

The Role of Customer Satisfaction in Mediating the Effects of Product Quality and Perceived Price Fairness on Switching Intention: A Study of iPhone Users in Denpasar

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Abstract

The premium smartphone market has become increasingly competitive, encouraging consumers to evaluate alternative brands based on the value they receive from product performance and pricing. Although the iPhone is widely recognised for its premium positioning, users may still develop intentions to switch when they perceive that the product quality or price no longer provides satisfactory value. This study examines the direct effects of product quality and perceived price fairness on switching intention, while also investigating the mediating role of customer satisfaction among iPhone users in Denpasar. A quantitative approach was adopted by collecting data from 144 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The proposed research model was analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The empirical findings indicate that both product quality and perceived price fairness significantly decrease switching intention while simultaneously exerting positive effects on customer satisfaction. In addition, customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationships between product quality and switching intention and between perceived price fairness and switching intention. These findings suggest that consumers are less likely to consider alternative smartphone brands when they perceive superior product quality and fair pricing, as these perceptions strengthen overall satisfaction. From a managerial perspective, the results highlight the importance of continuously enhancing product quality and implementing pricing strategies that consumers perceive as equitable in order to reinforce customer satisfaction and minimise switching intention.

Keywords:

Customer satisfaction; Perceived price fairness; Product quality; Switching intention; iPhone users.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed smartphones into essential devices supporting communication, work, education, entertainment, and social interaction. This development has intensified competition in the global smartphone industry, requiring manufacturers to continuously improve product quality, introduce technological innovations, and develop pricing strategies that create superior customer value (Fitria, 2022; Kotler & Keller, 2021). Among premium smartphone brands, the iPhone is positioned as a high-end smartphone that emphasizes product quality, technological features, and user experience. The iPhone is known for its reliable performance, advanced security systems, integrated iOS ecosystem, and elegant design, which collectively enhance the user experience (Norbaiti & Rahmi, 2020). Furthermore, its relatively high price makes consumers' evaluations of price fairness particularly relevant when assessing the value they receive from the product (Mulyati & Hariyanto, 2021). Recent market reports also indicate changes in the smartphone market and iPhone sales performance, highlighting the importance of

product and pricing considerations in an increasingly competitive industry (Ayuningtyas, 2024; Counterpoint Research, 2024).

This phenomenon is also evident among iPhone users in Denpasar. A preliminary survey conducted by researchers of 30 users showed that 63.3% had considered switching to another smartphone brand. The responses indicated that considerations related to iPhone prices, perceived product innovation, and the availability of competing smartphones with alternative features were among the factors associated with respondents' consideration of switching. These results suggest that consumers are increasingly evaluating whether the quality and benefits they receive justify the premium price, thus increasing their propensity to switch to a competing brand.

Switching intention refers to consumers' willingness to replace their current brand with an alternative due to dissatisfaction or the perception that competing products offer greater value (Bansal & Taylor, 1999; Kotler, 2002; Vu et al., 2020). Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) provides a theoretical perspective for understanding customer satisfaction through consumers' evaluation of product performance in relation to their expectations (Oliver, 1980). From this perspective, favourable evaluations of product performance are associated with higher customer satisfaction, which may subsequently be related to a lower intention to switch. Furthermore, Equity Theory suggests that consumers evaluate price fairness by comparing the sacrifices they make with the benefits they receive (Adams, 1963; Xia et al., 2004). Accordingly, product quality and perceived price fairness may be associated with switching intention both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction.

Previous research consistently reports that higher product quality increases customer satisfaction and reduces consumer brand switching intentions (Albari & Kartikasari, 2020; Chuang et al., 2016; Sambo et al., 2022). Similarly, perceived price fairness has been found to strengthen customer satisfaction and prevent switching intentions because consumers perceive greater value when prices are perceived as fair (Bolton et al., 2010; Putri & Bernarto, 2023). Similarly, perceived price fairness has been associated with higher customer satisfaction and lower switching intention because consumers may evaluate the exchange more favourably when the price is perceived as fair (Bolton et al., 2010; Putri & Bernarto, 2023). However, empirical findings regarding these relationships are not entirely consistent. Some studies have reported significant effects of product quality and perceived price fairness on switching intention, whereas other findings suggest that these relationships may vary across consumer and product contexts (Chubaka et al., 2022; Lam et al., 2004). These variations indicate that further research is needed to examine how product quality and perceived price fairness are related to switching intention and whether customer satisfaction provides an explanatory mechanism for these relationships.

Although previous studies have examined the relationships among product quality, perceived price fairness, customer satisfaction, and switching intention, empirical evidence concerning the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the premium smartphone context remains limited. Although previous studies have examined the relationships among product quality, perceived price fairness, customer satisfaction, and switching intention, empirical evidence concerning the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the premium smartphone context remains limited. In particular, empirical evidence focusing on iPhone users in Indonesia, including the Denpasar market, remains limited. Furthermore, studies integrating Expectation Disconfirmation Theory and Equity Theory to explain how consumers evaluate product quality and price fairness before developing switching intentions are still limited. These theoretical, empirical, and contextual gaps form the basis for this research.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effects of product quality and perceived price fairness on customer satisfaction and switching intention among iPhone users in Denpasar. It also examines the effect of customer satisfaction on switching intention and investigates the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationships between product quality, perceived price fairness, and switching intention.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with an associative method. An associative research approach was employed to examine the relationships among the variables included in the research model (Sugiyono, 2022). The data collection method used in this study was a survey using a questionnaire as the research instrument. The method chosen for this study was purposive sampling, with the criteria being respondents residing in Denpasar, having a high school education or equivalent, having purchased the iPhone themselves, and having used the iPhone for at least six months. Questionnaires were distributed online via Google Forms and in person at the research location. A Likert scale was used to measure the variables, with values ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A total of 144 respondents met the predetermined criteria. The collected data were compiled in Microsoft Excel and subsequently analysed using SPSS 26 and SmartPLS 4.

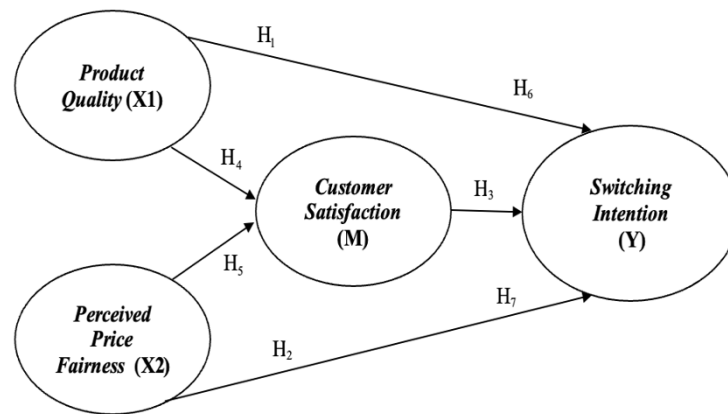


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive Analysis

A total of 144 valid responses were included in this study. All respondents met the predefined sampling criteria, including residing in Denpasar, having at least a senior high school education, purchasing their own iPhone, and using the device for a minimum of six months. The sample was predominantly female (70.1%), with most respondents aged between 22 and 30 years (68.1%). More than half held a bachelor's degree (56.3%), while the largest occupational groups were private-sector employees (42.4%) and entrepreneurs (23.6%). In terms of monthly expenditure, most respondents reported spending IDR 2,000,000–3,500,000 (38.2%) or more than IDR 3,500,000 (42.3%). These characteristics provide an appropriate respondent profile for examining the relationships among product quality, perceived price fairness, customer satisfaction, and switching intention in the context of iPhone users in Denpasar.

3.2. Evaluation of the Measurement Model (OuterModel)

PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4 was used to analyze the data. The analysis consisted of several stages: the measurement model was used to test validity and reliability, and the structural model was used to test hypotheses.

3.2.1. Convergent Validity

The measurement model was tested to test reliability and construct validity. Table 1 shows that all indicators were above the minimum threshold of 0.70, and the AVE value for each variable exceeded 0.50, indicating that the measurement model has good convergent validity.

Table 1. Results of Convergent Validity Test with Loading Factor

	Customer Satisfaction	Perceived Price Fairness	Product Quality	Switching Intention
M ₁	0.837			
M ₂	0.853			
M ₃	0.875			
M ₄	0.806			
X _{1.1}			0.850	
X _{1.2}			0.889	
X _{1.3}			0.865	
X _{1.4}			0.863	
X _{1.5}			0.872	
X _{1.6}			0.865	
X _{2.1}		0.850		
X _{2.2}		0.751		
X _{2.3}		0.817		
X _{2.4}		0.849		
Y ₁				0.750
Y ₂				0.827
Y ₃				0.798
Y ₄				0.807

Table 2. Results of Convergent Validity Test with AVE

Variable	AVE
Customer Satisfaction	0,711
Perceived Price Fairness	0,669
Product Quality	0,752
Switching Intention	0,634

3.2.2. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the cross-loadings and the Fornell–Larcker criterion. As shown in Table 3 and Table 4, each indicator exhibited a higher loading on its corresponding construct than on the other constructs, and the Fornell–Larcker criterion was satisfied for all latent variables. These findings indicate that the constructs achieved adequate discriminant validity.

Table 3. Results of Discriminant Validity Test with Cross-Loading

	Customer Satisfaction	Perceived Price Fairness	Product Quality	Switching Intention
M ₁	0.837	0.485	0.397	-0.547
M ₂	0.853	0.417	0.303	-0.460
M ₃	0.875	0.416	0.434	-0.536
M ₄	0.806	0.374	0.440	-0.529
X _{1.1}	0.435	0.457	0.850	-0.436
X _{1.2}	0.458	0.393	0.889	-0.472
X _{1.3}	0.380	0.398	0.865	-0.486
X _{1.4}	0.366	0.397	0.863	-0.372
X _{1.5}	0.341	0.402	0.872	-0.431
X _{1.6}	0.449	0.365	0.865	-0.459
X _{2.1}	0.492	0.850	0.412	-0.521
X _{2.2}	0.413	0.751	0.343	-0.366
X _{2.3}	0.350	0.817	0.363	-0.419
X _{2.4}	0.377	0.849	0.391	-0.488
Y ₁	-0.401	-0.363	-0.375	0.750
Y ₂	-0.541	-0.471	-0.444	0.827
Y ₃	-0.505	-0.467	-0.358	0.798
Y ₄	-0.505	-0.452	-0.451	0.807

Table 4. Results of Discriminant Validity Test with Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Customer Satisfaction	Perceived Price Fairness	Product Quality	Switching Intention
Customer Satisfaction	0,843			
Perceived Price Fairness	0,503	0,818		
Product Quality	0,470	0,463	0,867	
Switching Intention	-0,617	-0,554	-0,513	0,796

3.2.3. Composite Reliability

Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values. As presented in Table 5, all constructs achieved Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70 and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.50, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and construct reliability.

Table 5. Composite Reliability Results

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Customer Satisfaction	0,864	0,908
Perceived Price Fairness	0,835	0,890
Product Quality	0,934	0,948
Switching Intention	0,808	0,874

3.3. Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

The structural model was evaluated by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2) of the endogenous constructs. The structural model illustrating the hypothesised relationships among the latent variables is presented in Figure 2, while the evaluation results are discussed in the following section.

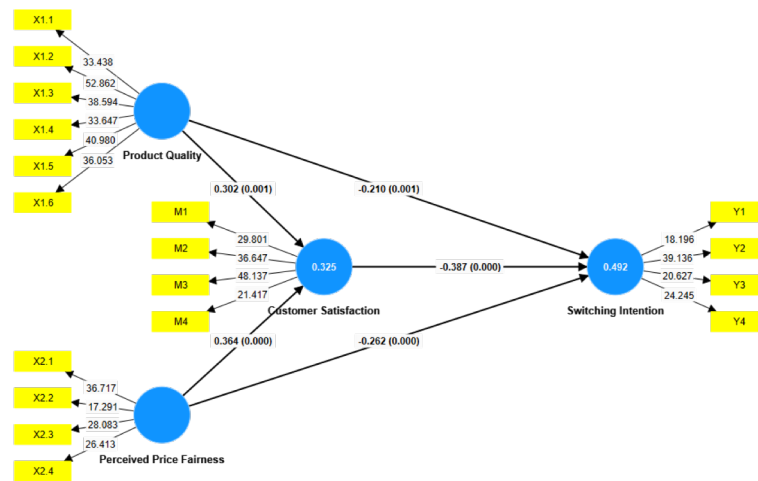


Figure 2. Research Empirical Model

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the explanatory power of the structural model. As shown in Table 6, the R^2 value for customer satisfaction was 0.325, indicating that product quality and perceived price fairness explained 32.5% of the variance in customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the R^2 value for switching intention was 0.492, indicating that product quality, perceived price fairness, and customer satisfaction jointly explained 49.2% of the variance in switching intention. Based on the categorization proposed by Hair et al. (2022), both values indicate a moderate level of explanatory power. The model also demonstrated satisfactory predictive relevance, with a Q^2 value of 0.657, indicating that the proposed model has adequate predictive capability.

Tabel 6. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Construct/Variable	R-square
Customer Satisfaction	0,325
Switching Intention	0,492

3.3.1. Direct Effects

The proposed hypotheses were tested using the bootstrapping procedure in PLS-SEM. The significance of the direct effects was evaluated based on the path coefficients, t-values, and p-values. The results of the direct effect analysis are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Direct Effect Test Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Product Quality -> Switching Intention	-0.210	-0.213	0.065	3.211	0.001
Perceived Price Fairness -> Switching Intention	-0.262	-0.264	0.063	4.147	0.000
Product Quality -> Customer Satisfaction	0.302	0.304	0.094	3.218	0.001
Perceived Price Fairness -> Customer Satisfaction	0.364	0.366	0.087	4.175	0.000
Customer Satisfaction -> Switching Intention	-0.387	-0.385	0.075	5.173	0.000

3.3.2. Indirect Effects

The indirect effect analysis revealed that customer satisfaction significantly mediated the relationship between product quality and switching intention ($\beta = -0.117$, $t = 2.896$, $p = 0.004$), as well as the relationship between perceived price fairness and switching intention ($\beta = -0.141$, $t = 3.229$, $p = 0.001$). These findings indicate that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationships of product quality and perceived price fairness with switching intention. The results of the indirect effect analysis are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Indirect Effect Test Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Product Quality -> Customer Satisfaction -> Switching Intention	-0.117	-0.116	0.040	2.896	0.004
Perceived Price Fairness -> Customer Satisfaction -> Switching Intention	-0.141	-0.141	0.044	3.229	0.001

3.4. Discussion

3.4.1. Effect of Product Quality on Switching Intention

The findings indicate that product quality has a significant negative effect on switching intention, suggesting that higher perceived product quality reduces consumers' intention to switch to competing smartphone brands. Descriptive analysis further shows that design aesthetics and additional features received the highest evaluations, whereas durability obtained the lowest mean score, indicating an area for potential improvement. The results are also consistent with previous studies (Albari & Kartikasari, 2020; Abigail et al., 2024; Sambo et al., 2022; Prabowo & Suprapti, 2025), confirming that superior product quality contributes to lower switching intention.

3.4.2. Effect of Perceived Price Fairness on Switching Intention

The results indicate that perceived price fairness has a significant negative effect on switching intention. This finding suggests that consumers who perceive the iPhone's price as fair are less likely to switch to competing smartphone brands. The descriptive analysis also shows relatively favourable evaluations of price fairness and the consistency between price and product quality, suggesting that respondents generally evaluated the price-quality relationship positively. These findings support Equity Theory (Adams, 1963), which explains that consumers evaluate whether the benefits obtained are proportional to the costs incurred. When the price is perceived as fair, consumers tend to maintain positive evaluations of the product, thereby reducing their intention to switch. This result is consistent with previous studies by Putri & Bernarto (2023) and Widiastiti et al. (2020), which found that perceived price fairness plays an important role in lowering consumers' switching intention.

3.4.3. Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Switching Intention

The results show that customer satisfaction has a significant negative effect on switching intention, indicating that more satisfied iPhone users are less likely to switch to competing smartphone brands. The descriptive analysis shows relatively favourable evaluations of satisfaction with product performance and overall satisfaction, indicating that these aspects received positive assessments from respondents. The results also support previous studies by Cronin et al. (2000), Lam et al. (2004), Althonayan et al. (2015), and Lestari (2019), which identified customer satisfaction as a key factor in reducing consumers' switching intention.

3.4.4. Effect of Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction

The findings demonstrate that product quality has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, indicating that consumers who perceive higher product quality tend to report greater satisfaction with their iPhone. Descriptive analysis shows that additional features received a relatively favourable evaluation, indicating that the availability of useful additional features contributes to respondents' assessment of product quality. The present findings are also in line with previous studies by Albari & Kartikasari (2019), Abigail et al. (2023), Sambo et al. (2022), and Prabowo & Suprapti (2025), all of which identified product quality as a significant determinant of customer satisfaction.

3.4.5. Effect of Perceived Price Fairness on Customer Satisfaction

The findings indicate that perceived price fairness has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, suggesting that consumers who perceive the iPhone price as fair tend to experience higher levels of satisfaction. Descriptive analysis further reveals that price-quality congruence and price fairness received the highest ratings, indicating that most respondents considered respondents generally evaluated the relationship between price, product quality, and perceived benefits favourably. These findings support Equity Theory (Adams, 1963), which argues that customer satisfaction is influenced by consumers' evaluation of the balance between the costs incurred and the benefits obtained. When the price is perceived as fair relative to the product's quality and value, consumers are more likely to develop favourable evaluations that enhance satisfaction. The current findings have been supported by previous research by Bolton et al. (2003), Putri & Bernarto (2023), Lutian et al. (2023), and Prabowo & Suprapti (2025), which identified perceived price fairness as an important determinant of customer satisfaction and long-term customer retention.

3.4.6. The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in the Relationship between Product Quality and Switching Intention

The findings reveal that customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between product quality and switching intention. This indicates that product quality reduces consumers' switching intention both directly and indirectly by enhancing customer satisfaction. Consumers who perceive higher product quality are more likely to report greater customer satisfaction, which is associated with a lower intention to switch to competing smartphone brands. The results are consistent with previous studies by Prabowo & Suprpti (2025), Albari & Kartikasari (2020), Abigail et al. (2024), and Sambo et al. (2022), which identified customer satisfaction as an important mechanism linking product quality to switching intention.

3.4.7. The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in the Relationship between Perceived Price Fairness and Switching Intention

The results further demonstrate that customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between perceived price fairness and switching intention. This finding suggests that consumers who perceive the iPhone price as fair are more likely to experience higher satisfaction, which in turn reduces their intention to switch to competing smartphone brands. These findings are consistent with Equity Theory (Adams, 1963), which proposes that consumers evaluate the fairness of an exchange by comparing the costs incurred with the benefits received. When consumers perceive the benefits received as appropriate relative to the price paid, they are more likely to report higher satisfaction and lower switching intention. The present findings also support previous research by Bolton et al. (2003), Putri & Bernarto (2023), and Prabowo & Suprpti (2025), confirming the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between perceived price fairness and switching intention.

3.4.8. Managerial Implications

The findings provide several managerial implications for the premium smartphone market in Indonesia. First, product quality has a significant negative effect on switching intention and a positive effect on customer satisfaction. The descriptive results indicate relatively favourable evaluations of design aesthetics and additional features, while durability received a comparatively lower evaluation. This suggests that maintaining product attributes that are positively evaluated should be accompanied by attention to product quality aspects that receive relatively lower evaluations.

Second, perceived price fairness significantly reduces switching intention and positively influences customer satisfaction. The findings indicate relatively favourable evaluations of price fairness and the relationship between price and product quality. This suggests that consumers evaluate the price of a premium smartphone not only based on the monetary amount paid but also in relation to the quality and benefits they perceive. Therefore, value communication should clearly convey the relationship between product quality, features, and the price paid.

Third, customer satisfaction significantly reduces switching intention and partially mediates the relationships between product quality, perceived price fairness, and switching intention. This indicates that managerial efforts should not focus solely on individual product attributes or price levels but should also consider how these factors contribute to consumers' overall satisfaction.

For the Indonesian premium smartphone market, these findings suggest that maintaining favourable product attributes, addressing comparatively weaker product quality aspects, and strengthening consumers' perceptions of price fairness may contribute to higher customer satisfaction and lower switching intention.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that product quality and perceived price fairness significantly reduce switching intention while positively influencing customer satisfaction among iPhone users in Denpasar. Customer satisfaction also has a significant negative effect on switching intention. Furthermore, customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationships between product quality and switching intention and between perceived price fairness and switching intention. These findings indicate that consumers' evaluations of product quality and price fairness are associated with both their satisfaction and their intention to consider alternative smartphone brands.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings support the relevance of Expectation Disconfirmation Theory and Equity Theory for understanding the relationships among product evaluations, customer satisfaction, and switching intention. EDT provides a theoretical perspective for understanding customer satisfaction through consumers' evaluation of product performance, while Equity Theory helps explain consumers' evaluation of the fairness of the exchange between the costs incurred and the benefits received.

From a managerial perspective, the findings indicate that maintaining product quality and strengthening perceptions of price fairness are important for increasing customer satisfaction and reducing switching intention. Particular attention may be given to product quality aspects that receive comparatively lower evaluations, while product attributes that are favourably evaluated should be maintained. In addition,

communicating the value associated with product quality and features may help consumers evaluate the price as fair.

This study has several limitations. First, the respondents were limited to iPhone users residing in Denpasar, which limits the generalizability of the findings to consumers in other regions of Indonesia. Second, the research model included only product quality, perceived price fairness, customer satisfaction, and switching intention. Other factors that may influence switching intention were therefore not examined.

Future research could extend the geographical scope by involving iPhone users from different cities or regions in Indonesia. Future studies could also incorporate variables such as brand image, customer loyalty, and perceived innovation to provide a broader understanding of switching intention. In addition, a longitudinal research design could be employed to examine changes in customer satisfaction and switching intention over time as consumer evaluations and market conditions evolve.

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