



## Brand Image Antecedents to Enhance Consumer Trust

**Runggu Besmandala Napitupulu<sup>1\*</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Management, Faculty of Economics, Universitas Darma Agung, Medan, Indonesia  
email: [rb.napitupulu@gmail.com](mailto:rb.napitupulu@gmail.com)

\*Corresponding Author: Runggu Besmandala

**Abstract:** Research aims are to identify, analyze, and conclude the effect of price perception and product quality on brand image and consumer trust. The analytical technique applies a structural equation model lisrel software supported. The study results, namely the price perception and product quality partially have a positive effect on brand image. Price perception, product quality, and brand image have a partially positive effect on consumer trust. Brand image partially mediates the effect of perceived price and product quality on consumer trust. To enhance brand image, especially for emotional satisfaction, more specifically for the self-expression value, namely by increasing the price perception which is dominant among other exogenous variables. The price discount reflects price perception. This dimension is reflected dominantly by the rare discount. Retailers in Medan need to pay more attention to price discounts that are rare for users to enhance brand image. Increasing consumer trust, especially the retailer ability, more specifically institutional recognitions, namely by the dominant brand image among exogenous constructs. Retailers in Medan need to pay more attention to emotional satisfaction, especially the user self-expression value to enhance consumer trust.

**Keywords:** Brand Image, Consumers Trust, Price Perception, Product Quality

### INTRODUCTION

Smartphones cannot be separated from people's daily lives now, whether at work or interacting with other people. Various brands are circulating in the market such as Samsung, Oppo, Xiaomi, Advan, Lenovo, Vivo, Asus, Smartfren, and others. Researchers are interested in the Vivo brand because it has entered the top 5 market shares in Indonesia since 2017. This brand has been entering the Indonesian market since 2015. To focus more on the characteristics and product features that are relatively the same, the Vivo Y series was chosen. One very important aspect of choosing a brand is consumer trust. The problem phenomenon was obtained through an initial survey targeting 143 respondents who live in the city of Medan. They don't trust smartphone brands like Lenovo, Asus, Advan, and Smartfren. Samsung is the most trusted brand with 56 people or 39.16 percent. Oppo occupies the

second rank with 40 people or 27.97 percent. The third position belongs to Vivo with 22 people or 15.38 percent. The sample still believes in Realme with a total of three people or 2.10 percent. Consumers trust Xiaomi 16 people or 11.19%. As many as 6 people or 4.2 percent are owned by other brands.

The diagnosis of the main problem (consumer trust) is obtained from various previous research results. What aspects substantially affect consumer trust? Based on the literature search, relatively many propositions were obtained "Brand image affects consumer trust". Furthermore, it was also found that the main antecedents of the brand image were price perception and product quality. Both of these constructs are substantial concerning brand image. The four constructs in a research model form 5 propositions. Price perception influences brand image; Product quality affects brand image; Price perceptions affect consumer trust; Product quality affects consumer trust; Brand image affects consumer trust. The five propositions above still need to be examined, whether the causal relationship applies universally in various occurrences. In the following, some relevant and in-line research results are presented. The research resulted by Ryananda et al., (2022) states that there is no effect of price perception on brand image. This is not in line with the research resulted by Pranoto et al., (2022); Lestari & Afriliani, (2022); Listari, (2022); Hernikasari et al., (2022); Ajeng Melati et al., (2021); Wydyanto & Yandi, (2020); Setiawan et al., (2016). They stated that price perceptions affected brand image.

Best-quality products will be remembered by consumers. If consistent, it will create a positive impression in the customers' minds. This means that the brand image is created in question. Several researchers such as Arifin et al., (2022); Hernikasari et al., (2022); Fajarani & Susilowati, (2022); Lestari & Afriliani, (2022); Listari, (2022); Ajeng Melati et al., (2021); Sisca et al., (2021); Wydyanto & Yandi, (2020); Gircela & Wati, (2020); Ketut, (2018); Rosady & Kusumawardhani, (2018). obtained research results, namely product quality affects brand image. Changes in product quality are always in line with changes in brand image. However, the proposition from the research results above is still doubtful because there are still research results related to the causal relationship between product quality and brand image which is still meaningless. After all, the determinant coefficient relatively does not reach a critical limit. Marvianta & Saputra, (2022) in their research on the effect of price, product quality, and promotion on the brand image has an R-Square of 0.44 (or 44%)  $\leq$  0.50 means the model is not meaningful berarti (Hair et al., 2019). Although the three exogenous variables partially have a positive effect on brand image, this model is unable to discuss further.

Mabkhot *et al.*, (2017) conducted research with Malaysian automobile local brands as objects. As a result, the brand image does not affect consumer trust. In their research, brand image is measured by friendly, modern, useful, popular, gentle, and artificial. Some research results are not in line with the proposition above, namely: Brand image affects consumer trust (Arifin et al., 2022; Lestari & Afriliani, 2022; Suharto et al., 2019; Ayu & Ketut, 2021; Iskandar & Berlianto, 2018; Hapsoro & Hafidh, 2018).

Al-ekam, (2016) revealed the results of his research on 711 consumers in 10 elementary and secondary schools in three cities in Sanaa, Ibb, and Aden in Yemen, namely price perceptions do not affect consumer trust. In contrast to the proposition above, the research results of R. Lestari & Afriliani, (2022); Ajeng Melati et al., (2021); Prabowo & Yulianeu, (2017) price perceptions have a positive effect on customer trust at Rumah Fotografi Kudus. The following researchers state that product quality affects consumer trust (Prilius et al., 2021; Ayu & Ketut, 2021; Suharto et al., 2019; Ketut, 2018; Hapsoro & Hafidh, 2018; Suhaily & Darmoyo, 2017). Furthermore, the following researchers, Ayu & Ketut, (2021); Prilius et al., (2021); Suharto et al., (2019); Hapsoro & Hafidh, (2018); Alhaddad & Alhaddad, (2015) stated that brand image influences consumer trust.

Even though there is a positive causal relationship between product quality and brand image partially on consumer trust. Some models show hesitation. The product quality and brand image on consumer trust has the R-square of  $0.17 \leq 0.50$ . (Hapsoro & Hafidh, 2018); The price perception and product quality on consumer trust has an R-square of 41.8% (Lestari & Afriliani, 2022). The number of exogenous variable variants contained in the endogenous variables is less than 0.50, indicating an unmeaningful model. The research model is related to the causal relationship between perceived price, product quality, and brand image. The causal relationship between price perception, product quality, and brand image on consumer trust. the two structural equations are in a communality, so there will be a mediator construct. The study starts from the construct - dimensions - indicators - statement items (second order approach). Thus obtaining broader and deeper information. The model obtained is more confirmatory and predictive as a reference and contributes to solving marketing problems.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The definition of the author's concept was a source of the concepts' synthesis by previous writers. Differences in locus and research units of analysis require definition improvement of the definition of the concepts in various pieces of literature. Propositions were also put forward referring to relevant literature reviews. Based on a brief review of various concept definitions from relevant researchers, the definitions of the research model construct concepts are obtained as presented below.

### Consumer trust

The author's synthesis results are Consumer trust is a strong belief that is attached in the consumers' minds about the superiority of a brand in the industry (Kholik *et al.*, 2020; Firmansyah & Ali, 2019; Rimawan *et al.*, 2017; Luhmann, 2017; Upamannyu *et al.*, 2015).

### Brand Image

Brand image can be defined as a person's impression of the product attributes or features that is embedded in the consumers' minds through a process (experience), either originating from oneself or information obtained from the environment through various media (Wagiswari, 2022; Kotler *et al.*, 2021; Lalaounis, 2021; Keller & Swaminathan, 2020; Brune *et al.*, 2018).

### Price Perception

Price Perception is a result of subjective consumer assessments based on the affective and cognitive aspects of a product's nominal price (Kotler *et al.*, 2021; Terzo, 2020; Devi & Setiawan, 2018; Cheng, 2017; Wang & Chen, 2016; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015).

### Product Quality

Product quality is a result of consumer or end-user evaluation of the main characteristics, features, and psychological elements of an item (Salomon *et al.*, 2022; Jain, 2021; Team, 2018; Perreault *et al.*, 2017; Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). Linkages between constructs in research or research concept frameworks are needed so that the implementation is systematic, organized, and by the objectives. Referring to literature and logical studies the author describes the conceptual framework. Furthermore, research hypotheses are proposed as a base in the propositions testing that has been stated before.

**There is an effect of Price Perception on Brand Image.**

Before deciding to purchase either a new product or one that has been purchased, consumers always pay attention to the price list. Consumers often do not just stop at the nominal listed on the price tag. The interpretation of the price will involve many aspects such as time to find the product, psychological burden, time and effort to study the product, and the nominal price itself. Cognitive and affective aspects will play a role in interpreting a price. The more reasonable the price level, the better the consumer will respond. If this situation is consistent in every purchase, a positive impression will be embedded in the consumers' minds of a brand. Perceptions of reasonable increasing prices will have an impact on an increasingly positive brand image in the customers' minds. Conversely, the more unreasonable price of a brand is perceived by consumers, the worse the brand impression will be. Several researchers have been in line with the proposition above, as can be found from the research resulted by Listari, (2022); Lestari & Afriliani, (2022); Pranoto et al., (2022); Hernikasari et al., (2022); Ajeng Melati et al., (2021); Wydyanto & Yandi, (2020); Setiawan et al., (2016). The description above becomes a base for researchers to propose a hypothesis: There is an effect of price perception on brand image.

**There is an effect of product quality on brand image**

The extent to which producers or suppliers can meet the attributes and features of a product in consumer or user assessment as a level of product quality. Generally, brands that compete in the industry are more related to the features presented. Marketers can fill the space for customers' needs or desires if the best will be preferred. The more optimal a marketer meets the customer's wishes, the stronger the brand is attached to their minds. The brand impression will increase. There is a product quality relationship with an impression on a brand. The research results were in line with the above thoughts have been obtained from Hernikasari et al., (2022); Fajarani & Susilowati, (2022); Lestari & Afriliani, (2022); Listari, (2022) ; Arifin et al., (2022); Sisca et al., (2021); Ajeng Melati et al., (2021); Wydyanto & Yandi, (2020); Gircela & Wati, (2020); Ketut, (2018); Rosady & Kusumawardhani, (2018). The description above becomes a reference to propose a hypothesis: There is an effect of product quality on brand image.

**There is an effect of price perception on consumer trust**

The price of a product is often not interpreted by consumers from the nominal listed on the price label only. Various aspects can shape consumer attitudes. The attitude of consumers is a result of cognitive or affective processes. The views that arise for example prices are highly perceived, low, moderate, the same price as competitors, under competitors, or above competitors. Consumers assess a product not only based on the nominal written on the price list but cognitive and affective aspects are often involved. Non-cognitive components are part of building customer trust. Perceived of Price can be defined as how buyers view prices such as low, fair or high (Suhaily & Darmoyo, 2017). Research Resulted by Benhardy et al., (2020). Price perception has an impact on purchasing intentions: mediation of trust concludes, price perceptions affect customer trust. Several other studies have been carried out that also show price perceptions affect consumers' trust (Hidajat & Setiawan, 2022; Lestari & Afriliani, 2022; Wijaya, 2019; Rivai & Wahyudi, 2017). Based on the propositions have been stated above, the authors propose the hypothesis "There is an effect of price perception on consumer trust".

**There is an effect of product quality on consumer trust**

Consumer expectations of brand specifications can be realized through a combination of characteristics and product features produced by marketers. The perceived hope shows the

extent of brand quality. Quality can also be used as a differentiator from competitors' goods or services in an industry. Product quality will have an impact on the company's relationship with the product (Xhema et al., 2018). This is vulnerable to consumers. Every company will try to make consumers get back again. This goal can be met if their expectation is realized. Even if possible above their expectations. Good and trusted product quality will be attached to the consumers' minds. A positive attitude will make a brand closer to the hearts of customers. Conversely, the bad quality will tend to be forgotten by consumers. Functions, durability, reliability, and service will determine the item's quality. The customer's real experience of the goods or services measured based on the specifications desired by consumers is a quality reference. The quality of an increasing product can affect consumers related to brand trust. If the specifications of an item desired are consistent at every purchase, consumer trust can occur. Some researchers who have examined the influence of product quality concerning consumer trust including Hidajat & Setiawan, (2022); Lestari & Afriliani, (2022); Diputra & Yasa, (2021); Pratama & Santoso, (2018); Fatmawati & Triastity, (2017); Suhaily & Darmoyo, (2017). They revealed the research results which state that product quality has a positive effect on consumer trust. If the product produced is getting better quality, then consumers will increase their brand trust. The more value of a product if compared to other brands in the market can enhance the level of consumer trust. The propositions that have been stated above become a reference for the author to propose the following hypothesis: There is an effect of product quality on consumer trust.

### **There is an effect of brand image on consumer trust.**

Brands are not only urgent for sellers but also consumers. Every time they make a purchase they will get unchanged quality. Consumers generally feel confident with certain brands. If there is no brand that they trust, then every time they make a purchase they must gather information for the evaluation purposes of the brand to be purchased. Brand image is an impression in the customers' minds regarding the suitability of the brand with them. Therefore will be related to their choice (Wagiswari, 2022). Different views of consumers on brand imagery are the reasons for each company to make an attractive impression on the market to compete in the industry. Consumers who already have trust in a brand will make it easier when making a purchase. A good brand image will cause trust in the product. This explains that trust can be caused by the brand image perceived by consumers. The results of other previous studies about the causal relationship between the brand image of consumer trust were carried out by Sudirman et al., (2020); Pratama & Santoso, (2018); Suhaily & Darmoyo, (2017); Abdullah, (2015). Referring to the propositions described above, the authors propose the hypothesis "There is an effect of brand image on consumer trust".

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The population was estimated at 895 people based on preliminary surveys. Samples of 360 people (at least 10 respondents per indicator for the abnormal data distribution) (Kasanah, 2015). They are active undergraduate students in various universities in Medan; Male and female; They have bought back the Vivo Smartphone Y Series; They are between 19 to 24 years old. Primary data is a source of a random distribution questionnaire to the population. The questionnaire was submitted to a random population until 360 people responded. Question/statement items are closed with a scale of 1-7 (strongly disagree until strongly agree). The validity and reliability of the instrument are tested with the product-moment correlation ( $R\text{-value} \geq 0.30$ ) and alpha cronbach ( $\alpha \geq 0.70$ ).

This study uses exploratory and causal designs. Exploratory is used to gather facts related to the problem phenomenon. The causal design uses a structural equation model with the Lisrel application program support to develop, check, and interpret the research model.



Since the distribution of data is not normally distributed, the estimation method applies a robust maximum likelihood. The measurement model both first and second order are components for building a full structural model. The full structural model was built after the four second-order measurement models meet the specifications (Whittaker & Schumacker, 2022; Hair et al., 2019; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019; Jöreskog et al., 2016; Byrne, 2016). Structural equations in general can be written as below.

$$\text{Measurement model for exogenous variables: } X = \Lambda x \xi + \delta \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Measurement model for endogenous variables: } Y = \Lambda y \eta + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

$$\text{Structural Model: } \eta = \beta \eta + \Gamma \xi + \zeta \quad (3)$$

Model specifications meet the rule of thumb: Standardized loading factors (SLF)  $\geq 0.70$ , Z-value  $\geq 1.96$  (Z-table critical ratio, two-tail test with a confidence interval of 95%), composite reliability (CR)  $\geq 0.70$ , and the average variances extracted (AVE)  $> 0.50$ , discriminant validity  $\leq 0.90$ , error variance  $< 4.00$  (acceptable), Rsquare  $\geq 0.50$  (Model is meaningful) (Hair et al., 2019; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019; Byrne, 2016; Haryono, 2016). A more complete model is shown with a path diagram. The parameters are estimated to be more informative. If the model diagram has been built, the Lisrel Simplis Program has worked well. Data distribution patterns have been accepted. Modifications are usually needed to fulfill the goodness of fit index.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

Data that has been collected through the questionnaire is processed, then described descriptively. It also shows in the form of tables, path diagrams, and functional equations to clarify meaning. In this study, the research model examination model was carried out through three stages. The examination is to ensure the results have met the specifications for discussion. These stages include: Testing the first-order measurement model, the second-order measurement model, and a full structural model.

### First-Order Measurement Model (1st CFA)

The first-order measurement model meets through an examination series of validity, reliability, determinant coefficient, and the goodness of fit index. Model parameters have met the specifications presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Parameters of converged first-order measurement models**

Dimensions	Indicators	SLF	$\delta, \varepsilon$	$\lambda$	Z-value	R-square
Price discount (H2)	Often (H21)	0.90	0.18	1.00		0.82
	Rare (H22)	0.98	0.05	1.10	34.34	0.95
	Never (H23)	0.92	0.16	0.96	28.91	0.84
Serviceability (K6)	Service speed (K61)	0.93	0.13	1.00		0.87
	Ease of service (K62)	0.94	0.12	1.02	33.18	0.88
	Satisfying problem solving (K63)	0.93	0.14	1.01	32.28	0.86
Functional satisfaction (C1)	Communication medium (C11)	0.96	0.08	1.00		0.92
	Finishing the task (C12)	0.82	0.34	0.83	21.90	0.66
	Facilities for business (C13)	0.79	0.38	0.83	18.42	0.62
Emotional satisfaction (C2)	Know information (C14)	0.87	0.24	0.93	19.81	0.76
	Aesthetics (C21)	0.93	0.14	1.00		0.86
	Self-expression value (C22)	0.96	0.07	1.05	35.78	0.93
Conformity with	Brand personality (C23)	0.90	0.19	0.97	29.14	0.81
	Functional value (C31)	0.90	0.20	1.00		0.80

Dimensions	Indicators	SLF	$\delta, \varepsilon$	$\lambda$	Z-value	R-square
consumer values (C3)	Social value (C32)	0.92	0.16	1.06	24.82	0.84
	Emotional value (C33)	0.92	0.15	1.07	23.41	0.85
Integrity (P1)	Fairness (P11)	0.91	0.17	1.00		0.83
	Fullfilment (P12)	0.92	0.15	1.03	35.18	0.85
	Honesty (P13)	0.94	0.11	1.02	31.19	0.89
	Dependability (P14)	0.89	0.21	0.95	26.73	0.79
Ability (P3)	Experience (P31)	0.92	0.15	1.00		0.85
	Institutional recognition (P32)	0.95	0.09	1.04	33.76	0.91
	Mastery of science and knowledge (P33)	0.93	0.14	1.00	31.22	0.86

Source: Processed from primary data, 2022

Price discount dimensions are reflected by often discounts, rare, and never with standardized loading factors of 0.90, 0.98, and 0.92 respectively. The influence weight path of the  $H2 \rightarrow H21$  is 1.00, with a standard deviation of 0.18, and a determinant coefficient of 0.82. The influence weight path of the  $H2 \rightarrow H22$  is 1.10, with a standard deviation of 0.05 with Z-value = 34.34, the determinant coefficient of 0.95. The influence weight path of the  $H2 \rightarrow H23$  is 0.96, with a standard deviation of 0.16 with Z-value = 28.91, the determinant coefficient of 0.84. The results of the six other first-order measurement models can be read in the same way.

### Second-Order Measurement Model (2nd CFA)

Examination of the second-order measurement model involves validity, construct reliability, determinant coefficient, and goodness of fit index. The second-order measurement model parameters have been fitted and are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 . Parameters of good fit second-order model measurement**

Construct	Dimension	SLF	$\gamma, \beta$	Z-value	$\zeta$	R-square
Price Perception (PRICE)	Price discount (H2)	1.00	1.71	22.07	0.01	1.00
Product Quality (QUALITY)	Serviceability (K6)	1.00	1.69	23.18	0.01	1.00
Brand Image (IMAGE)	Functional satisfaction (C1)	0.71	1.29	15.52	1.62	0.51
	Emotional satisfaction (C2)	0.92	1.61	16.73	0.45	0.85
	Conformity with consumer values (C3)	0.87	1.45	15.62	0.67	0.76
Consumer Trust (TRUST)	Integrity (P1)	0.88	1.39	15.58	0.54	0.78
	Ability (P3)	0.93	1.52	15.60	0.36	0.87

Source: Processed from primary data, 2022

Price perception is reflected by price discounts with a standardized loading factor of 1.00. The effect weight of  $PRICE \rightarrow H2$  is 1.71, with Z-value = 22.07. The determinant coefficient of 1.00, with an error variance of 0.01. The three other second-order measurement models can be understood in the same way.

### Full Structural Model

The full structural model is obtained from the combination of the four second-order measurement models that have been fitted. Initial model examination through the goodness of fit index (Absolute, Comparative, and Parsimonious). Fit Full Structure Model Path Diagram is presented in Figure 1.

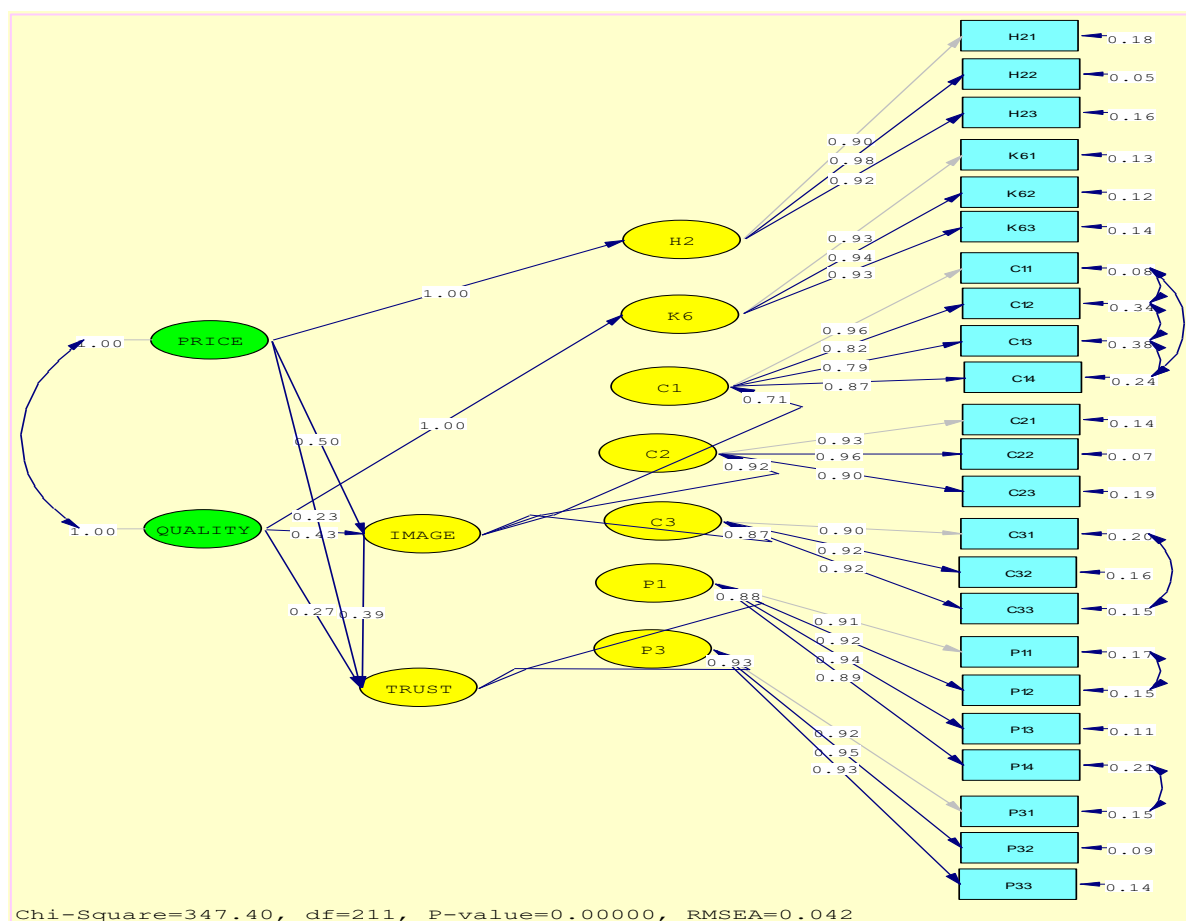
Structural Functional Equations I and II are presented below.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IMAGE} &= 0.50 \cdot \text{PRICE} + 0.43 \cdot \text{QUALITY}, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.32, R^2 = 0.68 \\ &\quad (0.054) \quad (0.051) \\ &\quad 9.26 \quad 8.43 \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{TRUST} &= 0.39 \cdot \text{IMAGE} + 0.23 \cdot \text{PRICE} + 0.27 \cdot \text{QUALITY}, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.38, R^2 = 0.62 \\ &\quad 0.082) \quad (0.052) \quad (0.062) \\ &\quad 4.73 \quad 4.40 \quad 4.33 \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

Structural Functional Equations I or (4) can be read as follows: The effect weight of PRICE → IMAGE is 0.50, with a standard deviation of 0.054 and with a Z-value of 9.26. Effect weight of QUALITY → IMAGE of 0.43, a standard deviation of 0.051 with a Z-value of 8.43. The determinant coefficient of 0.68 with an error variance of 0.32. Structural functional equations II or (5) can be read in no different ways.

The research model illustrated in a path diagram includes four exogenous and endogenous constructs. In the context of causal relationships between constructs, there are direct and indirect effects. There are five direct effect paths, namely: PRICE → IMAGE, QUALITY → IMAGE, PRICE → TRUST, QUALITY → TRUST, and IMAGE → TRUST. Direct effect parameters are presented in Table 3.



Source: Processed from primary data, 2022

**Figure 1. Path Diagram of Fit Full Structural Model (Standardized solution)**

**Table 3. Parameters of direct effect of the fit full structural model**

Path	$\gamma, \beta$	$\sigma$	Z-value	Z-table (Critical ratio)	Remark
PRICE → IMAGE	0.50	0.05	9.26	1.96	Supported
QUALITY → IMAGE	0.43	0.05	8.43	1.96	Supported



Path	$\gamma, \beta$	$\sigma$	Z-value	Z-table (Critical ratio)	Remark
PRICE → TRUST	0.23	0.05	4.40	1.96	Supported
QUALITY → TRUST	0.27	0.06	4.33	1.96	Supported
IMAGE → TRUST	0.39	0.08	4.73	1.96	Supported

Source: Processed from primary data, 2022

The indirect effect of price perception and product quality partially on consumer trust through the brand image. The indirect causal relationship path includes PRICE → IMAGE → TRUST dan QUALITY → IMAGE → TRUST. The parameters of both indirect effects are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Indirect effect portfolio of fit full structural model**

Indirect effect			Direct effect		Compa- rison	Characte- ristic
Path	$\gamma$ (PTL)	$\sigma$	Z-value	$\gamma$ (PL)		
PRICE → IMAGE → TRUST	0.20	0.04	4.41	0.23	PL>PTL	Partial mediation
QUALITY → IMAGE → TRUST	0.17	0.04	4.15	0.27	PL> QTL	Partial mediation

Source: Processed from primary data, 2022

## Discussion

This discussion will focus on the direct and indirect causal relationship between constructs in the research model. There are five direct influence paths and 2 indirect effect paths

### The direct effect of price perception on brand image

Price perception affects the positive impression of the brand with a weight of 0.50. Changes in consumer perception of the price in the same direction as changes in the impression of the brand. The results (propositions) are in line with Listari, (2022); Hernikasari et al., (2022); Lestari & Afriliani, (2022); Pranoto et al., (2022); Ajeng Melati et al., (2021); Wydyanto & Yandi, (2020); Setiawan et al., (2016). An enhancement in the 1 unit perception price will result in an enhancement in 0.50 brand image units. Assuming other exogenous constructs in the structural equation I does not change. Conversely, a decrease in 1 unit of price perception has an impact on the decline of 0.50 brand image units. Price perception is reflected by the dimensions of discounts. This dimension is reflected by often discounts, rare, and never. The dominant indicator among the three observed variables is a rare discount with an SLF of 0.98. The influence weight of the discount price is a rare discount price at 1.00. The confirmatory and prediction strength of the H2 → H22 path is the most precise in the first-order measurement model with a Rsquare of 0.95. Brand image is reflected by the functional satisfaction dimensions (C1), emotional satisfaction (C2), and conformity with consumer values (C3). Emotional satisfaction dimensions (C2) are dominant with an SLF of 0.92. This dimension is reflected by three indicators namely aesthetics, the self-expression value, and brand personality. The second indicator is dominant with an SLF of 0.96. Besides that, the confirmatory and prediction strength of the C2 → C22 path is the best in the first-order measurement model with Rsquare of 0.93.

### The direct effect of product quality on brand image

Product quality positively influences brand image with a weight of 0.43. Transformation in product quality is in line with transformation in brand image. This proposition supports the research resulting from Lestari & Afriliani, (2022); Arifin et al., (2022); Hernikasari et al., (2022); Fajarani & Susilowati, (2022); Listari, (2022) ; Ajeng Melati et al., (2021); Sisca et al., (2021); Wydyanto & Yandi, (2020); Gircela & Wati, (2020); Ketut, (2018); Rosady & Kusumawardhani, (2018). An enhancement of 1 unit of

product quality will result in an enhancement of 0.43 units of brand image. Assuming the other exogenous constructs in the structural equation I are constant. Conversely, a decline of 1 unit of product quality has an impact on a decrease of 0.43 units of brand image. The effect of perceived price on brand image is stronger than product quality. After going through the inspection it turned out that only the serviceability dimension reflects the product quality. This dimension is reflected by the service speed of retailers or salespeople, the ease of service, and the user's satisfying problem-solving. The dominant indicator is the ease of service with a standardized loading factor of 0.94. The path  $K6 \rightarrow K62$  has the best confirmation and prediction precision in the first-order measurement model concerned with  $Rsquare = 0.88$ .

### **The direct effect of price perceptions on consumer trust**

Price perception has a positive effect on consumer trust with a weight of 0.23. Changes in price perception are in the same direction as changes in consumer trust in brands. The author's research results are in line with Lestari & Afriliani, (2022); Hidajat & Setiawan, (2022); Ajeng Melati et al., (2021); Diputra & Yasa, (2021); Pratama & Santoso, (2018); Fatmawati & Triastity, (2017); Suhaily & Darmoyo, (2017); Prabowo & Yulianeu, (2017). An increase of 1 unit of price perception will increase to 0.23 units of consumer trust. Assuming other exogenous constructs in structural equation II are unchanged. Conversely, a decrease of 1 unit of price perception has an impact on a decrease of 0.23 units of consumer trust. The effect of price perception on consumer trust is weaker than its effect on brand image. Consumer trust is reflected by the integrity and ability dimensions. The last dimension is dominant with an SLF of 0.93. This dimension is reflected by three indicators, namely experience, institutional recognition, and mastery of science and knowledge. The second indicator is dominant with an SLF of 0.95. Besides that, the confirmatory and predictive power of the  $P3 \rightarrow P32$  path is the best in the first-order measurement model with a  $Rsquare$  of 0.91.

### **The direct effect of product quality on consumer trust**

Product quality positively influences consumer trust with a weight of 0.27. Transformation in product quality is in line with transformation in consumer trust. This proposition is in line with the research results from Hidajat & Setiawan, (2022); Lestari & Afriliani, (2022); Diputra & Yasa, (2021); Ayu & Ketut, (2021); Prilius et al., (2021); Suharto et al., (2019); Ketut, (2018); Hapsoro & Hafidh, (2018); Pratama & Santoso, (2018); Fatmawati & Triastity, (2017); Suhaily & Darmoyo, (2017). An enhancement of 1 unit of product quality will result in an enhancement of 0.27 units of consumer trust. Assuming the other exogenous constructs in structural equation II are constant. Conversely, a decrease of 1 unit of product quality has an impact on a decrease of 0.27 units of consumer trust. The effect of product quality on consumer trust is weaker than its effect on brand image.

### **The direct effect of brand image on consumer trust**

Brand image has a positive effect on consumer trust with a weight of 0.39. Changes in the brand image are in the same direction as changes in consumer trust. This proposition is in line with the research results from Ayu & Ketut, (2021); Prilius et al., (2021); Sudirman et al., (2020); Suharto et al., (2019); Pratama & Santoso, (2018); Hapsoro & Hafidh, (2018); Suhaily & Darmoyo, (2017); Abdullah, (2015); Alhaddad & Alhaddad, (2015). An enhancement of 1 unit of the brand image will have an impact on an enhancement of 0.39 units of consumer trust. Assuming other exogenous constructs in structural equation II does not change. Conversely, a decline of 1 unit of brand image results in a decline of 0.39 units of consumer trust.

### **Mediation Effect**

In the research model, 4 constructs are in one communality. Two exogenous constructs are an intermediate construct and an endogenous construct. Thus, there is an indirect effect partially of price perception and product quality on consumer trust through brand image.

### **Mediation of brand image in the causal relationship between price perception and consumer trust**

The indirect effect weight of price perceptions on consumer trust through brand image is 0.20. Path notation is as follows: PRICE  $\rightarrow$  IMAGE  $\rightarrow$  TRUST. The direct effect weight of price perceptions on consumer trust PRICE  $\rightarrow$  TRUST is 0.23. The direct effect weight is greater than the indirect effect, it is called partial mediation. The existence of brand image as an intermediate construct cannot increase the effect of price perceptions on consumer trust. As previously stated, the direct effect of price perception is stronger on brand image than consumer trust. However, price perceptions still play a role in directly enhancing brand image and consumer trust. Changes towards a positive price discount, often discount price, will increase emotional satisfaction, especially the self-expression value and ability recognition of the retailer or salesperson, especially institutional recognition.

### **Mediation of brand image in the causal relationship of product quality to consumer trust**

The indirect causal relationship weight between product quality and consumer trust through brand image is 0.17. Path notation is as follows: QUALITY  $\rightarrow$  IMAGE  $\rightarrow$  TRUST. The direct influence weight of price perceptions on consumer trust in QUALITY  $\rightarrow$  TRUST is 0.27. The direct effect weight is greater than the indirect effect, it is called partial mediation (Wijaya et al., 2020). The existence of brand image as an intermediate construct cannot increase the effect of product quality on consumer trust. As previously stated, the direct effect of product quality is stronger on brand image than consumer trust. However, product quality still plays a role in directly increasing brand image and consumer trust. Changes towards positive serviceability, specifically ease of service, will increase emotional satisfaction, specifically, the self-expression value of Y series Vivo smartphone users in Medan and recognition of the abilities of retailers or salespeople, specifically institutional recognition.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

Brand image is influenced by price perception and product quality. However, it is more strongly influenced by product quality as reflected by serviceability, particularly the ease of obtaining retailer services or Vivo series Y smartphone salespeople in Medan. Product quality affects consumer trust, especially the ability of human resource suppliers, more specifically institutional recognition. However, the effect is stronger in creating or enhancing a positive brand impression in the consumers' minds. Consumer trust is influenced by brand image, price perception, and product quality. However, brand image, especially emotional satisfaction, more specifically the self-expression value has a stronger influence. Price perception, especially price discounts, more specifically rare discount price is more powerful in influencing brand image than consumer trust. Although price perceptions and product quality affect consumer trust, their strength is smaller than that of brand image. The confirmation and prediction accuracy of structural model I is better than that of structural model II. Brand image mediation cannot increase the effect of the two exogenous constructs on consumer trust.

## Suggestion

Vivo smartphone Y series retailers and salespeople in Medan can improve brand image, especially emotional satisfaction, more specifically the self-expression value through increasing price perceptions, more specifically price discounts, more specifically rare price discounts. Consumers' trust, specifically the employees' ability, more specifically institutional recognition through strengthening brand image. The number of price perception, product quality, and brand image covariance found in consumer trust is 0.62. Future researchers can re-examine the four constructs with different brands, units of analysis, or locations to increase the confirmatory and predictive power of the model.

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