 79.8% of the variance in loyalty. Brand Satisfaction, Brand Value, Brand Personality, and Brand Reputation, despite positive associations reported in prior literature, did not exert significant independent effects once considered jointly.

The findings indicate that sustaining brand loyalty in the subscription economy depends less on traditional branding levers and more on the consistency, reliability, and trustworthiness of the ongoing service relationship. For marketers and subscription-based organisations, this underscores the need to prioritise continuous value delivery, transparent communication, and dependable service performance over image-based branding alone. As the subscription economy continues to expand across digital industries, understanding and managing these experience- and trust-based drivers of loyalty will remain essential to reducing churn and sustaining long-term customer relationships.

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