
THE ROLE OF PRICE FAIRNESS AND RELATIONSHIP MARKETING IN INCREASING CUSTOMER RETENTION THROUGH CUSTOMER VALUE: ON NIPRO SYRINGE PRODUCTS IN EAST JAVA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of Price Fairness and Relationship Marketing in improving Customer Retention through Customer Value for Nipro Syringe products in East Java. The main objectives of this study are: 1) to analyze the effect of Price Fairness on Customer Retention, 2) to analyze the effect of Relationship Marketing on Customer Retention, 3) to analyze the role of Customer Value as a mediator between Price Fairness and Customer Retention, and 4) to analyze the role of Customer Value as a mediator between Relationship Marketing and Customer Retention. The population of this study consists of all customers of Nipro Syringe products at PT. Sinar Roda Utama, who comes from the categories of Health Department, Government Hospitals, and Private Hospitals in East Java. The sample of this study consists of 112 respondents, selected using purposive sampling with specific criteria.

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Square (PLS) technique, supported by Smart PLS 3.0 software. The results of the study indicate that: 1) Price Fairness has a positive effect on Customer Retention, suggesting that customers who feel that the price they pay is in accordance with the benefits received tend to be more loyal and stay as customers, 2) Relationship Marketing also has a positive effect on Customer Retention, where marketing strategies focusing on long-term relationships can enhance customer loyalty, 3) Customer Value plays a significant role as a mediator between Price Fairness and Customer Retention, where customers' perception of the value they receive strengthens their loyalty, and 4) Customer Value also mediates the effect of Relationship Marketing on Customer Retention, where positive customer experiences increase their perceived value and reinforce their desire to stay loyal to the company.

Keywords: Price Fairness, Relationship Marketing, Customer Retention, Customer Value.

1. INTRODUCTION

The medical device industry, particularly syringe products, plays a vital role in medical services. Although domestic product absorption increased from 12% (2019) to 48% (2024) (*Information Portal*, 2024), import dependence remains high. In increasingly competitive conditions, companies such as PT Sinar Roda Utama need to maintain customer retention because retaining customers is more efficient than acquiring new customers. PT Sinar Roda Utama is a medical device distributor in Indonesia that focuses on Nipro syringe products and serves hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities through an extensive distribution network. The company is responsible for ensuring the availability of quality products, timely distribution, and competitive prices, while also managing customer relationships and *customer retention strategies*.

In recent years, the company has faced a decline in sales volume, especially in the corporate and government institution segments. This condition is thought to be influenced by increasing customer demands for transparency and price fairness.

The phenomenon that occurred at PT. Sinar Roda Utama in 2022-2025 shows a fluctuating trend in Nipro Syringe Product Sales Data across all categories, with growth occurring at the beginning of the period followed by a significant decline in the following years, especially in government hospitals, private hospitals and health services. Health services, government hospitals and private hospitals showed the highest growth rate in the short term (2022-2023) with a growth of 67.08%, but are also projected to experience a sharp decline in the long term (2024-2025) with a growth of -6.62%. This data indicates a major challenge in maintaining and expanding health services, which requires strategic planning to ensure the sustainability and growth of the health sector, especially in government hospitals, health services and private hospitals.

Syringe products in East Java, especially in 2024–2025, occurred across all customer categories, including the Health Office, government hospitals, and private companies, indicating a significant challenge in maintaining *customer retention*. Although there was a slight increase in some categories in 2024, the sharp decline in 2025 reflects a shift in customer preferences to more efficient or cheaper alternative products. This phenomenon is likely caused by less competitive prices and quality that does not meet market expectations, thus emphasizing the importance of appropriate marketing strategies and strong relationships to maintain market position in the medical device sector, especially in hospitals and healthcare institutions.

Relationship marketing focuses on building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between companies and customers. In a competitive market like the syringe market, strong relationships, high-quality service, and delivering value that meets customer expectations can increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately, *customer retention* (Suharto & Hoti, 2023; Pahrudin et al., 2023; Yasir et al., 2022).

Price fairness is the customer's perception that the price paid is commensurate with the benefits received. Based on *Social Exchange Theory* (Blau, 1964), prices perceived as fair can increase customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty, thereby encouraging *customer retention*. Research by Yasir et al. (2022) and Widyarini et al. (2025) shows that *price fairness* has a positive effect on *customer retention*, although its influence can be influenced by external factors such as market conditions (Nugraha & Wiguna, 2021).

In the relationship between *Price Fairness* and *Customer Retention*, *Customer Value* acts as a mediating variable. Customers with a fair price perception will evaluate that the benefits they obtain from product quality, supply reliability, and service support are comparable to or greater than the costs they incur. This evaluation forms a high *Customer Value*, which ultimately increases the tendency of customers to maintain relationships with the company (Zeithaml, 1988; Adams, 1965; Kotler & Keller, 2016). The influence of fair prices on *Customer Value* strengthens *Customer Retention* because customers who assess that the value they receive is greater than the costs they incur have a rational justification to remain loyal and make repeat purchases (Adams, 1965; Zeithaml, 1988; Bolton & Lemon, 1999; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Research on relationship marketing and customer retention in the medical device industry, particularly syringe products, is still limited. Most previous studies focused on the retail sector and only examined the direct influence of variables without considering the role of customer value as a mediator. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of customer value as a mediator in the

relationship between price fairness and relationship marketing on customer retention for Nipro syringe products in East Java.

Theoretical basis

Price Fairness

Price fairness is a consumer's perception of the extent to which the price paid is reasonable and commensurate with the benefits or value received, both compared to the prices of similar products and their own expectations (Yasir et al., 2022; Shaliza et al., 2024). This perception is not only economic but also influenced by psychological, social, and cultural factors, including the reference price and the perceived value of the product or service (Nugraha & Wiguna, 2021). Consumers who perceive prices as fair tend to be satisfied, loyal, and make repeat purchases, while price inequity can lead to frustration, anger, and decreased loyalty, even triggering switching to competitors (Widyarini et al., 2025; Mapalus et al., 2024). Therefore, in a competitive market, companies that set prices fairly, transparently, and in accordance with the value received by customers not only increase satisfaction but also strengthen customer loyalty and retention, and build a positive brand image (Pahrudin et al., 2023; Christiano et al., 2023).

Relationship marketing

Relationship marketing is a marketing approach that emphasizes building and maintaining long-term relationships with customers, focusing on customer retention rather than simply acquiring new customers (Rochmah & Purwanto, 2022). This approach involves ongoing two-way communication, personalized service, rapid response to complaints, and customer involvement in product development, thereby increasing customer value, satisfaction, and loyalty (Trenggana et al., 2022; Putra et al., 2025; Carmen et al., 2024). With an effective strategy, customers not only make repeat purchases but also recommend products or services to others, reducing promotional costs, strengthening trust, and supporting long-term retention. Furthermore, the use of technologies such as social media, mobile applications, and CRM systems strengthens interactions and relationships with customers, enabling companies to maintain intensive communication and tailor offerings to customer needs (Massie et al., 2023; Santoso et al., 2024). Overall, relationship marketing helps companies build loyalty and improve customer retention.

Customer Value

Customer value is a customer's perception of the value they receive from a product or service compared to the costs, effort, and risks incurred to obtain it (Santo Igno Gelu et al., 2022; Tjiptono & Diana, 2020). This value encompasses economic, functional, emotional, and social benefits, both tangible and intangible, and is formed throughout the customer experience, from purchase to after-sales service (Sebayang & Situmorang, 2019). *Customer value* forms the basis of purchasing decisions, with customers tending to choose products or services that provide higher benefits than the costs they incur. Therefore, companies need to create and maintain competitive customer value through innovation, personalization, and positive experiences to increase loyalty, retain customers, and remain relevant in a dynamic market.

Customer Retention

Customer Retention is a company's effort to retain existing customers with the aim of increasing loyalty and repeat purchases, not just attracting new customers (Rapanjari et al., 2025). Customer retention is important because loyal customers tend to repurchase, provide recommendations through word of mouth, and reduce the cost of acquiring new customers (Chandra et al., 2025; Akbar, 2024). The success of *Customer Retention* is influenced by service quality, ongoing communication, personalized experiences, and the company's ability to handle customer complaints quickly, thus creating long-term, mutually beneficial relationships (Amelia et al., 2025; Haudi et al., 2022). By retaining customers, companies not only increase profitability but also strengthen their position in a competitive market, as customer loyalty is a strategic asset for long-term growth (Rahayu et al., 2024).

Hypothesis**The Influence of Price Fairness on Customer Retention**

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) explains that the relationship between a company and its customers is based on mutually beneficial exchanges. Customers tend to maintain relationships with a company if the price they pay is perceived as fair and commensurate with the benefits received. Therefore, price fairness plays a crucial role in increasing satisfaction, loyalty, and repurchase decisions, which support *customer retention*. Several studies have shown that perceived fair prices can increase repurchase intention, satisfaction, and customer loyalty (Nugraha & Wiguna, 2021; Pahrudin et al., 2023; Widyarini et al., 2025). Therefore, price fairness is thought to have a positive effect on *customer retention* because fair prices encourage customers to maintain long-term relationships with the company. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Price Fairness has a positive effect on Customer Retention.

The Influence of Relationship Marketing on Customer Retention

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) explains that long-term relationships are formed through mutually beneficial exchanges. In the context of relationship marketing, companies build relationships with customers through effective communication, consistent service, and providing commensurate value, thereby increasing *customer retention*. Various studies have shown that relationship marketing has a positive effect on customer loyalty and retention (Akbar, 2024; Amelia et al., 2025; Nurbakti et al., 2022; Rapanjari et al., 2025). Therefore, a good relationship between a company and its customers can increase *customer retention*. Thus, the proposed hypothesis is:

H2: Relationship Marketing has a positive effect on Customer Retention.

The Influence of Price Fairness on Customer Retention Through Customer Value

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) explains that relationships between companies and customers are formed through mutually beneficial exchanges. In this context, price fairness influences customer value, which is the perceived benefits received by customers compared to the price paid. Prices perceived as fair increase customer perceived value, trust, and loyalty, which ultimately drives *customer retention*. Previous research shows that price fairness can increase *customer value* through customer trust and higher perceived benefits (Tobing, 2020; Shaliza et al., 2024; Yasir et al., 2022). Thus, price fairness has a positive effect on *customer retention* through customer value. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

H3: Price Fairness has a positive effect on *Customer Retention* through *Customer Value*.**The Influence of *Relationship Marketing* on *Customer Retention* Through *Customer Value***

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) explains that company-customer relationships are formed through mutually beneficial exchanges. In the context of relationship marketing, companies build long-term relationships through good communication, responsive service, and understanding customer needs, thereby increasing customer value, namely the perception of benefits received compared to costs incurred. Research by Moenardy Khalid et al. (2021) shows that increasing *Customer Value* through relationship marketing plays a significant role in increasing *Customer Retention*. Therefore, relationship marketing has a positive effect on *Customer Retention* through customer value. Thus, the proposed hypothesis is:

H4: Relationship Marketing has a positive effect on *Customer Retention* through *Customer Value*.**2. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research method to analyze the relationship between independent, mediating, and dependent variables. The research population is customers of Nipro Syringe products of PT. Sinar Roda Utama in East Java who come from the Health Office, Government Hospitals, and Private Hospitals. The research sample consisted of 160 respondents selected using a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling method, namely institutional customers who have made repeat purchases at least twice, are involved in the procurement process, and have collaborated for at least three months. The research data were analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method with the help of SmartPLS 3.0.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Model Analysis Using PLS-SEM****Reliability and Validity****Table 1. Composite reliability and Cronbach Alpha test**

	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<i>Customer Retention</i> (Y)	0.839	0.636
<i>Customer Value</i> (Z)	0.806	0.514
Price Fairness (X1)	0.898	0.638
Relationship Marketing (X2)	0.839	0.566

Source: Smart-PLS output (2025).

The test results showed that all variables had good reliability and validity. The composite reliability values for all variables were >0.7 and the AVE values were >0.5 , indicating that the research instrument was reliable, met convergent validity, and was suitable for further analysis.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the direct and indirect effects between the research variables. To conclude whether the hypothesis was accepted or rejected, the p-value was

used at a significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$ or 0.05. If the p-value < 0.05 , then H_0 is rejected, indicating an effect. Conversely, if the p-value > 0.05 , then H_0 is accepted, indicating no effect. The following are the results of the structural model evaluation obtained from the Smart PLS Bootstrapping report.

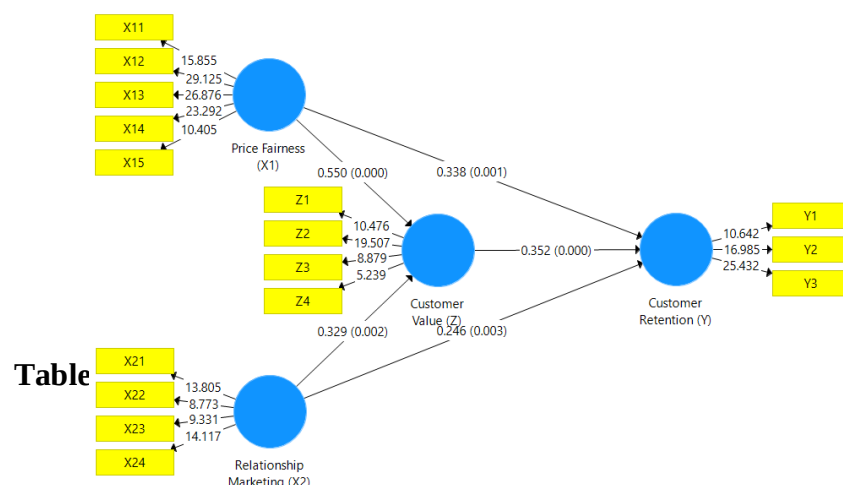


Figure 1. Bootstrapping output with P-Value

Table 2. Direct Effect Hypothesis Test

	Path Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values	Information
<i>Price Fairness (X1) -> Customer Retention (Y)</i>	0.338	3,222	0.001	Accepted
<i>Relationship Marketing (X2) -> Customer Retention (Y)</i>	0.246	3,014	0.003	Accepted

Source: smart-PLS output (2025).

The mediation effect test was conducted using the p-value at a significance level of 5% (0.05). If the p-value < 0.05 , then H_0 is rejected, indicating an indirect effect (mediation effect). If the p-value > 0.05 , then H_0 is accepted, indicating no mediation effect. The results of the structural model evaluation were obtained from the Smart PLS Bootstrapping Report, presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test of Indirect Effect (Mediation)

	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P Values	Information
<i>Price Fairness (X1) -> Customer Value (Z) -> Customer Retention (Y)</i>	0.193	2,584	0.010	Accepted
<i>Relationship Marketing (X2) -></i>	0.116	2,944	0.003	Accepted

<i>Customer Value (Z) -></i>				
<i>Customer Retention (Y)</i>				

Source: Smart-PLS output appendix (2026).

Hypothesis Test Results

From the results of tables 2 and 3, it can be concluded that the hypothesis states:

- H1: It is suspected that *Price Fairness* has a positive effect on *Customer Retention* at PT. Sinar Roda Utama which can be accepted, with *path coefficients* of 0.338 with a P-Value of 0.001 which is smaller than 0.05, so there is an influence or is significant (positive).
- H2: It is suspected that Relationship Marketing has a positive effect on Customer Retention at PT. Sinar Roda Utama which can be accepted, with path coefficients of 0.278 with a P-Value value of 0.022 which is smaller than 0.05, so there is an influence or is significant (positive).
- H3 : It is suspected that *Customer Value* can mediate the influence of *Price Fairness* on PT. Sinar Roda Utama which can be accepted , with *path coefficients* of 0.193 with a P-Value of 0.010 which is smaller than 0.05 , so there is an influence or it is significant (positive).
- H4. It is suspected that *Customer Value* can mediate the influence of *Relationship Marketing* on PT. Sinar Roda Utama which is acceptable, with *path coefficients* of 0.116 with a P-Value of 0.003 smaller than 0.05, so the results are significant (positive) or there is a mediation effect.

Discussion

The Influence of *Price Fairness* on *Customer Retention*

Price Fairness has a positive effect on *Customer Retention* at PT. Sinar Roda Utama. Customer perceptions of fair, transparent, and comparable prices relative to product quality increase customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty, thus encouraging repeat purchases. In accordance with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), customers will maintain relationships with companies if the exchanges that occur, including prices and benefits received, are perceived as fair. Therefore, a competitive and transparent pricing policy is an important factor in maintaining long-term relationships with customers. These results are also supported by previous studies showing that the perception of fair prices increases repurchase intention, satisfaction, and customer loyalty (Nugraha & Wiguna, 2021; Pahrudin et al., 2023; Widyarini et al., 2025), thus contributing to increased *Customer Retention*.

The Influence of *Relationship Marketing* on *Customer Retention*

Relationship marketing has a positive impact on *customer retention* at PT. Sinar Roda Utama. Implementing good relationships through effective communication, responsive service, and consistent customer experience can increase loyalty and encourage customers to continue making transactions in the long term. This aligns with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which explains that mutually beneficial relationships will strengthen customer commitment to the company. This finding is also supported by various previous studies that show that relationship marketing strategies play a significant role in increasing customer loyalty and retention.

The Influence of Price Fairness on Customer Retention Through Customer Value

Price Fairness influences *Customer Retention* by increasing Customer Value. Perceived fair and transparent prices make customers feel that the benefits they receive are commensurate with the costs incurred, thereby increasing perceived value, satisfaction, and trust in the company. This condition ultimately encourages loyalty and repeat purchase decisions, which strengthen *Customer Retention*. This shows that pricing policy functions not only as a sales strategy but also as a mechanism for shaping customer value perceptions. If customers perceive the company's prices as not reflecting the benefits received, then the perception of *Customer Value* will decrease and potentially trigger switching to competitors. Conversely, prices that are perceived as fair can strengthen long-term relationships between companies and customers. These results are in line with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which states that relationships will be maintained if the exchange is perceived as mutually beneficial. This is supported by research by Tobing (2020), Shaliza et al. (2024), and Yasir et al. (2022), which confirms that the perception of fair prices plays a role in increasing *Customer Value* and customer retention.

The Influence of Price Fairness on Customer Retention through Customer Value

The results of the study indicate that *Customer Value* acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between Price Fairness and *Customer Retention* at PT. Sinar Roda Utama. This indicates that the perception of fair prices not only directly influences customers decisions to continue using the product but also increases the customer's perceived value of the products and services provided by the company. When customers perceive that the set price is transparent, competitive, and commensurate with the benefits obtained, the perception of *customer value* will increase and encourage loyalty and the tendency to make repeat purchases.

This confirms that Price Fairness is a strategic factor in shaping customer value perceptions, because customers not only assess prices nominally, but also compare them with the quality of products, services, and experiences obtained. Thus, the higher the perception of price fairness felt by customers, the higher the perceived value, thereby strengthening long-term relationships between companies and customers and increasing *Customer Retention*.

The Influence of Relationship Marketing on Customer Retention through Customer Value

Customer value has been shown to mediate the influence of relationship marketing on *customer retention*. This suggests that relationship marketing strategies do not directly retain customers, but rather primarily increase the perceived value of the products, services, and relationships the company builds. When customers perceive benefits that outweigh the costs or effort they incur, their perception of *customer value* increases, driving loyalty and a decision to maintain a relationship with the company.

These findings align with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which explains that long-term relationships are formed through mutually beneficial exchanges. In this context, the implementation of relationship marketing, such as consistent communication, responsive service, and attention to customer needs, can increase customers' perceived value. Therefore, the higher the perceived *customer value*, the greater the customer's tendency to remain loyal and make repeat purchases, thereby increasing *customer retention*.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that *price fairness* and *relationship marketing* have a positive effect on *Customer Retention* at PT. Sinar Roda Utama. Customers who feel the price paid is commensurate with the benefits received tend to be more satisfied and loyal, while effective *relationship marketing strategies* through communication, responsive service, and understanding customer needs can strengthen long-term relationships with customers. In addition, *Customer Value* is proven to act as a mediating variable that strengthens the influence of *price fairness* and *relationship marketing* on *Customer Retention*, because increasing customer perceived value can encourage loyalty and sustainability of relationships with the company.

Suggestion

Based on the research results, PT. Sinar Roda Utama is advised to increase *Customer Retention* by maintaining the perception of price fairness through a transparent pricing policy that is in accordance with the benefits received by customers. In addition, the company needs to strengthen *relationship marketing* through intensive communication, responsive service, and a better understanding of customer needs to create stronger long-term relationships. The company also needs to increase *Customer Value* by ensuring consistent product quality, satisfactory service, and providing added value so that customers feel they are getting benefits commensurate with the price paid. With this strategy, customer loyalty can increase and encourage continuous repeat purchases. For further research, it is recommended to add other variables such as *customer experience*, digital technology, or psychological factors that have the potential to influence *Customer Retention*.

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