

HOW BRAND IMAGE, EVENT SPONSORSHIP, AND PRODUCT BENEFITS SHAPE CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE POCARI SWEAT MARKET**Pamuji Hari Santoso¹, Felix Edison², Ria Darmasari³**^{1,2&3}Institut Bisnis dan Teknologi Pelita IndonesiaEmail: pamuji.hari@lecturer.pelitaindonesia.ac.idDOI: <https://doi.org/10.35145/procuratio.v14i2.6039>

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, and Product Benefits on Purchasing Decisions of Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru City. This study uses primary data obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents who meet the research criteria. The data collection technique used in this study is incidental sampling. The number of samples in this study is 150 respondents. The data analysis method employed is quantitative analysis using SmartPLS software. The results show that Brand Image does not have a significant effect on Purchasing Decisions, while Event Sponsorship and Product Benefits have a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions of Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru City.

Keywords: Brand Image; Event Sponsorship; Product Benefits; Purchasing Decision***BAGAIMANA BRAND IMAGE, EVENT SPONSORSHIP, DAN PRODUCT BENEFITS MEMBENTUK KEPUTUSAN PEMBELIAN KONSUMEN: BUKTI EMPIRIS DARI PASAR POCARI SWEAT******ABSTRAK***

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, dan Product Benefits terhadap Keputusan Pembelian produk Pocari Sweat di Kota Pekanbaru. Penelitian ini menggunakan data primer yang diperoleh melalui penyebaran kuesioner kepada responden yang memenuhi kriteria penelitian. Teknik pengambilan sampel yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah incidental sampling. Jumlah sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah 150 responden. Metode analisis data yang digunakan adalah analisis kuantitatif dengan menggunakan perangkat lunak SmartPLS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Brand Image tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap Keputusan Pembelian, sedangkan Event Sponsorship dan Product Benefits berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Keputusan Pembelian produk Pocari Sweat di Kota Pekanbaru.

Kata Kunci: Brand Image; Event Sponsorship; Product Benefits; Keputusan Pembelian

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The development of a healthy lifestyle among Indonesian society has shown a fairly significant increase in recent years. Public awareness of the importance of maintaining fitness and bodily balance has continued to grow alongside the widespread health campaigns and easy access to information through digital media. Exercise is now no longer seen merely as a recreational activity, but also as part of a modern lifestyle that reflects an active and productive way of living (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). This phenomenon has also driven the growth of various health-supporting products, including isotonic drinks that function to replace body fluids and ions lost after physical activity.

Among the various sports that have grown rapidly, running has become a trend that is highly popular with the public. Its popularity has increased because it is easy for anyone to do and does not require special facilities. Seeing the strong public enthusiasm for this activity, many companies have taken advantage of this momentum by participating in sporting events as sponsors to strengthen their brand image and expand their market. Event sponsorship has proven effective in building an emotional connection between brands and consumers through activities that are relevant to a healthy lifestyle (Meenaghan, 2013).

Pocari Sweat is a brand that has consistently implemented a sponsorship strategy. This isotonic drink product from PT Amerta Indah Otsuka is well known as an ion replacement beverage that helps maintain body hydration and has become closely associated with a healthy lifestyle among the public (Otsuka Pharmaceutical, 2022). Through activities such as the Pocari Sweat Run, the company demonstrates its commitment to supporting an active lifestyle. The increasing enthusiasm of participants each year serves as evidence of the effectiveness of its communication and promotional strategies (Kotler & Keller, 2016a).

Every year, the number of Pocari Sweat Run participants increases because Indonesians are becoming more aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and regular exercise. After the pandemic, public interest in maintaining fitness and physical health increased significantly, making activities such as running an easy, affordable sport that anyone can do (Indonesian Ministry of Health, 2021). In addition to health factors, participant enthusiasm is also influenced by the additional benefits offered at the event, such as finisher medals, shopping vouchers, attractive giveaways, and goodie bags containing exclusive products. These rewards have become a unique attraction and often motivate people to participate every year. Intensive promotion through social media, support from influencers, and increasingly professional event organization have also expanded the reach to new participants. Furthermore, the emergence of various other running events that are increasingly creative and appealing, such as themed fun runs, night runs, and color runs, has made running culture in Indonesia even more vibrant and attracted greater public interest. Many participants join the Pocari Sweat Run as part of their new hobby, as the packed calendar of running events has made this activity increasingly popular among various groups. With the combination of health benefits, community, participant incentives, the abundance of attractive running events, and strong promotion, the year-to-year increase in the number of Pocari Sweat Run participants has become both natural and consistent.

On the other hand, the significant increase, especially during 2023–2024, was driven by several strong factors. One reason was the implementation of the hybrid run concept (offline + virtual), which expanded event accessibility so that participants from various regions could take part without being physically present in the host city (Antara News, 2021). In addition, the increasing professionalism of event organization—from medical facilities and safe routes to better-organized race management—made many runners feel more comfortable and confident in the quality of the event. The growing healthy lifestyle trend among young people, along with the rising popularity of running as both a social activity and a lifestyle, also contributed to the substantial growth in participant numbers. The combination of innovative event concepts, high-quality organization, and healthy lifestyle trends made the surge in participants during certain years highly significant.

The Pocari Sweat Run event attracts many enthusiasts because of its reputation as one of the most professionally organized running events in Indonesia. Pocari Sweat as a brand has long been strongly associated with hydration and health, so the public trusts that the events it organizes are safe and of high quality. In addition, the event's inclusive concept, offering various distances such as 5K, 10K, 21K, and virtual categories, allows both beginners and experienced runners to participate. The event is also known for providing a complete experience, including high-quality race packs, exclusive medals, well-managed routes, and a lively event atmosphere, delivering high experiential value (Antara News, 2024). Support from running communities across Indonesia and the FOMO trend among Gen Z have further increased public interest in participating. With its strong brand reputation, event quality, participant experience, and alignment with social trends, Pocari Sweat Run has become one of the running events with the highest number of participants each year (Fimela, 2025).

Pocari Sweat remains in the top position as the leading brand and consistently outperforms other brands. However, there is a noticeable trend of declining dominance over the years. This phenomenon is interesting to analyze because although Pocari Sweat's brand awareness and brand preference remain very strong, its share of the market position has gradually decreased. According to Kotler (2019), strong brand awareness and brand image

can keep a brand as consumers' top choice, but changes in consumer behavior and market dynamics can still influence shifts in brand positioning over the long term.

This decline in percentage can be explained by several factors. First, the entry of new competitors offering product differentiation has made the isotonic beverage market increasingly fragmented. Starting in 2023, products such as Hydro Coco and Gatorade became active in the market again, followed by 100 Plus in 2025. The presence of competitors with distinct characteristics—such as Hydro Coco's natural concept or 100 Plus's international image—has encouraged some consumers to try new brands, resulting in a slight shift in Pocari's market share. This indicates that the isotonic drink market is no longer dominated by just two major brands, Pocari and Mizone, but has evolved into a market with more choices for consumers. Schiffman & Wisenblit (2019) state that changes in preferences are often influenced by the emergence of new alternatives that are perceived as better aligned with consumers' values or lifestyles.

Changes in consumer preferences toward healthier lifestyles have also had a significant impact. In recent years, people have become increasingly concerned about their nutritional intake, hydration needs, and choosing beverages that support an active lifestyle and long-term health. This trend extends beyond sports to everyday activities, such as maintaining bodily balance during hot weather, avoiding overly sweet drinks, and choosing products associated with health. Sloan (2013) explains that modern consumers are increasingly embracing a wellness lifestyle, emphasizing health, hydration, and bodily balance. This shift in mindset has created opportunities for competitors promoting the concept of “natural hydration,” particularly products made from natural ingredients such as coconut water, which have been positively received by some consumers.

Nevertheless, the reasons why Pocari Sweat continues to maintain its position as the top brand are also very clear. A strong brand image, consistent quality, and benefits that are easy for consumers to understand are the main factors that keep Pocari's loyalty level high. It explains that brand loyalty is formed when consumers have high trust and confidence in consistent quality. Pocari Sweat is perceived as a safe and effective drink for replacing body fluids, maintaining electrolyte balance, and helping the body recover. This aligns with the view that consumers choose products with functional benefits that are most relevant to their needs. In addition, consumers choose Pocari Sweat because of its functional benefits that suit the body's needs. This drink helps overcome dehydration caused by physical activity or hot weather because its ion composition is designed to resemble body fluids. Pocari also helps maintain electrolyte balance so that the body stays fit and does not tire easily. Not only that, this product is often consumed during the body's recovery process, especially when someone loses a lot of fluids while ill. Its ions, which are easily absorbed by the body, make Pocari effective at improving hydration during sports activities. Its refreshing taste without being overly sweet is also one of the reasons why this product is comfortable to consume for various age groups.

In addition to these benefits, the healthy lifestyle trend has actually strengthened Pocari's position because Pocari has long been known as a drink associated with health and body hydration. Many people associate Pocari with an active lifestyle, sports, and body care, so as the health trend grows, Pocari's image becomes even stronger. However, this growing trend also creates opportunities for competitors that capitalize on differentiation, such as beverages made from natural ingredients or electrolyte drinks with a “more natural hydration” concept, resulting in a redistribution of consumers within the market.

Overall, the decline in Pocari's percentage over the past five years has not been caused by declining quality or a weakening brand image, but rather by increasingly competitive market dynamics and changes in consumer preferences toward a more diverse range of hydration categories. Meanwhile, Pocari's position as the top brand remains intact because of strong consumer trust, clear product benefits, and a health-oriented image that has been established for a long time. This is consistent with the view that brand strength can maintain a product's dominance even when the market changes.

The decision to buy something is actually the final step in consumer behavior, where people ultimately choose the product they feel best matches their needs and wants. This does not happen by itself because many factors influence it, such as how they perceive product quality, the brand's reputation, the advertising or promotions they receive, as well as their past personal experiences. Amid today's increasingly intense business competition, companies must truly understand how consumers make these choices so they can develop appropriate and effective marketing strategies (Tinggi et al., 2022).

This condition shows that the success of a brand in the isotonic beverage industry is determined not only by the product's function in replacing body fluids but also by how well the brand can build a strong image in consumers' minds, implement appropriate marketing strategies, and provide benefits that consumers genuinely perceive. As the market leader, Pocari Sweat has long been recognized by the public not only because of its product quality but also through consistent marketing communication strategies, such as sponsoring various sporting events, promoting healthy lifestyle campaigns, and maintaining a brand image as a trusted health drink.

This preliminary survey was conducted as an initial step to obtain an overview of consumers' level of knowledge and purchasing decisions regarding Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru City. Data were collected by distributing a simple questionnaire to randomly selected respondents..

The reason for conducting this pre-survey is that official sales data from PT Amerta Indah Otsuka are not publicly disclosed, so the researcher adopted an alternative approach by distributing a pre-survey to obtain relevant primary data. The results of this pre-survey were then used as a basis to strengthen the research background and support the initial analysis of consumer behavior toward Pocari Sweat. Based on the results of the pre-survey involving 40 respondents in Pekanbaru City, all respondents stated that they were familiar with the Pocari Sweat product. This high level of awareness can be explained by several factors: first, Pocari Sweat is one of the isotonic drink brands that has been present in Indonesia for a very long time and has strong advertising exposure through digital media as well as sponsorship of various sports events. Second, Pocari's brand visibility in stores, convenience stores, and supermarkets is very high, so consumers frequently see the product in their daily lives. According to (Kotler, 2019), continuous brand exposure increases brand awareness, so it is reasonable that all respondents were familiar with Pocari Sweat.

Although all respondents were familiar with Pocari Sweat, a small number of respondents—2 people—stated that they did not purchase the product. This condition indicates that awareness does not always translate directly into purchase decisions. Consumers' reasons for not buying Pocari Sweat may be influenced by several considerations. Some consumers prefer other brands such as Mizone or Hydro Coco, so even though they know Pocari, they still choose products that better suit their habits and personal preferences. There are also consumers who perceive that they do not need isotonic drinks except when they are sick or exercising, so this product is not a priority in their daily purchases. In addition, competition from substitute products such as mineral water, juice, or other electrolyte drinks that are perceived as more natural also influences consumer decisions. This is consistent with the opinion of (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015), who state that purchase decisions are determined not only by knowledge of a brand but also by consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward the overall product category.

Therefore, further research is needed on the factors that influence purchasing decisions for Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru. This study aims to better understand the extent to which brand image involvement in event sponsorship and consumers' perceptions of product benefits can increase purchase decisions. The literature shows that many factors influence consumer purchase decisions, including brand image involvement, event sponsorship, and perceptions of product benefits.

According to (Kotler & Keller (2016); Schiffman & Kanuk, 2018), a purchase decision is a process in which consumers recognize a need, seek information, evaluate various alternatives, and ultimately choose a product they believe can satisfy their needs. Purchase decisions not only reflect the final action in the buying process but are also influenced by various internal and external factors that shape consumers' perceptions and preferences.

In the context of isotonic beverages, consumers' purchase decisions are ultimately influenced not only by physiological needs after exercise but also by the psychological and emotional factors offered by the brand. A positive brand image, the brand's involvement in various event sponsorships relevant to a healthy lifestyle, and product benefits that meet consumers' needs form an important combination in influencing consumers to choose Pocari Sweat over other similar products.

Purchase decisions for a product are influenced by various factors. One of them is Brand Image. According to (Keller, 2016), Brand Image is consumers' overall understanding of a brand, including their beliefs and perceptions about it. (Lombok & Samadi, 2022) define brand image as the impression that arises in consumers' minds when they think of a particular product brand. Creating a strong brand image is expected to be an effective strategy for facing competition by enhancing the company's and product's image in the eyes of the public, thereby building trust and ultimately influencing purchasing behavior.

A strong and positive image is essential. Without it, it is very difficult for a company to attract new customers and retain existing ones. Creating the right brand image for a product is certainly beneficial for consumers because brand image influences their evaluation of competing brands, especially in consumer purchase decisions (Nasyeh & Avriyanti, 2023).

Previous studies examining the influence of brand image on purchase decisions have produced differing results. Research conducted by (Nasyeh & Avriyanti, 2023) found that brand image influences purchase decisions, whereas research conducted by (Kartika, 2021) showed that brand image has no influence on purchase decisions. In other words, brand image does not have a significant effect on purchase decisions because consumers already have their own views or personal assessments of the brand image in their minds.

The second factor influencing decision-making is event sponsorship. Companies can use this strategy to build and strengthen brand image in consumers' minds. By becoming directly involved in an event, a company not only projects a positive image and increases brand visibility but also builds emotional connections with consumers, which can ultimately encourage purchase decisions. In addition, through event sponsorship, companies have the opportunity to create enjoyable experiences that remain in participants' memories, making the relationship between consumers and the brand closer and more personal. According to (Puspitasari et al., 2024), Event Sponsorship is a marketing strategy in which a company provides support, either in the form of funding or other assistance, for a particular event, such as concerts, sporting events, or festivals. According to (Nathasa, 2022), event sponsorship is a form of brand promotion through various activities that attract high public interest. When sponsorship is

viewed as a strategic resource, it can be used to support management in achieving brand objectives, enhance brand image and reputation, and help companies gain a competitive advantage.

Previous studies examining the influence of event sponsorship on purchase decisions have also produced differing results. Research conducted by (Dimas Dawali & Pandowo, 2016) found that sponsorship does not have a significant influence on consumer purchase decisions, whereas research conducted by (Nusantari & Idris, 2017) found that event sponsorship benefits sponsors because it can influence consumers' decisions to purchase the sponsored brand. The sponsoring brand's name is subtly featured during an event without disrupting it, yet it remains visible to the audience. This is where event sponsorship has many opportunities to achieve success, including success in influencing consumer purchase decisions.

In addition to Brand Image and Event Sponsorship, consumers also consider product benefits before deciding to make a purchase. In today's era, consumers are becoming increasingly rational and selective in choosing products, especially those related to health and bodily needs. Product benefits refer to the advantages of a product's features for customers. Pocari Sweat offers the primary benefit of being an electrolyte replacement drink that helps maintain fluid balance after physical activity. These clear and relevant benefits that meet consumer needs are one of the main attractions influencing purchase decisions.

By considering these three aspects—brand image, event sponsorship, and product benefits—it is important to determine the extent to which each factor influences consumer purchase decisions for Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more targeted marketing strategies, particularly in the health beverage industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2023), marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value back from customers.

Marketing Management

According to Tololiu & Roring (2022), marketing management is an effort to plan and implement activities consisting of organizing, directing, coordinating, supervising, or controlling marketing activities within an organization so that organizational goals are achieved efficiently and effectively.

Marketing Mix

According to Roni Mohamad (2021), the marketing mix is a set of tactical marketing tools used by a company to achieve its marketing objectives in the target market.

Purchase Decision

According to Keller & Kotler (2016), a purchase decision is the stage in the consumer decision-making process when the consumer actually purchases the product.

Brand Image

Brand image is consumers' perception of a brand, formed through their experiences, beliefs, and associations with the products or services offered. Kotler & Keller (2016b) state that brand image is the set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that consumers hold about a brand. A positive brand image strengthens a company's position in the market, increases product appeal, and encourages consumer satisfaction.

Event Sponsorship

According to Rosita & Sosianika (2018), event sponsorship is an agreement between a sponsor and an event for the mutual benefit of both the sponsor and the sponsored party by providing funding or other forms of support.

Product Benefits

Product benefits are the value or utility that consumers obtain after using a product. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2023), product benefits are a product's ability to provide satisfaction in accordance with consumers' needs or wants. Perumusan Hipotesis

The Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions

Brand image plays an important role in influencing purchase decisions because a strong brand image can shape consumers' positive perceptions of a product. Based on various previous studies, brand image has generally been proven to have a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions across various products.

Many studies, such as (Andrian et al., 2024), emphasize that a strong brand image can increase consumers' interest and confidence in making purchases. However, some studies, such as (Aristamia & Salim, 2023), show that brand image does not always have a significant influence, depending on the product context and consumer

perceptions. Overall, brand image tends to make an important contribution to purchase decisions, although its effect may vary. Therefore, the better the brand image of the product being sold, the higher the likelihood of consumers making a purchase decision. A good product brand image is certainly not easily achieved by marketers today.

H1: Brand Image has an influence on purchase decisions.

The Influence of Event Sponsorship on Purchase Decisions

Event sponsorship is one of the promotional strategies widely used by companies to build relationships with consumers. Event sponsorship can influence purchase decisions because a brand's involvement in an event can increase consumer attention, create a positive image, and strengthen emotional closeness to the brand. When consumers see a brand supporting activities that are relevant to their interests, their perceptions of the brand's quality and credibility improve, thereby encouraging greater interest and confidence in purchasing. Thus, the more effective the event sponsorship, the greater its influence in encouraging consumer purchase decisions. (Puspitasari et al., 2024)

This is supported by the findings of research conducted by Nusantara & Idris (2017), which states that sponsorship provides benefits to the sponsoring party because it can influence consumers' decisions to purchase the brand. The sponsoring brand's name is subtly featured during an event without disrupting its proceedings, yet it remains visible to the audience. This is where event sponsorship has many opportunities to achieve success, including success in influencing consumer purchase decisions.

H2: Event sponsorship has an influence on purchase decisions.

The Influence of Product Benefits on Purchase Decisions

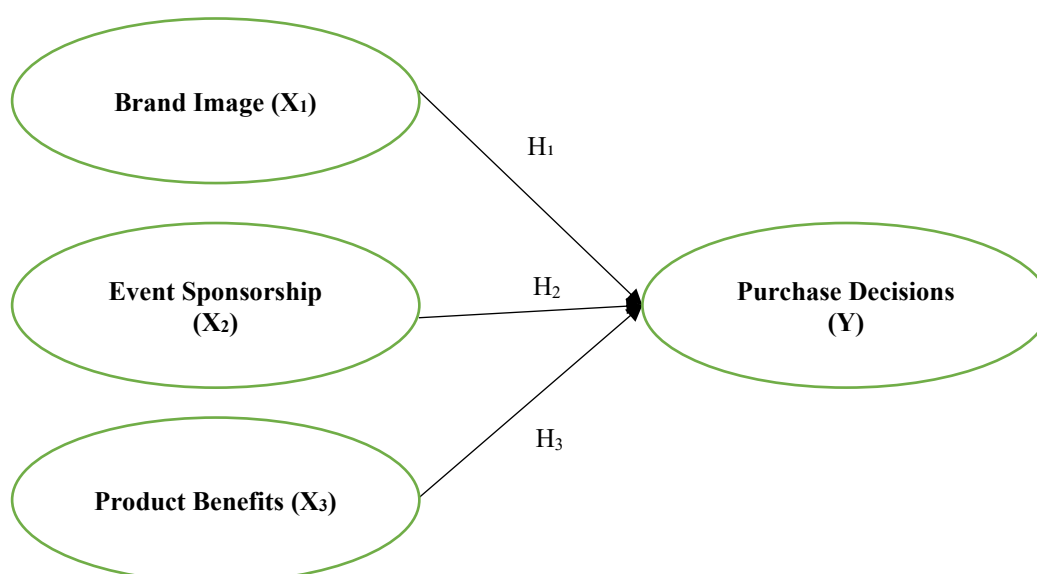
Product benefits influence purchase decisions because consumers tend to choose products that provide the greatest value and usefulness according to their needs. When the perceived benefits are greater—whether in terms of functionality, quality, or convenience—consumers will have greater confidence and interest in purchasing. The greater the benefits offered by a product, the greater the likelihood that consumers will decide to make a purchase. (Salsabila, Tria, et al., 2021).

This is supported by research findings according to Kotler & Keller (2016) and Schiffman & Kanuk (2018), which state that product benefits are consumers' perceptions of the usefulness and value provided by a product in meeting their needs. When these benefits are clear and relevant, consumers are more likely to be encouraged to purchase the product. In addition, when making purchase decisions, consumers tend to focus on the benefits offered by the product, including functional benefits such as quality and usability, as well as symbolic benefits such as self-image and social status.

H3: Product benefits have an influence on purchase decisions.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the description of the relationships among the variables and their influence on firm value, the conceptual framework of this research can be seen in Figure 1.



Source: Developed Research Journal, 2026

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Location and Period

In this study, the research object is all people in Pekanbaru who conduct transactions involving Pocari Sweat products. The research period runs from August 2025 to February 2026.

Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of all consumers of Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru City. The exact population size is unknown due to limitations in obtaining official data on the total number of Pocari Sweat consumers in the Pekanbaru area. The sampling technique used in this study is incidental sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which respondents are selected because they happen to be encountered and are willing to participate as samples at the time and location of data collection, provided they meet the study's inclusion criteria (Sugiyono, 2022). This technique does not require a population list (sampling frame) and does not guarantee that every element of the population has an equal chance of being selected; therefore, statistical generalization should be made with caution.

The sample size was determined based on the requirements proposed by Roscoe for research as follows: (1) An appropriate sample size for research is between 30 and 500; (2) If the sample is divided into categories, then the number of sample members in each category should be at least; (3) If the study will conduct multivariate analysis (such as correlation or multiple regression), then the minimum sample size should be 10 times the number of variables studied. For example, if there are 4 research variables (independent + dependent), then the sample size = $10 \times 4 = 40$ (maximum sample limit). Accordingly, the sample size to be used is 30×4 (number of variables) = 120 respondents. To obtain better results, the final sample size was set at 150 respondents.

Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is a statistical analysis method used to describe and interpret data as they are without intending to draw general conclusions. Descriptive analysis aims to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the facts and the relationships among the phenomena being studied. In the context of this study, descriptive analysis is used to explain the characteristics of the respondents and provide an overview of the research variables, including the analysis of the influence of Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, and Product Benefits on the purchasing decisions of Pocari Sweat consumers in Pekanbaru (Ghozali, 2018).

Validity Test

The validity test is used to determine the extent to which a measuring instrument measures what it is intended to measure. According to Ghozali (2021), the validity test is used to determine whether a questionnaire is valid. In this study, validity was tested by examining the Corrected Item-Total Correlation value. A statement is considered valid if it has a value greater than 0.30 and invalid if the value is less than 0.30. Indicators that meet these criteria are considered suitable for use in the study.

Reliability Test

According to Ghozali (2018), a questionnaire is considered reliable if a person's responses to the statements are consistent or stable over time. Reliability testing in this study uses the Cronbach's Alpha (α) technique. A variable is considered reliable if it has a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.60.

Outer Model Test

The outer model, or measurement model, is used to assess the relationship between indicators and latent constructs. The evaluation is conducted through tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, construct reliability, and multicollinearity. Convergent validity is assessed based on a loading factor value of ≥ 0.70 , Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of ≥ 0.50 , and composite reliability of ≥ 0.70 , although values of 0.60–0.70 are still acceptable in the early stages of research. Discriminant validity is tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross loadings, where the square root of the AVE should be greater than the correlations between constructs, and the indicator loading should be higher on its own construct than on other constructs. Construct reliability is measured using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Rho_A, with values of ≥ 0.70 indicating good reliability. In addition, a multicollinearity test is conducted by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), where a VIF value of < 10 indicates the absence of multicollinearity (Ghozali, 2018).

Inner Model Test

According to Ghozali (2018), the inner model, or structural model, is used to assess the relationships among latent constructs and to test the research hypotheses. The evaluation is carried out using several criteria, namely R-Square (R^2), Q-Square (Q^2), F-Square (f^2), and path coefficients. The R^2 value is used to determine the extent to which the independent variables explain the dependent variable, where a value of 0.67 indicates a strong model, 0.33 a

moderate model, and 0.19 a weak model. The Q^2 value is used to assess the model's predictive relevance through the blindfolding procedure, with the criterion that $Q^2 > 0$ indicates the model has predictive capability. Furthermore, the f^2 value is used to measure the magnitude of the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, where values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively. Meanwhile, path coefficients are used to determine the direction and significance of the relationships among constructs through the bootstrapping method, with the criteria of a t-statistic > 1.96 and a p-value < 0.05 indicating that the hypothesis is accepted.

Path Analysis

Path analysis is the use of regression analysis to estimate causal relationships among variables (causal model) that have been predetermined based on theory (Ghozali, 2018).

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \xi$$

Details:

- X_1 : Brand Image
- X_2 : Event Sponsorship
- X_3 : Product Benefits
- Y : Purchase Decision
- α : constant
- β_1 – β_3 : regression coefficients for each variable
- ξ : error

Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

Ghozali (2018) states that hypothesis testing is conducted to determine whether the research hypotheses are accepted or rejected based on the results of data analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach with the assistance of SmartPLS 3.0. The testing is carried out by examining the path coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value obtained from the structural model estimation. A hypothesis is considered accepted if the p-value < 0.05 and rejected if the p-value ≥ 0.05 . In addition, the path coefficient (β) is used to indicate the direction and strength of the relationship between variables. This test aims to prove whether Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, and Product Benefits have a significant effect on consumers' Purchase Decisions for Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The general profile of the respondents in this study was compiled to provide an understanding of the characteristics of consumers of Pocari Sweat products who served as the source of the research data. The respondents in this study totaled 150 people, consisting of residents of Pekanbaru City who had purchased or consumed Pocari Sweat products. These respondents were selected to ensure that the data obtained were relevant to the objectives of the study, particularly in analyzing the influence of Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, and Product Benefits on the Purchase Decisions of Pocari Sweat consumers in Pekanbaru, as shown in Table 1.

The majority of respondents are between 13 and 28 years old, indicating that Pocari Sweat consumers are predominantly young people in their productive years who lead active lifestyles. In terms of gender, most respondents are male, although the proportion of female respondents is also quite significant, reflecting that this product is consumed by various gender groups. Based on occupation, the majority of respondents are university students, indicating that many Pocari Sweat consumers come from the productive-age group who are active in academic activities as well as daily life. In terms of income, most respondents fall within the Rp3,000,000–Rp5,000,000 category, illustrating the dominance of the middle-income group. The relatively even distribution of respondents' residences across various districts in Pekanbaru City indicates that Pocari Sweat consumption is not concentrated in any particular area. In terms of product preference, the 500 ml package is the most frequently purchased size, indicating a tendency to choose practical packaging that supports an active lifestyle. In addition, the Original variant is the primary choice for the majority of respondents, reflecting a strong preference for the taste and characteristics of a product that has long been well known.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Profile	Category	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	84	56.00%
	Female	66	44.00%
	Total	150	100.00%
Age	13–28 years	120	80.00%
	29–44 years	26	17.33%
	45–60 years	4	2.67%
	Total	150	100.00%
Occupation	University Student	77	51.33%
	Private Employee	49	32.67%
	Self-Employed	16	10.67%
	Homemaker	3	2.00%
	Civil Servant	2	1.33%
	Unemployed	1	0.67%
	Freelancer	1	0.67%
	Student	1	0.67%
	Total	150	100.00%
Monthly Income	< IDR 1,500,000	33	22.00%
	IDR 1,500,000 – IDR 2,999,999	26	17.33%
	IDR 3,000,000 – IDR 5,000,000	67	44.67%
	> IDR 5,000,000	24	16.00%
	Total	150	100.00%
Subdistrict of Residence	Payung Sekaki	34	22.67%
	Pekanbaru Kota	21	14.00%
	Lima Puluh	16	10.67%
	Senapelan	13	8.67%
	Binawidya	10	6.67%
	Marpoyan Damai	10	6.67%
	Tenayan Raya	10	6.67%
	Rumbai	7	4.67%
	Sukajadi	7	4.67%
	Kulim	5	3.33%
	Bukit Raya	4	2.67%
	Tuah Madani	4	2.67%
	Rumbai Timur	4	2.67%
	Sail	3	2.00%
	Rumbai Barat	2	1.33%
	Total	150	100.00%
Package Size	500 ml Bottle	42	28.00%
	350 ml Bottle	34	22.67%
	600 ml Bottle	30	20.00%
	300 ml Can	24	16.00%
	2000 ml Bottle	20	13.33%
	Total	150	100.00%
Variant Purchased	Original	116	77.33%
	Ion Water	34	22.67%
	Total	150	100.00%

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Descriptive Analysis

Respondents' Perceptions of the Brand Image Indicator

Respondents' perceptions of the Pocari Sweat Brand Image indicator fall into the very good category, with an overall average score of 4.40. The highest average score was found for the statement "The Pocari Sweat logo is easy to recognize," with a score of 4.52. This indicates that Pocari Sweat's visual identity is firmly embedded in consumers' minds and is easily recognized compared to similar products, thereby creating a clear and consistent brand image in the eyes of consumers. Meanwhile, the lowest average score was found for the statement "Pocari Sweat is the first isotonic drink in Indonesia," with a score of 4.29, although it still falls within the very good category. This finding indicates that information regarding Pocari Sweat's position as the pioneer of isotonic drinks in Indonesia is still viewed positively by consumers, but its memorability and influence are not as strong as the brand's visual aspects. Overall, these results show that Pocari Sweat's brand image has been established very well, particularly through consumers' ease of recognizing the brand.

Respondents' Perceptions of the Event Sponsorship Indicator

Respondents' perceptions of the Pocari Sweat Event Sponsorship indicator fall into the very good category, with an overall average score of 4.29. The highest average score was found for the statement "I believe the events organized by Pocari Sweat create a positive impression on the wider community," with a score of 4.43. This shows that Pocari Sweat's sponsorship activities are able to build positive public perceptions and strengthen the brand image as a product that supports a healthy lifestyle. Meanwhile, the lowest average scores were found for the statements "I find the Pocari Sweat booth very eye-catching" and "Pocari Sweat distributes free drinks to event visitors," each receiving a score of 4.17, although they still fall within the good category. These findings indicate that although Pocari Sweat's sponsorship activities are viewed positively, the attractiveness of the booth and the free product distribution activities can still be improved to provide a more memorable experience for event visitors. Overall, these results show that Pocari Sweat's event sponsorship has been perceived very positively by consumers and plays a role in shaping a positive brand image.

Respondents' Perceptions of the Product Benefits Indicator

Respondents' perceptions of the Pocari Sweat Product Benefits indicator fall into the very good category, with an overall average score of 4.38. The highest average score was found for the statement "Pocari Sweat is very easy to find in various places," with a score of 4.56. This indicates that ease of access and product availability are the main benefits perceived by consumers, making Pocari Sweat a practical product that is easy to obtain whenever needed. Meanwhile, the lowest average score was found for the statement "I feel comfortable consuming Pocari Sweat because it is not too sweet," with a score of 4.30, although it still falls within the very good category. This finding indicates that although consumers view the taste positively, this aspect is relatively lower than the other perceived benefits. Overall, these results show that consumers perceive the benefits of Pocari Sweat very positively, particularly in terms of product accessibility and functional benefits that support the body's needs.

Respondents' Perceptions of the Purchase Decision Indicator

Respondents' perceptions of the Pocari Sweat Purchase Decision indicator fall into the very high category, with an overall average score of 4.30. The highest average score was found for the statement "I feel that Pocari Sweat is available in various places," with a score of 4.51. This indicates that ease of obtaining the product is the main factor driving consumers' purchase decisions, as its widespread availability makes it easier for consumers to buy it whenever needed. Meanwhile, the lowest average score was found for the statement "I consider Pocari Sweat my first choice for meeting my body's needs," with a score of 4.12, although it still falls within the high category. This finding indicates that although Pocari Sweat is viewed positively and is frequently purchased, some consumers have not yet fully made it their first choice compared to similar products. Overall, these results show that purchase decisions for Pocari Sweat are relatively high, primarily driven by ease of access and product availability, although there is still room to strengthen the brand's position as consumers' first choice.

Validity Test

Based on Table 2, all statement items for the Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, Product Benefits, and Purchase Decision variables have Corrected Item-Total Correlation values greater than 0.300 (cutoff), so all items are declared valid and suitable for use as research instruments. The lowest value is found in item X2.01 at 0.647, while the highest value is found in item Y.10 at 0.813. This indicates that each item has an adequate level of correlation with the total score of its respective variable and has met the validity test criteria.

Table 2. Validity Test Results

Variable	Statement Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cut-Off	Validity
Brand Image	X1.01	0,704	0,300	Valid
	X1.02	0,660	0,300	Valid
	X1.03	0,739	0,300	Valid
	X1.04	0,721	0,300	Valid
	X1.05	0,745	0,300	Valid
	X1.06	0,679	0,300	Valid
Event Sponsorship	X2.01	0,647	0,300	Valid
	X2.02	0,718	0,300	Valid
	X2.03	0,785	0,300	Valid
	X2.04	0,710	0,300	Valid
	X2.05	0,788	0,300	Valid
	X2.06	0,784	0,300	Valid
	X2.07	0,772	0,300	Valid
	X2.08	0,779	0,300	Valid
	X2.09	0,806	0,300	Valid
	X2.10	0,792	0,300	Valid
Product Benefits	X3.01	0,717	0,300	Valid
	X3.02	0,726	0,300	Valid
	X3.03	0,788	0,300	Valid
	X3.04	0,788	0,300	Valid
	X3.05	0,671	0,300	Valid
	X3.06	0,792	0,300	Valid
	X3.07	0,748	0,300	Valid
	X3.08	0,781	0,300	Valid
	X3.09	0,703	0,300	Valid
	X3.10	0,765	0,300	Valid
Purchase Decision	Y.01	0,686	0,300	Valid
	Y.02	0,699	0,300	Valid
	Y.03	0,793	0,300	Valid
	Y.04	0,691	0,300	Valid
	Y.05	0,733	0,300	Valid
	Y.06	0,718	0,300	Valid
	Y.07	0,807	0,300	Valid
	Y.08	0,763	0,300	Valid
	Y.09	0,810	0,300	Valid
	Y.10	0,813	0,300	Valid

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Reliability Test

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Cut Off	Reliabilitas
Brand Image	0,890	0,600	Reliabel
Event Sponsorship	0,941	0,600	Reliabel
Product Benefits	0,937	0,600	Reliabel
Purchase Decision	0,937	0,600	Reliabel

Source: SPSS Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 3, it is known that the Cronbach's Alpha value for the Brand Image variable is 0.890, Event Sponsorship is 0.941, Product Benefits is 0.937, and Purchase Decision is 0.937. All of these values are greater than the cutoff of 0.600, so all variables in this study are declared reliable. This indicates that each variable has a good level of internal consistency and that the research instrument is suitable for use in further analysis.

Convergent Validity Test**Table 4. Convergent Validity Test Results and VIF**

Variabel	Brand Image	Event Sponsorship	Product Benefits	Purchase Decision	VIF
X1.01	0.790				2.066
X1.02	0.761				1.940
X1.03	0.825				2.423
X1.04	0.805				2.191
X1.05	0.841				2.486
X1.06	0.799				2.233
X2.01		0.706			1.984
X2.02		0.776			2.419
X2.03		0.832			2.797
X2.04		0.764			2.419
X2.05		0.833			3.225
X2.06		0.834			3.234
X2.07		0.816			2.816
X2.08		0.826			3.034
X2.09		0.848			3.273
X2.10		0.841			3.318
X3.01			0.778		2.786
X3.02			0.787		3.109
X3.03			0.828		3.700
X3.04			0.834		2.854
X3.05			0.730		1.982
X3.06			0.841		2.845
X3.07			0.801		2.753
X3.08			0.832		3.060
X3.09			0.755		3.028
X3.10			0.813		2.588
Y.01				0.749	2.103
Y.02				0.763	2.460
Y.03				0.837	3.020
Y.04				0.751	2.188
Y.05				0.796	3.129
Y.06				0.779	2.818
Y.07				0.840	3.753
Y.08				0.809	3.548
Y.09				0.851	4.052
Y.10				0.852	4.121

Source: SPSS Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 4, all indicators for the Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, Product Benefits, and Purchase Decision variables have loading factor values above 0.70. This indicates that each indicator is able to represent the measured construct well and meets the convergent validity criteria. In addition, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all indicators are below 5, indicating that there are no multicollinearity issues in the measurement model. Thus, all indicators are declared valid in terms of convergent validity and are suitable for use in the next stage of analysis.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Test

Table 5. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Test Results

No.	Variabel	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
1	Brand Image	0.646
2	Event Sponsorship	0.654
3	Product Benefits	0.641
4	Purchase Decision	0.646

Source: SPSS Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 5, all variables in this study have an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of ≥ 0.50 , namely Brand Image at 0.646, Event Sponsorship at 0.654, Product Benefits at 0.641, and Purchase Decision at 0.646. These values indicate that each construct is able to explain more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. Thus, all variables have met the convergent validity criterion through their AVE values and are considered suitable for use in further analysis.

Discriminant Validity Test

Table 6. Discriminant Validity Test Results

Variabel	Brand Image	Event Sponsorship	Product Benefits	Purchase Decision
Brand Image	0.804			
Event Sponsorship	0.811	0.809		
Product Benefits	0.749	0.819	0.801	0.918
Purchase Decision	0.713	0.807		0.804

Source: SPSS Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 6, the correlation values between constructs indicate that the relationship between Brand Image and Event Sponsorship is 0.811, Brand Image and Product Benefits is 0.749, and Brand Image and Purchase Decision is 0.713. Furthermore, the correlation between Event Sponsorship and Product Benefits is 0.819, and between Event Sponsorship and Purchase Decision is 0.807. Meanwhile, the square root of the AVE for each construct is 0.804 for Brand Image, 0.809 for Event Sponsorship, 0.801 for Product Benefits, and 0.804 for Purchase Decision. All correlation values between constructs are below 0.90, indicating that each variable has a good ability to distinguish its construct from other constructs. Thus, this research model has met the discriminant validity criteria, and there are no overlap issues between constructs.

Construct Reliability Test

Table 7. Construct Reliability Test Results

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
Brand Image	0.891	0.894	0.916
Event Sponsorship	0.941	0.943	0.950
Product Benefits	0.938	0.940	0.947

Source: SPSS Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 7, all research variables have Composite Reliability values greater than 0.70, namely Brand Image at 0.916, Event Sponsorship at 0.950, and Product Benefits at 0.947. In addition, the Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable are 0.891, 0.941, and 0.938, while the rho_A values are 0.894, 0.943, and 0.940. All of these values are above the established minimum threshold, indicating that each construct has excellent internal consistency. Therefore, all variables in this study are considered reliable and suitable for further analysis.

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Test

Based on Table 4, all indicators for the Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, Product Benefits, and Purchase Decision variables have VIF values ranging from 1.940 to 4.121. The highest VIF value is found in indicator Y.10 at 4.121, while the lowest is found in indicator X1.02 at 1.940. All of these values are below the maximum threshold of 10, so it can be concluded that there are no indications of multicollinearity among the indicators in this research model. Therefore, the model meets the multicollinearity test criteria and is suitable for further analysis.

How Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, and Product Benefits Shape Consumer Purchase Decisions: Empirical Evidence from The Pocari Sweat Market (Pamuji Hari Santoso, Felix Edison, dan Ria Darmasari)

R-Square (R^2) Test**Table 8. R-Square (R^2) Test Results**

No.	Variabel	R Square	R Square Adjusted
1	Purchase Decision	0.852	0.849

Source: SPSS Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 8, the Purchase Decision variable has an R Square value of 0.852 and an Adjusted R Square value of 0.849. These values indicate that Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, and Product Benefits collectively explain 84.9% of the variation in Purchase Decisions, while the remaining 15.1% is explained by other variables outside this research model. Therefore, the structural model in this study can be categorized as very strong because the R^2 value is above 0.67.

Stone-Geisser Q^2 Test**Table 2. Stone-Geisser Q^2 Test Result**

Variabel	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Purchase Decision	1.500.000	695.921	0.536

Source: SPSS Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 9, the Purchase Decision variable has a Q^2 value of 0.536, obtained from the calculation $1 - (SSE/SSO)$. This Q^2 value is above 0, so it can be concluded that the model has good predictive relevance. This indicates that the Brand Image, Event Sponsorship, and Product Benefits variables are able to adequately predict the Purchase Decision variable in this research model.

Effect Size (f^2) Test**Tabel 3. Effect Size (f^2) Test Results**

Variabel	Purchase Decision
Brand Image	0.001
Event Sponsorship	0.052
Product Benefits	1.298

Source: SPSS Processed Data, 2026

Based on the effect size (f^2) test results in Table 10, it is known that the Brand Image variable has an f^2 value of 0.001 for Purchase Decision, which falls into the category of a very small or negligible effect (below 0.02). Furthermore, the Event Sponsorship variable has an f^2 value of 0.052, which is classified as a small effect. Meanwhile, the Product Benefits variable has an f^2 value of 1.298, which far exceeds the threshold for a large effect (≥ 0.35). This indicates that Product Benefits make a very strong and dominant contribution to Purchase Decision compared with the other variables in this research model.

Path Analysis**Table 11. Path Analysis Result**

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Conclusion
Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	-0.022	-0.016	0.063	0.354	0.724	Not Significant
Event Sponsorship -> Purchase Decision	0.179	0.177	0.087	2.067	0.039	Significant
Product Benefits -> Purchase Decision	0.788	0.786	0.069	11.444	0.000	Significant

Source: SPSS Processed Data, 2026

Significant if P Value < 0.05

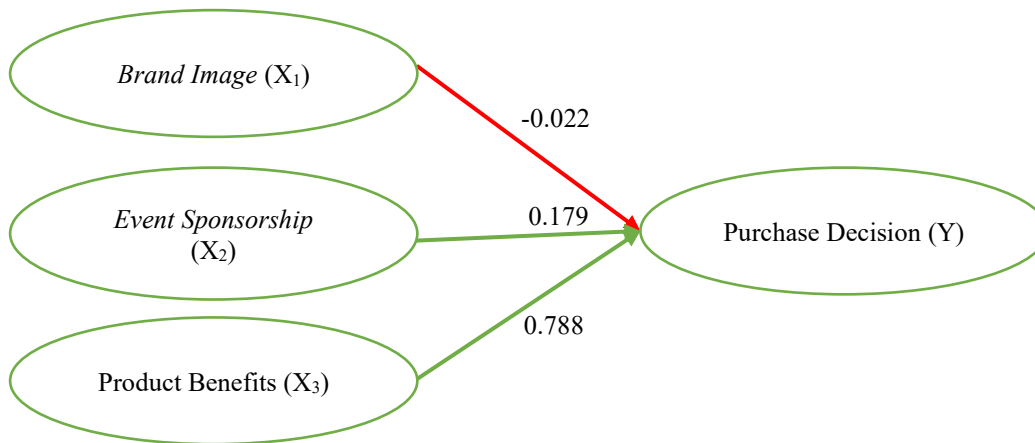


Figure 2. SmartPLS Output

Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions

Based on the Path Analysis result in Table 11, Brand Image has a P-value of 0.724, while the alpha is 0.05 (P-value > 0.05), and the path coefficient is -0.022. Therefore, it can be concluded that H₀ is accepted and H₁ is rejected. This indicates that Brand Image does not have a significant effect on Purchase Decisions.

The Effect of Event Sponsorship on Purchase Decisions

Based on the Path Analysis result in Table 11, Event Sponsorship has a P-value of 0.039, while the alpha is 0.05 (P-value < 0.05), and the path coefficient is 0.179. Therefore, it can be concluded that H₀ is rejected and H₂ is accepted. This indicates that Event Sponsorship has a significant effect on Purchase Decisions.

The Effect of Product Benefits on Purchase Decisions

Based on the Path Analysis result in Table 11, Product Benefits has a P-value of 0.000, while the alpha is 0.05 (P-value < 0.05), and the path coefficient is 0.788. Therefore, it can be concluded that H₀ is rejected and H₃ is accepted. This indicates that Product Benefits have a significant effect on Purchase Decisions.

Results and Discussion

The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing that has been conducted, it can be concluded that brand image does not have a significant effect on purchase decisions; therefore, H₁ is rejected. Although the descriptive analysis showed that respondents' perceptions of Pocari Sweat's brand image were in the very good category, this did not directly encourage purchase decisions. This condition can be explained by the intensity of the company's marketing activities compared to its competitors. The frequency of the brand's presence through event sponsorship activities becomes a more decisive factor in influencing consumers. If competing brands appear more frequently at various sports events, community activities, or public events, then their level of exposure and direct interaction with consumers becomes higher. In such situations, consumers tend to be more familiar with and more influenced by brands they encounter more often in person, so a positive brand image alone is not sufficient to influence purchase decisions.

In addition, consumers' perceptions of the product's function may be another reason why a positive brand image does not significantly affect purchase decisions for Pocari Sweat. Some consumers are now becoming increasingly critical of the ingredients in isotonic drinks and their health effects when consumed under inappropriate conditions. For example, an article on Kompasiana argues that consuming isotonic drinks such as Pocari Sweat, which are high in sugar and sodium, without balanced physical activity may not meet the needs of consumers who do not engage in intensive exercise and may have negative effects such as high blood pressure or weight gain. Such perceptions indicate that consumers not only consider the brand's overall reputation but also take into account the product's function, ingredients, and health implications when making purchase decisions. Therefore, even though Pocari Sweat's brand image is rated very positively, consumers prioritize functional and health considerations when deciding whether to make a purchase, especially among consumers who are not physically active or who already understand the risks of consuming sugary drinks in inappropriate amounts.

The results of this study are consistent with the research conducted by Kartika (2021), which found that brand image has no effect on purchase decisions. In other words, brand image does not have a significant influence on purchase decisions because consumers already have their own views or personal evaluations of the brand image in their minds. However, the findings of this study contradict several previous studies, such as Nasyeh & Avriyanti (2023), which stated that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. These differing

findings indicate that the influence of brand image on purchase decisions depends greatly on product characteristics, market context, and consumers' rational considerations, particularly for isotonic beverage products that emphasize functional benefits rather than brand image alone.

The Influence of Event Sponsorship on Purchase Decisions

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing that has been conducted, it can be concluded that event sponsorship has a significant influence on purchase decisions, so H2 is accepted. The findings of this study indicate that Pocari Sweat's involvement as a sponsor in various activities, especially sports events and events that reflect a healthy lifestyle, is able to exert a real influence on consumers' purchase decisions. A brand's presence at an event not only increases exposure but also strengthens the positive association between the product and activities that are relevant to consumers' needs, thereby encouraging purchase decisions.

The results of this study are consistent with the research by Dawali & Pandowo (2016), which states that event sponsorship has been proven to have a significant effect on improving brand image, which in turn affects consumers' purchase decisions. However, these findings contradict the study by Nusantara & Idris (2017), which states that event sponsorship has a negative and insignificant effect on purchase decisions for Samsung products. This difference in findings indicates that the effectiveness of event sponsorship depends greatly on the suitability of the event to the product's characteristics, consumer segmentation, and the relevance of the message conveyed through the sponsorship activities.

The Influence of Product Benefits on Purchase Decisions

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing that has been conducted, it can be concluded that product benefits have a significant influence on purchase decisions, so H3 is accepted. The findings of this study indicate that the product benefits perceived by consumers, such as Pocari Sweat's ability to replace body ions, provide refreshment after physical activity, and offer convenience and comfort in consumption, are the main factors that encourage consumers to make purchase decisions. Thus, consumers tend to consider the product's functional benefits more directly than promotional factors or brand image when making purchase decisions.

The results of this study are consistent with the research by Salsabila et al. (2021), which states that product benefits have a significant effect on purchase decisions for Deles beverages in Banyuwangi Regency. However, these findings contradict the study by Suhir & Imam Suyadi (2014), which states that product benefits have an effect but not a significant one on purchase decisions for cosmetic and skincare products in Bandar Lampung. This difference in findings indicates that the strength of the influence of product benefits on purchase decisions depends greatly on the type of product and the level of consumers' need for the product's primary function, particularly for isotonic beverages that have clear functional benefits that are easily perceived by consumers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study on the influence of brand image, event sponsorship, and product benefits on purchasing decisions for Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru City, it can be concluded that (1) Brand image does not have a significant effect on purchasing decisions for Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru City. This indicates that Pocari Sweat's brand image has not yet become the main factor that directly drives consumers to make purchasing decisions; (2) Event sponsorship has a significant effect on purchasing decisions for Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru City. This means that Pocari Sweat's involvement as a sponsor in various activities, especially those related to sports and healthy lifestyles, is able to exert a real influence in encouraging consumers to make purchases; (3) Product benefits have a significant effect on purchasing decisions for Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru City. This indicates that the functional benefits perceived by consumers, such as the product's ability to replace body ions and provide refreshment after physical activity, are the most dominant factor influencing purchasing decisions.

Based on the research that has been conducted, the conclusions that have been presented, and considering the research limitations mentioned above, the researcher would like to offer the following recommendations, which are expected to be useful for: (1) Academics are expected to contribute to the development of marketing management knowledge, particularly regarding the influence of brand image, event sponsorship, and product benefits on consumer purchasing decisions for Pocari Sweat products in Pekanbaru City. This study can serve as a reference for future researchers in developing more comprehensive research models, for example by examining the role of mediating or moderating variables such as consumer trust or perceived value, as well as comparing the influence of variables across different types of products. In addition, the findings of this study can serve as a basis for conducting comparative studies across regions or consumer segments to examine the consistency of variable effects in different contexts; (2) Future researchers are advised to include other variables that may influence purchasing decisions, such as price, product availability, brand loyalty, or a healthy lifestyle. Adding these variables is important because purchasing decisions for isotonic beverages are influenced not only by brand image and event sponsorship but also by rational considerations and consumption habits. Furthermore, the use of different research methods, such as qualitative approaches or mixed methods, as well as expanding the study area and

increasing the number of respondents, is recommended to explore the underlying reasons behind consumer behavior more deeply, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that truly influence purchasing decisions; (3) Companies are advised to evaluate their brand image strengthening strategies to make them more relevant and competitive amid market competition. Although respondents rated the brand image very positively, the study results indicate that brand image has not had a significant influence on purchasing decisions. Therefore, companies need to improve the consistency and intensity of their marketing activities, particularly in terms of the frequency and variety of event sponsorships, so that brand exposure does not lag behind competitors. In addition, companies can integrate messages about product benefits more explicitly into every promotional and sponsorship activity, so that the brand image is not only recognized but also directly associated with consumers' needs and experiences; (4) Consumers are expected to use this as a consideration when making purchasing decisions for isotonic beverages. Consumers are advised to consider the product's benefits and its suitability for their body's needs and daily activities before making a purchase; (5) Businesses in the isotonic beverage industry are advised to create direct experiences that consumers can personally experience, such as distributing product samples at sporting events, providing interactive booths at community events, organizing competitions or physical activities involving consumers, and collaborating with sports communities or schools. Such direct experiences can help consumers experience the product's benefits firsthand, thereby increasing their confidence and encouraging purchasing decisions. Strategies that emphasize actual experiences and direct consumer engagement are expected to enhance product competitiveness amid increasingly intense market competition.

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