

How Do I-Cherry Brand Assessment and Service Quality Standards Affect Community Purchasing Decisions?

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ABSTRACT

Mobile phones play a crucial role in communication for individuals across society. This necessity has led to an increase in demand for different types of communication devices, intensifying competition within the telecommunications industry. The aim of this study was to explore and assess the impact of brand and service quality on purchasing decisions for i-Cherry mobile phones. The research employed a quantitative approach, specifically descriptive quantitative research, with an explanatory nature. The target population consisted of i-Cherry mobile phone buyers at Plaza Medan Fair Mall. Using the Slovin formula, a sample size of 106 respondents was determined, and simple random sampling was applied for participant selection. The data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The study's results showed that both brand and service quality, individually and together, have a significant and positive impact on purchasing decisions for i-Cherry mobile phones, with a determination coefficient of 34.6%

INTRODUCTION

Currently, communication is essential for every community, significantly increasing the demand for various communication devices. This growing demand has intensified competition within the telecommunications industry. This is evident from the many mobile phone manufacturers offering new products with innovations that surpass previous models, providing consumers with greater ease in communication. As competition becomes more intense, companies are compelled to adapt and innovate to boost their revenues. A company's income grows when more consumers decide to purchase its products. Consumers base their buying decisions on several factors, including the brand and service quality of the product. Purchasing decisions involve a process where consumers determine whether to proceed with a purchase, starting with recognizing a need or desire. At Plaza Medan Fair, however, sales of i-Cherry products have been declining, resulting in several outlets experiencing no sales of i-Cherry phones in 2023. This drop in sales can be attributed to the increasing number of competing products that offer lower prices and higher specifications compared to i-Cherry phones.

Brands have unique characteristics, that set one product apart from others, even when they appear similar. These distinguishing features allow buyers to identify a company's products and make purchasing decisions based on their brand preferences. Service quality reflects the company's ability to meet customer expectations by delivering what customers need. When a company provides good service, it increases the likelihood that customers will make a purchase and potentially return for future purchases.

Brands are believed to play a significant role in influencing consumer purchase decisions. Brands with high value and strong recognition tend to be favored by consumers, as they prefer well-known and trusted names. However, the i-Cherry brand of mobile phones, sold at the Medan Fair Plaza outlet, is less recognized compared to more established brands in the market. Additionally, the durability of i-Cherry phones is perceived to be lower than that of other brands, with issues such as overheating and short battery life. These factors contribute to a lack of consumer interest in purchasing i-Cherry mobile phones at the outlet.

Additionally, service quality is believed to play a significant role in influencing customer purchase decisions. High-quality service adds value for companies by enhancing the customer experience. When customers receive good service, they are more likely to feel connected to the company, which can lead to repeat purchases and continued loyalty. Based on these considerations, the research will address the following questions: (1) How does the brand impact purchasing decisions for i-Cherry mobile phones? (2) How does service quality affect purchasing decisions for i-Cherry mobile phones? (3) How do both brand and service quality together influence purchasing decisions for i-Cherry mobile phones?

Theoretical Background

Brand Assessment

Rachman (2010:149) defines a brand as a seller's commitment to consistently deliver a set of specific attributes, benefits, and services to buyers. Rangkuti (2013:103) adds that a brand represents the value linked to a company's name, which should continuously be enhanced by businesses to strengthen their brand equity. According to Herlambang (2014:36), a brand consists of a name, term, symbol, sign, or design, or a combination of these elements, used to distinguish a product or service from competitors in the market.

Kotler and Keller (2009:265) identify five essential components of brand equity: (1) Differentiation, which gauges how distinct a brand is compared to others; (2) Energy, which assesses the momentum and meaning of the brand; (3) Relevance, which examines how broadly the brand appeals to consumers; (4) Esteem, which measures the respect and value the brand holds; and (5) Knowledge, which looks at consumers' familiarity and closeness with the brand. Sibarani, Hendra Jonathan (2011) highlights in his research that strong brand equity can significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions and lead to repeat purchases.

Service Quality

According to Sangadji and Sopiah (2013:99), service quality is a dynamic state encompassing products, services, personnel, processes, and environments that align with or surpass customer expectations. Meanwhile, Abdullah and Tantri (2014:44) describe service quality as the sum of characteristics of a product or service that determine its capacity to satisfy stated or implicit needs. Sunyoto and Susanti (2015:288) explain that if the actual service exceeds customer expectations, the service is considered high-quality; otherwise, it is not. In essence, service quality reflects the degree of disparity between the actual service delivered and the expectations held by customers.

Sangadji and Sopiah (2013:100-101) outline five dimensions of service quality: (1) Reliability, the ability to deliver promised services accurately, dependably, and on time without errors; (2) Responsiveness, the willingness of employees to assist customers and provide necessary services; (3) Assurance, the knowledge, competence, friendliness, and trustworthiness of staff that helps to reassure customers and reduce their concerns about risks; (4) Empathy, the ability of company personnel to understand and address customer needs, communicate effectively, and offer personalized attention; (5) Tangibles, the availability and condition of physical facilities, equipment, and communication tools used in the service process.

Purchasing Decision

Sangadji and Sopiah (2013:121) describe consumer decision-making as a process that integrates knowledge to evaluate multiple alternatives and select one. Similarly, Sunyoto (2013:90) explains consumer decision-making as an integrative process that involves assessing two or more behaviors and choosing the best option. Sudaryono (2016:99) defines a decision as selecting one action from two or more possible choices, meaning that decision-makers must choose one alternative from the available options. Sunyoto (2013:86) highlights three key points in understanding the consumer purchase decision model: (1) It provides an integrated view of consumer behavior; (2) It serves as a foundation for developing effective marketing strategies; and (3) It can be used as a basis for segmentation and positioning in the market. Hasan (2014:183) adds that after consumers evaluate their options, they are ready to make a purchasing decision, though purchase intentions do not always lead to actual purchases. Marketers need to assist consumers in following through on their intentions by offering payment plans, credit terms, or sales promotions, such as highlighting competitors' weaknesses or offering incentives to encourage immediate purchases.

Conceptual Framework

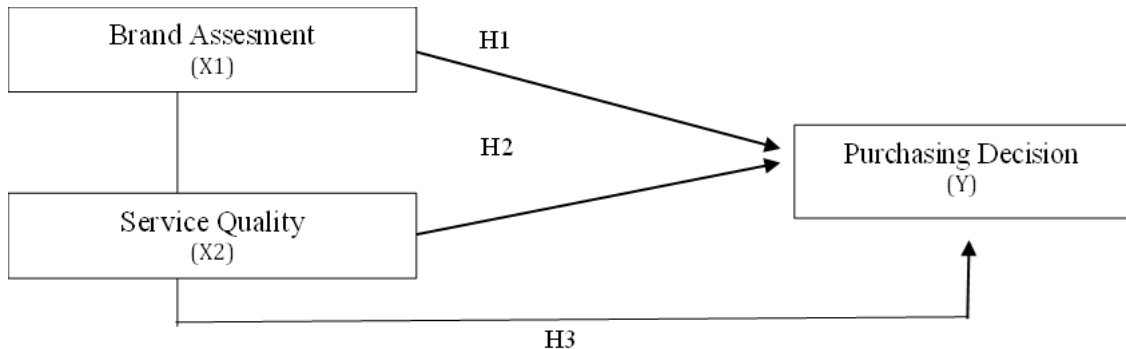


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on the conceptual framework above, the following hypotheses can be drawn:

- H1 : Brand assesment have a positive effect and significant on the purchasing decision.
- H2 : Service quality have a positive effect and significant on the purchasing decision.
- H3 : Brand assesment and service quality have a positive effect and significant on the purchasing decision.

METODOLOGY

This research adopts a quantitative approach, as it follows a clear and structured process. Arikunto (2010:27) explains that "Quantitative research involves the use of numbers throughout various stages, from data collection to data interpretation and the presentation of results." The research type is explanatory in nature. Zulganef (2008:11) defines explanatory research as a study that seeks to investigate the causal relationships between variables to explain a specific phenomenon. In this type of research, the aim is to clarify or demonstrate the relationship or impact between variables.

Sugiyono (2013:80) states that "A population refers to the entire group of objects or subjects with specific qualities and characteristics, determined by the researcher for study and conclusion purposes." The population for this study consists of 144 respondents, representing the average number of customers visiting mobile phone outlets at Medan Fair Plaza. A random sampling technique was used by visiting all the mobile phone outlets in the plaza. The Slovin formula was applied to determine the sample size, resulting in a selection of 106 respondents.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Validity Test

Torang (2016:289-291) explains that a validity test is used to assess whether a questionnaire accurately captures the concept it is designed to measure. A questionnaire is considered valid if the questions effectively capture the information needed. The validity of a questionnaire can be assessed by: Calculating the correlation between the score of each individual question and the total score of the construct. To determine significance, the calculated r-value (r_{count}) is compared with the critical r-value (r_{table}) for the given degrees of freedom, which is calculated as $n-k$ (where n is the sample size and k is the number of variables). For a sample size of 30 and a degree of freedom of 28 ($30-2$), the r_{table} value at alpha 0.05 is 0.361. (a) If $r_{count} \geq r_{table}$ and the question item has a positive correlation, the item is considered valid; (b) If $r_{count} < r_{table}$, the item is considered invalid, even if the correlation is positive. Another method for testing validity is by correlating the score of each individual question with the total score of the questionnaire.

Table 1. Brand Assessment Validity Test Results

No	Question	rcount	Conclusion
1	What do you think about the uniqueness of iCherry brand mobile phones compared to similar mobile phone brands?	0,725	Valid
2	How would you rate the specifications of iCherry brand mobile phones compared to similar mobile phone brands?	0,753	Valid
3	How do you think brand strength is important for iCherry brand mobile phones to differentiate them from other similar brands?	0,698	Valid
4	What do you think, your interest in the shape/physics of the existing iCherry brand mobile phones?	0,551	Valid
5	What do you think, the suitability of the appearance of the iCherry brand with the product features listed on the mobile phone?	0,439	Valid
6	What do you think about the attractiveness of iCherry brand mobile phones with your current purchase intention?	0,658	Valid
7	How do you think the iCherry brand mobile phone name is easy for consumers to remember?	0,748	Valid
8	What do you think, how good is the brand image of iCherry mobile phones in the minds of consumers?	0,735	Valid
9	How would you rate your ability to perform the service features available on iCherry brand mobile phones?	0,479	Valid
10	What do you think about the ability of iCherry brand mobile phone products to increase your knowledge?	0,436	Valid

Source: Research results, 2024 (data processed)

The validity test results for the brand variable, as shown in Table 1, indicate that all 10 questions representing the brand variable are valid, as the rcount values exceed the rtable value of 0.361.

Table 2. Service Quality Validity Test Results

No	Question	rcount	Conclusion
1	What do you think about the speed at which the company responds to your requests?	0,391	Valid
2	How do you feel about the company's level of care in responding to your complaints?	0,700	Valid
3	What do you think, the speed of sales service in handling your complaint?	0,685	Valid
4	How do you think the speed of sales in responding to your enquiry is affected?	0,473	Valid
5	What do you think about the time of arrival of the products ordered by you with what was promised by the company?	0,914	Valid
6	What do you think about the suitability of the products ordered and delivered from the company to your order?	0,586	Valid
7	What do you think, the level of patience of sales in handling each of your complaints?	0,708	Valid
8	What do you think, the politeness of sales in explaining if there is an error in the delivery of your product?	0,669	Valid
9	How often do you return products to the company after making a purchase?	0,418	Valid
10	What do you think about the frequency of sales errors in explaining mobile phone specifications to customers?	0,835	Valid

Source: Research results, 2024 (data processed)

The validity test results for the service quality variable, as displayed in Table 2, demonstrate that all 10 questions representing the service quality variable are valid, as the rcount values are greater than the rtable value of 0.361.

Table 3. Purchasing Decision Validity Test Results

No	Question	rcount	Conclusion
1	How do you think the completeness of the types of iCherry brand mobile phones offered to your purchasing decision?	0,673	Valid
2	What do you think, the variety of iCherry brand mobile phone products offered by the company?	0,474	Valid
3	What do you think about the suitability of the shape of iCherry brand mobile phones compared to other brand products?	0,610	Valid
4	What do you think, the suitability of the form of iCherry brand mobile phones with customer needs?	0,718	Valid
5	How do you think the influence of the product brand offered on purchasing decisions?	0,675	Valid
6	What do you think about the suitability of customer needs for the types of brands offered by the company?	0,724	Valid
7	What do you think, the friendliness of salespeople in the company in offering iCherry brand mobile phone products?	0,845	Valid
8	What do you think about the ability of the company's salespeople to explain the benefits of the product to you?	0,446	Valid
9	What do you think, the willingness of salespeople to serve customers outside of the company's operating hours?	0,773	Valid
10	What do you think, the suitability of the company's operating hours in serving the needs of current customers?	0,781	Valid

Source: Research results, 2024 (data processed)

The validity test results for the purchasing decision variable, as shown in Table 3, indicate that all 10 questions representing this variable are valid, as the rcount values exceed the rtable value of 0.361.

Reliability Test

Priyatno (2013:30) explains that a measuring instrument is considered reliable if it consistently produces the same results when used to measure a symptom at different times. In other words, a reliable tool will consistently yield the same measurement outcomes. The reliability of a measuring instrument can be assessed through two indicators: the standard error of measurement and the reliability coefficient, each with its own strengths and limitations. Reliability refers to the consistency of a set of measurements or the performance of a measuring instrument. This can mean that the same instrument, when used multiple times (test-retest), provides consistent results, or in subjective assessments, whether two evaluators provide similar scores (inter-rater reliability).

A commonly used method for testing reliability is Cronbach's Alpha. According to Priyatno (2013:30), the criteria for determining reliability are as follows: (1) Cronbach's Alpha < 0.6 indicates poor reliability; (2) Cronbach's Alpha between 0.6 and 0.79 indicates acceptable reliability; and (3) Cronbach's Alpha of 0.8 or higher indicates good reliability.

Table 4. Reliability Test Result

Variable	Number of Statements	Cronbach Alpha	Information
Brand Assesment (X ₁)	10	0,829	Reliable
Service Quality (X ₂)	10	0,819	Reliable
Purchasing Decision (Y)	10	0,865	Reliable

Source: Research results, 2024 (data processed)

From the reliability test results presented in the table, the Cronbach's Alpha values are 0.829 for the brand variable, 0.819 for the service quality variable, and 0.865 for the purchasing decision variable. These values indicate that the questions for all variables are reliable, as each exceeds the threshold of 0.60 for acceptable reliability.

Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing

The F test is utilized to determine if the independent variables, brand and service quality, collectively impact the dependent variable of purchasing decisions. The outcomes of the simultaneous hypothesis testing are as follows:

Table 5. Test F

Model	ANOVA ^a				
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1100,085	2	550,043	28,752	,000 ^b
Residual	1970,453	103	19,131		
Total	3070,538	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchasing Decision

b. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality, Brand Assesment

Source: Research results, 2024 (data processed)

The joint significance test (F statistical test) yielded an F value of 28.752. With degrees of freedom 1 (df1) set at 2 and degrees of freedom 2 (df2) at 103, the F table value at a 0.05 significance level is 3.08. The SPSS calculations reveal that the calculated F value is 28.752, which is greater than the F table value of 3.08. Furthermore, the significance level is 0.000, indicating that $28.752 > 3.08$ and 0.000 is less than 0.05. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted,

suggesting that brand and service quality have a simultaneous effect on the purchasing decisions for i-Cherry brand mobile phones.

Partial Hypothesis Testing

The t-test is employed to assess the extent of influence that a single independent variable has on the dependent variable.

Table 6. Test t
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	6,653	3,258		
1	Brand Assesment	,397	,097	,342	4,094
	Service Quality	,394	,084	,392	4,687

a. Dependent Variable: Purchasing Decision

Source: Research results, 2024 (data processed)

The t table value at a 0.05 probability level with an independent degree of $n-k = 103$ is 1.98326. The t-test results can be interpreted as follows: (1) For the brand variable, the t count value is greater than the t table value, specifically $4.094 > 1.98326$, with a significance level of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, H_a is accepted, indicating that the brand has a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions for i-Cherry brand mobile phones; (2) The t-value for the service quality variable exceeds the t-table value, with $4.687 > 1.98326$ and a significance level of 0.000, which is below 0.05. This leads to the acceptance of H_a , demonstrating that service quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for i-Cherry brand mobile phones.

DISCUSSION

Brand Effect on Purchasing Decisions

The analysis reveals that the brand has a significant and positive impact on purchasing decisions for i-Cherry mobile phones, as shown by the t-value being higher than the t-table value ($4.094 > 1.98326$) and a significance level of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Tengor et al. (2016), which also found that brand assessment impacts iPhone purchasing decisions. Hasan (2014: 215-216), "A strong brand will facilitate consumers in evaluating, weighing, and making purchase decisions based on all the associated values, such as product performance, price, delivery, warranty, and more." Brands with a strong image serve as a synthesis of all that suppliers offer, thereby

reducing the risks associated with complex purchasing decisions, particularly for technology-based products.

Tjiptono (2011: 42) asserts that a brand can be deemed successful if buyers perceive it to provide relevant, unique, and sustainable added value that satisfactorily meets their needs. Kotler and Keller (2009: 259) state that as consumer lives become increasingly complicated and fast-paced, the brand's ability to simplify decision-making and mitigate risks becomes invaluable. A strong brand allows customers to distinguish a company's products from competitors, helping them identify which brand aligns with their preferences, ultimately guiding their purchasing decisions.

The Effect of Service Quality on Purchasing Decisions

The analysis shows that service quality has a notable and positive effect on purchasing decisions for i-Cherry mobile phones, as evidenced by the t-value exceeding the t-table value ($4.687 > 1.98326$) and a significance level of 0.000, which is below 0.05. This finding is consistent with the research by Zulkarnaim and Triyonowati (2015), which revealed that service quality affects purchasing decisions for Samsung mobile phones in Surabaya. According to Suchaeri (2012: 5-6), customers derive satisfaction and pleasure from the quality of service they receive, leading them to return and make further purchases. Exceptional service does not occur spontaneously; it results from ongoing improvements. Customer feedback is invaluable for enhancing a company's performance.

Sumarwan (2013: 236) emphasizes the importance of management strategies focused on delivering high-quality service, ensuring timely delivery of promises, and maintaining a friendly demeanor to boost customer satisfaction and encourage repeat purchases. Suchaeri (2012: 5-6) reiterates that quality service leads to customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as the necessity of continuous improvement based on customer complaints. Girard et al. (2014: 71) highlight that customer service is vital for successful direct sales to consumers, stressing the importance of friendly interactions to build trust and demonstrate genuine care for customer needs. Although these actions may seem simple, they significantly enhance the likelihood of converting buyers into loyal customers. Providing services that meet customer expectations will ultimately generate interest and influence purchasing decisions, as satisfied customers are more likely to feel content with their experience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions presented in this research, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The assessment of the brand has a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions regarding i-Cherry brand mobile phones when considered individually.

2. The quality of service also demonstrates a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions for i-Cherry brand mobile phones when evaluated separately.
3. When analyzed together, both brand assessment and service quality significantly affect purchasing decisions for i-Cherry brand mobile phones, with the coefficient of determination indicating that 34.6% of the variation in purchasing decisions can be attributed to these two independent variables. The remaining 65.4% of the variation is attributed to other factors not examined in this study.

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