

Analysis of the Role of Brand Image in Mediating Factors Affecting the Purchase Decision of Essential Oil

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ABSTRACT

The increasing popularity of essential oils in Indonesia has led to the emergence of numerous essential oil businesses in the market. The rising number of essential oil businesses has intensified the competition in this industry. For emerging essential oil businesses to compete and capture the market, it is crucial to employ effective marketing strategies, one of which involves understanding the factors considered by consumers when purchasing essential oil products. The objective of this research is to identify the factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions regarding essential oil products. The study focuses on respondents who are essential oil users residing in the Jabodetabek region. The variables examined for their impact on purchasing decisions include product quality, price, brand image, and promotion, with brand image as a mediating variable. Data collection was carried out through a questionnaire using Google Forms, and the questionnaire results were processed using the SEM PLS application. Based on direct analysis results, there is a significant influence of product quality, price, brand image on purchasing decisions, as well as the impact of product quality and price on brand image. Furthermore, the indirect analysis results indicate that brand image can mediate the relationship between price and purchasing decisions and between product quality and purchasing decisions. In conclusion, the factors influencing consumers in purchasing essential oil products are product quality, price, and brand image, where brand image can mediate the influence of product quality and price on purchasing decision

Keywords: Essential Oil, Brand Image, Price, Purchase Decision, Product Quality, Promotion

INTRODUCTION

Essential oil is a liquid extracted through distillation from various parts of plants, such as flowers, peels, wood, stems, leaves, roots, fruits, and other plant parts (Ali et al., 2015). Essential oil finds application in a wide range of products, including flavors, perfumes, cosmetics, and aromatherapy. Aromatherapy is a product category that extensively utilizes essential oil in its applications. Aromatherapy is a therapeutic method that employs essential oil as a primary component to provide specific health benefits, both physical and psychological. The benefits of essential oil in aromatherapy include mood enhancement, relaxation, and assistance in achieving restful sleep. In this study, the focus is on essential oils intended specifically for use in aromatherapy.

At present, the global market for essential oils is continuously growing, partly driven by the increased use of essential oils in aromatherapy. The global aromatherapy market was valued at USD 2 billion in 2022 and is predicted to continue growing with a CAGR of 11.1% from 2023 to 2030 (Presedence Research, 2023). The Asia-Pacific region is expected to be one of the fastest-growing markets for aromatherapy, with Indonesia being among the countries contributing to this growth (Presedence Research, 2023).

The increasing popularity of essential oils in Indonesia has led to the emergence of many essential oil businesses in the market. On the Tokopedia marketplace alone, there are more than 1,642 stores selling essential oil products, offering over 100 brand options. The rising number of essential oil businesses has intensified the competition in the essential oil industry. Effective marketing strategies are crucial for emerging businesses in the essential oil sector to compete and capture the market. One such strategy involves understanding the factors that influence consumers' purchasing decisions for essential oil products. Surprisingly, there hasn't been much research on this topic, despite its potential usefulness for essential oil businesses in expanding their market. The aim of this research is to identify the factors that influence consumers' purchasing decisions for essential oil products. The study focuses on respondents who use essential oils and reside in the Jabodetabek region. The examined variables include product quality, promotion, price, and brand image, with brand image also serving as a mediating variable. Data collection is carried out through a questionnaire using Google Forms. The questionnaire results are processed using the SEM PLS application. Based on the analysis of direct influences, there is a significant impact of product quality on purchasing decisions, price on purchasing decisions, brand image on purchasing decisions, product quality on brand image, and price on brand image. Furthermore, the indirect influence analysis results indicate that brand image can act as a mediating variable between price and purchasing decisions, as well as between product quality and purchasing decisions. In conclusion, the factors that influence the purchasing decisions of essential oils are product quality, price, and brand image, where brand image can serve as a mediating variable between product quality and price on purchasing decisions.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Desain

The research adopts a quantitative approach, defined by Sugiyono (2016) as a method grounded in positivism philosophy (concrete data). Data, in the form of numerical measurements, is statistically analyzed to test hypotheses and draw conclusions related to the researched problem. The respondents in this study are users of essential oils residing in the Jabodetabek region.

Data Collection

The study utilizes primary data obtained directly from the source. Questionnaires were distributed online using Google Forms, with respondents providing ratings from 1-5, where 1 signifies strong disagreement and 5 indicates strong agreement.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was employed to select respondents based on specific criteria. The criteria involve essential oil users residing in the Jabodetabek region, screened through initial questionnaire questions. Respondents meeting the criteria proceeded to answer subsequent questionnaire items.

Sample Size Determination:

The sample size aligns with the Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis method, with Ferdinand (2014) suggesting a minimum of 5 times the number of indicator variables. The study, therefore, includes 124 respondents, exceeding the minimum required to account for potential unusable data.

Data Processing and Analysis:

Data processing and analysis were conducted using the SEM PLS 4.0.9.6 application. SEM involves two stages: outer model testing and inner model testing (Ghozali & Latan, 2020).

Outer Model Testing:

The outer model testing aims to examine the validity and reliability of indicators for the

construct. Some conditions that must be met are:

- a. The loading factor of indicators must be greater than 0.5.
- b. Cross-loading values should be greater than the correlation between constructs.
- c. Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability should be greater than 0.7.

Inner Model Testing:

The inner model testing aims to examine the significance of the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. The testing is conducted using bootstrapping in the SEM PLS application. A variable is considered to have a significant influence if:

- a. The p-value is < 0.05 or the T-value is > 1.96."

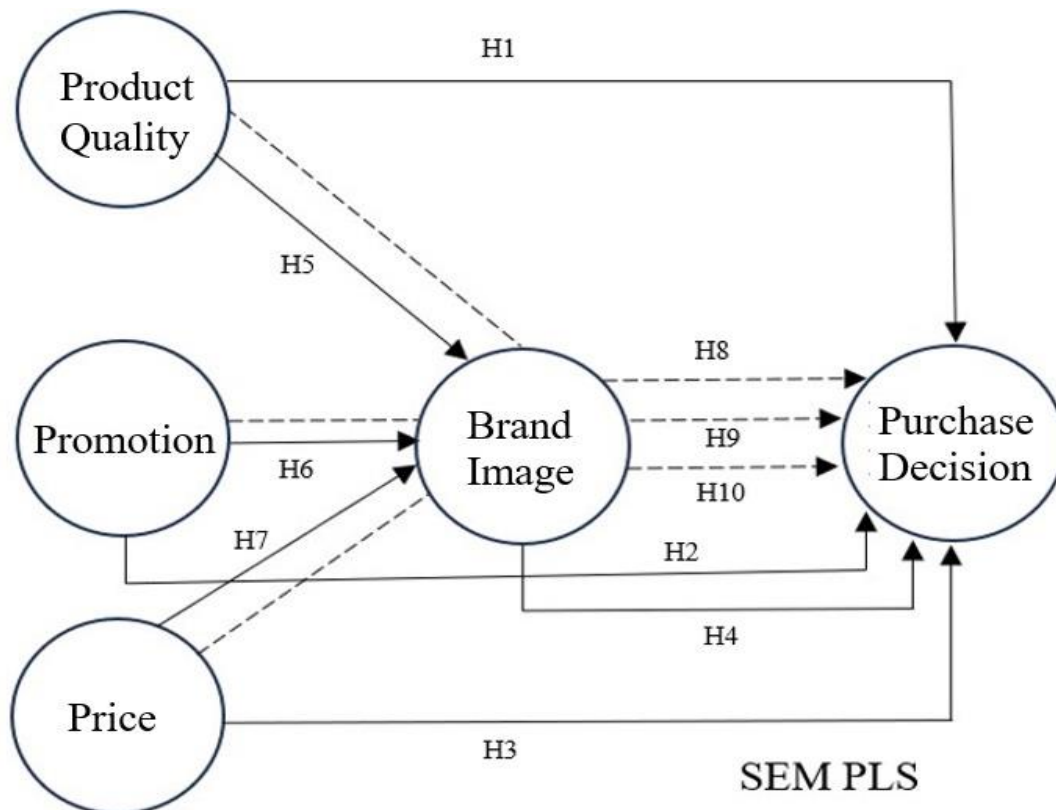
(Ghozali & Latan, 2020).

Research Variables

Tabel 1 Research Variables

Exogenous Variables	K (Product Quality): Represents the extent to which the quality of the product influences brand image and purchase decisions. P (Promotion): Examines the impact of promotional activities on brand image and purchase decisions. H (Price): Measures how product pricing affects brand image and purchase decisions.
Intervening Variable	M (Brand Image): Functions as an intervening variable connecting exogenous variables (K, P, H) with the endogenous variable (Y).
Endogenous Variables	Y (Purchase Decision): Indicates how product quality, promotion, and price, both directly and through brand image, influence the decision to purchase.

Research Framework Overview



Picture 1 Research Framework Overview

Research Hypothesis

Based on the research framework, the hypothesis for this study are as follows:

H1:	Product quality has a significant influence on purchase decision
H2:	Promotion has a significant influence on purchase decision
H3:	Price has a significant influence on purchase decisions
H4:	Brand image has a significant influence on purchase decisions
H5:	Product quality has a significant influence on brand image
H6:	Promotion has a significant influence on brand image
H7:	Price has a significant influence on brand image
H8:	Product quality has a significant indirect influence on purchase decision through brand image
H9:	Price has a significant indirect influence on purchase decisions through brand image
H10:	Promotion has a significant indirect influence on purchase decisions through brand image

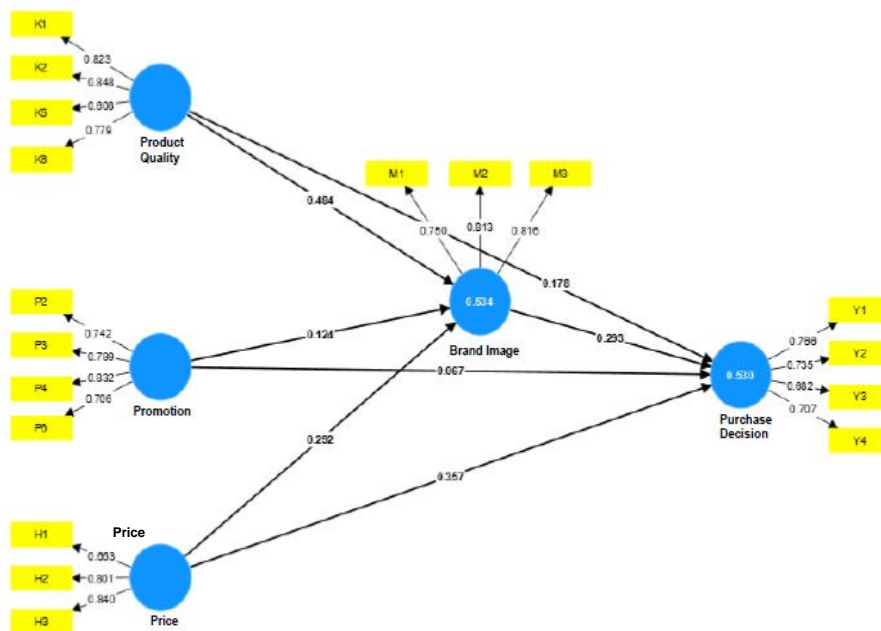
RESULT

Evaluation of Measurement Model Results (Outer Model)

Convergent validity test conducted to determine the accuracy level with reflexive indicators that can be seen from the

correlation between the indicators and their constructs. Convergent validity test in PLS with reflexive indicators is assessed based on the loading factor.

The following are the results of the SEM PLS test.



Picture 1 SEM PLS Analysis Result

Based on the measurement results, the loading factor values for most indicator variables are mostly above 0,7. However, there are still a few indicators with values below 0,7. According to Ghozali & Latan (2015), an indicator is considered to have good validity if its loading factor is greater than 0,70. Nevertheless, values between 0,5-0,6 are still considered acceptable. Following this reference, indicators with values between 0,5-0,7 are still deemed valid. This suggests that the construct validity in the model has been met.

The next test is the discriminant validity test. Discriminant validity is assessed by examining the values in the cross-loading table. Cross-loading values indicate the magnitude of the correlation between each construct and its indicators, as well as the indicators with other constructs in the block. A measurement model has good discriminant validity if the correlation between a construct and its indicators is higher than the correlation with indicators from other constructs in the block.

Tabel 1 Cross Loading Value

	Brand Image	Price	Product Quality	Promotion	Purchase Decision
H1	0.358	0.653	0.171	0.390	0.395
H2	0.433	0.801	0.320	0.272	0.500
H3	0.414	0.840	0.338	0.377	0.496
K1	0.560	0.309	0.823	0.388	0.436
K2	0.500	0.242	0.848	0.438	0.463
K5	0.333	0.275	0.608	0.250	0.374
K6	0.594	0.309	0.779	0.527	0.386
M1	0.750	0.503	0.531	0.564	0.510
M2	0.813	0.401	0.554	0.339	0.530
M3	0.816	0.323	0.466	0.283	0.453
P2	0.351	0.296	0.397	0.742	0.238
P3	0.422	0.260	0.439	0.799	0.343
P4	0.456	0.454	0.438	0.832	0.449
P6	0.331	0.338	0.361	0.706	0.389
Y1	0.444	0.423	0.495	0.316	0.766
Y2	0.661	0.378	0.513	0.327	0.735
Y3	0.310	0.416	0.249	0.271	0.682
Y4	0.355	0.549	0.250	0.443	0.707

Table 1 indicates that the cross-loading values for each indicator variable are greater than the cross-loading values for other constructs. The analysis of cross-loading values reveals no issues with discriminant validity. Based on the cross-loading values, the correlation between indicators and their respective constructs is higher than the correlation with indicators from other constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded

that the discriminant validity test has been satisfied, and there are no issues.

The next test involves assessing reliability, which measures the internal consistency of the measurement instrument. Reliability indicates the accuracy, consistency, and precision of a measuring tool. In Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis, reliability testing can be conducted using two methods, with the Cornbach's alpha value being greater than 0,6 (Sugiyono, 2016).

Tabel 2 Reliability Value and Construct Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance extracted
Brand Image	0.707	0.836	0.630
Price	0.648	0.811	0.591
Purchase Decision	0.699	0.814	0.523
Product Quality	0.767	0.852	0.593
Promotion	0.773	0.854	0.595

Based on the table, the Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0,6 and the Composite Reliability values are greater than 0,8. Therefore, it can be concluded that all constructs are considered reliable.

Top of Form

Direct Effect Analysis

The rule of thumb for supporting a research hypothesis is as follows: (1) if the coefficient or direction of the variable relationship (indicated by the original sample value) aligns with the hypothesized direction, and (2) if the t-statistic value is greater than 1.64 (two-tailed) or 1.96 (one-tailed), and the probability (p-value) is less than 0.05/5%.

Tabel 3 Significant Dirrect Effect Test Result

Variable Correlation	T Statistics	P Value	Status	Conclusion
Product Quality → Purchase Decision	1,974	0,048	Sig	H1 accepted
Promotion → Purchase Decision	0,921	0,921	Tdk Sig	H2 rejected
Price → Purchase Decision	4,248	0,000	Sig	H3 accepted
Brand Image → Purchase Decision	2,976	0,003	Sig	H4 accepted
Product Quality → Brand Image	5,286	0,000	Sig	H5 accepted
Promotion → Brand Image	1,549	0,121	Tdk Sig	H6 accepted
Price → Brand Image	3,355	0,001	Sig	H7 accepted

Based on the results of the direct effect analysis, it can be observed that there are 5 variables with significant relationships, namely product quality on purchase decisions, price on purchase decisions, brand image on purchase decisions, product quality on brand image, and price on brand image. Meanwhile, there are 2 variables with non-significant relationships, namely promotion on brand image and promotion on purchase decisions.

Relationship between Product Quality and Purchase Decision

The analysis results indicate a significant influence between product quality and purchase decisions at a 5% significance level, thus H1 is accepted. This outcome suggests that product quality is a consideration for consumers when deciding to purchase essential oil products. This finding aligns with a study conducted by Maritha et al., (2021), which investigated the impact of product quality on the purchase decisions of capa oil-type essential oil. The study concluded that product quality significantly influences purchase decisions. In this study, product quality is reflected by four indicators: health benefits, natural aroma, durability, and packaging aesthetics. Natural aroma stands out as the strongest indicator reflecting the quality of essential oil products. This is because essential oil products produce a natural fragrance derived directly from the plant. The natural fragrance has distinct characteristics and differs from the scent produced by chemically synthesized perfumes. This natural aroma serves as a parameter representing the purity of essential oil products. If the fragrance is derived from synthetic perfume, consumers may perceive the product as potentially not authentic and merely resembling the scent of synthetic perfume. Therefore, it can be concluded that natural aroma is a primary indicator of the product quality of essential oil, significantly influencing consumer considerations for making a purchase.

Relationship between Promotion and Purchase Decision

The research findings indicate that there is no significant relationship between promotion and purchase decisions, leading to the rejection of H2. This result suggests that consumers do not consider promotion as a crucial factor in their decision-making process when purchasing essential oil products. This may be attributed to the nature of essential oil products, which are not frequently and urgently needed. Consumers tend to postpone purchasing products that are not urgently needed, even when marketing stimuli such as promotions are offered by manufacturers. Consequently, promotions do not directly prompt consumers to make essential oil product purchases decision.

Relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Decision

The research results indicate a significant influence of brand image on the purchase decisions of essential oil products at a 5% confidence level, thus H3 is accepted. Similar findings were observed in a study conducted by Maritha et al., (2021), which concluded that brand image significantly influences the purchase decisions of capa oil-type essential oil. A parallel result was also shown in the research by Shafira et al., (2022), which found that brand image significantly affects the purchase decisions of eucalyptus essential oil. This suggests that brand image is a consideration for consumers when buying essential oil products.

Brand image is associated with consumers' perceptions of a specific product brand. According to Firmansyah (2018), a positive brand image is more likely to lead consumers to make a purchase. Consumers tend to prefer purchasing essential oil products with a positive brand image. In this study, brand image is reflected by three indicators: brand recognition, brand reputation, and uniqueness that attracts the brand. Brand recognition stands out as the indicator most reflective of brand image. This indicates that recognizing a brand is a consideration for consumers when making essential oil

product purchases. Consumers are inclined to buy essential oil products from brands they are already familiar with.

Relationship between Price and Purchase Decision

The research results reveal a significant relationship between price and purchase decisions at a 5% significance level, thus H4 is accepted. This finding is consistent with the results of the study conducted by Maritha et al., (2021), which concluded that price significantly influences the purchase decisions of capa oil-type essential oil. This indicates that price is a crucial factor in consumer considerations when purchasing essential oil products.

The variable of price is reflected by three indicators: affordable price, product quality conformity with the price paid, and price competitiveness. Price competitiveness stands out as the indicator most reflective of the price variable. This is because essential oil products in the market are sold at highly variable prices even for the same type and size. Therefore, consumers tend to compare prices between different products. Consumers are inclined to choose essential oil products with competitive prices, either lower prices with the same quality or the same price with better quality. Thus, price competitiveness is the primary indicator influencing consumer considerations when purchasing essential oil products.

Relationship between Price and Brand Image

The research results indicate a significant relationship between price and brand image at a 5% significance level, thus H5 is accepted. This finding aligns with a study conducted by Khan (2018), which concluded that price significantly influences brand image. This is in line with the theory proposed by Schiffman & Kanuk (2011), stating that price is one of the factors shaping brand image. Expensive prices are often perceived as an indication of higher quality,

and vice versa. In the essential oil market, products are frequently offered at a wide range of prices, spanning from inexpensive to premium. Brands that offer essential oils at higher prices are perceived to have superior quality, often considered as premium brands. On the other hand, brands that offer lower-priced essential oils are sometimes perceived as having standard quality or are considered as budget-friendly brands.

Relationship between Product Quality and Brand Image

The research results indicate a significant relationship between product quality and brand image at a 5% significance level, thus H6 is accepted. This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Darmajaya & Sukawati (2018), which concluded that product quality significantly influences brand image. This result is also in line with the theory proposed by Sumarwan (2011), stating that product quality is an indicator of brand image. Brand image is a manifestation of consumer perceptions of product quality. The better the product quality, the more positive the perception of the brand, and vice versa.

Relationship between Product Quality and Brand Image

The research results indicate that there is no significant relationship between promotion and purchase decisions at a 5% significance level, thus H7 is accepted. This suggests that promotion does not influence consumer perceptions of a particular essential oil brand. This differs from the findings of Kurniawan et al. (2022), which stated that there is a significant influence of promotion on brand image. This indicates that consumer perceptions of a particular essential oil brand are not affected by the presence of promotions. This is likely due to the nature of essential oils, which are purchased based on needs rather than being influenced by promotional activities.

Indirect Effect Analysis

Tabel 4 Hasil Uji Signifikansi Indirrect Effect

Variable Correlation	T Statistics	P Values	Status	Kesimpulan
Price → Brand Image → Purchase Decision	2,149	0,032	Sig	H8 accepted
Product Quality → Brand Image → Purchase Decision	2,681	0,007	Sig	H9 accepted
Promotion → Brand Image → Purchase Decision	1,283	0,199	Tdk Sig	H10 rejected

Relationship between Product Quality and Purchase Decision through the Mediating Variable of Brand Image

Based on the research findings, product quality significantly influences the purchase decision through the mediating variable of brand image, thus accepting H8. This result aligns with a study conducted by Darmajaya & Sukawati (2018), stating that brand image can mediate the influence of product quality on purchase decisions. Similar results are also demonstrated in the research by Kurniawan et al., (2022), asserting that product quality significantly influences purchase decisions through the mediating variable of brand image. This indicates that product quality shapes consumer perceptions of a brand of essential oil. Good product quality will form a positive perception of the brand image of essential oil. A positive brand image of essential oil will encourage consumers to choose to make a purchase from that brand.

Relationship between Promotion and Purchase Decision through the Mediating Variable of Brand Image

The research findings indicate that promotion does not significantly influence purchase decisions through the intervening variable of brand image, thus H9 is rejected. This result suggests that the brand image variable cannot serve as an intervening variable mediating the relationship between promotion and purchase decisions. This result is consistent with the analysis of direct effects, where promotion does not have a direct impact on brand image or purchase decisions. This finding differs from the study conducted by Kurniawan et al. (2022), which suggested that brand image could act as a mediating variable between promotion and purchase decisions. It indicates that the

promotions carried out by essential oil manufacturers may not yet affect consumers perceptions of the brand image of essential oil products, which, in turn, has implications for purchase decisions.

Relationship between Price and Purchase Decision through the Mediating Variable of Brand Image

Based on the research findings, the price significantly influences purchase decisions through the intervening variable of brand image, thus H10 is accepted. This indicates that brand image can mediate the relationship between price and purchase decisions. This aligns with the research by Wahyuni & Rahanatha (2020), which asserts that brand image can mediate the impact of price on purchase decisions. Similar results were also shown in the study by Saraswati & Rahyuda (2017), stating that brand image can mediate the influence of price on purchase decisions. This is because competitive pricing helps shape a positive brand image. A positive brand image encourages consumers to choose that brand for purchase. This suggests that price can influence consumer perceptions of a brand, ultimately impacting consumer purchase decisions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the hypothesis testing results using the SEM analysis tool, it can be concluded that the factors directly influencing consumer purchasing decisions for essential oil products are product quality, price, and brand image. In contrast, promotion does not affect purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, the factors indirectly influencing purchasing decisions through the mediating variable of brand image are price and product quality. Thus, it can be concluded that brand image can serve as a mediating variable between product

quality and price on purchasing decisions for essential oil. The variable that most strongly influences the purchasing decision for essential oil directly is the price, while the variable that most strongly influences the purchasing decision indirectly through the brand image variable is product quality.

Declaration by Authors

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