

## Strong Intention and Trust in Selecting a Publisher: When Price and Service Quality are Waxed

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### Abstract

Consumer goods purchases affect sales volume and business continuity. Litera Mediatama's "Book Writing Camp" training and mentorship program encouraged authors to produce books. Unfortunately, only 17% of BWC participants published at PT. Litera Mediatama. This is considerably below the company's goal of 40% of participants writing books. This indicates that BWC members still have little inclination to publish their works, making publisher marketing management difficult. This research examined the direct and indirect impacts of pricing and service quality perception on publication choice via trust. The survey included 315 BWC batches of 25–27 participants who had not published their works with Litera publisher. Online surveys were sent to 176 proportionally randomly sampled respondents. Data was analysed using SEM-PLS and SmartPLS 4.1.1.2. The research found that pricing and service quality perceptions positively and significantly affect BWC participants' publisher choice via trust. Further study should broaden the scope of the study to include a wider range of writers and independent publishers, examine additional mediating or moderating factors that may amplify the effect of price and service quality perception on publication choice. A formative indicator model or qualitative technique may be used by researchers.

**Keywords:** price perception; perceived service quality; trust; intention to choose; purchase intention

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### Introduction

The digital age has transformed individuals' literacy habits (Yang et al., 2025), leading to a growing preference for acquiring information and knowledge via digital media instead of print (Trakhman et al., 2025). This shift has caused several writers to grow more hesitant to publish works due to concerns about poor sales. This scenario presents a significant challenge for the publishing industry, necessitating that publishers, particularly independent ones, tailor their offerings to survive and compete in the marketplace (Spjeldnæs, 2022). PT. Litera Mediatama ('Litera'), an independent publisher located in Malang, East Java, Indonesia, persistently endeavours to maintain its business operations. The primary difficulty is the little interest in reading in Indonesia. UNESCO statistics indicate that under 0.001% of Indonesians are enthusiastic readers, signifying that among 1,000 individuals, only 1 engages in reading (Yusran, 2024).

According to IKAPI, there are 542 big or medium-sized publishers and 652 minor publishers (Anggraini, 2020). Litera's primary rivals are 'Deepublish' and 'Bukunesia', both in Sleman, Yogyakarta. These two publishers are formidable rivals because their systems closely resemble those of large publishers, whereby writers are not required to invest funds for publishing financing. Provided the

publisher accepts the author's submission, the book will undergo a somewhat expedited editing procedure before publication. The author thereafter awaits income in accordance with the arrangement established with the publisher. At Litera, writers are required to provide a certain sum for editing, pre-press, and printing expenses. Post-publication, writers must contemplate their book sales plan, despite Litera offering a marketing staff that assists with sales under a 25% profit-sharing model.

Consumer purchasing choices greatly impact sales volume and ensure company continuity (Firmansyah et al., 2024). In 2017, 'Litera' initiated a unique writing training and mentorship program named "Fun Writing Camp" to engage authors and stimulate their enthusiasm in publishing. However, owing to insufficient enthusiasm and a lack of emphasis on producing a publishable book, the program was subsequently rebranded as "Book Writing Camp" (BWC) and continues to this day. Of the 1,631 participants enrolled by Batch 27 in 2024, only 282 individuals (17%) chose to publish their works with 'Litera'. This number remains well behind the company's objective of a minimum of 40% of participants releasing their books (Rahayu & Lestari, 2024). This situation indicates that the willingness of BWC members to publish their works remains very low, presenting a significant task for the marketing management of 'Litera' to enhance writers' publication intentions (buy intention). Consequently, it is essential to study tactics that will enhance writers' inclination to use 'Litera' for their book publishing needs.

This research is urgent because it is necessary to develop prompt strategic solutions that will increase the willingness of BWC participants to choose 'Litera' as their preferred publishing option, given that the current number of participants who have published with 'Litera' is significantly below the company's target. The novelty of this study is a strategic framework aimed at enhancing purchase intention (intention to choose), which accounts for customer perceptions of pricing, perceived service quality, and trust in the company or brand. 'Litera' facilitated the evaluation of this framework among BWC participants. This research aims to analyse the direct and indirect effects of price perception and perceived service quality on the intention of BWC participants to choose 'Litera' for their book publication, with trust standing as a mediating variable.

## **Literature Review**

### **Price Perception, Trust, and Intention to Choose**

Customers are more likely to make a purchase when the pricing meets or exceeds their expectations (A. R. Putra & Jatmiko, 2024). A crucial component in acquiring customers is offering competitive pricing that maintains profitability for both consumers and businesses (Saputra et al., 2024) and there is a strong relationship between price and intent to purchase (Setiawan & Achyar, 2021). Supporting this conclusion is research showing that price significantly affects customers' intentions to buy (Rahayu & Anjaningrum, 2024), (Utami et al., 2024). An important factor in determining whether a customer will make a purchase is how they perceive the price (Anas et al., 2023). Customers are more likely to buy a product or service if they have a positive impression of the price they are being offered.

An empirical gap exists in other research findings that indicate that price negatively impacts purchase intention, albeit insignificantly (Wardani et al., 2022). So, even with huge reductions, customers' desire to buy really decreases at cheaper and quality-appropriate prices—although the drop is quite small. This drop is because, for most items/services, cost is directly proportional to quality. Consumers become appreciative and worried about potential negative effects if the price is dangerously low.

Price has a major impact on customer trust in a company's brand and goods or services, according to recent studies (Kesdu & Susila, 2024). At the same time, some researches (Anas et al., 2023), (Setiawan & Achyar, 2021), (Qalati et al., 2021), (Mahliza, 2020), (Senali et al., 2024), (Religia et al., 2024), (A. R. Putra & Jatmiko, 2024) have all shown that trust significantly affects purchase intention. When consumers have faith in a business, they are more likely to buy its products or services. So, there are some relationships between price perception, trust, and purchase intention (intention to choose publisher) is intricate.

Based on the aforementioned empirical investigations, we can formulate the following hypotheses:

- H1: The favourable view of the pricing structure reinforced the intention of "Book Writing Camp" participants to publish with Litera publishers.
- H2: Participants in the "Book Writing Camp" exhibited greater trust in Litera publishers as their perceptions of the offered publishing price became increasingly favourable.
- H3: The greater the trust that "Book Writing Camp" authors placed in Litera publishers, the more resolute their intention to publish with them became.
- H4: Participants in the "Book Writing Camp" who had a more favorable view of the publishing price offered developed greater trust in Litera publishers, which in turn enhanced their intention to publish with them.

### **Perceived Service Quality, Trust, and Intention to Choose**

Regarding the quality of the product or service, studies conducted by Rahayu & Anjaningrum (Rahayu & Anjaningrum, 2024) and Qalati et al. (Qalati et al., 2021) have shown that the level of service greatly influences the consumer's inclination to buy. The better a service's quality, the more likely it is that customers will buy it. This is because, according to Nuriyono et al. (Nuriyono et al., 2023), a combination of trust and a stronger impression of value encourages consumers to buy a product with more certainty. A higher level of perceived service quality is associated with a stronger level of consumer purchase intention for a product or service (Liao et al., 2022). This is because consumers' perceptions of service quality impact their intention to buy. Research by Putra and Lestari (H. T. Putra & Lestari, 2023) corroborated this idea, showing that consumers' impressions of a service's quality significantly impact their propensity to make a purchase.

Additionally, there is a scarcity of empirical support for the findings of Syachrony et al. (Syachrony et al., 2023), who found that service quality had no impact on consumers' intentions to buy. In other words, it makes little difference how good the service is when it comes to influencing customers to buy a product or service. This limitation is due to the fact that the majority of research on service quality is devoted to e-service quality, or the degree to which a website or app improves the shopping, buying, and delivery processes.

The level of service consumers receive strongly correlates with their trust in a company's name and offerings (Kesdu & Susila, 2024). A recent study by Qalati et al. (Qalati et al., 2021) demonstrates that service quality significantly impacts trust. Putra and Lestari (H. T. Putra & Lestari, 2023) further reinforce these findings by demonstrating that the perceived quality of a service significantly influences trust. Some studies have all found that trust plays a big role in whether people decide to make a purchase (Senali et al., 2024), (Religia et al., 2024), (Mahliza, 2020). Hence, the study defines buy intention—specifically, the author's desire to choose a publisher—as being linked to the authors' perceptions of the service's quality and trustworthiness. Good quality builds trust and strengthens the perception of value, which encourages consumers to choose and purchase the product with more

confidence (Nuriyono et al., 2023), which in turn increases the likelihood of making a purchase (Lazuardi et al., 2025).

So, some hypotheses may be developed from the aforementioned empirical investigation, such as:

- H5: The participants' impression of Litera Publishers' outstanding level of service solidified their desire to publish with them after Book Writing Camp.
- H6: Book Writing Camp attendees' trust in Litera Publishers was directly proportional to their evaluations of the company's service quality.
- H7: Participants in Litera's Book Writing Camp were more likely to want to publish with the company if they had a positive impression of the level of service they received.

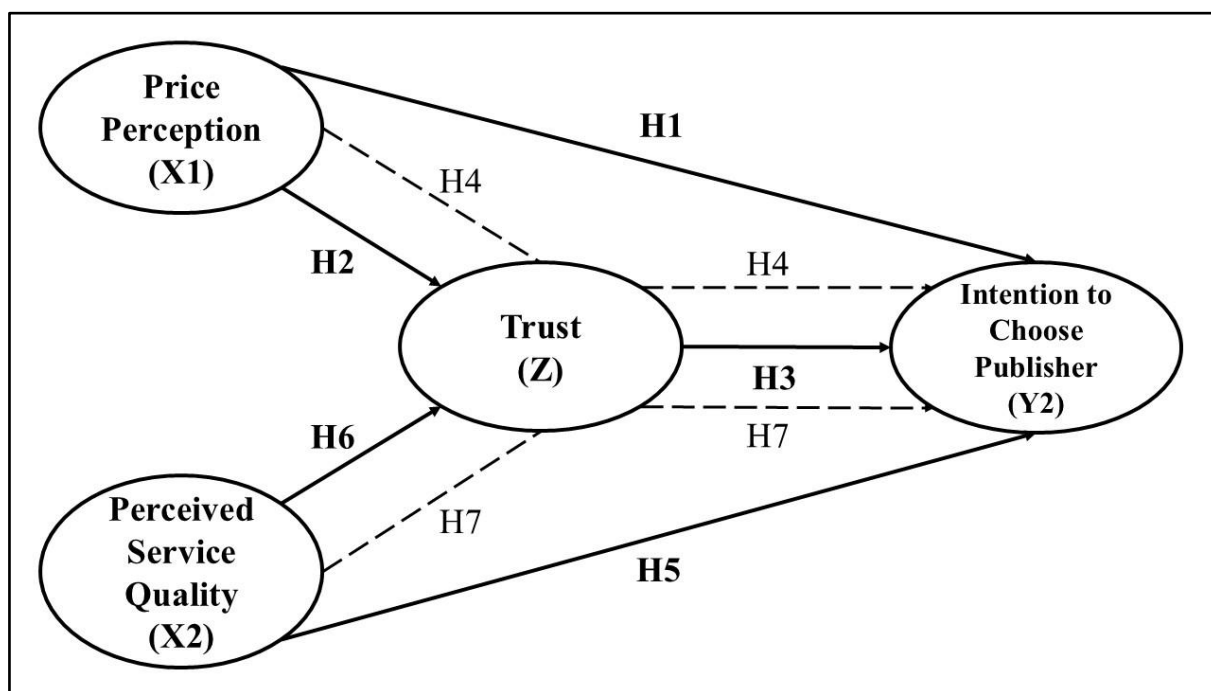


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## Methods

This study used a quantitative methodology, gathering data through an online questionnaire from the participants. The research population included all participants from Batches 25 to 27 of the "Book Writing Camp" (BWC) held by PT. Litera Mediatama (Litera's publisher); specifically, the participants were those who had not yet published their works with Litera, totaling 315 individuals. A total of 176 participants were chosen via a proportionate random selection method. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software for basic statistics and SmartPLS software for advanced analysis, which looked at both the outer and inner models and tested the hypotheses. Simultaneously, the measuring items for each study concept are enumerated in Table 1.

Table 1. Latent Construct's Measurements

Latent Constructs	Indicator	Items
Price Perception (X1) (Wendy Alvita, 2024),(Utami et al., 2024)	Affordability	Litera Publisher offers book publishing services at pricing that are reasonable (X11)
	Competitive & price	Litera Publishers' publication rates are competitive with the market average (X12)
	Price match with benefits	Authors that take part in Litera Publisher's "Book Writing Camp" gain perks that determine the publication price (X13)
	Price matches quality	The pricing structure at Litera Publisher is determined by the caliber of the printed book (X14)
Perceived Service Quality (X2) (Liao et al., 2022)	Tangibility	The apparatus employed for the printing of books at Litera Publisher exhibits exceptional quality (X21)
	Reliability	Litera publisher consistently adheres to its commitments as outlined in the Book Publishing Agreement (X22)
	Responsiveness	The staff at Litera Publisher demonstrates a commendable responsiveness to the diverse needs of authors throughout the publication process of their works (X23)
	Assurance	The entire staff at Litera Publisher can be relied upon due to their consistent professionalism in their endeavours (X24)
	Empathy	The entire staff of Litera Publisher diligently considers each concern raised by the author throughout the book publishing process (X25)
Trust (Z) (H. T. Putra & Lestari, 2023)	Action	The authors are trusting that Litera Publisher will prioritize their interests throughout the book publishing process (Z1)
	Commitment	The authors hold the conviction that Litera Publisher will adhere to its responsibilities as stated in the Book Publishing Agreement (Z2)
	Competence	The authors assert that Litera Publisher possesses the requisite expertise in the realm of book publishing (Z3)
	Individual information	The author expresses a readiness to furnish all necessary information pertinent to the book publishing process (Z4)
Intention to Choose Publisher (Purchase Intention) (Y) (Wendy Alvita, 2024),(Rahayu & Anjaningrum, 2024)	Eminent want	Publication of the author's book is a deeply held goal (Y1)
	Manuscript Readiness	An article written by the author is almost complete and ready to be published (Y2)
	Financial Readiness	The author has set aside some money to cover the expenses of publication (Y3)
	Seeking information	The author has contacted Litera Publisher in an effort to learn more about the publication process (Y4)
	Selecting a publisher	The author has selected Litera Publisher as the preferred publisher (Y5)

Source: Processed Data (2025)

## Results and Discussion

### Respondent's Demography

A total of 176 responses were analyzed, categorized by age: 4 individuals aged 17-22 years (2.3%), 25 individuals aged 23-28 years (14.2%), 34 individuals aged 29-34 years (19.2%), 85 individuals aged

35-40 years (48.3%), and 28 individuals aged above 40 years (15.9%). According to gender, there were 84 males (47.7%) and 92 females (52.3%). According to educational attainment, there were 2 respondents (1.1%) with high school or equivalent education, 3 respondents (1.7%) with diplomas, 68 respondents (38.6%) with bachelor's degrees, 86 respondents (48.9%) with master's degrees or specialty qualifications, and 17 respondents (9.7%) with doctoral degrees. According to the nature of employment, there are 2 students (1.1%), 18 lecturers (10.2%), 91 physicians (51.7%), 20 entrepreneurs (11.4%), and 45 individuals in other professions (25.6%). According to monthly income, 2 individuals make less than IDR 5 million (1.1%), 34 individuals earn between IDR 5 million and IDR 9.99 million (19.3%), 46 individuals earn between IDR 10 million and IDR 14.99 million (26.1%), 62 individuals earn between IDR 15 million and IDR 19.99 million (35.2%), and 32 individuals earn more than IDR 20 million (18.8%).

### Outer Model Measurement

The assessment of the research tool checked how well it measured what it was supposed to, looked at its ability to show similar and different concepts, and also tested how reliable it was in measuring the external PLS-SEM model. The research checked its convergent validity by looking at the factor loading values for each measurement item, which were all over 0.7 (see Figure 2, where these values are shown on the line connecting the main concept and the unaffected measurement in parentheses), and the AVE values were all above 0.5 (see Table 2, where all AVE values are greater than 0.5). Discriminant validity was confirmed because the Fornell-Larcker value was greater than the correlation coefficients between the different latent constructs (see Table 3). In addition, the cross-loading value of each item related to the proposed construct exceeded the cross-loading value associated with the alternative construct (see Table 4). Meanwhile, reliability evaluation was carried out using Cronbach's alpha, which must exceed 0.6, and composite reliability, which must exceed 0.8 (see the data in Table 2 proving that the instrument is reliable).

Table 2. Construct Validity and Reliability

Latent Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability		AVE
		(rho_a)	(rho_c)	
Intention to Choose Publisher (Y)	0.966	0.967	0.973	0.880
Perceived Service Quality (X.2)	0.915	0.927	0.938	0.754
Price Perception (X.1)	0.822	0.834	0.882	0.652
Trust (Z)	0.887	0.890	0.923	0.749

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.1.2 software output (2025)

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Latent Constructs	Price Perception (X.1)	Perceived Service Quality (X.2)	Trust (Z)	Intention to Choose Publisher (Y)
Price Perception (X.1)	0.808		0.475	0.247
Perceived Service Quality (X.2)		0.868	0.429	0.345
Trust (Z)			0.866	0.436
Intention to Choose Publisher (Y)				0.938

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.1.2 software output (2025)

Table 4. Cross-Loading

Items	Price Perception (X.1)	Perceived Service Quality (X.2)	Trust (Z)	Intention to Choose Publisher (Y)
X.1.1	0.782	0.580	0.674	0.616
X.1.2	0.797	0.487	0.499	0.619
X.1.3	0.766	0.451	0.488	0.619
X.1.4	0.881	0.567	0.735	0.722
X.2.1	0.436	0.706	0.484	0.665
X.2.2	0.631	0.945	0.697	0.778
X.2.3	0.665	0.928	0.717	0.813
X.2.4	0.512	0.871	0.652	0.645
X.2.5	0.544	0.870	0.628	0.674
Z.1	0.607	0.631	0.791	0.790
Z.2	0.688	0.677	0.913	0.793
Z.3	0.672	0.555	0.830	0.670
Z.4	0.642	0.681	0.922	0.774
Y.1	0.781	0.793	0.827	0.946
Y.2	0.791	0.826	0.813	0.962
Y.3	0.770	0.787	0.853	0.939
Y.4	0.702	0.730	0.791	0.902
Y.5	0.701	0.738	0.826	0.940

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.1.2 software output (2025)

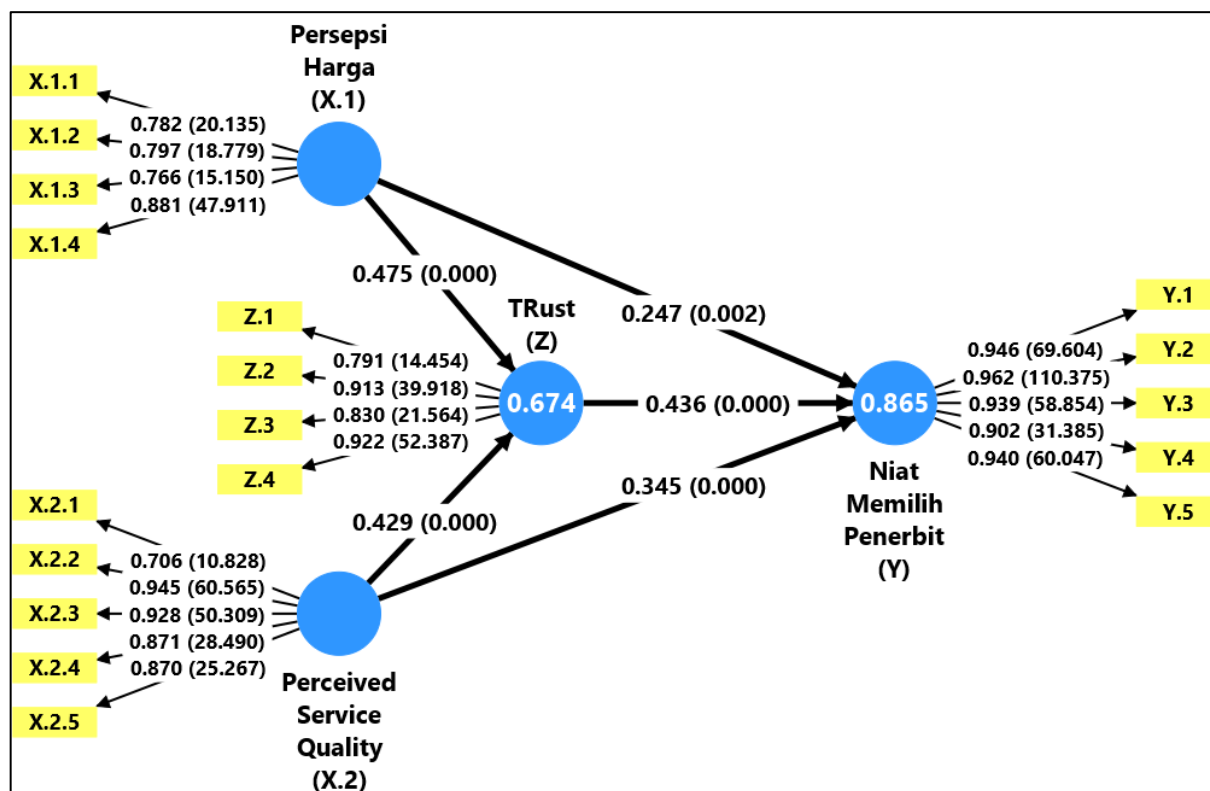


Figure 2. PLS-SEM Graphical Output

**Inner Model Measurement**

The evaluation of model fit was used to examine the viability of the PLS-SEM model. The R-squared value for the "Trust" construct in Figure 2, marked in the blue circle at 0.674, shows a strong effect, meaning that around 67.4% of trust is explained by how people view pricing and service quality. The R-squared value of 0.865 for the "Intention to Choose a Publisher" construct shows a strong effect, meaning that around 86.5% of the decision to choose a publisher is explained by pricing perception, perceived service quality, and trust.

**Hypothesis Test**

Hypothesis testing is crucial for determining its validity. The t-test is used to test the hypothesis. A p-value less than 0.05 or a t-statistic greater than 1.96 at the 5% significance level indicates that the exogenous latent construct significantly influences the endogenous latent construct. The path coefficient indicates direction, allowing for determination of whether the impact is positive or negative. The t-test results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. T-test Results

Latent Construct Relationship	Path Coefficient	T statistics	P values	Inferences
Price Perception (X.1) -> Intention to Choose Publisher (Y)	0,247	3,046	0,002	Positive & Significant H1 Supported
Price Perception (X.1) -> Trust (Z)	0,475	6,367	0,000	Positive & Significant H2 Supported
Trust (Z) -> Intention to Choose Publisher (Y)	0,436	4,895	0,000	Positive & Significant H3 Supported
Price Perception (X.1) -> Trust (Z) -> Intention to Choose Publisher (Y)	0,207	3,545	0,000	Positive & Significant H4 Supported Trust is a partial mediation
Perceived Service Quality (X.2) -> Intention to Choose Publisher (Y)	0,345	4,622	0,000	Positive & Significant H5 Supported
Perceived Service Quality (X.2) -> Trust (Z)	0,429	5,070	0,000	Positive & Significant H6 Supported
Perceived Service Quality (X.2) -> Trust (Z) -> Intention to Choose Publisher (Y)	0,187	3,703	0,000	Positive & Significant H7 Supported Trust is a partial mediation

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.1.2 software output (2025)

The study's findings were unexpected, as field data supported all of the research assumptions. Litera was the publisher that the BWC participants were most likely to trust and pick for their books due to their reasonable prices and high-quality service perceptions. This study's findings are in line with those of Putra and Jatmiko (A. R. Putra & Jatmiko, 2024)), who argued that customers' favorable impressions of a product's pricing affect their propensity to buy. Customers are more likely to make a purchase if the pricing is in line with their expectations. Setiawan and Achyar (Setiawan & Achyar, 2021) found that pricing strongly impacts purchasing intention; our results back up their findings. Customers are more likely to make a purchase if they perceive the price of the product or service to be somewhat higher. The findings are in line with previous



research that has shown that customers' perceptions of the price play a key role in determining their desire to buy a product or service (Rahayu & Anjaningrum, 2024),(Utami et al., 2024),(Anas et al., 2023). Customers perceive pricing more positively when they have a greater level of buying intention.

Nevertheless, this study's findings run counter to those of Wardani et al. (Wardani et al., 2022), who found a small but negative correlation between price and purchase intention. This indicates that customers' desire to buy is reduced, if little, by more reasonably priced goods and services that are also of sufficient quality, even after accounting for several reductions. Why? Because, in most cases, when it comes to drinks, you get what you pay for. Customers start to be cautious and worry about their health if it's too low. Services and goods related to book publishing are distinct from this. Additionally, Litera's publishing clients tend to be highly educated people with extensive experience in the fields of medicine, business, and academia; these individuals are in a prime position to evaluate the merits and drawbacks of book publication.

These findings are in accordance with those of Rahayu and Anjaningrum (Rahayu & Anjaningrum, 2024), who also found that service quality significantly affects consumers' intentions to buy. In line with these results, Qalati et al. (Qalati et al., 2021) showed that customers' intentions to buy a product or service are positively correlated with the quality of such service. The findings also corroborate previous studies that found customers' perceptions of service quality (Liao et al., 2022),(H. T. Putra & Lestari, 2023). To conclude, customers' intentions to buy are positively impacted by their perceptions of service quality. People are more likely to buy a product or use a service if they have a positive impression of the quality of its delivery.

The results of this research, however, run counter to those of Syachrony et al. (Syachrony et al., 2023), who found that service quality had no significant impact on consumers' intentions to buy. This indicates that an exceptionally high level of service does not substantially influence consumers' desire to buy a product or service. This difference is due to the fact that the existing literature on service quality mostly focuses on e-service quality, which is defined as the degree to which a website or application facilitates activities related to browsing, buying, and delivery of products and services.

There is a lack of solid evidence about the connection between how people perceive prices, trust, and their propensity to buy. Nevertheless, this study's findings corroborate those of Kesdu and Susila (Kesdu & Susila, 2024), who showed that people's perceptions of prices affect their confidence in a company. These findings corroborate those of Putra and Jatmiko (A. R. Putra & Jatmiko, 2024), Anas et al. (Anas et al., 2023), and Utami et al. (Utami et al., 2024), all of which showed that consumers' perceptions of prices affect their propensity to buy. Customers' faith in a brand is affected by how they perceive its prices, which in turn affects their intention to buy. This means that consumers are more likely to buy when they like the price of a product or service. Consequently, trust mediates the relationship between price perception and desire to buy to some extent. Trust and how much you think the price is impact your decision to buy. Fair pricing, higher perceived value, and higher levels of trust induce stronger purchase intentions.

Validation of the framework among customers or consumers of publishing services is particularly unusual, and research that examines the link between perceived service quality, trust, and purchase intention within a single framework is rather rare as well. Previous research by Qalati et al. (Qalati et al., 2021) has shown that trust mediates the relationship between perceived service quality and desire to buy, and our results corroborate that finding. Qalati et al. (Qalati et al., 2021)

found that internet shoppers were the participants of their investigation. Trust partly mediated the impact of perceived service quality on purchase intention, according to a study confirmed by Putra and Lestari (H. T. Putra & Lestari, 2023) that was also performed on online consumers. Therefore, a consumer's belief in the reliability and quality of the service significantly influences their likelihood to make a purchase. If customers have a favourable impression of the service they will receive, they are more likely to trust a business and buy.

This study's theoretical implications include expanding the field of marketing management theory and demonstrating the importance of trust as a link between pricing and service quality, two tactical marketing factors, and consumers' intent to buy. This study's findings provide support for and credibility to theories like the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Specifically, it demonstrates that trust is a psychological process that connects first impressions (of pricing and service quality) to the intention to buy.

This study has important practical implications for PT. Litera Mediatama (Litera publisher). It is critical for them to effectively manage three primary aspects: pricing, service quality, and trust. By doing so, they can improve the likelihood that writers would pick them. Authors who participate in Litera Publisher's "Book Writing Camp" program are more likely to want to have their works published by Litera Publisher rather than by other publishers if the company pays attention to these three areas in their operational and commercial strategies. Litera publishers should keep in mind the following: (1) upholding quality standards, as Litera's publishing prices are higher than those of some competitors; (2) fostering socialization among respondents, who may lack technical knowledge of print quality and have never worked directly with Litera; and (3) enhancing staff professionalism and encouraging more positive responses both during and after the BWC.

## Conclusions

Through trust as a partial mediator, the findings show that BWC participants' intention to pick Litera as their preferred publisher for publishing their works is influenced by price perception and perceived service quality, both directly and indirectly. Consequently, an author's faith in the publisher and their desire to pick it are both affected by their perceptions of the publisher's pricing and the quality of the publishing service.

One of the many flaws in the study is that only Litera's BWC participants were included, which means the findings do not apply to other writers and publishers. Consequently, it is suggested that future studies broaden the scope of the study to include a wider range of writers and independent publishers. Further study should examine additional mediating or moderating factors that may amplify the effect of price and service quality perception on publication choice. A formative indicator model or qualitative technique may be used by researchers.

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