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## The Influence of Product Quality, Price Perception and Reference Groups on the Purchase Decision of Refillable Perfumes (Study on Uchi Parfume Refillable Solo, Central Java)

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### ABSTRACT

Perfume has become one of the lifestyle products that can support appearance and can increase confidence. All people really need perfume in activities outside the home. Some people often feel the need to buy perfume at an expensive price and irrational considerations to fulfill their desire in their social environment to look perfect and to keep up with the existing trends. This study aims to determine the influence of product quality, price perception, and reference groups on refillable perfume purchase decisions in Uchi Parfume Refillable consumers in Solo, Central Java. This research is a quantitative research and the research method used is causal analysis. The number of respondents was 220 people obtained through purposive sampling techniques. Data was collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method with Smart PLS 4 software. The results show that product quality, price perception, and reference groups partially have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. These findings show that these three variables are important factors that influence consumers in choosing refillable perfume products. Therefore, Uchi Parfume is advised to continue to maintain quality, set competitive prices, and utilize social influence in its marketing strategy.

**Keywords:** Product Quality; Price Perception; Reference Group; Purchase Decision; Refillable Perfume.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Perfume is one of the product items that can improve a person's appearance. Many people understand that using perfume is important today. Perfume not only transforms the body into a fragrance, but also changes the mood. The aroma of a fragrant and fresh body supports confidence and appearance in daily activities. Each fragrance will provide perception, imagination, and sensation. This means that more and more people have used perfume to show their "uniqueness".

There are many ways that consumers can buy perfumes they like, one of which is by buying refillable perfumes. Refillable perfumes are made from concoctions with unwritten compositions that can be close to popular scents and are packaged in ordinary small bottles. In refillable perfumes, buyers can order specific perfume scents. Refillable perfumes are desired and trusted by some people to use and have their own market.

One of the refillable perfumes is Uchi Perfume which is located in Solo, Central Java. Based on information from the head of the Uchi Perfume Solo Central Java branch, in 2023 there will be a decrease in the number of Uchi Perfume customers from previous years. By using a B2C (Business to Consumer) business model, Uchi Perfume focuses on selling products or services directly to the end consumer.

Researchers have previously researched the factors that influence purchasing decisions. The results of Maulana's research found that the factor that affects purchase decisions is the price that has a significant effect on Artfresh products (Maulana 2021). Then Dimas' research stated that good product quality can provide satisfaction to the needs and needs of customers for repeated purchase decisions in Toyka Perfume (Dimas, Ubaidillah, Rizky, Rofi & Dutahatmaja 2024). Furthermore, Wijanarko's research states that the reference group or reference group does not have a dominant influence on the purchase of original perfume (Wijanarko & Fachrodji 2020).

### **Problem Formulation**

The problem that exists is the decrease in the number of customers in consumers of Uchi Perfume Solo - Central Java on purchase decisions. In detail, the problems in this study are: 1. Does product quality affect consumer purchase decisions?, 2. Does price perception affect consumer purchase decisions?, and 3. Does the referral group affect consumer purchase decisions?.

### **Research Objectives**

With the object of research on Uchi Perfume Solo, Central Java, this study aims to: 1. To test and analyze product quality affecting consumer purchase decisions, 2. To test and analyze price perception affecting consumer purchase decisions, and 3. To test and analyze reference groups affecting consumer purchase decisions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Marketing Management**

Define marketing as a social and managerial process in which individuals and groups obtain their needs and wants by creating, offering and exchanging products that are of value to each other. Furthermore, marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong relationships between customers with the goal of capturing value from customers in return. (Kotler, Keller and Chernev 2022).

## **Consumer Behavior**

Consumer behavior is essentially about understanding what consumers are doing and what they are doing. The definition of consumer behavior, is the actions of individuals who are directly involved in the effort to acquire, use, and determine products and services, including the decision-making process that precedes and follows these actions. (Tjiptono 2020)

## **Theory of Planned Behavior - TPB**

TPB is a theory about the relationship between beliefs and behavior. Subjective norms, and perceptions of behavior control, together shape individual behavioral intentions and behaviors. This theory explains that behavior arises because of the intention that underlies the behavior (Kautonen, Gelderen & Fink 2015).

## **Purchase Decision**

Purchase decisions are a process that customers make to decide to choose products or services from various existing alternatives. A purchase decision is a buyer's decision about which brand to buy (Kotler and Armstrong 2019).

## **Product Quality**

Quality is the sum total of the characteristics and characteristics of a good or service that affects its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. Obviously this is the definition of customer-centric quality. (Abdullah and Tantri 2019)

## **Price Perception**

Price is the amount of money exchanged for a product or service. In addition, price is the sum of all the value that consumers exchange for the amount of benefits by owning or using goods and services. (Kotler and Armstrong 2019)

## **Reference Groups**

A group according can be defined as two or more people who interact to achieve individual or collective goals. (Schiffman and Kanuk 2018)

## ***Research Framework***

### **Hipotesis**

H1 : Product quality (X1) has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase decisions (Y) at Uchi Parfume Solo, Central Java

H2 : Price Perception (X2) has a positive and significant effect on consumers' purchasing decisions (Y) at Uchi Parfume Solo, Central Java

H3 : Reference Group (X3) has a positive and significant effect on consumers' purchasing decision (Y) at Uchi Parfume Solo, Central Java

## **METHOD**

This research process begins with the activity of identifying problems in the place that will be used as the location of the research, the formulation of the identified problems, the collection of theoretical bases that strengthen the foundation in the variables, the preparation of methods in data collection, the preparation of instruments, and the determination of the

testing techniques carried out. The subject of this study is Uchi Perfume consumers. This research process takes time from April 2024 to July 2025. The population is consumers who have purchased refillable perfumes at Uchi Perfume Solo, Central Java.

(Noor 2017) states that the appropriate sample size in the SEM equation method is between 100-200 samples, and depends on the number of parameters estimated. The guideline is 5-10 times the estimated parameters. In this study, the sample size used was calculated based on 40 indicators multiplied by 5:  $40 \times 5 = 200$  respondents. The data collection method used is the questionnaire method.

The data analysis method in this study uses component or variance based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) where the data processing uses the Smart-Partial Least Square (Smart-PLS) version 4.0 program. PLS (Partial Least Square) is an alternative model of covariance based SEM. PLS is intended for causal-predictive analysis in situations of high complexity and low theoretical support (Ghozali 2016).

Instrument testing with outer and inner models, as follows:

### **1. Convergent Validity**

An indicator is said to have good validity if the value is greater than 0.70, while a loading factor of 0.50 to 0.60 can be considered sufficient. Based on this criterion, if there is a loading factor below 0.50, it will be dropped.

### **2. Discriminant Validity**

This measurement can be used to measure the reliability of the component score of latent variables and the results are more conservative compared to composite reliability. Recommended AVE value should be greater than 0.50

### **3. Composite Reliability**

The Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha testing aims to test the validity of the instrument in a research model, or if all latent variable values have a composite reliability value or Cronbach alpha  $\geq 0.7$ , it means that the construct has good reliability or the questionnaire used as a tool in this study is consistent.

### **4. Structural Model Testing or Hypothesis Test (Inner Model)**

To see the value of R-Square, the PLS model was also evaluated by looking at the Q-Square predictive relevance for the construct model. Q-Square measures how well the observation value is produced by the model and also the estimation of its parameters. The Q-square value  $\geq 0$  (zero) indicates that the model has a predictive relevance value while the Q-square value  $\leq 0$  (zero) indicates that the model lacks predictive relevance.

### **5. Hypothesis Testing**

The magnitude of the t-static value. The limit for rejecting and accepting the proposed hypothesis is  $\pm 1.96$ , where if the t-value is in the range of -1.96 and 1.96 then the hypothesis will be rejected or in other words accept the null hypothesis (H0).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

#### **A. Descriptive Analysis Results**

The data was obtained about Uchi Perfume Solo Central Java by distributing questionnaires to 220 respondents.

Description of Product Quality Variables, it can be found where the answers of all respondents show that the indicator that has the highest average (mean) at KPR9 (4,223) with the statement of the function of Uchi Parfume based on customer needs, the main function of perfume as a support for confidence has a mean The highest priority, it can be interpreted that the majority of customers choose Uchi Parfume because it helps them feel more confident in their daily activities. Meanwhile, the statement that has the lowest average value (mean) is in KPR12 (3,659). Uchi Parfume products are available with a wide selection of scents. The lowest mean in this statement indicates the weakness of consumer perception of the diversity of Uchi Parfume scents. This can be a priority for improvement to improve purchasing decisions and satisfaction.

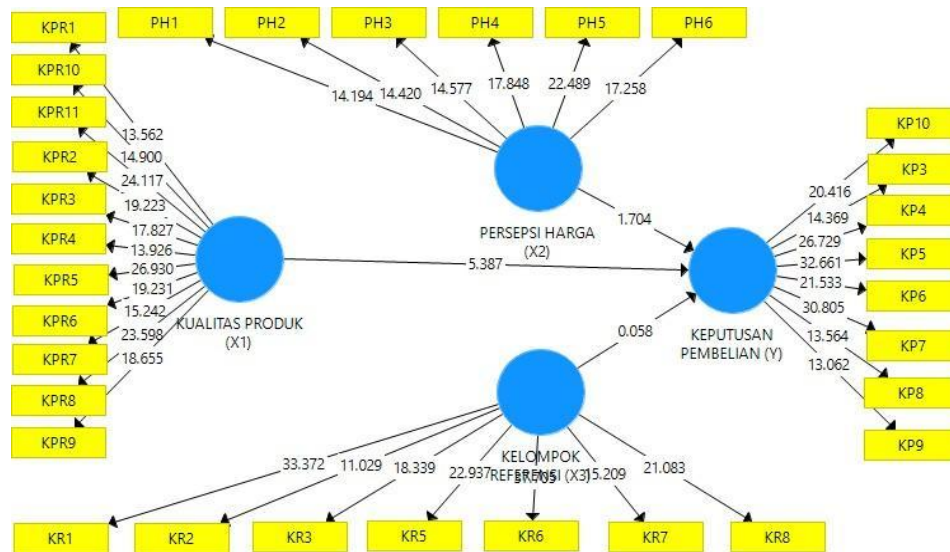
Descriptive Price Perception Variables, it can be known where the respondent's answers show that the indicator that has the highest average (mean) of PH8 (4,150) with the statement of Uchi Parfume function based on customer needs. The highest mean value indicates the function that best meets the emotional, psychological, or functional needs of the customer, and can be the main focus in Uchi Parfume's marketing or product development strategy. Meanwhile, the statement that has the lowest average value (mean) at PH5 (3,759) with the product is the compatibility between the price of Uchi Parfume and the benefits obtained. Consumers are less satisfied with the balance between price and what they get.

Descriptive of Reference Group Variables, it can be seen from the answers of all respondents who show that the indicator that has the highest average (mean) at KR1 (4,118) with the statement of knowing Uchi Parfume from nuclear family members (mother, father, wife, husband, children), then it can be concluded that the majority of respondents know the Uchi Parfume brand through nuclear family members. The nuclear family is the main source of information in introducing Uchi Parfume products and the role of word of mouth (from the family) is very strong in shaping brand awareness. Meanwhile, the statement that has the lowest average value (mean) at KR4 (3,700) with the statement of close friends also recommends choosing Uchi Parfume. This indicates that the majority of respondents are less influenced by recommendations from close friends in deciding to buy Uchi Parfume. This means that social factors in the form of recommendations from the closest people are not the main determinant in the decision-making process of buying this perfume.

Descriptive Variables of Purchase Decisions, it can be seen that from the respondents' answers which show that the indicator that has the highest average (mean) in KP3 (4,282) with the statement of looking for information about Uchi Parfume by visiting the store. This behavior is dominant, meaning that consumers prefer a direct (offline) approach to get information, rather than through other media such as the internet, social media, or from other people. Meanwhile, the statement that has the lowest mean value at KP8 (3.986) with a standard deviation (0.783) with the statement of Uchi Parfume products is in accordance with consumer needs, meaning that most respondents do not agree or are neutral to the statement that Uchi Parfume products are in accordance with their needs.

## **B. Instrument Test Results (Outer and Inner Model)**

The t-test in the study shows how much the independent variable affects the dependent variable. The result of the t-test if greater than 1.96 is considered significant and with an alpha value of 5%. Therefore, the criteria for rejecting or accepting the hypothesis, if the  $p < 0.05$ , then the hypothesis is accepted. Conversely, if the value of  $p > 0.05$  then the hypothesis is rejected.



1. Product Quality has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions. Because the direction of the relationship can be seen from the original value of the sample of 0.642,  $t$ - statistic  $>$   $t$ -table ( $5.514 > 1.96$ ) and the hypothesis is accepted. In addition, the determination of significance can also be determined by comparing the  $p$ -value with the level of uncertainty. The results of the hypothesis test can be seen, that Product Quality has a value of 0.000 which means that the  $p$ -value is smaller than alpha 0.05. This shows that Product Quality has a positive and significant effect on the Purchase Decision, so the hypothesis is accepted.
2. Price Perception has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions. Since the direction of the relationship can be seen from the original value of the sample of 0.188,  $t$ - statistic  $>$   $t$ -table ( $4.440 > 1.96$ ) and hypotheses are accepted. In addition, the determination of significance can also be determined by comparing the  $p$ -value with the level of uncertainty. The results of the hypothesis test can be seen, that Price Perception has a value of 0.007 which means that the  $p$ -value is smaller than alpha 0.05. This shows that Price Perception has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions. Then the hypothesis is accepted.
3. Reference Groups have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions. Since the direction of the relationship can be seen from the original value of the sample of 0.204, the  $t$ -statistic  $>$   $t$ -table ( $3.553 > 1.96$ ) and the hypothesis are accepted. In addition, the determination of significance can also be determined by comparing the  $p$ -value with the level of uncertainty. The results of the hypothesis test can be seen, that the Reference Group has a value of 0.022 which means that the  $p$ -value is smaller than alpha 0.05. This shows that the Reference Group has a positive and significant effect on the Purchase Decision. Then the hypothesis is accepted.

## Discussion

### 1. The Influence of Product Quality on Purchase Decisions

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that Product Quality has a significant effect on consumer purchase decisions. Consumers will judge the product based on its perception of quality. High-quality products create more value

for consumers, so they feel their purchasing decisions are the right one. Quality is also a benchmark that distinguishes one product from a competitor's product. Quality products tend to provide a positive experience to consumers, increase satisfaction and build loyalty. This also has an impact on future purchase decisions (repeat purchases). When consumers believe that the product is of high quality, then they feel the risk of purchasing decisions (such as damage, disappointment, non-conformity) becomes smaller. This speeds up purchasing decision-making. Quality products are often recommended by customers to others, either directly or through social media. This recommendation will encourage other potential consumers to join in the purchase.

This is strengthened by on the Influence of Product Quality and Product Price on Hiour Perfume Product Purchase Decisions, which shows that product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. Furthermore, it was strengthened by (Yusniari 2024) research entitled The Influence of Product Quality, Brand Image and Trust on Consumer Purchase Decisions of In Parfume Batam City, which showed that the quality of purchase had a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. (Yuda 2023).

## **2. The Influence of Price Perception on Purchase Decisions**

It can be concluded that Price Perception has a significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions, where consumers consider high prices to reflect good quality, then they tend to prefer products with higher prices, assuming better quality. Consumers feel that the price of a product is comparable to or lower than the benefits they obtain, they will be more likely to make a purchase.

This is strengthened by entitled The Influence of Price Perception, Product Quality and Outlet Location on Perfume Purchase Decisions at Abna Parfum Outlets, which shows that price perception has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. Furthermore, it was strengthened by (Putri 2024) research, namely the Influence of Price and Product Quality on the Purchase Decision of Regazza Perfume at PT Priskila Prima Makmur, which showed that price perception had a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision. (Natasya 2024).

## **3. The Influence of Reference Groups on Purchasing Decisions**

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the Reference Group has a significant effect on the purchase decision. Reference groups put social pressure on individuals to buy certain products in order to be accepted or in accordance with the group's expectations. Reference groups provide information that is considered trustworthy in the product evaluation process. Consumers buy products to show an identity or lifestyle that suits the group they admire. Reference groups greatly influence purchasing decisions because they can shape perceptions, inform, and motivate consumers to choose certain products. Therefore, companies need to understand their target market reference group so that their marketing strategy is on target.

This is strengthened by entitled Analysis of the Influence of Reference Groups, Lifestyle and Self-Control on the Impulsive Purchase of Baba Parfum in Rantau Prapat City, which showed that the results showed that the reference group had a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. (Monica 2022)

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Conclusion**

This study is intended to determine the influence of product quality, price perception and reference groups on the purchase decision of refillable perfume (a study on Uchi Perfume Refillable Solo, Central Java) in a practical way. Based on data analysis and discussion, several research conclusions can be expressed as follows:

1. Product quality has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. Providing an understanding that the better the quality of perfume, the higher the use of perfume, if so, it will increase consumers to buy perfume.
2. Price perception has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Providing consumers with an understanding of assessing prices in accordance with quality can encourage important decisions and considerations in purchasing perfumes.
3. Reference groups have been proven to have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. It gives the understanding that the stronger the influence of the reference group, the more likely someone is to decide to buy. So, there is a one-way relationship, if people around give recommendations or show a preference for a product, then someone is more likely to buy the product.

### **Suggestion**

For Companies

Some suggestions that can be considered for Uchi Perfume and for future researchers:

#### **a. Product Quality**

Product Quality Variable Description shows the indicator that has the lowest mean with the statement Uchi Perfume Products are available with a wide selection of scents. The lowest mean in this statement indicates the weakness of consumer perception of the diversity of Uchi Perfume scents.

Seeing the low consumer perception of the diversity of aromas in Uchi Perfume products, the company is advised to innovate and develop more diverse aroma variants in accordance with market preferences. Collecting consumer preference data through surveys or social media can be the first step to finding out which types of scents are most in demand. In addition, Uchi Perfume can also consider presenting a limited edition or unique signature scent collaboration as a form of product differentiation in the market. The provision of testers in outlets or digital campaigns that introduce new scent variants can also increase consumer awareness and interest in product diversity.

#### **b. Price Perception**

The Descriptive Price Perception Variable shows that the indicator that has the lowest average value (mean) in the statement of Conformity between the price of Uchi Perfume and the benefits obtained. Consumers are less satisfied with the balance between price and what they get.

This statement shows the weakness of consumers' perceptions of dissatisfaction with the balance between price and what they get. Consumers think that high prices reflect good quality, so they tend to prefer products with higher prices, assuming better quality. Consumers feel that the price of a product is comparable to or lower than the benefits they obtain, they will be more likely to make a purchase. Uchi perfume can also innovate to make perfumes at affordable prices or provide discounts for the purchase of certain products. The relationship between price perception and quality, benefits, and purchasing ability needs to

be considered for Uchi Perfume in the future in determining sales strategy.

### c. Reference Groups

The Reference Group Variable Description shows that the indicator that has the lowest mean value in the Close Friends statement also recommends choosing Uchi Perfume. This indicates that the majority of respondents are less influenced by recommendations from close friends in deciding to buy Uchi Perfume. This means that social factors in the form of recommendations from the closest people are not the main determinant in the decision-making process of buying this perfume.

Build a community of Uchi Perfume users, such as loyalty programs or customer groups on social media, to increase interaction between users and create a stronger word-of-mouth effect and provide referral incentives, or rewards for customers who successfully recommend products to their friends, to encourage social effect in purchases.

## 2. For the Next Researcher

Researchers are further advised to expand the scope of the study by including other variables to get a more comprehensive picture. Mixed research methods, which are a combination of quantitative and qualitative, can also be applied to gain a deeper understanding of consumers' purchasing decisions. In addition, research on different industry sectors can be conducted to see if similar results are found in other contexts. Longitudinal research can also be considered to analyze changes in turnover intentions over a period of time, especially after changes in company policies.

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