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Customer Satisfaction as a Key Driver of Repurchase Intention: Evidence from Brand Image and Price Perception in the Beauty Industry

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Abstract
This study examines the effects of brand image and price perception on repurchase intention through customer satisfaction among consumers of Somethinc beauty products using TikTok Shop in Semarang City. Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) is used to explain the model by positioning brand image and price perception as pre-purchase expectation cues, customer satisfaction as a post-purchase evaluation, and repurchase intention as a continuance response. A quantitative explanatory design was applied, and data were collected from 150 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results indicate that brand image and price perception positively and significantly influence customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. Customer satisfaction has the strongest direct effect on repurchase intention and partially mediates the effects of brand image (VAF = 52.6%) and price perception (VAF = 42.6%).. Unlike the modified model's reference study, which found no mediating role of customer satisfaction in the Brand Image Repurchase Intention relationship, the present study identifies significant partial mediation. This finding indicates that, in social commerce, favorable brand associations become sustainable repurchase drivers when consumers' actual experiences confirm the expectations communicated through the platform.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has developed from a communication channel into an integrated advertising and commerce environment. This development is especially visible in Indonesia's beauty industry, where consumers increasingly use digital advertisements, online reviews, influencer recommendations, and social-commerce features when evaluating products (Wang et al., 2023; Rahmadhani et al., 2024). The growth of internet access, smartphone use, e-commerce, and platforms such as TikTok has made beauty-product information and transactions easier to access

(Aprelyani & Ali, 2024). However, extensive digital exposure does not automatically ensure that consumers will repurchase a product.

Repurchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness to purchase a product again after evaluating a previous purchase and usage experience (Mahaputra, 2023; Dirgantari et al., 2024). This intention is closely related to customer satisfaction, which arises when the perceived performance of a product is compared with the expectations formed before purchase (Paludi & Nurchorimah, 2021). Consumers whose experiences meet or exceed expectations are more likely to maintain positive evaluations and repurchase the product. Thus, repurchase intention represents a post-purchase response rather than merely an extension of initial purchase interest..

Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) provides the theoretical lens for explaining this post-purchase process. ECT suggests that consumers form expectations before purchase, evaluate actual performance after use, and experience satisfaction when performance confirms or exceeds those expectations (Oliver, 1980). In this study, brand image and price perception are positioned as expectation-forming cues: brand image shapes expectations of credibility, quality, and uniqueness, while price perception reflects expectations concerning affordability and the value received. Customer satisfaction represents the post-purchase evaluation, which subsequently relates to repurchase intention. Because expectation, perceived performance, and confirmation are not measured as separate latent constructs, this study does not claim to test the complete ECT model; rather, ECT is used to explain the proposed relationships as a post-purchase process.

Brand image is formed through the associations and impressions that consumers attach to a brand, including its name, design, reputation, product characteristics, and communication activities (Noviandari & Fachrodji, 2024). A favorable image can reduce perceived risk and establish positive expectations before purchase. Price perception is equally important because consumers assess whether the amount paid is affordable, competitive, and consistent with the value received (Mudfarikha & Dwijayanti, 2021). In the beauty market, these two evaluations operate together: brand image signals expected quality, whereas price perception determines whether that expected quality is considered worth the financial sacrifice.

The study focuses on Somethinc consumers who use TikTok Shop in Semarang City. TikTok is widely used to obtain beauty-product information through short videos, reviews, tutorials, influencer content, and live shopping. This setting is relevant because consumers encounter brand claims, price promotions, and social recommendations before they experience the product directly. Consequently, satisfaction depends on whether the actual quality and benefits of Somethinc products are consistent with the image and price expectations created during the digital shopping process. Empirical evidence concerning this post-purchase mechanism remains limited in the specific context of Somethinc purchasers on TikTok Shop in Semarang.

Somethinc is an Indonesian beauty brand that combines a modern local-brand identity, attractive packaging, product innovation, and intensive digital marketing. Its positioning as an accessible yet quality-oriented brand makes it a relevant case for examining how brand image and price perception influence repeated purchasing (Hermawati, 2024). TikTok Shop also creates a distinctive social-commerce context because product demonstrations, creator endorsements, consumer comments, and time-limited promotions are presented within the same purchasing environment. These features can strengthen expectations before purchase, but they can also create a gap when the experience after purchase does not match the promises communicated through the platform.

Some consumers perceive the brand's innovation and digital presence positively, while others may question whether the product results justify the price paid. This tension is important because an attractive brand image or a promotional price may encourage an initial purchase, but repeat purchasing depends on the consumer's evaluation after using the product. The problem is therefore not only whether Somethinc is visible on TikTok, but whether its brand and price promises are confirmed through a satisfying experience. ECT explains continuance through a sequence in which expectations are compared with perceived performance, the resulting confirmation shapes satisfaction, and satisfaction encourages subsequent behavior (Oliver, 1980). The model in this study is ECT-informed because expectation and confirmation are not measured as separate latent constructs. Nevertheless, ECT provides a coherent causal argument: brand image and price perception form expectations before purchase, customer satisfaction summarizes the evaluation after purchase, and repurchase intention represents the consumer's continuance response. This theoretical positioning allows the relationships among the variables to be interpreted as a process rather than as isolated statistical associations.

Brand image and price perception do not represent confirmation itself. Instead, they serve as expectation-forming cues that consumers use before and during the purchasing process. Brand image shapes expectations regarding credibility, quality consistency, uniqueness, and product reliability. Price perception shapes expectations regarding the level of benefits that consumers should receive in exchange for their monetary sacrifice. Customer satisfaction emerges after consumers compare these expectations with their actual product and shopping experiences. Positive confirmation occurs when Somethinc products, services, and TikTok Shop transactions perform consistently with or better than consumers' prior expectations. This positive evaluation subsequently strengthens repurchase intention. Conversely, a strong brand image or attractive promotional price may fail to produce continued purchasing when the actual experience does not confirm the expectations previously established. Because this study does not separately measure expectation, perceived performance, and confirmation as individual constructs, it does not claim to test the complete ECT model. Instead, ECT is applied as a theoretical lens for explaining how symbolic and economic expectation cues are translated into satisfaction and repurchase intention.

This study modifies the model of Girsang et al. (2020), which examined brand image and product quality in relation to repurchase intention through customer satisfaction among Oriflame consumers. The present study retains brand image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention but replaces product quality with price perception and applies the model to actual Somethinc purchasers on TikTok Shop. The novelty of this study is established at three interconnected levels. First, at the model level, the study modifies Girsang et al. (2020) by replacing product quality with price perception. This modification introduces an economic evaluation variable that is more closely associated with the promotional and price-comparison characteristics of TikTok Shop.

Second, at the theoretical level, the study uses Expectation-Confirmation Theory to explain the relationships among the variables as a sequential process. Brand image represents a symbolic expectation cue, price perception represents an economic expectation cue, customer satisfaction reflects consumers' post-purchase evaluation of whether these expectations are fulfilled, and repurchase intention represents a continuance response. Thus, customer satisfaction is not positioned merely as a statistical intervening variable but as the theoretical mechanism that translates expectations into continued purchasing behavior. Third, at the empirical level, the study addresses the inconclusive mediating role of customer satisfaction. In contrast to Girsang et al. (2020), who found that customer satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between brand image and repurchase intention, the present study demonstrates a significant partial mediation effect. This finding suggests that, in a social-commerce environment, brand image becomes a more sustainable driver of repurchase when consumers' actual experiences confirm the expectations created through digital brand communication.

Some studies report a significant effect of brand image on repurchase intention, whereas others find no significant effect (Hasibuan & Abror, 2025; Shakti et al., 2024). Previous findings also differ regarding whether customer satisfaction mediates the brand image-repurchase relationship; Girsang et al. (2020), for example, did not confirm this mediation. Rather than treating these differences as a simple list of inconsistent results, this study examines whether the social-commerce context strengthens the need for post-purchase confirmation. Accordingly, the study analyzes the direct effects of brand image, price perception, and customer satisfaction on repurchase intention, as well as the mediating role of customer satisfaction. This finding suggests that a favorable brand image could directly stimulate repurchase without necessarily being translated through satisfaction. Such a mechanism may operate differently in social commerce, where brand expectations are intensively constructed through short-form videos, live streaming, influencer recommendations, customer reviews, and interactive product demonstrations. In this environment, the effect of brand image may depend more strongly on whether consumers' actual experiences confirm the promises communicated through the platform. This study investigates whether customer satisfaction functions as a confirmation mechanism that converts symbolic expectations generated by brand image and economic expectations generated by price perception into repurchase intention. This theoretical mechanism constitutes the central contribution of the study and distinguishes it from research that merely examines direct statistical relationships among brand image, price perception, satisfaction, and repurchase intention.

METHODS

This study used a quantitative explanatory design to examine the causal relationships among brand image, price perception, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention. Data were analyzed SmartPLS Version 4.0 collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) was selected because the study simultaneously evaluates the measurement model, the direct relationships among latent variables, and the indirect effects of customer satisfaction as a mediating variable (Priyanto & Pramudana, 2024).

The population consisted of consumers residing in Semarang City who had purchased Somethinc beauty products through TikTok Shop. Because the size of this population was unknown, the minimum sample was calculated using the Lemeshow formula with a 95% confidence level, a population proportion of 0.50, and a 10% margin of error, resulting in a minimum requirement of approximately 96 respondents. The study collected data from 150 respondents,

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thereby exceeding the minimum requirement. Purposive sampling was used with the following criteria: active TikTok users, at least 17 years old, residents of Semarang City, and consumers who had previously purchased Somethinc products through TikTok Shop.

The instrument measured four reflective constructs. Brand image was measured through brand superiority, brand strength, and brand uniqueness. Price perception was measured through affordability, price-quality suitability, and price competitiveness. Customer satisfaction was represented by four post-purchase evaluation indicators, while repurchase intention was measured through transactional, referential, preferential, and exploratory intentions. The instrument contained 14 indicators in total. The measurement model was assessed using outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and composite reliability. The structural model was evaluated using R^2, predictive relevance (Q^2), path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, indirect effects, and Variance Accounted For (VAF). Hypotheses were supported when the t-statistic exceeded 1.96 and the p-value was below 0.05.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model). The measurement model was evaluated to determine whether the observed indicators adequately represented the latent constructs. The assessment covered convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability.

Convergent Validity. Convergent validity indicates the extent to which indicators of the same construct share a high proportion of variance. An outer loading of 0.70 or higher is generally preferred, although values between 0.60 and 0.70 may be retained when AVE and composite reliability remain satisfactory (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 1 Outer Loading and Convergent Validity Results

Indicator	Construct	Outer Loading	Decision
X1.1	Brand Image	0.897	Valid
X1.2	Brand Image	0.836	Valid
X1.3	Brand Image	0.838	Valid
X2.1	Price Perception	0.802	Valid
X2.2	Price Perception	0.829	Valid
X2.3	Price Perception	0.831	Valid
Z1.1	Customer Satisfaction	0.852	Valid
Z1.2	Customer Satisfaction	0.825	Valid
Z1.3	Customer Satisfaction	0.827	Valid
Z1.4	Customer Satisfaction	0.738	Valid
Y1.1	Repurchase Intention	0.856	Valid
Y1.2	Repurchase Intention	0.879	Valid

Indicator	Construct	Outer Loading	Decision
Y1.3	Repurchase Intention	0.851	Valid
Y1.4	Repurchase Intention	0.679	Marginal

Most indicators have outer loading values above 0.70 and therefore demonstrate satisfactory convergent validity. The loading of indicator Y1.4 is 0.679, which is slightly below the preferred threshold but remains above 0.60. Because the repurchase-intention construct also meets the AVE and composite-reliability criteria, Y1.4 was retained to preserve the theoretical coverage of the construct.

Discriminant Validity. Discriminant validity evaluates whether each construct is empirically distinct from the other constructs in the model. In accordance with the original PLS-SEM analysis, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was used by comparing the square root of each construct's AVE with its correlations with other constructs (Zhao et al., 2021).

Table 2 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	Brand Image	Price Perception	Customer Satisfaction	Repurchase Intention
Brand Image	0.858	0.697	0.747	0.741
Price Perception	0.697	0.821	0.698	0.718
Customer Satisfaction	0.747	0.698	0.812	0.808
Repurchase Intention	0.741	0.718	0.808	0.820

The square root of the AVE for Brand Image (0.858), Price Perception (0.821), Customer Satisfaction (0.812), and Repurchase Intention (0.820) is higher than the corresponding inter-construct correlations. Thus, the constructs meet the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Nevertheless, the correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention (0.808) is close to their AVE square roots, indicating that the two post-purchase constructs are strongly related and should be interpreted carefully.

Composite Reliability. Composite reliability was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the indicators within each construct. A construct is considered reliable when its composite reliability value exceeds 0.70.

Table 3 Composite Reliability Test Results

Construct	Composite Reliability	Criterion	Decision
Brand Image	0.893	> 0.70	Reliable
Price Perception	0.861	> 0.70	Reliable
Customer Satisfaction	0.885	> 0.70	Reliable
Repurchase Intention	0.891	> 0.70	Reliable

All constructs have composite reliability values above 0.70, ranging from 0.861 to 0.893. These results indicate that the indicators consistently measure Brand Image, Price Perception,

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Customer Satisfaction, and Repurchase Intention. Accordingly, the measurement model was considered sufficiently reliable for structural-model evaluation.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2). The coefficient of determination indicates the proportion of variance in each endogenous construct explained by its predictors. Values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are commonly interpreted as strong, moderate, and weak explanatory power, respectively.

Table 4 R-Square Results

Endogenous Variable	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Interpretation
Customer Satisfaction	0.619	0.614	Moderate
Repurchase Intention	0.718	0.712	Moderate

Brand Image and Price Perception jointly explain 61.9% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction, indicating moderate explanatory power. Brand Image, Price Perception, and Customer Satisfaction explain 71.8% of the variance in Repurchase Intention. This result approaches the strong category and shows that the model captures a substantial portion of the factors associated with consumers' willingness to repurchase Somethinc products.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2). Predictive relevance was examined to determine whether the model has the ability to predict the endogenous constructs of Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention.

Table 5 Predictive Relevance

Test	Value	Decision
Q^2 Predictive Relevance	0.893	Has predictive relevance

The Q^2 value of 0.893 is greater than zero, indicating that the model has predictive relevance. In substantive terms, brand image, price perception, and customer satisfaction provide useful information for predicting repurchase intention among Somethinc consumers using TikTok Shop in Semarang City. The remaining unexplained behavior may be associated with other factors, including product quality, skin compatibility, promotions, brand trust, reviews, and shopping experience.

Hypothesis Testing. The structural relationships were evaluated using path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. A hypothesis was supported when the t-statistic exceeded 1.96 and the p-value was below 0.05. Direct and indirect effects were examined using the PLS bootstrapping procedure.

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Table 6 Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Effect Type	Relationship	Effect Coefficient	t-Statistic	p-Value	VAF	Decision
H1	Direct Effect	Brand Image → Customer Satisfaction	0.507	6.663	<0.001	–	Accepted
H2	Direct Effect	Price Perception → Customer Satisfaction	0.345	4.297	<0.001	–	Accepted
H3	Direct Effect	Brand Image → Repurchase Intention	0.221	2.955	0.003	–	Accepted
H4	Direct Effect	Price Perception → Repurchase Intention	0.225	2.837	0.005	–	Accepted
H5	Direct Effect	Customer Satisfaction → Repurchase Intention	0.485	5.638	<0.001	–	Accepted
H6	Indirect Effect	Brand Image → Customer Satisfaction → Repurchase Intention	0.246	4.841	<0.001	52.6%	Accepted
H7	Indirect Effect	Price Perception → Customer Satisfaction → Repurchase Intention	0.167	2.942	0.003	42.6%	Accepted

All seven hypotheses were supported. Brand Image and Price Perception positively influence Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention, while Customer Satisfaction also has a positive effect on Repurchase Intention. The significant indirect effects show that Customer Satisfaction partially mediates both the Brand Image-Repurchase Intention and Price Perception-Repurchase Intention relationships.

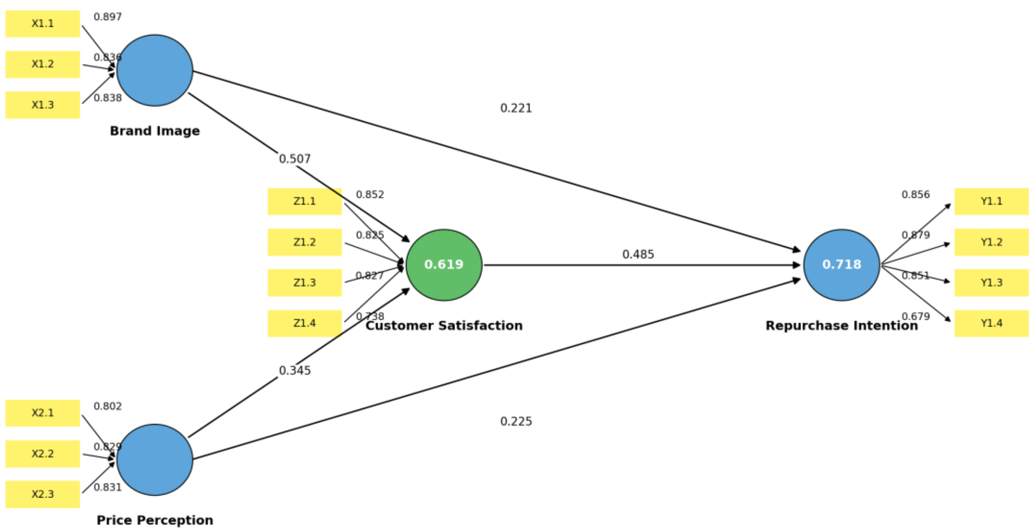

Figure 1 Structural Model and Path Coefficients

The Influence of Brand Image on Customer Satisfaction

The positive influence of Brand Image on Customer Satisfaction supports the view that a favorable brand image creates expectations that guide consumers' post-purchase evaluations. Somethinc's perceived superiority, strength, and uniqueness appear to provide an initial assurance regarding product performance. From an ECT perspective, satisfaction increases when the actual experience confirms these symbolic expectations. Therefore, the result does not simply show that a well-known brand produces satisfied customers. Instead, it indicates that the symbolic meanings attached to the brand become relevant to satisfaction when consumers perceive consistency between the promoted brand image and the quality, benefits, and shopping experience actually received. The relatively strong coefficient of 0.507 also indicates that brand image is the more influential antecedent of satisfaction in this model, consistent with Girsang et al. (2020).

The Influence of Price Perception on Customer Satisfaction

The positive effect of Price Perception on Customer Satisfaction shows that consumers' satisfaction is not simply generated by low prices. Consumers evaluate whether the price paid is reasonable relative to product quality, ingredients, effectiveness, packaging, promotional benefits, and the overall purchasing experience. Therefore, the relevant issue is benefit–price consistency rather than price reduction alone. TikTok Shop frequently presents products through discounts, vouchers, bundles, free-shipping programs, and limited-time offers. These promotional mechanisms can create expectations that consumers will obtain greater value from their purchases. Satisfaction will increase only when the actual benefits received confirm these economic expectations. When promotions reduce the purchase price but the product does not provide the expected benefits, positive price perception may not develop into sustainable satisfaction. The lower coefficient of Price Perception compared with Brand Image indicates that economic evaluation is important but is not the primary determinant of satisfaction. Promotional incentives may encourage an initial transaction, whereas sustained satisfaction depends on whether consumers perceive that the product remains worth purchasing even beyond the promotional period.

The Influence of Brand Image on Repurchase Intention

Brand Image also has a direct positive effect on Repurchase Intention. A recognized and distinctive brand can reduce uncertainty and make Somethinc a preferred option when consumers plan another purchase. However, the direct coefficient of 0.221 is lower than the effect of Customer Satisfaction on Repurchase Intention. This difference implies that a positive image can attract consumers back, but its influence is more sustainable when the brand promise is supported by a satisfactory usage experience.

The Influence of Price Perception on Repurchase Intention

Price Perception has a direct positive effect on Repurchase Intention. Consumers are more willing to buy Somethinc again when they perceive the price as affordable and appropriate for the quality and benefits received. In the TikTok Shop context, discounts and promotional prices may encourage repeat purchasing, but the result should not be interpreted to mean that lower prices are always preferable. A price strategy is more likely to support repurchase when it preserves perceived value and remains consistent with the brand's quality positioning.

The Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Repurchase Intention

The finding that Customer Satisfaction has the strongest direct effect on Repurchase Intention provides the most substantial support for the ECT-informed mechanism proposed in this study. Although Brand Image and Price Perception can attract consumers and reduce their uncertainty, actual post-purchase experience is more decisive in determining whether consumers intend to purchase the product again. Satisfaction provides consumers with direct evidence that the product and the purchasing channel can reliably deliver the expected benefits. For Somethinc consumers, this experience may involve product effectiveness, ingredient suitability, consistency between claims and actual results, seller responsiveness, delivery security, and complaint handling. When these experiences are satisfactory, consumers face less uncertainty and perceive less risk in making future purchases. Customer satisfaction functions as a behavioral bridge between marketplace expectations and continued purchasing. This interpretation provides greater theoretical meaning than merely stating that customer satisfaction has the highest statistical coefficient.

The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in the Brand Image-Repurchase Intention Relationship

Customer Satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between Brand Image and Repurchase Intention, with a VAF value of 52.6%. This means that more than half of the total influence of brand image on repurchase intention was transmitted through customer satisfaction. Moreover, the indirect effect of Brand Image through Customer Satisfaction was 0.246, which was slightly greater than its direct effect of 0.221. This result indicates that the influence of brand image on repurchase intention is predominantly explained by consumers' satisfactory experiences rather than by brand reputation alone. A positive brand image may generate interest, confidence, and initial preference, but these symbolic associations must be confirmed by actual product and shopping experiences before they become a sustainable intention to repurchase.

This finding is theoretically important because it differs from Girsang et al. (2020), who concluded that customer satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between brand image and repurchase intention. The difference suggests that the function of brand image may vary across purchasing environments. In a social-commerce environment, consumers receive repeated brand-related cues through short videos, live streaming, product demonstrations, influencers, and customer comments. These cues can strengthen expectations, making post-purchase confirmation increasingly important. This study does not claim that TikTok Shop definitively causes the difference from Girsang et al. (2020), because no direct comparison between platforms was conducted. Instead, the results indicate that social-commerce characteristics may constitute a contextual condition that strengthens the role of satisfaction in translating brand image into repurchase intention.

The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in the Price Perception-Repurchase Intention Relationship

Customer Satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between Price Perception and Repurchase Intention, with a VAF value of 42.6%. The direct effect of Price Perception on

Repurchase Intention was 0.225, while its indirect effect through Customer Satisfaction was 0.167. These results indicate that price perception affects repurchase intention through both transactional and evaluative mechanisms. The transactional mechanism occurs when consumers directly intend to repurchase because the price is considered affordable, competitive, or financially acceptable. The evaluative mechanism occurs when consumers first assess whether the benefits obtained justify the price paid. A favorable evaluation increases satisfaction, which subsequently strengthens repurchase intention. The direct effect being greater than the indirect effect indicates that promotional and affordability considerations remain influential in TikTok Shop transactions. Nevertheless, the significant indirect effect confirms that promotional prices cannot independently ensure customer retention. Consumers must also experience satisfactory value after purchasing and using the product. This finding extends the meaning of price perception beyond its role as a short-term promotional stimulus. Price perception also operates as an expectation cue whose influence on future purchasing depends partly on whether consumers are satisfied with the benefits received.

A comparison of the direct and indirect effects provides a more comprehensive interpretation of the structural model. Brand Image had a total effect of 0.467 on Repurchase Intention, consisting of a direct effect of 0.221 and an indirect effect of 0.246 through Customer Satisfaction. Price Perception had a total effect of 0.392, consisting of a direct effect of 0.225 and an indirect effect of 0.167. These findings indicate that Brand Image had a larger overall effect on Repurchase Intention than Price Perception, although the direct effects of the two variables were nearly identical. The difference in their total effects emerged because Brand Image generated a stronger indirect effect through Customer Satisfaction. Therefore, the main advantage of brand image lies not only in its capacity to directly encourage repurchase but also in its ability to produce expectations that, when confirmed, enhance customer satisfaction. The model consequently demonstrates a dual-cue confirmation process. Brand Image provides symbolic cues related to trust, credibility, and brand identity, whereas Price Perception provides economic cues related to affordability, fairness, and value. Both cues directly influence Repurchase Intention, but they also converge on Customer Satisfaction as the principal post-purchase evaluation mechanism.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explains repurchase intention as the outcome of a confirmation process involving symbolic expectations, economic expectations, and post-purchase evaluation. Brand Image and Price Perception positively influence Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention among consumers purchasing Somethinc products through TikTok Shop. However, Customer Satisfaction emerges as the strongest direct predictor of Repurchase Intention, demonstrating that actual product and shopping experiences are more decisive for continued purchasing than brand reputation or price attractiveness alone. The mediation findings constitute the central empirical contribution of the study. Customer Satisfaction mediates 52.6% of the effect of Brand Image and 42.6% of the effect of Price Perception on Repurchase Intention. The indirect effect of Brand Image through Customer Satisfaction is even slightly greater than its direct effect. This finding indicates that brand image becomes a sustainable driver of repurchase primarily when consumers’ experiences confirm the credibility, quality, and benefits associated with the brand.

The mediation of the Brand Image–Repurchase Intention relationship also distinguishes this study from Girsang et al. (2020), who found no such mediation. Although the present study cannot attribute this difference exclusively to TikTok Shop, the finding indicates that the mechanism connecting brand image, satisfaction, and repurchase intention may vary according to the characteristics of the purchasing environment. Theoretically, the study proposes an ECT-informed dual-cue mechanism. Brand Image represents a symbolic expectation cue, Price Perception represents an economic expectation cue, Customer Satisfaction represents an aggregate post-purchase evaluation, and Repurchase Intention represents a continuance response. Accordingly, the novelty of the study does not rely merely on the use of Somethinc as the research object or TikTok Shop as the platform. Its contribution lies in explaining how symbolic and economic expectations are translated into repurchase intention through customer satisfaction.

Managerially, Somethinc should ensure that brand promises communicated through TikTok content, live streaming, influencers, and customer reviews remain consistent with actual product performance. Promotional programs should enhance perceived value without establishing expectations that cannot be fulfilled. Customer retention also requires consistent product quality, clear information, responsive service, secure delivery, and effective complaint handling. This study is limited by its cross-sectional design, its focus on a single brand and geographical area, and the absence of direct measurements of expectation and confirmation. Therefore, the results represent an ECT-informed explanation rather than a complete empirical test of Expectation-Confirmation Theory. Future research should directly measure expectation, perceived performance, and confirmation, employ longitudinal designs, compare multiple social-commerce and e-commerce platforms, and investigate additional variables such as product quality, perceived value, brand trust, electronic word of mouth, and customer experience.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, professional, or institutional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research process, interpretation of the findings, or publication of this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

M.A.B. contributed to conceptualization, data collection, formal analysis, visualization, and preparation of the original manuscript draft. E.S. contributed to methodology, supervision, validation, and review and editing of the manuscript. Both authors discussed the findings, approved the final manuscript, and are accountable for the integrity of the work.

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