

THE ROLE OF PRODUCT QUALITY AND BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS OF ROHANI TEMPE CHIPS BUYERS IN MALANG CITY

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Abstract

Rapid developments in the snack food industry, especially tempeh chips products, have been seen in recent years. Increasingly tight business competition makes brand image and product quality the main factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Tight competition in the tempeh chips market, especially in Malang City, is the main challenge that has caused a decline in sales. Therefore, this research aims to examine the influence of product quality and brand image on purchasing decisions for Rohani Tempe Chips in Malang. This research uses an inferential statistical approach with 96 respondents selected through a purposive sampling technique, focusing on consumers who have purchased Rohani Tempe Chips in Malang City. Data was collected through questionnaires and analyzed using path analysis. The research results show that: Product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, Product quality has a positive and significant effect on brand image, Product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Rohani Tempe Chips in Malang through brand image

Keywords: product quality, brand image, purchasing decisions.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the snack food industry, especially tempeh chip products, has shown an increasingly rapid increase in recent years. This is supported by increasing consumer interest in healthy and natural foods, including processed tempeh products. In this case, product quality is the main factor that can influence purchasing decisions. Public awareness of the importance of healthy eating has become the main driver of growth in this industry.

In the current era of increasingly fierce competition, consumer purchasing decisions are greatly influenced by brand image and product quality. Strong brand perception and high-quality products have proven to be important factors in attracting customer attention and fostering loyalty. In the context of the food industry, such as tempeh chips, the importance of product quality and brand image cannot be ignored.

Indonesia is a country that is rich in cultural and ethnic diversity, and has various types of typical food, one of which is chips. Chips have become a favorite food among various levels of society. This food is often used as a snack or accompaniment when eating. Not only have they received wide acceptance among Indonesian people, but chips from Indonesia have also gained popularity in the international market. The types of chips in Indonesia are quite diverse, and one of them is tempeh chips.

Tempe chips are a traditional Indonesian food that has long been known, especially on the island of Java, initially only considered as a light snack that was easily sold by traders. However, over time, tempeh chips have become a typical food from various regions in Indonesia, such as West Java, Yogyakarta and Bali. Rohani Tempe Chips, one of the potential products in the snack food market which was established in June 1988, has superior product quality and a positive brand image, becoming the main differentiator in attracting consumers' attention and influencing their purchasing decisions.

Product quality is a crucial factor in the snack food industry such as tempeh chips, not only limited to taste and texture, but also includes cleanliness, safety, nutritional value and product consistency. Rohani Tempe Chips are known for prioritizing high quality standards, using quality tempeh raw materials, a production process that maintains cleanliness, and innovation in flavor formulation that suits the tastes of modern consumers. Consistency in producing products is also a characteristic that consumers can rely on, providing consistent trust and satisfaction with every purchase.

Although Rohani Tempe Chips has succeeded in building a strong reputation in terms of product quality, the tempeh chips industry also faces challenges, such as tight competition in the market and declining sales due to product quality issues that are not durable. To overcome this challenge, improving product quality is the main possible solution differentiate manufacturers from other competitors and attract consumer interest. With better product quality, manufacturers can strengthen their brand image and increase positive purchasing decisions, thereby remaining competitive in a busy market.

To overcome challenges in the tempeh chips industry, steps that can be taken include improving marketing and branding strategies to differentiate products from competitors, innovating products both in terms of taste and packaging, and improving product quality by increasing quality control at every stage. production. In addition, establishing partnerships with tempe farmers to ensure the supply of quality raw materials, providing training and guidance in agricultural practices according to standards, and conducting regular market research is also necessary to understand consumer trends and needs, as well as adapt business and product strategies according to preferences. market. By implementing these steps, it is hoped that we can overcome intense competition, declining sales, and increase the competitive advantage of tempe chips products in the market.

Product quality is a key factor in increasing consumer interest and business success. According to Handoko (2022), product quality is defined as the conformity of goods with predetermined standards, which affects the value of the product. Apart from product quality, brand image also has an important role in mediating consumer purchasing decisions, including reputation, visual impression, perceived quality, and overall brand values.

A study by Kurniadi & Antari (2023) highlights the important role of brand image as an intermediary between product quality and consumer purchasing decisions. Brand image allows consumers to link their perception of product quality to the final decision to buy or not buy a product. Consumers tend to prefer products with a positive brand image to those that are less favorable. Developing and maintaining a positive brand image is the key to influencing consumer purchasing behavior and winning market competition, as supported by research by Darmajaya & Sukawati (2018). Brand image is the result of various associations and experiences that shape consumers' beliefs about a brand, which significantly influences their perceptions and purchasing decisions. So the purpose of this research is to test the influence of product quality on purchasing decisions for Rohani Tempe Chips, to test the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions for Rohani Tempe Chips, to test the influence of product quality on the brand image of Rohani Tempe Chips and to test the influence of product quality on purchasing decisions for Tempe Chips. Spirituality through brand image as a mediating variable.

According to (Kotler and Keller, 2016) that product quality is the product's ability to carry out its use, including durability, reliability, accuracy, which is achieved comprehensively. It is very important for businesses to consistently improve the quality of goods and services them because it can increase client satisfaction and entice them to make additional purchases.

Brand image is the perception or image that consumers have of a brand. It covers all aspects related to a brand, including product quality, reliability, reputation, corporate image, brand values, and user experience associated with the brand.

According to Keller (2008), brand image is how people understand or consider a company and its products. Meanwhile, according to Kotler and Keller (2009), brand image is the perception that exists in the minds and hearts of customers. This response arises when the product that is remembered is mentioned, which shows the consumer's memory of the product.

Purchasing decisions according to (Kotler and Armstrong, 2003) in (Agung & Sri, 2019) , are a stage in the decision-making process where customers make factual purchases. Purchasing decisions are a mental process carried out by consumers to choose among various existing product or service options, with the aim of meeting their needs or desires, covering several stages, starting from awareness of needs, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, to the final decision to purchase. or not.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods used to describe or explain data numerically and comprehensively. This approach aims to collect data that can be measured quantitatively and then organize, summarize, and analyze that data to provide a clear picture of the observed phenomenon.

Inferential statistics, according to Sugiyono (2018), is a statistical method used to analyze sample data and then extrapolate (conclude) the findings to the population from which the sample was taken. An inferential quantitative approach, a research strategy based on data obtained systematically during research regarding the facts and characteristics of the topic under study, is used by researchers based on this concept.

A quantitative approach also allows researchers to draw conclusions from research findings to a wider population and obtain results that are more objective and can be measured accurately. This is important to provide a deeper understanding of the factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions for Rohani Tempe Chips products in Malang City.

In research, the type of data used is ordinal level data, which is a type of quantitative data where the values have a level or order, but the distance between the values is not uniform. In ordinal data, values can be ordered from lowest to highest, but the differences between the values do not have a consistent interpretation. In other words, it can't it is assumed that the difference between two adjacent values is equal to the difference between the other two values. Some of the characteristics of ordinal tiered data include: Order: The values in ordinal tiered data can be sorted from lowest to highest or vice versa, Level: Ordinal tiered data shows different levels or classes between the values and the Interval Difference is Not Fixed: The distance between values does not have a fixed or consistent interval difference.

Primary data is the data source used by the author in this research. Primary data, according to Sugiyono (2018), is a type of data source that provides data collectors with access to obtain data directly. Primary data is often collected by researchers or parties who have a direct interest in a particular study or observation.

In this research, researchers used a questionnaire as a tool to collect data. A questionnaire is a technique for collecting data in which participants are given a written list of questions to complete. Open or closed questions can be included in a questionnaire, which can be distributed online or given to respondents in person.

Researchers apply a quantitative descriptive approach, a method that utilizes mathematical equations to analyze research findings and relate them to relevant theories, which are then used as a basis for drawing conclusions with.

Likert Scale

The Likert scale was used in this research to evaluate respondents' thoughts and reactions. Sugiyono (2018:168) states that the Likert Scale is a technique used to measure how people or groups of people feel about certain phenomena in terms of attitudes, views and perceptions. On a Likert scale, there are five possible answers to each question. As a result, the author gives a value (weight) to each alternative answer chosen.

Table 1 Measurement Scale

	Classification	Alternative Answers	Score
1.	SS	Strongly agree	5
2.	S	Agree	4
3.	CS	Simply Agree	3
4.	T.S	Don't agree	2
5.	STS	Strongly Disagree	1

In calculating each respondent's answers to the list of questions asked, a special score or value will then be given. The score ranges from 1 to 5.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is a statistical technique used to summarize and describe the basic properties of a set of data. The main focus is to provide a better understanding of the data by using various graphic and numerical techniques or analysis to present respondent data, such as gender, age and occupation, which are characteristics of the conditions studied by the researcher. And it can be analyzed using the SmartPLS program which aims to collect, manage and analyze data so that it can be presented in a more attractive format. (Ghozali, 2016).

Quantitative analysis

Using statistical techniques, quantitative analysis is an analytical method used to handle data generated from a list of questions in the form of numbers collected through questionnaires. The author of this research uses the SmartPLS application. The quantitative aim of this research is to identify significant simultaneous and partial impacts.

Data Instrument Test

Validity test

The validity of a questionnaire is determined by a validity test. If the questions in a questionnaire are able to reveal the items that the questionnaire is supposed to measure, then the questionnaire is considered valid. The correlation value between the items and the total, or item-total correlation, is compared with the table correlation value to carry out a validity test. A question is considered valid if the calculated correlation value (r calculated) exceeds the table correlation value (r table) (Ghozali, 2016).

Reliability Test

Questionnaire reliability is measured by how well the questionnaire represents variable or construct indicators. If someone consistently gives the same answers to the same questions over time, the questionnaire is considered trustworthy and reliable. With SmartPLS, you can use the Cronbach Alpha (α) statistical test to measure reliability. If a variable produces an α value of at least 0.6, then the variable is considered reliable (Ghozali, 2016).

Partial Least Square Method

For systems of independent and dependent variables, partial least squares (PLS) analysis is an alternative to canonical correlation, covariance-based structural equation models (SEM), or Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression (P Wuri Handayani, 2019). Because PLS eliminates the assumptions of OLS regression, including the multivariate normal distribution of the data and the problem of multicollinearity among exogenous variables, PLS is a powerful analytical technique also known as soft modeling. PLS is used to investigate or validate the existence of correlation between latent variables and to test less robust theories (limited samples and problems with data normality).

Structural Model Planning (Inner Model)

The structural model (Inner Model) is a representation of the relationship between latent variables and manifest variables, and functions to ensure the strength and accuracy of the structural model being built. R-Square values, such as 0.67, 0.33, and 0.15, are used to indicate the strength of a model, where higher values indicate a stronger model, while lower values indicate a weaker model (Ghozali and Latan, 2020).

Measurement Model Planning (Outter Model)

The relationship between each indicator block and its associated latent variable is described by a measurement model, also known as an outer model. The reliability of the research instrument and construct validity were assessed using the outer model. The goal is to evaluate the extent to which the tool can measure what needs to be evaluated and to guarantee that the tool is consistent in measuring a concept or that respondents are consistent in responding to questions in a survey or other research tool. (Ghozali and Latan 2020).

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity refers to the extent to which indicators measuring the same construct are highly correlated with each other. Convergent validity shows that the measurement instrument can describe the construct being measured well. Usually, convergent validity is tested using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with an AVE value above 0.5 indicating good convergent validity (Ghozali, 2015).

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which different constructs are truly different from each other. Discriminant validity shows that indicators for one construct are not highly correlated with indicators of other constructs. One way to test discriminant validity is to see whether the correlation between constructs is lower than the correlation of indicators within one construct.

Cronbach Alpha

Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient that measures the internal reliability of a measurement instrument, which shows the consistency of answers to items that measure the same construct. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0 to 1, with values above 0.6 generally considered to indicate good reliability. A higher value indicates that the items in the instrument have better internal consistency (Hariyono, 2016).

Hypothesis testing

T Test (Partial)

The T test is used to evaluate the partial influence (per variable) of the independent variable on the dependent variable. In this testing process, decisions are taken based on the following criteria: If the calculated t value is greater than the t table value (t-statistic > 1.96) or the significance value (Sig) less than alpha (α), then the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted, which indicates that there is a significant influence between the Product Quality Variables (X1), Brand Image (X2), and Purchase Decisions (Y). However, if the calculated t value is smaller than the t table value (t-statistic < 1.96) or the significance value is greater than alpha (α), then H0 is accepted and Ha is rejected, which indicates that there is no significant influence between the Product Quality Variable (X1), Brand Image (X2), and Purchase Decision (Y) (Ghozali, 2016).

Path Analysis Test (path analysis)

According to Ghozali (2018) path analysis, or path analysis, is a statistical method used to evaluate the causal relationship between variables in a model. This method extends regression analysis by allowing simultaneous testing of multiple cause-and-effect relationships between variables

RESULTS

Data Instrument Test

Validity test

Table 2 Validity Test

Items	Variable X1	Variable M1	Variable Y1
X1.1	0.661		
X1.2	0.614		
X1.3	0.729		
X1.4	0.637		
X1.5	0.702		
X1.6	0.707		
M1.1		0.642	
M1.2		0.631	
M1.3		0.851	
M1.4		0.824	
Y1.1			0.540
Y1.2			0.771
Y1.3			0.756
Y1.4			0.782

From the validity test it can be concluded that all the variables Product Quality, Brand Image and Purchasing Decisions have valid data because they have values above 0.50

Reliability Test

Table 3 Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Items
Product quality	0.756	6
Brand Image	0.771	4
Buying decision	0.707	4

It can be seen from the table above that each statement relating to the variables of product quality, brand image and purchasing decisions has a Cronbach's alpha value that is higher than 0.60. Thus, it can be said that every statement used in this research for each variable can be trusted.

**Partial Least Square (PLS) Method
 Structural Model Planning (Inner Model)**

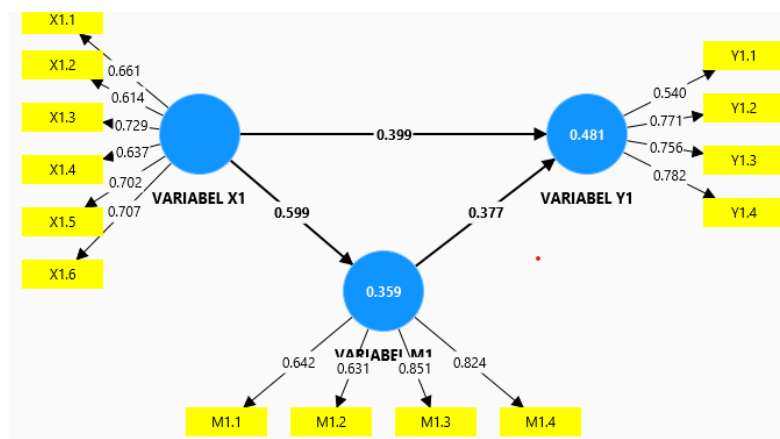


Figure 1 Structural Model Planning (Inner Model)

Path coefficient values, which measure how much latent variables influence initial outcomes, serve as the basis for internal models, structural models. This model is evaluated by considering the significance value and R-square. Verifying R-square, a model fit test, is part of inner model testing. Checking the predictive significance of R-square for a model variable in a PLS model allows one to determine the R-square value. The second step is to evaluate the R² value, which is interpreted the same as in linear regression, namely how much of the variability of the endogenous variable can be explained by the exogenous variable. The R² value is classified into three categories R-Square 0.67, 0.33 and 0.15 indicating a strong, moderate and weak model (Ghozali and Latan, 2020).

Table 4 R-Square Output

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Variable Y1	0.481	0.470

Based on the results of the structural model, the R-Square value of the purchasing decision variable is 0.481. This means that 48.1% of the variability in variable Y (Purchasing Decision) can be explained by variables X1 (Product Quality) and M1 (Brand Image), while 51.9% is explained by other variables outside the independent variables and mediating variables. The criteria for this structural model are included in the moderate to strong or good category.

Measurement Model Planning (Outter Model)

Convergent Validity

Table 5 AVE value

	Average Variance Extracted
Product quality	0.557
Brand Image	0.553
Buying decision	0.517

From the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value shown in the table, it can be concluded that all the variables above have values that meet the requirements with values above 0.5, so these variables are considered reliable.

Descriminant Validit

Table 6 Output Cross Loading

	Brand Image	Buying decision	Product quality
M1.1	0.642	0.380	0.362
M1.2	0.631	0.401	0.357
M1.3	0.851	0.544	0.537
M1.4	0.824	0.487	0.497
X1.1	0.427	0.400	0.661
X1.2	0.340	0.373	0.614
X1.3	0.461	0.520	0.729
X1.4	0.246	0.403	0.637
X1.5	0.403	0.381	0.702
X1.6	0.492	0.438	0.707
Y1.1	0.353	0.540	0.300
Y1.2	0.527	0.771	0.365
Y1.3	0.442	0.756	0.525
Y1.4	0.445	0.782	0.564

Each statement indicator has a stronger relationship with its respective variable compared to other variables, as can be observed from the cross-loading results. Therefore, it can be said that the latent construct predicts its own table indicators more accurately than other table indicators.

Cronbach Alpha

Table 7 Cronbach Alpha

	Cronbach's Alpha
Variable M1	0.723
Variable X1	0.763
Variable Y1	0.684

From the cross loading results , it shows that the Cronbach's alpha value, with a value of more than 0.60, meets the required standards. As a result, these values are acceptable and demonstrate strong reliability.

Hypothesis testing

t Test (Partial)

Table 8 Path Coefficient

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	t Statistics	P Value
KP-KPEM	0.399	0.407	0.122	3,282	0.003
CM-KPEM	0.377	0.373	0.126	2,980	0,000
KP-CM	0.599	0.607	0.070	8,540	0.001

Information:

KP = Product Quality

CM = Brand Image

KPEM = Purchase Decision

The influence of product quality on purchasing decisions for spiritual tempe chips in Malang City

Based on the summary of path analysis test results, with a p-value of 0.003, the coefficient value is 0.399, smaller than alpha 0.05. This shows the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho), indicating that product quality (X1) has a significant and positive influence on purchasing decisions (Y). The direct impact of Product Quality (X1) on Purchasing Decisions (Y) is 39.9%, or 0.399, as shown in Table 4.29. As a result, the t-statistic for construct X2 is greater than 1.96, or 3.282, and the probability value (P-Values) is smaller than 0.05, or 0.003. Thus, it can be said that Ha2 is acceptable. These findings indicate that the decision to buy spiritual tempeh chips in Malang City is influenced positively and significantly by product quality. Product quality is an aspect that manufacturers must pay close attention to, because high quality products can provide satisfaction to customers.

The influence of brand image on purchasing decisions for spiritual tempe chips in Malang City

With a p-value of 0.000 and a coefficient value of 0.377, this value is smaller than alpha 0.05. This shows that the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, indicating that brand image (X2) has a direct influence of 0.377 or 37.7% on purchasing decisions (Y), which is a positive and substantial influence. As a result, the probability value (P-Values) for construct X2 is less than 0.05 or 0.000, and the t-statistic is more than 1.96, or 2.980. In conclusion, there is a relationship between the Brand Image variable (X2) and increased Purchasing Decisions (Y). These findings indicate that brand perception significantly and positively influences consumers' decisions

to buy spiritual tempeh chips in Malang City. Before customers make a purchasing choice, their perception of a product or service may be influenced by the brand image. Customers are more likely to buy a product if they have a positive perception of the brand.

The influence of product quality on brand image among buyers of spiritual tempe chips in Malang City

Based on the summary of the path analysis test results, the p-value is 0.001 and the coefficient value is 0.599, indicating that this value is smaller than alpha 0.05. This shows the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0), which indicates that product quality (X1) has a strong and positive impact on brand image (X2). Product Quality (X1) has an impact of 59.9% (0.599) on Brand Image (X2). As a result, the probability value (P-Values) for construct X2 is less than 0.05, or 0.001, and the t-statistic is more than 1.96, or 8.540. Thus, it can be said that H_{a2} is acceptable. In short, increasing Brand Image (M1) is significantly influenced by the Product Quality variable (X1). This finding is in line with other research which shows how the brand image of spiritual tempeh chips in Malang City is positively and significantly influenced by product quality.

The influence of product quality on purchasing decisions for spiritual tempeh chips in Malang City with brand image as a mediating variable

Based on the results of the path analysis, the coefficient values of 0.599 and 0.377 are multiplied to obtain a coefficient value of 0.226 or 22.6%, in accordance with research which shows that product quality has a positive and significant effect on the decision to purchase spiritual tempe chips in Malang City through image brand. This shows the contribution of the indirect influence of product quality (X1) on purchasing decisions (Y1) through brand image (M1). Individuals make purchasing decisions based on their attitudes towards consuming or purchasing a product that they already trust, believe can satisfy their needs, and are willing to bear the associated risks.

DISCUSSION

The research results above reveal that product quality positively and significantly influences purchasing decisions for spiritual tempe chips in Malang City through brand image. The implication is that every increase in product quality will increase purchasing decisions through brand image. The high quality products that will be produced by the company are able to attract the attention of consumers to make purchases. However, the lack of new variants of Rohani Tempe Chips may cause consumers to switch to competing products.

To improve product quality, companies must continue to make innovation efforts by making attractive products and introducing new variations, while ensuring that these products meet established standards. Companies need to maintain a positive brand image even though they can provide high-quality products and satisfy customers. Providing high-quality products at affordable prices will help improve brand perception as existing customers are more likely to stick with Rohani Tempe Chips rather than trying other brands.

This research was conducted based on scientific steps, but has limitations, namely only examining two variables that influence purchasing decisions, namely product quality and brand image. Testing other variables that can also have an impact is very important because there are many other factors that can influence purchasing decisions that are not examined in this research. Apart from that, this research was only carried out on buyers of spiritual tempeh chips in Malang City, so it needs to be carried out in other places to expand the reach. The number of respondents in this study was also limited, so it is hoped that future researchers will use a larger sample.

CONCLUSION

Increasing product quality has a positive and significant influence, influencing purchasing decisions. This shows that efforts to improve product quality by the company can increase purchasing decisions for Rohani Tempe Chips.

Increasing brand image has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. This indicates that improving the brand image that the company creates can increase purchasing decisions for spiritual tempeh chips in Malang City.

Increasing product quality positively and significantly influences the brand image of spiritual tempe chips in Malang City. This states that improving product quality can improve the company's brand image.

Through brand image, product quality has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. This shows how a stronger brand image and higher product quality can influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

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