

Price and Product Quality as Determinants of Customer Satisfaction: A Fashion SME Case Study

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how price and product quality shape customer satisfaction at Fashion Outlet Rantauprapat (FOR), a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) fashion retailer in Aek Tapa, North Sumatra, Indonesia.

Methodology: A qualitative descriptive case study was conducted using unstructured interviews with six purposively selected informants (the owner, two employees, and three regular customers), direct observation between 20 and 25 October 2023, and documentary review of monthly sales for the 2023 calendar year. Data were analyzed through the Miles and Huberman interactive model of data reduction, data display, and verification, supported by source triangulation.

Results: Both determinants positively influenced satisfaction. Value aligned, multi-tier pricing made prices feel commensurate with quality, while consistent quality and trend aligned stock curation drove repeat purchases and loyalty. Sales rose continuously from IDR 10,500,000 in January to IDR 18,250,000 in December, totaling IDR 176,409,000, a 73.8% annual increase.

Conclusions: Competitive pricing and consistent product quality jointly generate satisfaction, loyalty, and steady revenue growth at FOR, with quality emerging as the dominant retention driver.

Limitations: The single store purposive design with six informants limits statistical generalization and reflects interpretive judgement without quantitative validation.

Contributions: The study supplies contextual, informant grounded evidence on price and quality as satisfaction determinants for Indonesian SME fashion retailers in secondary cities and enriches the SME marketing management literature.

Keywords: *Customer Satisfaction, Fashion Retail, Price, Product Quality, SME*

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1. Introduction

Indonesia fashion industry has become one of the most dynamic engines of the national creative economy, generating value across design, manufacturing, retail, and logistics. The sector has matured into a sophisticated consumer market in which product variety, price positioning, and quality consistency act as the central competitive differentiators (Khalid, 2024). Demand for apparel continues to expand as middle income consumers gain access to a widening spectrum of branded and locally produced clothing, and as social media accelerates the circulation of trends that retailers must track in close to real time (Jin, Omar, & Fu, 2024). For Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

operating in this environment, the capacity to convert this demand into durable commercial performance depends less on advertising scale than on the everyday quality of the value proposition offered to each customer who enters the store.

Customer satisfaction is the foundational outcome through which fashion SMEs build sustainable competitive advantage. Satisfaction is widely understood as the pleasure or disappointment that arises when a consumer compares the perceived performance of a product against prior expectations ([Kotler & Keller, 2022](#)). Where performance meets or surpasses expectations, satisfaction follows and tends to consolidate into repeat patronage; where it falls short, dissatisfaction produces switching and, frequently, adverse word of mouth that erodes reputation. Contemporary retail scholarship treats satisfaction not as a static endpoint but as the pivot of an explanatory chain that links store level attributes to loyalty, advocacy, and revenue ([Vasquez-Párraga, Sahagún, & Musso, 2024](#)). This framing is especially salient for resource constrained retailers, for whom every satisfied customer represents a disproportionately valuable asset.

For SMEs without institutional brand equity or large promotional budgets, satisfaction driven loyalty and organic word of mouth are the principal mechanisms of customer acquisition and retention. Empirical work consistently shows that perceived value, satisfaction, and positive word of mouth reinforce one another, lowering acquisition costs and stabilizing the recurring revenue base on which small retailers depend ([González-Viralta, Veas-González, Egaña-Bruna, Vidal-Silva, Delgado-Bello, & Pezoa-Fuentes, 2023](#)). Studies of brick-and-mortar retail similarly demonstrate that favorable store attributes feed brand loyalty and perceived value, which then translate into repurchase and recommendation behavior ([Mirza, Ting, & Hussain, 2025](#)). In a localized fashion market such as Rantauprapat, where several outlets compete for an overlapping consumer base, these mechanisms are not abstractions but the practical levers that determine which stores grow, and which stagnate.

Two marketing mix variables recur in the literature as the dominant determinants of fashion retail satisfaction: price and product quality. Price is the most immediately legible signal of value that a consumer encounters, and the alignment a consumer perceives between price and quality directly conditions buying behaviour and satisfaction ([Zhao, Yao, Liu, & Yang, 2021](#)). When a price is judged fair relative to the benefits received, satisfaction is generated; when it is judged excessive, dissatisfaction and switching follow ([Bulan & Larashati, 2022](#)). Product quality, in turn, encompasses material and construction quality, design attractiveness, durability, trend relevance, and fit, that is, the attributes through which a garment delivers on its functional and aesthetic promises ([Guru & Paulssen, 2020](#)). In apparel specifically, consistent quality across replenishment cycles is the mechanism through which satisfaction matures into loyalty ([Komari, 2023](#)).

Fashion Outlet Rantauprapat (FOR), located on Jalan Aek Tapa in Labuhan Batu Regency, North Sumatra, is an SME fashion retailer offering a curated selection of branded and trend forward clothing to local consumers. FOR operates in a competitive corridor in which price comparison is easy and quality expectations are formed through repeated purchase experience. Understanding which factors most effectively drive satisfaction, and how those drivers surface in actual sales performance, is therefore of direct practical importance to FOR management and to comparable retailers across Indonesia secondary cities. Much of the existing Indonesian evidence on this question is quantitative and survey based, which captures the strength of relationships but rarely the lived mechanisms through which they operate at the level of a single store ([Ilyas, Ginting, & Mustafa, 2023](#); [Singh, Jasial, Misra, & Bansal, 2024](#)).

Against this background, the present study contributes a qualitative case study that documents, at the informant level, the precise mechanisms through which price and product quality generate satisfaction in an SME fashion outlet, and that triangulates those mechanisms against an objective 12 months sales record. The novelty of the study lies in pairing interpretive depth with documentary verification in a secondary city context that the dominant survey literature has largely overlooked, thereby explaining not merely that price and quality matter but how they are experienced and converted into commercial

growth. Accordingly, the study pursues three objectives: first, to examine how FOR pricing strategy influences customer satisfaction; second, to examine how FOR product quality influences customer satisfaction; and third, to determine how these satisfaction drivers are reflected in FOR 2023 sales trajectory.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Price and Customer Satisfaction

Price is the monetary amount a consumer surrenders in exchange for a product and, more analytically, the consumer's assessment of monetary value relative to perceived benefit. Because price is the value signal that consumers encounter first, the perceived alignment between price and quality exerts a direct effect on buying behaviour and on the satisfaction formed after purchase ([Zhao, Yao, Liu, & Yang, 2021](#)). When consumers judge a price to be fair for the quality received, satisfaction is reinforced, when the price quality relationship is misaligned, whether the price is read as too high or, paradoxically, as too low and therefore a signal of compromised quality, satisfaction is undermined ([Bulan & Larashati, 2022](#)). This reasoning extends classical expectation disconfirmation logic into the pricing domain, treating fairness perception as an antecedent of the affective evaluation that constitutes satisfaction.

In fashion retail the pricing problem is unusually delicate because consumers are simultaneously price sensitive and brand aware. Price sensitive shoppers compare across competing outlets and will switch for modest advantages, whereas brand aware shoppers accept premiums for recognizable quality signals ([Assidiki & Budiman, 2023](#)). Managing both segments requires continuous competitive price intelligence paired with stable quality, so that each tier of the assortment preserves its own credible price quality alignment. Recent Indonesian evidence confirms that price, alongside product quality and the broader marketing mix, exerts significant effects on repurchase intention mediated by satisfaction ([Tarigan, Sibarani, & Silitonga, 2024](#)). Price sensitivity, moreover, is not purely deterministic such as, studies of perceived value show that satisfaction and word of mouth partially mediate the path from value to repurchase, while price sensitivity can also act directly on repurchase intention ([Lin, Yeh, & Hsu, 2022](#)). For an SME, this implies that pricing is best understood as a relational instrument that manages perceived fairness over time rather than as a one-off transactional lever.

2.2 Product Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Product quality denotes the sum of characteristics that enable a product to satisfy stated or implied needs, spanning functionality, reliability, durability, conformance, and aesthetic attributes. Contemporary measurement work conceptualises experienced product quality as a multidimensional construct that consumers assess cumulatively across encounters rather than at a single point of sale ([Guru & Paulssen, 2020](#)). In apparel, quality is evaluated through material and construction quality such as finish, stitching, and resistance to pilling, through aesthetic quality such as design attractiveness and trend relevance, and through fit quality such as sizing accuracy and comfort. These dimensions jointly determine whether the garment honours the promise that motivated the purchase.

Quality is theorised to drive satisfaction through the expectation disconfirmation mechanism: when experienced quality meets or exceeds the buyer's prior expectation, satisfaction results, and when it falls below expectation, dissatisfaction follows. Indonesian and comparative evidence repeatedly identifies product quality as a primary and often the strongest determinant of satisfaction and of the loyalty that satisfaction mediates ([Komari, 2023](#); [Ariani, Wimba, & Trarintya, 2023](#)). The decisive operational variable is consistency: a returning customer who expects the quality of a previous purchase must encounter that quality again, which makes quality control at the procurement stage the central lever of loyalty generation ([Alfionita, Harmadi, Selliandro, & Soesilo, 2025](#)). Studies of repurchase intention in grocery and consumer goods retail likewise show that product quality, working through satisfaction, is among the most robust predictors of the intention to buy again ([Elistia & Septiani, 2023](#)).

2.3 Customer Satisfaction: Theory and Measurement

Customer satisfaction is conventionally defined as the pleasure or disappointment that results when perceived performance is compared with prior expectation, with satisfaction arising when performance meets or exceeds expectation (Kotler & Keller, 2022). In retail settings satisfaction is operationally expressed through willingness to return, positive word of mouth, resistance to competitor switching, and willingness to accept a reasonable premium for a consistently satisfying offer. Recent scholarship has moved toward integrative models in which satisfaction occupies a mediating position between cognitive evaluations, such as perceived value and service or product quality, and the behavioural outcomes that constitute loyalty (Vasquez-Párraga, Sahagún, & Musso, 2024).

A substantial body of cross sector evidence reports that satisfaction mediates the influence of quality and value on repurchase and loyalty, both online and offline (Ruslim, 2025; Hui, Al Mamun, Reza, & Hussain, 2025). Trust and satisfaction frequently operate in tandem, jointly transmitting the effect of perceived quality onto behavioural intention (Iffan, Syafei, & Cuong, 2024). For SME fashion retailers, who typically cannot compete with larger chains on advertising reach or assortment breadth, satisfaction is the most economically efficient route to a defensible customer base, because the loyalty and advocacy it produces lower acquisition costs and stabilise revenue. This reframes investment in price quality management from a cost into the highest return marketing activity available to a small retailer.

2.4 Price, Quality, and Satisfaction in Current Retail Practice

The implementation context of these relationships has shifted markedly. Fashion retailing is increasingly omnichannel, with consumers expecting consistent stock visibility, pricing, and quality across physical and digital touchpoints (Khalid, 2024). Factors such as perceived ease of use, integrated promotions, and integrated transactions now shape the experience that precedes satisfaction even for shoppers who ultimately purchase in store (Riaz, Baig, Meidute-Kavaliauskiene, & Ahmed, 2021). Logistics and service quality, assessed through integrated frameworks, have become measurable antecedents of satisfaction in omnichannel retail (Cai, Liu, Lai, Zhu, Yuen, & Wang, 2024), and platform level studies show that service quality, satisfaction, and trust jointly sustain continued usage intention (Kim & Yum, 2024).

Even where SMEs operate primarily through a single physical outlet, these developments matter, because the price and quality expectations consumers carry into the store are increasingly calibrated by their digital exposure to competing offers. Online retail research identifies the dimensions of service and product quality that most strongly move satisfaction (Singh, Jasial, Misra, & Bansal, 2024), and integrated studies of service quality, product quality, price, promotion, and location confirm that these variables jointly determine satisfaction and loyalty across Indonesian retail contexts (Akmal, Panjaitan, & Ginting, 2023; Aji & Nurlinda, 2024). For a secondary city SME such as FOR, the practical lesson is that competitive pricing and consistent quality remain the controllable core of the value proposition, even as the comparative baseline against which customers judge them is set partly beyond the store's walls.

2.5 Synthesis of Prior Empirical Studies

Table 1. Synthesis of prior studies on price, product quality, and customer satisfaction

Author(s) and Year	Setting / Context	Method	Key Finding
Ilyas et al. (2023)	Distribution firm consumers, Indonesia	Regression	Price and product quality each significantly raise customer satisfaction; price quality alignment is the dominant driver
Akmal et al. (2023)	CV. Restu retail customers	PLS-SEM	Service quality, product quality, price, promotion, and location jointly affect satisfaction and loyalty

Author(s) and Year	Setting / Context	Method	Key Finding
Ariani et al. (2023)	Putri Ayu weaving, Gianyar	Regression	Service and product quality raise repurchase intention with satisfaction as mediator
Komari (2023)	Indonesian skincare products	SEM	Product quality mediates repurchase decisions; consistency is the key loyalty lever
Lin et al. (2022)	Safety shoe buyers (sustainability)	SEM	Perceived value raises satisfaction, word of mouth, and repurchase; price sensitivity acts directly
González-Viralta et al. (2023)	Retail consumers, green practices	SEM	Value perceptions lift satisfaction, loyalty, word of mouth, and willingness to pay
Setyo and Salim (2025)	Coffee and eatery SME	PLS-SEM	Product quality, price, place, and service quality drive repurchase via satisfaction
Mirza et al. (2025)	Brick and mortar retail shoppers	PLS-SEM	Store attributes feed brand loyalty and perceived value, driving repurchase and word of mouth
Assidiki and Budiman (2023)	Fashion Outlet Rantauprapat, North Sumatra	Qualitative case study	Price and product quality positively influence satisfaction; consistent quality and competitive pricing build loyalty; sales grew continuously across 2023

Table 1 synthesizes representative empirical studies on price, product quality, and customer satisfaction across fashion and adjacent retail contexts. The pattern is consistent: price and product quality, individually and jointly, exert significant positive effects on satisfaction, repurchase intention, and loyalty, with satisfaction frequently serving as the mediating construct ([Setyo & Salim, 2025](#); [Zahra & Piartrini, 2024](#)). Service oriented extensions add that perceived value and word of mouth reinforce these paths ([Gontur, Gadi, & Bagobiri, 2022](#)), while mediation studies show satisfaction transmitting quality and price effects onto loyalty ([Hudaya, 2021](#)). Literature reviews of consumer decision processes situate price and quality as enduring antecedents of purchase and post purchase evaluation ([Toha & Supriyanto, 2023](#); [Zhang, Zheng, & Zhu, 2024](#)). The present study extends this evidence base to a single SME fashion outlet through a qualitative design that recovers the mechanisms behind the relationships the survey literature has quantified.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Setting

This study employed a qualitative descriptive case study design, an approach suited to understanding how price and product quality influence satisfaction within a specific organisational context and to recovering the processes through which those influences operate. Qualitative inquiry foregrounds phenomena as experienced by participants, that is, the owner, staff, and customers of the focal store, yielding contextual depth that standardised survey instruments cannot access ([Sugiyono, 2019](#)). The single case logic is appropriate where the analytical aim is mechanism and meaning rather than statistical generalisation, and where the unit of analysis is a bounded, information rich setting. Mixed and qualitative methods are increasingly recognised as complementary to the dominant survey tradition in retail satisfaction research because they explain the contingencies behind quantified relationships ([Singh, Jasial, Misra, & Bansal, 2024](#)).

The research was conducted at Fashion Outlet Rantauprapat (FOR), located on Jalan Aek Tapa, Rantauprapat, Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia, an SME fashion retailer offering branded clothing and accessories to local consumers. The interview and observation period ran from 20 to 25 October 2023, and the documentary review covered the full 2023 calendar year from January to December. Confining the empirical work to one store allowed sustained, repeated engagement with

the same informants and the same sales records, supporting the cross referencing of perceptual and documentary evidence that the analysis required.

3.2 Informants, Data Collection, and Analysis

Purposive sampling was used to select informants with direct knowledge of the phenomena under study, and the resulting six informants are profiled in Table 2. The owner supplied strategic perspectives on pricing, product selection, and customer management; two employees contributed operational observations on daily interactions, recurring pricing questions, and quality complaints or compliments; and three regular customers offered experiential accounts of price satisfaction and quality assessment. Triangulating these three vantage points across ownership, operations, and consumption follows accepted practice for organizational case study research and guards against single source bias (Sugiyono, 2019). Three complementary methods were combined: unstructured interviews with all six informants exploring price fairness, price quality alignment, quality assessment criteria, and return motivation, direct observation of the store environment, display, pricing communication, and shopping behavior, and documentary review of monthly sales records as objective corroboration.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, comprising three concurrent activities (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction selected and organized the most relevant material from interview notes and observation records, discarding redundant content. Data display arranged the reduced material into thematic categories, namely price related satisfaction, quality related satisfaction, and sales performance. Conclusion drawing and verification synthesized findings across informant types and cross referenced the qualitative satisfaction themes against the quantitative sales trend, using the documentary record as a triangulating check on the interpretive claims. This procedure aligns the study with the integrative tradition in which satisfaction is examined as the link between perceived value or quality and behavioral outcomes (Ruslim, 2025).

Table 2. Informant profile and data sources

Informant Code	Count	Role and Perspective Provided	Primary Data Contribution
OW	1	Store owner; strategic pricing, product curation, customer management	Pricing philosophy, sourcing decisions, trend monitoring practices
EM	2	Sales employees; daily operational contact with customers	Recurring price questions, complaint and compliment patterns, return frequency
CU	3	Regular customers with multiple prior purchases	Lived price fairness judgements and quality assessments
DOC	12 records	Monthly sales documentation, January to December 2023	Objective revenue trajectory for triangulation

Table 2 The study involved four types of informants, including one store owner (OW) providing insights into pricing strategy, product selection, and customer management; two employees (EM) contributing operational perspectives on customer interactions, pricing inquiries, complaints, and returns, three customers (CU) offering experiential evaluations of price fairness and product quality; and 12 monthly sales documents (DOC) from January to December 2023 used as secondary data to support objective revenue trend analysis and triangulation.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Results

Price influence on satisfaction. Interview and observation evidence indicates that FOR pricing strategy drives satisfaction. The owner described the pricing philosophy as offering products at prices customers perceive as commensurate with the quality and brand value received, neither cheap nor expensive but value aligned. Employees confirmed that customers routinely express satisfaction when comparing FOR against competing outlets in the local corridor, with the most frequent comment being

that the products are reasonable given their quality and that customers would not buy comparable items more cheaply elsewhere if quality were lower. Customers reported that price was the first criterion applied on entering the store but became less decisive once quality was assessed; several had entered initially because the displayed prices appeared competitive yet returned because the quality justified the price.

The multi tier structure of FOR assortment, ranging from lower cost casual clothing to premium branded items, allowed the store to serve several income segments while preserving a credible perception of value alignment within each tier. Customers selecting lower tier products reported satisfaction with price quality alignment in that tier, while those selecting premium products reported that the premium was justified by a visible quality difference. This tiered approach effectively managed the expectations of a heterogeneous customer base with differing price sensitivity.

Product quality influence on satisfaction. Quality emerged as the most frequently cited satisfaction driver in customer interviews. All three customer informants spontaneously mentioned quality before price when asked what brings them back, indicating that quality functions as the primary loyalty driver once price has cleared an initial reasonableness threshold. Attributes named included material feel and durability, for instance that fabric does not pill after washing, consistent sizing across purchases, and alignment with current trends. The owner identified product curation as the leading operational priority, monitoring trends through social media and industry channels, refreshing stock regularly to maintain relevance, and exercising quality control at the procurement stage by selecting suppliers with dependable quality. Employees confirmed that returns and quality complaints are rare, suggesting that procurement stage control effectively prevents the expectation gaps that generate dissatisfaction.

Table 3. Fashion outlet Rantauprapat monthly sales revenue in 2023

No.	Month (2023)	Sales Revenue (IDR)
1	January	10,500,000
2	February	11,250,000
3	March	11,850,000
4	April	12,700,000
5	May	13,345,000
6	June	14,449,000
7	July	15,150,000
8	August	16,490,000
9	September	16,550,000
10	October	17,880,000
11	November	17,995,000
12	December	18,250,000
Total		176,409,000
Average monthly		14,700,750
Cumulative annual growth		73.8 percent

Sales performance as supporting evidence. Documentary analysis of FOR 2023 monthly sales records corroborates the perceptual findings, as presented in Table 3. Revenue rose without interruption from IDR 10,500,000 in January to IDR 18,250,000 in December, a cumulative annual increase of 73.8%, with an annual total of IDR 176,409,000 and an average monthly revenue of IDR 14,700,750. Month on month change was positive in every month, with an average compounded month on month growth of approximately 5.2 percent and no reversal months that would signal seasonal dips, dissatisfaction episodes, or competitive disruption.

The growth pattern is gradual and sustained rather than episodic, which is consistent with satisfaction produced by continuous operational quality rather than by one off promotion. The second half of the year shows accelerating performance relative to the first, with the July to December average of IDR 17,052,500 per month exceeding the January to June average of IDR 12,349,000 by 38.1%, an uplift consistent with the cumulative word of mouth and loyal base growth that high satisfaction retail operations typically exhibit over time.

4.2 Discussion

The convergent finding across interviews, observation, and documentation is that price and product quality operate synergistically rather than independently at FOR. Price establishes the initial purchase threshold, and product quality governs the post purchase evaluation that determines whether the customer returns. When both are well managed, the resulting price quality alignment generates not only momentary satisfaction but the sustained loyalty visible in the sales trajectory. This sequencing, in which price clears an entry threshold and quality secures retention, mirrors the expectation disconfirmation logic in which satisfaction is the affective consequence of confirmed or exceeded expectations ([Kotler & Keller, 2022](#)), and it resonates with evidence that price fairness perception conditions the satisfaction that follows a transaction ([Zhao, Yao, Liu, & Yang, 2021](#)).

The primacy customers assigned to quality, mentioning it before price as their reason for returning, aligns closely with findings that consistent product quality is the central long term loyalty mechanism in apparel and consumer goods retail ([Komari, 2023](#); [Alfionita, Harmadi, Selliandro, & Soesilo, 2025](#)). FOR procurement stage quality control, by minimising the expectation gaps that produce dissatisfaction, functions as the practical instrument through which this mechanism is realised. The rarity of returns and complaints reported by employees is the observable signature of that control. This interpretation is consistent with measurement work that treats experienced product quality as a cumulative, multi encounter construct rather than a single transaction attribute ([Guru & Paulssen, 2020](#)), since loyalty at FOR depends precisely on quality being reproduced across replenishment cycles.

The role of the multi tier pricing structure deserves emphasis. By preserving a credible price quality alignment within each tier, FOR manages a heterogeneous customer base whose members differ in price sensitivity, a challenge that the literature identifies as central to fashion pricing ([Bulan & Larashati, 2022](#); [Assidiki & Budiman, 2023](#)). The finding that premium tier customers accept higher prices when a visible quality difference justifies them is consistent with evidence that perceived value, not price level alone, governs satisfaction and the willingness to pay that accompanies it ([Lin, Yeh, & Hsu, 2022](#); [González-Viralta et al., 2023](#)). In effect, FOR practises an informal value based segmentation that the survey literature describes in aggregate but that the present case renders visible at the level of individual purchase reasoning.

Read through the integrative satisfaction models that now dominate retail scholarship, FOR sales growth is best understood as the behavioural downstream of satisfaction operating as a mediator between perceived value and loyalty ([Vasquez-Párraga, Sahagún, & Musso, 2024](#); [Ruslim, 2025](#)). That no informant attributed the 2023 growth to discount campaigns, advertising, or formal loyalty programmes strengthens the inference that the trajectory reflects genuine satisfaction driven loyalty and word of mouth rather than promotional stimulus. This is consistent with evidence that satisfaction and word of mouth jointly transmit value into repurchase, and that store attributes feed loyalty and advocacy in brick and mortar settings ([Mirza, Ting, & Hussain, 2025](#); [Hudaya, 2021](#)).

The findings also speak to the shifting implementation context of fashion retail. Although FOR operates as a single physical outlet, the price and quality expectations its customers carry into the store are increasingly calibrated by digital exposure to competing offers, a dynamic documented in omnichannel research ([Khalid, 2024](#); [Riaz, Baig, Meidute-Kavaliauskiene, & Ahmed, 2021](#)). The store's continuous trend monitoring through social media is, in this light, not incidental but a direct response to consumers whose reference points are partly set online. The broader Indonesian evidence

that price, product quality, and service quality jointly determine satisfaction and loyalty ([Akmal, Panjaitan, & Ginting, 2023](#); [Aji & Nurlinda, 2024](#); [Ilyas, Ginting, & Mustafa, 2023](#)) is therefore reproduced here at the micro level, with the added contribution that the case specifies the mechanisms, namely multi tier price quality alignment and procurement stage quality consistency, through which the relationships operate. These mechanisms extend, rather than merely confirm, the survey tradition by showing how satisfaction is produced and converted into measurable growth in a secondary city SME ([Setyo & Salim, 2025](#); [Zahra & Piartrini, 2024](#); [Toha & Supriyanto, 2023](#); [Zhang, Zheng, & Zhu, 2024](#); [Ariani, Wimba, & Trarintya, 2023](#); [Elistia & Septiani, 2023](#); [Iffan, Syafei, & Cuong, 2024](#); [Hui, Al Mamun, Reza, & Hussain, 2025](#); [Cai, Liu, Lai, Zhu, Yuen, & Wang, 2024](#); [Kim & Yum, 2024](#); [Singh, Jasial, Misra, & Bansal, 2024](#)).

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This qualitative case study examined how price and product quality influence customer satisfaction at Fashion Outlet Rantauprapat through interviews with six informants, direct observation, and documentary review of 2023 monthly sales. Three conclusions follow. First, price positively influences satisfaction: FOR multi-tier strategy creates price quality alignment across income segments, with all informant groups reporting satisfaction with the value received for prices paid. Second, product quality positively influences satisfaction: consistent quality and trend aligned curation are the primary drivers of return behavior, cited spontaneously by customers before price as their main reason for loyalty. Third, both influences are reflected in performance, with continuous monthly revenue growth across 2023, from IDR 10,500,000 to IDR 18,250,000 and a total of IDR 176,409,000, documenting the commercial consequence of sustained satisfaction.

Three practical recommendations follow for FOR and comparable SME fashion retailers. First, price quality alignment should remain the central marketing strategy, with regular competitive benchmarking against local retailers informing pricing as input costs change, so that perceived value alignment is preserved. Second, procurement stage quality control should remain the leading operational priority, since maintain supplier standards and conduct pre stock quality checks protect the quality satisfaction mechanism that currently sustains loyalty. Third, FOR should consider formalizing satisfaction monitoring through brief periodic customer surveys, moving from informant-based evidence to structured, trackable data capable of detecting emerging issues before they affect sales.

5.2 Research Limitations

The study carries three limitations, first, the small purposive sample of six informants from a single store limits statistical generalization; the findings describe FOR specific context and cannot be extended to other SME fashion retailers without further research. Second, the qualitative design relies on informant self-reports and researcher interpretation, introducing potential social desirability bias, in that informants may present more favorable perceptions than they hold, and interpretive subjectivity in the analytical conclusions. Third, the study documents a correlational pattern, in which consistent price quality management coincides with sales growth, but does not establish causality; unmeasured factors such as location, store atmosphere, and staff service quality may also contribute to the observed trajectory.

5.3 Directions and Future Study

Future research should extend this qualitative evidence along two paths. First, a quantitative survey with a larger customer sample using validated price perception, product quality, and satisfaction instruments would permit regression or structural equation testing of the relationships identified here, yielding statistically generalizable evidence for the price, product quality, and satisfaction model in the Rantauprapat fashion context. Second, a comparative multi store study across several SME fashion outlets would enable cross outlet comparison of pricing strategies, quality standards, and satisfaction outcomes, identifying which specific practices differentiate high satisfaction from lower satisfaction operators and thereby providing more actionable guidance for SME development programmed in North Sumatra. Incorporating omnichannel touchpoints would further align

the inquiry with the evolving retail environment in which even single outlet SMEs increasingly compete.

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Author Contributions

DH conceptualized the study, designed the research instruments, conducted the interviews and field observation, and drafted the manuscript. MJ curated the sales documentation, performed the data reduction and thematic analysis, contributed to the discussion and conclusions, and reviewed and edited the manuscript. Both of the authors read and approved the final version of the article.

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