

HOW PSYCHOLOGICAL COMFORT AND AESTHETIC VALUE INFLUENCE PURCHASE DECISION IN DENTAL CLINIC SERVICES: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PRICE PERCEPTION

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of psychological comfort and aesthetic value on purchase decision in dental clinic services, with price perception serving as a mediating variable. We used quantitative explanatory research design and data analysis with Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that psychological comfort and aesthetic value have positive and significant effects on both price perception and purchase decision. Furthermore, price perception positively influences purchase decision and partially mediates the relationships between psychological comfort, aesthetic value, and purchase decision. The structural model demonstrates substantial explanatory power in predicting patients' decisions to utilize dental clinic services. The findings reveal that psychological comfort is the most influential factor affecting purchase decision, exceeding the influence of aesthetic value. These results highlight the importance of creating a comfortable emotional environment, reducing patient anxiety, and enhancing the perceived aesthetic benefits of dental services. The study provides practical implications for dental clinic managers in developing patient-centered service strategies that strengthen perceived value and encourage service utilization.

1. INTRODUCTION

Oral health is a major concern for the community today, with the rise in public awareness that helps the dental care environment to reach its peak. Today, dental treatment approaches can be considered more than just health programs to maintain a normal oral health profile and are now seen as part of personal aesthetics, confidence, and overall quality of life. The demand for services like teeth whitening, veneers, orthodontic treatment, as well as aesthetic restorations has expanded as consumers have the desire to benefit functionally but also aesthetically. Accordingly, it is the focus of dental practitioners to comprehend factors influencing consumers' purchase decisions in such a highly competitive healthcare context.

With the growth of demand for dental care services, countless people still delay or do not pursue dental services. It is further confirmed by the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey (Survei Kesehatan Indonesia/SKI), of the national health authorities (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia), which estimates that 56.9% of the population aged three years and above suffer from oral and dental health-related problems. However, only 11.2% of individuals experiencing oral health problems sought professional dental care. The considerable differences between oral healthcare needs and service utilization demonstrate that consumers make decisions concerning their use of dental services outside of clinical necessity. A commonly encountered obstacle includes dental anxiety, meaning fear, suffering, or emotional stress related to dental treatment. Thus, the above-mentioned conditions suggest that the use of dental services for consumers reflects rational assessment and other aspects, but should also incorporate psychological influences that affect the consumer's service experiences. Psychosocial dimensions have been emphasized in the health service context. Jung et al. (2018) stated that relationship quality and patient trust have a

significant impact on recommendation intentions and service-related behavioral outcomes. Likewise, Han and Hyun (2015) found that aspects like emotional comfort, trust, and perceived price reasonableness affect customer retention in services relating to healthcare. Such findings suggest that psychological comfort is an essential determinant in influencing consumers' perceptions and behavior. From the perspective of dental clinics, patients who are in a safe, comfortable, and emotionally supportive environment during the course of therapy may be more likely to use dental services. Alongside psychological considerations, aesthetic outcomes have emerged as another important determinant of consumer behavior. Contemporary consumers increasingly view dental treatments as a means of enhancing appearance, self-image, and confidence. Tin-Oo et al. (2011) reported that satisfaction with dental appearance significantly influences patients' desire to undertake aesthetic dental treatment. Likewise, Gržić et al. (2013) found that expected aesthetic improvements are among the primary factors affecting patients' treatment choices in dental care. These findings indicate that aesthetic value may serve as an important source of perceived benefits that motivate consumers to seek dental services.

A second element that may also affect consumer decisions is price perception. Among other things, in the context of services, customers often judge that the advantages they receive are worth the cost incurred. Han and Ryu (2009) have shown that service contexts and service environments contribute positively towards customer price perceptions and customer evaluations. Similarly, Konuk (2019) found that perceived price fairness positively influences perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. This suggests that consumers may be more likely to accept service prices which they perceive as meaningful if they perceive value in functional, emotional, and aesthetic terms provided to them by the service.

Although various consumer behavior determinants have been studied in healthcare and service industries throughout history, the bulk of research has focused on service quality, satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and behavioral intentions. Studies have been conducted by Ahmady et al. (2015), Akbar et al. (2019), Othman and Kadasah (2025), and Amir et al. (2025) primarily emphasized service quality dimensions and patient satisfaction results. On the other hand, all studies dealing with aesthetic outcomes tend to deal only with treatment preferences and appearance satisfaction, while those studying psychological aspects more generally have often looked at trust, relationship quality, or service experience separately. Little effort has been made in linking psychological comfort, aesthetic value, price perception, and purchase decision under a single overall system—in particular for dental clinic service providers.

Accordingly, this study fills an important research gap by establishing psychological comfort and aesthetic value as antecedents of the purchase decision, and by analyzing the mediating effect of price perception. This study extends the service marketing and consumer behavior literature by offering empirical evidence of emotional comfort and aesthetic benefits as influencing consumers' evaluations of price and their subsequent purchase decisions in dental clinic services.

Hence, the work of the survey is to investigate the effect of psychological comfort and aesthetic value on purchase decision in dental clinic services and also to explore the mediating role of price perception in these relationships. The outputs of the study are anticipated to have both theoretical contributions to the service marketing literature and applications in dental clinic managers' clinical practice for improving service in such a patient-centred approach.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter systematically presents the theoretical arguments and previous empirical research of psychological comfort, aesthetic value, price perception, and purchase decision. The present discussion seeks to contribute a theoretical framework of these variables in the specific domain of dental clinic services. Also, the empirical findings have been reviewed to identify the gaps in the research and give a theoretical underpinning of the proposed hypotheses.

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Consumers' decision-making for the use of services is heavily influenced by their assessment of the benefits earned versus the sacrifice incurred during service consumption. In healthcare services, specifically dental clinic services, consumers assess not only the functional outcomes of treatment but also the emotional experiences and overall value associated with the service. Therefore, knowledge of the theoretical connection between psychological comfort, aesthetic value, price perception, and purchase decision for consumer behavior in this context is relevant.

Thus, Zeithaml (1988) conceptualised the Perceived Value Theory and as such, it was found to provide the most adequate theoretical framework for the relationships explored in the current study. The idea states that consumers evaluate a service by comparing the benefits they have received to the sacrifices they face, and by this process, the extent to which it passes through their perceived value system, to which then purchase decision comes. Perceived value is determined by higher-order abstractions, also known as psychological and symbolic value that is gained while consuming a service, says Zeithaml. Apart from its price perception, psychological comfort and aesthetic value are also regarded as higher-level benefits to the dental clinic service that add to consumers' assessment of the service on a psychological comfort and aesthetic value level. The higher these perceived benefits, the happier

consumers are, and correspondingly consumers are more realistic with their view of service prices as fair, reasonable, and aligned with what they derive from the experience of the benefit, and, subsequently, contribute to a potential investment. However, Perceived Value Theory provides us with a suitable theoretical perspective for an explanation, in terms of whether the psychological comfort and aesthetic value affect the perception and the purchase. This is the general theoretical foundation of the proposed research model and study hypotheses.

Psychological Comfort

Psychological comfort describes an individual's emotional state characterized by a sense of safety, trust, relaxation, and freedom from anxiety during service encounters. Psychological comfort is widely recognized in service marketing and healthcare literature as an important aspect of customer experiences as consumers seek emotional experiences during the service, which often include more than merely functional benefits, and can often play a significant role in the evaluation of services. Based on previous research, Han and Hyun (2015) found that emotional comfort and trust as gained from service interactions are the primary drivers of consumers' evaluations and behavioral intentions, and Jung et al. (2018) noted that positive patient provider relationships positively predict favorable behavioral outcomes such as service acceptance and recommendation intentions. Psychological comfort is especially relevant in dental clinics in the context of psychological comfort when providing medical care as dental treatment is associated with anxiety, risk, uncertainty, and treatment-related anxiety in most cases. As a result, patients with feelings of safety, emotional serenity, and comfort during dental clinic visits will be more likely to experience optimal service ratings and also to make positive decisions about behavior. Hence, the study defines psychological comfort based on six dimensions: safety, comfort, emotional calmness, trust in service providers, interaction comfort, and anxiety reduction.

Aesthetic Value

Aesthetic value is considered to consumers' perceptions of the visual, emotional, and symbolic benefits of a service, specifically related to its positive impacts on an individual's appearance, self-image, or emotional satisfaction. Aesthetic value is regarded as a significant component of perceived value in service marketing because consumers evaluate a service not only from its functional aspects, but also on how beneficial it is in enhancing personal attractiveness and confidence. In dental services, aesthetic outcomes are particularly pertinent as treatment outcomes influence patients' appearance and self-perception. Previous research has shown that aesthetic factors have an influence on consumer behaviour. Tin-Oo et al. (2011) reported that satisfaction with dental appearance had a positive effect on self-confidence and willingness to seek aesthetic dental treatment, while Gržić et al. (2013) reported that aesthetic expectations rank as one of the major motivations for patients to get dental care. Moreover, Samorodnitzky-Naveh et al. (2007) found positive attitudes toward dental aesthetics relate to higher levels of self-esteem, social confidence, and overall satisfaction with appearance. Consistent with consumer value theory, this finding indicates that aesthetic improvements impart psychological and also symbolic positive effects, extending beyond functional oral health outcomes, thus influencing consumers' evaluation of service value and subsequent behavior. Therefore, the study views aesthetic value from six aspects of improvement in appearance, attractiveness enhancement, enhanced self-confidence, aesthetic satisfaction, self-image improvement, and perceived aesthetic benefits.

Price Perception

Price perception refers to the overall evaluation of whether consumers thought the price is fair, reasonable, affordable, and consistent with benefits received from their service. Price perception is understood to be a significant factor in service marketing literature since consumers often evaluate the value of products and services through comparing benefits to costs of service acquisition. Han and Ryu (2009) asserted that consumers' evaluations of service environments and service experiences strongly affect perceptions of value and price fairness. Likewise, Han and Hyun (2015) found that perceived price reasonableness is connected to customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in that it strengthens consumers' evaluations of service benefits. Konuk (2019) showed also that service price fairness has a positive correlation with perceived value and customer responses, while Konuk (2020) suggested that consumers tend to bear service charges more often when they believe that the advantages received are worth the expense. In the case of Indonesia, Tecoalu et al. (2021) concluded that positive price perceptions also influence consumer purchase decisions by increasing perceptions of value and affordability. Likewise, Maharani et al. (2024) found that consumers' perception of price fairness and value for money greatly affect buying patterns and use of services. In healthcare services, such as dental clinic services, consumers often evaluate whether the functional, emotional, and aesthetic benefits gained from dental clinic treatment are worth the monetary cost. Hence, patients who perceive prices as fair, affordable, and aligned with the benefits received are most positively evaluated, and therefore are more prone to purchase and have positive intentions. Consequently, the current study proposes a framework for price perception across six constructs: price fairness, price-benefit congruence, affordability, value for money, price reasonableness, and price acceptance.

Purchase Decision

Purchasing decision is the process where consumers make a choice of products or services between various competitors. Purchasing decision-making in consumer behavior theories (as described by the cognitive-affective

model of purchasing model) is believed to be the outcome of several cognitive and affective appraisal processes that determine the consumers' evaluation of benefits, costs associated with purchase, risks, and expected satisfaction with product or service. In the service context, including in health care services, purchase decisions are associated with purchase-related, emotional experience, perceived value, trust, and service expectations. Konuk (2019) discovered in his research that perceived value and customer evaluation have a strong impact on consumers' purchase intentions and behavioral decisions, whereas Jung et al. (2018), found better service experiences and superior service quality lead to favourable behavioral outcomes such as service acceptance and recommendation intentions. In Indonesia, Tecoalu et al. (2021) showed that consumer perception of value and service attributes has a significant impact on purchase decisions, while Maharani et al. (2024) found that improved evaluation by consumers enhances purchase and utilization intention. In a similar vein, Havidz (2022) stressed that consumers are more likely to choose to purchase goods if they feel the benefits that they receive are worth the costs they incur. Purchase decision in relation to dental clinic services is a reflection of consumers' preferences and determination of selected and used dental treatment from their consideration of psychological comfort, aesthetic benefits and perceived fairness and affordability of the dental treatments. Those consumers who feel that a dental treatment is likely to fulfill their desires and expectations, tend to become more likely to establish their confidence in decision and care about the service rather than other competing ones. Accordingly, purchase decision has been described in this paper with six dimensions by Konuk (2019), Jung et al. (2018), Tecoalu et al. (2021), Maharani et al. (2024) and Havidz (2022) including utilization decision, purchase confidence, selection priority, service selection decision, certainty of choice, and need congruence. These dimensions encompass consumers' confidence and commitment to choose dental clinic services that best fulfill the expectations and treatment needs of customers.

2.2 Empirical Review and Hypothesis

Past research has reported several factors influencing the selection and utilization of services, especially in healthcare settings. Early studies focused on the importance of perceived needs, risk assessment, and sources of information in consumer decision-making systems (Chambers & Zitterkopf, 2019; Freiden & Goldsmith, 1989; Hekmat & Heischmidt, 1996). Afterward, the study emphasized the role of service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in affecting consumer behavior (Han & Ryu, 2009; Han & Hyun, 2015; Othman & Kadasah, 2025; Amir et al., 2025). Researchers further determined that perception of price and price fairness had a significant impact on perceived value, satisfaction, behavioral intention, and purchase decision (Konuk, 2019; Tecoalu et al., 2021). Previous studies have also highlighted the impact of trust, word-of-mouth, and online reviews in consumer reaction (Jung et al., 2018; Ponathil et al., 2020; Weisstein et al., 2017). Moreover, aesthetic-related factors contribute to perceived value and treatment selection decisions (Tin-Oo et al., 2011; Gržić et al., 2013; Shi et al.), while psychological comfort has been shown in research to enhance service evaluations and client outcomes (Han & Ryu, 2009; Modha, 2023). Despite those improvements, previous publications have tended to study these variables separately. Consequently, little research has consolidated psychological comfort, aesthetic value, price perception, and purchase decision into one model, especially in dental clinic services conducted in Indonesia. Based on these theoretical and empirical considerations, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H1: Psychological comfort has a positive impact on price perception.

Psychological comfort has been recognized as an important determinant of consumers' evaluations of service value and price fairness. Experiencing emotional comfort, having positive service interactions, and being in a supportive service environment helps in the perception of service prices (Jung et al., 2018). The influence of psychological comfort on price perception can, however, be weaker when consumers perceive that service prices exceed the benefits received (Han & Hyun, 2015; Ryu et al., 2012).

H2: Aesthetic value has a positive impact on price perception.

Consumers' price evaluations are influenced by aesthetic value. In evaluating quality of service and anticipated benefits, consumers use aesthetic cues. Higher aesthetic outcomes tend to increase perceived value, making prices appear more reasonable and acceptable (Shi et al., 2021; Konuk, 2019). Patients who experience improvements in appearance, self-confidence, and aesthetic satisfaction are expected to perceive dental treatment prices more positively.

H3: Psychological comfort has a positive impact on purchase decision.

Consumers' decision intention to use services depends heavily on psychological comfort. Satisfied and positive experiences and emotional comfort are the key factors influencing consumers' intention to benefit from services. When users feel warm emotional comfort, trust, and positive experience in service engagement, they have a higher probability to have positive evaluations and positive intention to use the service (Jung et al., 2018; Han & Hyun, 2015). While studies suggest that this type of influence is weak if consumers perceive prices to be unreasonable (Ryu et al., 2012; Konuk, 2019), the data on this effect is overall consistent that psychological comfort encourages service utilization decisions.

H4: Aesthetic value has a positive impact on purchase decision.

Aesthetic value is an important factor influencing consumers' decisions to utilize aesthetic and dental services. Consumers who perceive improvements in appearance, self-confidence, and self-image are more likely to develop

favorable evaluations and stronger intentions to use dental treatments (Gržić et al., 2013; Samorodnitzky-Naveh et al., 2007). Similarly, Tin-Oo et al. (2011) found that expectations of enhanced dental appearance and aesthetic outcomes encourage consumers to choose aesthetic dental services, although such decisions may also be influenced by cost considerations and treatment expectations.

H5: Price perception has a positive impact on purchase decision.

Price perception is an important influencing factor in consumers' purchase decisions because consumers tend to evaluate whether the benefits received are worth the costs incurred. Various studies have also reported that favorable price perception has a positive influence on purchase intention by increasing consumers' confidence in the value received from a service (Havidz, 2022; Maharani et al., 2024). Tecoalu et al. (2021) also reported similar results, finding that consumers are more likely to choose services when prices are perceived as fair, reasonable, consistent with quality, and aligned with service benefits.

H6: Price perception mediates the relationship between psychological comfort and purchase decision.

Price perception may potentially explain the indirect impact of psychological comfort on the purchase decision. Customers who receive a sense of safety, emotional comfort, trust, and reduced anxiety perceive service prices as more reasonable and corresponding to the benefits obtained, leading to purchase decisions (Konuk, 2019; Han & Ryu, 2009). Likewise, Ülker Can (2025) demonstrated that positive service experiences enhance consumers' willingness to accept prices through improved emotional well-being. Thus, price perception is hypothesized to be the mediator of psychological comfort and purchase decision.

H7: Price perception mediates the relationship between Aesthetic value and purchase decision.

Price perception may indirectly influence purchase decisions through aesthetic value. Customers who experience enhancement in beauty, self-confidence, and self-image tend to assess benefits of service positively and perceive prices to be reasonable and worthwhile (Gržić et al., 2013). Aesthetic benefits similarly promote perceived value and price acceptance, thereby encouraging purchase decision-making (Shi et al., 2021). Salem and Kiss (2022) found that positive price perceptions mediate the relationship between perceived benefits and the purchase decisions of potential customers. Thus, price perception is anticipated to mediate the relation of aesthetic value and purchase intention.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was a quantitative study with an explanatory research design to investigate the associations of Psychological Comfort, Aesthetic Value, Price Perception, and Purchase Decision among dental clinic services. The explanatory strategy was deemed appropriate because the purpose of this study was to test and to explain the causative relationships between our proposed research hypotheses (Hair et al., 2022).

Data sources were collected using a structured questionnaire which was administered to people in Indonesia who had received treatment in a dental clinic. Respondents were purposively sampled based on prespecified eligibility criteria: age ≥ 18 years and previous dental service experience. 171 valid responses were obtained and analyzed. Respondents were chosen because they had experienced the constructs studied in this research related to Psychological Comfort, Aesthetic Value, Price Perception and Purchase Decision in relation to dental clinic services. Of 171 respondents, 87% indicated that they were treated with aesthetic dental products, including scaling, veneers, teeth whitening, orthodontics with braces, crowns, bridges and other aesthetic dental procedures. The last 13% had received basic dental treatments (e.g., tooth extractions, dental fillings). Because patients were analyzed in all other forms of dentistry, other subjects of patients of both treatment categories were analyzed in this study rather than only a particular category of treatment in order to reflect the group of dental clinic patients. This study was conducted with a sample size that exceeded the least recommended number for PLS-SEM analysis for multiple latent constructs and mediation effects (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 3.1 Respondent Profile

Gender Number (%)			Age Number (%)			Education Number (%)			Treatment Number (%)		
Male	82	48%	18-29	73	43%	High School	30	18%	Basic	23	13%
Female	89	52%	40-50	78	46%	Diploma	26	15%	Aesthetic	148	87%
Total	171	100%	>50	20	12%	Bachelor's	98	57%	Total	171	0%
			Total	171	100%	Graduate	17	10%			
						Total	171	100%			

Source: Authors (2026)

The operationalisation of the research variables is displayed in Table 3.2. The researchers measured four latent constructs in this study, namely Psychological Comfort, Aesthetic Value, Price Perception, and Purchase Decision. Each construct was operationalised through six reflective indicators adapted from previously validated scales published in the literature, yielding a total of 24 measurement items. Psychological Comfort was evaluated through perceived safety, comfort, emotional calmness, trust in the service, interaction comfort, and anxiety reduction. Aesthetic Value was determined by assessing indicators of perceived improvements in appearance, aesthetic attractiveness, self-confidence, aesthetic satisfaction, self-image improvement, and overall aesthetic benefits. Price

Perception was assessed by indicators of price reasonableness, price–benefit congruence, affordability, value for money, price fairness, and price acceptance. Purchase Decision was operationalized with indicators of service utilization decisions, purchase confidence, service preference, decision to choose the service, certainty in selecting the service, and suitability with consumers’ needs. However, all items of the questionnaire were adapted to the context of dental clinic services and retained the conceptual meaning of each construct. Responses were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 3.2 Operationalization of Research Variables

Construct	Indicators	Construct	Indicators
Psychological Comfort (X1)	X1.1 Safety X1.2 Comfort X1.3 Emotional Calmness X1.4 Trust in the Service X1.5 Interaction Comfort X1.6 Anxiety Reduction	Price Perception (Y)	Y.1 Price Reasonableness Y.2 Price–Benefit Congruence Y.3 Price Affordability Y.4 Value for Money Y.5 Price Fairness Y.6 Price Acceptance
Aesthetic Value (X2)	X2.1 Appearance Improvement X2.2 Aesthetic Attractiveness X2.3 Self-confidence X2.4 Aesthetic Satisfaction X2.5 Self-image Improvement X2.6 Aesthetic Benefit	Purchase Decision (Z)	Z.1 Service Utilization Decision Z.2 Purchase Confidence Z.3 Service Preference Z.4 Decision to Choose the Service Z.5 Certainty in Choosing Z.6 Suitability with Consumer Needs

Source: Authors (2026)

Self-administered online questionnaire with Google Forms was used for data collection. This proved to be a useful strategy for data collection, wherein the respondents could choose to fill out the survey at their convenience. The data collected were subjected to Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS Version 4 software (Ringle et al., 2024). Indicator loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach’s Alpha assessed the measurement model, and path coefficients and coefficient of determination (R^2) assessed the structural model (Hair et al., 2022). The hypothesis test was performed based on the bootstrapping procedure to understand the significance of the direct and indirect relationships among the variables. Participation in this study was voluntary, and informed consent was gained from the respondents prior to completing the questionnaire. The confidentiality and anonymity of all the respondents were maintained throughout the research process.

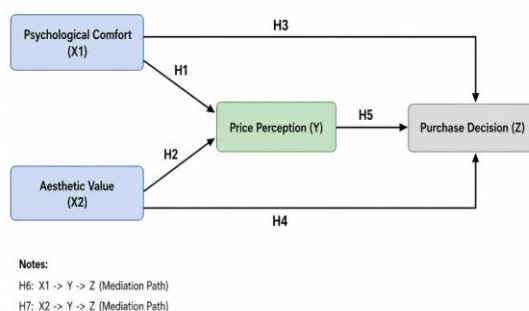


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Study

Source: Authors (2026)

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

The data were analyzed using SmartPLS Version 4 and Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis took place in two stages. The measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation were conducted. The measurement model investigation aimed to evaluate the construct reliability and validity by means of indicator loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha, and discriminant validity. The structural model analysis was then developed to assess the explanatory power of the proposed model and test the research hypotheses with path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), and bootstrapping procedures. The findings of these analyses are reported in the following sections.

The measurement model was tested on convergent, discriminant and construct reliability. Convergent validity was examined using AVE, and reliability was tested with Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability. As shown

in Table 4.1, all constructs came in above the recommended thresholds (0.70 Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability) and 0.50 AVE, exhibiting satisfactory reliability and convergent validity.

Table 4.1 Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Psychological Comfort (X1)	0.854	0.892	0.579
Aesthetic Value (X2)	0.915	0.934	0.701
Price Perception (Y)	0.904	0.926	0.675
Purchase Decision (Z)	0.905	0.927	0.678

Source: Authors (2026)

Results show that there is sufficient internal consistency and convergent validity for all constructs. Aesthetic Value demonstrated the highest Composite Reliability value (0.934) while all AVE values were above the threshold of 0.50 indicating that the indicators accurately correlate to their constructs.

We used the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) to analyze the discriminant validity. The HTMT values displayed in Table 4.2 all fell below the suggested 0.90 threshold and exhibit reasonable discriminant validity between concepts. HTMT varied between 0.599 and 0.842, all less than the cut off value of 0.90. As a result, discriminant validity is demonstrated to be true (e.g., each construct describes a distinct concept and is empirically different from the other constructs).

Table 4.2 HTMT Results

Constructs	X1	X2	Y	Z
Psychological Comfort (X1)	-			
Aesthetic Value (X2)	0.705	-		
Price Perception (Y)	0.661	0.599	-	
Purchase Decision (Z)	0.842	0.734	0.744	-

Source: Authors (2026)

Table 4.3 summarises the collinearity evaluation through the VIF. Results indicate that all obtained VIF are 1.642-1.932, which is far lower than the suggested value of 3.0 (Hair et al., 2022). Specifically, both the VIF values of the relationships $X1 \rightarrow Y$ and $X2 \rightarrow Y$ were 1.642, and for $X1 \rightarrow Z$, $X2 \rightarrow Z$ and $Y \rightarrow Z$, respectively 1.932, 1.804 and 1.724. Such findings suggest that the structural model shows no problematic multicollinearity among the predictor constructs. Thus, independent variables do not display excessive collinearity and thus, the expected path coefficients can be interpreted reliably with the potential of the analysis.

Table 4.3 Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

Variable	VIF
$X1 \rightarrow Y$	1.642
$X1 \rightarrow Z$	1.932
$X2 \rightarrow Y$	1.642
$X2 \rightarrow Z$	1.804
$Y \rightarrow Z$	1.724

Source: Authors (2026)

The structural model was assessed with the coefficient of determination (R^2) to indicate the explanatory power of the proposed model. The R^2 values for the endogenous constructs are shown in Table 4.4. The R^2 value of 0.420 indicates that Psychological Comfort and Aesthetic Value explain 42.0% of the variance in Price Perception. Meanwhile, the value of R^2 of 0.681 represents that Psychological Comfort, Aesthetic Value, and Price Perception jointly explain 68.1% of the variance in Purchase Decision. These results indicate that the proposed model offers substantial explanatory power in predicting consumers' purchase decisions in dental clinic services.

Table 4.4 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Price Perception (Y)	0.420	0.413
Purchase Decision (Z)	0.681	0.675

Source: Authors (2026)

Table 4.5 provides the effect size (f^2) values for the structural model. According to Hair et al. (2022), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. The results indicate that Psychological Comfort has a medium effect on both Price Perception ($f^2 = 0.177$) and Purchase Decision ($f^2 = 0.269$). Also, Price Perception demonstrates a medium effect on Purchase Decision ($f^2 = 0.180$). In contrast, Aesthetic Value exhibits small effect sizes on both Price Perception ($f^2 = 0.099$) and Purchase Decision ($f^2 = 0.098$). As a whole, these

results show that Psychological Comfort is significantly more related to Price Perception and Purchase Decision than Aesthetic Value, and Price Perception also has a meaningful effect on Purchase Decision.

Table 4.5 F-square

	X1	X2	Y	Z
X1			0.177	0.269
X2			0.099	0.098
Y				0.180
Z				

Source: Authors (2026)

Table 4.6 shows how PLSpredict has been evaluated. Each of the Q² predict values is positive, between 0.102 and 0.465 shows that all indicators are predictive of endogenous constructs and the model is relevant to them. In addition, the RMSE obtained from the PLS-SEM model is consistently lower than that calculated from the benchmark linear model (LM), indicating that the proposed model exhibited useful predictive power (Shmueli et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2022).

Table 4.6 PLSpredict Assessment

	Q²predict	PLS- SEM_RMSE	PLS- SEM_MAE	LM_RMSE	LM_MAE	IA_RMSE	IA_MAE
Y.1	0.115	0.766	0.629	0.797	0.650	0.814	0.660
Y.2	0.345	0.664	0.540	0.680	0.534	0.820	0.612
Y.3	0.102	0.805	0.641	0.815	0.637	0.850	0.663
Y.4	0.417	0.580	0.479	0.595	0.477	0.759	0.620
Y.5	0.254	0.722	0.579	0.765	0.610	0.836	0.674
Y.6	0.257	0.790	0.603	0.829	0.630	0.917	0.723
Z.1	0.298	0.695	0.530	0.715	0.538	0.829	0.639
Z.2	0.465	0.557	0.429	0.575	0.444	0.762	0.657
Z.3	0.407	0.719	0.546	0.763	0.568	0.934	0.731
Z.4	0.404	0.682	0.531	0.724	0.562	0.883	0.712
Z.5	0.442	0.667	0.521	0.701	0.538	0.892	0.693
Z.6	0.422	0.521	0.397	0.553	0.424	0.685	0.606

Source: Authors (2026)

The hypothesis was tested through the bootstrapping procedure. The structural model is analyzed using a bootstrapping analysis, the results of which are shown in Figure 2. The figure illustrates the significance levels (p-values) of the proposed relationships between Psychological Comfort, Aesthetic Value, Price Perception, and Purchase Decision, and the coefficient of determination (R²) values for the endogenous constructs. All the proposed relationships are statistically significant with p-values below 0.05 as indicated in Figure 2. For this type of association, the model accounts for 42.0% of the variance in Price Perception and 68.1% of the variance in Purchase Decision. More detail on direct and indirect effects results are given in Table 4.7.

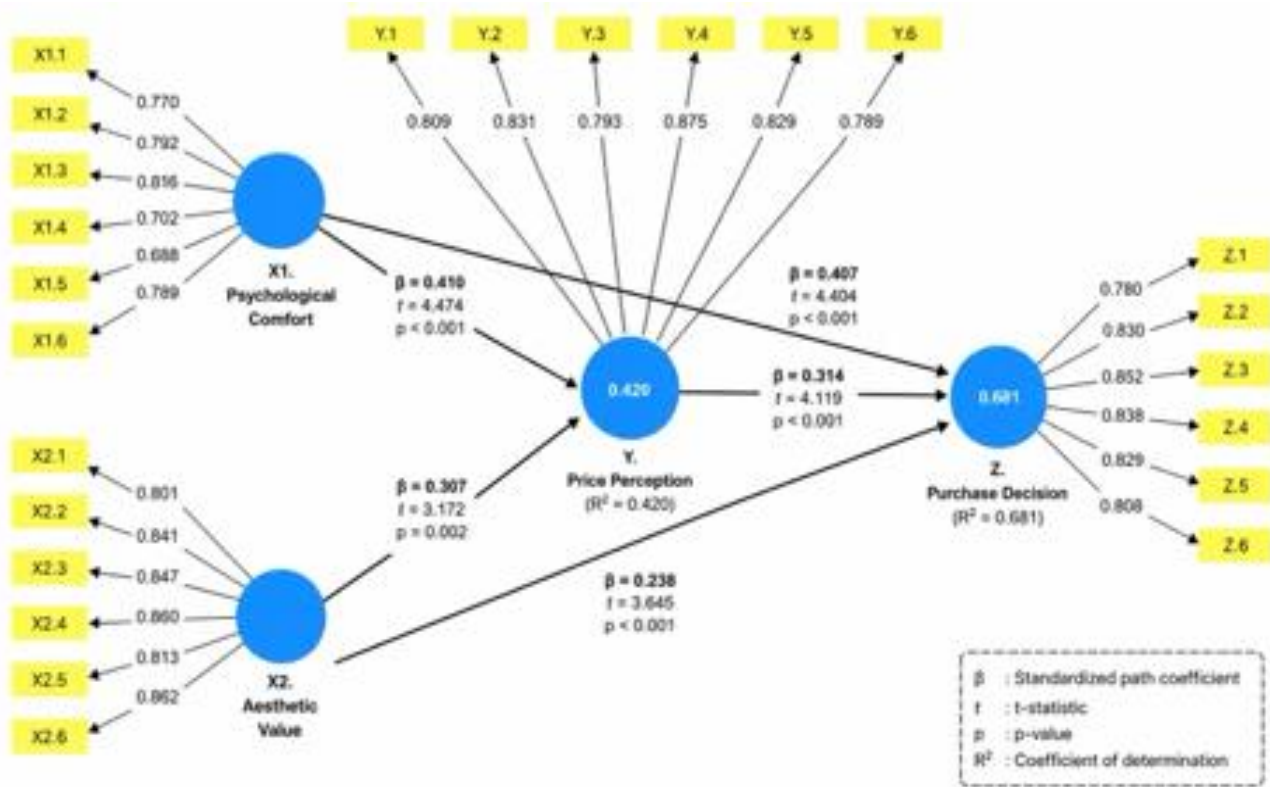


Figure 2. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing Results

Source: Authors (2026)

The results reveal that all direct relationships are positive and statistically significant. Psychological Comfort significantly affects both Price Perception and Purchase Decision. Similarly, Aesthetic Value has a significant effect on Price Perception and Purchase Decision. Price Perception has a significant positive effect on Purchase Decision, too. The indirect effect analysis shows that the relationships between Psychological Comfort and Purchase Decision and between Aesthetic Value and Purchase Decision are significantly mediated by Price Perception. As both the direct and indirect effects were statistically significant and also they were in the same positive direction, the mediating effect of Price Perception is regarded as a complementary partial mediation. These results imply that Psychological Comfort and Aesthetic Value affect Purchase Decision directly and indirectly via Price Perception. Consequently, both mediation hypotheses (H6 and H7) are supported. More detail on direct and indirect effects results are given in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Result of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-stat	p-value	Decision
H1	Psychological Comfort $\rightarrow$ Price Perception	0.410	4.474	<0.001	Accepted
H2	Aesthetic Value $\rightarrow$ Price Perception	0.307	3.172	0.002	Accepted
H3	Psychological Comfort $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	0.407	4.404	<0.001	Accepted
H4	Aesthetic Value $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	0.238	3.645	<0.001	Accepted
H5	Price Perception $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	0.314	4.119	<0.001	Accepted
H6	Psychological Comfort $\rightarrow$ Price Perception $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	0.129	2.783	0.005	Accepted
H7	Aesthetic Value $\rightarrow$ Price Perception $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	0.096	2.555	0.011	Accepted

Source: Authors (2026)

Overall, the outcomes have shown that Psychological Comfort, Aesthetic Value, and Price Perception are the most strongly impacted factors for Purchase Decision when working within dental clinic services. Of the direct effects, Psychological Comfort has the highest influence on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.407$), while Price Perception ($\beta = 0.314$) and Aesthetic Value ($\beta = 0.238$) are the second and third most significant. In addition, the significant indirect effects indicate that Price Perception serves as a partial mediator and strengthens the effects of Psychological Comfort and Aesthetic Value on Purchase Decision.

Discussion

Psychological Comfort, Aesthetic Value, and Price Perception are found to be substantial determinants of Purchase Decision in dental clinic services. Psychological Comfort then had the strongest direct effect on Purchase Decision, whereas Price Perception and Aesthetic Value came next. Psychological Comfort was also the top contributor to the predictor of Purchase Decision; as dental services are perceived as anxiety inducing, perceived risk and uncertainty-related, care-seeking behaviors will prioritize emotional comfort and trust in treatment decisions among the patients. These psychological barriers are also decreased with positive patient–provider interactions and trust in dental professionals in addition to a higher willingness of patients to use dental clinic services (Jung et al., 2018; Han & Hyun, 2015). These findings indicate that patients take into account not just clinical results, but also emotional comfort, aesthetic benefit and price when choosing dental services. Results are in agreement with those of Jung et al. (2018), which had drawn attention to the patient-provider bond and service comfort in influencing behavioral intentions, and Han and Hyun (2015) who had stressed the influence of emotional comfort on consumer behavior. The significant effect of Aesthetic Value is in agreement with the findings of Gržić et al. (2013), Samorodnitzky-Naveh et al. (2007) and Tin-Oo et al. (2011), that aesthetic results as well as self-image improvement are significant contributors to patients' treatment decisions. In addition, the positive influence of Price Perception on Purchase Decision is consistent with previous research works conducted by Konuk (2019), Tecoalu et al. (2021), Havidz (2022) and Maharani et al. (2024) found that favorable price evaluations promote consumers' purchase decisions.

This study intends to connect Psychological Comfort, Aesthetic Value, Price Perception, and Purchase Decision as an integrated research model in dental clinic services. Prior research that studies these constructs has predominantly approached them as separate constructs or in contexts where service is delivered, such as hospitality, beauty services, retail industries, and healthcare, though their respective applications are by no means exhaustive. The research contributes to the field by finding that Price Perception serves as a substantial mediator in the association between Psychological Comfort and Aesthetic Value and the Purchase Decision. It gives a holistic view to the consumers concerning their decision when it comes to aesthetic dentistry taking into account interlinked factors (psychological, aesthetic, and economic). This study empirically shows that the patients are not only subjected to the result of the treatment, but also the emotional experience of it and the service value ratings that make them choose the treatment modalities.

Evidence from research suggests that dental clinic managers should offer patient care based on psychological comfort, aesthetic value, and price perception. A place of comfort for treatment, reduction of anxiety by patients, improvement of the relationship between dentists and patients with increase in trust, may help restore patients' perception of service value. Further, the aesthetic benefits, including a favourable appearance, increased self-confidence and self-image, need to be promoted for dental practice by patient education and marketing efforts. Transparent price policies and clear explanations of the benefits of treatments must also be established so that patients perceive the prices of services as fair and worthwhile. Incorporating these factors would enable dental clinics to enhance patient acceptance, use of services, and overall competitiveness in the future.

5. CONCLUSION

The association of Psychological Comfort, Aesthetic Value, Price Perception and Purchase Decision was found in dental clinic services in Indonesia. The results verify all the hypotheses (H1–H7) that we suggested: the main one being that Psychological Comfort and Aesthetic Value have a significant positive influence on Price Perception and Purchase Decision, and Price Perception also has a significant and positive impact on Purchase Decision. Furthermore, Price Perception as a complementary partial mediator indicates that Psychological Comfort as well as Aesthetic Value may influence Purchase Decision directly and indirectly through Price Perception. These results are restricted to this cross-sectional study with dental clinic patients in Indonesia.

The findings offer several managerial implications for those managers of dental clinics as well. Psychological Comfort emerged as the strongest predictor of Purchase Decision, thus clinics should focus on enhancing emotional comfort such as improving waiting-room comfort, dentist–patient communication, reducing anxiety associated with treatment, and fostering trust during the service process to promote customers' purchases. Furthermore, clinics should offer clear explanations related to treatment costs and clearly communicate the aesthetic benefits of dental procedures to enhance patient price perceptions and promote treatment choice.

The study has bounds in terms of limitations. To begin with, purposive sampling might impede the generalizability of findings. In addition, the data were collected with a self-report questionnaire, and hence, they may be influenced by response bias. Third, we fail to demonstrate any causality across consumers' perceptions, which is a key limitation of cross-sectional designs. Fourth, the survey was not intended to inquire about the frequency of dental clinic visits. This could affect patients' perceptions of psychological comfort, price perception, and purchase decisions. Finally, participants were all from heterogeneous groups: patients had many different dental treatment experiences and so it neither discriminated between general dental service users nor users of aesthetic dental treatments. Therefore, future research is proposed to use probability sampling or longitudinal study design, add new

respondent characteristics, such as the frequency of dental clinic visits, and compare various patient groups by treatment type to reinforce and extend the proposed research model.

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