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The effect of product quality, premium price, and brand image on purchase decisions using sem (Case study Natesh Sanitary Pads)

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords:

Natesh Sanitary Pads; Premium Price; Product Quality; Purchase Decisions; This research aimed to obtain empirical evidence regarding the influence of Product Quality, Premium Price, and Brand Image on Purchase Decisions. The population in this research was consumers of Natesh Sanitary Pads. There were seven hypotheses put forward for in-depth analysis. The sampling method used a purposive sampling technique with a sample size of 200 respondents. The data collection method was carried out by distributing questionnaires with a Likert scale. The method used for data processing and analysis in this research is the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method, which uses the AMOS application. The results of this research showed the relationship or influence of Product Quality, Premium Price, and Brand Image on Purchase Decisions.

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, fierce business competition requires companies to compete with competing products competitively in an effort to attract consumer interest. This is due to the fact that today's consumers are often faced with a variety of brand options, which makes them interested in trying or switching to other brands or products (Lahay & Wolok, 2020).

The same phenomenon occurs in women's decisions when choosing the type of sanitary pads they use. Their selection of sanitary pads is based on considering the benefits and impacts that arise from using the product. Women who care about their health will choose sanitary pads that are of good quality (Sulianti & Arafah, 2019). Data on the Indonesian population reported by the Central Statistics Agency for 2022 states that of the 275 million Indonesian population, 139 million people are female. Of the 139 million people, around half are active users of sanitary napkins, so almost 70 million people are a potential market opportunity to be exploited.

The success of a company really depends on consumers, purchase decisions become a critical factor in the success of the business (Oscar & Keni, 2019). Consumer buying interest is when consumers collect and form a choice between various brands that are in their consideration before deciding to make a purchase (Heriyadi et al., 2021). When consumers finally make a choice, they have made a

purchasing decision (Arianty & Liyuwandari, 2021). In facing business competition, one aspect that can become a competitive advantage for a company is how they manage purchase decisions carried out by consumers. Fully understanding the consumer purchasing decision process is a challenging task. When consumers choose a product, they definitely consider various factors related to the product, such as appearance, color, size, packaging, and other elements. Apart from that, they also consider abstract aspects such as price, service, and product quality (Ernawati, 2019).

In the process of deciding what to buy, it's crucial to take product quality into account. Product quality is suitability and compliance with applicable specifications and standards, suitable or satisfactory for use, can satisfy desires, and meet needs and expectations at competitive costs (Effendi & Edison, 2022). Products that are superior in quality will experience rapid growth and be able to win market share (Suari et al., 2019). In marketing, something that cannot be separated is the direction of consumer behavior. Kotler & Keller (2022) explain that a purchase decision is a consumer's decision to decide to buy after evaluating several factors such as brand, location of purchase, amount to be purchased, time of purchase, and possible payment methods. Businesses should prioritize the excellence of their offerings since it significantly impacts consumer choices when selecting products or services. A higher level of product quality tends to generate increased interest from consumers, influencing their decision to make a purchase. By consistently delivering top-notch products, companies can establish a competitive edge over their rivals. Consequently, understanding consumer preferences is essential for companies to craft products that not only meet but exceed expectations in terms of quality (Ernawati, 2019). Based on a prior study examining the impact of the quality of halal-branded products on consumer purchasing decisions in Nigeria (Jaiyeoba et al., 2020), it was found that the positive and significant influence of the quality of halalbranded products extends to consumer purchasing decisions in the country. Concentrating on the quality of halal-branded products can facilitate business entry into new markets, enhance competitiveness in the global marketplace, and yield increased profits. The earlier research concentrated on specialty goods with unique characteristics, whereas this current study focuses on convenience goods, specifically sanitary pads, which have become part of routine necessities.

Apart from product quality, consumers will pay attention to the price that must be paid to get it. Perceived price premium relates to how consumers process price information as a whole and how that information has significant meaning for them. One way to understand premium price perceptions is to process information (Jusfarani et al., 2020). After perceiving whether the consumer gets a fair price or not for a product. Premium price reflects the value of money used as a measure of the benefits received from goods or services, which must be agreed to and accepted by consumers. Role premium price is very significant in influencing purchase decisions in purchasing a product, and this is a critical factor in the success of a marketing strategy. Premium price includes the costs required to obtain goods or services as well as the benefits provided. When determining product prices, companies must ensure compatibility between premium price and product quality offered because this balance will have an impact on purchase decisions towards that product (Saputri & Utomo, 2021). According to Wibowo & Rahayu (2021), price will affect customer satisfaction significantly. Premium price is viewed as a critical factor influencing the decision to purchase. Hence, drawing from previous research findings, the influence of price on purchase decisions suggests that a premium price has the potential to dissuade consumers from buying a product (Tan et al., 2019). This earlier study shares similarities in data collection methodology, utilizing purposive sampling techniques targeting young customers. In contrast, this research uses purposive sampling, specifically among female customers who have purchased and used Natesh Sanitary Pads. The critical difference lies in the fact that the earlier study investigated the patterns of customer desire for products labelled as environmentally friendly, representing a highinvolvement product. In comparison, this study centres on understanding customer preferences for routine products, which fall under low-involvement products.

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When managing a business, maintaining and building a brand image or the product or service being marketed is very important to win the hearts of consumers. Therefore, it is essential to create a brand image that is positive in the eyes of consumers. Brand image is a description of how consumers associate a particular brand with certain beliefs and associations. The better brand image of the product being sold, the greater the likelihood that consumers will choose to buy that product (Arianty & Andira, 2021). Derived from a prior investigation regarding the impact of brand image on consumer purchase decisions, as observed in the Xiao Mi case study (Marpaung et al., 2023), it was revealed that brand image exerts a substantial and favourable influence on consumer purchase decisions. The study's examinations concluded that brand image significantly and positively affects purchase decision-making. Both the earlier research and the present study delve into comparable variable relationships. However, the former centred on smartphones as specialty products, whereas the latter explores sanitary pads, classified as convenience products with inherent health value. This research illustrates the strong drive shown by business players, including the sanitary pads manufacturing company Natesh Sanitary Pads, in an effort to focus their attention on developing and strengthening the brand image of the products they offer. In a very tight competitive environment, brand image is identified as a crucial factor that the Natesh Sanitary Pads company needs to pay attention to in order to maintain its competitive position in the market for similar sanitary pad products. The existing brand image of a strong company is considered a vital element because it can influence a company's ability to attract the attention of new consumers and maintain the loyalty of existing consumers (Saputri & Utomo, 2021).

Natesh Sanitary Pads is a brand of health sanitary napkins that are free from bleach, which is included in the Indonesian Doctors Association News magazine. Natesh Sanitary Pads also use nano silver technology to kill germs and viruses when used. Natesh Sanitary Pads with a thinness of less than 1mm provide comfort to consumers when using them; consumers can also feel the benefits of Natesh Sanitary Pads after using them.

Theoretical implications of this study enhance academic research in marketing management, emphasizing consumer behaviour in the convenient product category with health-related values. Simultaneously, practical implications aim to offer further insights to industry professionals. This includes guidance for manufacturers in developing pricing strategies aligned with customer value and consumer psychology and aiding consumers in comprehending the factors that impact their decisions when purchasing convenience products.

The purpose of this research is to understand the correlation or influence of the relationship between the variables Product Quality, Premium Price, Brand Image, and the Purchase Decision variable. In detail as follows. H1: The Effect of Product Quality on Brand Image, H2: The Effect of Premium Price on Brand Image, H3: The Effect of Product Quality on Purchase Decisions, H4: The Effect of Premium Price on Purchase Decisions, H5: The Effect of Product Quality on Purchase Decisions through Brand Image mediation, H7: The Effect of Premium Price on Purchase Decisions through Brand Image mediation

Based on the theory, the following conceptual framework was prepared like Figure 1 below.

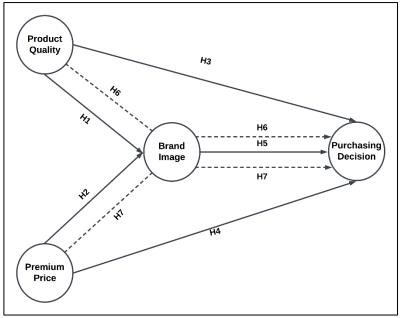


Figure 1. Research Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the survey method was employed, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. The questionnaire was distributed to individuals who met specific predetermined criteria. The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling, focusing on respondents who were (a). Women, (b). Had purchased and used Natesh Sanitary Pads, and (c). Served as decision-makers in the purchasing process. The study's target population comprised consumers of Natesh Sanitary Pads, and the sample size consisted of 200 respondents. The distribution of questionnaires was facilitated through snowball sampling, where researchers initially distributed questionnaires to a WhatsApp Group with 440 members. Subsequently, each member referred the questionnaire to the next respondent, creating a cascading effect. Data collection occurred between September 18 and October 15, 2023. The questionnaire implemented a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with corresponding categories: a score of 5 denoted "Strongly Agree," 4 indicated "Agree," 3 represented "Doubtful," 2 stood for "Disagree," and 1 signified "Strongly Disagree."

Based on the theoretical review that has been presented, product quality in this research refers to five indicators, namely main performance, features, conformance of specifications, and aesthetic. Furthermore, there are four premium price indicators, including price affordability, price match with quality, price competitiveness, and price match with benefits. Next, there are three brand image indicators, namely product superiority, brand ability, and brand convenience. For purchase decisions, there are three indicators, namely confidence when deciding to buy, careful consideration, and choice priorities.

Data analysis begins with the classification of respondents based on their demographic characteristics. The questionnaire data undergoes testing to ensure its normal distribution, validity, and reliability. The method used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Structural Equation Modeling is a statistical method that integrates factor analysis, path analysis, and regression analysis. The purpose of SEM is to measure the relationship between latent variables (unobserved constructs) and indicators that measure these variables (Suhriani & Abdurakhman, 2019). This testing encompasses the evaluation of Standardized Loading Factor (SLF) values, along with the computation of Construct Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Once

confirmed that the data meets the established criteria, the subsequent step involves formulating a model and assessing its appropriateness using various goodness-of-fit indices. If several prominent indices meet the predetermined criteria, it can be inferred that the model is suitable. Hypothesis testing is then conducted from the fitting model to ascertain whether there is a significant influence among variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondent Characteristics

The following are the characteristics of various respondents in the survey based on demographic data

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics
Categories

Categories	Items	F	%
	Sumatra	24	12%
	Kalimantan	74	37%
	Java	70	35%
Domicile	Sulawesi		7%
	Bali		8%
	Maluku	1	1%
	Overseas		2%
Total	200	100	
	Less than 21 years old	29	15%
	21 to 30 years old	131	66%
Age	31 to 40 years old	23	12%
O	41 to 50 years old	13	7%
	50 years and over	4	2%
Total	,		
	Elementary School	1	1%
	Junior High School	3	2%
Total Lord	Senior High School	82	41%
Last education	D1/D2/D3/D4	26	13%
	Bachelor degree)	84	42%
	Postgraduate (S2/S3)	4	2%
Total	200	100	
	Employee	59	30%
	Student	47	24%
	Businessman	41	21%
	BUMN	13	7%
	Student	11	6%
Work	Civil servants	11	6%
WOTK	Housewife	9	5%
	Migrant workers	4	2%
	Teacher	2	1%
	Doctor	1	1%
	Retired	1	1%
	Police/TNI	1	1%
Total	200	100	
	Less than IDR 4 million	34	17%
	IDR 4 million to IDR 6 million	47	24%
	More than IDR 6 million to IDR 8 million	26	13%
Income per Month	More than IDR 8 million to IDR 10 million	20	10%
	More than IDR 10 million to IDR 12 million	7	4%
	More than IDR 12 million	8	4%
	Not yet working	58	29%
Total	Total 200		
Pocket Money per Month	Less than IDR 1 million	26	13%
i ocket Money per Month	IDR 1 million to IDR 1.5 million	27	14%

	More than IDR 1.5 million to IDR 2 million	18	9%
	More than IDR 2 million to IDR 2.5 million	10	5%
	More than IDR 2.5 million	9	5%
	Already working	110	55%
Total	200	100	

Based on responses received from respondents regarding consumption behavior, it was found that most of them also use other brands of sanitary napkins. A total of 133 people (67%) indicated that they used other brands, with Charm (75%) and Laurier (71%) being the main choices. The main reasons for using other brands of sanitary napkins tend to be due to ease of access (94%), affordable price (92%), and comfort of use (83%).

Measurable Model

The results of the suitability, validity, and reliability tests are listed below.

Table 2. Value of Standardized Loading Factor (SLF), Construct Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in Overall Model Fit

	Extracted (AVE) in Overall Model Fit			
	Items	SLF	CR	AVE
Product Quality	Natesh Sanitary Pads have high absorbency	0.660		
	Natesh Sanitary Pads product packaging is easy for consumers to use	0.651		
	The quality of Natesh Sanitary Pads is as promised	0.591	0.897	0.687
	The packaging design for Natesh Sanitary Pads is attractive, updating consumer tastes	0.681		
Premium Price	The premium price of Natesh Sanitary Pads is in line with the purchasing power of target consumers	0.589		
	The premium price of Natesh Sanitary Pads is commensurate with its high quality	0.598	0.863	0.613
	Premium price Natesh Sanitary Pads are able to compete with sanitary napkins in other similar quality class categories offered on the market	0.546		
	The premium price of Natesh Sanitary Pads is in accordance with the best benefits provided to consumers	0.63		
Brand Image	Natesh Sanitary Pads are known as sanitary napkins with a soft texture, comfortable to use	0.597		
	Natesh Sanitary Pads is known as a sanitary napkin brand with differentiation advantages compared to other brands of similar products.	0.657	0.879	0.71
	Among the brands of sanitary pads available in the market, Natesh Sanitary Pads is the brand that I remember the most	0.668		
Purchase Decision	I felt confident when I decided to purchase Natesh Sanitary Pads	0.557		·
	My decision to buy Natesh Sanitary Pads was after careful consideration.	0.522	0.824	0.612
	Natesh Sanitary Pads are my priority choice when deciding to buy sanitary napkin products	0.644		0.012

According to Table 2, the results of the validity and reliability tests show that the indicators in the model that have been built have met the validity and reliability criteria and have an AVE value above 0.5. All indicators have a Standardized Loading Factor (SLF) value above 0.5. This shows that all the metrics used are valid and effective for measuring the entire structure of the model that has been created. The Construct Reliability (CR) score obtained was greater than 0.7, indicating that all instruments can reliably and consistently measure the overall structure in the model that has been developed.

Table 3. Goodness of Fit

Table 5. Goodness of 11t				
Goodness of Fit Index	Cut off Value	Results		
χ2	Expected to be low	138.111		
Df		72		
χ2- Significance Probability	≥ 0.05	0.00		
CMIN/DF	≤3.00	1,918		
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.068		

RMR	< 0.05	0.100
NFI	≥ 0.90	0.913
IFI	≥0.90	0.957
TLI	≥0.90	0.944
CFI	≥0.90	0.956

The results of the model conformance test as shown in Table 3, show that the model meets the suitability requirements, and the suitability of the model can be stated. The six measurements show that the model fits the data well.

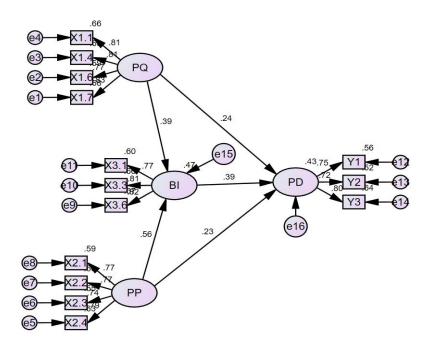


Figure 2 Full Model Testing

Hypothesis Testing

The results of testing the influence of the relationship between variables in the research configuration that has been built in this research can be summarized as follows:

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. 11y poincis results					
Hypothesis	Path	Estimate	S.E	CR	P
H1	Brand Image < Product Quality	0.363	0.077	4,738	***
H2	Brand Image < Premium Price	0.539	0.089	6,065	***
НЗ	Purchase Decision < Product Quality	0.209	0.083	2,514	0.012
H4	Purchase Decision < Premium Price	0.203	0.100	2,032	0.042
H5	Purchase Decision < Brand Image	0.361	0.361	3,385	***

Based on information from Table 4, the test results show the following results: (a). Product Quality has a significant influence on Brand Image. The t-value and p-value support the hypothesis. The calculated t-value for the Product Quality variable on Brand Image is 4.738, which shows a significant relationship compared to the t-table value (1.96). The p-value is also smaller than 0.05 (α = 0.05), so the first hypothesis is accepted, (b). The results of the second hypothesis are accepted. Premium Price has a significant impact on Brand Image. The t-calculated value of the

Premium Price variable on Brand Image is 6.065, which shows a significant relationship, with a p-value smaller than 0.05, (c). The third hypothesis is accepted. Product Quality has an impact on Purchase Decisions. The calculated t-value for the Product Quality variable on Purchase Decision only reached 2.514, which is very significant compared to the t-table value (1.96), with a p-value that is smaller than 0.05 (α = 0.05), (d). The results of the fourth hypothesis are accepted. Premium Price has a significant positive impact on Purchase Decisions. The t-calculated value of the Premium Price variable on the Purchase Decision is 2.032, indicating a significant relationship with a p-value smaller than 0.05, (e). The fifth hypothesis is also accepted. Brand Image has a significant influence on Purchase Decisions. The calculated t-value for the Brand Image variable on Purchase Decision is 3.385, indicating a significant relationship, with a p-value smaller than 0.05 (α = 0.05).

Next, to test the indirect relationship through mediating variables, the results of the Sobel test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Sobel Test - Significance of Mediation				
Livroathasis	Path	Sobel Test	Two-tailed Probability	
Hypothesis	raui	Statistics		
H6	Product Quality> Brand Image> Purchase	2.74	0.006	
	Decision			
H7	Premium Price> Brand Image> Purchase Decision	2.94	0.003	

Based on the Sobel test results contained in Table 5, we can conclude that: (f). In the case where Brand Image mediates Product Quality on Purchase Decision, the Sobel statistical value is 2.74 with a p-value of 0.006. These results indicate that there is a significant indirect effect through the mediating variable Brand Image. The Sobel statistical value is greater than the t-table value (1.96), and the p-value is smaller than 0.05 (α = 0.05), (g). In the case where Brand Image mediates Premium Price on Purchase Decision, the Sobel statistical value is 2.94 with a p-value of 0.003. This also shows that there is a significant indirect effect through the mediating variable Brand Image. The Sobel statistical value is greater than the t-table value (1.96), and the p-value is smaller than 0.05 (α = 0.05).

Thus, the results of the Sobel test show that there is a significant mediating effect of Brand Image in the relationship between product quality and purchase decision, as well as between premium price and purchase decision.

Discussion

In the context of this research, the first hypothesis, which states that product quality influences brand image is accepted. This is reinforced by observations of respondents' consumption behavior which shows that they use Natesh Sanitary Pads for reasons related to product quality, such as packaging (85%), product variety (85%), absorbency (91%), hygiene (95%), as well as comfort (94%) and safety of use (96%). This shows that the respondent's perception of the product quality of Natesh Sanitary Pads is very positive, and this is what makes product quality the main determining factor for the brand image of Natesh Sanitary Pads.

Furthermore, this research supports the second hypothesis, which says that premium price influences brand image. Consumers look at Natesh Sanitary Pads as a product with a premium price, and premium price influences consumer choices. This can be seen from the survey results, which show that many respondents know Natesh Sanitary Pads based on price suitability with consumer perceptions (98%). Therefore, premium price is one of the aspects that build a brand image for Sanitary Pads. Acceptance of the third hypothesis is also confirmed, which states that product quality influences purchase decisions. Product quality Natesh Sanitary Pads has a significant impact on respondents' purchase decisions. This can be seen in respondents' reasons for purchasing, such as comfort in use (94%) and health safety (96%). Respondent demographics also show that the majority of undergraduate graduates (42%) tend to analyze product quality before

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purchasing decisions, which shows that product quality plays an important role in respondents' purchase decisions.

Furthermore, the fourth hypothesis is also accepted, which states that premium price influences purchase decisions. The research results show that a strong perception of premium price has a significant impact on purchase decisions. This is seen in the main reasons for purchasing, such as affordable price (92%) and price commensurate with quality (84%). Respondent demographics also show that most of them have no income (29%) and have limited income/under 6 million (41%), which makes them sensitive to the premium price offered by Natesh Sanitary Pads. This shows that the respondent's perception of premium price Natesh Sanitary Pads is considered to influence consumers in making purchase decisions Natesh Sanitary Pads.

The fifth hypothesis is accepted: brand image in this research is proven to have a significant influence on purchase decisions. This proves that people are becoming more selective in deciding to buy products. Sanitary napkins are purchased based on how often the brand is talked about, heard, and seen. A well-known brand is one of the reasons consumers decide to buy Natesh Sanitary Pads. Natesh Sanitary Pads, which are known for their price according to quality (84%), comfortable to use (94%), and safe for health (96%), are a consideration for consumers when making purchases. This shows that brand image influences purchase decisions. Natesh Sanitary Pads are considered to influence consumers in making purchase decisions Natesh Sanitary Pads.

Purchase decisions based on brand image are, of course, built by several factors, namely product quality and premium price. Product quality Natesh Sanitary Pads, such as high absorption capacity (91%) and packaging that makes it easy to use (85%), can build a brand image Natesh Sanitary Pads comfortable to use (94%). So, a purchase decision occurs because of product quality through brand image. This shows that brand image is able to mediate product quality on purchase decisions for Sanitary Pads (The sixth hypothesis is accepted).

Meanwhile, brand image can also be influenced by premium price, namely price according to quality (98%). So that a brand image will be formed, Natesh Sanitary Pads has an affordable price (80%) when compared to the health benefits obtained. This causes a purchase decision because of the premium price through the brand image. This shows that brand image is able to mediate premium price on purchase decisions (the seventh hypothesis is accepted).

CONCLUSION

In this research, the results of the analysis support the initial hypothesis based on the literature. Several factors have been proven to influence purchase decisions for Natesh Sanitary Pads, including product quality, premium price, and brand image. High product quality has a positive impact on a good brand image (H1). Good product quality builds positive consumer perceptions towards Natesh Sanitary Pads. Affordable premium prices contribute to the formation of brand image Natesh Sanitary Pads (H2). Premium prices that match product quality create a positive perception of brand image. Comfortable and safe product quality plays a role in encouraging consumers to make purchase decisions for Sanitary Pads (H3). Aspects such as comfort of use and security influence purchase decisions. Premium price in accordance with quality or premium price, has an impact on consumer purchase decisions (H4). A premium price that is commensurate with the benefits provided influences purchase decisions. Brand imageNatesh Sanitary PadsWidely known knowledge, which emerges through conversation, exposure, and hearing, influences consumers to use the product (H5). A strong brand image is a factor in purchasing decisions. Apart from that, brand image, which is influenced by product quality, mediates its influence on purchase decisions (H6). This indicates that brand image is not only directly influenced by product quality but also influences purchase decisions. Brand image which is influenced by premium price has a significant relationship with purchase decisions (H7). The premium price that consumers can accept is one of the factors that influences purchase decisions.

This research shows the importance of continuing further research to explore other factors that influence product quality, brand image, premium price, and purchase decisions. In addition, this research also emphasizes the importance of considering context and additional variables that could impact research results. The results of this research provide a deeper understanding of the complexity of the relationship between product quality, brand image, premium price, and purchase decision.

These findings provide valuable insight to decision-makers in developing more effective and targeted marketing strategies. With a deeper understanding of how these factors relate to each other, companies can design marketing campaigns that are more efficient and better meet consumer needs. Apart from that, this research also helps companies to understand how they can maintain a strong brand image, determine an appropriate premium price, and influence consumer purchase decisions.

LIMITATION & FUTURE RESEARCH

Researchers hope that the results of this research become an important reference for better and more in-depth research in the future. This conclusion emphasizes the importance of developing knowledge and understanding in the area that is the focus of this research.

By utilizing the findings from this study, future researchers can construct more comprehensive studies. They can improve the models used, broaden the range of variables considered, or adopt more sophisticated methodologies to answer more complex questions. Further research can explore awareness of health needs by considering the benefits provided by the product. There are also health promotion variables that have the potential to have a relationship or influence on purchasing decisions for health products such as Natesh Sanitary Pads.

Besides that, efforts to improve the quality of research and analytical methods will contribute to achieving more valuable and accurate findings. As a result, this research is not only useful for developing current knowledge but also inspires more advanced and significant future research. This conclusion illustrates the importance of collaboration among researchers, sharing knowledge, and continuing to encourage progress in related scientific fields.

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