Predicting the Mediation Impact of Promotion in Correlation with Price Perception, Product Quality, Brand Image, and Purchasing Decision

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze promotion as the mediator of price perception, product quality, and brand image towards the decision of purchasing Minaku's frozen food. This study uses a sample of 150 respondents who are consumers of Minaku. The researcher uses the analysis method of Structural Equation Modelling – Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) to answer the matter in the research. The SEM calculation shows that promotion cannot be predicted as a mediator between price perception and purchase decision because the ρ-value is 0,101 and the T-statistic value is 1,644. It means price perception is not a key factor that can influence customers to buy a product, even though it is given a promotion. Especially for Minaku's frozen food product, the power of brand image and product quality affect consumer consideration during purchasing. The price perception is not the most important thing for consumers, but rather how a product can fulfill consumers' needs; for instance, the product has to be reliable and give satisfaction feeling in exchange for owning the product.

The result of this study also strengthens the previous research conducted by Halim & Hamzah, (2020) stating that price perception has no effect on purchasing decisions through promotional mediation.

Keywords: Price Perception, Product Quality, Brand Image, Promotion, and Purchasing Decision.

1. Introduction

The covid-19 pandemic has hit Indonesia for almost two years, and the pandemic is not over yet. Consequently, it has affected all business sectors and many Indonesians' routines. Currently, fewer people are traveling since the government encourages all citizens to do all activities from home. At the same time, the food and beverage industry highly contributes to economic growth along with the healthcare industry. As long as consumers are at home, they only do online shopping for necessities and work-study remotely in addition to social restrictions.

After all, a product that has high potential in the market during the pandemic is frozen food. When consumers have limited time on cooking due to work, frozen food is an alternative that is practical, quick, economic, and remain nutritional. According to Saraswati and Hidayat (2018), it is stated that product design and product quality can affect the purchasing decision. Up to now, the frozen food industry has been valued as a good prospect to grow due to lifestyle changes, especially for millennial users.

The frozen food industry is one of the businesses that continue to grow well and is promising. The trend of frozen food has a tendency to grow, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic situation, people will necessarily prepare their own food at home, not something complicated and time-consuming to cook, so frozen food becomes the best choice. The core point besides the frozen food business is to distribute. The selection of distribution has taken from many variables, for instance, product quality, brand image, promotion, and price perception on purchasing decision (Styaningrum and Niati, 2019). Minaku has been established in 2005 and actively engaged in the distribution; supply and chain industry. The products that have been distributed are nugget, tempura, fish ball, scallop, dumpling, fish cake, crab sticks, shoestring, edamame, and others. In fact, there are many trading companies under frozen food that focus on supply chain and distribution points in Indonesia.

When a pandemic occurs, Minaku has significantly experienced distribution and sales issues, likewise, marketing performance is declining to result in lower sales turnover. Consequently, lower profits, less labor in demand, and slower growth. The following table shows a sales data of the total distributor number in compared to sales volume in 3 years (2018-2020):

Table 1.1 Sales Volume Data from 2018, 2019, and 2020

No.	Year	Distributor Total	Sales Volume (Kg)	% Increase (Decrease)
1.	2018	236	7.608.632	-
2.	2019	251	8.762.441	15,16 %
3.	2020	297	8.059.003	(8,03) %

Source: internal data of the company, 2021

In traditional marketing theory, one way that is often taken by marketers to increase sales is through strengthening distribution strategies, for instance, increasing distribution facilities and shortening distribution channels from producers to consumers. However, in a digital era, communication is unlimited, social media is everything, consumers become active and critical where more distribution channel is not an effective strategy.

There are some significant changes in consumer behavior especially after the social restrictions which resulted in lower purchasing, changes in shopping patterns as restrictions on activities outside the house, school, office; and tourism are disrupted. Changes in the market situation after the Covid-19 pandemic caused companies to be more sensitive in response to marketing strategies. It could be the form of presenting promotions or advertisements to digital communities which have the potential of active consumers. In addition, changes in consumer decisions making need extra attention whereby brand image are/not arising on social media or well-established in marketplace platforms.

However, the main principle of marketing activities has to be effective along with arising consumers' needs. The fact that today's consumers are no longer treated as passive 'targets' but

rather should be treated as a group whose expectations and needs are growing actively in correlation with technology, where these conditions have dramatically changed their ability to obtain and process information.

These changes in consumer behavior inevitably require companies to rethink their marketing strategies so that they are closer to their consumers. Promotion is one of the marketing strategies that are easier and have a greater impact on consumer perceptions as desired by marketers. Promotion, as a marketing strategy involves a mixture of several traditional models such as brand image, price perception, and purchasing decisions (Jiang, Shang and May, 2015).

In regards to the previous issue where by Minaku experiences a decline in sales and market growth, the researcher proposes an analytical model by predicting promotional activities as a mediator on the relationship between brand image, price perception, product quality, and purchasing decisions. This model is an alternative model whereby often placed as the main variable in every marketing activity (Sood and Ke0ller 2012, Keller 2009, Erdeem, Kuksov and Peters 2016).

2. Literature Review

Price Perception

Tjiptono and Chandra (2020:412) price perception can be interpreted as the amount of money that customer can use to obtain a product or service. Schiffman and Kanuk (2008: 186) stated that price perception is an opinion about price and how customers perceive high, low, and fair products towards price given which can have a strong influence on purchase goals and satisfaction.

Monroe (2003:161) stated that price perception is always identified with quality perception and perception cost incurred by consumers in obtaining a product. In this study, price perception can be measured using indicators based on the theory of Kotler and Armstrong (2016: 326) which are influenced by price suitability with product quality, price suitability with benefits, competitive prices, and affordable prices.

Product Quality

Kotler and Armstrong (2017:208) stated that product quality is the ability of a product to perform its functions, this includes the overall benefits regarding durability, reliability, ease of operation. Kotler and Keller (2016:157) stated that the quality of products and services is the result of customer satisfaction and the profits of companies that have a fairly close relationship. The higher the level of quality of a product, the higher the level of consumer satisfaction obtained.

Product quality can be measured using indicators according to the theory of Tjiptono and Chandra (2020:99) which are influenced by performance, reliability, features, conformance, and durability.

Brand Image

Kotler and Armstrong (2017: 209) stated that brand image is a perception and belief that exists in consumers' minds, and is reflected in associations that occur in consumers' memories. Kotler and Keller (2016: 315-316) stated that brand image can be influenced by several factors, such as benefits, attributes, values, culture, usage, and personality. The theory of Kotler and Armstrong (2016) stated that brand image can be measured using indicators of strengths, uniqueness, and favorable.

Promotion

Tjiptono and Chandra (2020:483) stated that promotion is basically one of marketing communications, which is a marketing activity that tries to provide, spread information, influence, persuade, remind the target market and so that the products can be accepted, bought, and bring loyalty to the products offered by the company. Under any circumstances, promotion is a business activity that can affect other parties. Specifically, promotion is one of the components of the marketing mix within the company. Promotion can also be defined as a mechanism in marketing communications, the exchange of information between buyer and seller (Setyaningrum, 2015).

Simamora's theory (2017: 6.13) stated that promotion can be measured using indicators in the form of advertising, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, personal selling, and direct marketing.

Purchasing Decision

Setiadi (2011: 332) stated that purchasing decision is a part of integration processes that combine knowledge to evaluate several given variables' behaviors and choose one of them. Meanwhile, Schiffman and Kanuk (2008) said that the purchasing decision is an act of selecting several choices or alternatives, in another word, an alternative choice must be available to someone when making a decision.

Morissan (2015:111) said the purchasing decision is the next stage after an intention and desire to purchase from the consumers, but purchasing decision is not the same as the actual purchase. Kotler's theory (2012) state that purchasing decision can be measured using indicators of stability in a product, habits in buying products, and giving recommendations to others.
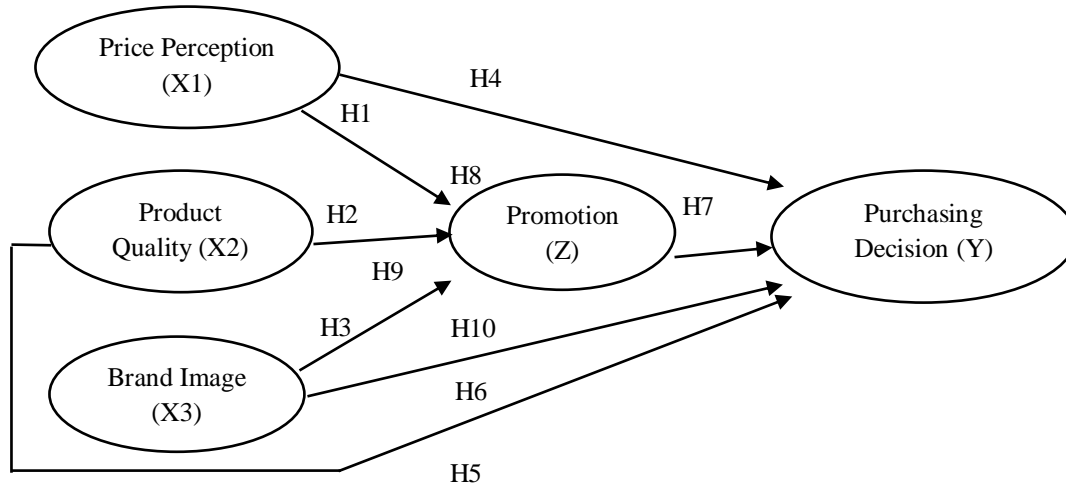
Conceptual Framework

Image 2.1
Research Conceptual Framework
Source: Researcher Thoughts Results, 2021

Research Hypothesis

H1 : Price perception has a positive and significant effect on promotion.

H2 : Product quality has a positive and significant effect on promotion.

H3 : Brand image has a positive and significant effect on promotion.

H4 : Price perception has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decision.

H5 : Product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decision.

H6 : Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decision.

H7 : Promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decision.

H8 : Price perception has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions with promotion as the mediating variable.

H9 : Product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions with promotion as the mediating variable.

H1 : Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions
0   with promotion as the mediating variable.

3. Research Method

According to Ferdinand (2014:7) causality research is research that wants to find an explanation in a causal relationship model (cause-effect) between several concepts or several relationship variables or the influence of exogenous variables (X), with mediating variables (Z), towards endogenous variables (Y). This research uses a quantitative approach with the method of conducting a survey. The survey method was chosen as a reference for primary data sources by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The population in all retail outlets or stores in the distribution area of East Java and Central Java. As a province that can represent all provinces in Indonesia, it was conducted in October 2021. The sample is respondents who have purchased frozen food products. The data collection techniques used in this research are in the form of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data that contains information obtained from sampling during the research by distributing questionnaires to respondents.

Data processing in this research used the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis test method using the Partial Least Square (PLS) smart program. To test the relationship between variables from the ten hypotheses analyzed, such as 1) fittest of the measurement model is a suitability test for the outer model, 2) convergent validity, 3) discriminant validity, 4) reliability test with Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha.

The model is said to have fairly good discriminant validity if the AVE root for each construct is greater than the correlation between the constructs. Ghozali & Latan (2015) described another test to assess the validity of the construct by looking at the AVE value. The model is said to be good if the AVE of each construct is $\geq 0,5$. The reliability test is a construct with reflexive indicators, the construct is declared reliable if the value of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha is $\geq 0,7$ (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The same opinion is said by Yamin & Kurniawan (2011) Construct reliability can be said to be reliable if the Composite Reability CR value is $\geq 0,7$.

4. Result

Based on the results of PLS analysis to test the validity and reliability, the coefficient of model determination and the path coefficient for the equation model has been shown based on the results of the PLS Algorithm Smart PLS output.

To test Convergent Validity, the value of outer loading is used. The outer loading size is declared high if it has a correlation of more than 0,50 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). So that all indicators are declared feasible or valid to be used for further analysis. Discriminant Validity of the indicator measurement model can be observed in the cross-loading between indicators and their constructs. Based on the results of the analysis, it can be seen that each indicator of the research variable has the largest cross-loading value on the variables it forms compared to the cross-loading value on other variables. The result obtained can be said that the indicators used in the following research already have a good cross-loading value in compiling their respective variables. The result shows that there is no indicator variable that has a cross-loading value below 0.5, so all indicators are declared feasible or valid for research use and can be used for further analysis.

In addition, it can be seen that the Average Variant Extracted (AVE) value, based on the data display in Table 4.1, can be observed that each research variable has an Average Variant Extracted (AVE) value greater than 0.5. Thus, it can be stated that each variable has a good discriminant validity value.

Table 4.1 Average Variant Extracted (AVE) Value

Variable	Average Variant Extracted (AVE)
Price Perception	0,520
Product Quality	0,513
Brand Image	0,524
Promotion	0,517
Purchasing Decision	0,585

Source: Processed primary data (2021)

4.1. Composite Reliability

Based on the data displayed in Table 4.2, it can be seen that the composite reliability value of all research variables is above 0,7 the construct is declared reliable if the composite reliability value is above 0,7 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). These results can show that each variable has met composite reliability and in conclusion, all variables have a high level of reliability.

Table 4.2 Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Price Perception	0,897	0,869
Product Quality	0,880	0,842
Brand Image	0,908	0,885
Promotion	0,913	0,893
Purchasing Decision	0,927	0,911

Source: Processed primary data (2021)

4.2. Cronbach's Alpha

Based on the data displayed in Table 4.2, it can be seen that the Cronbach's Alpha value of each research variable is above 0,7. So based on the results of the research shows that each variable has met the requirements of Cronbach's alpha value, finally, a conclusion can be made that all variables have a high level of reliability.

4.3. Structural Model Test (Inner Model)

Implementation of testing on the inner model is used to test the possible relationship between latent constructs. The inner model consists of a structural model, inner relation, and substantive theory which can describe the relationship between latent variables based on substantive theory.

The inner model can be tested by looking at the R-square, Q-square, path coefficient and indirect effects to obtain important information on how much the dependent latent variable can be influenced by the independent latent variable, as well as the results of the significance test to test the significance value of the effect or relationship between variables (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The results of Smart Pls analysis can be shown in the following image.
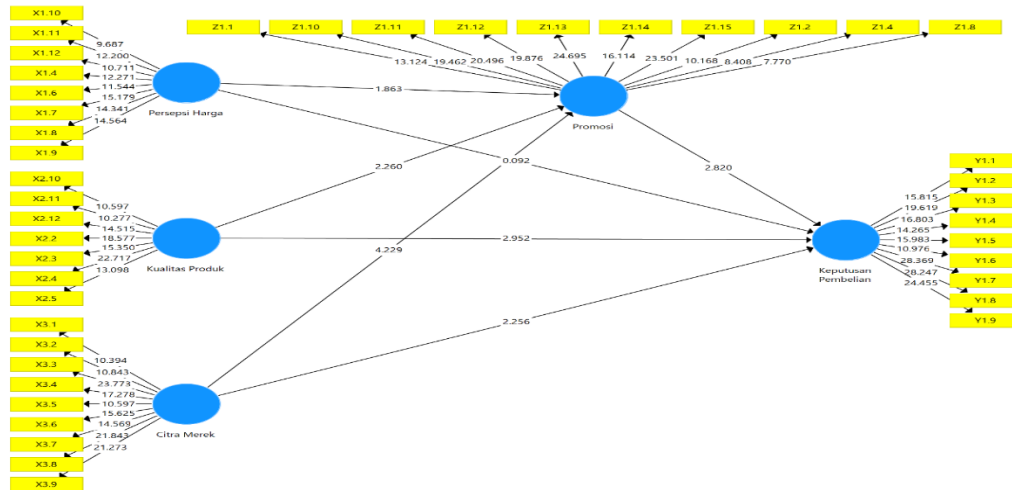

Image 4.2 Result of *Inner Model*
Source: Processed primary data (2021)

4.4. R-Square Test

Based on the presentation data in Table 4.3, it can be seen that the R-Square value for the variable price perception, product quality, and product image is 0,484. The number explains that the percentage of the price perception, product quality, and product image that reflect promotion is 48.4%. It means the variable indicates a moderate category. Next for the R-Square value obtained by the purchase decision variable for 0,578. This value explains that the price perception, product quality, and product image can be explained by purchasing decisions for 57,8%, meaning that these variables indicate a moderate category.

Table 4.3 R-Square Value

Variable	R-Square
Promotion	0,484
Purchasing Decision	0,578

Source: Processed primary data (2021)

4.5. Model Goodness Test (Goodness of Fit)

The *goodness of fit* assessment is known by the Q-Square value, which has the same meaning as the coefficient determination (R-Square) in the regression analysis, where the higher the Q-Square, the better or more fit the data. The result of calculating the Q-Square value is the approach used by the following formula (Hengky and Ghozali, 2012):

Q-Square $= 1 - [(1 - R21) \times (1 - R22)]$

$= 1 - [(1 - 0,484) \times (1 - 0,578)] = 1 - (0.516 \times 0.422)$

$= 0,782$

Based on the results of the above calculations, obtained a Q-Square value of 0,782. It shows that the diversity of the research data described by the research model is 78,2%. While the remaining 21,8% is explained by other factors outside the research model. Hence from these results, this research model can be declared to have good and positive *goodness of fit.*

4.6. Path Coefficient Test

The following are the results of the direct effect test based on the hypothesis being tested:

Table 4.4 T-Statistics and P-Values, Direct Effect

Variable	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-Values	Desc.
H1: Price Perception -> Promotion	0,150	1,863	**0,063**	**Rejected**
H2: Product Quality -> Promotion	0,226	2,260	**0,024**	**Accepted**
H3: Brand Image -> Promotion	0,409	4,229	**0,000**	**Accepted**
H4: Price Perception -> Purchasing Decision	0,009	0,092	**0,927**	**Rejected**
H5: Product Quality -> Purchasing Decision	0,300	2,952	**0,003**	**Accepted**
H6: Brand Image -> Purchasing Decision	0,246	2,256	**0,024**	**Accepted**
H7: Promotion -> Purchasing Decision	0,316	2,820	**0,005**	**Accepted**

Source: Processed primary data (2021)

The results of data processing based on the presentation of the T-statistics and P-values above, it can be seen that the hypothesis proposed in this study can be formulated, the following are the details of the influence between variables:

1. The effect of price perception (X1) on promotion (Z): H1

Testing the price perception variable (X1) on promotion (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,150 indicating a positive direction. Because the T-statistics value of 1,863 is still below 1,96 and the ρ-value is greater than α (0,063 > 0,05) then H0 is accepted so there is a positive but not significant (rejected) effect for variable price perception (X1) on promotion (Z).

2. The effect of product quality (X2) on promotion (Z): H2

Testing the product quality variable (X1) on promotion (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,226 indicating a positive direction. Because the T-statistics value of 2,260 is above 1,96 and the ρ-value is smaller than α (0,024 > 0,05) then H2 is accepted so there is a positive and significant influence (accepted) for variable product quality (X2) on promotion (Z).

3. The effect of brand image (X3) on promotion (Z): H3

Testing the brand image variable (X3) on promotion (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,409 indicating a positive direction. Based on the T-statistics value of 4,229 above, 0,96 and the ρ-value smaller than α (0,000 < 0,05), it can be concluded that H3 can be accepted, so there is a positive and significant influence (accepted) for the brand image variable (X3) on promotion (Z).

4. The effect of price perception (X1) on purchasing decision (Y): H4

Testing the price perception variable (X1) on purchasing decisions (Y) obtained a coefficient value of 0,009 indicating a positive direction. Because the T-statistics value of 0,092 is still far below 1,96 and the ρ-value is greater than α (0,927 > 0,05) then H0 is accepted, so there is a positive but insignificant influence (rejected) for the price perception variable (X1) on purchasing decision (Y).

5. The effect of product quality (X2) on purchasing decision (Y): H5

Testing the product quality variable (X2) on purchasing decision (Y) obtained a coefficient value of 0,300 indicating a positive direction. Based on the T-statistics value of 2,952 above 1,96 and the ρ-value smaller than α (0,003 < 0,05) then H5 can be accepted so there is a positive and significant influence (accepted) for variable product quality (X2) on purchasing decision (Y).

6. The effect of brand image (X3) on purchasing decision (Y): H6

Testing the brand image variable (X3) on purchasing decisions (Y) obtained a coefficient value of 0,246 indicating a positive direction. Based on the T-statistics value of 2,256 above 1,96 and the ρ-value smaller than α (0,024 < 0,05), it can be concluded that H6 can be accepted, so there is a positive and significant influence (accepted) variable brand image (X3) on purchasing decision (Y).

7. The effect of promotion (Z) on purchasing decision (Y): H7

Testing the promotion variable (Z) on purchasing decisions (Y) obtained a coefficient value of 0,316 indicating a positive direction. Based on the T-statistics value of 2,820 above 1,96 and the ρ-value smaller than α (0,005 < 0,05), it can be concluded that H7 can be accepted, so there is a

positive and significant influence (accepted) the promotion variable (Z) on purchasing decision (Y).

4.7. Indirect Effect

Indirect effect testing is done by looking at the results of the path tested, if all the paths traversed are significant then the indirect effect is also significant, and if there is a non-significant path then the indirect effect is said to be non-significant. The indirect effect path coefficients are presented in the following table:

Table 4.6 T-Statistics and P-Values, Indirect Effect

Variable	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Desc.
H8: Price Perception -> Promotion -> Purchasing Decision	0,048	1,644	**0,101**	**Rejected**
H9: Product Quality -> Promotion -> Purchasing Decision	0,071	1,540	**0,124**	**Rejected**
H10: Brand Image -> Promotion -> Purchasing Decision	0,129	2,259	**0,024**	**Accepted**

Source: Processed primary data (2021)

The results of data processing based on the presentation of the T-Statistics and P-Values above, it can be seen that the hypothesis proposed in this research can be formulated, the following are the details of the influence between variables:

1. The effect of price perception (X1) on purchasing decision (Y) through promotion mediation (Z): H8
Testing the price perception variable (X1) on purchasing decision (Y) through promotion mediation (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,048 indicating a positive direction. Because the T statistics value of 1,644 is still below 1,96 and the ρ-value is greater than α (0,101 > 0,05) then H0 is accepted, thus there is a positive but not significant influence (rejected) variable price perception (X1) on purchasing decision (Y) through promotion mediation (Z), so the variable cannot mediate the price perception variable (X1) on purchasing decision (Y).

2. The effect of product quality (X2) on purchasing decision (Y) through promotion mediation (Z): H9
Testing the product quality variable (X2) on purchasing decision (Y) through promotion mediation (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,071 indicating a positive direction. Because the T statistics value of 1,540 is still below 1,96 and the ρ-value is greater than α (0,124 > 0,05) then H0 is accepted, thus there is a positive but not significant influence (rejected) variable product quality (X2) on purchasing decision (Y) through promotion mediation (Z), so the variable cannot mediate the product quality variable (X2) on purchasing decision (Y).

3. The effect of brand image (X3) on purchasing decision (Y) through promotion mediation (Z): H10

Testing the brand image variable (X3) on purchasing decision (Y) through promotion mediation (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,129 indicating a positive direction. Because the T statistics value of 2,259 is above 1,96 and the ρ-value is smaller than α (0,024 < 0,05), it can be concluded that H10 can be accepted, thus there is a positive and significant influence (accepted) variable brand image (X3) on purchasing decision (Y) through promotion mediation (Z). Based on these results, the mediating variable in this study can partially mediate the brand image variable (X3) on purchasing decision (Y).

Based on the results of research that has been done on frozen food products, there are several things that can be used as policy improvements as follows:

a) This research shows that price perception has a positive but not significant effect on promotion and price perception has a positive but not significant effect on purchasing decision and price perception has a positive but not significant effect on purchasing decisions through promotional mediation. It turns out that most consumers who buy Minaku's frozen food products are not affected by price perception, consumers are more likely to look at the aspects of brand image, product quality, the urge base on needs, and loyalty to a product. Henceforth, the company must take steps in the form of building a brand image, providing quality assurance, and continuing to carry out promotional activities.

b) It turns out that most consumers who buy frozen food products pay more attention to aspects of product quality assurance that are good, safe, healthy, and can meet consumer needs. Including these products can be consumed by all ages, has a fairly long shelf life when stored in a frozen state, and is very easy to serve in a relatively fast time. For future steps, the company needs to diversify its products by:

1) Vertical, with the pattern of making new products and new brands.

2) Horizontal, by adding new product variants by taking into account grammatical factors, attractive packaging designs, and making product mixes.

c) Because price perception has a positive but not significant effect on promotion and price perception has a positive but not significant effect on purchasing decision, though there is promotion mediation. Hence, the company must take the opportunity to adjust the selling price of the product, by increasing the selling price of the product to increase the profit. Because most consumers who buy frozen food products do not question the price perception but pay more attention to the brand image, product needs, and product quality assurance.

d) This study shows that promotion is only effective if it is applied as a mediating influence on the brand image on purchasing decisions. Not as a mediating influence on price perception and product quality on purchasing decisions.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of testing ten hypotheses on frozen food products that have been proposed in this research, it can be concluded that:

a) The results of the research with the rejected hypothesis as follows:

1) Price perception has no effect on promotion.
2) Price perception has no effect on purchasing decision.
3) Price perception has no effect on purchasing decision through promotion mediation variables
4) Product quality has no effect on purchasing decision through promotion mediation variables

b) The results of the research with the accepted hypothesis as follows:

1) Product quality has an effect on promotion.
2) Brand image has an effect on promotion.
3) Product quality has an effect on purchasing decision.
4) Brand image has an effect on purchasing decision.
5) The promotion has an effect on purchasing decision.
6) Brand image influences purchasing decision through promotion mediation variables, so the role of mediating variables in this study is partial mediation.

Based on the results of research, discussion, and conclusions obtained from frozen food products, the recommendations that can be given are as follows:

1) In determining the research variables, it is hoped that further research will pay more attention to the factors that make routine consumer buying patterns as control variables for consumer behavior research on products that are low involvement.

2) Samples taken in the low-involvement buying model are expected to be taken more heterogeneously in the form of samples from population groups with economic class segments or premium segments so that they get a clearer picture of their expectations for the product and contribution of marketing strategy.

3) It is hoped that the results of this study can be used as a reference for further researchers who will examine the same concept, that is the influence of product quality and promotion on purchasing decision and make brand image variable as a mediating variable. For further researchers, it is recommended to use samples that have almost the same characteristics so that it would be easier to get results and conclusions.

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