

UDC 339

## INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY, PRODUCT QUALITY AND PRICE TOWARDS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN INCREASING CUSTOMER RETENTION

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the influence of service quality, product quality, and price on customer satisfaction in increasing the retention of IndiHOME product customers at PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia Witel NTT. The sample in this study was 100 customers of IndiHOME selected based on simple random sampling technique. Sources of research data were primary and secondary obtained using questionnaire, observation and interviews. The data analysis technique was PLS (Partial Least Square). The results of the study showed that service quality, product quality, and price had a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, customer satisfaction had a positive and significant influence on customer retention.

### KEY WORDS

Service quality, product quality, price, customer satisfaction, customer retention.

Massive transformation in our telecommunication industry, taking place quite recently, results in both opportunity and challenge for landline phone and cellular phone operators as well as internet service provider (Czarnecki and Dietze, 2017). This development forces Telecommunication Company to adapt to this change in order to survive the business competition and grow.

One of the focuses of the telecommunication industry is customer retention. Customer retention is perhaps the largest impact of profit growth since influencing new customers to re-purchase requires higher cost influencing existing customers (Singh, et.al, 2012).

Customer satisfaction is one of the determinant factors of customer retention. It has significant influence towards re-purchasing intention in various types of service (Patterson, Johnson & Spreng, 1998). High customer satisfaction increases buying intensity (Assael, 1995). Besides that, Kotler, Armstrong, and Cunningham (2002) stated that satisfied customers tend to repurchase. Kotler (2003) also noted that customer satisfaction is the key to customer retention and has been considered as fundamental determinant of customer's long-term behavior and customer retention. Danesh et al (2012) and Boohene et al (2013) revealed that customer satisfaction influences customer retention.

Level of customer satisfaction is affected by several factors, namely product, service quality and price (Irawan, 2003).

Related literatures stated that business performance has direct influence towards customer satisfaction and indirect influence towards customer loyalty (Khattab and Aldehayyat, 2011). Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) also noted that high service quality will increase customer satisfaction. The second factor is product quality. An increase in product quality will improve customer satisfaction level (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). The findings of Fiazisyah and Purwidiani (2018), Julianto (2017), Wijaya (2017), Istiqo (2017), Sembiring (2014), Aditia and Suhaji (2012), and Saidani and Arifin (2012) revealed that service quality has significant influence towards customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, Mowen, et.al (2002) argued that product quality has direct influence towards customer satisfaction. Thus, increase in product quality will result in competitive advantage and eventually, high customer satisfaction. Higher product quality will cause higher customer satisfaction (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). The findings of Wijaya (2017), Sembiring (2017), and Saidani and Arifin (2012) also stated that product quality has significant influence towards customer satisfaction.

The third factor is price. At a certain price level, increase of perceived benefits will result in increase of value. Increase of perceived value among customers will result in maximum customer satisfaction (Tjiptono, 1999). Fiazisyah and Purwidiani (2018), Wijaya (2017), and Istiqo (2017)'s studies also showed that price has significant influence towards customer satisfaction.

One of the companies focusing on customer retention and customer satisfaction is PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia Tbk Witel NTT. This is considered relevant because the company provides telecommunication service, an industry that has been undergoing massive transformation recently.

The most popular product of this telecommunication service provider is IndiHOME. Indonesia Digital HOME (IndiHOME in short) consists of telecommunication and data services such as landline (Voice), internet (Internet on Fiber or High-Speed Internet), and interactive television service (USee TV, Cable, IP TV). This type of service is called IndiHOME as it provides three different types of service in one offer (3-in-1) namely, internet, subscription television, and telephone. Customer retention on this product is decreasing gradually. Figure 1 described number of IndiHOME service termination between 2015 and 2018.

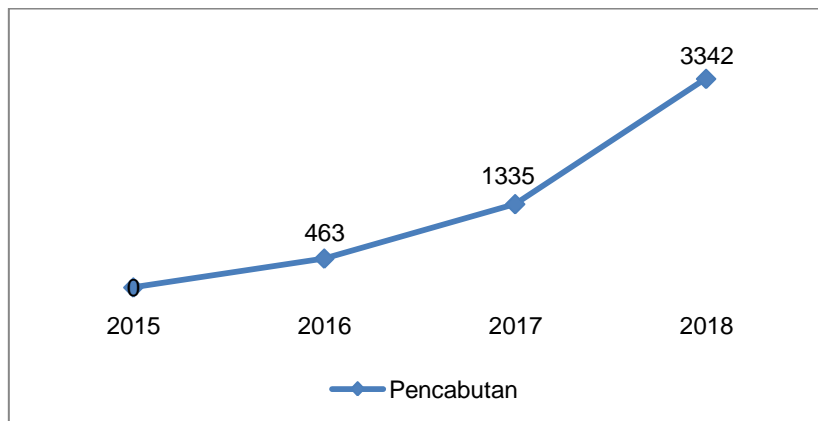


Figure 1 – IndiHOME Service Termination Cases (Source: Primary Data, 2019)

The figure showed that the number of customers who terminated service is increasing. It means customer retention is declining. Objective of this study is to describe influence of service quality, product quality and price towards customer satisfaction in order to increase retention of PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia Witel NTT's IndiHOME customer.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Limitation on the concept of customer retention can be seen based on two different perspectives, namely company and customer perspectives (Moenardy, 2016).

The first perspective is that of company. Buttle defined customer retention as number of customers doing business with a company at the end of the financial year which is represented by percentage of active customers at the beginning of the financial year. Exact intervals for retention periods should be measured in one year. However, it also depends on the repurchase cycle found in the industry. As an addition, Kaplan and Norton as cited in Moenardy defined customer retention as an activity that aims to maintain on-going interaction with customers through on-going relationships, marketing loyalty, marketing database, permission marketing, and others.

The second perspective is that of customer. This perspective defines retention as customer's behavior or intention to keep buying product or using service from a company or stop doing so. Morgan and Hunt defined customer retention as customer intention to repurchase particular type of service from a service provider. In addition, Kassim and Soulden defined customer retention as future tendency of customers to repurchase, while

Keiningham, et.al defined customer retention as customer intention to maintain business relationship with particular company. Zineldin considered retention as a commitment to maintain business relationship or exchange with a particular company on an on-going basis. A more comprehensive definition of customer retention was put forward by Strauss and Friege provided a more comprehensive definition of customer retention which is customer preference, customer identification, customer commitment, customer trust, customer desire, to recommend and customer intention to repurchase.

Indicators of customer retention are formulated based on opinions of several experts, namely Morgan and Hunt (1994), Lin Guo et al(2008), Butle, Nguyen, and Leblanc (2001), Boohene et al(2013), and Richards (1996) as cited in Moenardy (2016). Several indicators of customer retention are: (1) Intention to Maintain Business Relationship; (2) More involvement; (3) Stronger attachment; (4) Strong Intention to Repurchase.

### **Customer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is one of the most pivotal aspects in marketing. Marketing experts provided various definitions of satisfaction and customer satisfaction.

Kotler (1997) stated that "Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product or service's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations".

J. Paul and Jerry C. Olson as cited in Usmara (2003) defined satisfaction or dissatisfaction as comparison between expectation and performance prior to making a purchase and customer perception on the performance after making a purchase. Customer is dissatisfied when expectation and performance prior to making a purchase is higher than performance after making a purchase. At the opposite, customer is satisfied when expectation and performance prior to making a purchase is lower than performance after making a purchase.

Other experts, such as Hansemark and Albinsson, Bitner and Zeithaml, and Willie also provided their own definition on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction means attitude towards service provider, or emotional reaction for a discrepancy between customer expectation and experience (Hansemark and Albinsson, 2004). Bitner and Zeithaml (2003) defined customer satisfaction as customer evaluation on product or service that shows whether or not the product or service meet the customer's need and expectation. According to Willie as cited in Tjiptono (1997) customer satisfaction is "an emotional response obtained from evaluation towards customer's experience after purchasing a product or service."

To measure customer satisfaction, Kim, Zao, and Yang as cited in Moenardi (2016) adopted parker Mathew's concept of customer service in which customer satisfaction is perceived from two perspectives, namely satisfaction as a process and satisfaction as an outcome. Thus, indicators of customer satisfaction involve (1) satisfaction towards process; (2) satisfaction towards outcome; and (3) total satisfaction.

### **Service Quality**

Experts have various ideas about the concept of service as service has several different interpretations (Tjiptono and Chandra, 2011).

Zeithaml (1998) defined service quality as customer's assessment on advantages or benefit of a product or service as a whole. Mowen, et.al (2002) defined service quality as a process of a customer's overall evaluation on service performance opportunities. Service quality is the level of perfection expected and perfection is maintained in order to meet customer's expectation (Wyckof as cited in Arief, 2007). Furthermore, Parasuraman as cited in Arief (2007) described service quality as a comparison between services; satisfying service is one that meets or even exceeds customer expectation.

A couple of main factors affecting service quality are expected service and perceived service (Parasuraman et al, 1985). An ideal service refers to a condition where perceived service matches expected service, and poor service is a condition in which the perceived service is worse than the expected service (Moenardy, 2016).

Many researchers adopted Parasuraman, Zeithmal, and Berry (1988)'s Servqual model to evaluate service quality. Explained by Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), the model consists of (1) Reliability; (2) Responsiveness; (3) Assurance; (4) Empathy; and (5) Tangibles.

### **Product Quality**

Marketing high-quality product is one of the most effective strategies to win business competition. Customers prefer high-quality product to one with poor quality. Therefore, companies should maintain quality of their products (Gitosudarmo, 1997).

American Society for Quality Control defines product quality as overall characteristics of a product or service that allow them to meet customer satisfaction. As an addition, Mowen (2012) stated that product quality is customer's evaluation process of which objective is to improve performance of a product.

Product quality means ability of a product to carries out its functions which involve durability, reliability, accuracy, convenience, operation and improvement as well as other attributes." High-quality product is one that carries its function well (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). Product quality is some factors that enable product or services to meet its purpose. Product quality refers to attributes or traits of a product that satisfy consumers both physically and psychologically (Assauri, 2004). Kotler (2008) mentioned four types of product quality, namely low quality, average quality, high-quality, and superior quality. Nevertheless, based on the perspective of marketing, customer is the one that determines product quality.

Several indicators of product quality are (Kotler and Keller, 2012): (1) Features; (2) Performance Quality; (3) Conformance Quality; (4) Durability; (5) Reliability; (6) Repairability, and (7) Style.

### **Price**

Price, according to William J. Stanton, is an amount of money (and possibly several items) needed to obtain combination between product and service. Jerome Mc Cartgy defined price as what is charged for an object (Angipora, 2002). Furthermore, Basu Swastha and Irawan defined price as certain amount of money (and several products if possible) needed to obtain several combinations of products and services (2005).

Kotler & Amstrong (2008) provided a more comprehensive definition of price. Price refers to certain amount of money charged for goods/ service or the amount of value customer exchanged for benefits they will get from particular goods/ services (Kotler & Amstrong, 2008). Price is the easiest mixed marketing element used to control benefits of a product. Price also communicates how producer/ company positions an object/ services on the market (Kotler *et al*, 2005).

Indicators of pricing are (Stanton, 1998): (1) affordability; (2) match between price and product quality; (3) competitiveness; (4) match between price and benefit.

### **Hypotheses**

H1: Service quality has a positive and significant influence towards customer satisfaction;

H2: Product quality has a positive and significant influence towards customer satisfaction;

H3: Price has a positive and significant influence towards customer satisfaction;

H4: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant influence towards customer retention.

## **METHODS OF RESEARCH**

The setting of the study was PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia Tbk Witel NTT located at W.J. Lalamentik Street number 93, Oebufu Sub-District, Oebobo, Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

This study was an explanatory study that employed quantitative approach. The objective was to identify influence of service quality, product quality and price towards

customer satisfaction as well as the influence of customer satisfaction towards customer retention. In order to get primary data, the authors conducted survey using questionnaire and interview. The samples were 100 IndiHOME customers selected based on the simple random sampling technique. Furthermore, the data analysis technique was PLS (Partial Least Square).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Outer Model Testing

Outer model testing involves reliability, construct validity and discriminant validity testing. Table 1 and 2 showed result of the outer model testing evaluating reliability, construct validity and discriminant validity of the variables.

Table 1 – Reliability and Construct Validity

No	Criteria	Cut Off	Service Quality	Product Quality	Price	Customer Satisfaction	Customer Retention
1.	Cronbach Alpha	0.7	0.894	0.880	0.910	0.834	0.902
2.	Rho_A	0.7	0.896	0.884	0.915	0.858	0.916
3.	Composite Reliability	0.6	0.913	0.905	0.928	0.882	0.921
4.	Average Variance Extracted	0.5	0.512	0.544	0.618	0.602	0.626

Source: PLS Output, 2019.

Table 2 - Discriminant Validity

	Cut Off	Price	Customer Satisfaction	Service Quality	Product Quality	Customer Retention
Price	<0.90					
Customer Satisfaction	<0.90	0.781				
Service Quality	<0.90	0.592	0.724			
Product Quality	<0.90	0.752	0.825	0.604		
Customer Retention	<0.90	0.566	0.701	0.608	0.728	

Source: PLS Output, 2019.

### Structural Model Testing

Structural model testing consists of R-square, f-square, and direct effect test. Result of the r-Square Test evaluating influence of product quality, service quality and price towards customer satisfaction was 0.661 (66,1%) or moderate. Furthermore, result of the r-Square analysis for influence of customer satisfaction towards customer retention was 0.430 (43%) or low. Table3 show result of the f-Square analysis.

Table 3 – F-Square

No	Variable	F-Square	Description
1.	Service Quality towards Customer Satisfaction	0.161	Moderate
2.	Product Quality towards Customer Satisfaction	0.261	Moderate
3.	Price towards Customer Satisfaction	0.082	Weak
4.	Customer Satisfaction towards Customer Retention	0.756	Substantial

Source: PLS Output, 2019.

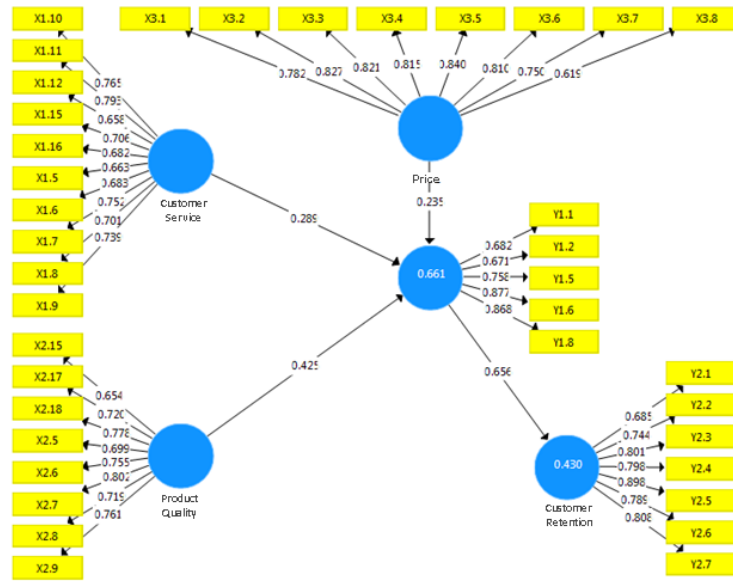


Figure 2 – Constructing Path Diagram for the Study (Source: PLS Output, 2019)

### Developing Mathematical Equation

Relationship between the latent variable (structural model) can be represented in the following equation.

$$Y_1 = \gamma_1 X_1 + \gamma_2 X_2 + \gamma_3 X_3 + \zeta_1$$

$$Y_2 = \beta_2 Y_1 + \zeta_2$$

Description:

$\gamma_{jb}$  = path coefficient between the exogenous and endogenous latent variables,

$\beta_{ji}$  = path coefficient between the exogenous and endogenous variables

Therefore, the mathematical model developed in this study is as follows:

$$Y_1 = 0.289X_1 + 0.425X_2 + 0.235X_3 + \zeta_1$$

$$Y_2 = 0.656Y_1 + \zeta_2$$

### Goodness of Fit (GoF)

Goodness of Fit is used to test validity of a model in general. This GoF index is a sole estimation used to validate combination between outer model and structural inner model. Goodness of fit used predictive-relevance ( $Q^2$ ) score. Thus, in this study, GoF was measured using the following formula:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2)(1 - R_2^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 0.807 \rightarrow \text{High GoF}$$

### Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing aimed to identify how much influence service quality, product quality and price had towards customer satisfaction as well as how much influence customer satisfaction had towards customer retention. In the hypothesis testing, the level of significance was 0.05 and t-table was 1.985. Table 4 showed result of the hypothesis testing.

Table 4 - Hypothesis Testing

Exogenous and Endogenous Variables	Path Coeff.	T-Stat	T-Tab	p-value	Description	Hypothesis
Influence of Service Quality towards Customer Satisfaction	0.289	3.500	1.985	0.000	Significant	H <sub>1</sub> can be accepted
Influence of Product Quality towards Customer Satisfaction	0.425	5.953	1.985	0.000	Significant	H <sub>2</sub> can be accepted
Influence of Price towards Customer Satisfaction	0.235	2.645	1.985	0.008	Significant	H <sub>3</sub> can be accepted
Influence of Customer Satisfaction towards Customer Retention	0.656	7.710	1.985	0.000	Significant	H <sub>4</sub> can be accepted

Source: PLS Output, 2019.

## Discussion of results

### *Influence of Service Quality towards Customer Satisfaction*

The findings show that service quality has significant influence towards customer satisfaction where  $p$ -value is 0.000 (lower than 0.05 or the level of significance). The path coefficient is 0.289 (positive) that means higher service quality results in higher satisfaction of PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia Witel NTT's IndiHOME customers.

The findings are in accordance to Irawan (2003), Khattab and Aldehayyat (2011), Parasuraman et al. (1985), Saravana & Rao (2007), and Lee et al. (2000). In addition, they are also relevant to the findings of Fiazisyah and Purwidiani (2018), Julianto (2017), Wijaya (2017), Istiqo (2017), Sembiring (2014), Aditia and Suhaji (2012), and Saidani and Arifin (2012)'s studies that service quality has significant influence towards customer satisfaction. However, the findings did not support the findings of Aditia (2012)'s study that service quality did not have any influence towards customer satisfaction.

Both the interview and the descriptive analysis provide evidence supporting the findings of the study. The Customer Care manager stated that IndiHOME provides high service quality and therefore, their customers are satisfied with IndiHOME service. Furthermore, the descriptive analysis shows that the respondents have positive attitude towards the company's service and high level of customer satisfaction. Percentages of the service quality and customer satisfaction are 82.4% and 77.3% respectively.

Based on the voice of customer data, the customers are not satisfied with the company's after sales service. The service is time-consuming due to several factors, namely (1) the staff's skills, knowledge, and attitude. Some staffs should improve both their skills and attitude; (2) some equipment has yet to meet the standard operating procedures. The company should update these types of equipment.

### *Influence of Product Quality towards Customer Satisfaction*

The findings showed that product quality has significant influence towards customer satisfaction where  $p$ -value is 0.000 (lower than 0.05 or the level of significance). Furthermore, path coefficient is 0.425 (positive) that means higher product quality will result in higher satisfaction of PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia Witel NTT's IndiHOME customers.

It is in line with (2003), Kotler and Armstrong (2008), and Mowen, et.al (2002). As an addition, the findings also support Wijaya (2017), Sembiring (2017), and Saidani and Arifin (2012)'s studies that product quality has significant influence towards customer satisfaction. However, they are at the opposite of Aditia (2012)'s study which showed that product quality did not have any significant influence towards customer satisfaction.

Both the interview and descriptive analysis support the findings of this study. The Customer Care Manager explained that IndiHOME is a high-quality product since it uses the most current fiber technology and has various different features (TV, Landline, and Internet). Besides that, the descriptive analysis shows that the respondents have positive attitude towards quality of the product and high level of customer satisfaction. Their percentages are 79.83% and 77.3% respectively.

### *Influence of Price towards Customer Satisfaction*

The findings show that price has significant influence towards customer satisfaction where  $p$ -value is 0.008 (lower than 0.05 or the level of significance). Path coefficient is 0.235 (positive) that indicates that higher price will improve satisfaction level of PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia Witel NTT's IndiHOME customers.

The findings support Irawan (2003) and Tjiptono (1999) as well as Fiazisyah and Purwidiani (2018), Wijaya (2017), and Istiqo (2017) that price has significant influence towards customer satisfaction.

Both the interview and descriptive analysis support the findings of the study. The Customer Care manager admitted that some people find IndiHOME a little bit expensive (when compared to products from cellular phone providers). Percentage of one of the indicators of price competitiveness, "IndiHOME is more affordable than other similar products" is 68% (the lowest percentage for price).

The manager also explained that some customers have very little information about IndiHOME, its service and price, and as the result, they find IndiHOME pricier than its competitions. As a matter of fact, IndiHOME has various price ranges allowing customer to adjust between their budget and available IndiHOME service.

#### *Influence of Customer Satisfaction towards Customer Retention*

The findings show that customer satisfaction has significant influence towards customer retention in which p-value is 0.000 (lower than 0.05 or the level of significance). Path coefficient is 0.656 (positive) showing that higher customer satisfaction means higher customer retention.

The findings are in line with Patterson, Johnson & Spreng (1998), Kotler, Armstrong, and Cunningham (2002), Kotler (2003), Danesh et al (2012) and Boohene et al (2013) that customer satisfaction has significant influence on customer retention. However, they do not support Kassim and Nizar (2007)'s study that customer satisfaction does not have significant influence towards customer retention.

The Customer Care manager mentioned several factors that influence level of satisfaction of IndiHOME customers convincing them to keep using the product; the factors are: (1) various types of service; (2) advanced technology; (3) affordability; and (4) no competitor providing similar products.

The manager further explained some internal and external issues in maintaining customer retention. The internal issues are (1) some employees are still lacking knowledge and skills on customer service, and therefore, they are not showing the best attitude while interacting with customers; (2) some equipment did not the standard operating procedures; and (3) some customers found the company's system too complicated. The external factors are: (1) Myindihome, IndiHOME platform designed for complaint-handling, product advertising, and payment is a novelty for majority of the customers; (2) some customers feel that the company's performance is still lacking; (3) some customers are not familiar with IndiHOME products and tariffs and therefore, claimed that IndiHOME is pricy.

## **CONCLUSION**

Objective of the study is to describe influence of service quality, product quality, and price towards customer satisfaction and customer retention of PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia Witel NTT's IndiHOME customers. The finding shows that service quality, product quality and price have significant influence towards customer satisfaction. Furthermore, customer satisfaction has significant influence towards customer retention.

Based on the conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia Witel NTT should improve both their service and product quality in order to improve customer satisfaction and eventually customer retention. As an addition, the company should establish a user-friendly system, and improve their equipment and human resources in order to increase customer satisfaction level;
2. The company should also improve their customer experience, for example a better complaint-handling. It should also put into account their customer opinions in order to decide which areas it should improve;
3. The company should provide ample information about IndiHOME fee to customers;
4. Future researchers should conduct similar studies, but they should use different theories, involve different variables, indicator and conduct them in different setting/sector.

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