A Customer Perspective Theory on Retailers' Repurchase Intentions for Air Conditioning Products

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Abstract

This study used well-known air conditioning companies as case studies to examine how corporate reputation in Medan City retail outlets mediated the relationship between brand equity, product quality, and repurchase intentions. This study employed quantitative methods as part of its causal-descriptive design. Using PLS-SEM, the concept is empirically confirmed. Questions were asked to gather information. Out of the five retail companies in Indonesia that distribute AC items from different brands, Medan has 99 clients. Customer repurchase intention ($R2 = 0.904$) and customer-based company reputation ($R2 = 0.877$) are strong indicators of a well-fitting model. Even though factors like product quality, customer experience, and company reputation significantly impact consumers' intentions to repurchase, customer brand equity is still relatively small. A statistically significant correlation exists between a company's reputation among its customers and their propensity to buy from that company again. These findings will benefit sales, electronics companies (particularly those making air conditioners), and other interested parties.

Keywords: *Customer Perspective Theory, Retailers' Repurchase, Air Conditioning Products*

INTRODUCTION

Up to six months of summertime might be experienced in Medan. Historically, this area has experienced temperatures as high as 37–41 degrees Celsius. Daytime highs in the city's interior are higher in hot-dry states than in hot-humid states due to the city's varied climate conditions (Octarina et al., 2022). Because of the difficulties in coping with the heat, Xu and colleagues found that people will eventually adjust to living in more relaxed places (Xu et al., 2020). There is a potential customer base for cooling systems and other consumer electronics among Medan's 2,435,252 inhabitants (BPS Medan, 2022). A comfortable and relaxing atmosphere is the primary goal of air conditioning systems (Wikipedia, 2022).

Air conditioners are in high demand in Medan, and the market is fiercely competitive among the leading manufacturers. Indoor air conditioning systems are indispensable in city homes and businesses. Over the next several decades, air conditioning will become increasingly popular as global temperatures and incomes rise (Davis & Gertler, 2015). A positive trend has emerged in the electronic sales of air

conditioners since the number of COVID-19 cases has been steadily declining, and the Community Activity Restriction Regulations have been loosened.

Multiple varieties of air conditioners are available to customers, including split-wall, central, standing-floor, cassette, and window models. Customers' propensity to buy drops sharply when they doubt the product's reliability or whether it will meet their needs. Consumers' propensity to buy something positively correlates with their automatic buying habits (Chen et al., 2022). This is demonstrated when customers choose to purchase air conditioners; manufacturers' product quality can still impact consumers. According to Huang and Liu (2022), consumers' hedonic adjustment and expressive value attitudes are influenced by their perceptions of brand equity when purchasing decisions (Y.-C. Huang & Liu, 2022).

Bennett and Rundel-Thiele (2005) and Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) cite customer literature highlighting brand loyalty as a critical component in fulfilling consumers' purchase intentions (Bennett & Rundel-Thiele, 2005; Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). This mentality develops in the minds of brand-loyal customers as they plan future purchases. Favorable views of a company's reputation also impact consumers' buying intentions (Bianchi et al., 2019a; Jung & Seock, 2016).

Consumers' reputations are most heavily weighed, according to Kircova and Esen (Kircova & Esen, 2018). In times of saturated markets and increasing competition, it is crucial to cultivate positive behavioral intentions among customers toward the company (Gul, 2014). Building strong customer relationships takes little time for businesses. The release of AC innovations that are constantly in demand among urban consumers and replacement products, along with lower penetration in rural areas, will drive the impact of air conditioning as a long-term product. Customers are more likely to be satisfied and purchase more when the brand is vital. When it comes to multi-brand retail outlets, building brand equity is essential for increasing sales (Manjunath & Aluregowda, 2014).

Using the variables of customer-based brand equity, company reputation, and the effect of product quality on customer loyalty, this research continues Suwarno's study on the air conditioning retail market in Medan (Suwarno et al., 2023). On the other hand, this study looks at products and businesses from the consumer's point of view. Air conditioning companies are enticing customers with attractive sales to boost sales. Despite their best efforts to learn about other AC brands, loyal customers will always have opinions about the one they've purchased before. People now go online before making a purchase, thanks to technology. Many factors influence a buyer's propensity to repurchase, including but not limited to size, color, offer, expected service, kind, brand, power consumption level, operational simplicity, yearly maintenance price, dealer reputation, installation costs, and place of purchase. According to this study, residents of Medan's AC purchases are influenced by brand equity, customer experience, and business reputation. Finally, suggestions for theoretical work, managerial practice, and further study are included.

Customer Repurchase Intention (CRI)

Repurchase intention is "the degree to which a consumer plans to make future purchases or use the services of a given business after giving some thought to the circumstances surrounding the present state of the market" (Hellier et al., 2003). AC dealers must achieve profitability to influence their customer's repurchase intentions consistently. Medan City has a lot of rivalry regarding pricing, product quality, and service because there are so many air conditioner dealers. Managers should launch robust advertising campaigns in the hopes that consumers will remain interested in purchasing

air conditioners from their dealers. According to research by Grewal, repurchase intention is measured by a customer's willingness to visit again, making the first choice, recommending the business to others, and spreading positive word of mouth to a large audience (Grewal et al., 2008). Nonetheless, the exit-voice theory—a product of research by Noyan and Simsek (2012)—proposes a model that integrates performance, satisfaction, and quality theories. The retail industry can only use the repurchase intent model (Noyan & Simsek, 2012a).

A study by Zeithhmal (1996) found that among the five components of behavioral intention is the intention to repurchase (Zeithhmal et al., 1996). Consumers' behavior in purchasing a product is characterized by repurchase intention (Kotler et al., 2016). In the purchasing process, this intention to buy or rebuy strongly correlates with why he must use or purchase specific products, says Kotler. Each customer's reason for making this purchase is unique. Consumers will select goods based on the features necessary to meet their requirements. According to the repurchase intentions of experienced evaluative customers, they may stick with the same product or service provider (Ahmad et al., 2016; C. Kim et al., 2012; Trivedi & Yadav, 2020).

The concept of repurchase intention has many different interpretations, depending on the perspective. From the standpoint of the buyer-seller relationship, prior research has shown that two important factors influencing consumers' propensity to make repeat purchases are levels of trust and satisfaction (Wu et al., 2020). Customers are likelier to write positive reviews after a good product or service experience (Wu et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2018). The high cost of acquiring new customers and the low economic value of trusted, loyal customers can be avoided through repeated purchases from existing customers. The expenses can easily exceed five times what it would cost to acquire a new customer, initiate a transaction, and keep them as a customer. A Wu (2020) study found that positive customer relationships are sustained by consistently satisfying customers, increasing trust, encouraging repurchase intent, and decreasing switching costs. The repurchase intention indicator is consistent when comparing in-store and online purchases. This study extends Hellier's customer repurchase intention indicator from Noyan and Simsek's research.

Customer-based Brand Equity (CBBE)

Consumer-based brand equity is formed over time through the experiences consumers have with the brand and the products they purchase. Research on CBBE is still in its early stages, but it serves as a foundation for understanding how CBBE affects consumer choice, commitment, extension, and business performance (Hyun et al., 2022; Nguyen-Viet, 2023; C. I. Park & Namkung, 2022). Two perspectives on brand equity emerge in the field: the behavioral approach, which focuses on consumer behavior, and the cognitive approach, which is concerned with consumer perception (Silverman et al., 1999). Customer and business value are both enhanced by solid brand equity (Bagozzi et al., 1998). Financial and customer-based approaches are the two main ways academics study brand equity. From a monetary market perspective, the first angle of brand equity is the worth of the assets associated with a brand (Farquhar et al., 1991; Simon & Sullivan, 1993). Consumer reactions to brand names will be assessed from the second viewpoint, customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993; Shocker et al., 1994).

Aaker argues that the sum of a brand's assets and liabilities, as it pertains to consumers, is known as "brand equity" (Aaker, 1991a). The five brand equity models identified by Aaker—brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary brand assets—are the sources of brand equity values.

Keller has a differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer responses to the brand marketing field, which measures brand equity based on brand awareness and brand image owned by consumers (Keller, 1993). Following this, Keller disclosed that when customers can identify and recall the brand's image field, they will be cognizant of the brand's presence and knowledge of the brand (Keller, 2013). Customer brand knowledge, defined by Keller as "descriptive and evaluative information recorded in consumers' memory about the brand," is crucial.

Positive customer-based brand equity occurs when consumers have a favorable impression of a product and respond favorably when presented with the opportunity to purchase it. This is because consumers have developed a strong and distinct association with the brand, which they associate with positive values. An approach to brand equity that concentrates on the customer is the CBBE model. As Keller (2013) put out, the core idea behind consumer-based brand equity is that a brand's strength depends on the sum of a consumer's sensory experiences with the brand over time.

Consumers can only contribute to a brand's high equity when they know its existence, have a positive and lucrative association with it, and understand its distinctive qualities. To build a brand, according to Keller (2013), one must first construct the correct brand identity, formulate the brand's meaning, elicit the expected response from consumers, and then establish the right relationship. Looking at the air conditioner industry in Medan through the lens of the Aaker Model, this study aims to comprehend the connection between company reputation and repurchase intentions with customer-based brand equity antecedents such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary brand assets. This aimed to test the hypothesis that a company's reputation and repurchase intention can be improved by focusing on customer-based brand equity.

Based on the discussion above, the first, second, and third hypotheses are proposed:
H1: Customer-based brand equity significantly influences repurchase intention.
H2: Customer-based brand equity significantly influences corporate reputation.
H3: Customer-based brand equity indirectly affects repurchase intention through corporate reputation as an intervening variable.

Customers' Experienced Product Quality (CEPQ)

Determining quality remains a challenge for researchers. Several studies have proposed a multi-dimensional field model of product and service quality (Garvin, 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Parasuraman et al. (1988) state that the multidimensional, validated, and generally applicable product quality measure has been available only now. Understanding Customers' Experienced Product Quality (CEPQ)—an aggregation of customer evaluations of product performance on the relevant quality dimensions as an overall quality assessment—becomes essential as a new measure in the context of quality, which can always be conceptualized in multidisciplinary ways. An important initial step in understanding CEPQ as a reflective or formative construct is to clarify that it gathers experience from various sizes of quality.

The quality characteristics and the objects used for measurement inform this choice. Taking a production-based approach, this research defines quality as meeting or exceeding all requirements laid out in the design (Garvin, 1988). Only the customer's evaluation of quality is essential from a user-based standpoint. Aaker (1991) and Jacobson and Aaker (1987) agree that raising product quality is critical to standing out in a crowded marketplace. According to Anderson and Sullivan (1993), Carman (1990), and Tsiotsou

(2006), more research is needed on the effect of CEPQ on customer satisfaction (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Carman, 1990; Tsiotsou, 2006). According to Das Guru and Paulssen (2020a), product quality is no longer a determining factor in customer satisfaction (Das Guru & Paulssen, 2020a).

Product quality, as perceived by the consumer, is more important than conformance to engineering standards or other objective measures in determining consumer behavior. According to Netemeyer et al. (2004), CEPQ is defined as "the customer's assessment of the superiority, reward, or overall superiority of the product (concerning its intended purpose) relative to alternative products (Netemeyer et al., 2004)." This definition is based on the user-based perspective on product quality, followed in this study. This research continues Field's earlier work, Das Guru & Paulssen (2020). Eight quality dimensions were found to determine how satisfied customers are with the quality of air conditioning products. Customers in this study note features, aesthetics, durability, ease of use, and serviceability as product quality dimensions across AC product categories. These five dimensions are conceptualized as product quality.

Based on the discussion above, the fourth, fifth, and sixth hypotheses are proposed:
H4: Customers' experienced product quality significantly influences repurchase intention.
H5: Customers' experienced product quality significantly influences corporate reputation.
H6: Customers' experienced product quality indirectly affects repurchase intention through corporate reputation as an intervening variable.

Customer-Based Corporate Reputation (CBCR)

Research by Shenkar and Yuchtman-Yaar (1997) and Wartick (2002) characterize the company's reputation as characterized by good intentions, self-esteem, identity, organizational image, brand, and reputation (Shenkar & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1997; Wartick, 2002). Weiss et al. (1999) argued that the field should value the company's worldwide recognition and reputation. A company's reputation is built on its track record of fulfilling its promises to stakeholders. According to Dierickx and Cool (1987), there are multiple ways in which an intangible asset, like a reputation, can be beneficial (Dierickx & Cool, 1987). Successful businesses may have come to associate the product's name with excellence, which makes them prepared to shell out more cash for it (Roberts & Dowling, 2002). Consumers are more likely to believe advertising claims made by well-respected businesses.

Based on signal theory, consumers will have faith in companies that make decisions and are seen as competent and honest in their day-to-day operations (Keh & Xie, 2009a). Customers are more likely to express themselves and strive for personal growth when associated with a respected brand. Therefore, to establish a favorable image and obtain a competitive advantage, it is essential to utilize the company's reputation as a strategic asset (Fombrun & Riel, 2004a). Consistent with the institutional view, the current study defines a firm's reputation as an overall evaluation of the extent to which a firm is substantially "good" or "bad." They suggest four elements create a company's reputation: credibility, reliability, trustworthiness, and responsibility (Fombrun & Riel, 2004b; Keh & Xie, 2009b; Weiss et al., 1999).

The term "customer-based corporate reputation" (CBCR) refers to how consumers perceive a company after interacting with its products, services, and communications. Research in the fields of customer citizenship behavior (Walsh & Beatty, 2007), customer

satisfaction and loyalty (Jin et al., 2007), customer word of mouth (C. Park & Lee, 2009), and spending and share of wallet (Walsh et al., 2012) has documented this phenomenon. A company's reputation can be measured by five main factors: customer orientation, good employer, reliable and financially strong company, product and service quality, and social and environmental responsibility. Field Walsh (2017) suggests an indicator based on the characteristics of AC product customers in Medan. Walsh et al. (2017) used this metric to test customer repurchase interest (Walsh et al., 2017a).

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H7: Corporate reputation has a significant influence on repurchase intention.

To find the answers to these questions, we created a conceptual model to illustrate the relationships between the variables. Here is the resulting framework:
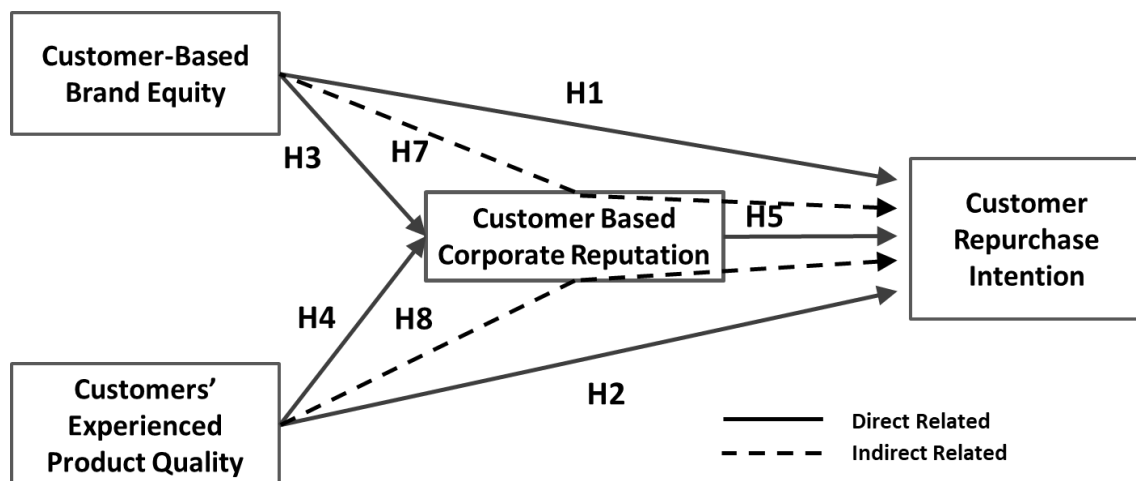
Picture 1. Conceptual framework

   This paper aims to test a general model that describes how customer intention to repurchase is influenced by the company's reputation for brand equity and product usage experience, specifically from the perspective of AC customers. Understanding customer repurchase intentions is crucial for effective marketing strategies. Existing research has focused on product quality, company reputation, and brand strength. However, there is a need for more comprehensive theories that are validated through direct customer perspectives.
   Several studies focus on identifying the fundamental factors that influence customer repurchase intentions (Ahmad et al., 2016; Hellier et al., 2003; C.-C. Huang et al., 2014; C. Kim et al., 2012; Kwon & Kim, 2016; Noyan & Simsek, 2012a; Shalehah et al., 2019; Tong & Wong, 2015a). Prior research primarily focused on customer purchasing intentions to brand equity (Ahmad et al., 2016; Hellier et al., 2003; C.-C. Huang et al., 2014; Kwon & Kim, 2016; Shalehah et al., 2019), customer satisfaction (Hellier et al., 2003; C. Kim et al., 2012; Kwon & Kim, 2016; Noyan & Simsek, 2012a), This research brings a fresh perspective by exploring the uncharted territory of repurchase decisions and how they are influenced by factors such as the company's reputation, product quality, and brand strength. It focuses explicitly on customers of multiple AC brands, shedding light on a previously unexplored area.

RESEARCH METHODS
Sample And Data Collection

A quantitative approach characterizes this study's methodology. A causal relationship, or a relationship that affects and is affected by the variables studied, is the main objective of this causal-descriptive research. This study's population consists of an unidentified number of people who purchase air conditioners in Medan from five significant stores in the city. The research assistant guided each respondent through the entire questionnaire, and to ensure consistent results, they were asked to name their preferred AC brand and big retailer. This study's sample strategy was convenience sampling, which involves randomly picking participants from the pool of people shopping for air conditioners in stores during the study's execution.

Research assistants from Universitas Prima Indonesia were enlisted to distribute and collect the questionnaires. A face-to-face survey was held from December 10th, 2023, through March 15th, 2024. One hundred twelve surveys were distributed, but only 99 could be used for the final data analysis, giving an 89% response rate. Roscoe postulated that selecting a sample for a study should be multivariate, with a minimum of ten samples equal to the number of variables under investigation (Roscoe, 1975). This research used four variables: repurchase intention, customer-based corporate reputation as a mediator, customer-based brand equity as an independent variable, and customer-experienced product quality as a dependent variable.

Theoretical considerations regarding the sample informed the researchers' determination of the sample size, which included 99 respondents split into five groups. This cluster division aims to ensure that the data obtained is more accurate. The distribution of respondents from the distributor is as follows: Company A with 27, Company B with 12, Company C with 14, Company D with 30, and Company E with 16.

Measurement Instrument and Questionnaire Design

The research scale is operational based on the store's previous purchases and brand choice. Adjustments were made to suit the current context and the research's aims. Based on work by Hellier et al. (2003) and Noyan & Simsek (2012), the "Customer Repurchase Intention" measure employs a five-item scale. "Customer-Based Brand Equity" and "Customers' Experienced Product Quality" both utilize five-item scales that were initially created by Aaker (1991) and Das Guru & Paulssen (2020). "Corporate Reputation" was measured using an adjusted version of a five-item scale by Walsh et al. (2017). This survey asked participants to rate their level of agreement with the following statements using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong disagreement, and 5 indicates strong agreement. The scale showed internal consistency in this sample with a Cronbach's α of 0.70.

Data Analysis

This research used Smart PLS software for the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique to statistically analyze the measurement and structural models. According to Hair, PLS is a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) equation model that employs a variance or component-based approach (Hair et al., 2017a). It uses a structural model (Inner Model) to test the path coefficient, goodness of fit, hypothesis, and regression equations. One component of the measurement model analysis is the reliability of the internal consistency or composite. Second is Discriminant Validity, and third is Convergent Validity, also known as Average Variance Extracted- AVE.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A respondent profile is derived from the primary data that has been collected. Table 1 below summarizes this profile:

Table 1: Demographic Characteristic Respondent

Demographics Characteristic		f = 99	%
Gender	Male	67	68
	Female	32	32
Married	Yes	79	80
	No	20	20
Age	Less than 20	8	8
	21 – 30	21	21
	31 – 40	41	42
	More than 41	29	29
Education	Middle School	11	11
	High School	56	57
	Undergraduate Degree	24	24
	Postgraduate Degree	8	8
Occupation	Office Workers	32	32
	Entrepreneur	19	19
	Government Employees	27	27
	Professional Job	11	11
	Housewife	7	7
	Student	3	3
Income	Less than 3 Mio	11	11
	3.1 – 8.0 Mio	47	47
	8.1 – 12.0 Mio	23	23
	More than 12.1 Mio	18	18
Payment	Cash	19	19
	Credit Card	57	57
	Financing	23	23
Used for	Office Building	23	23
	Café	19	19
	School / Campus	7	7
	Bank	12	12
	Home	33	33
	Warehouse	5	5
Purchase	First	11	11
	Second	42	43
	Third	27	27
	More than third	19	19
Most Selected AC Brand (*The most sold AC brand from the choice of total respondents*)	Sharp	21	21
	LG	18	18
	Samsung	17	17
	Daikin	12	12
	Panasonic	11	11
	Polytron	8	8

Demographics Characteristic		f = 99	%
	Gree	2	2
	Others	10	10

Source: Data processed 2024

Men (68%) buy AC more than women (32%), per Table 1. Men dominate AC product purchases in this survey. Most respondents are married (80%). This reveals that family influences AC product purchases. Age distribution: 42% were 31–41 years old, 29% were over 41, 21% were 21–30, and 8% were under 20. Air conditioning consumers are productive-aged. Many respondents attended university (58%), postgraduate (18%), high school (14%), and junior high (1%). With more consumer education, air conditioning products are more likely to be purchased. Occupation: 32% office workers, 27% government employees, 19% entrepreneurs, 11% professionals, 7% homemakers, and 3% students. Air conditioning customers are workers. Income (Rupiah): Revenue-wise, respondents with 3.1–8.0 Mio had 47%, 8.1–12.0 (23%), over 12.1 (18%), and below 3 Mio (11%). Results reveal this air conditioner's customers are financially stable. Payment: Most respondents pay by credit card (57%), then alternative finance (23%), then cash (19%). Overall, people prefer credit purchases. Interviewed respondents said they buy air conditioning items for residences (33%), offices (23%), cafés (19%), schools/campuses (7%), banks (12%), and warehouses (5%). Overall, various products are employed in non-house constructions. The first (11%), second (42%), third (27%), and more than three (19%) air conditioning product purchases at retail stores were reported. This reveals that most responders buy air conditioning items from the same store. The respondent is a loyal retail client. AC brands sold best at five retail stores: Sharp 21%, LG 18%, Samsung 17%, Daikin 12%, Panasonic 11%, Polytron 8%, Gree 2%, and Others 10%. Japanese brands account for 44% of Medan air conditioning sales, followed by Korean (35%), Chinese (12%), and Indonesian (8%). Results reveal that Medan air conditioning customers choose branded and popular items.

Structural Model Analysis

Table 2. Measurement Model Results.

Composite Statistic		Loading Factor
Customer-Based Brand Equity – (Aaker, 1991b)		
CA (0.872), rho_A (0.873), CR (0.907), AVE (0.662)		
Brand Loyalty	*I will still choose to use this AC in the future.*	0.802
Brand Awareness	*I am familiar with this AC brand*	0.819
Perceived Quality	*This brand's air conditioner is strong and durable*	0.839
Brand Associations	*I like the design of this AC brand*	0.801
Brand Trust	*This AC brand has a product warranty*	0.806
Customers' Experienced Product Quality - (Das Guru & Paulssen, 2020b)		
CA (0.875), rho_A (0.877), CR (0.909), AVE (0.668)		
Features	*This AC has unique features compared to others*	0.843
Aesthetics	*I like the shape of this AC design*	0.817
Durability	*The life span of this AC is very long*	0.836
Ease of use	*This AC is easy to install, clean & operate*	0.800
Serviceability	*This AC brand is available 24 hours customer service*	0.788
Customer Based Corporate Reputation - (Walsh et al., 2017b)		

Composite Statistic		Loading Factor
*CA (0.877), **rho_A** (0.878), **CR** (0.911), **AVE** (0.671)*		
Customer Orientation	*Has employees who treat customers courteously*	0.783
Good Employer	*Looks like a good company to work for.*	0.823
Reliable Strong Finc.	*Looks like it has strong prospects for future growth*	0.833
Product ServQual	*Offers high-quality products and services*	0.832
Social Environ Respond	*Seems to make an effort to create new jobs*	0.823
Customer Repurchase Intention - (Noyan & Simsek, 2012b)		
*CA (0.904), **rho_A** (0.904), **CR** (0.929), **AVE** (0.724)*		
Wishing to revisit,	*If want to shop AC, I will go to this shop again.*	0.777
Made the first choice	*When I want to shop for AC, I first consider this shop*	0.895
Recommend to others	*I recommend others to buy an AC in this shop*	0.866
Spread positive things to many people	*This shop helps customers who want to buy the right air conditioner*	0.861
Choose the same brand	*I will buy the same air conditioner in this shop again*	0.852

Note:
- Reliability test, if Cronbach's alpha value and composite reliability value > 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017b)
- Test the validity of the AVE value is > 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017b).

R2-squared measures the independent variable's ability to explain dependent variable variability. When measuring the proportion of variance explained by each endogenous latent variable, the test results of the R-square model indicate a good model, with values greater than 0.75 (Hair et al., 2017a).

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion & R-Square

	CBBE	CBCR	CEPQ	CRI	R^2	R^2 Adj
CBBE	**0.841**					
CBCR	0.630	**0.798**			0.832	0.829
CEPQ	0.795	0.533	**0.802**			
CRI	0.591	0.440	0.548	**0.814**	0.782	0.775

Note: CBBE (customer-based brand equity), CEPQ (customer experience product quality), CBCR (customer-based corporate reputation), CRI (customer repurchase intention).

Researchers use cross-loadings and the Fornell-Larcker criterion to assess discriminant validity. The Fornell-Larcker criterion compares the square root of the AVE value to latent variable relationships. Table 3 shows that each latent model is different since the square root value of each AVE construct is more significant than the correlation value with other constructs. The AVE can be used to test convergent validity and outer loading. Indicators with AVE values above 0.5 have strong convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017a).
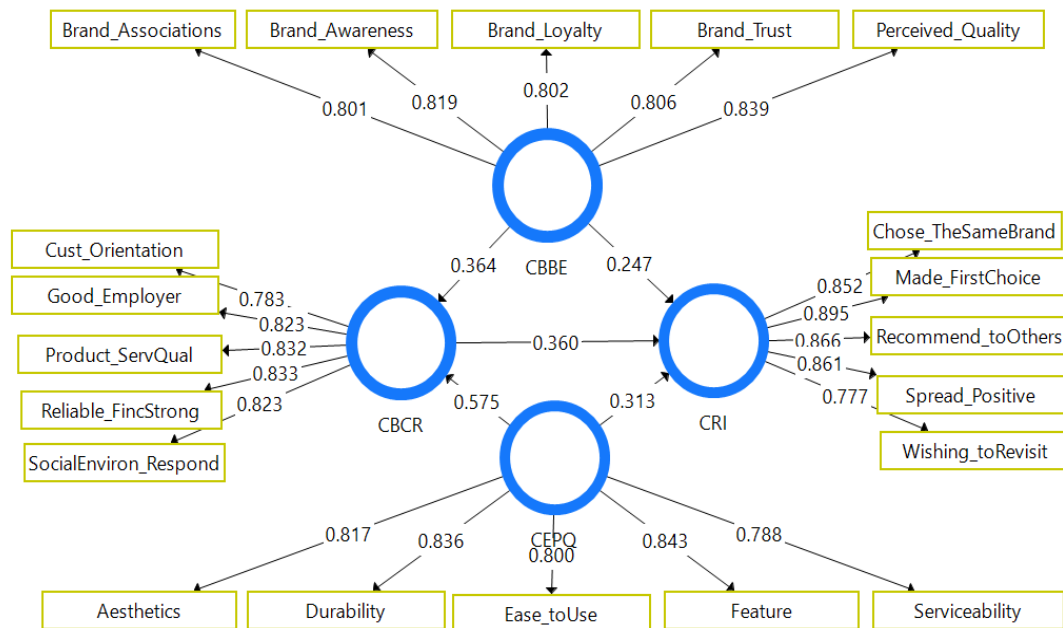
Figure 1. SEM-PLS Result

Table 4. F-Square

	CBBE	CBCR	CEPQ	CRI
CBBE		0.179		0.054
CBCR				0.100
CEPQ		0.447		0.070
CRI				

Note: CBBE (customer-based brand equity), CEPQ (customer experience product quality), CBCR (customer-based corporate reputation), CRI (customer repurchase intention).

Table 4 displays the f-square test results used to evaluate the model's accuracy. The f-square values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively, indicate whether the latent variable predictor has a moderate, medium, or substantial influence at the structural level. It profoundly impacts the whole structure (Hair et al., 2017a).

Table 5. Model Fit Test Results

	Saturated Model	**Std Value**	**Result**
SRMR	0.060	< 0.10	Fit
d_ULS	0.761	> 2.00	Marginal Fit
d_G	0.592	> 0.90	*Marginal Fit*
Chi-Square	301.725	Minimal in size	Less
NFI	0.819	> 0.9	*Marginal Fit*
Rms Theta	0.160	> 0.102	Fit

Fit test analysis contains numerous criteria, but researchers can utilize only some to determine the study model's applicability. It's better to have many models fit tests that match the requirements. Table 5 provides the model fit test results, indicating it can be evaluated next. These results suggest that most model fit criteria fit well, but others are marginal. The model must match SMARTPLS model fit criteria: RMS Theta < 0.102, SRMR < 0.10 or < 0.08, and NFI > 0, 9. Table 5 of the fit model shows that the RMS

Theta value is $0.160 > 0.102$, and the NFI value is $0.819 < 0.9$. These two model assessments show that the model fits the data (Hair et al., 2017a).
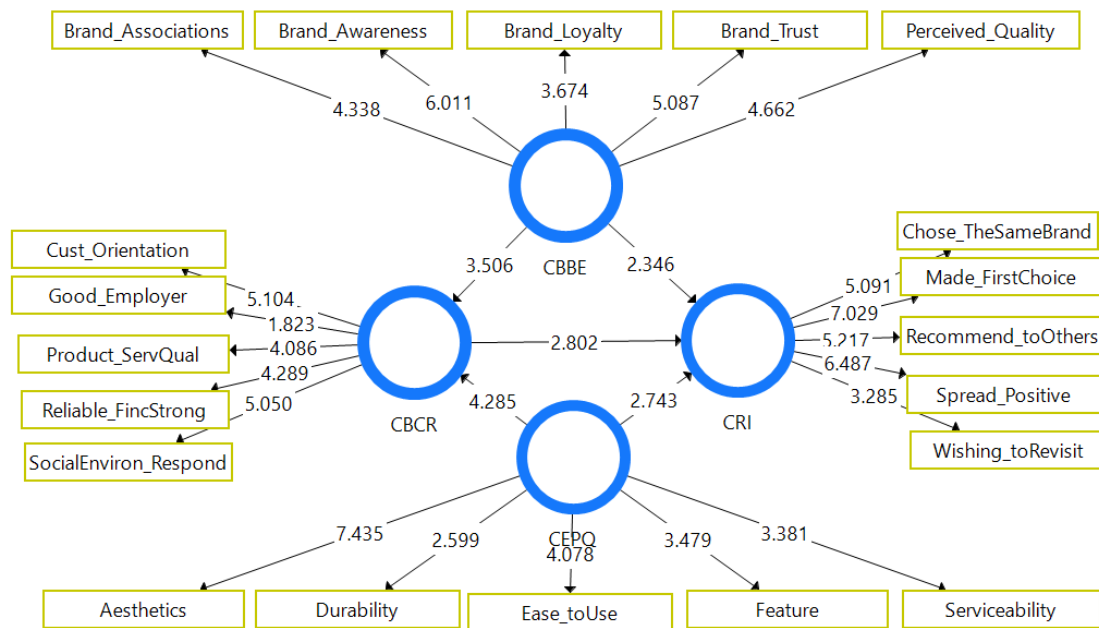
Figure 2. SEM-PLS Bootstrapping Result

Table 6. Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Relation	Sample	Mean	Std.Dev	Ts	P-Value	Note
H1	CBBE → CRI	0.247	0.246	0.105	2.346	0.019	+ Sig
H2	CBBE → CBCR	0.364	0.345	0.104	3.506	0.000	+ Sig
H3	CBBE → CBCR → CRI	0.131	0.115	0.052	2.501	0.013	+ Sig
H4	CEPQ → CRI	0.313	0.301	0.114	2.743	0.006	+ Sig
H5	CEPQ → CBCR	0.575	0.544	0.134	4.285	0.000	+ Sig
H6	CEPQ → CBCR → CRI	0.207	0.188	0.089	2.318	0.021	+ Sig
H7	CBCR → CRI	0.360	0.330	0.129	2.802	0.005	+ Sig

Note: CBBE (customer-based brand equity), CEPQ (customer experience product quality), CBCR (customer-based corporate reputation), CRI (customer repurchase intention).

Bootstrapping is a method for determining the likelihood or significance of direct, indirect, and total impacts. Additionally, f-square, outer loading, outer weight, adjusted r square, r square, and f square can all be evaluated for significance using bootstrapping. Table 6 shows the results of the PLS-SEM bootstrapping analysis. In this case, the path coefficients between the constructions are the values of the coefficients that show how significant and robust the relationship is. Assuming the path coefficients' values fall within the range of -1 to +1, this number is utilized for hypothesis testing. The two constructs have a more significant link when the value is closer to +1 (Hair et al., 2017b). If the value of the connection is closer to -1, then it is negative. All the independent variables positively affect the dependent variable since the parameter coefficients for

these variables are approaching the value of +1. All hypotheses were accepted, or the direct influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is meaningful or statistically significant because the complete construct had a p-value <0.05, according to this research.

DISCUSSION

Table 6 shows that the first hypothesis was accepted because it predicts the impact of customer-based brand equity on customer repurchase intention, and the results are significantly positive. This finding goes against what was found in Field's earlier research (Bojei & Chee Hoo, 2012; Hyun et al., 2022; Kwon & Kim, 2016; Langga et al., 2019), which showed significant results. However, other research by Kalesaran confirms that the brand awareness dimension does not substantially impact repurchase intention, and it also backs up the findings that customer-based brand equity variables do not significantly affect antecedents of repurchase intention (Kalesaran et al., 2019). According to Aquinia, brand recognition and associations were insignificant (Aquinia et al., 2021). Furthermore, Karunaratna found no statistically significant relationship between brand awareness and the repurchase intention field (Karunaratna, 2021).

Marketing managers can use the results of this customer-based study to inform the development of effective marketing strategies by learning how brand equity influences repurchase intention. Studies in different contexts have found conflicting results regarding the impact of assessing brand equity on the intention to return to a different product. Since AC use is still comparatively higher in large cities, this study aimed to determine, from a consumer perspective, how various aspects of brand equity affect repurchase intention to use ACs. The findings demonstrate that males have a more significant say in selecting an AC brand to purchase and have benefited from the positive association with that brand. This study found that brand strength does have an effect and is positive and significant. According to the five dimensions of CBBE, two aspects of brand equity—brand loyalty (3.674) and brand association (4.338) of repurchase intention—have low values.

According to Table 6, the second hypothesis is supported because it demonstrates that customers' perceptions of the product's quality have a positive and statistically significant effect on their intention to repurchase. In keeping with previous work by Das Guru & Paulsen (2020), this study employs the dimensions of perceived quality—features, aesthetics, durability, ease of use, and serviceability—to measure the quality of a product that consumers have experienced. The study does not use the performance, material, and reliability dimensions since they are irrelevant to its purpose. This research uses two measures of perceived quality: the strength of the customer's bond with the store's management and the sophistication of the product's technological features. The results demonstrate a notable influence on consumer actions, particularly about the repurchase of AC products. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of another research as well. Research has shown that product quality and repurchase intention differ significantly (Aquinia et al., 2021; Ariffin et al., 2016; Astawa & Rahanatha, 2021; Hyun et al., 2022). Nevertheless, contrary to the findings of Singh and Alok, there was no statistically significant correlation between consumers' perceptions of quality and their intentions to repurchase (Singh & Alok, 2022).

Suppose a customer's purchasing experience varies across stores due to the services offered by each. In that case, it is essential to consider customer perception when determining how product quality variances impact various experiences. Marketing managers should consider the following factors—a simplified scale with only five items

from the eight dimensions of perceived quality—regarding air conditioners: the ease of use of products and the after-sales customer experience. In general, the CEPQ results highlight the customer-centric strengths and areas for improvement within the current product portfolio. To enhance and sustain product sales, the company must strategically cultivate the position of dealer stores. Different product categories will give customers different perceptions of quality. In this study, customer perceptions of home appliances will naturally differ from those of AC products, services, or luxury goods.

The third hypothesis is also supported by the results of the impact of customer-based brand equity on customer-based corporate reputation, which are positive and statistically significant (as shown in Table 6). The results of this study are consistent with those of earlier research. Significant results between brand strength and company reputation were demonstrated in field studies (Heinberg et al., 2018; Lai et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2006). This study examines the company's reputation from the perspective of the customer. It does this by surveying a sample of buyers from retail stores in the air conditioner industry in Medan, Indonesia. Finding out how corporate reputation affects AC industry brand equity in retail stores was the driving force behind this study. Customers often perceive retail stores as places to purchase goods. Because consumers have faith that the retail establishment will uphold the standards set by the AC company, they are willing to lend a helping hand to the AC in their quest to establish and grow the brand's and the store's reputation and recommendations from retail stores.

The fourth hypothesis shows the impact of customers' experienced product quality on customer-based corporate reputation, with positive and significant results, so this hypothesis is accepted (Table 6 shows). The results of this study support research conducted by (Awang & Jusoff, 2009), which showed substantial results between perceived quality and company reputation in telecommunications provider companies. However, contrary to the results of this study, it is outside the research (Gatti et al., 2012). In this study, perceived quality is insignificant to the company's reputation for Christmas cake products. However, perceived quality shows significant results on repurchase.

This study found that the three perceived quality items, namely feature, and durability, made a very significant contribution to the company's reputation from the company itself. The company's corporate social responsibility gives the highest score among the three. The results show that durability is the most critical aspect of perceived quality concerning a company's corporate reputation, and companies should pay attention to this if they want to be positively perceived by stakeholders. This study also shows that customer perceptions of quality will be high, especially for products related to technology and machinery.

The five hypotheses show the impact of customer-based corporate reputation on customer repurchase intention, with positive and significant results, so this hypothesis is accepted (Table 6 shows). The results of this study support previous research (Bianchi et al., 2019b; S. B. Kim & Kim, 2016; Minh Ha et al., 2022; Tong & Wong, 2015b). The study results show that consumers will be loyal when given clear information about the products they buy from shopkeepers when presented with various product choices. Even though consumers tend to have a brand in their minds, the recommendations given by the shopkeeper are an essential input for them when deciding to buy the product. When the product meets consumer expectations, they tend to recommend that others buy the brand at a store that provides this service.

In this study, the fifth hypothesis shows the relationship between customer-based brand equity and customer repurchase intention mediated by Customer-Based Corporate Reputation, which shows positive and significant results, so this hypothesis is accepted.

Customers consider the brand an added value to the company's reputation, encouraging consumers to repurchase the product at the same place. Air conditioning companies must demonstrate to customers the strength of their excellent brand in their promotional activities to build a good reputation and increase consumer purchase intention for the product directly and indirectly to the stores selling it. This will have a vital contributing impact on customer consumption behavior in stores.

Purchase intention cannot always be driven by advertising alone. Still, from consumer experience when using a product, it is the most significant impetus to increase consumer purchase intention towards products and stores that have helped them when providing recommendations to buy these products. These results are consistent with the sixth hypothesis in this study, showing the relationship between Customer Experience Product Quality and customer repurchase intention mediated by Customer-Based Corporate Reputation, showing positive and significant results so that this hypothesis is accepted. This relationship is better and is more valuable than the customer-based brand equity relationship. So, long-term planning, a comprehensive strategy, and the right way to maintain loyal customers by using products from the brands offered are required.

This research shows that brand strength is a stimulus for air conditioning retailers to have a good reputation so that product repurchases continue and the same shop is used as the initial step for consumers to use the products offered. Research has shown that the strong impact of customer satisfaction factors will influence the recommendation of products and stores on company reputation and repurchase intentions, as evidenced by product quality, and will maintain loyalty to the brand. Therefore, air conditioner manufacturers must focus on brand strength and promotion activities to improve their reputation and increase customer repurchase intention.

CONCLUSION

The results show from the customer's perspective that the positive and significant correlation between product quality and repurchase intention is mediated by company reputation. However, the relationship between brand strength and repurchase intention mediated by company reputation shows a positive but insignificant correlation. This is because the brand supports the quality offered by the product, so high product quality keeps customers loyal. More importantly, much of the literature on the customer perspective has been devoted to the influence of brand and product quality on firm reputation while ignoring the mediating role of corporate reputation in the relationship between brand, product quality, and consumer repurchase intentions.

Thus, this study adds to the existing knowledge about the role of brand, product quality, and company reputation from the customer perspective by finding that a good corporate reputation, excellent and resilient brand strength, and product quality substantially impact repurchase intention. The findings from this study indicate that inappropriate customer service can hurt specific consumer behavior. In the short term, air-conditioning retailer service activities may convince consumers to repurchase, but they may need to be more convincing. Repurchase behavior is only guaranteed to last for a short time because only product quality and a good brand image contribute to sustainable behavior.

This suggests that to gain and retain customers, Air Conditioning Manufacturers should develop and nurture their retailers to maintain and sustain a strong brand reputation by using direct-to-customer promotions. This will have a long-term and sustainable positive impact on the intention to repurchase air conditioning products. Therefore, the theoretical contribution of this research is to introduce the company's reputation as an

incentive for retailers to market their products more efficiently through brand strength and product quality. As well as long-term benefits for maintaining the relationship between products or brands and retailers regarding consumer repurchase intentions.

Implication

Overall, managers in air conditioning companies can indirectly build a strong reputation for their business to retailers and consumers. However, due to competitive pressures, retailers are starting to be recognized as helpers to increase sales through positive consumer recommendations. When retailer service is less consistent, sustaining customer interest and purchase behavior is more accessible. This study finds that the more consumer-focused components of brand strength and product quality may have a solid direct or close relationship mediated partly by firm reputation. As a result, managers can educate and develop their retail or enhance their company's reputation by using promotional activities that are considered appropriate for the strength of the brand and product quality. As a result, managers in the air conditioning industry may need to implement retailer programs capable of sustainably building corporate reputation and brand reputation. This can be done by implementing promotional programs that are often closer to the interests of consumers. This study shows that consumers are more likely to listen to information from retailers than advertisements for the products they see, so treating retailer employees well will increase sales because they will face customers with a cheerful attitude.

To make consumers more aware of the company's promotional activities, air conditioning companies can use retailers to communicate and convey a positive image and reputation to consumers. In addition, it is necessary to increase the efficiency of shopkeepers when serving in stores, especially those who have direct contact with customers. Therefore, retail managers must develop human resource management policies that support the sales strategy of their products. Air-conditioning retailers should hire specialists on a product aligned with the brand in their store and create a brand with a shopkeeper. In the end, retail companies as agents of air conditioner manufacturers must not only pursue profits and sell at non-competitive prices or even lower prices in the market only to gain customers and profits but need to do the right thing, commit to the core values of cooperation between retailers and air conditioning manufacturers as the brand holders of the air conditioning products they sell.

Limitations Research

The main limitation of this study is that the sample used is a small group of air conditioning customers in Medan, Indonesia. The questionnaire was conducted through direct interviews with students and customers who bought air conditioning products at the specified store. Respondents may need to learn about the intent of the questions asked or may not know about the activities carried out by students when being interviewed. As a result, generalizations can be distorted because some respondents may have participated without being fully aware that the student activity has been proposed at other stores. Future research can be conducted with a larger sample. This study limits the influence of brand strength, product quality, and company reputation on consumer repurchase intentions according to customer perceptions. Future research could use the "retailer's perspective" variable to mediate the above relationship or investigate further consumers' "sustainable consumption behavior" towards retail brands in the air conditioning industry.

Acknowledgments

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