Analysis of the Effect of Product Quality and Brand Image on Truck Car Purchasing Decisions: Case Study at PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju Branch

Analisis Pengaruh Kualitas Produk dan Citra Merek terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Mobil Truk: Studi Kasus di PT. Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Cabang Mamuju

Kurniati[1], Junaeda[2]*, Muchtar[3]
Universitas Muhammadiya Mamuju[1,2,3]
niakurniati7171@gmail.com[1], junaedaedha208@gmail.com[2], muchtar@ciputra.ac.id[3]

**Corresponding Author*

ABSTRACT
This study examines the impact of product quality and brand image on truck car purchasing decisions at PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju Branch. The research reveals a positive and significant relationship between product quality and purchasing decisions, as well as a robust link between brand image and decision-making. Both variables individually influence consumer preferences, validating the first and second hypotheses. Simultaneous testing confirms their joint significance, emphasizing their combined impact on purchasing decisions. These findings underscore the need for businesses to maintain high product quality and cultivate a strong brand image to effectively shape consumer behavior. Such a comprehensive approach is crucial for enhancing customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall business success in the competitive automotive market.
Keywords: Product Quality, Brand Image, Purchasing Decisions

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini menguji dampak kualitas produk dan citra merek terhadap keputusan pembelian mobil truk di PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Cabang Mamuju. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan hubungan yang positif dan signifikan antara kualitas produk dan keputusan pembelian, serta hubungan yang kuat antara citra merek dan pengambilan keputusan. Kedua variabel tersebut secara individu mempengaruhi preferensi konsumen, memvalidasi hipotesis pertama dan kedua. Pengujian secara simultan menegaskan signifikansi gabungan keduanya, menekankan dampak gabungannya terhadap keputusan pembelian. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi perlunya perusahaan mempertahankan kualitas produk yang tinggi dan menumbuhkan citra merek yang kuat untuk membentuk perilaku konsumen secara efektif. Pendekatan yang komprehensif sangat penting untuk meningkatkan kepuasan pelanggan, loyalitas, dan kesuksesan bisnis secara keseluruhan di pasar otomotif yang kompetitif.
Kata Kunci : Kualitas Produk, Citra Merek, Keputusan Pembelian

1. Introduction

In this fast-paced era, the need for people to support human mobility anywhere is very important. Owning a car has become a necessity rather than a luxury. Indeed, the world was created to fulfill human needs. The need for transportation is no longer a luxury but an interest, coupled with the very high purchasing power of the community. This has caused the automotive industry over the past few years to grow and resulted in competition between companies that produce several increasingly innovative motor vehicle products. The higher the competition between business actors, each company requires high purchasing decisions from consumers. Purchasing decisions are a consideration of how a marketing strategy will be carried out by the next company. Currently, industrial development in Indonesia has progressed quickly and rapidly. This situation makes business competition conditions tighter. This causes companies to have superior innovation and creativity in order to create a

competitive advantage in the face of the emergence of other competitors engaged in the same industry.

One industry that is growing rapidly is the automotive industry, especially cars. In producing, in addition to paying attention to the function of the car as transportation of goods and passengers (passenger car), manufacturers must also pay attention to the type and design of the car. This is one of the competitive strategies in marketing in facing competition and providing opportunities for potential buyers to choose brands, types, and product quality according to the needs and purchasing power of the community.

With so many car brands available in the market, there is a tightening of efforts by car companies to capture a wider market share than other companies. While trying to expand the market, the dominant company still has to protect its business continuously from the attacks of its opponents Tjiptono (2014), The right and planned marketing strategy in the company is by means of good branding in the minds of consumers and quality product quality Lasander (2013). A brand is "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of all of these, which indicates the identity of the maker or seller of a product or service". Kotler and Armstrong (2019). According to Priyambodo (2013) in his research, it is generally stated that product quality is equated with a relative measure of the goodness of a product, whether goods or services. Meanwhile, price is the completeness attached to an item that allows the item to fulfill wants, needs and satisfy consumersii (satisfaction) expressed in money.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2019), product quality is "the ability of a product to carry out its functions, including durability, reliability, accuracy, ease of operation and repair, and other valuable attributes". When the product offered is in accordance with what consumers expect, consumers will feel satisfied. When consumers are satisfied, achieving company goals will be easier to achieve. One of the factors that is closely related to the activities of determining purchasing decisions made by consumers is the perceptions and beliefs of consumers about these products so that they can form an image. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2019: 463) Brand image is "perceptions and beliefs made by consumers, as reflected in associations that occur in consumer memory". In Amron's research (2018) states that the role of brand image is so important because when information about the product is not controlled by consumers, the step taken by consumers is to use brand image in choosing the product to be purchased.

The object of this research is PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju branch was founded by Japanese entrepreneurs. Hino dealers provide a variety of Hino products such as hino trucks, hino dutro, hino buses, engine spare parts or Hino engines and others. Based on the results of preliminary observations conducted by researchers found information that the business has a level of truck car sales on the 1st of January to March amounted to 39 units with various types and types of vehicles.

However, the problem found by researchers is in terms of product quality where, truck cars owned by PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) are of poor quality, such as spare parts that often experience leaks and the engines provided must require special attention where, the engine is too wasteful in the use of engine oil, the load capacity is still small, but the resulting engine is more powerful than its competitors. Furthermore, in terms of brand image, most people think that the quality of truck cars at PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) has not met people's expectations where people still do not recognize truck cars at PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) where the truck car is a new competitor in the market share long before other truck cars are present in the community in Mamuju Regency.

2. Literature Review

According to Philip Kotler in Warnadi & Triyono (2019), "Marketing is a human activity directed at efforts to satisfy wants and needs through the exchange process". According to

Tjiptono & Anastasia (2020), "Marketing is the process of creating, distributing, promoting, and pricing goods, services and ideas to facilitate satisfying exchange relationships with customers and to build and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders in a dynamic environment". According to Kertajaya in Alma, B (2021), "Marketing is a strategic business discipline that directs the process of creating, offering, and changing values from one initiator to its stakeholders".

According to Heizer and Render in Suharyanto, et al (2022), Quality is the ability of a product or service to meet customer needs, the concern of every manufacturing industry for products. Meanwhile, according to Assauri in Herlina and Pranata (2022), Quality is an emphasis on the overall prioritized characteristics of a product that bears or supports progress to satisfy customer needs and desires. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2019), the meaning of product quality is "the ability of a product to perform its functions, it includes the product's overall durability, reliability, precision, ease of operation and repair, and other valued attributes, which means the ability of a product to demonstrate its function, it includes overall durability, reliability, accuracy, ease of operation and repair of products as well as other product attributes. Meanwhile, according to Sunyoto in Majid, et al (2021), product quality is a measure to assess that a good or service has the desired use value or in other words, a good or service is considered to have quality if it functions or has the desired use value. A similar opinion is also expressed by Tjiptono (2014), product quality, which focuses on efforts to fulfill consumer needs and desires and delivery accuracy to meet consumer expectations. According to Tjiptono (2014: 332), there are several indicators of product quality which have several dimensions including Performance, Features, Conformance To Specification, Durability, Perceived Quality.

Brand image is a series of associations (perceptions) that exist in the minds of consumers towards a brand, usually organized into a meaning. The relationship to a brand will be stronger if it is based on experience and gets a lot of information. According to Kotler, P and Armstrong, G (2019), what interprets is "Image information can be seen from the logo or symbol used by the company to represent its products, where this symbol and logo are not only a differentiator from similar competitors but can also reflect the quality and vision of the company's mission".

Meanwhile, according to Rangkuti, F (2016) Brand Image is "brand perception associated with brand associations that are embedded in consumer memories". A similar opinion was also expressed by Schiffman & Wisenblit (2019) stating that brand image is "the perception in the minds of consumers about products and brands that come from images and symbolic values for consumer benefits based on the products offered". In the perception of consumers who think that the brand is an important identity of a product, because with a good image it will have a positive effect on the perceptions of consumers, and vice versa if the image is bad it will have a negative effect on consumer perceptions.

The better the brand image, the consumer will also have the perception that the product with that brand is good and also guaranteed quality because there is already trust that arises in the minds of consumers in the brand of the product. This is in line with the statement according to Sopiah and Sangadji (2016) which states that the benefits of brand image are as follows: Consumers with a positive image of a brand are more likely to make purchases, Companies can develop product lines by utilizing the positive image that has been formed of old product brands. Brand Image is something that must be considered by the company because it will affect the survival of the company.

According to Kotler and Keller in Firmansyah, A (2019) a strong Brand Image in the minds of customers is formed based on 3 (three) factors including: Favorability of Brand Association The superiority of brand associations can make consumers believe that the attributes and benefits provided by a brand can satisfy consumer needs and desires, thus

creating a positive attitude towards the brand. Strength of Brand Association (Strenght of Brand Association) The strength of brand associations depends on how information enters consumers' memories and how that information is managed by sensory data in the brain as part of the brand image. Uniqueness of Brand Association A brand must be unique and attractive so that the product is characterized and difficult for competing manufacturers to imitate. Through the uniqueness of a product, it will give an impression that is quite imprinted on the customer's memory of the uniqueness of the brand or brand of the product that distinguishes it from other similar products.

According to Rangkuti, F (2016) there are several indicators of brand image. brand image, including researchers will display on the following page which are as follows:

Recognition The level of recognition of a brand by consumers, if a brand is not known, products with that brand must be sold by relying on the lowest prices such as the introduction of logos, taglines, product designs and other things as the identity of the brand. Reputation Is a fairly high level of reputation or status for a brand because it has a good track record, a brand that consumers like will be easier to sell and a product that is perceived to have high quality will have a good reputation. Such as perceptions from consumers and product quality. Affinity Is an emotional relationship that arises between a brand and its consumers, this can be seen from the price, customer satisfaction and consumers of a product that uses the brand in question. Domain Namely concerning how wide the scope of a product that uses the brand in question.

According to Assauri (2017), purchasing decisions are "actions based on a person through perceptions of the benefits, quality of the product or service he wants". Meanwhile, Schiffman and Khanuk (2015), purchasing decisions are "an attitude based on a person through several considerations that are in line with his desired needs". Another opinion is also presented by Kotler, P and Armstrong, G (2019), purchasing decisions are "the gradual ability to choose a good or service in accordance with the stages based on their needs". Based on several opinions that have been put forward by experts, the authors conclude that purchasing decisions are a consumer attitude-taking behavior with alternatives to buying or not buying goods or services as a solution to the problems they face.

In making this decision, consumers go through several stages, starting from meeting needs, searching for information, evaluating to find alternatives, then taking actions that result in satisfaction or dissatisfaction. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2019), purchasing decision indicators consist of four stages. First, the "problem recognition" stage involves a person's awareness of the need or problem to be solved through a purchase. Second, in the "information search" stage, individuals seek information about the various options available to meet their needs or wants. Third, in the "alternative evaluation" stage, people consider various options by comparing and measuring the expected satisfaction of each option. Finally, in the stage of "post-purchase behavior," the decisions taken will be reflected in actions and judgments after the product or service is used. This whole process reflects how a person makes a purchase decision which is ultimately influenced by needs, information, evaluation, and post-purchase experience.

3. Research Methods

This research was conducted at PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju Branch, Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi Province, with the address on Jalan Sudirman, Mamuju District. The type of data used consists of quantitative data and qualitative data. Quantitative data is data in the form of numbers or graded qualitative data. In this study, quantitative data includes population and research samples, questionnaire calculations, and research results. Qualitative data is data in the form of words, sentences, schemes, and images. Qualitative data in this study includes an overview of the research site and

characteristics of respondents. Data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data is obtained directly from data collection, through observation, interviews, and distributing questionnaires to respondents. Secondary data is obtained indirectly, such as relevant written report documents, information from literature, and print and electronic media. The research population is all consumers who purchase truck cars at PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju Branch, the number is unknown or unlimited. The research sample was calculated using the Cochran formula with the results of 96 respondent samples. Data collection methods include observation, interviews, documentation, literature study, and questionnaires.

Qualitative data obtained from the questionnaire was converted into quantitative data using a Likert scale with 5 alternative answers. Data analysis involves research instrument tests such as validity and reliability, hypothesis testing with multiple linear regression, partial t test, F statistical test for simultaneous testing, coefficient of determination (R^2) test, and operational definition of variables. Product quality is measured by performance indicators, additional characteristics or features, conformity to specifications, durability, and perceived quality. Brand image is measured through indicators of recognition, reputation, attractiveness, and area. Purchasing decisions are understood as consumer behavior in buying or not buying based on problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, and post-purchase behavior.

4. Results and Discussions

The data analysis process in this study was carried out using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software version 24. The following is an explanation of the results of data processing through multiple linear regression equations in this study:

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing Result

Variable	Beta	T Value	Significant
Constant	6,745	2,796	0,006
Product Quality	0,128	2,100	0,038
Brand Image	0,681	10,294	0,000
F Square		68,365	.000[b]

The partial test results of the product quality variable in the research context show a positive direction with a regression coefficient value of 0.128. This indicates that there is a positive relationship between product quality and truck car purchasing decisions at PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju Branch. Furthermore, the tcount value of 2.100 is greater than the ttable which is 1.986. This indicates that the product quality variable has a significant partial effect on purchasing decisions.

The significance test results with a significance value of 0.038 which is smaller than the significance level (α) of 0.05 indicate that the effect of product quality on purchasing decisions for truck cars is statistically significant. This means that differences in product quality have a real impact on the purchase decision of truck cars at the branch. The interpretation of the test results is that product quality plays an important role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Better product quality tends to increase the likelihood of consumers to decide to buy a truck car from PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju Branch.

Therefore, the results of this study support the first hypothesis which states that product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. These results are in line with marketing theories which state that product quality has a significant impact on consumer purchasing behavior. Thus, company management should continue to focus on improving the quality of its products to meet consumer expectations and needs, as well as maintaining a positive image in the perspective of consumers.

The results of partial testing of the brand image variable in the research context show a positive direction with a regression coefficient value of 0.681. This indicates that there is a positive relationship between brand image and truck car purchasing decisions at PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju Branch. Furthermore, the tcount value of 10.294 is much greater than the ttable which is 1.986. This indicates that the brand image variable has a significant partial effect on purchasing decisions.

The significance test results with a significance value of 0.000 which is smaller than the significance level (α) of 0.05 indicate that the effect of brand image on truck car purchasing decisions is highly statistically significant. This shows that a strong brand image has a very real impact on consumer purchasing decisions. The interpretation of the test results is that brand image has an important role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. A positive and strong brand image tends to increase the likelihood of consumers to choose and buy a truck from PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju Branch. In other words, good brand reputation and positive image can be factors that attract and influence consumer preferences. This result is also in accordance with marketing theory which shows that a good brand image can create consumer trust and loyalty, and differentiate products from competitors. Therefore, company management needs to continue to invest in building and maintaining a positive brand image to support consumer purchasing decisions.

The simultaneous testing results of the variables "product quality" and "brand image," as presented in Table 1, reveal a significant influence on purchasing decisions of truck cars at PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Cabang Mamuju. The obtained F-count value of 68.365 exceeds the critical F-table value of 3.094, indicating a substantial simultaneous impact. Additionally, the significance level of 0.000 is well below the predetermined threshold of 0.05, underscoring the statistical significance of the joint effect of product quality and brand image on purchasing decisions.

This outcome substantiates the initial assumption of the researcher that both product quality and brand image collectively play a significant role in shaping consumers' decisions when buying truck cars from PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Cabang Mamuju. In other words, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected in favor of the alternate hypothesis (H3), thus validating the third hypothesis posited in this study. The significance of this finding lies in its affirmation of the interplay between tangible attributes, such as product quality, and intangible aspects, like brand image, in influencing consumer behavior. When considered together, these factors exert a considerable influence on consumers' decisions. A favorable product quality coupled with a strong brand image can sway consumer preferences toward purchasing truck cars from the mentioned branch.

This outcome aligns with marketing theories that emphasize the importance of creating a holistic consumer experience by harmonizing both product quality and brand image. It underscores the need for businesses to consistently deliver high-quality products while fostering a positive brand perception to enhance overall customer satisfaction and drive purchase intentions.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis of the research findings underscores the pivotal role of product quality and brand image in influencing consumers' purchasing decisions regarding truck cars at PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju Branch. The study unveiled a positive and significant relationship between product quality and purchasing decisions, as evidenced by the regression coefficient of 0.128.

This implies that higher product quality directly enhances the likelihood of consumers opting to purchase truck cars from the branch. The statistical significance of the t-test further emphasizes this influence, supported by a significance value of 0.038, indicating that

differences in product quality substantially impact purchase decisions. These results validate the first hypothesis and align with established marketing theories, highlighting the substantial impact of product quality on consumer purchasing behavior. The findings emphasize the necessity for consistent efforts by company management to maintain and enhance product quality, ensuring alignment with consumer expectations and fostering positive perceptions. Furthermore, the study revealed a robust positive relationship between brand image and truck car purchasing decisions, underlined by a regression coefficient of 0.681. The highly significant t-test result, with a significance value of 0.000, accentuates the pivotal role of brand image in influencing consumer preferences and decisions. A favorable brand image amplifies the likelihood of consumers selecting truck cars from PT Kumala Motor Sejahtera (Hino Mamuju) Mamuju Branch.

This outcome resonates with marketing theory, which emphasizes the power of a positive brand image in building consumer trust, loyalty, and differentiation from competitors. The research reaffirms the second hypothesis and underscores the strategic importance of consistent investments in cultivating and maintaining a strong brand reputation. Crucially, the simultaneous testing results reaffirmed the joint significance of product quality and brand image in influencing purchasing decisions. The substantial F-count value of 68.365, significantly surpassing the F-table value of 3.094, underscores the collective impact of these variables. The extremely low significance level of 0.000 further emphasizes the simultaneous effect. This conclusive result validates the third hypothesis, highlighting the synergistic relationship between tangible product quality and intangible brand image in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. In essence, the research outcomes collectively accentuate the need for a comprehensive approach in influencing consumer behavior.

Businesses must focus on enhancing both product quality and brand image to effectively attract, retain, and convert customers. These findings provide valuable insights for company management to strategically align their efforts towards maintaining exceptional product quality, cultivating a strong brand image, and holistically influencing consumer purchasing decisions in a competitive market landscape.

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