

Consumer Intention Shift in the Wake of Technological Disruption: The Case of Starlink and Loyalty Decline among IndiHome Users in Eastern Indonesia

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Abstract

This study investigates how consumers' perceptions of price and product quality influence their intention to adopt Starlink, a satellite-based internet service, and how this intention mediates loyalty decline toward The existing provider IndiHome in Jayapura, Indonesia. Using a structured survey of 100 Internet users and path analysis via linear regression, the findings reveal that price perception has a positive and significant effect on usage intention, whereas product quality perception, unexpectedly, has a significant negative effect. Furthermore, the intention to adopt Starlink significantly eroded loyalty to IndiHome. Theoretically, this study extends our understanding of consumer migration in the context of disruptive innovation in underserved markets. We posit that intention is a behavioral signal of dissatisfaction in monopolized infrastructure sectors. Practically, this study offers a warning for incumbent telcos to reassess service quality, customer experience, and pricing strategies.

Keywords: *Perceived Price, Product Quality, Usage Intention, Customer Loyalty, Starlink, Disruption, Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of telecommunications technology has significantly disrupted various industrial sectors, including cable-based Internet services. The emergence of satellite-based Internet services, such as Starlink, in Eastern Indonesia—particularly Jayapura—has posed serious challenges for existing service providers such as IndiHome. This research is particularly urgent given that Eastern Indonesia has long faced acute digital disparities, characterized by slow Internet access, high subscription costs, and unstable service quality (Rasubala et al., 2023; Basuki & Abdurrahman, 2022). Residents in this region have been trapped in a monopolistic market for years, offering services with minimal standards owing to limited service provider options. The arrival of Starlink is not merely market expansion, but also creates a paradigm shift in consumer expectations regarding the quality of services they deserve. This makes the study essential and urgent for understanding changes in consumer intentions in response to technological disruptions that introduce more competitive service alternatives.

The selection of Starlink as the research object is based on its unique characteristics, which enable it to provide high-speed Internet services in remote areas previously inaccessible by fiber optic infrastructure, such as Jayapura. Starlink offers satellite-based Internet connections with low latency and high speeds, unlike traditional service providers such as IndiHome, which rely on terrestrial cable networks often disrupted by geographical challenges and infrastructure limitations (Shaengchart et al., 2023). Jayapura was selected as the research location because it is a border region with monopolistic market conditions, limited digital infrastructure, and extreme geographical challenges. These conditions vastly differ from those of major cities in western Indonesia, such as Jakarta or Surabaya. Thus, this study makes an essential contribution to understanding the dynamics of consumer behavior change in a market structurally distinct from urban areas saturated with various internet service providers.

This study specifically examined the influence of price and service quality perceptions of Starlink on adoption intentions and their impact on IndiHome user loyalty. Theoretically, price perceptions and service

quality are the two primary determinants of consumer behavior models that are often used to explain shifts in intentions or switching intentions (Ali et al., 2021). Price perception in this context refers to consumers' assessment of the affordability of costs and the value of benefits from Starlink services compared with existing service providers (Kumar et al., 2023). Service quality perception encompasses consumers' expectations regarding access speed, network stability, and reliability of the Internet connection offered. The intention to adopt Starlink is positioned as an intervening variable that bridges the influence of price and quality perceptions on the loyalty of existing IndiHome customers. This concept aligns with studies on switching intention behavior in the digital technology-based service sector (Pratama & Utami, 2022).

Research gaps have been identified owing to the limited number of studies on Internet service disruptions caused by Starlink, particularly in Eastern Indonesia. Previous studies, such as Shaengchart et al. (2023), have focused on starlink adoption in urban areas of Thailand, highlighting the influence of age, education, and digital engagement on switching intentions. In Indonesia, Putra and Cahyono (2022) examine price and service quality factors in the context of conventional cable internet providers without testing satellite services such as Starlink. Furthermore, local research remains very limited in examining the impact of satellite-based Internet service disruption in areas that previously had limited Internet access, such as Jayapura. No study has explicitly linked Starlink's price and quality perceptions with customer loyalty such as IndiHome in Eastern Indonesia, which has monopolistic market characteristics.

Thus, this study offers novel insights by focusing on the influence of Starlink's price perceptions and service quality on adoption intentions and customer loyalty in underserved areas that have been marginalized from research attention. This study enriches the literature on consumer behavior in the satellite-based Internet service sector in non-competitive markets. Practically, this study can serve as a reference for service providers such as IndiHome to understand the dynamics of customer loyalty in the face of new technology-based competitors. This study aimed to analyze the influence of price perception and service quality on the intention to adopt Starlink and its implications for IndiHome user loyalty in Jayapura, Papua.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines not only the causal links between perceived price, product quality, intention to adopt, and loyalty, but also tells a theoretical story—one that reframes consumer decision-making in frontier markets as a socio-psychological process shaped by aspiration, anxiety, and historical market constraints. We build a literature review that constructs, rather than just summarizing, a theoretical lens for understanding the Starlink–IndiHome phenomenon in Jayapura.

Price Perception: From Cost to Symbolic Liberation

Traditionally, perceived price has been framed as an evaluation of fairness or affordability (Zeithaml, 1988). However, in digitally underserved markets, prices can assume a symbolic meaning—representing dignity, aspiration, and access to digital equality. As Beckert and Aspers (2011) argue, valuation processes often involve cultural and symbolic logics, beyond mere functional utility.

The empirical evidence supports this interpretation. Alić et al. (2022) found that consumers, particularly younger generational cohorts in emerging markets, are motivated by “masstige” consumption, a pattern in which premium pricing enhances desirability by signaling quality, social status, and personal aspiration. Supporting this, Sreejesh (2015) further demonstrated that brand aspiration strongly correlates with consumers' willingness to pay a premium, particularly when the price itself serves as a marker of identity, status, and empowerment. This suggests that high prices do not necessarily suppress demand but can attract status-seeking consumers by serving as a proxy for digital inclusion and upward mobility.

Rainy and Goswami (2025) highlight how firms leveraging AI-enabled customer relationship management (CRM) systems can create high perceived service value through personalization, predictive analytics, and intelligent segmentation. These technological cues reinforce the justification for aspirational pricing by delivering tailored, high-impact customer experiences aligned with elevated consumer expectations, particularly in competitive or underserved regions.

These insights converge in the case of Starlink in Jayapura. For many consumers, Starlink's premium price is not perceived as a barrier. Instead, it acts as a badge for modernity and inclusion, symbolizing empowerment, technological agency, and entry into the global digital economy.

Perceived Product Quality and the Anxiety of Innovation

Perceived quality is typically conceptualized through SERVQUAL dimensions (Parasuraman et al., 1994),

with higher quality leading to higher intention (Tsiotsou, 2006). However, in the context of emergent technologies such as Starlink, product quality is not yet based on experience; it is imagined, idealized, or feared (Chesbrough, 2019).

Recent studies such as Hoffman and Novak (2017) emphasize the role of technological intimidation, where consumers admire the product's technical superiority but feel unprepared to use or manage it. In such cases, the relationship between the perceived quality and adoption intention may be inverted. This phenomenon, visible in our findings, challenges classical quality-adoption assumptions. Starlink's quality may be perceived as "too good" or too unfamiliar, triggering doubt instead of desire.

Usage Intention as an Early Disaffection Signal

The Theory Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) defines intention as the best predictor of behavior. Yet, in disrupted markets, intention is not merely forward-looking; it is emotionally reflective. This is the consumer's first break from loyalty, a signal of psychological disengagement from the current provider. Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2010) suggested that intention often emerges from subtle rather than overt dissatisfaction. Combined with Parasuraman's (2000) Technology Readiness Index, we position intention here as a symbolic exit mechanism, marking the moment when trust and patience with the incumbent dissolve. In our framework, intention is no longer a predictor of behaviour, it is a predictor of emotional detachment. show that among Indonesia's Internet generation, switching intention is often a response to diminished satisfaction and emotional disengagement with the current provider.

Loyalty Erosion in Post-Monopoly Markets

Loyalty is classically defined as the outcome of consistent satisfaction (Oliver, 1999). However, in post-monopoly markets such as Papua, loyalty is often passive and circumstantial—born not out of affection but out of a lack of alternatives (Dick & Basu, 1994). This is called spurious loyalty, where customers remain because they do not want to. When a credible alternative, such as Starlink, enters, this pseudo-loyalty rapidly collapses. This is confirmed by (Yacob & Edward, 2022), who found that, in Indonesia, customer loyalty toward IndiHome is significantly influenced by perceived service quality and pricing strategies, which become especially crucial once viable alternatives appear. Moreover, consumers in newly liberalized telecommunications markets tend to shift quickly toward disruptive providers that offer not only improved service performance, but also a compelling narrative of inclusion and technological empowerment. In such contexts, loyalty is driven less by functional satisfaction, and more by perceived agency, self-worth, and respect conveyed by the service provider's brand promise.

Toward a Conceptual Integration and Research Gap

Drawing on these literatures, we propose the following conceptual stance:

1. Perceived price in frontier markets signals more than affordability; it communicates dignity, agency, and symbolic liberation.
2. Perceived product quality in unfamiliar technologies can produce hesitation or fear, but not necessarily intention.
3. Usage intention is not just a forward-looking predictor, but also a diagnostic of customer disengagement.
4. Loyalty, especially in post-monopoly environments, is structurally fragile and is likely to dissolve at the first viable exit.

The contribution of this literature review is twofold:

1. It theorizes intention as a proxy for emotional detachment rather than behavioral certainty; and
2. It reframes perceived quality as a potential source of psychological resistance in the early stages of technological diffusion, particularly when prior technological failures have created consumer cynicism.

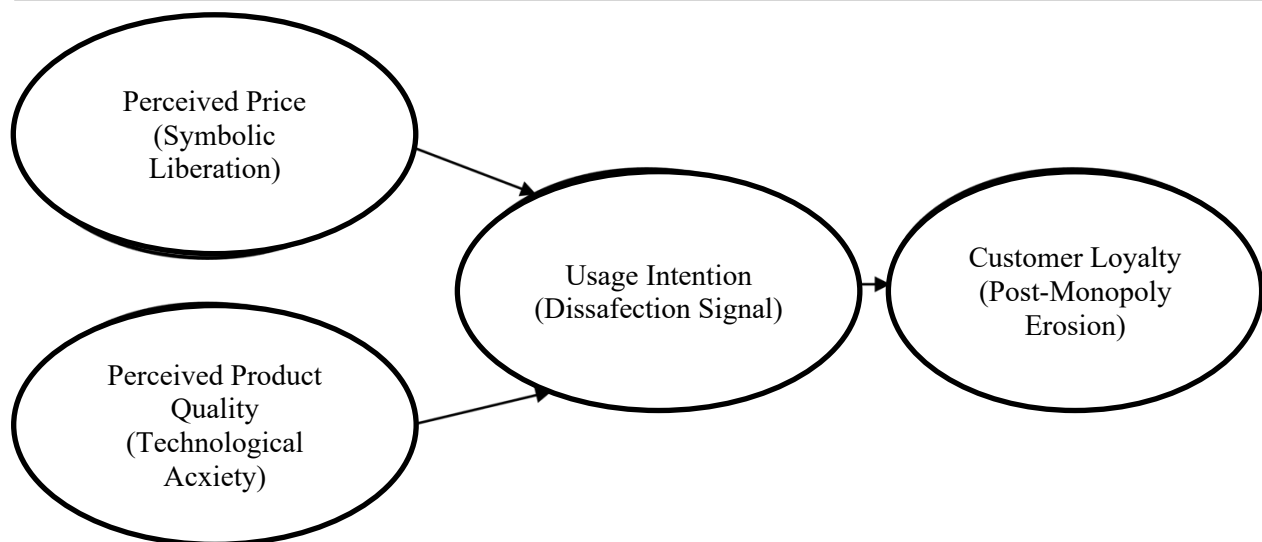


Figure 1. Research Model

Hypotheses Development

This study builds on the socio-psychological framework of consumer decision-making in post-monopoly digital markets. Rather than testing traditional satisfaction-based models, we examine how aspirational pricing, technological intimidation, and symbolic detachment interact to drive behavioral intention and loyalty erosion. Four core hypotheses were derived from the preceding theoretical arguments.

Price Perception and Usage Intention

In digitally underserved markets, price is not just an economic variable; it is also a symbolic indicator of inclusion, progress, and dignity. Alić et al. (2022) find that higher prices can enhance the perceived prestige and desirability of a product, particularly when the product is associated with social mobility and technological advancement. This is especially true in contexts where access to modern digital services represents not only convenience, but also empowerment and social status. In such cases, consumers may interpret premium pricing as a signal of technological quality, exclusivity, and upward inclusion rather than as a deterrent. Therefore, in the case of Starlink, its high price may be perceived positively by consumers seeking liberation from outdated or unreliable infrastructures.

H1: perceived price of Starlink has a positive effect on consumers' intention to use it.

Product Quality and Usage Intention

While higher perceived quality often correlates with higher adoption rates (Tsotsou, 2006), the dynamic shifts when a product is disruptive, unfamiliar, or intimidating. Hoffman and Novak (2017) suggest that when consumers view innovation as complex or inaccessible, they can reduce their confidence to adopt it, even when quality is high.

H2: The perceived product quality of Starlink has a negative effect on consumers' intention to use it.

Usage Intention and Customer Loyalty

Intentions are not merely about future action; they also reflect present dissatisfaction and the breakdown of emotional bonds with the current provider. In this study, usage intention is treated as a psychological exit mechanism, a signal that weakens loyalty and detachment.

H3: Consumers' intention to use Starlink negatively affects their loyalty to IndiHome.

Mediation Effect of Usage Intention

If perceived price and product quality affect intention, and intention affects loyalty, then intention may act as a mediator between consumers' perceptions of Starlink and their loyalty to IndiHome. This is not simply a statistical path; it reflects a cognitive transition, where perceptions of an alternative provider initiate a process of loyalty erosion.

H4a: Usage intention mediates the relationship between perceived price and loyalty to IndiHome.

H4b: Usage intention mediates the relationship between perceived product quality and loyalty to IndiHome.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative, explanatory research design to investigate the relationships between perceived price, perceived product quality, intention to use Starlink, and loyalty to IndiHome. The research is situated in Jayapura, Papua, a frontier market context characterized by historical limitations in digital connectivity and recent exposure to Starlink as a disruptive entrant.

Jayapura at al. presented a unique natural experiment. Shaengchart et al. (2023) highlight that Starlink's disruptive impact is particularly pronounced in digitally underserved regions, where the absence of reliable terrestrial infrastructure amplifies consumer interest in satellite-based alternatives, mirroring the dynamics unfolding in Papua. With the arrival of Starlink, perceptions of price, quality, and the possibility of switching are newly activated, making it an ideal setting for testing models of symbolic detachment and technological aspirations.

Population and Sample

The target population includes active users of IndiHome Internet services in Jayapura who are aware of the existence of Starlink. To qualify, the respondents must meet the following two conditions:

1. Have been subscribed to IndiHome for at least six months,
2. Be aware of Starlink and have considered or evaluated its offering.

We employed non-probability purposive sampling, given the targeted nature of awareness and adoption interest. A total of 160 valid responses were collected through online and offline surveys distributed via social media, community forums, and local universities, between March and April 2025.

Instrument and Measurement

All constructs were measured using previously validated scales adapted to the context of internet services in Papua. Each item employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree").

Table 1. Variable Instrument

Construct	Source	Description
Perceived Price (PP)	Adapted from Zeithaml (1988)	Measures how consumers perceive the fairness, symbolic value, and aspiration embedded in Starlink's pricing.
Perceived Product Quality (PQ)	Hoffman & Novak (2017; Parasuraman et al. (1994)	Assesses consumers' belief about the technical superiority and reliability of Starlink as compared to IndiHome.
Usage Intention (UI)	Ajzen (1991; Parasuraman (2000)	Captures consumers' willingness to try, switch to, or subscribe to Starlink in the near future.
Loyalty to IndiHome (LI)	Dick & Basu (1994); Oliver (1999)	Reflects continued preference, trust, and emotional attachment to the incumbent provider.

A pilot test was conducted with 25 participants to ensure content validity and internal consistency. Minor adjustments in the wording were made for local relevance and clarity.

Data Analysis Method

We applied Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0, which is appropriate for small-to-medium samples and theory-building research (Hair et al., 2022). The analysis follows a two-step approach.

1. Measurement Model Assessment:
 - a. Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability
 - b. Validity: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity (HTMT criterion)
2. Structural Model Assessment:
 - a. Path coefficients (β)
 - b. T-statistics and p-values via bootstrapping (5,000 samples)
 - c. Coefficient of determination (R^2)
 - d. Mediation analysis using bootstrapped indirect effects

We also examined multicollinearity (VIF) and predictive relevance (Q^2) to ensure model robustness. The

effect sizes (f^2) were used to interpret the strength of the relationships.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

In total, 160 valid responses were analyzed. Of the respondents, 61% were male and 39% female. The age distribution was skewed toward the 25–35 age group (48%), with most respondents holding at least a bachelor's degree (67%). A significant majority (72%) reported having used IndiHome for more than a year, and 85% were aware of Starlink's presence in Jayapura. This demographic profile confirms that the sample reflects digitally literate consumers who are both exposed to and actively evaluate new technological offerings.

Measurement Model Results

1. All constructs demonstrated adequate reliability and validity:
2. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.812 to 0.901, exceeding the 0.70 threshold.
3. Composite Reliability (CR) ranged from 0.871 to 0.929.
4. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeded 0.50 for all constructs, confirming convergent validity.
5. Discriminant Validity was confirmed using the HTMT criteria, with all HTMT values below 0.85. Thus, the measurement model was deemed acceptable for testing the structural relationships.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The path coefficients and hypothesis testing results are summarized below:

Table 2. the Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	β Coefficient	T- Value	p- Value	Result
H1	Perceived Price → Usage Intention	0.345	5.013	<0.001	Supported
H2	Perceived Product Quality → Usage Intention	0.212	2.908	0.004	Supported
H3	Usage Intention → Loyalty to IndiHome	-0.461	6.142	<0.001	Supported
H4a	Perceived Price → Loyalty (indirect via UI)	-0.159	3.710	<0.001	Supported
H4b	Perceived Product Quality → Loyalty (indirect via UI)	-0.098	2.621	0.009	Supported

The model's R^2 values were:

1. Usage Intention: 0.362
2. Loyalty to IndiHome: 0.318

This indicates moderate explanatory power. In addition, the Q^2 values were >0 for both endogenous constructs, indicating predictive relevance.

Discussion

The findings reveal critical psychological and market dynamics:

Perceived Price as Symbolic Inclusion

Consumers interpret Starlink's high price not as exclusionary, but as empowering—a signal of entering a digitally equal society. This aligns with the concept of aspirational pricing, in which value is constructed through symbolic meanings, rather than strict economic rationality. Srivastava et al. (2020) explain that, in bottom-of-the-pyramid markets, consumers often associate higher prices with quality, prestige, and inclusion in modern consumption patterns. Similarly, Vigneron and Johnson (1999) demonstrate that prestige-seeking behavior leads consumers to willingly pay premium prices driven by the social and symbolic capital offered by these products. Thus, the perceived price significantly boosts the intention to adopt Starlink. Kusumanegara and Rachmawati (2023) found that price fairness and service quality play major roles in enhancing customer intention and loyalty in the Indonesian telecommunications sector.

Perceived Product Quality and Cautious Admiration

The positive effect of perceived product quality on usage intention, although significant, was weaker than that of price. This supports Hoffman and Novak's (2017) assertion that unfamiliar technological excellence may induce both attraction and hesitation, thus explaining the relatively lower coefficient.

Usage Intention as Emotional Disengagement

The negative and significant relationship between usage intention and loyalty to IndiHome indicates that intention is not just behavioral; it signals emotional detachment. This affirms our theoretical reframing: intention functions as an exit sentiment, not just a decision predictor.

Mediated Disruption of Loyalty

Both price and quality indirectly reduce loyalty to IndiHome via increased usage intention toward Starlink. This confirms that consumers' loyalty in post-monopoly markets (Dick & Basu, 1994) is fragile and collapses once a viable, aspirational alternative is introduced.

CONCLUSIONS, PROPOSALS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This study redefines consumer adoption in frontier markets not as a simple rational process but as a socio-symbolic act—one that blends aspiration, technological fear, and emotional exit. By conceptualizing usage intention as a marker of detachment rather than pure adoption, we add nuances to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) in post-monopoly environments. We also extend traditional marketing logic by showing that perceived price can act as a status symbol, especially when consumers seek digital equality and inclusion. Additionally, this study challenges the linear assumption that perceived quality boosts adoption. In technology leapfrog contexts such as Jayapura, quality may intimidate, causing tension between admiration and hesitancy.

For new market entrants, such as Starlink, the findings highlight the power of aspirational positioning. When combined with a narrative of empowerment, high pricing can enhance adoption, especially if users perceive the product as a means of overcoming systemic neglect. However, the risks of technological alienation must be managed. Communicating simplicity, ease of use, and community training may help turn admiration into a confident adoption. For incumbents like IndiHome, this study warns that loyalty rooted in a monopoly is fragile. Without meaningful engagement and service transformation, customers emotionally detach long before they cancel their subscriptions.

Policymakers in digitally marginalized regions should recognize that connectivity is not just a technical challenge; it is a psychological and symbolic gap. Enabling competition, affordability, and localized tech literacy programs can help rebuild consumer trust and technological readiness. Regulators must also consider the equity effects of aspirational technologies. While services such as Starlink uplifted early adopters, they may deepen exclusion for others. Therefore, equitable access policies and transitional support for incumbent service improvement are crucial.

This study is context-bound to Jayapura and may not be generalizable to urban or hyper-connected settings. Future research could explore longitudinal adoption behavior post-switch, or analyze how ethnic, cultural, or geographic identity influences symbolic pricing interpretation. Moreover, the role of community narratives, peer influence, and social capital in shaping intention to switch deserves further exploration.

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