

The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in the Relationship Between Product Trust, Perceived Value, Price Fairness, and Purchase Decisions: An Empirical Study of Telekomcel Company in Timor-Leste

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the relationships between product trust, perceived value, price fairness, customer satisfaction, and purchasing decisions based on the existing marketing literature. The study develops 10 hypotheses that propose direct relationships between product trust, perceived value, price fairness, customer satisfaction, and purchasing decision. Additionally, the study proposes a mediating role for customer satisfaction in the relationships between the other variables. The study collected data from 178 randomly selected Telekomcel customers in Timor-Leste through a survey. Smart-PLS was used to assess the validity, reliability, and test the hypotheses. The results strongly support all the hypotheses, highlighting the importance of product trust, perceived value, and price fairness in shaping customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions. This study provides insights for future research in this area.

Keywords : *Product trust, perceived value, price fairness, customer satisfaction, customer purchasing decision.*

1. Introduction

The process of purchasing a product involves various stages, from recognizing the need to selecting a specific brand and product. This decision-making process is influenced by several factors, including consumer trust, which refers to the knowledge and beliefs that consumers hold about a product's attributes and benefits (Huang & Benyoucef, 2017). In addition to trust, the confidence that customers have in a product's ability to meet their expectations and deliver what was promised, also plays a crucial role in determining repurchase behavior. Purchasing decisions also influenced by perceived value, price fairness and customer satisfaction.

Multiple empirical studies have indicated that product trust and perceived value are critical factors that influence customers when making purchasing decisions (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; López-Guzmán & Vargas-Sánchez, 2019; Sopian et al., 2019; Sangwan & Verma, 2020). Perceived value refers to how well a product fulfills a customer's needs and expectations, leading to customer satisfaction and a higher likelihood of future purchases (Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds et al., 1991; Oliver, 1997; Söderlund, 2006; Chen et al., 2020; Zhang & Mao, 2021). However, numerous debates about product trust and perceived value and how they impact customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions across diverse cultures and countries. Most studies on this topic have been conducted in specific regions or countries, leading to a significant research gap on cultural variations in customer perceptions and values

(Han & Ryu, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Additionally, the impact of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality on product trust and perceived value and their effect on customer decision-making is an area that requires further investigation (Aydin & Özdemir, 2020; Lin & Bhattacharjee, 2020). Finally, more research is necessary to explore the influence of demographic factors such as age, gender, and income level on customers' perceptions of product trust and perceived value (Wu et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2021) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of customer behavior intention.

Price fairness is another important factor that customers consider when making purchasing decisions. The concept of price fairness is crucial for customer satisfaction and loyalty, as it refers to a customer's perception of the price compared to the product's value. Numerous studies have highlighted its importance (Teunter & ten Wolde, 2013; Zhang & Huang, 2017; Zeithaml et al., 2018; Mishra & Pathak, 2021; Kuo et al., 2022). However, there are several potential research gaps related to this topic, including the need to understand how different cultures and countries perceive price fairness (Kim et al., 2018), the impact of pricing strategies and tactics such as discounts or bundling on customer perceptions and decisions (Kwon & Lee, 2021), the effect of pricing on different customer segments based on income level or loyalty (Chua & Banerjee, 2020; Kim et al., 2018), and the relationship between perceived price fairness and long-term customer loyalty and lifetime value (Brown & Dant, 2019).

To comprehend the intricate factors that impact consumer behavior, it is crucial to consider the intermediate role of customer satisfaction. Factors such as product trust, perceived value, and price fairness are pivotal in determining customer satisfaction, and consequently, their decision to purchase a product. When customers trust a product, perceive it as valuable, and view its price as reasonable, they are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase. As a result, higher levels of customer satisfaction increase the likelihood of purchasing the product. Customers who are satisfied tend to associate the product with higher quality and trustworthiness, which leads to a greater willingness to pay a fair price for the product (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Boshoff & Gray, 2017).

This study aims to investigate the impact of product trust, perceived value, and price fairness on customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions. The research explores how these factors affect customers' perceptions and attitudes towards a product, and how they influence their decision-making process. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for businesses to improve their marketing strategies and enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.

2. Theoretical Frameworks

2.1. Product Trust

Products encompass physical objects, services, places, organizations, ideas, or individuals that producers can offer to fulfill the needs and desires of the market (Shin et al., 2019). Trust, on the other hand, is a person's belief in certain values that can influence their behavior (Chae et al., 2020; Cuong, 2020). Product trust refers to the willingness of an average consumer to rely on a product's ability to perform all its functions (Shin et al., 2019). Product trust involves confidence in a product's reliability and intentions, especially in situations where there are risks to consumers. Consumers are willing to trust a product despite potential risks, hoping that the brand can deliver positive results. Product attributes, such as objects, features, and benefits, are learned through cognitive processes, contributing to consumers' trust (Vazifehdoost, Rahnema, & Mousavian, 2014).

Product trust can be influenced by various factors such as the perceived quality of the product, the reputation of the brand, the level of satisfaction and value provided, and the feeling of security and trust towards the brand. Product trust is important for building strong relationships between consumers and brands, as it can lead to increased loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and ultimately, higher sales and profits (Blasco-Arcas, Buil, Hernández-Ortega & Sánchez-Medina, 2017; Leknes & Olsen, 2021; Kim & Hyun, 2021).

Chae et al. (2020) identified two dimensions for measuring product trust: viability and intentionality. The viability dimension relates to a brand's ability to meet and satisfy consumer needs and values, which can be assessed

using satisfaction and value indicators. The intentionality dimension reflects an individual's sense of security towards a brand, which can be evaluated through trust and security indicators. Additionally, customer-perceived value varies in marketing literature, referring to a consumer's overall assessment of a product's utility based on what they receive and sacrifice (Cuison et al., 2021). Cuong (2020a) suggests that customer-perceived value is a trade-off between a customer's perception of the quality or benefits of the product and the price paid.

Product trust, customer satisfaction, and purchasing decision have strong relationship among others. Companies that prioritize building trust, delivering high levels of customer satisfaction, and creating positive purchasing experiences are more likely to achieve long-term success and growth. Product trust has a direct positive impact on customer satisfaction and purchasing decision (Wu and Chen, 2021). When customers trust a product, they are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase experience and make repeat purchases or recommend the product to others (Kim and Lee, 2020; Lee and Kim, 2021). Product trust can also lead to increased loyalty and a willingness to pay a premium price for the product (Lin and Wang, 2021).

2.2. Perceived Value

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018: 34), customer perceived value is the difference between the total customer value and the total customer cost. Total customer value is the collection of benefits that consumers expect to receive from a product or service. On the other hand, the total customer cost is the set of sacrifices that consumers expect to make in evaluating, acquiring, and using the product or service. Perceived value was defined by Hanaysha (2018) as an exchange between what customers perceive, such as quality, benefits, and utility, and what they sacrifice, such as price, opportunity cost, time, and effort. Alhuwaishe & ALMeshal (2018) proposed four criteria for the definition of perceived value, namely low price, the presence of desired product features, the quality of the product relative to the price, and what consumers receive in terms of benefits and sacrifices.

Alhuwaishe & AL-Meshal (2018) outlined several main characteristics of perceived value. First, value is instrumental in the sense that products and services are tools to meet customer needs and wants. Therefore, marketers must not only create value in their offerings but also relate those offerings to the specific needs and wants of each target customer. Second, value is dynamic in line with changing customer needs and desires. In addition, the value can also change due to increasing market expectations. If a marketer manages to meet or exceed customer expectations at one point in time, those expectations will become the next

minimum standard for assessing marketer performance later. Third, values are hierarchical, where universal values are the foundation. Without universal value, customers will not even consider if the product/service fulfills their needs and desires. While efficiency reflects the minimal cost to the customer in obtaining that value (measured by money, time, and physical effort required). Top of Form Bottom of Form

Perceived value is a complex construct that is influenced by a range of internal and external factors, and marketers need to carefully consider these factors in order to optimize their offerings and maximize customer satisfaction. These factors are: (1) Product attributes: The quality, features, and benefits of a product can greatly impact the perceived value. (2) Price: The price of a product can affect the perceived value, as customers evaluate whether the price is worth the benefits received. (3) Brand reputation: A brand with a positive reputation can enhance the perceived value of its products. (4) Customer experience: The experience of using a product or interacting with a company can influence the perceived value. (5) Marketing and promotion: The way a product is marketed and promoted can shape customers' perceptions of its value. (6) Competitor offerings: Customers often compare the perceived value of one product to its competitors, which can influence their purchasing decisions (Jain & Gupta, 2004; Homburg et al., 2005; Roy & Balaji, 2020).

Four main aspects of customer perceived value, namely: (1) Emotional Value, which is the ability related to the feeling or emotional impression caused by using the product. (2) Social Value, which is the ability of a product to improve self-concept and create a good social impression in society. (3) Performance Value (Quality Value), which is the ability of a product that is considered to have good performance. (4) Price Value, which is the ability of a product to be obtained at a price that seems to have price efficiency (Chae et al., 2020).

Numerous indicators have been used to measure perceived value, namely: (1) Price fairness: This indicator assesses whether customers feel that the price they paid for the product or service is fair compared to the perceived benefits they received (Nguyen & Okoro, 2020; Chen et al., 2021). (2) Quality: This indicator assesses the perceived quality of the product or service, including its reliability, durability, and performance (Singh & Rao, 2020; Kim & Park, 2021). (3) Features: This indicator assesses the perceived value of the product or service features, including its design, functionality, and ease of use (Lee & Koo, 2021; Venkatesh & Thong, 2021). (4) Brand reputation: This indicator assesses the perceived value of the brand and its reputation in the market, which can influence customers' willingness to pay for the product or service (Lee & Sung, 2020; Chen & Zhou, 2021). (5) Customer service: This indicator assesses the perceived value of the customer service provided by the company, including its responsiveness, helpfulness, and overall satisfaction with the

customer experience (Kwon & Lee, 2020; Huang et al., 2021). (6) Convenience: This indicator assesses the perceived value of the convenience of obtaining the product or service, including its accessibility, ease of purchase, and delivery options (Lee & Kim, 2020; Kim & Cho, 2021).

Perceived value is also a key factor in the customer's purchasing decision. Customers are more likely to choose a product or service that they perceive as providing high value for their money, compared to a product or service that they perceive as having lower value for their money (Huang & Chen, 2018; Li et al., 2021). Therefore, companies that can effectively communicate and deliver perceived value to their customers are more likely to succeed in attracting and retaining customers. Perceived value has a significant impact on both customer satisfaction and purchasing decision. When customers perceive high value in a product or service, they are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase and have a positive perception of the company. This satisfaction can lead to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth recommendations to others (Zeithaml, 1988; Kuo et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2021; Zhang, Fu, & Huang, 2021).

2.3. Price Fairness

Price fairness is a critical aspect of sales transactions that involves the customer's perception of paying a reasonable and acceptable price (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Pricing is a crucial element of the marketing mix that can help differentiate a seller's offer from that of competitors (Nazari et al., 2014). A reasonable and acceptable price can build a good product image for customers and positively influence their purchasing behavior (Nazari et al., 2014). The concept of price fairness is primarily based on the customer's evaluation of the price comparison between the actual price and the reference price (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

The perception of price fairness can be influenced by several factors, including customers' perceived value, the competitive environment, price transparency, product differentiation, trust in the seller, and personal values and beliefs. These factors must be considered when developing pricing strategies and communicating prices to customers to ensure that prices are perceived as fair and reasonable. A higher perceived value of a product or service, the presence of competitors in the market, price transparency, unique or high-quality products or services, customer trust, and ethical or socially responsible pricing practices are some of the factors that may contribute to the perception of price fairness (Nagle & Hogan, 2018; Gong & Stump, 2020; Kumar & Shah, 2021; Kim & Park, 2021).

Price fairness can be measured using various indicators, such as the accuracy of pricing, fairness of price policy, and customer perception of a fair price (Kumar & Shah, 2021). In addition to these indicators, there are other factors to

consider. For instance, whether customers believe they paid a fair price, whether the pricing is transparent and accurate, whether the company's pricing policies are fair and consistent, whether the pricing aligns with ethical standards, and whether the price is reasonable and acceptable based on perceived value (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

Price fairness, customer satisfaction, and customer purchasing decision are closely related in the context of marketing. Customers' perception of price fairness can have a significant impact on their satisfaction with the product or service, as well as their purchasing decision. If customers perceive the price of a product or service to be fair, they are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Huang & Lu, 2007; Kim et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2018). Numerous empirical studies also support that price fairness has significant impact on customer satisfaction and decision-making because customers who perceive prices to be fair are more likely to be satisfied and make repeat purchases (Liu & Jang, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Jia et al., 2021).

2.4. Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to the overall evaluation or feeling a customer has about a product, service, or experience after comparing their expectations with the actual performance or outcome (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Cuison et al., 2021). It is a critical component of a company's success because satisfied customers are more likely to repurchase products or services and recommend the company to others, while dissatisfied customers are likely to switch to a competitor and share their negative experience with others. Satisfying customer needs is the desire of company which leads to increase competitive advantage of a company (Cuong, 2020). When customers are satisfied with a product or service, they are more likely to make repeat purchases, which can increase a company's sales volume. Satisfied customers are also more likely to recommend the product or service to others, which can lead to new customers and increased revenue.

In determining the level of consumer satisfaction, five main factors must be considered by companies according to Kotler & Keller (2016), namely: (1) Product quality Consumers will feel satisfied if their evaluation results show that the products they use are of high quality. (2) Quality of service. Especially for the service industry, consumers will feel satisfied if they receive good service or what is expected. (3) Emotional Consumers will feel proud and gain confidence that other people will be amazed by him when using a product with a certain brand which tends to have a higher level of satisfaction. The satisfaction obtained is not due to the quality of the product but from the social value that makes consumers satisfied with a brand. (4) Price Products that have the same quality but set a relatively low

price will provide higher value to consumers. (5) Cost Consumers who do not need to incur additional costs or do not need to waste time to get a product tend to be satisfied.

Customer satisfaction can be an important predictor of purchasing behavior, the relationship is not always straightforward and can be influenced by a variety of factors. There are different debates among authors on the relationship between customer satisfaction and purchasing decision. Some argue that customer satisfaction has a direct impact on purchasing decisions, meaning that satisfied customers are more likely to repurchase products or services and to recommend them to others (Liu & Jang, 2009; Kuo, Wu, & Deng, 2009). However, others argue that the relationship between customer satisfaction and purchasing decision is more complex and that other factors can intervene. For example, customers may be satisfied with a product or service but still choose to switch to a competitor if they perceive a better value proposition (Kumar & Reinartz, 2012). Additionally, some customers may not always be able to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction accurately, which can result in discrepancies between stated and actual behaviors (Westbrook & Reilly, 1983). Finally, other factors such as price, convenience, or brand image can also play a role in purchasing decisions (Oliver, 2010).

2.5. Purchasing Decision

Consumer purchasing decisions as an integration process that combines knowledge to evaluate two or more alternative behaviours and choose one of them. The result of this integration process is a choice that is presented cognitively as a desire to behave (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Purchasing decisions are components of consumer behaviour, which is the study of what a person or group looks like in determining, buying, consuming, and what products, ideas, or experiences are needed to satisfy their needs (Kotler and Armstrong (2018: 177; Zeriti & Robson, 2019; Dzhandzhugazova & Dzhandzhugazov, 2020). Thus purchasing decisions are processes where consumers have alternative choices to determine whether they want to buy a product or not. Purchase decisions arise because of emotional impulses from within and outside influences. The buying decision process is a basic psychological process that plays an important role in understanding how consumers make their buying decisions.

The process of consumers making decisions about what to purchase involves cognitive processing that culminates in the selection of a final choice from among available alternatives. This process includes a series of stages, including problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, consumption, and post-purchase evaluation. Consumers often become aware of

their needs or problems and then actively or passively seek information to find the most suitable alternatives. The evaluation of alternatives and purchase decisions are influenced by beliefs and attitudes, and typically involve several sub-decisions, such as the brand, supplier, quantity, execution time, and payment method. Post-purchase behavior is critical for marketers to track, as it can impact repurchase decisions and negative word-of-mouth. (Surucu, Yesilada & Maslakci, 2020; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 2019).

Numerous debates surrounding customer purchasing decisions in the field of marketing and consumer behavior. Here are a few examples: (1) Rational versus emotional decision-making: One debate revolves around whether customers make purchasing decisions based on rational or emotional factors. Some argue that consumers carefully weigh the pros and cons of each option before making a decision, while others believe that emotions play a much larger role in decision-making (Lucey & Davenport, 2020; Chintagunta & Gopinath, 2020). (2) Traditional versus digital shopping: Another debate is about the impact of e-commerce and online shopping on the traditional purchasing decision process. While some argue that the internet has fundamentally changed the way people make purchasing decisions, others argue that the underlying decision-making processes remain the same (Chen, Fay & Wang, 2018; Kassim & Abdullah, 2021). (3) Internal versus external factors: A third debate centers on the relative importance of internal versus external factors in the purchasing decision process. Internal factors include personal preferences, attitudes, and beliefs, while external factors include social influence, marketing messages, and situational factors such as time and place (Correia & Correia, 2021; Chan & Prendergast, 2021). (4) Long-term versus short-term decision-making: There is debate about the relative importance of long-term versus short-term factors in the purchasing decision process. Some argue that customers make decisions based on long-term goals and values, while others believe that immediate needs and desires have a much larger impact on decision-making (O'Cass, & Siahtiri, 2019; Campbell & Kirmani, 2021).

Thus debates surrounding customer purchasing decisions in marketing and consumer behavior continue to exist, with varying viewpoints on the relative importance of rational versus emotional decision-making, traditional versus digital shopping, internal versus external factors, and long-term versus short-term decision-making. Therefore, empirical studies are still needed to provide insights into

these debates and help marketers better understand the complex nature of consumer behavior in regards to consumer purchasing behavior.

3. Research Model and Hypothesis

3.1. Conceptual Framework and Research Model

This study utilizes multiple conceptual frameworks to comprehensively investigate the various factors namely Product trust (X1), Perceived value (X2), and Price fairness (X3) that can influence Customers' satisfaction (Y1) and Purchasing decisions (Y2). Firstly, the expectancy disconfirmation model suggests that customers develop certain expectations before purchasing a product, and their post-purchase evaluation is based on a comparison between these expectations and their actual experience with the product (Oliver, 1980). Secondly, the value-based framework emphasizes the importance of perceived value in customers' purchasing decisions, and how it can increase their satisfaction and loyalty (Zeithaml, 1988). Thirdly, the price fairness model proposes that customers evaluate the fairness of a product's price by comparing it to similar products, their expectations, and past experiences, and that a fair price can positively affect customer satisfaction and purchase intention (Monroe, 1990). The fourth framework is the brand trust framework, which highlights the crucial role of building trust with customers. It can lead to enhanced satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Lastly, the customer relationship management framework suggests that companies can establish stronger relationships with customers by collecting and analyzing customer data to gain better insight into their preferences and needs, and tailor their offerings accordingly (Payne and Frow, 2005).

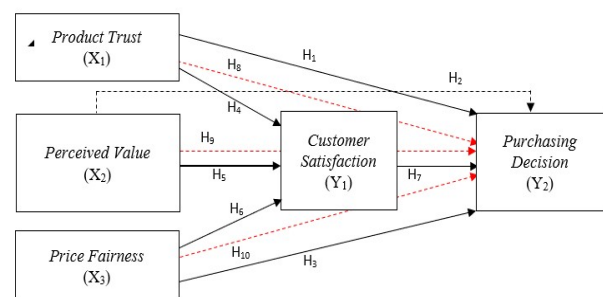


Figure 1. Research Model

The authors utilized Smart-PLS to measure the variables in the model and adapted indicators from a previous study (Nazari et al., 2014). Smart-PLS was chosen because it can predict relationships between multiple variables and is suitable for small sample sizes, as stated in a study by Hair et al. (2014) and used by Saldanha et al. (2020).

3.2. Hypothesis

3.2.1. Product Trust and Purchasing Decision

Customer trust is a critical factor in the purchasing decision of consumers. When a customer trusts a brand or a product, they are more likely to make a purchase. Trust can be built through positive experiences, such as a history of reliable product quality, positive customer service experiences, and transparent business practices. Several studies have shown a significant relationship between customer trust and purchasing decisions (Jang and Nam, 2009; Hussain et al., 2016; Huang and Tsai, 2015). Product trust has a direct positive impact on customer satisfaction and purchasing decision (Wu and Chen, 2021) because when customers trust a product, they are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase experience and make repeat purchases or recommend the product to others (Kim and Lee, 2020; Lee and Kim, 2021; Lin and Wang, 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be drawn :

H₁ : There is a positive and significant effect of product trust on customer purchasing decision.

3.2.2. Perceived Value and Purchasing Decision

Perceived value is a crucial factor that affects a customer's purchasing decision. It refers to the customer's assessment of the benefits they will receive from a product relative to its cost. When a customer perceives that a product offers high value, they are more likely to make a purchase. Research has consistently shown a significant relationship between perceived value and purchasing decision. When customers perceive that a product offers high value, they are more likely to purchase it. Moreover, customers are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase when they perceive high value. This satisfaction can also lead to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Zeithaml, 1988; Kuo et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2021; Zhang, Fu, & Huang, 2021). In addition, perceived value can also influence a customer's willingness to pay a premium price for a product. When customers perceive high value, they may be willing to pay more for a product than they would for a similar product with lower perceived value (Huang & Chen, 2018). Therefore, the second hypothesis can be formulated as below:

H₂ : There is a positive and significant effect of perceived value on customer purchasing decision.

3.2.3. Price Fairness and Customer Purchasing Decision

Price fairness can have a significant effect on customer purchasing decisions. When customers perceive that a product is priced fairly, they are more likely to make a purchase. Studies have shown that price fairness can influence customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty, all of which can ultimately impact purchasing decisions. Customers who perceive that they are being charged a fair

price for a product are more likely to trust the brand and feel satisfied with their purchase, which can lead to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Ng & Wang, 2021). Therefore, it is important for companies to carefully consider their pricing strategies and ensure that they are perceived as fair and reasonable by their target customers. This can involve conducting market research to understand customer perceptions of pricing, offering transparent pricing information, and avoiding practices such as price gouging or hidden fees. Numerous empirical studies also justified that price fairness had significant effect on purchasing decision (Yoo and Park, 2016; Chen and Lin, 2019; Kim, Lee and Park, 2020).

H₃ : There is a positive and significant effect of price fairness on customer purchasing decision.

3.2.4. Product Trust and Customer Satisfaction

Product trust has a significant effect on customer satisfaction. When customers trust a product, they are more likely to be satisfied with it. Trust is an important factor in determining how customers perceive a product, and it can be a key driver of customer satisfaction. When customers trust a product, they are more likely to perceive it as being high-quality, reliable, and effective. This perception can lead to higher levels of satisfaction, as customers are more likely to get the results they are looking for from the product (Chae et al., 2020; Cuong, 2020). Furthermore, when customers trust a product, they are more likely to have positive expectations about it. This can lead to a phenomenon known as the "confirmation bias," where customers are more likely to notice positive aspects of the product and overlook negative ones, further increasing their satisfaction (Blasco-Arcas, Buil, Hernández-Ortega & Sánchez-Medina, 2017; Leknes & Olsen, 2021; Kim & Hyun, 2021). Product trust has a direct positive impact on customer satisfaction and purchasing decision (Wu and Chen, 2021). Based on these empirical findings, this study proposes the following hypothesis :

H₄ : There is a positive and significant effect of product trust on customer satisfaction.

3.2.5. Perceived Value and Customer Satisfaction

Perceived value and customer satisfaction are essential concepts in the marketing literature. Perceived value refers to the customer's overall assessment of the benefits received from a product or service in relation to its cost, while customer satisfaction reflects the degree of pleasure or gratification that a customer derives from their purchase experience and the overall performance of the product or service. A significant body of research has established a robust positive relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction (Lee et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Specifically, customers who perceive a

high value in a product or service are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase, as they believe they have received a fair deal for the price paid, and the product or service has fulfilled or surpassed their expectations. Furthermore, customers who perceive high value in a product or service are more likely to have a favorable perception of the company (Zeithaml, 1988; Kuo et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Based on these empirical findings, this study proposes the following hypothesis :

H₅ : There is a positive and significant effect of perceived value on customer satisfaction.

3.2.6. Price Fairness and Customer Satisfaction

Research has shown that there is a significant relationship between price fairness and customer satisfaction. Customers are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase if they perceive the price of the product or service to be fair. When customers perceive the price to be fair, they are more likely to believe that they have received a good value for their money, which can contribute to higher levels of satisfaction. Therefore, businesses should strive to ensure that their pricing policies are fair and transparent to enhance customer satisfaction. Numerous studies revealed that prices fairness had significant effect of customer satisfaction (Liu & Jang, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Jia et al., 2021). Based on these empirical findings, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H₆ : There is a positive and significant effect of price fairness on customer satisfaction.

3.2.7. Customer Satisfaction and Purchasing Decision

Customer satisfaction has a significant effect on purchasing decision. When customers are satisfied with a product or service, they are more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend the product to others. Positive word-of-mouth recommendations can also increase the likelihood of new customers making a purchase. Additionally, satisfied customers are less likely to switch to a competitor, which can increase customer loyalty and ultimately lead to increased sales and revenue for the company. Therefore, companies often prioritize customer satisfaction in order to increase the likelihood of customers making a purchasing decision in their favor. Numerous empirical studies revealed that customer satisfaction is a key factor in driving customer loyalty, repurchase intentions, and purchase intention (Chen & Lu, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2020; Xu et al., 2021). Therefore, the hypothesis for this research can be formulated as below:

H₇ : There is a positive and significant effect of customer satisfaction on purchasing decision.

3.2.8. Product Trust, Customer Satisfaction and Purchasing Decision

Customer satisfaction can play a significant role in the relationship between product trust and purchasing decision. When customers have a high level of trust in a product, they are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase. This satisfaction can then lead to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth recommendations to others, which in turn can increase sales and revenue for the company. On the other hand, if customers have a negative experience with a product they trusted, their satisfaction level will be low, and they are unlikely to make future purchases. Numerous empirical studies found that customer satisfaction had significant effect on product trust and purchasing intention (Liu et al., 2016; Rajabi and Gholipour, 2017; Calvo-Porrall and Lévy-Mangin, 2017). Therefore, customer satisfaction acts as a mediator between product trust and purchasing decision.

H₈ : Customer satisfaction play significant effect on the relations between product trust and purchasing decision.

3.2.9. Perceived Value, Customer Satisfaction and Purchasing Decision.

Customer satisfaction plays a significant role in the relationship between perceived value and purchasing decision. When customers perceive a high value for a product, they are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase. This satisfaction, in turn, can influence their future purchasing decisions as well as their recommendations to others. Empirical studies also confirm that customer satisfaction play significant role on perceived value and customer repurchasing intention (Homburg et al., 2015; Shao et al., 2020). Therefore, customer satisfaction acts as a mediator between perceived value and purchasing decision.

H₉ : Customer satisfaction play significant effect on the relations between perceived value and purchasing decision.

3.2.10. Price Fairness, Customer Satisfaction and Purchasing Decision

Customer satisfaction can play a significant effect on the relationship between price fairness and purchasing decision. When customers perceive that the price they paid for a product is fair, it can lead to a positive customer satisfaction experience. This positive experience can influence the customer's decision to make a repeat purchase or recommend the product to others (Chen & Chen, 2018; Chou & Huang, 2021). Therefore, customer satisfaction can play a critical role in the relationship between price fairness and purchasing decision.

H₁₀ : Customer satisfaction plays significant effect on the relations between price fairness and purchasing decision.

4. Research Method

The research was carried out in Telkomcel, Dili, Timor-Leste from August to September 2021. The population of this study included 99,782 Telkomcel customers in Dili during August 2021. The data were collected from the official records of PT Telkomcel Dili. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 7.5%, resulting in a sample of 178 respondents.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researchers designed the questionnaires based on relevant literature and prior empirical studies. The questionnaire aimed to measure five constructs: product trust, perceived value, price fairness, customer satisfaction, and purchasing decision. The measurement scale used was a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The researchers distributed the questionnaires using the accidental sampling method to collect data from the target population. To ensure the validity and reliability of the collected data, appropriate statistical analyses were conducted.

The present study utilized Smart-PLS 3.0 to evaluate the validity and reliability of the model through outer model measurement. The authors employed two types of validity tests: convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was assessed using two criteria: outer loading (OL) and average variance extracted (AVE) of each variable indicator. To meet the convergent validity criterion, an indicator's OL value should be higher than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019), and the AVE value should exceed the recommended threshold of 0.5. Nevertheless, the OL value can be considered acceptable up to 0.60, and values below 0.60 can be excluded from the analysis (Hair et al., 2019; Saldanha et al., 2019a).

Discriminant validity can be evaluated using two common criteria, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion. The Fornell-Larcker criterion involves calculating the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct, and comparing this value to the correlation between that construct and others in the model. When the AVE root value is greater than the correlation value between constructs, the discriminant validity value is considered acceptable, as outlined by Hair et al. (2014). The HTMT criterion is another method for assessing discriminant validity, where a value of less than 0.9 indicates good discriminant validity, according to Henseler et al. (2015). Construct reliability is typically evaluated using composite reliability (CR), with a common

rule of thumb being that the CR value should exceed 0.7. This value indicates the extent to which the latent variable is reflected in the observed indicators and measures the internal consistency of the constructs. While a CR value of 0.7 is commonly accepted, it is not an absolute standard (Hair et al., 2019). Cronbach Alpha (CA) can also be used to assess reliability, with a minimum acceptable value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019; Saldanha et al., 2019b).

The inner model serves to elucidate the strength of relationships between latent variables or constructs based on a substantive theory. This study utilized Smart-PLS 3.0 to test the inner model through several parameters, including R-squared (R²), predictive relevance (Q²), and Path Coefficient. R² was used to determine the extent to which variance in the endogenous latent variable was explained by the exogenous latent variables in the model. R² values were categorized as weak (0.25), moderate (0.50), and substantial (0.75). Predictive relevance (Q²) was used to assess the predictive relevance of latent variables in the model, with higher Q² values indicating greater predictive relevance. As a rule of thumb, Q² values higher than 0, 0.25, and 0.5 denote small, medium, and large predictive relevance, respectively. Lastly, T-values (t-statistic) and P-values were employed to evaluate the significance of the path coefficient and establish the statistical significance of the relationship between two constructs. These statistical measures were consistent with previous studies (Hair et al., 2019; Saldanha et al., 2019c).

5. Results and Discussions

5.1. Results

5.1.1. Validity and Reliability

The findings from the convergent validity test demonstrated that all items in the questionnaire had a loading factor value higher than 0.7 (Figure 1). Moreover, the AVE values for all items exceeded the recommended threshold value of 0.5 (Table III), indicating that they are appropriate for use as research instruments. Therefore, the study concluded that all indicators effectively represent their corresponding constructs and are likely valid measures.

The discriminant validity of the research model was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, a recommended method by Hair et al. (2019). According to this criterion, discriminant validity is established if the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than the correlation value between that construct and any other constructs in the model. Table I presents the results of the discriminant validity testing based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion in this study. Therefore, the study concluded that all indicators effectively represent their corresponding constructs and are likely valid measures.

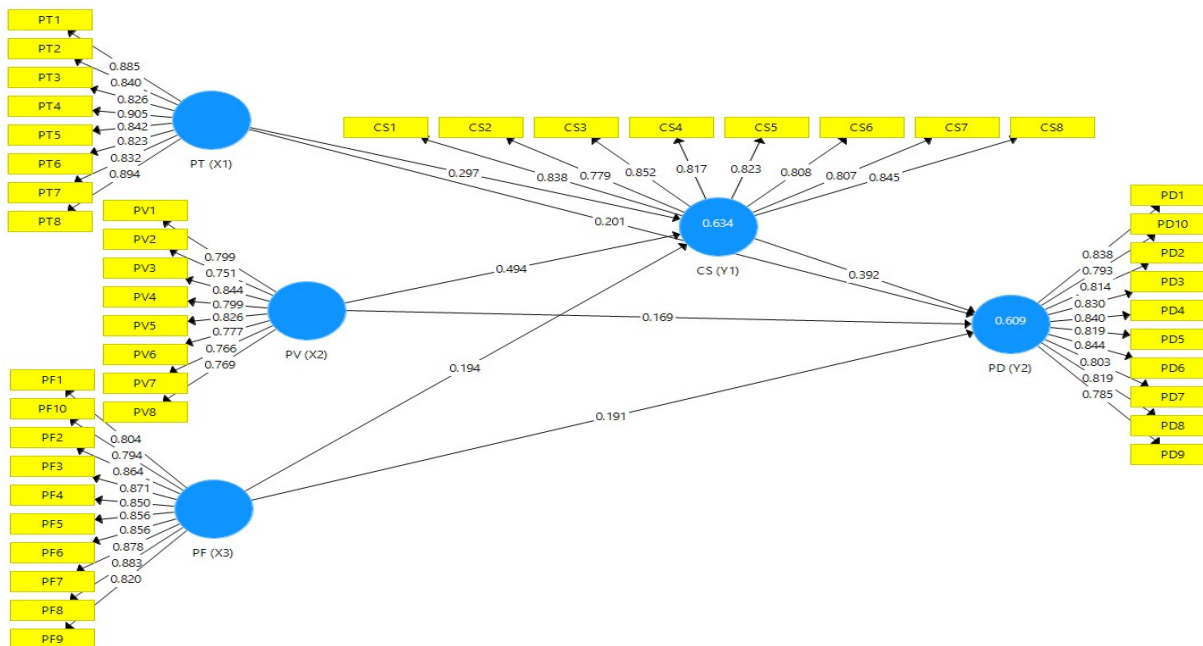


Figure 2. Outer Loading (OL) for Convergent Validity Test

Table II. Result of Discriminant Validity Testing (HTMT)

	Product Trust (X ₁)	Purchase Decisions (Y ₂)	Customer Satisfaction (Y ₁)	Perceived Value (X ₂)	Price Fairness (X ₃)
Product Trust (X ₁)	0,856				
Purchase Decisions (Y ₂)	0,601	0,819			
Customer Satisfaction (Y ₁)	0,629	0,730	0,821		
Perceived Value (X ₂)	0,549	0,631	0,725	0,792	
Price Fairness (X ₃)	0,317	0,496	0,463	0,354	0,848

Based on the above, that the results of the composite reliability test show a satisfactory value, because all the values of the latent variables have a composite reliability value of 0.70 and the results of the Cronbach's alpha test also show a satisfactory value, because all the values of the latent variables are 0.70 (Table III).

Table III. CA, CR and AVE values

Item	CA	CR	AVE
Product Trust (X ₁)	0,948	0,957	0,734
Purchase Decisions (Y ₂)	0,945	0,953	0,671
Customer Satisfaction (Y ₁)	0,931	0,943	0,675
Perceived Value (X ₂)	0,915	0,931	0,627
Price Fairness (X ₃)	0,957	0,962	0,719

5.1. Inner Model Test

The coefficient of determination (R²) is a measure that indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables in the model. In this study, the R² values for the endogenous variables of customer satisfaction and purchase decision were calculated and can be seen in Table IV. The results indicated that the R² values for customer satisfaction and purchase decision were 0.634 and 0.609, respectively. These values suggest that the exogenous variables in the model have a strong capacity to explain the variance in the endogenous variables as recommended by Hair et al. (2019).

Table IV. Determination Coefficient (R^2)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Customer Satisfaction (Y_1)	0,634	0,628
Purchase Decisions (Y_2)	0,609	0,600

The predictive relevance (Q^2) of the structural model evaluates its ability to predict observed values. Specifically, a Q^2 value greater than zero for a particular endogenous latent variable indicates that the PLS path model is predictive relevant for that construct. The Q^2 value is used in the structural testing of the inner model, and a Q^2 value greater than zero signifies that the model has predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2019). In this study, Q^2 values were computed for each endogenous variable, and the results indicated a Q^2 value of 0.820, signifying good predictive relevance of the model. In other words, 82% of the variance in the purchasing decision (the dependent variable) can be explained by the variables used in the model. This implies that the observed values have been accurately reconstructed with predictive relevance, and the model is a good fit.

In this study, the overall fit of the structural model was evaluated using the widely used Goodness of Fit (GoF) method. The GoF criteria for assessment were categorized as poor fit (below 0.3), moderate fit (0.30 to 0.70), and strong fit (above 0.70) (Hair et al., 2019). The GoF value for this study was calculated to be 0.652, which classified as moderate fit. It indicates a moderate fit between the proposed model and the collected data. These findings suggest that the proposed model provides a suitable explanation for the

relationships among the variables in the model and has a moderate fit with the data.

5.1.3. Hypothesis Test

The study conducted hypothesis testing for structural equations using Smart-PLS 3.0 to investigate the direct influence of various factors on purchase decisions and customer satisfaction. The results indicated as in the Table V that all the hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 and H7) were accepted because the t-statistic values were positive, and the t-count values were greater than the t-table values (1.96) with p-values less than 0.05. This implies that product trust, perceived value, price fairness, and customer satisfaction have positive and significant effects on purchase decisions. In addition, product trust, perceived value, and price fairness have also positive and significant effects on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the study concludes that these factors are essential in influencing consumers' purchase decisions and satisfaction.

The study also examined whether customer satisfaction mediates the effect of product trust, perceived value, and price fairness on purchase decisions. The results show that product trust, perceived value, and price fairness have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions through customer satisfaction because the t-count values are higher than the t-table values, and the p-values are less than 0.05, indicating that the results are statistically significant (Table V). The hypotheses for product trust, perceived value, and price fairness through customer satisfaction influencing purchase decisions (H8, H9, H10) are all accepted.

Table V. Path coefficient (T and P values) for Direct and Indirect Effect Test.

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
Product Trust (X_1) -> Purchase Decisions (Y_2)	0,201	0,186	0,080	2,526	0,012
Perceived Value (X_2) -> Purchase Decisions (Y_2)	0,169	0,172	0,085	1,984	0,049
Price Fairness (X_3) -> Purchase Decisions (Y_2)	0,191	0,193	0,087	2,198	0,029
Product Trust (X_1) -> Customer Satisfaction (Y_1)	0,297	0,299	0,082	3,596	0,000
Perceived Value (X_2) -> Customer Satisfaction (Y_1)	0,494	0,496	0,085	5,795	0,000
Price Fairness (X_3) -> Customer Satisfaction (Y_1)	0,194	0,187	0,065	2,974	0,003
Customer Satisfaction (Y_1) -> Purchase Decisions (Y_2)	0,392	0,399	0,123	3,195	0,002
$X_1 \rightarrow Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$	0,116	0,119	0,047	2,481	0,014
$X_2 \rightarrow Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$	0,194	0,198	0,074	2,612	0,010
$X_3 \rightarrow Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$	0,076	0,076	0,036	2,100	0,037

5.2. Discussions

The first objective of this study was to investigate the impact of product trust on purchase decisions and its

significance in shaping consumer behavior. The findings indicate a positive and significant effect of product trust on purchasing decisions. The study also suggests that Telkomcel has successfully established a strong level of product trust among its customers, which can contribute to the company's overall success. Additionally, customers trust Telkomcel's signal to be among the best compared to similar

products, further strengthening their product trust. The results demonstrate that product trust plays a critical role in shaping purchase intention, and brand trust serves as a precursor to purchase intention. The study found that Telkomcel customers perceive the company as a reliable cellular provider with a positive product image and quality, which is consistent with prior research emphasizing the importance of product trust in fostering lasting relationships between the brand and the consumer (Aydin & Taskin, 2014; Sanny et al., 2020). Despite the positive and significant impact of product trust on purchasing decisions, customer complaints in real-world settings indicate a gap between research findings and actual experiences. The gap could be due to several reasons, including the research sample size of 179 customers, which may not represent the entire population, leading to negative experiences and complaints. Other factors, such as pricing, customer service, or availability, may also influence customer complaints, making the impact of product trust on purchasing decisions still relevant. Moreover, discrepancies between customer expectations and actual product experience may lead to dissatisfaction and complaints, emphasizing the importance of managing customer expectations and aligning product claims with actual product experience.

The second objective of this study was to investigate how perceived value affects customer purchasing decisions. The results showed that perceived value has a significant and positive impact on purchase decisions, with value being a crucial factor in influencing consumer perceptions of benefits received for the cost of money, time, and effort. Customers who buy Telkomcel products are particularly attentive to the perceived value and benefits of the product, with Telkomcel being a popular provider known for providing stronger signals even in remote areas, resulting in greater customer satisfaction and a higher willingness to purchase its products. The study's findings are consistent with previous empirical studies (Ebrahim et al., 2016; Muzakir & Damrus, 2018). However, other studies found perceived value to have an insignificant effect on purchasing decisions (Chen et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2021), potentially because other factors such as price, product quality, brand, and service quality may be more important to customers. Therefore, it is crucial to consider these variables when assessing the impact of perceived value on purchasing decisions. Nonetheless, the study underscores the importance of perceived value in driving customer purchasing decisions and suggests that Telkomcel's focus on delivering value to its customers is a key driver of its success.

The third objective of this research aimed to investigate the impact of price fairness on customer purchasing decisions. The study results revealed a significant and positive effect of price fairness on purchase decisions. These findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Asadi et al. (2014) and Guo and Xiao (2018), indicating that customers prefer a fair deal for their money. Customers tend

to perceive fair prices as an indication of ethical and trustworthy business practices, which enhances their overall experience with the product or service (Asadi et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2015; Chou and Huang, 2021). The study findings further suggest that Telkomcel's pricing strategies are flexible and offer various products and packages tailored to customers' needs. The company's pricing is competitive, and it provides bonuses such as free calls, internet, or SMS to attract customers. Telkomcel's prices are perceived as reasonable and commensurate with the value received, contributing to customers' overall satisfaction with the company's products and services. However, some empirical studies, such as Chen et al. (2019) and Liu et al. (2021), have reported insignificant effects of price fairness on customer purchasing decisions. These mixed results could be attributed to factors such as product nature, market type, sample size, price transparency, and competitors' prices (Asadi et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2021; and Muzakir & Damrus, 2018). Additionally, customers may prioritize other factors, such as product quality and brand reputation, over price fairness when making purchasing decisions (Keller, 1993; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1996). Therefore, companies need to consider various factors when developing pricing strategies and marketing campaigns to attract and retain customers, as price fairness is not the only factor influencing customer purchase decisions.

The fourth objective of this study was to examine the relationship between product trust and customer satisfaction. The study results indicate that there is a positive and significant effect of product trust on customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous research studies (Calvo-Porrall and Lévy-Mangin, 2017; Liu et al., 2016; Rajabi and Gholipour, 2017), which also found that trust is a vital component of any buyer-seller relationship and positively influences customer satisfaction. While trust and satisfaction are interrelated, some scholars have considered satisfaction to be a component of trust (Ebrahim et al., 2016). In this study, customers' trust in Telkomcel's products and services was identified as a significant factor in enhancing their satisfaction. Telkomcel's positive image, ease of access to sim-cards and internet packages, and efficient handling of customer issues were also noted as key factors in building trust among customers. Additionally, customers reported satisfaction with the flexibility of Telkomcel's pricing strategy, with bonuses such as free calls, SMS, or internet available in packages customized to meet individual needs. However, various factors such as the type of product or service being offered, market competition, or individual preferences and expectations can render product trust insignificant in impacting customer satisfaction.

The fifth objective of this research was to investigate the effect of perceived value on customer satisfaction. The results indicate that perceived value has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction, which is

consistent with previous research conducted by Muzakir and Damrus (2018). Self-fit and new product novelty are the primary drivers of perceived value, which aligns with prior studies (e.g., Dodds et al., 1991; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). The strong positive effect of perceived value on customer relationship growth highlights the significance of creating a robust value proposition for customers. Hence, customers' satisfaction level after purchasing or using Telkomcel products is determined by their perception of value. Past research supports that customer-perceived value can lead to customer satisfaction (e.g., Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Cronin et al., 2000). Telkomcel delivers on their promise of good quality products, and their signal strength is superior to that of other operators, leading to customer satisfaction in using Telkomcel products. Consequently, customers prefer Telkomcel over other operators, aligning with previous studies that emphasize the importance of perceived value in customer loyalty (e.g., Babin and Attaway, 2000). However, some studies have found no significant effect of perceived value on customer satisfaction (Li and Wang, 2013; Huang and Kuo, 2013; Nadeem and Prabhakar 2018) due to the variation in industry types and size, and customers may prefer product quality, service quality, and brand reputation over perceived value.

The sixth objective of this research was to investigate the impact of price fairness on customer satisfaction. The findings suggest that price fairness has a positive and statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction. This indicates that customers perceive the price they paid as fair and reasonable based on the quality of the product they expected, which is consistent with previous marketing studies (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Oliver, 1997; Anderson et al., 1994; Bolton, 1991). These results also imply that Telkomcel has a good reputation in terms of price and product quality, leading to increased satisfaction and repeat purchases. Telkomcel's customers rated the operator's card as affordable, and Telkomcel offers affordable package prices (daily, weekly, or monthly) that are tailored to customers' needs, further enhancing customer satisfaction. This is in line with the findings of Zeithaml et al. (1996) and Anderson et al. (1994), which suggest that price affordability positively affects customer satisfaction. Additionally, Telkomcel provides various bonus services such as credit, internet, or telephone packages in their package prices to attract and satisfy customers. This approach has been found to be effective in enhancing customer satisfaction, as customers tend to be more satisfied when they receive a fair and reasonable price based on the expected quality of the product (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Oliver, 1997). However, the result of this study is not in line several studies that found the insignificant impact of price fairness on customer satisfaction (Giering (2001; Kim and Park, 2011) because customers may likely place greater emphasis on other factors such as network quality, service reliability and convenience.

The seventh objective of this research was to investigate the effect of customer satisfaction on purchase decisions. The results indicate that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on purchase decisions. This means that customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping and improving purchasing decisions. The high volume of customer complaints received by companies reflects the importance of maintaining high customer satisfaction levels to avoid customer disappointment and negative impacts on purchasing decisions. To improve customer satisfaction, Telkomcel has established measures to address customer complaints. For example, the company provides 24-hour customer service via telephone or My Telkomcel application to assist customers with product inquiries and purchases. Customers are given the flexibility to select the desired features, services, and subscription packages (e.g., internet, telephone, SMS) according to their needs, which can ultimately enhance their purchasing decisions. The results of this research confirm previous studies that revealed the positive and significant effect of customer satisfaction on customer purchasing decisions (Srinivasan and Rangaswamy, 2004; Chae et al., 2020; Han et al., 2021). However, numerous empirical studies also showed that customer satisfaction has a low impact on customer purchasing decisions (Wu and Chen, 2019; Lee et al., 2019) due to various factors such as the type of product or service being purchased and the level of competition in the market. The eighth objective of this research was to explore how customer satisfaction affects the relationship between product trust and customer purchasing decisions. The results revealed that customer satisfaction has a significant and positive impact on the relationship between product trust and purchase decisions. Consumers consider several factors when making a purchase, such as product quality, price, function, and usability, with product trust being a key factor that influences their decision to buy. When customers trust the products they purchase, they are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase and not worry about issues such as counterfeit products or product-related concerns. Companies try to enhance customer satisfaction by offering high-quality products and services. For instance, Telkomcel has taken measures to address customer complaints and offers 24-hour customer service via telephone or My Telkomcel application to assist customers with product inquiries and purchases. By providing flexible options for selecting desired features, services, and subscription packages, Telkomcel aims to enhance customer purchasing decisions based on product trust and satisfaction. This study confirms the findings of previous research by Choi, Qiao, and Wang (2020), Nguyen and Nguyen (2020) and Chen and Chen (2021) that customer satisfaction has a significant effect on the relationship between product trust and customer purchasing decisions. Satisfied customers are more likely to trust the products they purchase, which increases their willingness to buy and become repeat

customers. Additionally, when customers trust a product, they are more likely to recommend it to others, resulting in increased sales and revenue for the company. However, some studies have shown contradictory results, indicating that customer satisfaction may have an insignificant influence on product trust and customer decision. For instance, Wu and Chen (2019) found that customer satisfaction had no significant effect on product trust and purchasing decisions in the context of mobile banking services, while Lee et al. (2019) found that customer satisfaction had a weak effect on product trust and purchasing decisions in the context of luxury fashion brands. These findings suggest that the relationship between customer satisfaction, product trust, and purchasing decisions may depend on the specific context and characteristics of the product or service being evaluated.

The ninth objective of this research was to investigate the impact of customer satisfaction on the association between perceived value and customer purchasing decision. The results revealed a significant and positive effect of customer satisfaction on perceived value and customer purchase decisions. This finding suggests that customer satisfaction can strengthen the relationship between perceived value and purchasing decisions, as satisfied customers are more likely to perceive a product as having greater value. According to Nguyen and Nguyen (2020), customer satisfaction has a positive effect on perceived value, which then positively impacts purchasing decisions. Additionally, customers who perceive a product as having high value are more willing to pay a premium price, which ultimately leads to increased revenue for the company. Li et al. (2018) pointed out that companies that prioritize the creation of perceived value through superior quality, features, and benefits are more likely to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, some studies have reported insignificant effects of customer satisfaction on the relationship between perceived value and customer purchasing decision (Tan and Teo, 2016; Mao, 2018). These inconsistencies suggest that the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the perceived value and purchase decision relationship may be dependent on the specific context and product/service characteristics being evaluated.

The objective of this study was to investigate the mediation role of customer satisfaction on price fairness and customer purchasing decisions. The results suggest that customer satisfaction has a significant positive impact on the relationship between price fairness and purchasing decisions. This finding is consistent with prior research conducted by Ebrahim et al. (2016), which highlights the importance of customers' perception of price fairness in their purchasing decisions and overall satisfaction with the product. When making purchasing decisions, customers consider the price as a critical factor, and the price must align with the quality and benefits provided to the customer. A reasonable price can contribute to creating a higher perceived value for the

product, which can enhance customer satisfaction and future repeat purchases. Empirical studies have demonstrated that customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in the relationship between price fairness and customer purchasing decisions (Kim, Lee, and Lee, 2011; Saeed, Amin, and Rasheed, 2019). Therefore, when customers perceive price fairness and are satisfied with the product or service, they are more likely to remain loyal to the brand and make repeat purchases. However, some studies have found no significant mediation role of customer satisfaction on the relationship between price fairness and customer purchasing decisions (Ma, Zhang, and Wang; 2018). These inconsistent results may be due to differences in the research context, measurement of the constructs, and the role of other variables in this relationship (Kuo, Wu, and Deng, 2009; Huang and Chen, 2018; Ma, Zhang, and Wang, 2018; Yoo and Park, 2016). For example, Kuo, Wu, and Deng (2009) found that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between price fairness and customer loyalty in the telecommunications industry, whereas Huang and Chen (2018) found that customer satisfaction did not mediate this relationship in the online retail context.

6. Conclusions and Implications

The current study provides valuable insights into the impact of product trust, perceived value, and price fairness on customer satisfaction and purchase decisions. The study confirms the importance of these variables in shaping customer behavior and highlights the need for practitioners to focus on strategies that enhance customer perceptions of product trust, perceived value, and price fairness to increase purchase decisions.

The results of the study indicate that all three variables (product trust, perceived value, and price fairness) have a positive influence on customer satisfaction and purchase decisions. Additionally, customer satisfaction plays important in the relationship between product trust, perceived value, price fairness and customer purchasing decision. However, perceived value emerges as the most dominant variable affecting customer satisfaction and purchase decisions. Therefore, practitioners should prioritize strategies aimed at improving customers' perception of the value proposition of their products to enhance brand preference and purchase intention. The study findings also suggest that perceived value serves as an antecedent to brand preference and purchase decision, emphasizing the crucial role of perceived value in shaping customer behavior. These insights can guide practitioners in developing effective marketing strategies that prioritize perceived value as a key driver of customer satisfaction and purchase decision.

However, it is important to note that the study focused solely on the variables of product trust, perceived value, and price fairness and their impact on customer satisfaction and

purchase decisions. Future research should also consider other variables such as product quality, brand reputation, and service quality to provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer behavior. Additionally, while customer satisfaction and purchase decisions are important indicators of company performance, practitioners should also pay attention to other factors such as competitiveness and overall company performance as benchmarks for profitability and sustainability.

7. Limitations And Future Research

The present study investigated the impact of product trust, perceived value, and price fairness on customer satisfaction and purchasing decision. While the study provided valuable insights, there are several limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the study was conducted solely on Telkomcel customers and may not generalize to other cellular service providers with different products, coverage, and customer experiences. Future research should include a more diverse sample to assess the generalizability of the findings.

Secondly, the sample size of 178 participants in this study was relatively small, which may limit the statistical power and precision of the results. Future research should consider increasing the sample size to improve the reliability and validity of the findings.

Thirdly, this study relied on self-reported data collected through questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias. While measures were taken to ensure the accuracy of responses, future research could incorporate other data collection methods, such as interviews, observations, or focus groups, to provide more in-depth and nuanced data.

Fourthly, this study focused solely on the variables of product trust, perceived value, and price fairness and their impact on customer satisfaction and purchase decisions. Future research should also consider other variables such as product quality, brand reputation, and service quality to provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer behavior.

Overall, despite these limitations, this study provides a foundation for future research to explore the complex relationships between product trust, perceived value, price fairness, customer satisfaction, and purchasing decision in the cellular service industry. Future studies could build upon these findings by incorporating different samples, research methods, and analytical techniques to enhance the validity and generalizability of the results.

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Research Instrument:

Product Trust (X₁)

No	STATEMENT
1	Telkomcel has a good image in customers
2	I feel happy using Telkomcel products
3	Telkomcel is a cellular card provider that has high price and quality
4	Customers are satisfied with product quality and service quality from Telkomcel employees
5	Customers believe Telkomcel has better internet quality
6	Telkomcel 4G cellular data speed won't let me down
7	Telkomcel has a good and stable signal
8	Telkomcel has a variety of features and services to suit customer needs

Perceived Value (X₂)

No	STATEMENT
1	I like to use products from Telkomcel
2	I prefer to use Telkomcel operator than other operators
3	I believe Telkomcel products provide benefits according to customer needs
4	I am very proud to use Telkomcel products
5	Using Telkomcel products is a product with a well-known brand.
6	Telkomcel does not yet have an extensive network to villages
7	Telkomcel provides good quality as promised
8	Telkomcel signal is better than other operators

Price Fairness (X₃)

No	STATEMENT
1	Affordable Telkomcel Simcard prices
2	Many bonuses are offered at varying prices
3	Various Types and Prices of Telkomcel Internet Packages are tailored to customer needs
4	Saturday and Sunday Top Up Bonuses are attractive, and customers often use them
5	Telkomcel package prices vary according to the benefits
6	Product prices can compete with other brands
7	Telkomcel always provides information to customers via SMS or applications in case of price changes
8	Customers always get an SMS notification when your data package is about to run out or my package's active period is about to end
9	Customers are always loyal to Telkomcel even though there are many other providers
10	Customers agree with the price offered because Telkomcel's internet service is faster and more stable

Customer Satisfaction (Y₁)

No	STATEMENT
1	I am satisfied with the ease of buying a Telkomcel package
2	I am satisfied with the gifts or bonuses given to Telkomcel customers
3	I am satisfied with the performance and service provided by employees to customers Customer Acceptable Price
4	I as a customer are not easily lured by offers elsewhere
5	I will return to the Telkomcel service centre (Plaza) if there is a problem with my card or number
6	I am willing to give information and a positive impression on Telkomcel
7	I suggest to my friends or family to use the Telkomcel operator card
8	I am willing to recommend Telkomcel to family or friends because I have felt the benefits and quality

Purchase Decision (Y₂)

No	STATEMENT
1	Customers buy Telkomcel cards because they have various types of products according to their needs
2	I bought Telkomcel products because they have better quality
3	Telkomcel has Internet package prices that can be adjusted to customer needs
4	I bought a Telkomcel card because the brand is well known
5	Customers can easily use Telkomcel internet anywhere
6	Telkomcel card is available throughout Timor-Leste
7	My Telkomcel application is always active 24 hours to make it easier for customers to buy products and find out information about Telkomcel products
8	Customers can subscribe to packages (internet, telephone, SMS) according to the time they want