



## **PRODUCT VARIANCE AND BRAND IMAGE DETERMINING CUSTOMER LOYALTY: PURCHASE BEHAVIOR OF SOSRO TEA PRODUCTS**

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### **Abstract**

Business competition, which has more and more competitors, causes consumers to be more careful in choosing a product and brand. This is because consumers tend to want to get a sense of satisfaction and even want to become loyal customers. However, to have loyal customers, an appropriate strategy is also needed because customer loyalty determines the survival of a business. Therefore, this study chose the title product variance and brand image determining customer loyalty. In this study, the population is Sosro tea customers in the city of Surabaya. The sample is known to be 100 respondents. The technique for determining the sample is using purposive sampling. After the data is collected, it will be processed and analysed with SPSS. There are several data analyses discussed, starting from the validity test, reliability test, multiple linear regression analysis which includes the t test, F test and finally the coefficient of determination. Based on the results of his research, it was found that partially and simultaneously product variants and brand image affect customer loyalty.

**Keywords:** product variance, brand image, customer loyalty, sosro tea products.

## Introduction

At present the business world in Indonesia is experiencing an increase and is getting tighter. This can be seen from the many new businesses that have started to emerge. The food and beverage business are an industry that has good potential and is growing very rapidly because it relates to people's daily needs (Hariani & Al Hakim, 2022). Many have made this business a promising business opportunity to make a profit, but not a few have gone bankrupt due to an inappropriate marketing strategy.

Direct consumption products consist of food products and beverage products. These two products are the most sought-after products because they relate to consumer needs (Khayru, 2021). Particularly for beverage products, there are many beverage products with various types and brands. For example, tea beverage products, which were originally tea products sold in the form of dry and brewed tea leaves, are now developing into ready-to-drink tea products. The form also varies, ranging from powder form to liquid form. The packaging of a product, especially tea, is growing day by day. This can be observed from what was originally consumed through box packaging, now tea is available packaged in bottles. The bottled tea beverage product that is best known by the public is Teh Botol Sosro. This is because Teh Botol Sosro is a pioneer of bottled tea. The emergence of the Sosro Bottle Tea product which is packaged in bottles can make it easier for consumers to consume tea because consumers do not have to bother brewing the tea first if they want to enjoy fresh tea water. This product also offers many different variants to be able to meet customer needs and desires accompanied by certainty of quality products (Darmawan, 2018). This is to increase opportunities to gain sales and win competition in the market (Solomon, 2015; Khayru & Issalillah, 2021). There are several factors that influence purchasing decisions, including product variants and brand image strength (Retnowati et al., 2021). Both of these can even affect customer loyalty.

Product variant as disclosed by Groover (2010) is a product that is specially designed or different from where a company produces it. These product variations will differentiate between products from one company to another based on products that are in the same category (Mardikaningsih & Al Hakim, 2017) and this is a strategy to avoid switching customers to competitors (Lestari & Putra, 2022). The strategy

of making new variations can increase sales. These variations can be made in various ways in the form of variations in size, price, appearance, and materials which are components of product variations that can be used as a differentiator from competing products (Essardi et al., 2022). More choices for buyers cause them to potentially become loyal to the product (Darmawan, 2019).

Kotler & Keller (2013) provides an explanation regarding brand image which is the perception of consumers towards a brand based on brand associations in the minds of consumers. Image is an element of brand strength (Sinambela, 2017; Issalillah et al., 2022). This relates to how consumers explain what they think about a brand and what the brand feels when they think about it (Setyaningsih, 2004; Mardikaningsih et al., 2015). The existence of a brand image on certain products allows for various associations that arise in consumers' minds when remembering certain brands (Darmawan, 2019; Putra, 2022). These associations can be conceptualized by type, endorsement, prominence, strength, and uniqueness. If this is stronger than other brands, it allows a stronger bond between the customer and the brand, which means that customers become more loyal to the brand (Mardikaningsih, 2016; Darmawan & Arifin, 2021).

Jones and Sasser (1995) regarding customer loyalty, namely as a customer's desire to consume certain products or services in the long term. Loyalty stated by Yin (1999) is a behavior to buy repeatedly. Loyalty is a positive customer behavior based on a product that is purchased several times and at the same time other people are also invited to use the same product (Verriana & M. Yusik, 2017). With this, loyal customers are a valuable asset owned by the company (Gunawan et al., 2019). This can be seen from the characteristics it has (Griffin, 2005). Loyal customers make regular repeat purchases and they will still buy even though the price has increased (Arifin & Darmawan, 2021; Darmawan & Gatheru, 2021). Loyal buyers also buy between product lines or additional services provided by the company (Darmawan, 2018; Cici & Mardikaningsih, 2022). They also refer to other people (Masitoh et al., 2017). They also show immunity to the pull of competitors or always refuse when offered products from competing companies (Ernawati, 2017).

In line with the previous description, the research currently being carried out has the objective of knowing the effect of product variant and brand image on customer loyalty for Teh Sosro.

## Method

In this study, the population is Sosro tea customers in the city of Surabaya. The sample is known to be 100 respondents. The technique for determining the sample is using purposive sampling. In order for this research to be more focused, two independent variables were determined, the first being product variant (X1) and the second being brand image (X2) and choosing customer loyalty (Y) to be the dependent variable. In more detail, indicators based on each variable will be shown as follows. Product variants (X1) are various kinds of products that are produced, designed specifically or differently by a company. Product variants have three indicators, namely style, quality, and design (Gunawan et al, 2019). Brand image (X.2) as a representation of the overall public perception of a particular brand from information and past experience of that brand (Kotler & Keller, 2013). Brand image has three indicators, namely strength, uniqueness, and good image (Assauri, 2014). Customer loyalty (Y) is a customer who is willing to buy a product repeatedly and at the same time invites other people to use the same product (Griffin, 2005). Indicators of customer loyalty as mentioned by Griffin include re-buying; buying between product or service lines; willing to recommend to others; and not easy influenced by competitors.

The data collection method in this study is through a questionnaire. The researcher will distribute questionnaires assisted by the Google Form application where the respondents in this study are selected when they are seen consuming the product.

In the questionnaire that has been composed of a set of questions, the Likert scale has also been determined. The Likert scale has a range from Strongly Disagree having a score of 1 to a score of 8 for Strongly Agree. After the data is collected, it will be processed and analyzed with SPSS. There are several data analyzes discussed, starting from the validity test, reliability test, multiple linear regression analysis which includes the t test, F test and finally the coefficient of determination.

## Result and Discussion

Characteristic respondents based on the gender and age of sosro tea customers. The characteristic data of the respondents are described as follows. The respondents consisted of men totaling 48 respondents while women totaling 52 respondents. The age range group of 17 – 20 years with a total of 47 respondents is more than the next age range. It states that the age range of 17 – 20 years is the productive age where they consume packaged products more often. The majority of sosro tea customers use the product 3-5 times a week with 39 respondents. There were 1 -2 times a week as many as 21 respondents. The rest ranges from 1 – 3 times a month. This shows that sosro tea has quite a lot of customers.

Each statement item can produce a valid value if there is a value above 0.3 for the corrected item total correlation results. In the SPSS output, the X and Y variables for each statement item can exceed 0.3 so that valid results can be achieved. There are certain conditions for the reliability test, namely the specified Cronbach alpha value must be more than 0.6 to achieve reliability. It is known that the product variant, brand image and customer loyalty variables are reliable as the results are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Reliability test results

No	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items	Information
1	Product Variants (X.1)	0.746	7	Reliable
2	Brand Image (X.2)	0.729	5	Reliable
3	Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.684	7	Reliable

(Source: SPSS Results, 2022)

The usefulness of carrying out multiple linear regression analysis is to see the magnitude of the influence that is contributed from the independent variable to the dependent variable. The results have been presented in table.

Table 2. t-Test and Regression Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	21.690	4.014		5.404	.000
	X.1	5.343	.679	.493	7.866	.000
	X.2	6.078	.793	.480	7.660	.000

Source: SPSS Output Results

From multiple linear regression analysis based on product variant variables (X1) and brand image (X2) to influence customer loyalty (Y), it is known that the regression model formed is  $Y = 21.690 + 5.343 X.1 + 6.078 X.2 + e$ . If the results are interpreted, then:

The constant 21.690 is the value of customer loyalty without any influence from product variants (X1) and brand image (X2). This means that if the independent variable has a value of 0, then customer loyalty is predicted to have a value of 21.690.

The product variant regression coefficient (X1) is 5,343 which means that if there is an increase of 1 unit from the product variant, then there is an increase of 5,343 for customer loyalty assuming the value of the brand image variable (X2) is zero.

The brand image regression coefficient (X2) is 6,078 which means that if there is an increase of 1 unit in brand image, then there is an increase of 6,078 for customer loyalty assuming the value of the product variant variable is zero.

The independent variable on the dependent variable can be partially tested based on the t test. With the help of table 2, it can be understood how the regression relationship is formed between the independent variable and the dependent variable. In order to achieve a significant partial effect, each product variant and brand image variable must show a sig value below 0.05.

After observing the SPSS output, the result is that there is a partial effect given by the product variant on customer loyalty because the significance value is still below 0.05, which is 0.000. This is also the same as the brand image variable in that there is a partial effect given to customer loyalty at a significant number which is also below 0.05, namely 0.000.

Table 3. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15362.169	2	7681.085	136.081	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5475.141	97	56.445		
	Total	20837.310	99			

Source: SPSS Output Results

The simultaneous effect of the independent variables of product variants and brand image on customer loyalty will be tested using the F test. Table 3 becomes a table showing the results of the F test. The F-count value in table 3 reaches 136.081 and the significance value reaches 0.000. Based on these values, there is a simultaneous influence of product variants and brand image which is significant on the formation of customer loyalty.

The amount of influence given by the product variant and brand image variables on customer loyalty can be seen in the R-Square column.

**Table 4. Coefficient of Determination**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.859 <sup>a</sup>	.737	.732	7.513

Source: SPSS Output Results

In the R-Square column it appears that the percentage is 73.7%. This percentage means that the formation of customer loyalty requires contributions from product variant variables and brand image of 73.7%. Apart from the independent variables that have been selected in this study, they can only contribute 26.3% to customer loyalty.

The results of the analysis found that product variants affect customer loyalty and the influence exerted is also significant. In 2019 to 2022 there are several researchers who produce similar research findings. The researcher is Jumarudin (2019); Retnowati et al. (2021); Masrurroh (2021); Sinambela and Mardikaningsih (2022); Hakiki & Al Hakim (2022); Kusmayanti (2022). There are product variants in the form of variations in size, price, appearance, and materials which are components of product variations that can be used as a differentiator from competing products (Putra et al., 2022). Besides being able to increase sales, the policy of holding product variants can also affect an increase in the number of purchases from customers (Hariani & Sinambela, 2020).

Brand image can also affect customer loyalty and the influence given is significant. Several studies do not agree with these results. This research is research from Sondakh (2014); Munir & Putra (2021); Irfan & Hariani (2022). This may still require an even stronger effort to build a brand image according to the intended target market so there needs to be a marketing program that is developed even more strongly for this

product, which is unique and highlights its advantages that are different from competing products (Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2016; Irfan & Hariani, 2022). Based on Sinambela et al. (2020); Issalillah & Khayru (2022) brand image and corporate image can lead to repeat purchases. The existence of a combination of elements that support one another can create a stronger brand image for consumers (Jahroni et al., 2021).

Businesses that are being run definitely need customers. The benefits of having customers can be calculated and seen based on customers who have bought and even know how the products offered by the seller (Khasanah et al., 2010). With loyal customers, the seller has succeeded in completing business profits in a stable manner. Customers who have used the product will buy the product again, unless they have had a bad experience during a transaction (Darmawan & Arifin, 2020). Another advantage is that sellers do not have to pay high costs to find new customers or advertise products. If the relationship between the seller and the old customer is well established, they will continue to return (Yin, 1999). When a business has won customer trust, it will be easier to understand customer wants and needs (Mardikaningsih & Arifin, 2021; Khayru et al., 2021). Thus, to maintain and maintain good relationships with customers is an important key for businesses to survive long in the business world.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of his research it was found that partially and simultaneously product variants and brand image affect customer loyalty. The quality of Sosro tea products must be maintained and improved because the higher the quality of a product can create customer satisfaction which leads to the formation of customer loyalty so that total sales are also affected. Companies must be able to maintain and further enhance the creative ideas in terms of the products offered in order to make these products more attractive to consumers. Companies must continue to carry out the perception of affordable prices and compete according to product quality even though they are well-known brands. Marketing communications must be carried out in order to strengthen brand reputation. This is because the competition is very fierce so as to maintain a good brand image.

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