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The Influence of Taste, Packaging and Price on Purchasing Decisions of Pie Ngalam Heritage Products, Malang, East Java

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ABSTRACT

Business competition is increasingly intense, requiring companies to adapt to the evolving competitive dynamics to remain viable. Producers must highlight the uniqueness and quality of their products to influence consumer purchasing decisions. Pie Ngalam Heritage is a manufacturer specializing in producing pie cakes designed as keepsakes from Malang. Pie Ngalam products possess distinct qualities that help them sustain a competitive advantage in the market. This study aims to evaluate the influence of taste, packaging, and price on consumer purchasing decisions regarding Pie Ngalam Heritage products in Malang. The study comprised a cohort of 50 consumers engaged in numerous transactions and analyzed the data. We analyzed data using structural equation modeling (SEM) and the SEM WarpPLS technique. In particular, we employed the hierarchical component model (HCM) or second-order method. Evaluated the strength and reliability of the relationship between hidden variables and their indicators. The findings revealed that flavor positively and significantly impacted purchasing decisions, with a t value of 2.234, which exceeds the critical value of 2.010. While packaging also had a positive effect, its impact was not statistically significant, as shown by a low t-value of 1.444, below the critical value of 1.677. Conversely, price had a substantial and positive effect on purchasing decisions for Pie Ngalam Heritage products, with a strong statistical significance indicated by a t value of 4.838, well above the critical value of 2.406. To boost sales at Pie Ngalam Heritage, businesses should focus more on affordable pricing and superior taste rather than making significant investments in packaging.

1. Introduction

The food business in Indonesia, particularly in the snack and souvenir sectors, is experiencing rapid growth (Ngatemin et al., 2019; Wahmuda & Hidayat, 2020). This expansion has intensified market competition, requiring businesses to develop strategic approaches to sustain their operations (Zhao et al., 2020). In highly competitive markets, consumers have numerous choices, compelling producers to emphasize product uniqueness and superiority to attract buyers (Setiawan et al., 2024). As a center of industrial development, Malang City also reflects this rapid transformation, with increasing competition among local food producers (Yoga et al., 2022; Pragmadeanti & Rahmawati, 2022).

Despite extensive research on consumer purchasing decisions, previous studies have

primarily focused on general consumer preferences, often overlooking the specific dynamics of the souvenir food industry, particularly in Malang. There is limited empirical evidence regarding the key factors influencing purchasing decisions for local souvenir products like Pie Ngalam Heritage. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing how taste, packaging, and price impact consumer purchasing decisions, providing insights into the competitive positioning of Pie Ngalam Heritage.

Understanding the factors that drive consumer purchase decisions is essential for businesses aiming to thrive in competitive environments (Tenima et al., 2023). Companies must remain adaptable to shifting market conditions and focus on attracting buyers to sustain growth (Özdemir & Türker, 2023; Rini Putri Utami, 2024). Purchasing decisions extend beyond transactions, as consumer experiences influence repeat purchases and brand loyalty (Mulyana, 2021; Saha et al., 2023). Specifically, taste, packaging, and price play critical roles in consumer decision-making in the souvenir food sector. A purchasing decision is a person's decision to choose one of several available alternatives through an integration process that combines knowledge and attitudes to evaluate and determine the best choice (Fadhila et al., 2020). Various internal and external factors influence consumers' purchase decisions (Sun et al., 2023).

Pie Ngalam Heritage, a well-known producer of Malang's signature souvenir pies, differentiates itself with unique flavors and attractive packaging. However, initial observations suggest that taste, packaging, and price are the primary determinants influencing consumer purchases. This study focuses on these three variables because they directly impact product appeal and market competitiveness. Previous research supports their significance: taste is a key determinant of consumer preference and loyalty in the food sector (Dewi et al., 2023), packaging enhances product attractiveness and perceived value (Qur'ani et al., 2024), and price remains a crucial factor influencing purchasing behavior and company strategies (Tjiptono, 2020; Anwar & Siswanto, 2020; Alatas et al., 2023).

The competitive landscape challenges Pie Ngalam Heritage in sustaining its market position. Therefore, this study assesses how much taste, packaging, and price influence purchasing decisions. The findings will contribute to consumer behavior research by providing industry-specific insights and offering practical business recommendations for improving product quality and marketing strategies. This research is expected to aid Pie Ngalam Heritage and similar businesses in enhancing their market competitiveness and long-term sustainability.

2. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research methodology with a confirmatory approach to test specific hypotheses regarding the relationships between variables (Solimun et al., 2017). The objective was to analyze the correlation between taste (X1), packaging (X2), price (X3), and purchasing decisions (Y) through hypothesis testing. The study sample consisted of consumers who have purchased products from the Pie Ngalam Heritage brand. The sampling technique followed a purposive sampling approach, selecting respondents who have made at least two repeat transactions. The sample size determination followed the guidelines established by Solimun et al. (2017) and Hair et al., (2021), recommending a sample size of at least 10 times the number of variables. Given the four variables in this study, a minimum of 40 respondents is required, rounded up to 50.

This study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the WarpPLS (Warp Partial Least Square) technique for data analysis. WarpPLS is preferred over Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) because it is better suited for handling small sample sizes, complex models, and non-normally distributed data. Specifically, this research applied the Hierarchical Components Model (HCM) or second-order modeling approach, as Hair et al. described (2021). The analysis consisted of two stages: first, evaluating the relationships among the primary variables (first-order analysis), followed by a second-order analysis to assess the overall structural model. This approach provides a comprehensive evaluation of how taste, packaging, and price collectively influence purchasing decisions:

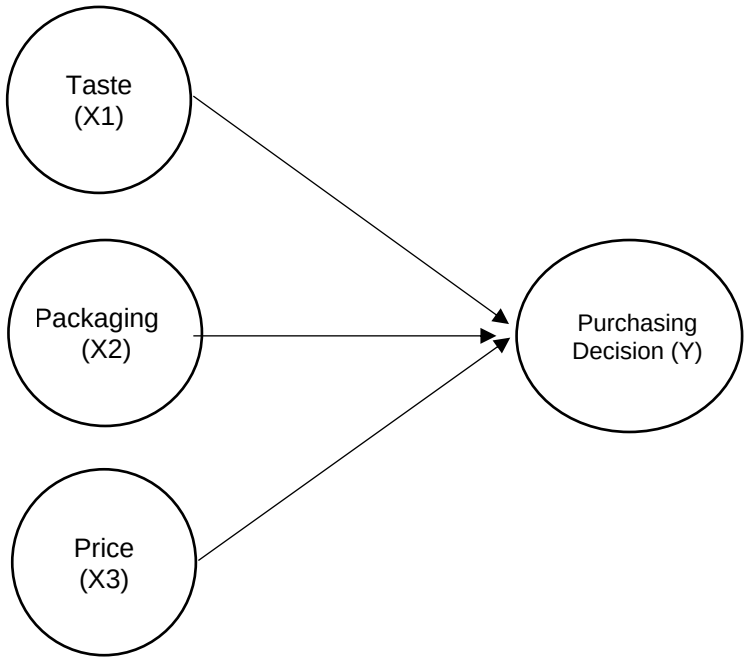

Figure 1. Structural Equation Modeling Diagram of Research

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. First Order Evaluation

The primary objective of the first-order evaluation is to elucidate the correlation between items and their corresponding indicators. The reflective model's assessment in the structural equation model necessitates three essential tests: internal consistency testing, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 1. First Order Test

Indicator	Item	Loading Factor	P Value	CR	CA	AVE
X1.1	X1.1.1	0.716	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
X1.2	X1.2.1	0.696	<0.001	0.816	0.549	0.689
	X1.2.2	0.760	<0.001			
X1.3	X1.3.1	0.848	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
X1.4	X1.4.1	0.753	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
X1.5	X1.5.1	0.740	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
X2.1	X2.1.1	0.890	<0.001	0.960	0.918	0.924
	X2.1.2	0.879	<0.001			
X2.2	X2.2.1	0.831	<0.001	0.927	0.843	0.864
	X2.2.2	0.751	<0.001			
X2.3	X2.3.1	0.890	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
X3.1	X3.1.1	0.794	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
X3.2	X3.2.1	0.879	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
X3.3	X3.3.1	0.902	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
X3.4	X3.4.1	0.859	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
X3.5	X3.5.1	0.816	<0.001	0.927	0.843	0.864
	X3.5.2	0.839	<0.001			
Y1.1	Y1.1.1	0.819	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
Y1.2	Y1.2.1	0.808	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
Y1.3	Y1.3.1	0.856	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
Y1.4	Y1.4.1	0.894	<0.001	1.000	1.000	1.000
Y1.5	Y1.5.1	0.858	<0.001	0.928	0.844	0.865
	Y1.5.2	0.855	<0.001			

Source: Primary data Processed, 2024

A. Internal Consistency Reliability Testing

Internal consistency reliability testing can be conducted using the composite reliability (CR) coefficient and Cronbach's alpha. In order to meet the criteria for internal consistency reliability, an item must have a coefficient alpha (CR) value that exceeds 0.7 and a composite reliability (CA) measurement that surpasses 0.6. Based on the data provided in Table 1, it is clear that all CR values are more significant than 0.7, and each indicator's CA value exceeds 0.6, thereby meeting the reliability requirements.

B. Convergent Validity Testing

1) Indicator Validity

The values of the loading factors indicate the validity of measurement indicators. Hair et al. (2021) define statistical significance as a loading factor greater than 0.5. Moreover, as Solimun et al. (2017) stated, all loading factor values exceeded 0.5, indicating strong correlations between indicators and latent variables, thus meeting convergent validity requirements. Some indicators displayed more substantial loading factors than others, suggesting a higher contribution to their respective constructs.

2) Average Variance Ectracted (AVE)

The AVE, or average variance extracted, is a metric used to assess the convergent validity of a measurement instrument. According to studies conducted by Hair et al. (2021)

and Solimun et al. (2017), an indicator is considered to have convergent validity if its Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value exceeds 0.5. Based on the results, all indicators have an average variance extracted (AVE) value greater than 0.5, suggesting that they satisfy the specified requirement.

C. Evaluation of Discriminant Validity

The goal of discriminant validity is to measure how distinct a concept is from others.

1) Cross-loading Approach

This approach entails comparing the loading value of an indicator with the loading value of the related latent variable's indicator. Cross-loading analysis is used to identify any inconsistencies between the observable indicators and the latent variables they are intended to represent. As stated by Solimun et al. (2017), if the factor value of an item in an indicator surpasses the correlation values of other indicator items, it is considered a valid loading value. Based on the discriminant validity test utilizing the cross-loading approach, the correlation between each indicator and its related latent variable is more robust than the correlations with other latent variables. The cross-loading approach is used to assess the robustness of the discriminant validity of the questionnaire. Discriminant validity measures how much a specific concept may be distinguished from others.

2) Fornel-Larcker Approach

This method entails comparing the square root of the AVE (average variance extracted) value for each construct with the correlations between that construct and other constructs. The Fornel-Larcker technique suggests that the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) value for each latent variable should exceed the correlation with other latent variables, suggesting that each latent variable is separate and different from the others.

3) HTMT (Heteroit-Monotrait Ratio) Validity

HTMT is derived by computing the average correlation between all items and the average correlation between each indicator's items (Hair et al., 2021; Kock, 2021), deeming an HTMT result satisfactory if it falls below 0.9.

Table 2. HTMT Validity Evaluation Results

	X1	X2	X3	Y1
X1				
X2	0.823			
X3	0.794	0.744		
Y1	0.805	0.832	0.810	

Source: Primary data Processed, 2024

3.2. Second Order Evaluation

In the second-order model evaluation, there are 2 (two) tests to assess the mode, namely internal consistency and convergent validity tests, without the need for discriminant validity tests (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 3. Second Order Analysis Test

Variables	Indicator	Loading factor	P Value	CR	CA	AVE
Taste (X1)	X1.1	0.719	<0.001	0.892	0.848	0.625
	X1.2	0.848	<0.001			
	X1.3	0.860	<0.001			
	X1.4	0.773	<0.001			
	X1.5	0.742	<0.001			
Packaging (X2)	X2.1	0.912	<0.001	0.920	0.868	0.793
	X2.2	0.832	<0.001			
	X2.3	0.924	<0.001			
Price (X3)	X3.1	0.825	<0.001	0.939	0.918	0.754
	X3.2	0.888	<0.001			
	X3.3	0.914	<0.001			
	X3.4	0.866	<0.001			
	X3.5	0.847	<0.001			
Purchase Decision (Y1)	Y1.1	0.819	<0.001	0.939	0.922	0.721
	Y1.2	0.808	<0.001			
	Y1.3	0.856	<0.001			
	Y1.4	0.894	<0.001			
	Y1.5	0.855	<0.001			

Source: Primary data Processed, 2024

A. Internal Consistency Testing

This assessment assesses the coefficients of CR (composite reliability) and CA (average variance extracted). According to Solimun et al. (2017), an item meets the internal consistency and reliability criteria if its CR value is above 0.7 and its CA value is above 0.6. After carefully examining the test results in the table, it is clear that the CR and CA values satisfy the intended criteria because their overall value exceeds the stated parameters.

B. Convergent Validity Testing

1) Indicator Validity

Indicator validity testing is used to assess the accuracy of measurements by examining the values of the loading factors, according to research conducted by Hair et al. (2021; Solimun et al., 2017). This research establishes a loading factor above 0.5 as significant, showing a strong connection between the indicator and the latent variable. According to this analysis, the factor value meets the specified criterion because the loading factor is greater than 0.5.

2) Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The AVE is employed to evaluate the convergent validity. According to a study conducted by Solimun et al., (2017), an indicator is deemed to fit the criterion if its Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value exceeds 0.5. According to the evaluation results, all indicators have satisfactory Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, which means they meet the criteria for convergent validity.

3.3. Relationship Between Latent Variables

The objective of establishing the link between latent variables is to determine the reciprocal impact of the variables within the study model. The second-order model analyzes the path diagram to assess the structural model, also known as the inner model.

A. Collinearity Test

The collinearity test results showed VIF values exceeding 3.3, typically indicating multicollinearity concerns. However, in WarpPLS, a higher threshold is often accepted when dealing with complex models (Kock, 2021). All model variables have a full collinearity VIF value > 3.3, indicating that all latent variables meet the collinearity assumption.

Table 4. Collinearity Evaluation Results

Variables	Full Collinearity VIFs
Taste (X1)	3.202
Packaging (X2)	2.897
Price (X3)	3.253
Purchase Decision (Y1)	3.225

Source: Primary data Processed, 2024

B. Evaluation of Determinant Coefficient

The determinant coefficient evaluation measures the model's capacity to precisely forecast or elucidate the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 5. R-square and Q-square Evaluation Results

Indicator	Purchase Decision (Y)
R-Square	0.799
Q-Square predictive relevance	0.800

Source: Primary data Processed, 2024

The R-squared value represents the degree to which the model can explain the data, whereas the R-squared contribution value shows the individual contribution of each variable.

Table 6. R-square Contribution

Variables	R Square Contribution
Taste (X1)	0.255
Packaging (X2)	0.129
Price (X3)	0.415

Source: Primary data Processed, 2024

The purchase satisfaction variable (Y) has an R-square value of 0.799, indicating that it explains 79.9% of the variation in the data. This indicates that the individual elements in the model together explain 79.9% of the variation in the purchasing decision, which is the outcome being measured. The study does not account for other variables, contributing to the remaining 20.1% of the variation remaining unexplained, suggesting that other factors, such as brand trust or word-of-mouth, may influence purchasing decisions. The research determinant coefficient is examined and yields an R-square value within the high prediction range. Furthermore, we can quantify the impact of each factor on the purchase choice as

follows: Taste (X1) has a 0.255 (25.5%) influence, packaging (X2) has a 0.129 (12.9%) influence, and price (X3) has a 0.415 (41.5%) influence. The price variable (X3) has the most significant contribution value.

C. Blindfolding Evaluation

The coefficient of determination (Q-square) for the purchasing preference variable (Y) is 0.800. This value results from an assessment showcasing the model's capacity to foresee and evaluate its predictive utility. According to (Hair et al., 2021), The accepted Q-square value criteria are > 0. It can be seen that the results of the blindfolding evaluation in the study are acceptable because they have values above the criteria with high predictive accuracy.

D. Effect Size Evaluation

The effect size measures the change in R-squared that happens when we exclude one of the exogenous variables from the model. An effect size of less than 0.02 is considered to have negligible influence, according to (Hair et al., 2021). The evaluation results demonstrate that the variables X3, X1, and X3 influence Y1, with differing magnitudes of impact: substantial, moderate, and minor, respectively.

Table 7. Effect Size Evaluation Results

Exogenous Variables	Endogenous Variables Purchase Decision (Y1)	
	Koefisien Jalur	Effect Size (F^2)
Taste (X1)	0.314	0.255**
Packaging (X2)	0.173	0.129***
Price (X3)	0.495	0.415*

Source: Primary data Processed, 2024

Information: *) Highly influential (f2 >0,35)
**) Moderately influential (f2 <0,35)
***) Little influence (f2 <0,15)

E. Evaluation of the Fit and Quality Indicides Model

Assessing the model's fit and quality indices scrutinizes valid criteria from the sources (Solimun et al., 2017) (Kock, 2021). The WarpPLS technique utilizes multiple factors to evaluate the quality of the model (goodness of fit) in structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. The table data indicates that the model fulfills all 10 criteria, meeting the requirements for model fit.

Table 8. Evaluation of Model Fit and Quality Indices

Model Fit and Quality Indicis	Criteria	Results	Information
Average path coefficient (APC)	Accepted if p<0.05	0.327, P<0.001	Significant
Average R-squared (ARS)	Accepted if p<0.05	0.799, P<0.001	Significant
Average adjusted R-square (AARS)	Accepted if p<0.05	0.786, P<0.001	Significant
Average block VIF (AVIF)	Accepted if ≤5, ideal ≤3.3	3.719	Accepted
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	Accepted if ≤5, ideal ≤3.3	3.719	Accepted
Tenenhause GoF (GoF)	small ≥ 0,1, Currently ≥0.25, high ≥0,36	0.760	High
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)	Accepted if ≥0,7, ideal =1	1.000	Ideal
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	Accepted if ≥0,9, ideal=1	1.000	Ideal
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	Accepted if ≥0.7	1.000	Accepted
Nonlinear bivariate casuality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	Accepted if ≥0.7	1.000	Accepted

Source: Primary data Processed, 2024

3.4. Analysis Evaluation

The key parameters in this study pertain to the investigation (Hair et al., 2021). The coefficient path analysis demonstrates that the path from X3 to Y, known as Path X3àY, is very significant, with a P value of less than 0.01 and a coefficient of 0.495. In addition, the path from X1àY has a moderate significance level, as indicated by a P-value below 0.05 and a coefficient value of 0.314. The path from X2àY is somewhat significant, as indicated by a path analysis coefficient of 0.173.

Table 9. Direct Effect Evaluation Results

Variable Path	Coefficient	P Value
X1 → Y1**	0.314	0.015
X2 → Y1***	0.173	0.082
X3 → Y1*	0.495	<0.001

Source: Primary data Processed, 2024

Information: *) High significance (P Value ≤ 0.01)
**) Medium significance (P Value ≤ 0.05)
***) Low significance (P Value ≤ 0.10)

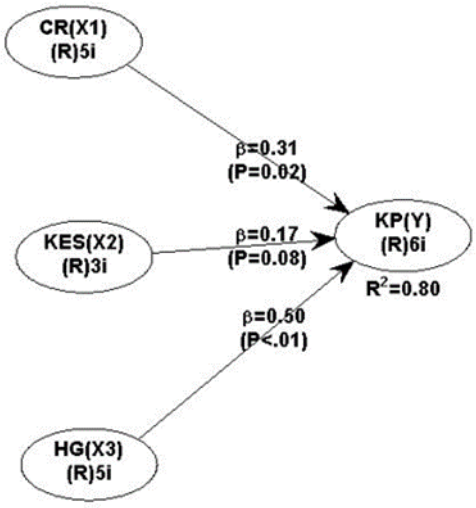

Figure 2. Research Path Diagram Model
Source: Data Analysis (2024)

3.5. Hypothesis Test

The following results of the hypothesis testing are shown in the table below:

Table 10. Path Coefficient Evaluation Results

Variable Path	Coefficient	t value	p value	*Confidence Intervals*	Information
X1 → Y1**	0.314	2.234	0.015	[0.038; 0.589]	Accepted
X2 → Y1***	0.173	1.414	0.082	[-0.067; 0.414]	Rejected
X3 → Y1*	0.495	4.838	<0.001	[0.295; 0.696]	Accepted

Source: Primary data Processed, 2024

Information: *) High level of significance (t table > 2.406)
**) Medium level of significance (t table > 2.010)
***) Low level of significance (t table > 1.677)

We conducted hypothesis testing using the gathered data to determine the acceptance or rejection of the proposed hypothesis. We display the results of hypothesis testing below:

1. There is a positive influence of taste (X1) on purchasing decisions (Y)

The impact of taste on purchase decisions is indicated by a path coefficient of (β = 0.314), which is statistically significant at a probability level below 0.05. In addition, the t-test statistic for this path is 2.234, and the confidence intervals range from 0.038 to 0.589. The test findings reveal that the path coefficient is positive and has a modest level of statistical significance. This indicates that taste plays a significant role in influencing purchasing decisions, thus supporting the acceptance of the first hypothesis. Consumers prioritize flavour, aligning with past research emphasizing its role in food choices. The results align with prior research, indicating that flavour exerts a favourable and substantial influence on consumers' purchasing choices (Ibadurrahman & Hafid, 2022; Di et al., 2023; Febriana et al., 2024). The flavour is important because people are inclined to choose foods that have a delectable taste. Food possessing a distinctive and delectable flavour not only entices consumers but also has the potential to boost sales (Xue, 2024) substantially.

2. There is a positive influence of packaging (X2) on purchasing decisions (Y1)

The path coefficient of 0.173, with a probability value greater than 0.05, indicates the impact of packaging on purchasing decisions. The t-test statistic for this path is 1.414, and the confidence intervals range from -0.067 to 0.414. The test findings suggest that the route coefficient is positive but does not reach statistical significance. This may be because consumers prioritise taste and price over packaging when choosing souvenir food items. This result suggests that the packaging factor does not substantially influence purchasing decisions, thereby leading to the rejection of the second hypothesis. The findings of this study are in direct opposition to prior research, which suggested that the packaging component had a favourable and noteworthy impact on consumer buying choices. The findings of (Aprilliyan, 2020; Partiwi & Arini, 2021; Agusria et al., 2021) corroborate this conclusion.

3. There is a positive influence of price (X3) on purchasing decisions (Y)

The relationship between price and purchasing decisions is expressed by a path coefficient of 0.495, indicating a robust positive correlation. Furthermore, the p-value associated with this correlation is below 0.05, indicating that the connection is statistically significant. The t-test value for this path is 4.838, and its confidence interval ranges from 0.295 to 0.696. The test findings indicate that the path coefficient is positively correlated and statistically significant. This suggests that the price variable substantially influences purchase decisions, confirming the accuracy of the third hypothesis. The findings of this study corroborate prior research, indicating that the price factor exerts a favourable and substantial impact on customers' purchasing choices ((Zulaicha & Irawati, 2016 ; (Hermiyenti & Wardi, 2019); Rizki, 2020). Pricing a product or service is a critical factor for a company because it directly impacts revenue generation and the long-term viability of its operations (Mustafa et al., 2022). Pricing decisions and tactics are crucial to a company's performance (Tjiptono, 2016). Confirming that affordability is a key factor in consumer behaviour.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that taste and price are the most influential factors in purchasing decisions, while packaging plays a less significant role. Taste has a moderate yet notable impact on purchasing decisions (t-value = 2.234 > 2.010), with 'characteristic' (loading factor = 0.860) having the most decisive influence, while 'aroma' (loading factor = 0.719) plays a minor role. This suggests that enhancing unique taste attributes could improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Despite its positive perception, the packaging does not significantly affect purchasing decisions (t-value = 1.414 < 1.677). However, this does not mean packaging is irrelevant. It may still contribute to brand perception and initial consumer attraction, warranting further exploration into how design, branding, and functionality influence consumer preferences. Price emerges as the dominant factor influencing purchases (t-value = 4.838 > 2.406), with 'price competitiveness' (loading factor = 0.914) being the strongest indicator. This suggests that maintaining competitive pricing while ensuring product quality is essential. Rather than merely reducing costs, Pie Ngalam Heritage could consider strategies like bundle pricing, seasonal discounts, or loyalty programs to appeal to different customer segments. While packaging costs should be optimized, businesses should not eliminate investment in packaging. Instead, they should focus on cost-effective yet visually appealing designs reinforcing brand identity. Long-term strategies such as tiered pricing models and product innovation could also help sustain market competitiveness. In conclusion, businesses should prioritize taste and competitive pricing strategies while refining packaging to enhance brand

positioning. Future research could explore additional factors, such as brand trust and customer experience, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of purchasing behaviour.

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