



Service Quality, Product Quality, and Price-Saving Orientation as Predictors of Customer Satisfaction: Evidence from AEON Bukit Tinggi, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the increasing need to understand key drivers of customer satisfaction in highly competitive retail environments. Despite extensive research on service quality, product quality, and pricing, limited studies have examined the integrated effects of these factors within Malaysian brick-and-mortar retail settings. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of service quality, product quality, and price-saving orientation on customer satisfaction at AEON Bukit Tinggi, Malaysia. A quantitative research design was employed using a structured survey administered to 478 AEON customers. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. The results indicate that all three variables significantly and positively influence customer satisfaction ($p < 0.001$), with product quality emerging as the strongest predictor, followed by service quality and price-saving orientation. These findings support Expectation Disconfirmation Theory, suggesting that satisfaction increases when customer expectations regarding service, product value, and pricing are met or exceeded. The study concludes that an integrated strategy combining high service standards, superior product quality, and value-oriented pricing is essential for enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering customer loyalty in the retail sector.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Customer satisfaction is a crucial aspect of retail success, particularly in a competitive market with shifting customer preferences. Satisfied customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and share positive word of mouth. These traits will contribute to a retailer's larger market share and reputation. It is also known that primary variables of the customer experience, including service quality, product quality, and price-value, can impact customer satisfaction. For retail giants like AEON in Malaysia, making these elements known is crucial to achieving a loyal followership and staying ahead in the market. AEON Bukit Tinggi is situated in a commercial and consumer-oriented city

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environment in Klang. The market is crowded and there is competition between local, regional and international retailers. The fact that service, the product and the price can have an important effect on customer satisfaction in this domain is an important competitive advantage. Service quality is the degree to which a retailer has met or exceeded customer expectations on the four dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Good service quality has always been associated with greater satisfaction and loyalty, including customer loyalty-related results such as brand recognition, good reviews, and customer relations. For instance, customers are more likely to return when staff are responsive and helpful; service processes are effective, and the overall shopping environment is appealing. Recent studies also reaffirm that service quality matters. Customer-oriented quality of service, as measured by a study investigating Vietnamese supermarkets, was found to correspond to customer expectations to markedly increase satisfaction levels. Like retail services, it is extremely important that companies keep up the highest service standards in competitive markets; retailers that invest in educating their employees on how to respond with customer attentiveness have historically achieved higher customer satisfaction.

Product quality refers to the tangible characteristics of a retailer's products, including their durability, functionality, design and general value that affects how customers perceive the retailer. High-quality products contribute to the perception of customer value and generally fulfil or surpass customer expectations to increase satisfaction in the customer experience. For mature markets such as Malaysia, quality in products is critical to competitiveness within the market segments. Recent studies support that product quality has a direct and positive influence on consumer satisfaction by meeting clients' needs for reliability and value. On the other hand, Hossain's [6] research indicated that higher quality products in retail stores produced higher satisfaction as individuals feel "Good value for their money". Singh [18] found that product quality also predicts satisfaction across the board for online and offline retail sites. These results imply that the retailer benefits a lot from a customer repeat purchase when reliable, well-made products in the store are made regularly. Price-saving orientation, also known as value consciousness or price consciousness, is a customer's intention to pursue value for money and provides an effective price advantage (e.g., discounts, promotions, and cost-effective offerings). Consumers today are more price-sensitive than they have been in the past, as economic volatility and increased living expenses grip society. Price-saving orientation to a particular degree of purchase, customers with a price-saving orientation will critically assess whether a retailer provides price-driven consumer will be conscious of a competitive price and attractive offers to be competitively priced by a retailer. This consideration becomes even more important in the case of price-sensitive markets, such as Malaysia, where consumers tend to compare prices and loyalty rewards, often driven by promotions and competition among retailers. There is some evidence from research indicating that retailers with such a mindset towards customer price-saving customer expectation match retail strategies, as it relates to consumers' price-savings, which will raise the satisfaction scores. For example, Kajandren [8] conducted a study in Malaysia, which found that a focus on cost and discount services in the online context had an associated effect with improvement in customer satisfaction. Ravinna [14] also noticed the fact that price competitiveness as well as frequent promotion have helped to satisfy the consumers' value as well as the retail industry satisfaction. These results highlight the importance of retailers beyond service and the availability of products to sustain customer satisfaction, and also provide perceived price fairness and savings.

Although there is a considerable amount of literature on service quality, product quality, and pricing, in particular, few studies have focused on these factors in combination regarding Malaysian brick-and-mortar retail. Most prior research explores these determinants isolated from or as a combination of these determinants and across different industries, with many retailers such as AEON

still lacking a locally contextualised understanding of how service, product, and price elements collectively affect customer satisfaction. In order to fill this gap, the current study considers AEON Bukit Tinggi, a popular shopping district, as a case study for this relationship examination. The study is based on the Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), which holds that satisfaction results from comparing pre-purchase expectations with actual performance. If service, product or pricing performance surpasses expectations (positive disconfirmation), the customer will be satisfied; if it falls short (negative disconfirmation), the customer will be dissatisfied. Based on EDT, we expect that service and product improvements, along with a price-saving mindset at AEON, will promote positive disconfirmation and satisfaction. We postulate that each one of these three influences has a highly positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Subsequent sections describe the research approach, report the empirical findings and considerations on theory and retail practice. This study is significant because it provides empirical evidence for Malaysian brick-and-mortar retail by evaluating these predictors within a single integrated model, offering clearer guidance for retail managers on where to prioritise improvements. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of service quality, product quality, and price-saving orientation on customer satisfaction at AEON Bukit Tinggi.

1.2 Literature Review

Customer satisfaction is still a big driver of the retail business, particularly in increasingly competitive markets with consumers' expectations shifting over a short space of time. Service quality has emerged consistently as one of the key predictors of customer satisfaction as retailers look to differentiate themselves from other alternatives. It can be defined as the ability to perceive and experience a service experience across the customer journey. Service quality is typically defined as that which meets its customers' expectations. Unlike product quality, which relates to tangible product characteristics, service quality focuses on intangible factors, including the behaviour of staff members, communication, and the process of service provision. Parasuraman *et al.* describe the SERVQUAL model [13], describing the five major dimensions of service quality: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Responsiveness is the willingness of the employees to provide prompt assistance, while reliability means the ability to deliver the services that were promised accurately and dependably. They are, after all, the essence of what trust is about. It is said that trust in someone to work is important, while people need more than just trust to operate, they also need to work with empathetic humans to try to cater to what they perceive as their own competence. Tangibles would be physical aspects such as store layout, cleanliness, signage, and how employees looked. Collectively, these dimensions determine customer perceptions of service quality and thus enhance their overall satisfaction.

The relationship of service quality with satisfaction is theoretically proposed by EDT (Expectation Disconfirmation Theory). Oliver [12] states that levels of customer satisfaction result when the consumers' expectations are compared with the actual performance of service, and there are either positive, neutral or negative levels of disconfirmation being experienced. Performance that goes beyond the expected will result in positive disconfirmation and satisfaction, while failure to do so will result in negative disconfirmation and dissatisfaction. So, higher quality service increases positive disconfirmation and hence customer satisfaction. Although closely related, service quality and customer satisfaction are conceptually different. Service quality is mostly the cognitive appraisal of certain qualities of a service, while satisfaction is a general emotional response of how satisfied a customer is.

Nevertheless, considerable theoretical and empirical studies consistently find that service quality is a key antecedent to customer satisfaction. A large body of evidence shows positive linkages between service quality and customer satisfaction. A meta-analysis by Carrillat *et al.* [5], who analysed 86 studies with more than 42,000 participants, showed that service quality has far-reaching and statistically significant impacts on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intentions. Customers, in general, report significantly greater satisfaction levels in all international retail settings where they perceive higher service quality. Later studies over the past decade corroborate these findings across many cultural contexts. For example, Nguyen [11] discovered that Vietnamese supermarket customers were more satisfied to a large extent when the service quality was better, whereas smaller service gaps were correlated to satisfaction. In Indonesia, research indicates that enhanced service responsiveness and reliability in mini-markets increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. In Malaysia, Andrew *et al.* [3] showed that all five SERVQUAL dimensions are statistically significant and positively associated with satisfaction among hypermarket shoppers in Sarawak, revealing that every dimension influences how customers appraise their experience. The above studies all show the main importance of service quality for retail managers in order to maintain competitiveness, as it has a direct implication on both customer satisfaction and repeat patronage. All of the SERVQUAL dimensions have a role to play in satisfaction, but their relative relevance differs from place to place.

Reliability is often the strongest predictor in general retail, as customers are looking for reliable, error-free service. By contrast, empathy and responsiveness might have greater importance for high-contact service industries (interpersonal, where the customer interface is of primary importance). Tangibles are more significant in fields such as luxury retail and hospitality, where the physical environment is a critical component of the experience. We know from these factors that service quality generally affects satisfaction; however, which way you consider each dimension should depend on market context and expectations for a given customer. Research corroborates service quality's significant role in shaping satisfaction within Southeast Asia including Malaysia. Malaysian customers in urban retail centres are demanding more reliable, accurate, quick and customised services. When retailers invest in training their staff, creating an enhanced store atmosphere, and making the service process more efficient, consumers are likely to experience greater levels of satisfaction and loyalty intentions, according to studies. These findings were not unique in the Thai context, but are also reported in other local markets, like Thailand and Vietnam, for which the quality of service remains one of the most important predictors of satisfaction. It is of significant importance in online retail platforms.

Similarly, the rapid adoption of digital technologies has made the importance of service quality for online retail platforms even more significant. In e-commerce in Malaysia, elements such as ease of use, delivery reliability, and customer service quality have all made an impact on consumer satisfaction. Therefore, the core principles of service are relevant not only for the brick-and-mortar store environment but also online retail shopping environment. There are several research gaps, however, despite strong global and regional evidence. First, very little work is found looking at retail and service quality in Malaysian brick-and-mortar. Many studies examined in other areas (e.g., banking, hospitality) as a single dimension of service or in the general service dimension, to emphasise on wide sector coverage of service quality of the retail context and in its comprehensive dimensions (e.g., retail). Second, even if the effect of service quality on satisfaction is established, there is an underdeveloped understanding of service quality and its interplay with different factors (e.g., product quality and pricing) in the Malaysian retail context. Exploring how these determinants can enhance or moderate each other could yield a more comprehensive view of customer satisfaction. Third, variation in SERVQUAL ranking across studies indicates that customer priorities

are influenced by culture and context. Future investigations must delve into the influence of ethnicity, income level and shopping frequency on perceptions of service quality among Malaysia's diverse consumers. Lastly, changes in behaviour patterns post the COVID-19 pandemic have raised expectations about hygiene, digital integration and consistent omnichannel service. This study would be valuable to theory development based on the emergence of new variables and managerial practice rooted in the impact of new factors.

Ultimately, we conclude from the literature that service quality is a powerful and stable predictor of satisfaction in retail customers. Theoretical models, SERVQUAL and Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory, also offer clear explanations of the impact of service quality on satisfaction. Empirical research in different countries, such as Malaysia, indicates that all five service quality factors (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles) can affect satisfaction, only with different context-specific impacts. With heightened consumer expectations in Malaysia and heightened retail competition, ongoing research on service quality within a local setting is key to improving customer satisfaction and retention. This kind of research will provide academic insight into the impact of service on satisfaction while providing retailers with tangible guidance in how to enhance this to deliver a better product or service.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design and Sample

This research employed a cross-sectional survey design to focus on predictors of customer satisfaction in AEON Bukit Tinggi. The targeted population was customers of the AEON Bukit Tinggi shopping centre in Klang, Malaysia, which attracts roughly 25,000 shoppers on an average weekday, as stated on the Aeon Group website. A cluster sampling approach was applied by defining clusters based on shopping time periods (weekday versus weekend) and major store sections, and respondents were then approached within the selected clusters. A minimum sample size of 377 was calculated from Krejcie and Morgan [9], which is appropriate in a population of this size. In total, 478 valid responses were obtained, exceeding the range required, thus increasing the statistical power of this study.

2.2 Data Collection Procedure

Both online and in-person methods were employed to obtain information. The survey was built through Google Forms and disseminated through various channels on social media (Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp) and at the AEON Bukit Tinggi store. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and respondents were screened to confirm they were AEON Bukit Tinggi shoppers at least 18 years of age. Data collection occurred over a specified time period with reminders sent on social media to increase response rates. An online form was also utilised to facilitate data compilation as responses were automatically recorded into a database. Before conducting a primary survey, we conducted a pilot on 58 participants to test the questionnaire's clarity and reliability. Following some pilot feedback, we made slight wording changes for clarity. Similar results were verified in the pilot data, indicating the survey items' high internal consistency, allowing us to trust the reliability of this measure before full introduction.

2.3 Measures and Instrumentation

The survey instrument utilised two parts: the demographics and measurements of four major constructs (service quality, product quality, price-saving orientation, and customer satisfaction). A five-point Likert scale was employed to measure all constructs, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), as it is widely recommended for capturing respondents' attitudes and perceptions in social science research, as stated in Sekaran & Bougie [16]. All constructs were assessed using multi-item scales derived from the literature and adapted to this retail sample. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Service quality is measured using 10 items, including dimensions of key services relevant to retail, such as staff helpfulness, responsiveness, communication clarity, store environment, and after-sales services. These items were taken from general service quality measures and modified for AEON, focusing on areas such as employee assistance, responsiveness to customer needs, and clarity in policies (i.e., return and exchange). Product quality was assessed through nine items measuring customers' perceptions about product quality at AEON. Items included product durability, functionality, variety, and overall product quality against expectations. This scale assesses whether AEON's items comply with customer requirements for performance and dependability.

On the other hand, price-saving orientation was measured with 10 items on the consumer's value-consciousness and the extent of interest in AEON's pricing and promotions. Some items related to the attitudes towards price fairness, the value added by discounts, the availability of loyalty rewards, and the need for bargain shopping. This construct corresponds to the consumer's desire to appreciate value for money when making a purchase. Customer satisfaction was assessed by 10 items regarding the quality of shopping at AEON Bukit Tinggi. The scale consisted of items which assessed the extent to which AEON met the customer's expectations, satisfaction with the purchase, willingness to refer the store, and overall satisfaction. These variables represented the service, products, and pricing experiences in the store. Additionally, the internal consistency of all these scales was very high. Table 1 provides summaries of the number of items and Cronbach's alpha for each construct. With all α values exceeding the usual reliability threshold of 0.70, most above 0.80, they all show good internal consistency of the survey scales.

Table 1

Reliability of measurement scales (N = 478)

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's α (Reliability)
Customer Satisfaction	10	0.858
Service Quality	10	0.840
Product Quality	9	0.840
Price-Saving Orientation	10	0.852

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis of our survey sample gives a perspective for the hypothesis testing. The respondent demographic was skewed to young people and female consumers, which aligned with the average customer type in an urban mall within Malaysia. The responses suggest AEON Bukit Tinggi is heavily focused on young consumers, nearly 29% of respondents were between the ages of 22 and 25 years, and approximately 25% were between the ages of 18 and 21. More than 60% of the respondents had at least a college degree or diploma, indicating educated clients. The ethnic composition included Malay (41.4%), Chinese (22.6%), Indian (18.2%), and others (17.8%), which

closely approximated Malaysia's urban diversity. A percentage of 55.3% reported moderate income levels (around RM 1,000-5,000 per month), a middle-class audience, perhaps likely to be aware of both the high levels of quality and low prices in their consumption behaviours. The sample is, in short, that of the young, educated and thrifty youth, which is the basis for a modern-looking modern retail strategy.

Participants also tended to give their experiences at AEON Bukit Tinggi favourable marks overall. The average scores on a 1-5 scale for service quality, product quality, and customer satisfaction, all above the midpoint of 3, were higher than 2, indicating excellent perceptions of AEON's services and products in general. For the more price-saving orientation, the data were somewhat more scattered, as individuals differed in their valuation of the approach to price. None of the values were significantly off; skewness was near zero (from -0.08 to -0.07) and kurtosis ± 2 for all constructs, where extreme outlying and heavy-tailed distribution were not assumed and would violate parametric test assumptions. The reliability of all scales was high (as shown in Table 1), which provided confidence that survey items were interpreted uniformly by respondents. In conclusion, the sample characteristics and descriptive results indicate that the data were suitable for exploring the proposed relationships.

3.2 Hypothesis testing

H1 : Service quality \rightarrow customer satisfaction. Our results provide significant support for H1. Service quality was positively correlated with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.830$, $p < 0.001$), so respondents who rated it higher also reported higher overall satisfaction. A linear regression indicated that service quality alone accounted for 68.9% of the variance explained by customer satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.689$), with a positive, significant regression relationship ($p < 0.001$). Such data reveal a significant association between quality improvement and satisfaction, and that if there is improvement in service, then satisfaction will be expected to rise massively. At AEON, such practical applications of the following factors, like the helpful staff helping customers, the prompt service, and an overall positive service experience, have positive and significant impacts on customer satisfaction. This result aligns with the expectation-disconfirmation theory that says better quality services will create positive disconfirmation exceeding expectations as a consequence of quality and satisfaction in turn. It also supports recent research on service excellence as a driving force behind satisfaction in retailing. For instance, Ismail [7] reported that responsiveness and assurance are two important service dimensions that enhance customer satisfaction within the Malaysian store.

H2: Product Quality \rightarrow Customer Satisfaction. The data reinforced H2 nicely. Product quality positively correlated with customer satisfaction significantly ($r = 0.833$, $p < 0.001$), nearly in the same magnitude as the service quality correlation. This suggests that consumers who regard AEON's products as high-quality in terms of durability, variety, and meeting expectations are very likely to experience contentment in their shopping experience. In a straightforward regression, product quality predicted 69.4% of the variance in satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.694$, $p < 0.001$), although it was also marginally the most significant of the three dependent variables. This means product quality may represent the overall most influential factor of this study, but on a small scale. These results show that retail store service excellence isn't enough; an inability to offer quality products would greatly reduce customer satisfaction. On the other hand, if you put extra emphasis on product quality, customer satisfaction may significantly improve. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that customers are most satisfied by products that not only meet, but also exceed, their performance and value goals. Research from different retail environments has reached similar conclusions. For instance, Uzir *et al.*, [20] reported that high product quality significantly enhances

customer satisfaction and the probability of repeat purchases in home appliance retail. Singh [18] also found that product quality is an essential driver of satisfaction on different online and offline retail channels. Our findings validate the significance of the high standard (good merchandise, reliable brands, value for money) of a product to the satisfaction of retailers such as AEON.

H3: Price-Saving Orientation → Customer Satisfaction. The results were also consistent with H3. A strong positive relationship was found between price-saving orientation and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.826$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that shoppers who take AEON's pricing approaches (discounts, promotions, perceptions of price fairness) positively affect satisfaction. The regression analysis revealed that price-saving orientation alone accounted for approximately 68.3% of the variance in satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.683$, $p < 0.001$). Yet this R^2 is a fraction of those for service and product quality, but it is still quite significant for just one factor, suggesting that pricing and perceptions of value are of paramount importance to customers. Simply put, in a hyper-competitive, price-sensitive market, offering real monetary value (affordable pricing, savings) will make customers feel satisfied. Shoppers who are relatively AEON-savvy or high price-savings focused, price-savings orientation shoppers are probably happy with AEON when they believe AEON is likely to be sold at a price-saving (feeling they have received a good deal or even if AEON is more attractive than other price-sensitive buyers). This finding supports previous studies that stress that price fairness and promotion-based benefits have a significant impact on customer satisfaction. For example, Kajandren [8] shows that Malaysian online buyers who spent online shopping in Malaysia with a high money saving orientation are also the most satisfied, are likely to be more satisfied during sale/discounting and are willing to spend on products provided in which they can receive sales and discounts. At a similar time, Ravinna [14] found that price-sensitive retail customers in Malaysia, on the other hand, respond positively to discount programs and loyalty reward programs from stores that offer such programs, resulting in more satisfaction and loyalty. The fact is that we agree that AEON's insistence on strong pricing and value promotions is one of the primary drivers that keep their customers happy.

In summary, all three hypotheses (H1, H2, H3) also substantiated showing service quality, product quality, and price saving orientation are significant and have positive influences on consumer satisfaction in an AEON Bukit Tinggi market. The impact sizes were significant (i.e. statistically significant) as well as practically significant. The fact that these elements are so interrelated makes sense: a store doing well in one variable may well do well in others, or shoppers expect a good deal of integrated value proposition. Of interest, the combined multiple regression model (including all three predictors) has an adjusted R^2 of 0.752, which suggests that aggregated factors provide 75% of the variance in customer satisfaction. This demonstrates that a comprehensive approach to service, product, and pricing, both in theory and practice, will lead to a very high satisfaction level. We discuss what these insights mean for theory and retail management in turn. Data on the correlation coefficients and the variance explained for each hypothesised relationship are presented in Table 2 below, thus summarising the major quantitative findings. All three independent variables have a strong positive correlation with customer satisfaction (r values ~ 0.83 , $p < 0.001$). Simple regression analyses show each factor explains a substantial proportion of variance in satisfaction ($R^2 \sim 0.68$ – 0.69). All hypothesised relationships are supported by the data at a 99.9% confidence level.

Table 2
 Results of correlation and regression analyses

Predictor (Independent Variable)	Outcome (Dependent Variable)	Pearson r	R ²	p-value	Hypothesis Support
Service Quality	Customer Satisfaction	0.830	0.689	< 0.001	Yes (H1 supported)
Product Quality	Customer Satisfaction	0.833	0.694	< 0.001	Yes (H2 supported)
Price-Saving Orientation	Customer Satisfaction	0.826	0.683	< 0.001	Yes (H3 supported)

The responses were examined and cleaned to identify any missing and inconsistent items after data collection. The final dataset (N = 478) was then analysed using IBM SPSS (Version 30). The analysis proceeded in several steps. Descriptive statistics were computed to indicate the sample demographic composition and the distribution of responses for each construct. The demographic profile indicated female shoppers (65.7%) accounted for the majority, whereas male shoppers (34.3%) made up the minority, and a substantial proportion of respondents were aged 18–25 years. The distribution of the sample was well-educated (over 60% had a diploma or higher) and ethnically diverse (approximately 41% Malay, 23% Chinese, 18% Indian, and 18% other ethnic groups). That meant that the data represented the average cross-section of AEON Bukit Tinggi’s clientele, comprising predominantly young adult shoppers from diverse backgrounds. Descriptive statistics for construct variables included mean and standard deviation values and normality checks. Skewness and kurtosis scores for all variables were within ranges considered acceptable (skewness close to 0, kurtosis between -1.3 and -1.1), indicative of the observations that were approximately normally distributed. This warranted the application of parametric statistical tests for deeper analyses.

Second, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to analyse the bivariate relationships between the independent variables (service quality, product quality, and price-saving orientation) and the dependent variable (customer satisfaction). This served as an initial test of our hypotheses concerning positive associations. The correlation matrix shows that service quality, product quality, and price-saving orientation are highly positively related to customer satisfaction (e.g., each $r \approx 0.83$, $p < 0.001$). Service quality and customer satisfaction were strongly correlated at $r = 0.830$, product quality at $r = 0.833$, and price-saving orientation at $r = 0.826$ (all $p < 0.001$). Correlation coefficients greater than 0.70 were found to be highly significant by traditional standard benchmarks. These findings provide some initial evidence which supports all three hypotheses that enhancements in any of the three categories are related to better customer satisfaction.

Third, for measuring the predictive power of the factors for satisfaction, separate simple linear regressions were done for each independent variable. We conclude with the conclusion shown in Table 2, that each model is significant, and that it explains a sizable proportion of the variance in satisfaction by means of a predictor to itself. So service quality explained $R^2 = 0.689$ and product quality explained $R^2 = 0.694$ and price-saving orientation explained $R^2 = 0.683$ of the variance. In other words, every factor alone explains about 68–69% of the customer satisfaction variability. These R^2 values reflect strong explanatory power (consumer behaviour research would say that over 0.60 is substantial). The regression coefficients for each of the three predictors were positive and significant ($p < 0.001$), meaning they had a positive effect on customer satisfaction and hence supported Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Importantly, product quality demonstrated the strongest R^2 , suggesting that product quality might act as the single strongest predictor (although the difference among those three factors was slight).

Lastly, a multiple regression was carried out to assess the joint influence of the three factors. Multicollinearity was considered (for example, if the store was known to offer high-quality product it would also likely be perceived as providing good value), since service quality, price-saving orientation, and product quality are likely interrelated. The multiple regression produced an adjusted R^2 of about 0.75 together for the three predictors, suggesting that these factors together accounted for 75% of the variance in customer satisfaction, while all predictors remained positive and significant, $p < 0.001$. We assessed the variance inflation factors (VIFs), which were also monitored, thus suggesting that multicollinearity had not unduly affected the regression estimates (<5). The integrated model demonstrates that a comprehensive integrated strategy across service, product, and pricing dimensions together yields an extremely high level of customer satisfaction.

4. Discussion

4.1 Theoretical Implications

Results of this study support and generalise Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) in contemporary practice in retail. EDT describes that customer satisfaction is produced by comparing pre-purchase expectations with actual performance. Our findings demonstrated that AEON Bukit Tinggi's quality service, high-quality products and competitive pricing had a significant positive disconfirmation that the retail experience exceeded customers' expectations. When service is efficient and helpful, products perform well, and prices are seen as fair or reduced the cost, customers feel their expectations have been fulfilled or perhaps even exceeded and that there is satisfaction. This correlates to EDT in that these are all part of the retail value proposition; the three factors all affect customer expectations and results. Our study makes an empirical contribution to the literature by empirically proving EDT in the context of a Southeast Asian retail environment. By the same token, previous empirical validation of EDT has been performed in Western contexts or specific service industries. The findings are evidence that EDT is widely applicable in culture and industry: customers all over the world compare service, product and price expectations, and whether or not they feel more satisfied depends on this comparison. In addition, the work we present combines three streams of literature, namely service quality, product quality, and price/value orientation, in that they become closely related to satisfaction. We demonstrate that a holistic view does offer a better overall understanding of the drivers of customer satisfaction in retail, despite the fact that each of these streams has been studied separately. The somewhat greater influence of product quality in this study points to why the "core product" continues to be at the core of the experiential retail revolution.

This is in line with modern customer satisfaction models that state that sustainable customer happiness demands not only service excellence, but also superior product value, based on Mittal's article [10]. It will also contribute to the theoretical discussion regarding price-saving orientation by emphasising the implications of perceived economic value on satisfaction judgments, which is sometimes underrepresented in classical satisfaction theories. We demonstrate that price saving behaviour is not only a marketing and economic phenomenon, but it is also a psychological phenomenon influencing consumers' feelings about the outcome of their shopping. In an era of empowered consumers who frequently cross-check price information through the web when shopping in-store, the relevance of this element resonates with innovative consumer behaviour theories that incorporate value-conscious aspects of the customer satisfaction equation according to Yeh *et al.*, [21]. Thus, as service quality, product quality and price-saving orientation collectively lead to high customer satisfaction, the study thus supports an integrative theory basis of how retail satisfaction can be achieved. It shows that successful retail has to engage multi-dimensional

customer's expectations to fulfil its 'multi-faceted' requirements; it has to involve both human factors (service), the tangible element of products, and the 'financial' elements such as value and price. This trio of factors might offer future theories of consumer satisfaction and loyalty in retailing a useful addition to them, especially in the newer emerging markets, where the expectations for consumers are growing quickly.

4.2 Relationship to Previous Studies

Our study findings are broadly in line with existing literature but contribute valuable local insight specifically for the Malaysian retail sector. In relation to service quality, our substantial positive impact of service quality on satisfaction was consistent with many prior studies highlighting service quality as a significant driver of customer satisfaction in retail and in the field of service delivery. Research from different countries, such as Parasuraman *et al.*, [13]; Ismail, [7] indicated the existence of dimensions of service quality regarding responsiveness, assurance, and empathy that influence customer satisfaction and loyalty. Our study has similar observations about a large Malaysian hypermarket. For instance, Teshome [19] pointed out in Ethiopia that the degree of reliability and responsiveness of service was important to the perceived satisfaction of retail customers. Nguyen [11] observed that, with regard to Vietnam's supermarkets, a higher standard of service better reflected customers' expectations, which increased customer satisfaction. We saw the same thing at AEON Bukit Tinggi: constant and attentive service delivers on customer satisfaction, which in turn enhances it still further.

Furthermore, our work provides insight that is specific to our context, that the service quality at AEON is a part of the brand value proposition, helping to help it differentiate itself in a crowded marketplace. This supports Zygiaris [24], who wrote that in competing retail markets, better service quality should serve as a distinguishing factor for keeping customers. The above findings, taken as a whole, support well-established relationships in a new setting and emphasise that the investment in good service quality is also as important in Malaysian retail as in other parts of the world. On products, we are also strongly aligned with satisfaction, which is also in line with previous findings. The study in retail conducted in Malaysia by Sern and Mahadevan [17] found that factors of product quality, such as durability and appearance, strongly influence customers' assessment of stores. Our findings strengthen this by demonstrating a measurable relationship between product quality and satisfaction at AEON. In a retail chain setting, Hossain [6] also reported a positive effect of product quality on customer satisfaction. Our findings add to the evidence for that relationship. More importantly, product quality demonstrated a slightly greater explanatory power for satisfaction than all other factors in our analysis, which supports a literature by Ainawayseh [2] that posits that the intrinsic quality of an offering (the product) ultimately anchors satisfaction. The product quality (when shopping online vs. offline) leads to highly positive satisfaction, as stated in Singh [18]. Connecting our results to these studies reveals a common story: no matter how great the service or how good the prices, a retailer can never catch up with poor product quality. AEON's case stands out: customers seem to compensate the retailer with greater satisfaction when they feel as if they have earned trust with the quality of goods they buy, which can, in turn, translate into both more repeat visits and a positive retailer image. Our study, therefore, echoes previous recommendations that retail managers must strictly monitor product standards through quality sourcing, variety, and quality control approaches to ensure satisfied consumers as stated in Sambo *et al.*, [15].

For a price-saving orientation, we provide empirical evidence for a qualitative shift that has been occurring more recently: consumers have increasingly begun to appreciate value not only in terms of low prices, but in terms of obtaining a good deal. The strong significance of price orientation for

satisfaction of AEON mirrors Kajandren's [8] finding that consumers in Malaysia's e-commerce had higher levels of satisfaction when they believed that a value-for-money proposition is strong. Similarly, one study conducted by Ravinna [14] found that price-sensitive retail customers were more satisfied and loyal to stores that offer frequent promotions and rewards. Our contribution goes a lot further, illustrating this effect in a traditional retail setting. This indicates that while such aspects of physical retailing are significant, experiential characteristics are important, the value perception regarding value is critical and they only help retail experiences. This is in line with previous research, such as Abdullah [1], that highlights the impact of pricing strategies for Malaysian consumers on purchase intention and customer satisfaction. We add that price-saving orientation is also shared by lower-income consumers and middle-class educated consumers. This tells us that there's a fundamental change in consumer behaviour with savvy shoppers around the value curve. In accordance with Zhao *et al.*, [23], these results suggest that customer satisfaction models incorporate perceived price fairness and value. The retail lesson is obvious that competitive pricing and promotions are no longer just tactical moves to win over today's price-sensitive customers.

4.3 Practical Implications for Retail Management

From a managerial standpoint, this study offers clear guidance for retailers aiming to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. The evidence suggests that retailers should adopt a balanced focus on service, product, and pricing strategies to deliver a superior overall shopping experience. For AEON Bukit Tinggi and similar retail outlets, this means investing in service excellence: management should continue to train and empower front-line employees to provide courteous, prompt, and knowledgeable service. Given the strong link between service quality and satisfaction, areas such as staff responsiveness, effective problem resolution, and personalised assistance are worthwhile investment targets. Retailers can implement regular customer service training, offer performance incentives for excellent service, and gather customer feedback on service interactions. By fostering a customer-centric service culture, retailers make shoppers feel valued and understood, thereby driving satisfaction. For instance, ensuring adequate staffing during peak hours, providing employees with strong product knowledge, and enabling staff to handle returns or complaints efficiently will reinforce positive customer perceptions of service quality.

Next, retailers must ensure high product quality and variety. Product strategy should emphasise quality control, the curation of reliable brands, and offering merchandise that meets local consumer needs. The slight edge of product quality in influencing satisfaction suggests that retailers cannot ignore the fundamentals of the goods they sell. AEON and similar stores should work closely with suppliers to maintain high standards and promptly address any quality issues (e.g., removing defective products from shelves). Additionally, understanding customer preferences to stock products perceived as high-value-for-money can enhance satisfaction. Retailers might conduct periodic reviews of product performance (using returns data and customer reviews) and adjust inventory accordingly. Introducing local or premium product lines that emphasise quality will also satisfy discerning customers. In short, delivering on the promise of quality products will strengthen customers' trust and satisfaction in the long run.

In addition, competitive pricing and value promotions are crucial. Retail managers should recognise the importance of customers' price-saving orientation by designing pricing strategies that underscore value. This includes setting competitive base prices, running regular promotions or discounts, and maintaining attractive loyalty programs. For example, AEON could offer exclusive member discounts, bundle deals, or timely sales (holiday promotions, clearance events) that appeal to consumers' desire to save money. Transparency in pricing (clearly communicating discounts and

price comparisons) also contributes to perceptions of fairness. As our study indicates, customers who feel they are getting a good deal are more satisfied, so retailers should highlight savings in their marketing communications. However, promotions must be balanced so as not to compromise perceived product quality; the goal is to convey value (quality relative to price) rather than just low cost. Effective strategies might include limited-time offers to generate excitement, loyalty points redeemable for savings, or price-match guarantees to assure customers of competitive pricing.

Implementing improvements in these areas tends to have a synergistic effect. For instance, better service can enhance the perceived value of products, and reasonable prices can make customers more forgiving of minor service lapses. The alignment of our recommendations with those in the literature is notable, as Ismail [7] similarly emphasises service responsiveness and competitive pricing as key drivers of satisfaction in Malaysian retail. By addressing all three factors, retailers can create a virtuous cycle of satisfaction that leads to loyalty and positive word of mouth. Satisfied customers are likely to spend more time and money in the store and become repeat patrons, which is vital to business sustainability.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the influence of service quality, product quality, and price-saving orientation on customer satisfaction within the competitive nature of the retail industry. Based on the case of AEON Bukit Tinggi in Malaysia, the study proves that all three aspects are influential in influencing customers' satisfaction with their shopping experience. High service quality makes customers feel important and confident, higher product quality fulfils customers' requirements and delivers additional value, and a strong price-saving orientation meets customers' needs for affordability and fairness. When a retailer, such as AEON, does well on these factors, it serves customers, it does so not only in a way that satisfies them, but is in fact likely to earn their repeat business.

These results hold important implications. For academia, this study enriches the literature by confirming key marketing and consumer behaviour theories (EDT) in our Malaysian context, and a single framework on several factors influencing satisfaction. This highlights the need for analysing a comprehensive set of factors in customer satisfaction studies, not separate variables. The message for practitioners and retail managers is simple: You either want to stay in the current retail economy, or if you plan to succeed in the future, your best bet will be to serve, offer quality products and value. Fulfilling a part of these, in a single or two categories, can hardly lead customers to satisfaction as a deficiency in any area will eventually affect the entire experience. The AEON Bukit Tinggi's case has shown that sustained effort in all three areas yields very high customer happiness, which in turn likely translates to strong customer loyalty and a competitive edge for AEON Bukit Tinggi. In short, as consumer demand grows consistently and competition in the retail industry is on the rise, especially because of the increasing number of alternatives with e-commerce, it is paramount that we understand customer satisfaction. The findings further confirm that the bedrock of successful retail, the fundamentals, have remained: respect customers, buy great products, and offer them fair deals. Retailers that do this, by internalising and responding to these principles and applying the elements that are at work in their strategies, must find themselves well placed to secure continued customer satisfaction and success, in such companies are sure to maintain the long-term sustainable businesses. This should be continued to extend, evolve and adapt to evolving consumer behaviour and technology, and take these issues, consumer behaviour and the trends of the market in terms of changes in the future according to technology and future research and practice.

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