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Pricing strategy and marketing distribution channels on customer satisfaction and purchasing decision for green products

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ABSTRACT

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This paper aims to investigate the impact of pricing strategy and distribution channels on the decision-making process of customers when purchasing green products. The focus is on the satisfaction of customers who purchase these products. The study is conducted on the population of all customers who purchase green products from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The sample size is determined using a formula that considers the number of variables or indicators. The study uses Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), which is a method used to test variants-based structural equation models with the support of SmartPLS software. The results show that all seven hypotheses are supported, indicating that pricing strategy and distribution channels play a critical role in customer satisfaction and decision-making processes when purchasing green products. The results have implications for SMEs that sell green products as they need to focus on their pricing strategies and distribution channels to increase customer satisfaction and decision-making. This study provides essential insights into the impact of pricing strategy and distribution channels on customer satisfaction and decision-making when purchasing green products. The findings can guide SMEs in developing effective marketing strategies to persuade more customers to purchase green products and contribute to environmental sustainability.

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1. Introduction

Environmental awareness and sustainable development have become hot topics in recent years due to the alarming rate of climate change and its related consequences. As a result, many organizations and consumers are now paying attention to environmental issues and are making efforts to reduce their carbon footprint. One-way companies can contribute to sustainability efforts is by offering green products. Green products, also known as eco-friendly or sustainable products, are those that have less negative impact on the environment throughout their life cycle (Handayani, 2017). Green products are environmentally-friendly products that aim to reduce the negative impact on the environment and promote sustainable consumption (Prakash & Pathak, 2017; Lewandowska et al., 2017). According to Wijekoon & Sabri (2021), green products can include organic food, renewable energy products, sustainable clothing, eco-friendly cleaning products, and hybrid cars. Pricing strategy is crucial for the success of green products' sales as it can directly affect consumer behavior. The pricing strategy can either encourage or discourage consumers' willingness to pay for environmentally sustainable products. To promote the sales of green products, companies need to adopt pricing strategies that will benefit both the environment and their business. The pricing strategy of green products is an essential element that can have a significant impact on customer satisfaction (Lam et al., 2016; Pan & Nguyen, 2015). A green product refers to any product that is eco-friendly and does not cause harm to the environment. The pricing strategy of green products can be an effective tool for companies to increase their market share and revenue. Moreover, distribution channels play a crucial role in the satisfaction of customers with green products. The marketing of green products involves various channels that enable the products to reach the target customers.

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These channels can be classified into direct and indirect distribution channels (Kozlenkova et al., 2015; Hong & Guo, 2019; Ebrahim, 2020).

Direct distribution channels involve a manufacturer or a producer selling directly to customers through online platforms, company websites, or exclusive retail stores. Indirect distribution channels involve intermediaries such as wholesalers, retailers, and distributors who aid in the distribution of the product to the market (Watson et al., 2015; Ihara, 2020). The choice of distribution channels depends on various factors, including the target market, marketing objectives, cost, and competition. The choice of distribution channels for green products has a significant impact on customer satisfaction (Dangelico & Vocellelli, 2017; Chin et al., 2015). Moreover, customer satisfaction is an important factor in determining the success of a company's marketing efforts. It reflects the extent to which customers are happy with a product, service, or overall shopping experience. Green products are those that are environmentally friendly and socially responsible, and their buying behavior is influenced by various factors including distribution channels (Biswas & Roy, 2015; Lin & Niu, 2018). Several studies have shown that distribution channels can influence the buying behavior of customers towards green products. One study found that online shopping channels are more effective in promoting green products than traditional physical stores (El Junusi, 2020). Another study found that environmental labeling of products is more effective in driving consumer purchases through online channels compared to traditional channels (Melero et al., 2016; Yasmin et al., 2015). The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of pricing strategy and distribution channels on the decision-making process when purchasing green products with customer satisfaction used as mediating variable.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

The pricing strategy of green products has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. Customers are more likely to purchase green products that they perceive as valuable and reasonably priced. Therefore, companies should consider incorporating an effective pricing strategy for green products to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, companies should conduct market research to identify factors that affect customers' willingness to pay for green products. Yenipazarli & Vakharia (2015) stated that green products with lower prices attract more customers than green products with higher prices. The study found that customers are willing to pay a premium for green products; however, the premium should not be too high. Li et al. (2016) found that the pricing strategy of green products has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. The study indicated that customers' willingness to pay for green products is influenced by several factors such as the price of the product, quality, consumer beliefs, and attitudes towards the environment. Moreover, Ali et al. (2015) and Chou et al. (2020) found that customers' perceived value of green products is a critical factor in determining customer satisfaction. The study found that customers who perceive high value in green products are more likely to purchase them, leading to increased customer satisfaction. Furthermore, Mohd Suki (2017) and Gelderman et al. (2021) found that the pricing strategy of green products has a significant impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The study found that customers who perceive high value in green products are more likely to become loyal customers to a company.

Several studies have investigated the impact of different pricing strategies on the purchasing decision of green products. Kumar et al. (2021) found that consumers are willing to pay higher prices for eco-friendly products, especially if they perceive that the products have a positive impact on the environment. They also found that consumers' willingness to pay decreases as the price of the product increases. Moreover, the study suggests that companies can use "premium pricing" strategy for green products to enhance their brand image and increase the perceived value of the products. Similarly, Barbarossa & Pastore (2015) found that consumers prefer green products that are relatively inexpensive compared to conventional products. Therefore, companies may use "competitive pricing" strategy to attract consumers who are price-sensitive towards green products. Furthermore, Wei et al. (2018) discovered that consumers who are environmentally conscious are willing to pay more for green products, even though the products are more expensive than conventional products. However, this willingness to pay may decrease when the price difference between green and conventional products is too high. Conversely, Li et al. (2015) propose that penetration pricing strategy may be the most effective pricing strategy for green products. This strategy allows companies to sell green products at a lower price than conventional products, which will increase the demand for green products. However, the study suggests that companies should be careful when using this strategy as it may lead to a negative perception of the product's quality.

H₁: *Pricing strategy has a significant effect on customer satisfaction of green products.*

H₂: *Pricing strategy has a significant effect on the purchasing decision of green products.*

Ricci et al. (2018) found that the distribution channels used for green products affect customer satisfaction in terms of product availability, convenience, and trust. The study suggested that direct channels increase customer satisfaction, as they provide faster and more efficient ways of reaching customers. Nielsen et al. (2019) found that intermediaries such as retailers and wholesalers play a crucial role in the promotion of green products. Retailers can educate their customers on the benefits of green products, their price, and availability, thus contributing to customer satisfaction. The study also suggested that intermediaries can provide feedback to manufacturers on customers' needs and preferences, leading to the development of better products. Liu & Kao (2022) found that the use of e-commerce channels for the distribution of green products increases customer satisfaction. Online platforms provide customers with a wide range of products, facilitate comparison of prices and

features, and offer a convenient and secure shopping experience. The study suggested that e-commerce channels can enhance customer loyalty, improve brand reputation, and increase sales. Moreover, Trivedi et al. (2018), the distribution channels for green products play a significant role in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards green products. The study found that consumers are more likely to purchase green products when they are available through convenient and accessible distribution channels. Consumers are more likely to purchase green products when they are made readily available through traditional distribution channels such as retail stores, supermarkets, and online marketplaces. The study also reveals that consumers prefer to purchase green products from well-known brands with a strong reputation for sustainability. Ramya & Ali (2016) found that distribution channels influence consumer behavior through their impact on product availability. The study found that consumers are more likely to purchase green products when they are available through multiple distribution channels. The study also revealed that consumers are more likely to purchase green products when they are distributed through channels that create a sense of exclusivity. For instance, consumers are more likely to purchase green products that are only available through specialty stores or online marketplaces that specialize in eco-friendly products. Dangelico & Vocellli (2017) found that distribution channels play a critical role in shaping consumers' beliefs and attitudes towards green products. The study found that consumers have a more positive attitude towards green products when they are distributed through channels that emphasize environmental and sustainable practices. Consumers are more likely to perceive green products positively when they are distributed through channels that communicate their environmental benefits and sustainability credentials. The study also revealed that consumers are more likely to trust green products that are distributed through channels that support eco-friendly practices and initiatives.

H3: *Distribution channels have a significant impact on customer satisfaction of green products.*

H4: *Distribution channels have a significant effect on decision making when purchasing green products.*

Customer satisfaction is crucial for any organization that wants to succeed. According to Pan & Nguyen (2015), satisfied customers are more likely to have a positive perception of a company, promote the company's products, and become repeat customers. Furthermore, customer satisfaction has been shown to be a significant predictor of customer loyalty (Melero et al., 2016). Given the importance of customer satisfaction, it is essential to consider its impact on the purchasing decision of green products. Many studies have explored the relationship between customer satisfaction and the purchasing decision of green products. Ali et al. (2015) found that customer satisfaction with green products significantly influences their intention to purchase again from the same company. Liu & Kao (2022) confirmed that customer satisfaction positively affects the intention to purchase green products. Wei et al. (2018) found that customer satisfaction with green products depends on several factors, including the perceived quality, perceived value, image, and awareness of environmental issues. Moreover, consumers are willing to pay more for green products when they are satisfied with their quality and value (Chou et al., 2020).

H5: *Customer satisfaction has a significant impact on the purchasing decision of green products.*

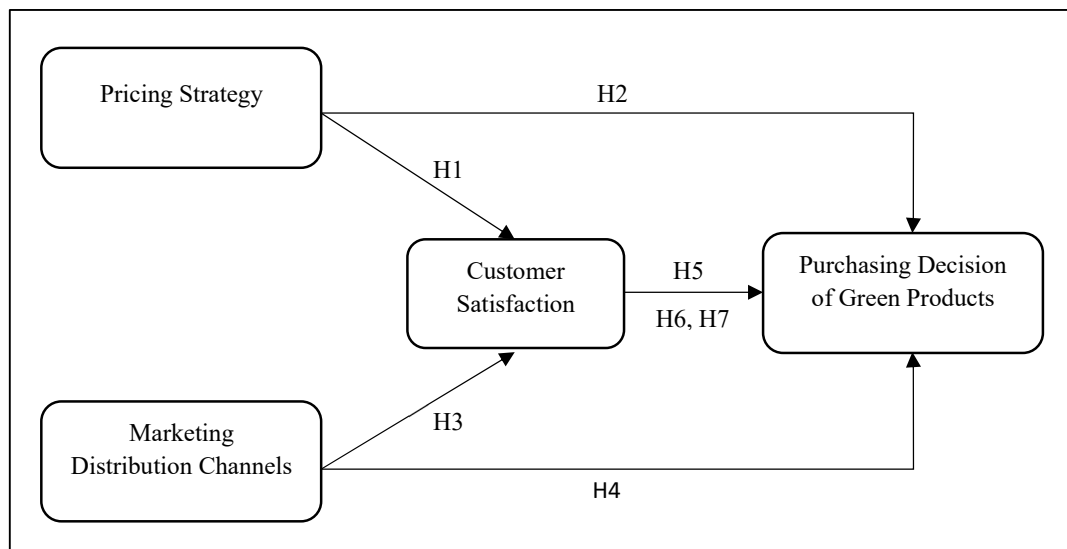


Fig. 1. Theoretical framework

Customer satisfaction and pricing strategy are two important factors that influence the purchase of green products. While previous studies have explored the impact of these factors on green product purchase behavior, there is limited research on the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between pricing strategy and green product purchase. Several studies have indicated that pricing strategy plays a crucial role in the decision to purchase green products. Li et al. (2016) found that pricing strategies such as discounts, subsidies, and competitive pricing are effective in promoting the purchase of

green products. Curvelo et al. (2019) reported that perceived value for money and product price are significant predictors of green purchase intention. Another study by Biswas and Roy (2015) found that a fair price for green products positively influences sustainable consumption behavior. In addition, several studies have highlighted the importance of customer satisfaction in influencing the purchase of green products. Pan and Nguyen (2015) showed that customer satisfaction with green products positively influences repurchase behavior. Melero et al. (2016) reported that customer satisfaction with green products significantly impacts word-of-mouth communication and brand loyalty. Furthermore, customer satisfaction can mediate the effect of distribution channels on the decision to purchase green products. Waluya et al. (2019) found that online shopping channels' effect on the decision to purchase green products was mediated by customer satisfaction. Mahmoud et al. (2017) found that customer satisfaction has a mediating effect on the relationship between green marketing and green purchase behavior.

H6: *Customer satisfaction is able to mediate the effect of pricing strategy on the decision to purchase green products.*

H7: *Customer satisfaction is able to mediate the effect of distribution channels on the decision to purchase green products.*

3. Method

This study will investigate the impact of pricing strategy and distribution channel on customer satisfaction and purchasing decision for green products in Central Sulawesi province, Indonesia. The research design will be both descriptive and explanatory, combining hypothesis testing and statistical analysis through the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. All variables were measured through a 5-point Likert scale survey asking respondents to rate their agreement or disagreement with various pricing and distribution statements. The sampling method will be random sampling, targeting consumers who have a record of purchasing green products. The sample size was 200 consumers of green products. The prices of green products are determined by four indicators, which include price adjustments based on quantity and quality, as well as well-controlled prices. The marketing distribution channel for green products is measured using five indicators, including the timing and place of distribution, access to green product locations, and the efficiency of distribution services. The decision to purchase green products is assessed based on five indicators, including how frequently customers make purchases, their willingness to return, and their satisfaction with the product. Finally, customer satisfaction with green products is measured using four indicators, looking at the alignment between customer expectations and reality in terms of prices, distribution, government regulations, and designated retail services. The technique of analysis used is PLS-SEM, a multivariate statistical analysis technique especially useful for research that involves latent variables. The research hypotheses were tested through a series of regression analyses, a path analysis, and a mediation analysis.

4. Results

The first analysis was to examine Outer Model measurement linked to the latent variable. The reflexive indicator outer model was assessed by examining the validity of the indicators and the composite reliability of the block indicators, through convergent and discriminant methods. Convergent validity is important in determining the accuracy of the relationship between variables and their corresponding indicators. A measure is considered high if it's correlated at or above 0.70 with the construct being measured (Ghozali, 2015). If a loading's value is below 0.70. The indicator is removed from the analysis and recalculated. In the early stages of developing a measurement scale, a loading value of 0.50 to 0.60 is satisfactory. Table 1 presents the outer loading value of each indicator on each research variable.

Table 1

Outer Loading

Variable	Indicator	Loading
Pricing strategy	Price is flexibly adjusted	0.583
	Price according to quantity	0.907
	Price according to quality	0.936
	Prices are well controlled	0.910
Marketing Distribution Channel	Supply chain time	0.796
	Place of distribution	0.904
	Smooth access to the location of suppliers	0.809
	Location access efficiency	0.674
	Smooth distribution service	0.700
Purchase Decision	Purchase Frequency	0.769
	Willingness to buy	0.848
	Positive Recommendation	0.867
	Happy to talk about products	0.774
	Customer commitment	0.912
Customer Satisfaction	Willing to receive product-related information	0.771
	Expectations of the prevailing green products prices in the market	0.959
	Expectations of green products distribution	0.843
	Expectations on the control on green products	0.702
	Expectations of designated retail services	0.899

According to the table, 17 out of 19 indicators have values exceeding 0.7, while the remaining two are below 0.07. However, Chin's perspective (1999) affirms that a loading value of 0.50 to 0.60 is acceptable for a measurement scale. Therefore, all indicators in this research are deemed valid and appropriate for use.

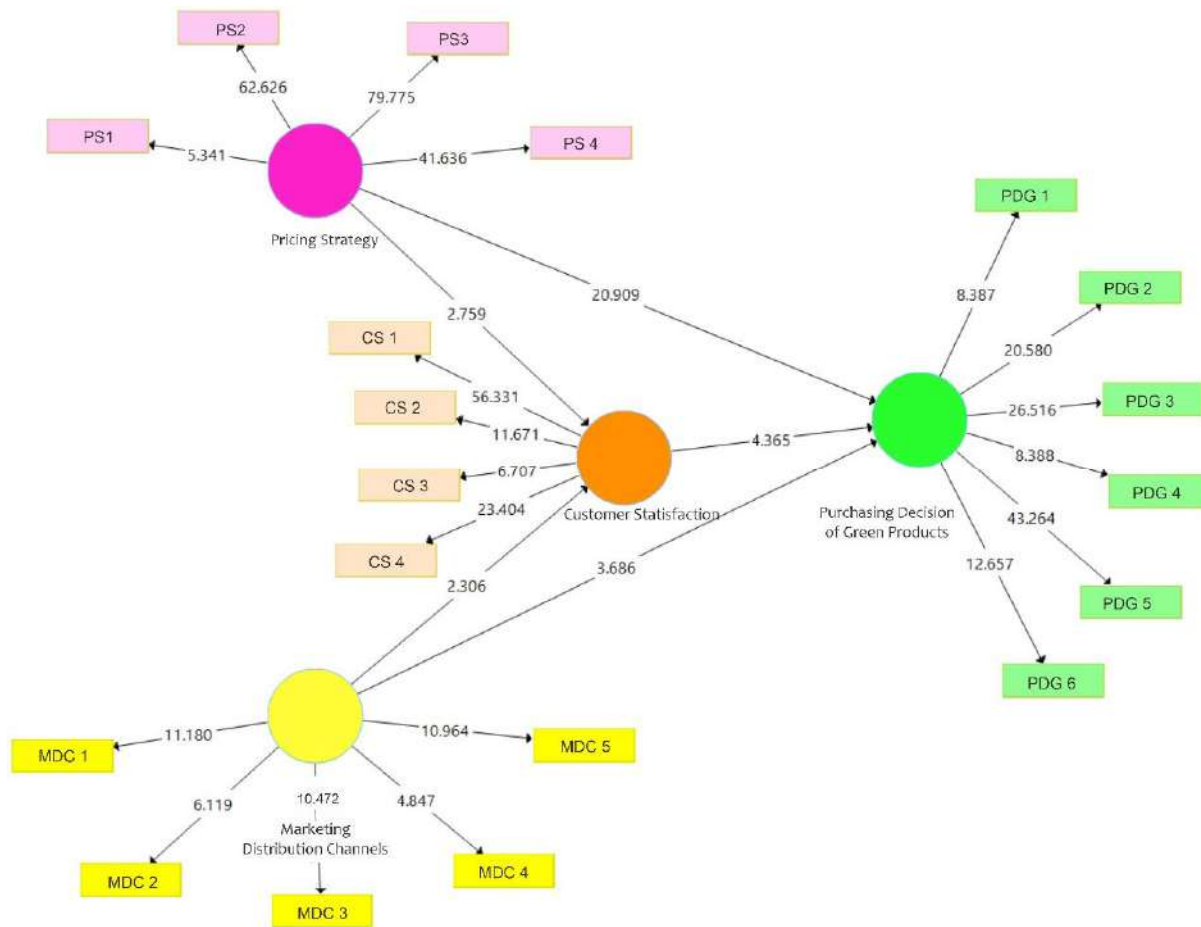


Fig. 2. Structure Test analysis

The purpose of this research was to test a hypothesis using the Partial Least Square (PLS) analysis technique via the SmartPLS 3.0 program. A schematic model of the PLS Inner Model program was employed to assess the strength of the effect of independent variables on dependent variables. Path coefficient evaluation was used to measure this effect, and Coefficient determination (R-Square) was employed to gauge the degree to which variables influence endogenous variables. The results revealed that an R2 of 0.67 or higher for endogenous latent variables in the structural model indicates an excellent inclusion of exogenous variables that affect them. If the result was between 0.33-0.67, it was regarded as in the medium category, and if it was 0.19-0.33, it was considered in the weak category. Based on the internal model schema that has been shown in the image above, it can be explained that the Path Coefficient values in this study, from the largest to the smallest, are shown in the Table 2. According to the table provided, it is evident that the Path Coefficients comprise of seven hypotheses, comprising of two indirect hypotheses and five direct hypotheses. The highest path coefficient value is observed in the first hypothesis, measuring 0.843, which falls under the good category. The second hypothesis, measuring 0.383, is classified under the medium category. However, the remaining five hypotheses, comprising hypothesis five, three, four, six, and seven, display Path Coefficient values of 0.227, 0.188, 0.163, 0.078, and 0.037, respectively. These values all fall under the weak category.

Table 2
Path Coefficients

Hypotheses	Path	Confirmation
Pricing strategy → satisfaction	0.843	High
Pricing strategy → purchasing decision	0.383	Medium
Distribution channel → satisfaction	0.188	Low
Distribution channel → purchasing decision	0.163	Low
Satisfaction → purchasing decision	0.227	Low
Pricing strategy → satisfaction → purchasing decision	0.078	Low
Distribution payment → satisfaction → purchasing decision	0.037	Low

The test of the hypothesis in this research involved analyzing the T-Statistics and P-Values. If the P-Values were less than 0.05, the research hypothesis was considered valid. The data analysis provided results that could be used to confirm or reject the hypothesis. Table 3 shows the results of the hypothesis testing using the inner model.

Table 3
Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	T Statistics	P Values	Information	Results
H1 Pricing strategy → Satisfaction	2.759	0.006	Significant	Accepted
H2 Pricing strategy → Purchasing decision	20.909	0.000	Significant	Accepted
H3 Green products marketing distribution channel → Satisfaction	2.306	0.022	Significant	Accepted
H4 Green products marketing distribution channel → Purchasing decision	3.686	0.000	Significant	Accepted
H5 Satisfaction → Purchasing decision	4.365	0.000	Significant	Accepted
H6 Pricing strategy → Satisfaction → Purchasing decision	2.13	0.034	Significant	Accepted
H7 Green products marketing distribution payment → Satisfaction → Purchasing decision	2.267	0.024	Significant	Accepted

Testing the first hypothesis has revealed that a company's pricing strategy has an impact on the satisfaction of its customers. Setting the right price for goods or services can be a challenging task for companies, as it directly affects customer satisfaction. Determining the ideal selling price of a product involves considering customer expectations and ensuring customer satisfaction. Although companies use similar pricing methods based on factors such as costs, competition, demand, and profit, finding the right combination of these factors depends on the periodic nature, market, and objectives of the company. Pan & Nguyen (2015) and Waluya et al. (2019) support the idea that price greatly influences customer satisfaction, with studies showing that a positive pricing strategy increases satisfaction. Additionally, product quality and pricing both play significant roles in customer satisfaction, as confirmed by a test's F-value of 0.000, which is smaller than the significance level of 0.05. Many studies also suggest that the price strategy has a significant impact on user satisfaction.

The findings from testing the second hypothesis suggest that the pricing strategy impacts consumers' purchasing decisions. Price is a crucial factor that consumers consider when considering whether to buy a product or service. The cost set by a company is a factor that can influence consumers' decisions to buy again. Price refers to the payment required for a product or service. The study illustrates that price affects the decision to repurchase, as evidenced by respondents' perceptions regarding the prices set. In addition, Yenipazarli and Vakharia (2015) and Li et al. (2016) show that, when combined, price and service quality have a more significant impact compared to the impact of either variable independently. The study discovered that only the service quality and price variables partially influenced consumers' decisions to repurchase among the independent variables (service quality, location, and price). Furthermore, the results of research Arif's (2019) show that the price variable has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention.

The findings from testing the third hypothesis reveal that the way green products are marketed to customers can impact their level of satisfaction. Through the distribution of green products, customers can feel satisfied. These findings are backed up by prior research that shows a positive and significant correlation between distribution channels and customer satisfaction. Additionally, these channels can impact customer purchase loyalty. This is in line with Rita et al. (2019) which shows the positive and significant influence of distribution channels on customer satisfaction. These results further support the theory that designing effective distribution channels can provide strategic advantages for companies. Distribution channels refer to the various marketing channels and strategies that companies use to reach their target audience. This finding is consistent with Rita et al. (2019) which shows that distribution channels have a significant impact on customer satisfaction.

This research report analyzed the impact of green product marketing distribution channels on consumers' purchasing decisions. The results showed that distribution channels have a significant influence on buying decisions, along with product and promotion levels. Efficient distribution channels increased the likelihood of repurchasing due to their accuracy and speed. Both promotion and distribution channels positively influenced buying decisions, but only distribution had a significant effect. Furthermore, this research has shown through hypothesis testing that Satisfaction significantly impacts purchasing decisions. This suggests that when customers are content with green products, they are more likely to buy or intend to buy. Research Lam et al. (2016) support the claim that repurchase intention is positively influenced by perceived quality and customer satisfaction. This study recognizes that customer satisfaction positively influences repurchase decisions. The testing led to the conclusion that service quality is the main factor affecting customer satisfaction. Additionally, customer satisfaction is the significant factor influencing repurchase decisions. Based on the descriptive calculations, consumers perceive the price variable as high, the service quality variable as medium, and the satisfaction and repurchase decision variables as high.

Based on the hypothesis testing conducted in this research, it can be concluded that fixed pricing has a significant impact on user decision-making. These findings suggest that a product's pricing strategy can lead to user satisfaction, as stated. Furthermore, once the user is satisfied with the product, they are more likely to use it again. This result is in line with the

research of Melero et al. (2016) and Liu & Kao (2022) who highlight the importance of customer satisfaction in determining variables such as corporate image, service quality, and price perceptions. Service quality was found to be the most influential factor in determining customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. The dominant factor in making repurchase decisions is found to be customer satisfaction, which can be achieved when a company meets the needs of its consumers effectively. This study supports the research of Melero et al. (2016) and Liu and Kao (2022) who have shown a positive and significant correlation between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention in online stores.

From the results of hypothesis testing that have been carried out for this research, it can be stated that the significant influence of product distribution channels on purchasing decision is through a sense of user satisfaction. This indicates that the existing distribution channels for the product can provide a sense of intention to repurchase or to purchase the product. However, before feeling the intention to purchase, the user feels satisfaction with the product, so that through the sense of satisfaction he has, it will lead to a great intention to repurchase. The results of this study are strengthened by Lam et al. (2016) there is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. Finally, it can be concluded from the hypothesis testing conducted in this study that the effect of distribution channels on purchasing decisions is largely due to user satisfaction. This implies that the product's current distribution channels may lead to a tendency to purchase or repurchase the product. However, before feeling the desire to buy, user satisfaction with the product plays an important role. As a result, the satisfaction experienced by users can significantly increase the intention to repurchase. The findings of this study are reinforced by Lam et al. (2016) who have proven a positive correlation between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of pricing strategies and distribution channels in customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions towards green products. The findings suggest that companies and policymakers should take these factors into consideration when developing and promoting green products. Based on the research objectives, it can be concluded that the pricing strategy had a notable impact on customer satisfaction towards green products in Central Sulawesi province, Indonesia. The pricing strategy also played a role in determining whether customers opted to purchase green products or not. Furthermore, the distribution channels were found to influence customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions towards green products. Customer satisfaction was also found to be a key factor in determining whether customers chose to purchase green products or not, with the pricing strategy having a significant impact on purchasing decisions through customer satisfaction. Lastly, distribution channels were determined to significantly affect purchasing decisions through customer satisfaction for green products.

The theoretical implication of this study is that pricing strategies and distribution channels are crucial factors in the success of green products in the market. The findings confirm the importance of understanding customer preferences and behavior, particularly in relation to the pricing and distribution of green products. The study also highlights the interdependence between customer satisfaction, pricing strategies, and distribution channels. Furthermore, the practical implications of this study are significant for businesses and policymakers. These findings suggest that companies should align their pricing strategies with the preferences and attitudes of their customers towards green products. Additionally, companies should focus on developing efficient and effective distribution channels to reach potential customers. Policymakers can also use these findings to create regulations and incentives that promote the production and consumption of green products. However, this study has some limitations that warrant further research. Firstly, the study only focused on the Central Sulawesi province, and therefore, the findings may not be applicable to other regions. Secondly, the study focused only on the pricing strategy and distribution channels as factors influencing customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions towards green products. Other factors such as product design, product quality, and brand reputation may also influence customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions, and therefore, these factors need to be considered in future research. Future research can expand on this study by including other factors that influence customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions towards green products. For instance, future research can investigate the impact of product design, product quality, and brand reputation on customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions towards green products. Additionally, future research can investigate the role of marketing communication, such as advertising and promotion, in influencing customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions towards green products. Moreover, future research can also explore the impact of environmental awareness and education on customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions towards green products. Educating the public on the importance of eco-friendliness and sustainability can increase demand for green products and positively influence customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions.

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