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The Influence of Word of Mouth, Brand Image and Price on Purchase Decisions of Lifebuoy Soap

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ABSTRACT

The author conducted an analysis of the extent to which Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price influence Lifebuoy Bath Soap Purchasing Decisions. This research was conducted using a quantitative approach, where data was collected through online questionnaires using Google Forms. The population studied included consumers in the West Jakarta area who had used Lifebuoy bath soap. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, with 110 respondents. The data obtained were analyzed using SmartPLS software version 4.0 with a Partial Least Square approach. Based on the results of the analysis, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price have a positive and significant effect on Lifebuoy bath soap purchasing decisions.

Keywords : Word of Mouth; Brand Image; Price; Purchasing Decision.

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INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization requires companies to act quickly and accurately in facing competition within a highly dynamic and uncertain business environment. This competitive pressure is evident in the bath soap industry, where many companies actively seek to capture consumer attention. According to Apriani (2021), bath soap is one of the most common products used to support personal hygiene. Lifebuoy as a well established brand, possesses a stronger brand identity compared to other soap brands. This strong identity provides a significant competitive advantage, allowing Lifebuoy to sustain its market position and remain competitive.

Lifebuoy as an antiseptic soap product holds a strategic position. With increasing public awareness of hygiene, Lifebuoy provides a solution that not only protect users from germs but also offers safety and comfort. The brand emphasizes its role not merely as a product seller but also as an active educator, promoting hygiene and disease prevention through campaigns and public health programs.

This study aims to analyze the influence of Word of Mouth, Brand Image and Price on Purchase Decisions for Lifebuoy soap. Understanding these relationships is important to see how marketing strategies and consumer perceptions interact, and how companies can maintain their competitive position in increasingly competitive markets. The results are expected to provide insights into the effect of these variables on purchase decisions and offer recommendations for companies to design effective and sustainable marketing strategies.

In conclusion, this introduction provides a general context regarding business competition and the importance of personal hygiene, highlight's Lifebuoy's position in the antiseptic soap market and directs readers to focus of the study on factors influencing consumer purchase decisions. It prepares readers to understand the research objectives, the background of the problem and the relevance of the topic in the context of modern marketing and consumer behavior.

Figure 1. Top Brand Index of Bath Soap in Indonesia

Nama Brand	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Asepso	9.70	8.60	10.50	11.80	15.00
Dettol	36.50	43.80	37.70	36.20	39.50
Lifebuoy	38.60	32.50	40.00	38.70	32.80
Nuvo	10.20	10.50	9.90	11.00	7.10

Source: topbrandaward.com

Figure 1 presents a comparison of bath soap products from 2020 to 2024, showing that Lifebuoy maintained a relatively high level of consumer interest. However, its percentage declined in both 2021 and 2024. When compared with Asepso, Dettol and Nuvo, the decrease in Lifebuoy's share alongside the steady increase of its competitors places the brand in a vulnerable position.

In fact, Lifebuoy holds a distinct advantage as a general purpose bath soap, as its use is not limited by gender or specific consumer groups. Bath soap is considered a basic necessity, which

means Lifebuoy's target market is relatively broad, encompassing both men and women across various segments. With such a wide market reach the company has opportunities not only to maintain but also to expand its consumer base, provided it can identify and respond to the key factors influencing purchasing decisions. By doing so, Lifebuoy can design effective marketing strategies to preserve customer loyalty and address competitive threats.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing Management

According to Mamonto, et al (2021), marketing management is the process of analyzing, planning, implementing and controlling programs aimed at creating and maintaining mutually beneficial exchanges to achieve organizational objectives. Meanwhile Ariyanto, et al (2023) emphasize that marketing management is a branch of management science that is crucial for business sustainability, as it serves as a key factor enabling companies to survive, grow, and achieve their desired goals.

Consumer Behavior

According to Khafidin (2020), consumer behavior holds particular significance for parties seeking that the study of consumer behavior is deeply rooted in the field of economics particularly in marketing.

Word of Mouth

According to Wibowo and Wulandari (2022), Word of Mouth is a form of communication among consumer that can enhance brand image and influence purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, Hasan (2010) states that Word of Mouth consist of customer praise, recommendations, and comments regarding their experiences with services and products, which significantly affect customer decisions or purchasing behavior,

Brand Image

According to Yoeliastuti, et al (2021), brand image refers to the perceptions and beliefs instilled in consumers, which become recalled memories when they hear a slogan and are embedded in their minds. Meanwhile, Nurcahyo and Ali (2023) define brand image as an emotional value that can evoke positive feelings, thereby fostering consumers desire to purchase a product.

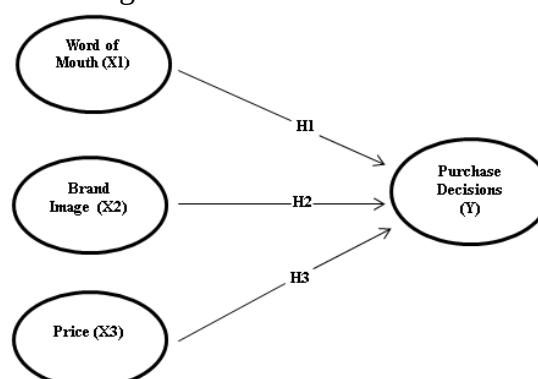
Price

According to Wulandari and Calista (2022), price affordability means that the price is relatively aligned with consumers purchasing power. Price becomes an important factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, Maisirata (2023) explains that competitive pricing refers to the determination of product prices by considering the average prices refers of similar products in other industries as a benchmark for pricing within a company's strategy.

Purchase Decisions

According to Kotler, et al (2022), a purchase decision is defined as the consumers choice regarding brand preferences within a set of alternatives. Meanwhile, Schiffmn and Kanuk (2018) state that a simple decision making model consists of three components.

Figure 2. Framework



Description:

1. Independent variables, whose value is not directly related to other values, variables are given the symbol (X), among others:
X1 : Word of Mouth
X2 : Brand Image
X3 : Price
2. The dependent variable, the variable whose value depends on other variables is given the symbol (Y)
Y : Purchase Decisions

METHOD

Time and Place of Research

This research begins with the process of collecting data, followed by data processing and the writing of the report, and concludes with the presentation of the overall research findings derived from the collected data. In conducting the research to obtain the necessary data for the preparation of the research proposal, the study was carried out among the community of West Jakarta who use Lifebuoy bath soap products. The research is scheduled to be conducted from the research planning stage, implementation, and up to the preparation of the final report, spanning from June 2024 to July 2025.

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach with a casual method to examine cause an effect relationships among variables. According to Sugiyono (2016), the quantitative method is based on the philosophy of positivism, involving random sampling, data collection using research instruments, and statistical analysis to test hypotheses. In this study, the independent variables are Word of Mouth (X1), Brand Image (X2), and Price (X3), while the dependent variable is Purchase Decision (Y). The Purpose of this research is to examine the effect of these three independent variables on purchase decisions.

Measurement Scale

According to Sugiyono (2016), the Likert scale is defined as a scale used to measure the opinions and attitudes of an individual or group regarding social phenomena.

Population and Sample

According to Sugiyono (2020), a population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects with certain characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and from which conclusions are drawn. A population is not limited to humans, but may also include objects, items, or other natural phenomena.

Moreover, a population does not only encompass the total number of objects or subjects under study but also includes all the characteristics and attributes they possess. In this research, the population under investigation consists of the community in Kembangan Utara, West Jakarta. Specifically, the research population refers to consumers who use Lifebuoy bath soap.

Data Analysis Method

The data analysis method employed in this study is the variance based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Square (PLS) version 4.0. According to Ghazali (2020), PLS is a powerful analytical method, often referred to as soft modeling because it does not require regression assumptions such as normally distributed data or absence of multicollinearity. PLS was developed to test both theory and weak data, for instance when dealing with small sample sizes or normality issues, and is also used to explain the presence or absence of relationships among latent variable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

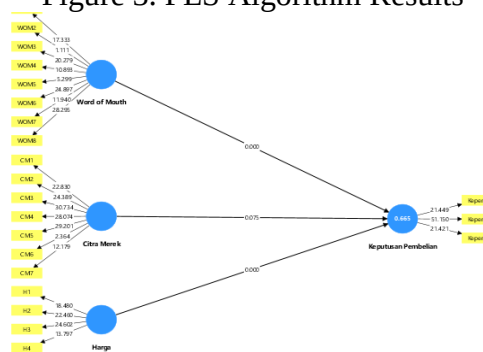
Data Quality Test Results

1. Outer Model

a. Convergent Validity

Convergent Validity testing of the measurement model with reflexive indicators is assessed based on the correlation between the item score or component score and the construct score calculated by PLS. Individual indicators are considered valid if they have a correlation value above 0.50. By looking at the output results of the correlation between indicators and their constructs as shown in the table and structural figure below:

Figure 3. PLS Algorithm Results



Source: Output PLS (2024)

Table 2. Convergent Validity Test Results

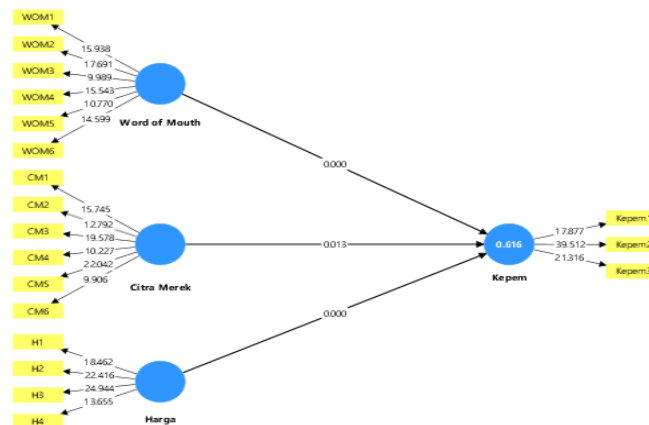
Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Description
Word of Mouth (X1)	WOM1	0.774	Valid
	WOM2	0.139	Not Valid
	WOM3	0.781	Valid

	WOM4	0.740	Valid
	WOM5	0.469	Not Valid
	WOM6	0.868	Valid
	WOM7	0.722	Valid
	WOM8	0.865	Valid
Brand Image (X2)	CM1	0.885	Valid
	CM2	0.901	Valid
	CM3	0.902	Valid
	CM4	0.901	Valid
	CM5	0.897	Valid
	CM6	0.259	Not Valid
	CM7	0.786	Valid
Price (X3)	H1	0.846	Valid
	H2	0.829	Valid
	H3	0.876	Valid
	H4	0.765	Valid
Purchase Decisions (Y)	Kepem1	0.841	Valid
	Kepem2	0.915	Valid
	Kepem3	0.840	Valid

Source: Output PLS (2024)

Based on Figure 3 and Table 1 above, it can be seen that the indicators WOM2, WOM5, and CM6 have factor loading values of less than 0.50, which are considered invalid and insignificant. Therefore, these indicators were dropped from the model. The following presents the output of the indicators and the recalculated results after removing the invalid indicators.

Figure 4. PLS Algorithm Results (modified)



Source: Output PLS (2024)

The results of the modified convergent validity test in Figure 4 show that all indicators have met the requirements of convergent validity, as they exhibit factor loading value of 0.70. Therefore, it can be stated that these indicators are valid.

b. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity testing, namely reflective indicators, can be seen in the cross loading between indicators and their constructs. An indicator can be declared valid if it has the

highest loading factor for the intended construct compared to the loading factor for other constructs.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Test Results (Cross loadings)

Indicator	Word of Mouth	Brand Image	Price	Purchase Decisions
WOM1	0.768	0.485	0.270	0.487
WOM2	0.779	0.416	0.491	0.672
WOM3	0.723	0.354	0.236	0.404
WOM4	0.757	0.195	0.184	0.448
WOM5	0.717	0.181	0.282	0.384
WOM6	0.756	0.231	0.327	0.500
CM1	0.349	0.827	0.220	0.375
CM2	0.303	0.792	0.269	0.369
CM3	0.298	0.827	0.228	0.373
CM4	0.350	0.742	0.322	0.422
CM5	0.337	0.825	0.329	0.480
CM6	0.371	0.705	0.366	0.397
H1	0.331	0.322	0.846	0.426
H2	0.490	0.358	0.828	0.623
H3	0.255	0.221	0.877	0.530
H4	0.271	0.332	0.764	0.445
Kepem1	0.568	0.375	0.544	0.820
Kepem2	0.614	0.546	0.523	0.892
Kepem3	0.511	0.390	0.529	0.844

Source: Output PLS (2024)

Table 2 shows that the value of each variable produces a large cross loading value in making comparisons between variables in the statements used to represent them.

Another method to see discriminant validity is to look at the square root value of the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct with the correlation between the construct and other constructs in the model, then it can be said to have a good discriminant validity value.

Table 3. AVE Testing Results

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Word of Mouth	0.563
Brand Image	0.620
Price	0.689
Purchase Decisions	0.727

Source: Output PLS, 2024

Based on Table 3, it shows that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test for each variable has a value of more than 0.5. Therefore, the value of all constructs has met the criteria for good discriminant validity.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Test Results (Fornell Lacker Criterium)

Variable	Word of Mouth	Brand Image	Price	Purchase Decisions
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Word of Mouth	0.750			
Brand Image	0.427	0.788		
Price	0.417	0.372	0.830	
Purchase Decisions	0.664	0.517	0.624	0.853

Source: Output PLS (2024)

From Tables 3 and 4 it can be concluded that the square root of the average variance extracted ($\sqrt{AVE}$) for each construct is greater than the correlation between one construct and another construct in the model. The AVE value based on the table above, it can be concluded that the constructs in the estimated model meet the discriminant validity criteria.

c. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Testing composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha aims to test the reliability of instruments in a research model. If all latent variables have a composite reliability value and Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.7 , it means that the construct has good reliability or the questionnaire used as a tool in this study is reliable or consistent.

Table 5. Composite Reliability & Cronbach's Alpha Test Results

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability(ρ_c)	Description
Word of Mouth	0.847	0.885	Reliable
Brand Image	0.877	0.907	Reliable
Price	0.850	0.898	Reliable
Purchase Decisions	0.812	0.889	Reliable

Source: Output PLS (2024)

Based on Table 5, the results of testing composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha show a satisfactory value, because all latent variables have a composite reliability value and Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.70 . This means that all latent variables are said to be reliable.

2. Inner Model

Inner model testing is the development of conceptual and theory-based models in in order to analyze the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables that have been described in the conceptual framework.

a. R-Square

Table 6. Endogenous Variable R^2 Value

	R-square
Purchase Decisions	0.616

Source: Output PLS (2024)

Based on the data presented in Table 6 above, the R- Square value for purchase Decision is 0.616. This indicates that 61.6% of the variation in Purchase Decision is influenced by Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price. While the remaining 38.4% is affected by other variables outside the scope of this study.

b. F-Square

The F-Square value is used to assess the substantive influence of exogenous constructs on endogenous costructs. The magnitude of the direct effect of an exogenous construct on an

endogenous construct is classified into three categories: 0.20 indicates a small effect 0.15 indicates a medium effect, and 0.35 indicates a large effect:

Table 7. F-Square Test Results

			F-Square	Criteria
Word of Mouth Decisions	Purchase	▼	0.347	Large
Brand Image Decisions	Purchase	▼	0.078	Small
Price	Purchase Decisions		0.283	Medium

Source: Output PLS (2024)

Based on Table 7 above, the F-Square value for Word of Mouth is 0.347, which falls into the large category. The F-Square value for Brand Image is 0.078, categorized as small, while the F-Square value for Price is 0.283, which is classified as medium.

c. Q-Square

The Q^2 value is obtained using the blindfolding technique and reflects how well the observed values can be predicted by the model. If the Q^2 value is greater than zero ($Q^2 > 0$), the model is considered to have good predictive relevance.

Table 8. Q-Square Test Results

	Q-Square
Purchase Decisions	0.570

Source: Output PLS (2024)

Based on the calculation results presented in Table 8 above, the predictive relevance value is 0.570, which is greater than zero. This indicates that 57% of the variation in the Purchase Decision variable is explained by the independent variables. Therefore, the model can be considered to have relevant predictive capability.

d. Hypothesis Testing Results

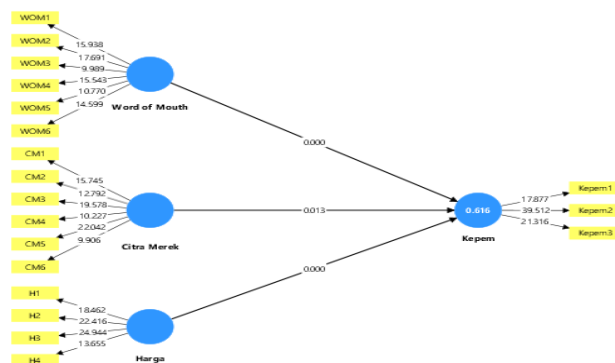
Based on the calculation results presented in Table 8 above, the predictive relevance value is 0.570, which is greater than zero. This indicates that 57% of the variation in the Purchase Decision variable is explained by the independent variables. Therefore, the model can be considered to have relevant predictive capability.

Table 9. Hypothesis Testing Results

	Original samel (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values	Description
Word of Mouth -> Purchase Decisions	0.424	0.423	0.064	6.679	0.000	Positive Significant
Brand Image -> Purchase Decisions	0.197	0.202	0.080	2.475	0.013	Positive Significant
Price-> Purchase Decisions	0.373	0.373	0.071	5.248	0.000	Positive Significant

Source: Output PLS (2024)

Figure 4. Bootstrapping Test Results



Source: Output PLS (2024)

Discussion

The Effect of Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the hypothesis test in this study, the results obtained a T-statistic value of 6.679, which is greater than 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, with a sample estimate of 0.424. Therefore, it can be concluded that Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision of Lifebuoy bath soap. This is because information shared directly from one consumer to another is considered more honest and trustworthy compared to commercial advertisements. The results of this study are supported by previous research conducted by Taher, et al. (2022), which states that Word of Mouth provides a business opportunity as it does not require much advertising capital and occurs naturally. As a result, Word of Mouth promotion has a positive and significant impact on consumers purchasing decisions.

The Effect of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the hypothesis test in this study, the results obtained a T-statistic value of 2.475, which is greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.013, which is smaller than 0.05, with an original sample value of 0.197. Therefore, it can be conclude that the Brand Image variable has a positive and significant effect on the Purchase Decision of Lifebuoy bath soap. This is because the brand image can create a positive perception in the minds of consumers regarding the quality, reliability, and benefits of the product. The results of this study are strengthened and in accordance with previous research conducted by Rivai, J. (2021), which states that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. The study explains that the better brand image formed in consumers mind, the higher their level of trust and loyalty toward the product, which in turn encourages consumers to make a purchase.

The Effect of Price on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the hypothesis test in this study, the results obtained a T-statistic value of 5.248, which is greater than 1.96, and a P-value of 0.000, which is smaller thn 0.05 with an original sample value of 0.373. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Price variable has a positive and significant effect on the Purchase Decision of Lifebuoy bath soap. This is because price is one of them main factors considered by consumers when making purchasing decisions. The results of this study are supported by previous research conducted by Marlius, D., and Mutiara, M (2022) shows that price has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. The study explains that when the price offered corresponds to the products quality and the consumers purchasing power to make a purchase.

CONCLUSION

Referring to the conclusions presented, there are several suggestions that can be considered, including:

1. Word of Mouth has a significant influence on the purchase decision of Lifebuoy soap. Through word-of-mouth communication such as recommendations from friends, family, or close acquaintances, consumers' attention can be attracted. The stronger and more positive the Word of Mouth about Lifebuoy soap, the higher the tendency of consumers to make a Purchase Decision.
2. Brand Image has a significant influence on the purchase decision of Lifebuoy soap. When consumers have a positive perception of the Lifebuoy brand, it increases their confidence in choosing and purchasing Lifebuoy soap products. The stronger and more positive the Brand Image of Lifebuoy soap among consumers, the higher their tendency to make a Purchase Decision.
3. Price has a significant influence on the purchase decision of Lifebuoy soap. With affordable pricing that matches product quality and remains competitive compared to other brands, consumers are more likely to feel confident in purchasing Lifebuoy soap. A price that aligns with consumers' purchasing power and offers good economic value will encourage purchase decisions. The more consumers feel that the price of Lifebuoy corresponds to the benefits they receive, the higher their tendency to make a Purchase Decision.

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