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The Influence of Price and Product Quality on Consumer Decisions in Purchasing Zara Brand Clothing in Medan 2024

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of price and product quality on consumer purchasing decisions for Zara brand clothing in Medan in 2024. The rapid development of the fashion industry in Indonesia and the increasing presence of global fast-fashion brands such as Zara have made it important to understand how local consumers evaluate their choices. Employing a quantitative research design, the study used a purposive sampling technique with 100 respondents who had previously purchased Zara products in Medan. Primary data were gathered through structured questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression with the aid of SPSS. The analysis revealed that both price and product quality exert a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions. While price remains a critical consideration, product quality emerged as the dominant factor influencing satisfaction, loyalty, and repurchase intention. These findings underscore the importance for Zara's management to maintain a consistent balance between competitive pricing and high-quality standards. Strategically aligning price fairness with superior product quality is expected to strengthen consumer trust, increase purchase frequency, and enhance Zara's competitiveness in the Medan fashion market.

INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry has become one of the most dynamic and competitive sectors in today's global economy, driven by rapid changes in consumer preferences, technological advancements, and the influence of social media. In Indonesia, the fashion industry plays a vital role in shaping consumer lifestyles, particularly in urban centers where exposure to global trends is high. The increasing purchasing power of the middle class has fueled demand for branded fashion items, including those from international retailers such as Zara. As a global fast-fashion giant, Zara has successfully positioned itself by offering products that balance fashionable design, speed-to-market, and quality assurance (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Yin, 2022). However, the higher price point of Zara products compared to local and other international fashion brands raises critical questions regarding consumer decision-

making processes in emerging markets such as Medan (Andini & Megawati, 2023; Perangin-angin et al., 2023).

Consumer decision-making in fashion is highly complex and influenced by both rational and emotional factors (Bishnoi & Singh, 2022; Sharma, 2021; Betzler et al., 2022). On one hand, product-related attributes such as quality, durability, and design are central considerations; on the other hand, external factors such as price perception, brand image, and social influence shape consumer attitudes toward purchasing (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010; Sumarwan, 2011). Previous studies have highlighted that price remains one of the most decisive elements in shaping consumer choices, particularly in price-sensitive markets (Nugroho, 2022; Kusnadi, 2020). Consumers tend to evaluate whether the perceived value justifies the financial outlay, making price perception a psychological as well as economic variable (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Al Shurideh et al., 2025; Bharadwaj & Bezborah, 2021). For Zara, which positions itself in the fast-fashion segment but maintains a relatively premium pricing strategy in Indonesia, this creates both opportunities and challenges.

Equally important is product quality, which is often regarded as a primary determinant of consumer satisfaction and loyalty. High-quality products can foster trust, reduce post-purchase dissonance, and encourage repeat purchases (Griffin, 2005; Peter & Olson, 2010; Olutade & Enwereji, 2024). In fashion retailing, quality extends beyond material durability to include aspects such as design relevance, stitching consistency, and comfort. Zara has built its global reputation partly on its ability to integrate quality with speed and design innovation. Yet, in markets like Medan, where consumers are exposed to a variety of local and international alternatives, quality becomes a key differentiator that influences brand preference and purchase intentions.

Moreover, consumer behavior in fashion purchasing is increasingly shaped by globalization and digitalization (Konina et al., 2021; Gurnani & Grupta, 2024). Consumers in urban Indonesia are highly connected, actively comparing prices, checking online reviews, and monitoring seasonal sales before making purchasing decisions (Kotler et al., 2017). This greater access to information intensifies competition among brands and puts pressure on companies to not only maintain competitive prices and consistent quality but also communicate value effectively. In this context, Zara's global brand strength must be complemented by local market strategies that resonate with Indonesian consumer expectations.

The theoretical basis for understanding consumer purchasing decisions often draws from models of consumer behavior which emphasize the interaction between psychological, personal, and marketing stimuli (Engel et al., 2008; Rusdian et al., 2024; Erensoy et al., 2024). Price and product quality can be classified as core marketing mix elements that significantly influence perceived value and satisfaction (Tjiptono, 2015). When price and quality are perceived as balanced, consumers are more likely to make favorable purchasing decisions; conversely, if there is a mismatch such as high prices with low perceived quality consumers may shift to alternative brands. Prior research in the Indonesian context has confirmed the simultaneous influence of price and product quality on purchase decisions in fashion and retail sectors (Kusnadi, 2020; Nugroho, 2022).

Although the field has been studied extensively, there remains a gap in the literature concerning the investigation of these determinants in the context of the particular local environment of the Indonesian metropolitan area of Medan that is defined by the heterogeneous composition of consumer groups and the widening exposure rate to international retail stores. The presence of Zara in Medan is symbolic not only of the infiltration of international fashion brands in the secondary markets, but also of

the need to understand how local consumers do the trade-offs between price and quality. Given the competitive fashion-retail setting that Medan is located in, with the local boutiques, online stores, and chain stores sharing the same space, the knowledge about consumer decision-making would become instrumental (Suwarno & Alya, 2024).

As a result, the current paper is a critical enquiry into how price and product quality impact consumers in the purchasing of Zara products in Medan. With the focus on the two variables, the study provides empirical evidence of how global fashion brands can tailor strategies to local market situations. The results will achieve two things: theoretically, by strengthening the models of consumer-behaviour in the new markets; and practically, by providing practical recommendations to both Zara and other global retailers interested in doing business in Indonesia. Particularly, the research questions seek to answer the question of whether the relatively high cost of Zara clothing is justified in perceived quality by the consumers of Medan and to what level these criteria influence the frequency of purchase, satisfaction and brand loyalty.

METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative research design with descriptive and verification approaches. Quantitative methods were chosen because they allow researchers to test hypotheses statistically and establish measurable relationships between independent and dependent variables (Sugiyono, 2021). The descriptive component of the study aims to systematically portray consumer characteristics, perceptions of price, and evaluations of Zara's product quality, while the verification component seeks to empirically test the hypothesized influence of price and product quality on purchasing decisions. Such a dual approach ensures not only an overview of consumer tendencies but also a rigorous examination of causal relationships (Ferdinand, 2014).

Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of Zara consumers in Medan who have made at least one purchase within the past year. Medan was chosen as the research site due to its status as one of Indonesia's largest urban centers, with a growing middle-class consumer base and increasing exposure to international retail brands. Given the impossibility of surveying the entire population, a purposive sampling technique was employed. Purposive sampling enables the selection of respondents based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, ensuring that participants have direct purchasing experience with Zara products (Sugiyono, 2021).

A total of 100 respondents were targeted, aligning with statistical requirements for multiple regression analysis, which generally recommends a minimum sample size of 5–10 times the number of independent variables studied (Ghozali, 2018). The criteria for inclusion were: (1) respondents aged 18 years or older, (2) individuals who have purchased Zara products in Medan within the last 12 months, and (3) willingness to participate voluntarily in the survey. This sample size is considered sufficient to represent consumer perceptions while remaining manageable within the study's resource constraints.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed directly to consumers at Zara outlets in Medan, particularly at Sun Plaza, which is one of the city's main shopping centers and a strategic location for the brand's target market. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to capture consumer perceptions of price fairness, product quality dimensions, and purchasing decision factors. The questionnaire items were adapted

from established consumer behavior and marketing measurement instruments (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Peter & Olson, 2010), ensuring both content validity and relevance to the research context.

Prior to full distribution, a pilot test involving 20 respondents was conducted to evaluate the clarity and reliability of the questionnaire items. Feedback from this pilot stage was used to refine ambiguous wording and improve measurement accuracy. This process also helped ensure that the instrument was culturally appropriate and aligned with local consumer understanding.

Data Analysis

Data were processed and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and frequency distributions, were first applied to summarize consumer demographics and variable tendencies. Subsequently, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the influence of price (X_1) and product quality (X_2) on consumer purchasing decisions (Y). The regression model was formulated as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$$

where Y represents purchasing decisions, X_1 is price, X_2 is product quality, a is the constant, b_1 and b_2 are the regression coefficients, and e represents the error term.

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the research instrument, the questionnaire was first tested for validity and reliability. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with a value ≥ 0.70 considered to meet acceptable standards (Ghozali, 2018). After the instrument was declared valid and reliable, the data were further analyzed using a series of classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, to ensure the regression model was free from deviations. Furthermore, a partial t-test was conducted to determine the effect of each independent variable, namely price and product quality, on consumer purchasing decisions. A simultaneous t-test was also conducted to assess the extent to which both independent variables jointly influence purchasing decisions. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to measure the extent to which variation in purchasing decisions can be explained by price and product quality factors, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between the research variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The statistical evidence of the interview answers on 100 respondents provides statistically significant, but subtle, data regarding the impact of cost and quality of products on Zara buying behavior in Medan. Both dimensions are significantly different with product quality having more mean central tendency ($M = 4.24$) than price ($M = 4.07$). Price sensitivity is supported by a significant percentage of the respondents (82-percent say that price affects purchase frequency; 90-percent pay attention to price always). At the same time, significant signs of quality confirmation can be found, and 90% of them stated that Zara adheres to current fashion trends and 88% of them stated that they are sure of comfort and longevity of the brand. These findings should, however, be perceived critically. First, the purposive, in-store sampling method probably over-represents the currently existing customer base and under-represents the attitude of the price sensitive non-buyers, thus restricting the external generalizability. Second, the cross-sectional, self-report survey presents common-method and social-desirability biasing: respondents can past-justify purchases after the fact or exaggerate fashion awareness. Third, although the model captures a significant part of the variation ($R^2 = 0.499$), about a half of the determinants of purchasing decision are not explained, which indicates the omission of the variables of brand image, social influence, timing of promotions, income, or

computer-internet interaction. The study could be enhanced methodologically with strong checks to multicollinearity and common-method-bias, subgroup analyses (income or age moderation of price sensitivity), and alternative modeling (SEM to mediate the satisfaction between quality and repeat purchase). In practice, the trend indicates that Zara only has the potential to maintain premium prices when quality and trend relevance are consistently delivered, however, promotion and price levels should be more targeted and specific to the local area so that more price-sensitive markets can be reached. Lastly, the future studies must use bigger and representative samples, longitudinal sales or behavioral records, and qualitative follow-ups to unravel the intentions behind the quantitative trends in this case.

Descriptive Overview of Respondents and Variable Tendencies

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics and Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Characteristics / Variables	Category / Indicator	Frequency (n = 100)	Percentage (%)	Mean (1–5 Scale)	Interpretation
Gender	Male	36	36	—	—
	Female	64	64	—	Majority of respondents are female
Age Group	18–24 years	28	28	—	—
	25–35 years	54	54	—	Dominant age segment
	>35 years	18	18	—	—
Purchase Frequency	Once a year	28	28	—	—
	More than once a year	72	72	—	Indicates brand engagement
Research Variables	Price Perception	—	—	4.07	High – Price perceived as fair and reasonable
	Product Quality	—	—	4.24	Very High – Strong satisfaction with quality, design, and comfort
	Purchasing Decision	—	—	4.06	High – Confidence and loyalty in purchase

Note Source: Primary data processed using SPSS (2025). The data show that most Zara consumers in Medan are women aged 20–35, who exhibit active purchasing engagement and positive perceptions toward both price and product quality.

The descriptive statistics provide a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' perceptions of price and product quality in relation to their purchasing decisions for Zara products in Medan. Out of 100 respondents, the majority were between 20 and 35 years old, representing the segment most actively engaged with fashion trends and digital retail channels. Most respondents were female (64%), which aligns with global fashion consumer patterns where women tend to exhibit higher purchase frequency and brand attachment (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Sharma, 2021). In terms of purchasing behavior, 72% of respondents reported buying Zara products more than once a year, indicating a moderate level of brand engagement and repeat buying.

The overall mean values for each research variable were notably high, signifying positive consumer perceptions. The mean score for price perception stood at 4.07, suggesting that respondents generally viewed Zara's pricing as reasonable relative to its brand and quality positioning. Meanwhile, the product quality variable yielded a higher mean of 4.24, reflecting stronger consumer satisfaction with the design, durability, and comfort of Zara products. The purchasing decision variable averaged 4.06, signifying general confidence and loyalty among the surveyed consumers. These results collectively indicate that Zara's consumers in Medan exhibit a relatively

strong purchase commitment, underpinned by favorable evaluations of price and quality dimensions.

Price Influence on Purchasing Decisions

Table 2. Price Variable Survey Results

Price Variable Indicators	Percentage/Mean
Price influences purchase frequency	82%
Always consider price before buying	90%
Promotions influence purchasing decisions	88%
Overall mean score (1–5 scale)	4.07

The results presented in Table 1 show that price constitutes a significant determinant of consumer decisions when purchasing Zara products. A large proportion (82%) agreed that price directly influences how frequently they make purchases, while 90% reported consistently considering price before committing to buy. Furthermore, 88% of respondents acknowledged that promotional campaigns, such as discounts and seasonal sales, have a strong influence on their buying decisions. The mean value of 4.07 across all price indicators supports the notion that Zara’s pricing strategy is generally well received, but remains a pivotal factor shaping consumer evaluation and behavior.

These findings confirm that price operates not only as an economic element but also as a cognitive cue in the evaluation process, consistent with the perceived value theory (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Consumers assess whether the benefits derived from a product justify the financial expenditure, and when this equilibrium is achieved, purchasing intentions are strengthened. Similar findings have been reported by Kusnadi (2020), who established that price significantly impacts fashion purchasing behavior among Indonesian consumers. The results further reveal that promotions play an important mediating role: even within premium fast-fashion segments, consumers are highly responsive to sales incentives. This aligns with Nugroho’s (2022) argument that Indonesian consumers, while valuing brand prestige, remain highly price-sensitive and are inclined to delay purchases until promotional opportunities arise.

The implication for Zara’s pricing strategy is that while consumers are willing to pay a premium for perceived quality and global fashion reputation, sustained engagement requires adaptive pricing tactics. Periodic discounts or loyalty-based promotions may serve to retain the interest of value-oriented customers without eroding the brand’s premium positioning (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Hence, maintaining a strategic balance between price fairness and exclusivity becomes crucial in sustaining competitive advantage within Medan’s dynamic retail landscape.

Product Quality Influence

Table 3. Product Quality Survey Results

Product Quality Indicators	Percentage/Mean
Designs follow latest fashion trends	90%
Comfortable to wear	88%
Trust in product consistency and durability	High agreement (majority)
Overall mean score (1–5 scale)	4.24

As shown in Table 2, respondents’ perceptions of product quality were exceptionally positive, with a mean score of 4.24 the highest among all variables measured. Approximately 90% of respondents agreed that Zara’s designs consistently reflect current global fashion trends, while 88% emphasized comfort as a defining quality

attribute. A majority also expressed trust in the consistency and durability of Zara's products, signaling strong brand credibility.

This result underscores that product quality exerts a stronger influence on consumer decisions than price, corroborating Griffin's (2005) assertion that quality is a central driver of customer satisfaction and loyalty. In fashion retailing, product quality extends beyond tangible dimensions such as stitching and material strength to encompass intangible attributes like aesthetic appeal and brand prestige (Sumarwan, 2011). The findings here mirror those of Olutade and Enwereji (2024), who noted that consumer confidence and reduced dissonance are largely shaped by perceptions of product reliability.

Zara's ability to combine trend relevance with material comfort contributes to its success in retaining customers despite premium pricing. Moreover, the emphasis on design innovation and comfort aligns with Peter and Olson's (2010) framework, which posits that product quality functions as a key determinant of emotional satisfaction and repeat purchasing behavior. These findings also suggest that quality serves as a mitigating factor for price sensitivity when consumers perceive superior quality, they are more inclined to rationalize higher prices as justified.

The consistently high perception of quality among Medan consumers also reflects Zara's effective global supply chain and quality control processes, which enable the brand to deliver fashion items aligned with international trends at a relatively fast turnover rate (Yin, 2022). This operational efficiency reinforces the perception that Zara's higher price point corresponds to dependable value delivery. Therefore, product quality, as both a symbolic and functional attribute, emerges as the dominant construct influencing consumer decisions in the studied context.

Purchasing Decisions and the Combined Effect of Price and Quality

Table 4. Purchasing Decision Survey Results

Purchasing Decision Indicators	Percentage/Mean
Confidence in purchasing decisions	86%
Willingness to make repeat purchases	84%
Overall mean score (1–5 scale)	4.06

Regression analysis revealed that the combined effect of price and product quality explained 49.9% of the variance in purchasing decisions ($R^2 = 0.499$). This finding indicates that almost half of the consumer decision-making process is attributable to these two variables, while the remaining variation can be explained by other factors such as brand image, digital influence, and peer recommendations. The mean purchasing decision score of 4.06 suggests a high level of confidence and satisfaction among consumers, with 86% affirming trust in their decisions and 84% expressing willingness to make repeat purchases.

These results support the Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (2008) model, which emphasizes that consumers evaluate purchasing alternatives based on an integration of cognitive and affective assessments. In this study, price and quality jointly function as central cues that guide the formation of perceived value. The data confirm Nugroho's (2022) and Andini and Megawati's (2023) observations that when consumers perceive equilibrium between price fairness and product excellence, the likelihood of purchase and post-purchase satisfaction increases significantly.

Additionally, the substantial proportion of explained variance suggests that Zara's success in Medan stems from its capacity to deliver a coherent value proposition where pricing and quality reinforce each other. However, the unexplained 50.1% of variance highlights that other variables such as promotional appeal, brand image, or social influence also shape consumer outcomes. This reinforces the multi-

dimensional nature of consumer decision-making in fast fashion, where both rational and emotional motives coexist.

Balancing Price and Quality in Zara Consumer Decisions

The findings of this study contribute to the broader understanding of consumer behavior in fast fashion by demonstrating that both price and product quality significantly influence Zara consumers in Medan, with quality emerging as the stronger determinant. Importantly, these results should not be viewed in isolation but rather in relation to existing literature and the theoretical frameworks that explain consumer decision-making.

The fact that product quality outweighs price as a determinant of purchase decisions reflects a pattern consistent with consumer behavior theory, which posits that satisfaction and loyalty are primarily driven by perceived quality rather than cost (Griffin, 2005; Kotler & Keller, 2016). In highly competitive markets such as fashion retail, quality functions as a key differentiator, particularly when consumers are faced with abundant alternatives. Zara's emphasis on trend alignment, design relevance, and comfort appears to reinforce trust and loyalty among Medan's consumers. This resonates with Sumarwan's (2011) perspective that consumers tend to remain committed to brands that consistently meet or exceed their expectations in terms of quality, regardless of pricing challenges.

Nevertheless, the role of price cannot be disregarded. While respondents indicated that quality is the dominant driver, the significant influence of price highlights that Zara's positioning in Medan requires a careful balance. Price serves not only as an economic measure but also as a psychological signal of value (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Consumers in emerging economies like Indonesia are often price-conscious, and while many are willing to pay for quality, they remain highly responsive to promotions and discounts. This reflects a cultural dimension of Indonesian consumer behavior: a preference for value maximization, where the perceived "fairness" of price strongly influences purchase intentions (Nugroho, 2022).

The simultaneous effect of price and quality, which explained nearly half of the variance in purchasing decisions, also underscores the interplay between rational and emotional aspects of consumer behavior. Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (2008) describe decision-making as an integration of cognitive evaluations (e.g., weighing benefits against costs) and affective responses (e.g., satisfaction with design or prestige). Zara's case illustrates this dynamic clearly: while its global brand strength and design relevance fulfill emotional aspirations, the acceptance of its relatively high pricing depends on whether consumers believe that the trade-off is justified.

A critical implication of this finding is that Zara cannot rely solely on its international brand equity in the Indonesian market. Instead, it must continuously reinforce the perception of quality to justify its pricing strategy. This is consistent with Tjiptono's (2015) argument that marketing success depends on sustaining a balance between value creation and value communication. For Zara, value communication should include emphasizing material durability, design innovation, and even sustainability practices, which are increasingly relevant in global fashion discourse. Such efforts would help not only in justifying price levels but also in strengthening consumer trust in the long term.

At the same time, the unexplained variance in the model (approximately 50.1%) points to limitations in focusing solely on price and quality. Other factors such as brand image, digital engagement, cultural influences, and peer recommendations are likely to play important roles. This aligns with Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan's (2017) notion of Marketing 4.0, which emphasizes the importance of digital connectivity and community influence in shaping consumer behavior. Given the

increasing role of social media in fashion consumption, Zara's brand strategies in Medan should also consider how digital content and online peer reviews influence perceptions beyond price and quality.

Furthermore, while the study confirms the dominance of quality, it is important to acknowledge the risks associated with fast fashion. Zara's model relies on speed and affordability in design turnover, which may at times compromise durability. Should consumers perceive inconsistency in quality, loyalty could decline despite the brand's global reputation. This reflects Keller's (2013) concept of brand equity, where negative experiences can erode long-term trust more quickly than positive ones build it. Therefore, Zara's strategic challenge is not only to maintain quality but to ensure its consistency across product lines and over time.

Finally, the findings have broader implications for understanding consumer behavior in emerging urban markets. Unlike in developed economies where brand prestige alone often drives fashion consumption, consumers in cities like Medan appear to balance global aspirations with pragmatic considerations of value. This suggests that fast fashion brands must adapt their strategies when entering secondary urban markets in developing countries. Future research should therefore expand beyond price and quality to include sociocultural and technological factors that increasingly shape consumption in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Price has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, especially through perceived affordability, brand value, and effectiveness of discount promotions. Although Zara's prices are relatively high, consumers are still willing to buy because they feel that the price is comparable to the quality. Product quality is the most dominant factor influencing purchasing decisions. The quality of materials, design, comfort, and product consistency are the main reasons consumers feel satisfied and loyal to the Zara brand. Purchasing decisions are strongly influenced by previous positive experiences and perceptions of quality and price. This creates consumer loyalty and a tendency to make repeat purchases and recommend to others. Overall, this study shows that in order to maintain and improve consumer purchasing decisions, Zara needs to continue to maintain product quality and implement pricing strategies that are relevant to market segmentation in Medan.

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