

Price, product quality, and brand image as antecedents of customer satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- Technology is one of the most essential things in human life. The advancement and development of technology, especially communication technology, cause every telecommunications company to continue improving its products' excellence to keep up with technological developments. This study aims to determine the effect of price, product quality, and brand image on consumer satisfaction of iPhone Smartphone users in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Design/Methodology/Approach- The study subjects were people in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, with a sample size of 100 people selected using a purposive sampling technique. This research uses a quantitative approach and data collection techniques, such as distributing questionnaires. Instrument tests were carried out with measurement models, validity tests, reliability tests, and structural model testing through bootstrapping. The analytical tool used in this research was Smart PLS 3.0.

Findings- The study's findings show that consumer satisfaction is positively impacted by price, product quality, and brand image. Customers are satisfied when the price is determined according to the demands or advantages they want. Customer satisfaction will be determined by the product's quality. Furthermore, the brand image will give an impression of a product. When using or buying a product, consumers will choose products with a familiar brand image because it will give the assumption that a positive brand image will provide consumers with a feeling of satisfaction.

Research limitations/implications- The limitation of this research is the process of collecting data from respondents, which takes quite a long time. The distribution of online questionnaires was only addressed to respondents who used iPhone Smartphones in Yogyakarta, so the respondents' answers could not represent all Smartphone users of various brands in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Originality/value- There is still little research on the antecedents that cause consumers to use iPhone smartphones, especially in Yogyakarta. Similar studies only discuss Smartphone users in general in Yogyakarta or iPhone Smartphone users in several regions in Indonesia.

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1. The Introduction

Globalization is an unavoidable phenomenon that affects business activities and challenges readiness to face competition. Business organizations must effectively design strategies to respond to the market (Hasim et al., 2018). In addition, business organizations must be responsive to changes in customer behavior, patterns, trends, and preferences (Shamsudin et al., 2018). Tangible evidence of these changes is the presence of smartphones, which have become a daily necessity for all people (Anshari et al., 2017). Every telecommunications company is competing to create smartphones with various brands and superior features to meet consumer needs (Cecere et al., 2015). The development of increasingly advanced technology makes telecommunications equipment more sophisticated, one of which is a smartphone produced by Apple, namely, the iPhone.

The iPhone was the first smartphone innovation developed by Apple in 2007. With a distinctive design and appearance, the iPhone attracts consumers with the various features offered (Fileri & Lin, 2017). There are several reasons consumers are loyal to using the iPhone, namely product quality represented by camera quality, internal processor quality, Apple ecosystem integration, exclusive branding or strong brand image, user interface that is more user-friendly, diverse and elegant color choices, and selling prices that tend to be stable. The flow of competition has both positive and negative implications, especially those related to price competition, product quality, and brand image (Subaebasni et al., 2019).

Research by Rizan et al. (2013) and El-Adly (2019) demonstrated that price has a favorable impact on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the price may put pressure on customer satisfaction. However, if customer satisfaction is directly impacted by the service, then price has little to no impact on customer satisfaction (Kaura et al., 2015). If product quality is maximally fulfilled, consumers tend not to look at the price factor directly, and vice versa. Price conveys an essential message to consumers, where a reasonable pricing strategy positively impacts consumer satisfaction (Wu & Lu, 2018). Price is very important because it can determine the value that a product deserves to be used by consumers.

The company will make the maximum effort to provide the best product quality to customers because it can increase customer satisfaction. The research results of Razak et al. (2016) and Hoe and Mansori (2018) prove that product quality positively influences customer satisfaction. A failure in product quality can lead to customer disappointment (Cho et al., 2017). Poor product quality decreases customer satisfaction, and ultimately, consumer loyalty also decreases (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). According to Joudeh and Dandis (2018), higher-quality products keep customers satisfied and encourage them to repeat purchases. One of the things that customers take into account when choosing what to buy is the quality of the product (Brata et al., 2017). If the customer thinks the product is good, they will be satisfied. Accordingly, a company's performance depends on its customers' satisfaction (Hassan et al., 2015).

A positive product brand image increases customer satisfaction. When customers realize and use a product brand, it must be based on their satisfaction with the brand. Brand image is important for organizations to achieve customer satisfaction (Dam & Dam, 2021). Businesses can improve their business effectiveness by focusing on customer satisfaction and brand image. A positive customer-company relationship shows the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand image. The findings of studies by Cheung et al. (2014) and Mohammed and Rashid (2018) demonstrate that brand image has a favorable impact on consumer satisfaction. The better the perception in the minds of consumers towards the brand image of the product or company, the higher the consumer satisfaction (Zameer et al., 2015). Brand image also allows consumers to recognize and evaluate the quality of products (Dirsehan & Kurtuluş, 2018) because consumers generally prefer products that are already well-known with a positive image.

Perceptions of the product or service and expectations of its performance determine customer satisfaction (Lemmetynen et al., 2016). According to Paul et al. (2016), customer satisfaction may also be defined as the level of emotion a person experiences after comparing the performance of the product they received with their expectations. Customer satisfaction has five (five) benefits, according to Bernazzani (2022): it helps businesses become better, it helps understand how to improve businesses, it increases customer advocacy and loyalty, it increases

customer retention and lowers the percentage of customers who reduce of their business relationships, and it increases consumer lifetime valuations. It is believed that customer satisfaction affects repurchase intentions and behaviors, which in turn boosts the company's potential sales and revenue (Zhao et al., 2021).

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

After achieving the level of benefits that customers desire, price suitability may help to maintain customer satisfaction and ultimately encourage repeat purchases and customer loyalty, according to Al-Adwan et al. (2020). Customer satisfaction is positively correlated with perceptions, and vice versa (Ladhari et al., 2017). When sacrifices are made according to the acceptable value, when the price of the product is determined by the advantages to the customer, customer satisfaction can also be created. The findings of El-Adly (2019) and Vasic et al. (2019) show that price positively affects customer satisfaction. When purchasing things, buyers' rationality is greatly impacted by their sense of price. In general, consumers believe that goods and services with lower pricing are of lesser quality, and vice versa (Mirabi et al., 2015). To put it another way, price is a measure of quality and is deemed equal if it is comparable to the quality that it represents. Some researches link customer happiness and loyalty to fair pricing, high-quality products, and high-quality services. **H₁: Price Has a Positive Effect on Customer Satisfaction**

Joudeh and Dandis (2018) argued that better product quality maintains customer satisfaction levels and ultimately encourages customers to make repeat purchases in the future. Product quality is also one of the elements that customers consider when purchasing. Satisfaction is obtained if the customer has a positive view that the quality of the product is trustworthy and meets his expectations (Asnawi et al., 2020). Customer satisfaction can be interpreted as a feeling of pleasure or disappointment from a customer when he compares his or the perception of a product's performance with desired expectations (Haming et al., 2019). The results of Razak et al. (2016) and Hoe and Mansori (2018) prove that product quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction. For the marketing of a product to be successful, consumers need to feel a match with the quality of the product, and they tend to buy products that match their needs. In other words, the manufacture or design of a product must be oriented to what the market wants or the customer's preference, such as a high-quality product. Consumers are satisfied if their products are of high quality. **H₂: Product Quality Has a Positive Effect on Customer Satisfaction**

Brand is one of the factors that determines the success of a product, as well as distinguishing one product from another in the market. This makes many manufacturers realize that the brand is one of the most valuable assets. The brand of a product or company involves image and perception and is one of the criteria consumers use to buy the product (Bellezza & Keinan, 2014). The unique characteristics of Modern marketing methods are based on creating a brand that can strengthen the brand image of a product or company. In the purchasing process, consumers are more likely to buy brands rather than products. This is because of two factors. First, consumers do not care about product specifications and manufacturing processes; therefore, they are more likely to choose products with well-known brands because they assume that famous brands are more trustworthy and safer. Second, there is a feeling of pride or added value when using products from well-known brands (Zhang, 2015). The only way to dominate the market is to have a dominant brand. The results of Cheung et al. (2014) and Mohammed and Rashid (2018) prove that brand image has a positive effect on customer satisfaction. **H₃: Brand Image Has a Positive Effect on Customer Satisfaction**

Figure 1 shows the framework of this study. This study seeks to prove that price, product quality, and brand image affect consumer satisfaction, in this case, iPhone smartphone users in Yogyakarta.

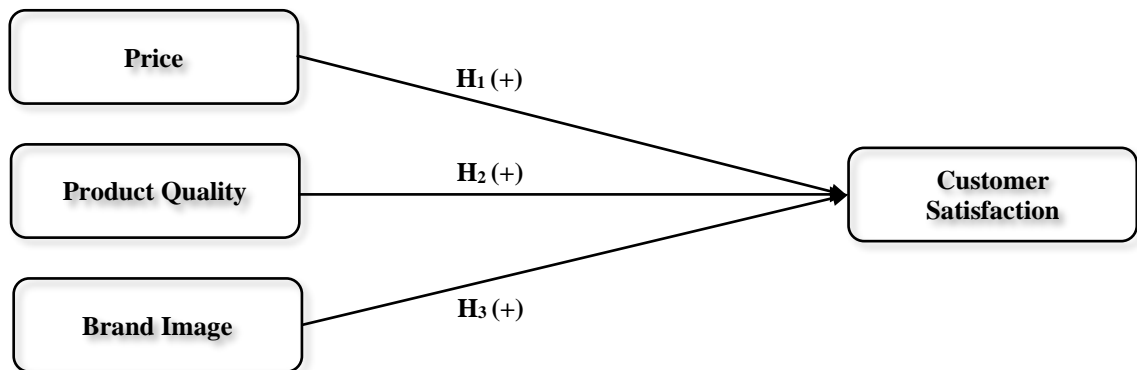


Figure 1. Research Model

3. Research Methodology

The population of this study was people who live in Yogyakarta, Indonesia and are iPhone smartphone users. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling and a research sample of 100 people. The measurement scale used in this study was a five-point Likert scale. Items that represent price (PR), product quality (PQ), brand image (BI), and customer satisfaction (CS). Price with a scale of four items, product quality with a scale of eight, brand image with a scale of four, and customer satisfaction with a scale of four

The analytical tool used in this research was Smart PLS 3.0. This research goes through the validity, reliability, and hypothesis-testing stages. Validity testing was measured based on the factor loading value on each item representing each variable. Items with a factor loading value of more than 0.6 will be declared valid, and vice versa (Hair et al., 2020). Then, reliability testing was measured based on Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values. Each variable can be reliable if it has a Cronbach's alpha value of more than 0.6 and a composite reliability of more than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2020). Hypothesis testing will then be performed by examining the p-value of each hypothesis. If the p-value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted or supported, and vice versa (Hair et al., 2020).

4. Result and Discussion

Validity Test

Figure 2 shows the bootstrapping model after removing the six variable items from the data analysis. Based on these results, it is known that the remaining items have a factor loading value of more than 0.7, so they were declared valid.

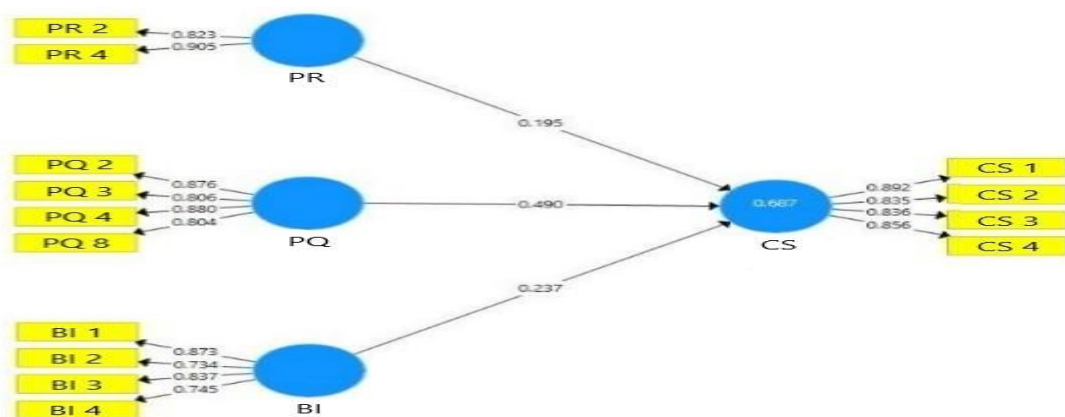


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Table 1 presents the validity test results. Based on the validity test, six items were removed from the data testing because the factor loading value was less than 0.6. The results are declared valid because the outer loadings value is more than 0.7 or meets the requirements of convergent validity. The removed items included items from the price variable (PR1; PR 3) and the product quality variable (PQ 1; PQ 5; PQ 6; PQ 7).

Table 1. Validity Test Result

Indicator	Price	Product Quality	Brand Image	Customer Satisfaction
PR 2	0.823			
PR 4	0.905			
PQ 2		0.876		
PQ 3		0.806		
PQ 4		0.880		
PQ 8		0.804		
BI 1			0.873	
BI 2			0.734	
BI 3			0.837	
BI 4			0.745	
CS 1				0.892
CS 2				0.835
CS 3				0.836
CS 4				0.856

Reliability Test

Table 2 shows that all the variables used in this study are reliable. This can be proven by the Cronbach's alpha value of each variable being greater than 0.6, and the composite reliability value being greater than 0.7.

Table 2. Reliability Test Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Price	0.669	0.856
Product Quality	0.863	0.907
Brand Image	0.809	0.876
Customer Satisfaction	0.878	0.916

Hypothesis Test

Table 3 shows that all hypotheses in this study were accepted because they had a p-value of less than 0.05. Price has been proven to affect customer satisfaction. This means that when the price given for a product is comparable to the benefits received by consumers, whatever price is offered will still provide satisfaction to consumers for the benefits of the product. Product quality has been proven to affect customer satisfaction. This shows that when producers can produce the best-quality products, consumer satisfaction is encouraged when using or consuming these products. Brand image has also been proven to have an effect on customer satisfaction. Consumers also pay attention to the brand image of a product before making a purchase. When a product has a positive brand image, consumers will be willing to buy the product and feel satisfied.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Result

Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Price → Customer Satisfaction	0.195	0.209	0.078	2.487	0.013
Product Quality → Customer Satisfaction	0.490	0.482	0.086	5.718	0.000
Brand Image → Customer Satisfaction	0.237	0.230	0.072	3.274	0.001

Discussion

The Effect of Price on Customer Satisfaction

Price, in this study, has been proven to affect iPhone user satisfaction in Yogyakarta. When the price of a product is based on the benefits to be received, it provides customers with a level of satisfaction (Brata et al., 2017). In other words, price can be said to reflect product quality and the suitability of customer benefits. The effect of price on customer satisfaction is shaped by perceived value, meeting customer expectations, fairness, and the psychological impact of pricing (Alzoubi et al., 2020). High product prices can increase satisfaction if they signal good quality or contain an element of exclusivity, while price increases without perceived value can lead to dissatisfaction, especially in price-sensitive markets (Martinčić et al., 2022). Consumers are likely to be satisfied if they perceive a product to be of high value relative to its price. The results of this study align with the results of research conducted by Kaura et al. (2015) and Jabarzare and Rasti-Barzoki (2020) that price positively affects customer satisfaction. Price fairness affects customer satisfaction, especially in a competitive market.

The Effect of Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction

Product quality in this study is proven to affect the level of satisfaction of iPhone users in Yogyakarta. Product quality directly describes a product's functions, such as durability, reliability in meeting needs, and ease of use (Kumar & Noble, 2016). The better the product quality, the higher the customer satisfaction and interest because product quality is the most important factor in buying a product (Mirabi et al., 2015). When product quality meets or exceeds consumer expectations, satisfaction increases. Research by Razak et al. (2016) and Hoe and Mansori (2018) supports the results of this study that high product quality can encourage customer satisfaction. Product quality directly impacts customer satisfaction, which can drive repurchase intentions and loyalty (Harisandi & Purwanto, 2022).

The Effect of Brand Image on Customer Satisfaction

The brand image in this study has been proven to affect customer satisfaction in the context of iPhone users in Yogyakarta. Brand image refers to customers' perceptions about a product brand, which is formed from experiences, communications, and the overall identity projected by the product brand (Mao et al., 2020). The brand image also includes quality, reliability, prestige, and emotional connection (Mabkhot et al., 2017). Brand image gives both positive and negative impressions of a product (Ansary & Nik Hashim, 2018). When using or consuming a product, customers choose products with easily recognizable brands because they think the brand has a good image. Companies can create a positive brand image and stick it in customers' minds so that customers feel confident when using or consuming a product and that it can meet customers' needs and desires. A strong brand image often leads customers to believe the product is high quality, thus providing customer satisfaction. The results of this study align with those of research conducted by Cheung et al. (2014) and Mohammed and Rashid (2018), who show that brand image positively affects customer satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

This study proves that price, product quality, and brand image have a proven effect on customer satisfaction. Price impacts on customer satisfaction, but that impact is also influenced by other factors such as perceived value, price fairness, quality, customer expectations and market context. While higher prices may increase satisfaction, as in the case of luxury goods, in other price-sensitive cases, it may lead to dissatisfaction. Product quality is also a determinant of customer satisfaction. A product that consistently meets or exceeds customer expectations in terms of quality will increase satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth referrals from consumers. Furthermore, a positive brand image has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. It can foster trust, emotional connection, perceived value, and customer loyalty. Customers are more likely to be satisfied with brands they perceive as reliable, prestigious, and emotionally

appealing. The brand image is a competitive differentiator and contributes to long-term customer loyalty, repeat purchases, and consumer satisfaction.

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