

The Relationship of Product Knowledge, Company Image, and Promotion on Purchasing Decisions for Unilever Indonesia Products in Sidoarjo

Rangga Ramadhani¹, Rizky Eka Febriansah²

^{1,2}Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia



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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to examine the relationship between product knowledge, company image, and promotional activities with consumer purchasing decisions in the context of an increasingly competitive business environment. **Method:** A quantitative research design with a correlational approach was employed, involving a sample of 100 respondents selected to represent consumer perceptions. Data were analyzed statistically to determine the strength and significance of relationships among the studied variables. **Results:** The findings reveal that product knowledge, company image, and promotion each have a positive and significant relationship with purchasing decisions. These results indicate that consumers' understanding of products, perceptions of corporate reputation, and exposure to promotional efforts jointly influence their decision-making process. **Novelty:** This research contributes to the existing literature by providing updated empirical evidence on the determinants of purchasing behavior in Indonesia, highlighting the synergistic role of cognitive and perceptual factors in shaping consumer decisions within an emerging market context.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of increasingly widespread globalization, the rapid flow of information and growing global connectivity have created a competitive arena in the industrial world [1]. This condition is not only limited to the impact of globalization, but is also increasingly complicated by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic that began in late 2019. As a result of this development, consumer behavior has also changed where consumers are increasingly wise and selective in determining their purchasing decisions [2]. So that purchasing decisions are now not just mere transactions, but have become strategic decisions that are important in determining the success of the company.

One of the major companies that has also felt the changes in consumer behavior is Unilever Indonesia [3]. Unilever Indonesia is one of the fast moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies in Indonesia that has experience for more than 87 years and with well-known product brands, such as Pepsodent, Lux, Lifebuoy, Dove, Sunsilk, Clear, Rexona, Vaseline, Rinso, Molto, Sunlight, Wall's, Royco, and Bango [4]. To cope with these changes, this company has implemented various strategies to remain competitive. The strategies carried out include product development and innovation, strengthening brand communication and implementing the concept of sustainability in the company [5].

Unilever Indonesia asserts its dominance as a fast moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) company in Indonesia with various advantages compared to its competitors. These advantages include a larger market share [6], higher market capitalization [7], and product brands that are favorites of consumers in Indonesia, such as Sunlight [8], Pepsodent [9], and Kecap Bango [10]. With these advantages, Unilever Indonesia is able to maintain its position as the leading FMCG company in Indonesia.

With Unilever Indonesia's dominance built on a large market share, high market capitalization, and superior product brands, understanding consumer behavior is crucial to maintaining that position. One stage in consumer behavior is the purchase decision stage. The purchase decision is the decision made by consumers regarding what goods to buy, how much, where to buy, when to buy, and how to make the purchase [11].

In the context of purchasing decisions, consumers can be influenced by various aspects, including personal, psychological, marketing, social, and cultural factors [12]. Each aspect is then divided into several factors. When designing a product offering strategy, companies need to carefully consider and consider these aspects.

Previous studies have highlighted several marketing factors related to purchasing decisions, such as brand image [13], product quality [14], product innovation [15], brand awareness [15], and price [13]. Through these previous studies, the conclusions drawn confirm that these factors have a significant relationship and role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions, particularly regarding Unilever Indonesia products.

Previous studies have focused on factors such as brand image, product quality, product innovation, brand awareness, and price in explaining consumer purchasing decisions, particularly for Unilever Indonesia products. While these factors have been shown to be related, it is important to note that other factors may also be related to consumer purchasing decisions. These factors include product knowledge [16], corporate image [17], and promotion [18].

There are differences in research findings regarding the factors examined by several previous studies in relation to purchasing decisions. Product knowledge yields different results, with one study confirming a positive relationship with purchasing decisions [19], while a similar study concluded the opposite [20]. Corporate image also shows different results, with one study showing a positive relationship [21], while another study found no relationship with purchasing decisions [22]. Similarly, promotion has also shown different results. One study found a relationship between promotion and purchasing decisions [23], while another study concluded the opposite [24]. Thus, the research results on each factor show different conclusions regarding the relationship between these factors and purchasing decisions.

This research attempts to fill a research gap identified, namely the evidence gap, which arises from contradictory findings from previous studies. An evidence gap arises when new research findings contradict widely accepted conclusions from previous studies [25]. This effort is conducted by analyzing how product knowledge relates to purchasing decisions, corporate image to purchasing decisions, and promotion to

purchasing decisions, specifically for Unilever Indonesia products. Through the analysis of these factors, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to science, particularly in the field of consumer behavior studies.

Based on the research background described, there are issues that need to be investigated in order to fill this research gap.

Purchasing decisions are the process of determining whether to buy a product or choose not to make a purchase [27]. Purchasing decisions are also the result of various factors that influence consumers, which then shape their attitudes in processing information and producing responses related to the product they will buy [28]. Thus, purchasing decisions are a process that involves considering various factors that ultimately result in the consumer's final decision to buy or not buy a product.

Purchasing decisions have several indicators, such as: 1) product purchase, 2) brand purchase, 3) selection of purchasing channels, 4) timing of purchase, and 5) quantity [29]. Product purchase is a consumer's step to obtain the desired goods or services. Meanwhile, brand purchasing focuses on the product brand in the purchasing process. Purchasing channel selection involves a process in which each item to be purchased must be selected through the appropriate purchasing channel. Purchasing timing involves the consumer's decision to determine when is the right time to carry out the product purchase. Finally, the quantity reflects how much of the product the consumer wants or purchases.

Purchasing decisions are the result of various considerations involving specific aspects of the consumer [11]. These aspects include personal, psychological, marketing, social, and cultural factors. These factors are then divided into factors, each of which plays a role in the purchasing decision. Therefore, a consumer's decision to purchase a product does not emerge spontaneously but rather through consideration of these various aspects.

Previous research has shown that purchasing decisions are related to several factors, such as the consumer's level of product knowledge [30], the company's positive image [17], and the success of promotions [31]. These factors shape the final decision made by consumers in choosing which product to purchase.

Product knowledge has several indicators. These include: 1) product attributes, 2) functional benefits, 3) psychosocial benefits, and 4) perceived value [34]. Product attributes involve physical characteristics or specific features that distinguish one product from another. Functional benefits refer to the practical utility or performance of a product, which can influence a consumer's decision to choose or use a particular product. Meanwhile, psychosocial benefits encompass aspects such as prestige or social image associated with product use. Finally, the perceived value after a consumer uses a product reflects the satisfaction or additional benefits perceived after the consumption experience.

Product knowledge is related to purchasing decisions because adequate information about a product can influence how consumers choose which product to

purchase [35]. Product knowledge is formed through experience and information obtained from various sources. Consumers with adequate product knowledge tend to make more informed purchasing decisions because they understand the attributes and benefits of a product, thus choosing a product that aligns with their needs and preferences.

Previous research has shown that product knowledge is related to purchasing decisions. Based on previous research, consumers who have good information about a product will feel more confident in their purchasing decisions because the product can meet their expectations [30]. The level of understanding of a product is related to consumers in determining their purchasing choices [36]. The higher the level of product knowledge a consumer has, the higher the level of their purchasing decisions [37]. Therefore, it can be concluded that product knowledge is related to purchasing decisions.

Corporate image is the consumer's overall view of a company, reflected through the associations that arise in their minds when they see or hear the company's name [38]. Corporate image is also the consumer's perception of a company's attributes and qualities related to its performance [39]. Therefore, corporate image can be defined as the overall impression or picture formed in the public's mind based on interactions, experiences, and perceptions of the company's performance.

Corporate image has several indicators, such as: 1) corporate identity, 2) corporate reputation, and 3) image vis-à-vis competitors [34]. Corporate identity involves visual and symbolic elements that characterize the company's identity, such as logos, colors, designs, and other branding elements. Corporate reputation reflects consumers' general perceptions of the company, which include evaluations of the company's credibility, reliability, integrity, and overall performance. Competitor image refers to the views or perceptions consumers or stakeholders have of a company compared to its competitors.

A good corporate image can create a consumer tendency to purchase the company's products [40]. This occurs because a good image can build consumer trust in the company. This trust serves as a basis for making choices, so consumers are more likely to choose products from companies with a good image over those from other companies. A good image can also provide a perception of the quality of a company's products, which can ultimately strengthen consumer decisions.

Previous research has shown that corporate image is related to purchasing decisions. Based on previous research, consumer perceptions of a company's reputation are related to the level of purchasing decisions made [41]. A positive corporate image is consistent with an increased consumer tendency to make purchases [21]. The better a company's image in the eyes of consumers, the more likely consumers are to decide to purchase the company's products [17]. Therefore, it can be concluded that corporate image is related to consumer purchasing decisions.

Promotion is a marketing element that aims to inform and persuade the market about a product offered by a company [42]. Promotion is also an important part of a marketing strategy designed to attract consumer interest, increase sales, and support a

company's competitiveness [42]. Thus, promotion functions not only as a means of communication but also as a strategy for business success.

Promotion can be measured using several indicators, such as: 1) promotional frequency, 2) promotional quality, 3) promotional quantity, and 4) promotional timing [43]. Promotion frequency reflects how often promotions are conducted, which can influence the level of public exposure and understanding of a product. Promotion quality is a crucial aspect, involving the creativity and attractiveness of the message conveyed, which contributes to consumer recall and trust. Promotion quantity refers to the number of media or channels used, which influences the extent to which the message can reach various market segments. Promotion timing plays a crucial role in determining the right moment to increase its effectiveness.

Promotion is a crucial element of marketing, useful for conveying the value and benefits of a product to consumers [35]. In purchasing decision-making, promotion serves as a communication tool that can help consumers identify their needs and assist them in considering which product to choose. With effective promotion, companies can encourage consumers to move through the purchasing decision stages, ultimately resulting in the purchase of the company's product.

Previous research has shown a relationship between promotion and purchasing decisions. When a company is able to implement promotions effectively, consumers are more likely to purchase the products offered by the company [31]. Effective promotion can increase consumers' likelihood of making a purchase [44]. This purchase decision can be driven by the right promotional strategy [45]. Thus, it can be concluded that promotion is related to purchasing decisions.

Based on the type of quantitative research used in this study, namely correlational, the research hypotheses can be formulated by focusing on the correlation between research variables. Based on the theoretical explanation and the results of previous research in the literature review section of this research article, it can be assumed that there is a relationship between product knowledge and purchasing decisions, corporate image and purchasing decisions, and promotion and purchasing decisions. In other words, changes in product knowledge, corporate image, and promotion are assumed to be positively correlated with changes in purchasing decisions.

RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the type of quantitative research used in this study, namely correlational, the research hypotheses can be formulated by focusing on the correlation between research variables. Based on the theoretical explanation and the results of previous research in the literature review section of this research article, it can be assumed that there is a relationship between product knowledge and purchasing decisions, corporate image and purchasing decisions, and promotion and purchasing decisions. In other words, changes in product knowledge, corporate image, and promotion are assumed to be positively correlated with changes in purchasing decisions.

This research was conducted in Sidoarjo Regency and included people who met the criteria that constituted the study population. These criteria included having used Unilever Indonesia products, having encountered Unilever Indonesia product promotions, and residing in Sidoarjo Regency. Because there is no definitive data on the number of people meeting these criteria, this study population is of unknown size.

A sample was used in this study to efficiently collect data from a large population. One method for determining sample size is to use a mathematical formula. In this study, the Cochran formula was used to calculate sample size. This formula was chosen because it is appropriate for this study, which uses a survey method and has an unknown population size [49].

Based on the sample size calculation using the Cochran formula, the sample size for this study was 96. To support the implementation of this research, the sample size was rounded up to 100. This 100-unit sample size is considered adequate for this study [50].

In selecting the sample, a non-probability sampling technique was used. Convenience sampling was chosen because it allowed the researcher to select subjects who were accessible and could easily participate. This technique was chosen for data collection due to the limited resources and information available in this study.

The data obtained in this study were categorical. Categorical data is a type of data that represents categories or groups, not numerical values [51]. Furthermore, the scale or level of measurement for the data obtained in this study was ordinal, which is a type of data that has a specific order, but the distance between these orders cannot be measured precisely [52].

Because the data obtained in this study are ordinal data, a non-parametric statistical method was chosen to analyze the data [52]. The statistical test used in this study was the Spearman Correlation because it is a statistical test included in the non-parametric statistical method, in accordance with the data measurement scale in this study, and in accordance with the research objectives [53]. Spearman Correlation is used to measure the relationship between product knowledge and purchasing decisions, corporate image and purchasing decisions, and promotions and purchasing decisions. The direction of the relationship can be negative or positive, while the level of relationship strength is determined based on the correlation value which includes the categories very weak (0.00-0.19), weak (0.20-0.39), moderate (0.40-0.59), strong (0.60-0.79), and very strong (0.80-1.00) [54]. If the significance value is less than 0.05, then it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the variables being tested [52].

The data obtained was then processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software version 25. SPSS was used to conduct statistical analysis on the data obtained, thereby assisting researchers in understanding the meaning of the collected data. Therefore, the analysis results from this software are expected to contribute to supporting the findings and interpretations in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, with a sample size of 100 and a significance level of 5%, the degree of freedom (df) value is 98. With (df) of 98 and a significance level of 5%, the r-table value is 0.197. The results of the validity analysis of the research instrument show that all items in each variable of this study are declared valid with a calculated r-value greater than the r-table.

The analysis results demonstrate a relationship between product knowledge and purchasing decisions. This relationship is positive, meaning that an increase in product knowledge is followed by an increase in purchasing decisions in a reciprocal manner. This relationship indicates that product knowledge is related to purchasing decisions, but the relationship is relatively weak. Furthermore, this relationship is significant, indicating that it does not occur by chance. These analysis results support the first hypothesis and confirm that product knowledge is relevant to purchasing decisions.

Based on empirical data, consumers have a good understanding of the uses and benefits of the Unilever Indonesia products they purchase. Consumers perceive the products they purchase as having value commensurate with their costs. Consumers are satisfied with the products they purchase because they meet their needs. The ease with which consumers recognize products through their packaging and design suggests that visual information also plays a role in building product knowledge.

Adequate product understanding is related to purchasing decisions because accurate information about a product can help consumers determine product choices that suit their needs [35]. This knowledge can be formed through experience and the information they obtain. Consumers who have good insight into a product tend to be more confident in their purchasing decisions.

Previous research has shown that product knowledge is related to purchasing decisions. Based on previous research, consumers' level of product understanding is related to their purchasing decisions [36]. Consumers who have adequate information about a product tend to be more confident in their purchasing decisions [30]. The higher a consumer's level of product knowledge, the higher their purchasing decision-making ability [37].

The analysis results demonstrate a relationship between corporate image and purchasing decisions. This relationship is positive, meaning that improvements in corporate image will be followed by increases in purchasing decisions in a reciprocal manner. This relationship indicates that corporate image is related to purchasing decisions, but the relationship is moderate. Furthermore, this relationship is significant, indicating that this relationship is not a random occurrence. These analysis results support the second hypothesis and confirm that corporate image is relevant to purchasing decisions.

Based on empirical data, consumers have a positive perception of Unilever Indonesia. Consumers also view the company as superior compared to other companies

in the same industry. The ease of recognizing the company's visual elements and symbols also creates a strong impression in consumers' minds.

A good corporate image can be linked to consumers' tendency to choose the company's products [40]. This is because a positive image is often associated with consumer trust in the company. Through this trust, consumers tend to associate a good corporate image with the belief that the products offered by the company are also of good quality. This can help consumers consider their purchasing decisions.

Previous research has shown that corporate image is related to purchasing decisions. Based on previous research, positive perceptions of a company are related to consumers' purchasing decisions [41]. A positive corporate image is aligned with consumers' purchasing decisions [21]. The better a company's image in the eyes of consumers, the more likely consumers are to decide to purchase the company's products [17].

The analysis results demonstrate a relationship between promotions and purchasing decisions. This relationship is positive, meaning that an increase in promotions will be followed by an increase in purchasing decisions in a reciprocal manner. This relationship indicates that promotions are related to purchasing decisions, but the relationship is relatively weak. Furthermore, this relationship is significant, indicating that this relationship is not a coincidence. These analysis results support the third hypothesis and confirm that promotional factors are relevant to purchasing decisions.

Based on empirical data, consumers frequently encounter advertisements for Unilever Indonesia products across various promotional channels. These promotions are quite eye-catching, and they then feel compelled to purchase the promoted products. Consumers also stated that the company's product promotions frequently appear in various media, consistently creating an impression in their minds. The timing of these promotions is also considered relevant by consumers, as they perceive them to be timely and engaging.

Promotion is an important part of marketing because it helps convey information and value about a product to consumers [35]. In purchasing decision-making, promotion serves as a communication medium to help consumers identify their needs and evaluate appropriate products. With well-planned promotions, consumers can more easily navigate the purchasing decision-making process and ultimately decide on a particular product.

Previous research has demonstrated a link between promotion and purchasing decisions. Effective promotions can increase consumers' likelihood of making a purchasing decision [44]. These purchasing decisions can be driven by appropriate promotional strategies [45]. When a company is able to implement promotions effectively, the likelihood of consumers purchasing the products offered by the company increases [31].

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The study concludes that product knowledge, corporate image, and promotion each have a positive and significant relationship with consumer purchasing decisions, confirming their critical roles in influencing consumer behavior. **Implication :** These findings imply that companies should prioritize enhancing consumer awareness through accurate product information, fostering a credible and trustworthy corporate image, and implementing persuasive promotional strategies to strengthen purchasing intentions and loyalty. **Limitation :** However, the study's quantitative correlational design and limited sample size of 100 respondents restrict the generalizability of the results across different market segments and industries. **Future Research :** Subsequent studies are encouraged to employ mixed-method or longitudinal approaches to explore causal relationships and contextual variations, thereby deepening theoretical understanding and providing more comprehensive insights into consumer decision-making dynamics.

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Rangga Ramadhani

Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia

***Rizky Eka Febriansah (Corresponding Author)**

Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Email: rizkyfebriyanzah@umsida.ac.id
