

THE INFLUENCE OF PRODUCT QUALITY, PRICE, AND TASTE ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS AT ESTEH INDONESIA'S MP MANGKUNEGARA OUTLET, PALEMBANG

Miyura Dwi Arienda¹, Amrillah Azrin², Herman Efrizal³, Irayani⁴

¹²³⁴ Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Tridinanti
email corresponding author: miyuraaarienda@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Indonesia's ready-to-drink beverage market has made product differences increasingly easy to copy, leaving everyday consumer judgments as a decisive source of advantage. This study examines whether product quality, price, and taste shape purchase decisions at the Esteh Indonesia outlet on MP Mangkunegara Street, Palembang. A quantitative survey was conducted with 98 consumers selected from a population of 4,177 buyers through purposive sampling. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale and analysed with validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression, the t test, and the F test using SPSS 27. The model was significant ($F = 54.556$; $p < .001$) and explained 63.5% of the variance in purchase decisions. Product quality had a positive effect ($B = .212$; $p = .009$), price had a positive effect ($B = .395$; $p = .001$), and taste produced the strongest coefficient ($B = .505$; $p < .001$). The findings show that consumers do not separate functional quality, affordability, and sensory satisfaction when choosing a contemporary tea beverage. For outlet management, maintaining a stable flavour profile deserves the highest operational attention, while product consistency and accessible pricing remain necessary to protect repeat purchases.

Keywords: product quality; price; taste; purchase decision

ABSTRAK

Pasar minuman siap minum (*ready-to-drink*) di Indonesia membuat diferensiasi produk semakin mudah ditiru, sehingga penilaian konsumen sehari-hari menjadi sumber keunggulan yang menentukan. Penelitian ini mengkaji apakah kualitas produk, harga, dan rasa memengaruhi keputusan pembelian di gerai Esteh Indonesia yang berlokasi di Jalan MP Mangkunegara, Palembang. Survei kuantitatif dilakukan terhadap 98 konsumen yang dipilih dari populasi 4.177 pembeli menggunakan metode *purposive sampling*. Tanggapan responden diukur menggunakan skala Likert lima poin dan dianalisis melalui uji validitas dan reliabilitas, uji asumsi klasik, regresi linear berganda, uji t, serta uji F dengan bantuan perangkat lunak SPSS 27. Model penelitian menunjukkan hasil yang signifikan ($F = 54,556$; $p < 0,001$) dan mampu menjelaskan 63,5% varians dalam keputusan pembelian. Kualitas produk memiliki pengaruh positif ($B = 0,212$; $p = 0,009$), harga memiliki pengaruh positif ($B = 0,395$; $p = 0,001$), dan rasa menghasilkan koefisien terbesar ($B = 0,505$; $p < 0,001$). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa konsumen tidak memisahkan antara kualitas fungsional, keterjangkauan harga, dan kepuasan sensorik saat memilih minuman teh kekinian. Bagi manajemen gerai, menjaga konsistensi profil rasa merupakan prioritas operasional utama, sementara konsistensi produk dan harga yang terjangkau tetap penting untuk mempertahankan pembelian ulang.

Kata kunci: kualitas produk; harga; rasa; keputusan pembelian

1. INTRODUCTION

Tea has long been familiar in Indonesian households, yet the way it is sold has changed sharply. A drink that once relied on a simple combination of brewed tea, sugar, and ice now appears in branded cups, layered toppings, cheese foam, fruit infusions, milk mixtures, and seasonal menus. The new format has widened demand while also lowering the distance between competing brands. Consumers can compare outlets in a few minutes, place an order through delivery applications, and shift to another seller when the product fails to meet expectations. For a beverage outlet, the purchase decision is therefore made in a setting where alternatives are visible, switching costs are low, and a disappointing experience is quickly remembered.

Esteh Indonesia entered this crowded market by turning tea into a contemporary product without abandoning its position as an affordable everyday drink. The outlet on MP Mangkunegara Street serves a busy part of Palembang and competes not only with specialist beverage brands but also with cafés, convenience stores, and small independent sellers. Its menu ranges from plain iced tea to milk-based, cheese-topped, fruit, and matcha variants. Prices likewise move across several levels, allowing consumers to choose according to portion, ingredients, and spending capacity. This variety creates commercial opportunity, yet it also requires the outlet to maintain a clear reason for consumers to choose the brand rather than a nearby substitute.

Purchase decisions in this setting are rarely driven by a single consideration. Consumers may first notice the appearance of a drink, then judge whether the price feels reasonable, remember a previous experience with sweetness or aroma, and finally decide whether the product is worth buying again. Marketing theory places this judgment within a broader process in which consumers recognize a need, search for information, compare alternatives, select an offer, and evaluate the result after consumption (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The sequence is not always slow or deliberate, particularly for low-cost beverages, but the same elements remain present in compressed form.

Product quality becomes visible through details that consumers can directly experience. The drink should arrive in the expected size, ingredients should be fresh, ice and sweetness should be controlled, the cup should be clean, and the menu should taste reasonably similar from one purchase to the next. Quality in marketing is not limited to technical compliance; it concerns the product's ability to perform the function expected by the buyer (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). In a beverage outlet, that function includes refreshment, sensory enjoyment, convenience, and confidence that the order will be prepared safely.

Price works differently because it is both a sacrifice and a signal. A low figure may widen access, yet consumers still ask whether the portion and ingredients justify the payment. A higher figure may be accepted when the product feels distinctive, while even a cheap drink may be rejected when its quality seems uncertain. Research on purchasing at a café in Palembang found that product-related evaluation remained important alongside service and promotion, showing that price is interpreted within the whole offer rather than as an isolated number (Ariani et al., 2025). The relevant question is therefore not merely whether the beverage is inexpensive, but whether consumers perceive the price as fair for what they receive.

Taste occupies a more immediate place in food and beverage decisions because it is encountered at the point of consumption. Aroma, sweetness, texture, temperature, freshness, and aftertaste can either confirm or overturn the expectations created by branding and price. A study of food purchasing reported that taste and price both contributed to the decision to buy, which underlines the commercial importance of sensory consistency (Tsabita & Sumaryanto, 2024). For tea beverages, small changes in syrup, powder, brewing strength, or ice can be noticed quickly, especially by repeat customers who already possess a reference point.

Earlier studies have produced a broad pattern in which product quality and price influence purchase decisions, although the strength of each variable depends on the object and market. Product quality, brand image, and price were significant in a study of household fragrance products (Febrianti & Ali, 2024). A separate investigation also found that product quality and price were relevant to consumer choice, even when brand image was included in the same model (Setiawan & Lukiarti, 2024). These findings offer a useful foundation, yet they do not fully explain the decision process for a freshly prepared drink, where taste is experienced directly and may vary between employees, shifts, or production batches.

Research conducted in Palembang has likewise shown that location, product variation, promotion, perceived value, trust, and store image can shape consumer responses. Product variety and store-related factors influenced purchases at a local restaurant (Imanulah et al., 2022). Promotional activity affected purchasing in the telecommunications market (Putri & Sulbahri, 2022). Perceived value and trust also mattered in decisions to use an online marketplace (Putri, 2025). The diversity of these results indicates that purchase decisions are sensitive to context, making outlet-level evidence necessary before management chooses which operational problem deserves priority.

The present study addresses that need by focusing on three variables that consumers encounter in every transaction: product quality, price, and taste. The research does not treat taste as a decorative attribute attached to the product; it places sensory experience beside quality and price in the same explanatory model. This focus is relevant because contemporary beverage brands often compete through menu novelty, while daily sales may depend more heavily on whether the core product remains reliable after the novelty fades. The study also uses data from one specific Esteh Indonesia outlet rather than combining outlets with different employees, traffic patterns, and local competitors.

The research asks whether product quality, price, and taste jointly influence purchase decisions and whether each variable has a separate effect. Its practical purpose is to identify which aspect should receive the strongest managerial attention at the MP Mangkunegara outlet. Its academic contribution lies in testing a compact consumer-behaviour model in a local beverage setting where functional, economic, and sensory judgments meet within a low-involvement purchase. The results are expected to help explain why an apparently simple decision to buy iced tea can reflect a structured evaluation of what the consumer receives, what the consumer pays, and what the consumer actually tastes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Behaviour and Purchase Decisions

Consumer behaviour concerns the way individuals select, obtain, use, and assess products in order to satisfy needs. It includes visible actions, such as choosing a menu or paying for an order, as well as less visible judgments about risk, value, familiarity, and satisfaction. Purchase decisions form one outcome of that process. They appear after the consumer has compared available choices, but the comparison may rely on habit and experience rather than a lengthy search. In routine beverage purchases, a customer may use only a few cues: a remembered taste, a price range, waiting time, or confidence that the outlet will deliver the same product as before.

The five-stage decision model remains useful because it shows how a purchase is connected to what happens before and after payment. Need recognition begins when the consumer wants refreshment, a sweet drink, a companion for a meal, or a product associated with social activity. Information may come from prior experience, friends, digital menus, promotions, or online reviews. Evaluation then narrows the alternatives according to criteria that matter to the buyer.

The final decision can still be changed by availability or situational pressure, while post-purchase evaluation determines satisfaction and the possibility of repeat buying (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

For branded tea, the decision may be low in financial risk but high in repetition. A consumer who buys the drink several times a month generates more value than a one-time buyer attracted by a temporary campaign. This makes post-purchase evaluation particularly important. A product that looks appealing but tastes inconsistent may secure trial without securing loyalty. Conversely, a reliable drink sold at a reasonable price can become a habitual choice even when the consumer is exposed to competing promotions.

Local studies illustrate how purchase decisions absorb multiple kinds of value. Brand activity, brand image, and price affected cosmetic purchases in Palembang (Humaira et al., 2025). Electronic word of mouth, brand image, price, and loyalty were also connected in research on cosmetics sold through Tokopedia (Irayani et al., 2026). Although cosmetics and beverages involve different levels of involvement, both findings show that consumers combine what a product represents with what it costs and how previous experience has shaped confidence in the offer.

Product Quality

Product quality describes the capacity of an offer to perform consistently in ways that consumers consider useful. The concept covers core performance, reliability, conformity to standards, additional features, durability where relevant, and aesthetic appeal. For a made-to-order beverage, several conventional dimensions require contextual interpretation. Durability is less important than freshness, while reliability means that the drink ordered today should resemble the same drink purchased last week. Conformity concerns the use of recipes and preparation standards, and aesthetics appear through colour, cup condition, topping placement, and overall presentation.

Consumers do not observe every production step, so they infer quality from outcomes and signals. A clean sealing film, balanced aroma, correct temperature, and accurate order can suggest that the outlet controls its process. Mistakes in sweetness, missing toppings, leaking cups, or uneven texture suggest the opposite. These cues matter because the product is consumed soon after preparation and cannot be repaired once the customer has left the outlet. Quality control therefore depends on small operational routines carried out repeatedly by cashiers, baristas, checkers, and supervisors.

Evidence from previous research supports the connection between quality and consumer response. Service quality and product quality contributed to customer satisfaction in a study that included trust as a moderating variable (Fitri et al., 2023). Research on skincare purchasing also treated product attributes as an important element in consumer choice (Gea, 2024). The implication for a tea outlet is not that every technical feature must be maximized, but that the attributes most visible to consumers should be delivered without avoidable variation.

Product quality in this study is measured through performance, reliability, durability in the sense of maintained freshness, conformity with specifications, product features, and aesthetics. These dimensions capture both the drink itself and the consistency with which the outlet presents it. A positive quality judgment should reduce uncertainty and make the consumer more comfortable choosing the product again.

Price

Price is the amount exchanged for access to a product, yet its behavioural meaning goes beyond the nominal figure. Consumers assess affordability, compare the figure with competing

offers, and decide whether the benefits justify the sacrifice. A price may be considered fair when it matches portion size, ingredient quality, convenience, and expected enjoyment. The same price may feel excessive when the drink is inconsistent or readily replaceable. Price perception is therefore relational: it is formed against income, alternatives, previous purchases, and the value promised by the brand.

Esteh Indonesia applies a tiered menu in which basic tea is offered at a lower price than milk, cheese, fruit, and matcha-based variants. Such a structure can serve different budgets, but it also creates an expectation that higher-priced variants will provide a noticeable difference in ingredients or experience. Clear differentiation supports value perception, while weak differentiation can make consumers question the price gap. Price communication should therefore work together with menu design and product execution.

Studies in different categories repeatedly place price within the set of variables that guide buying. Price contributed to purchase decisions in research on household products (Febrianti & Ali, 2024). Price also influenced cosmetic purchasing when examined with brand-related variables (Humaira et al., 2025). A study of green skincare included environmental positioning and packaging, demonstrating that consumers may accept broader value claims when the offer remains commercially credible (Omega, 2025). These findings suggest that price is strongest when consumers can connect it to a recognizable benefit.

The price variable in this study is represented by affordability, price-quality fit, price competitiveness, and the correspondence between payment and benefits. These indicators allow the analysis to distinguish a merely low price from a price judged appropriate. A positive coefficient would indicate that favourable price perceptions increase the likelihood of purchase, not that raising the numerical price itself automatically raises demand.

Taste

Taste refers to the sensory response produced by flavour, sweetness, aroma, texture, temperature, and the interaction between ingredients. In beverage research, it deserves separate attention because it is both a quality outcome and a direct source of pleasure. Consumers may forgive minor packaging differences, yet they are less likely to ignore a drink that is too sweet, watery, stale, or unlike the flavour they previously enjoyed. Taste can therefore dominate a repeat-purchase decision even when other dimensions remain acceptable.

Consistency is central to taste perception. A recipe may be well designed, but the consumer experiences the work of the outlet rather than the recipe document. Differences in measurement, brewing time, ice volume, powder handling, or topping storage can change the final result. Training and checking procedures are therefore part of sensory management. The outlet needs enough flexibility to respond to requested sweetness levels while keeping the identity of each menu recognizable.

Prior findings support the commercial role of sensory evaluation. Taste, price, and service quality influenced purchasing in food-related research (Tsabita & Sumaryanto, 2024). Product variation also affected decisions at a restaurant, indicating that consumers respond to the range and character of what is offered (Imanulah et al., 2022). In a branded tea context, menu breadth may invite trial, but the perceived taste of the chosen item determines whether that trial becomes a favourable memory.

Taste is measured here through aroma, flavour, texture, freshness, and appearance as experienced by the consumer. Appearance is included because sight shapes sensory expectation before the first sip, although the variable remains centred on the consumption experience. A

strong taste assessment should increase purchase decisions because it provides the most immediate confirmation that the money spent produced the expected enjoyment.

Hypothesis Development

A consumer who perceives a drink as well prepared, reliable, and visually acceptable faces less uncertainty when choosing it. Product quality should therefore strengthen the decision to purchase. Research on product quality and purchasing has shown a significant relationship across several categories (Setiawan & Lukiarti, 2024). On that basis, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows.

H1: Product quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase decisions at the Esteh Indonesia MP Mangkunegara outlet.

Favourable price perceptions can make the transaction feel accessible and fair. Consumers are more likely to proceed when the price fits their budget and appears proportional to the portion and benefits received. Price has been significant in research where consumers compared competing branded offers (Irayani et al., 2026). The second hypothesis is therefore stated as follows.

H2: Price has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase decisions at the Esteh Indonesia MP Mangkunegara outlet.

Taste provides direct evidence of whether the product satisfies the purpose for which it was bought. A distinctive and stable flavour can encourage repeated choice, whereas sensory inconsistency can weaken trust even when the price remains affordable. Food and beverage research has identified taste as a meaningful determinant of purchasing (Tsabita & Sumaryanto, 2024). The third hypothesis is stated as follows.

H3: Taste has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase decisions at the Esteh Indonesia MP Mangkunegara outlet.

The three variables are also expected to operate together. Consumers may accept a moderate weakness in one aspect when the overall offer remains attractive, yet a sustained purchase decision usually requires a workable balance between product execution, economic value, and sensory satisfaction. The fourth hypothesis is formulated as follows.

H4: Product quality, price, and taste simultaneously have a significant effect on consumer purchase decisions at the Esteh Indonesia MP Mangkunegara outlet.

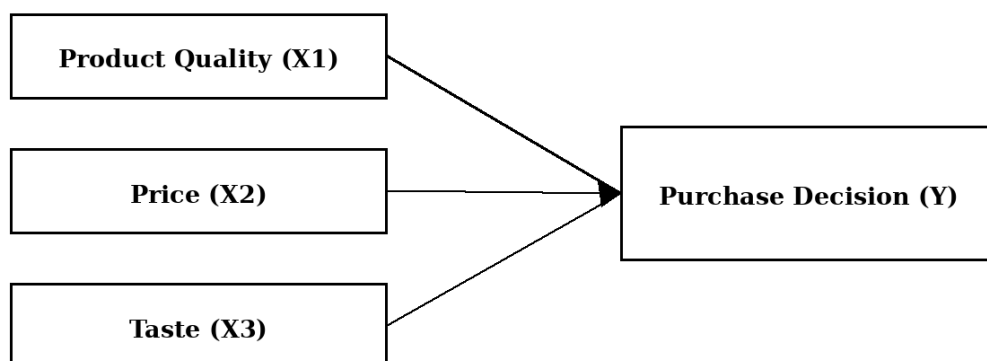


Figure 1. Research Framework

Source: Developed by the author, 2026.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a quantitative explanatory design because the research questions concern the measurable effect of three independent variables on one dependent variable. Survey data were collected at the Esteh Indonesia outlet on MP Mangkunegara Street, Palembang, during the March-July 2026 research period. The design allowed consumer perceptions to be converted into numerical scores and tested within a multiple-regression model. Quantitative research is appropriate when concepts are represented by indicators, data are gathered from a defined sample, and hypotheses are examined statistically (Sugiyono, 2022).

The population consisted of consumers recorded as making purchases during March, April, and May 2026. Outlet data showed 1,180 consumers in March, 1,436 in April, and 1,561 in May, producing a total population of 4,177. The minimum sample was calculated with a ten per cent margin of error, resulting in 98 respondents. Purposive sampling was used because participation required direct experience with the object being evaluated. Respondents had to have purchased a product from the MP Mangkunegara outlet and be willing to complete the questionnaire.

Primary data were obtained through a structured questionnaire, supported by direct observation and limited interviews used to understand outlet operations. The questionnaire was distributed to consumers who met the sampling criteria. Each statement used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. The instrument contained twelve product-quality items, eight price items, eight taste items, and ten purchase-decision items. The wording focused on concrete consumer experience so that respondents could judge the drink, the payment, and the final choice without needing technical knowledge of production.

Product quality was operationalized through performance, reliability, maintained freshness, conformity with preparation standards, menu features, and aesthetics. Price covered affordability, the fit between price and quality, competitiveness, and the fit between price and benefits. Taste was measured through flavour, aroma, texture, freshness, and visual appeal connected to the consumption experience. Purchase decisions included product choice, brand choice, outlet choice, purchase timing, and purchase quantity. The indicators were adapted to the context of a contemporary tea outlet rather than copied as abstract labels.

Instrument validity was assessed by comparing each item-total correlation with the critical value of .198 at the five per cent significance level. An item was retained when its calculated correlation exceeded the critical value. Reliability was evaluated with Cronbach's alpha, using .60 as the minimum acceptance threshold applied in the study. The analysis then proceeded to descriptive statistics, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, tolerance and variance inflation factor checks for multicollinearity, and visual inspection of the residual scatterplot for heteroskedasticity.

Multiple linear regression was used to estimate the separate contribution of product quality, price, and taste to purchase decisions. The model was expressed as $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$, where Y represents purchase decisions, X1 product quality, X2 price, X3 taste, and e factors outside the model. Partial effects were evaluated through t statistics, while the joint effect was tested through the F statistic at an alpha level of .05. The correlation coefficient described the strength of the combined relationship, and the coefficient of determination showed the proportion of variation explained by the model. All calculations were performed in SPSS version 27.

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Dimensions	Items
-----------------	-------------------	--------------

Product Quality (X1)	Performance; reliability; freshness; conformity; features; aesthetics	12
Price (X2)	Affordability; price-quality fit; competitiveness; price-benefit fit	8
Taste (X3)	Flavour; aroma; texture; freshness; visual appeal	8
Purchase Decision (Y)	Product, brand, outlet, time, and quantity choices	10

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The final dataset contained 98 usable questionnaires. Women represented 58 respondents, while men represented 40 respondents. The age distribution was concentrated in the younger groups: 41 respondents were 17-22 years old, 42 were 23-28 years old, and 15 were 29-33 years old. The profile indicates that the outlet's surveyed market was dominated by young consumers who are familiar with contemporary beverage products and who can compare brands through both physical outlets and digital platforms.

The gender composition should not be read as proof that women are universally more interested in tea beverages. It describes the consumers who met the criteria and completed the questionnaire during the research period. Nevertheless, the pattern gives the outlet a practical picture of the audience most visible in the data. Menu communication, promotional timing, and product presentation can be designed with this group in mind without excluding other consumers.

The age pattern is commercially important because younger consumers often combine functional needs with social and experiential motives. They may purchase a drink for refreshment, as an accompaniment to study or work, or as part of an outing with friends. This group is also likely to encounter competing products through social media and delivery applications. The outlet therefore needs to maintain an offer that survives rapid comparison rather than relying only on brand recognition.

Table 2. Respondent Profile

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	40	40.8%
Gender	Female	58	59.2%
Age	17-22 years	41	41.8%
Age	23-28 years	42	42.9%
Age	29-33 years	15	15.3%

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Instrument Quality

All questionnaire items exceeded the item-total correlation threshold of .198. Product-quality correlations ranged from .502 to .597, price correlations ranged from .501 to .625, taste correlations ranged from .501 to .638, and purchase-decision correlations ranged from .497 to .645. These results indicate that every retained statement moved in the same direction as the total score for its variable. No item had to be removed before the main analysis.

Reliability results were also acceptable. Cronbach's alpha reached .781 for product quality, .706 for price, .709 for taste, and .779 for purchase decisions. Each coefficient was above the .60 criterion used in the study. The values are close enough to suggest a consistent instrument without indicating that the items were simple duplicates of one another. The questionnaire could therefore be treated as a stable representation of the four constructs in this sample.

The validity pattern provides an additional substantive insight. The strongest taste item reached .638, and the strongest purchase-decision item reached .645. Although item-level coefficients should not be interpreted as structural effects, the results show that respondents were able to distinguish sensory judgments and purchase behaviour in a coherent way. This matters because taste could otherwise be absorbed into a broad product-quality score. The instrument retained it as a separate construct for the regression analysis.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Summary

Variable	Number of Items	Range of r	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
Product Quality	12	.502-.597	.781	Valid and reliable
Price	8	.501-.625	.706	Valid and reliable
Taste	8	.501-.638	.709	Valid and reliable
Purchase Decision	10	.497-.645	.779	Valid and reliable

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive results show generally favourable consumer assessments. Product quality produced a mean of 51.55 on a possible range of 12-60, with observed scores from 36 to 60. Price produced a mean of 34.16 on a possible range of 8-40, while taste produced a mean of 34.14 on the same range. Purchase decisions reached a mean of 42.77 on a possible range of 10-50. In every case, the observed mean was closer to the maximum than to the minimum.

Standard deviations were modest relative to the means: 4.236 for product quality, 2.980 for price, 3.076 for taste, and 3.971 for purchase decisions. The data were not concentrated at one identical response, but the spread was sufficiently contained to show a broadly positive view of the outlet. The similarity between the price and taste means is notable. Consumers evaluated both aspects positively, yet the regression results later show that similar average scores do not imply equal predictive power.

A high descriptive mean should not be mistaken for a guarantee of future sales. The scores describe the sample's evaluation during the study period, while competitive pressure continues outside the dataset. The practical value of the results lies in identifying which favourable perception most strongly supports the decision to buy and which aspects must be maintained so that the current assessment does not deteriorate.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
----------	---	---------	---------	------	----------------

Product Quality	98	36	60	51.55	4.236
Price	98	24	40	34.16	2.980
Taste	98	24	40	34.14	3.076
Purchase Decision	98	30	50	42.77	3.971

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Classical Assumption Tests

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced an asymptotic significance value of .200, which exceeded .05. The residuals were therefore treated as normally distributed. Multicollinearity was not detected: product quality had a tolerance of .537 and a VIF of 1.863, price had a tolerance of .490 and a VIF of 2.040, and taste had a tolerance of .518 and a VIF of 1.940. Every tolerance value was above .10 and every VIF was well below 10.

The scatterplot showed residual points spread above and below zero without a funnel, wave, or other systematic pattern. This visual result supported the assumption of homoskedasticity. Taken together, the tests indicate that the regression estimates were not undermined by a clear violation of normality, excessive overlap among the predictors, or visibly unequal residual variance.

The multicollinearity result is particularly relevant to the research design. Product quality and taste are conceptually related because sensory experience contributes to the overall perception of a beverage. Their VIF values, however, show that they did not behave as interchangeable measures in this dataset. Consumers could hold a broad judgment about product quality while also forming a more specific judgment about taste, allowing the model to estimate the contribution of each variable separately.

Table 5. Summary of Classical Assumption Tests

Test	Indicator	Result	Criterion	Conclusion
Normality	Asymp. Sig.	.200	>.05	Normal residuals
Multicollinearity	Tolerance: X1 / X2 / X3	.537 / .490 / .518	>.10	No multicollinearity
Multicollinearity	VIF: X1 / X2 / X3	1.863 / 2.040 / 1.940	<10	No multicollinearity
Heteroskedasticity	Residual scatterplot	Random spread	No clear pattern	Homoskedastic

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Multiple Regression and Hypothesis Testing

The regression equation was $Y = 1.057 + .212X_1 + .395X_2 + .505X_3 + e$. All three slopes were positive, meaning that more favourable evaluations of product quality, price, and taste were associated with stronger purchase decisions when the other variables were held constant. The constant was not statistically significant, but it has limited practical meaning because a score of

zero falls outside the observed Likert-scale range. Interpretation should therefore focus on the predictor coefficients and the model as a whole.

Product quality produced an unstandardized coefficient of .212, a standard error of .080, a standardized beta of .226, a t statistic of 2.664, and a significance value of .009. The result supports H1. A one-unit improvement in the product-quality score was associated with a .212-unit rise in the purchase-decision score, assuming price and taste remained constant. The effect is the smallest of the three predictors, but it is statistically meaningful and should not be treated as optional.

Price produced an unstandardized coefficient of .395, a standard error of .119, a standardized beta of .297, a t statistic of 3.334, and a significance value of .001. H2 was therefore supported. The positive direction reflects favourable price perception, including affordability and fairness, rather than the numerical price alone. Consumers who considered the price suitable for the product and benefits were more willing to purchase.

Taste produced an unstandardized coefficient of .505, a standard error of .112, a standardized beta of .392, a t statistic of 4.514, and a significance value below .001. H3 was supported, and taste emerged as the strongest predictor in both unstandardized and standardized terms. A one-unit increase in the taste score was associated with a .505-unit increase in the purchase-decision score when product quality and price were held constant.

The model correlation coefficient was .797, indicating a strong combined relationship between the three predictors and purchase decisions. R squared reached .635, while adjusted R squared was .624. The model therefore explained 63.5% of the observed variation before adjustment and 62.4% after accounting for the number of predictors. The remaining variation may relate to promotion, service speed, location convenience, delivery availability, social influence, lifestyle, or other factors not included in the model.

The simultaneous test produced $F(3, 94) = 54.556$ with a significance value below .001. H4 was supported. Product quality, price, and taste jointly provided substantially more explanatory power than a model without the predictors. The finding confirms that consumer choice at the outlet is not adequately described by one variable alone, even though taste has the largest partial effect.

Table 6. Multiple Regression and Partial Tests

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Decision
Constant	1.057	3.330	-	.317	.752	-
Product Quality	.212	.080	.226	2.664	.009	H1 supported
Price	.395	.119	.297	3.334	.001	H2 supported
Taste	.505	.112	.392	4.514	<.001	H3 supported

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Table 7. Model Summary and Simultaneous Test

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	F	df	Sig.	Decision
.797	.635	.624	2.436	54.556	3, 94	<.001	H4 supported

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Discussion of the Effect of Product Quality

The significant product-quality coefficient shows that consumers still require a dependable basic product even in a market driven by novelty. Menu innovation can attract attention, but the decision to buy is strengthened when the outlet delivers the expected portion, ingredients, freshness, cleanliness, and presentation. This result is consistent with the finding that product quality influenced purchasing in research on branded consumer goods (Setiawan & Lukiarti, 2024). It also accords with evidence that quality contributes to favourable customer evaluation when considered together with service and trust (Fitri et al., 2023).

The relatively smaller coefficient does not mean that quality is unimportant. Part of the quality experience may already be reflected in taste, which was measured separately. The remaining product-quality construct captures broader execution: whether the drink is prepared correctly, whether the cup and appearance are acceptable, and whether the offer is reliable. These features may function as a threshold. Once consumers regard them as satisfactory, differences in taste and price become more decisive; when they fall below expectations, the purchase can be lost before those other benefits are considered.

For management, the finding supports routine controls rather than occasional correction. Standard recipes should be paired with measurable preparation steps, fresh ingredients, clean work areas, and a final order check. The checker role described in the outlet structure can be used to confirm size, topping, seal condition, and visual consistency before the drink reaches the customer. Such controls protect the brand from small errors that appear minor internally but become the entire product from the customer's point of view.

The result also suggests that quality communication should remain concrete. Claims such as premium or high quality are less persuasive than visible proof: a properly sealed cup, an accurate order, stable freshness, and a drink that resembles the menu image without looking artificial. Consumers can then connect the brand promise to an experience they can verify.

Discussion of the Effect of Price

Price had a stronger partial effect than product quality. Consumers were more likely to purchase when they regarded the price as reachable, competitive, and proportionate to the benefits. The result is in line with research showing that price influenced purchase decisions alongside brand-related variables (Humaira et al., 2025). It also resembles findings from other branded products where consumers considered the price together with quality and image rather than independently (Febrianti & Ali, 2024).

The outlet's broad price range can support this favourable perception because it gives consumers an entry-level option as well as more elaborate variants. The structure works only when the difference between categories is understandable. A customer paying more for cheese foam, milk, fruit, or matcha needs to experience a clear change in portion, ingredient, or flavour. When menu descriptions and product execution make that difference visible, the price ladder can serve multiple budgets without weakening trust.

A positive price coefficient should not be translated into a recommendation to discount continuously. Frequent discounts may raise transactions temporarily while making the regular price look less acceptable. The more durable approach is to maintain price fairness: control portions, avoid unexplained changes, keep menu information accurate, and ensure that the drink received matches the category purchased. Promotion can then be used selectively without becoming the only reason to buy.

Young consumers dominated the sample, making affordability especially relevant. Their spending may be divided among transportation, meals, data, study needs, and leisure. A beverage

competes with all of those uses of money. The outlet can protect its position by retaining a genuinely accessible basic menu while offering premium variants to consumers seeking a more distinctive experience.

Discussion of the Effect of Taste

Taste produced the largest coefficient and the highest t statistic. The result confirms that the immediate sensory experience carries exceptional weight in a freshly prepared beverage. Consumers may first be attracted by price, branding, or appearance, but the drink must ultimately justify the choice through flavour, aroma, texture, freshness, and balance. This pattern is consistent with food-related research in which taste significantly influenced purchase decisions (Tsabita & Sumaryanto, 2024).

The dominance of taste also clarifies why product-quality control needs to reach the recipe level. A clean cup and accurate order cannot compensate for a drink that is too sweet, too weak, powdery, or inconsistent with the consumer's memory. Standard scoops, calibrated syrup pumps, controlled brewing time, correct ice volume, and proper ingredient storage are not merely technical details; they are the means through which the strongest predictor is delivered.

Taste consistency should not eliminate consumer choice. The outlet can continue to offer adjustable sweetness or ice, but those adjustments need clear limits so the identity of the menu remains intact. Staff should understand which components may be changed and which proportions define the product. Recording common requests can also help management decide whether a standard recipe should be reviewed rather than relying on untracked improvisation during busy shifts.

The result further suggests that menu innovation should be evaluated after launch. A new product can attract curiosity, yet repeat purchases reveal whether the flavour has lasting acceptance. Sales data, complaint notes, and simple customer feedback can be reviewed together to identify items that sell because of novelty and items that develop a stable audience. This approach prevents the menu from expanding without evidence that each variant contributes value.

Taste may also carry part of the brand's local identity. Consumers in Palembang encounter many sweet beverage options, and expectations about sweetness, tea strength, and texture are shaped by local habits. Outlet-level monitoring is useful because a recipe that performs well nationally may still require careful execution for the customers served at this location. The study does not recommend changing the brand standard casually, but it does support close observation of how that standard is received.

Joint Effect and Managerial Meaning

The simultaneous result shows that the three variables form a connected value proposition. Taste led the partial effects, but taste alone cannot protect purchasing when the price feels unreasonable or the product arrives in poor condition. Likewise, affordability cannot create lasting demand if the drink is disappointing. Management should therefore avoid treating the coefficients as permission to neglect the smaller variables. The ranking indicates priority, not substitution.

The explained variance of 63.5% is substantial for a behavioural study using three predictors. It indicates that everyday judgments about the drink and its price account for a large portion of the purchase decision at the outlet. The remaining 36.5% is also meaningful. Promotion, service quality, queue time, location, delivery-platform visibility, social recommendations, and brand image may alter the final choice. Research on promotion and purchasing in Palembang

demonstrates that communication activity can add explanatory value beyond the product itself (Putri & Madjir, 2022).

Trust and perceived value may also mediate how consumers translate experience into action. Evidence from marketplace use shows that perceived value can operate through trust in shaping decisions (Putri, 2025). In the present setting, repeated taste consistency and fair pricing may gradually build confidence that reduces the need to reconsider the brand each time. This possibility was not tested directly, but it offers a useful direction for later research.

The outlet can turn the model into a practical monitoring sequence. First, taste consistency should be checked at the start of each shift and whenever ingredients are replaced. Second, product execution should be audited through cleanliness, order accuracy, portion, and presentation. Third, prices should be reviewed against portions and nearby competitors without forcing the brand into a race to the lowest figure. Finally, sales and feedback should be examined together, because a high-selling item can still generate dissatisfaction that appears only after the promotion ends.

The findings also help distinguish local operational decisions from broad branding decisions. National campaigns, logos, and menu concepts may be determined centrally, while recipe discipline, ingredient handling, service coordination, and complaint response occur at the outlet. The strongest opportunities identified by this research are therefore actionable at the local level. The outlet does not need to redesign the entire brand to improve purchase decisions; it needs to deliver the brand's promised experience with fewer variations and clearer value.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The results share a general direction with earlier work but add a more specific account of beverage choice. Studies of cosmetics, household products, restaurants, and digital services have shown that price, product attributes, brand image, promotion, and perceived value can influence purchasing. The present study narrows that broad pattern by demonstrating that taste remains significant after product quality and price are entered into the same model. This separation is important because food and beverage research sometimes places sensory experience inside a general quality measure and therefore cannot show its independent contribution.

Research on restaurant purchasing found effects from store image, product variation, and location (Imanulah et al., 2022). Those variables describe the setting and breadth of the offer, while the current model focuses on the consumer's judgment of the drink received. The difference suggests that purchase decisions can be approached from both environmental and product-centred perspectives. A fuller model may eventually combine them, but the current results show that the product-centred variables already explain a considerable share of behaviour.

Research on green skincare examined environmentally oriented product features and packaging (Omega, 2025). Its context involves a more deliberate form of value evaluation than buying iced tea, yet both studies illustrate that product meaning must be translated into an experience the consumer recognizes. For Esteh Indonesia, that recognizable experience is less about abstract positioning and more about consistent tea character, fair payment, and reliable preparation.

Studies of smartphone and skincare purchases at Universitas Tridianti also found that product attributes, advertising, brand image, variety, and price mattered to consumer decisions (Anggraini, 2024). Similar evidence appears in research on product attributes and price in skincare purchasing (Gea, 2024). The present article adds outlet-specific evidence from a frequently purchased, freshly prepared product, where the consumption result is immediate and repeat buying can occur within days rather than months.

The contribution is therefore not a claim that taste has never been studied. It lies in showing, with one outlet's consumer data, that taste produced the strongest effect even after broader product quality and price were controlled statistically. This result gives local management a defensible basis for prioritizing flavour consistency rather than relying on intuition alone.

From Trial Purchase to Repeat Choice

A first purchase and a repeat purchase are related but not identical decisions. Trial can be triggered by curiosity, a recommendation, an attractive menu image, or a temporary discount. The consumer has little direct evidence and therefore relies on expectations. Repeat choice is more demanding because the consumer now possesses a personal standard. The second decision asks whether the earlier drink was enjoyable enough, fairly priced, and reliable enough to choose again when other alternatives remain available.

The model's three predictors can be read as stages in that transition. Product quality reduces the risk that the transaction will fail, price gives the consumer a reason to regard the choice as sensible, and taste supplies the memorable reward that makes the product worth repeating. When all three are favourable, the consumer does not need a new promotional argument at every visit. The previous experience itself becomes evidence for the next decision.

Inconsistency interrupts this process because it weakens the usefulness of memory. A customer who receives different sweetness, aroma, or texture on each visit cannot rely on the brand as a stable choice. The person must evaluate the outlet again, compare alternatives, or avoid the risk entirely. Consistency therefore lowers the mental cost of purchasing as well as protecting sensory satisfaction. It allows the brand to become an easy decision rather than a repeated experiment.

Price fairness has a similar cumulative effect. Consumers may tolerate a one-time premium when curiosity is high, but repeated buying requires a stronger sense that the payment remains reasonable. Portion, ingredients, and preparation must continue to support the price after the novelty of the menu name or visual presentation has disappeared. This is why value should be reviewed from the perspective of the returning customer, not only the first-time buyer.

The outlet can observe this pathway by separating promotional sales from routine demand. An item that rises sharply during a discount and falls immediately afterward may have achieved trial without building preference. An item that keeps a stable level after promotion is more likely to have converted experience into repeat choice. Combining this pattern with taste feedback and complaint records can show whether the product itself, rather than the incentive, is carrying the decision.

Operational Integration and Customer Retention

The statistical model becomes useful only when its variables are translated into routines that employees can carry out under real service pressure. Product quality, price, and taste are experienced by the consumer in one transaction, while outlets often manage them in separate conversations. Recipes may be discussed by the production team, prices by management, and complaints by front-line staff. A stronger approach connects these conversations so that a change in one area is checked for its effect on the others.

For example, replacing an ingredient to control cost may preserve the listed price but alter sweetness, aroma, or texture. Increasing portion size may improve value perception while slowing preparation or weakening recipe balance. Adding a topping may create menu interest but introduce storage and consistency problems. Each decision should therefore be reviewed through

three questions: does the change preserve the product standard, does the resulting price remain understandable, and does the final drink still provide the intended sensory experience?

This integrated view is especially important during peak hours. High demand can encourage shortcuts in measurement, checking, and communication. The immediate benefit is faster service, but the hidden cost may be a drink that differs from the customer's previous experience. A simple peak-hour protocol can reduce that risk by preparing approved ingredient stations, assigning clear roles, and identifying which checks cannot be skipped even when queues are long.

Customer retention also depends on how the outlet handles a failure. An incorrect or disappointing drink creates a test of the brand's reliability. Staff should be able to recognize the problem, replace the product when appropriate, and record the cause without blaming the customer. A quick recovery cannot erase every negative impression, but it can show that the outlet treats consistency as a responsibility rather than leaving the consumer to absorb the loss.

Repeat-purchase monitoring can be kept practical. The outlet does not need a complicated loyalty system to begin learning from return behaviour. Digital transaction data can identify frequently reordered menu items, while staff observations can capture recurring requests and complaints. When an item has strong first-time sales but weak repeat demand, management should examine whether novelty is masking a problem in taste, value, or execution.

Menu reviews should likewise distinguish between variety and clutter. A wide selection can attract consumers with different preferences, yet too many low-volume items may complicate inventory, increase preparation errors, and make staff training less consistent. Retaining a menu item should depend not only on occasional sales but also on ingredient efficiency, repeat demand, complaint frequency, and its contribution to the brand's tea-based identity.

The coefficients provide a basis for allocating attention. Taste deserves the most frequent direct monitoring because it produced the largest effect, product quality requires system-level control because it supports trust in the whole offer, and price needs periodic review because fairness can change when competitors, portions, or consumer purchasing power change. The frequency of monitoring can differ without turning one variable into the sole objective.

Over time, these practices can convert a favourable purchase decision into habit. Habit is not created by repetition alone; it develops when repeated transactions remain easy to justify. The customer knows what the drink will taste like, understands what it costs, and expects the outlet to prepare it correctly. That predictability reduces the effort of comparing alternatives and gives the brand a more durable advantage than a short promotional surge.

Practical Implications

Several practical implications follow from the model. Recipe control should be treated as a sales activity, not merely a kitchen matter. Daily opening checks can include tasting selected core products, confirming ingredient freshness, and ensuring measuring tools are available. During service, baristas should follow the same sequence and communicate clearly when a requested modification may change the intended flavour.

The checker function can be strengthened through a short release checklist covering menu name, size, topping, cup seal, appearance, and special requests. A checklist should remain brief enough for busy periods. Its purpose is to prevent common failures before the customer receives the product, not to add a ceremonial step that employees bypass when queues increase.

Price management should protect both accessibility and credibility. The basic tea category can remain a low-entry option, while higher categories should have visible ingredient and experience differences. Menu boards and digital menus should use clear names, sizes, and prices

so customers do not discover an unexpected charge at payment. Bundling may be useful when it reflects genuine value rather than hiding the regular price.

Feedback should be recorded by menu item and type of issue. A general statement such as customers complained is difficult to act on, whereas repeated notes about excessive sweetness, weak tea, melted topping, or inconsistent portion reveal a controllable pattern. The same record can identify strong items that deserve continued promotion because they receive both repeat sales and favourable comments.

Staff evaluation should connect operational behaviour to consumer outcomes. Employees need to know why measurement, storage, cleaning, and final checking matter. When the team understands that taste, quality, and price perception jointly explain purchase decisions, standards are less likely to be experienced as arbitrary instructions.

Limitations and Future Research

The study is limited to one Esteh Indonesia outlet and 98 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The findings describe the consumers represented in this dataset and should not be generalized automatically to every outlet or city. Differences in local competition, employee experience, delivery demand, and customer profile may produce different coefficient rankings elsewhere.

The model relies on self-reported perceptions collected at one period. It does not follow respondents over time or connect questionnaire scores with individual transaction histories. Future research could combine survey responses with repeat-purchase data, average spending, menu choice, or complaint records. A longitudinal design would also show whether taste remains dominant after novelty, seasonal menus, or promotions change.

Additional variables deserve examination. Service speed, staff interaction, location convenience, promotion, digital visibility, brand image, and trust may explain part of the remaining variance. Future models should add variables selectively rather than creating an unfocused list. Mediation or moderation analysis could test whether trust carries the effect of consistency, whether age changes price sensitivity, or whether purchase frequency strengthens the influence of taste.

A comparison between outlets would be especially useful. Researchers could use the same instrument in several Palembang locations and examine whether operational differences alter consumer judgments. Qualitative interviews could then explain why consumers assign importance to specific flavour characteristics or how they decide that a price is fair.

5. CONCLUSION

Product quality, price, and taste jointly had a significant effect on consumer purchase decisions at the Esteh Indonesia outlet on MP Mangkunegara Street, Palembang. The regression model explained 63.5% of the variation in purchase decisions and produced a strong multiple correlation of .797. The simultaneous result confirms that consumers evaluate the outlet as a combined offer rather than separating the drink, the payment, and the sensory outcome into unrelated judgments.

Each independent variable also had a positive and significant partial effect. Product quality contributed through reliable preparation, freshness, conformity, features, and appearance. Price contributed when consumers regarded the offer as affordable, competitive, and proportional to its benefits. Taste had the largest coefficient, showing that flavour, aroma, texture, freshness, and sensory consistency provided the strongest support for the decision to buy.

The managerial priority is therefore to maintain a stable flavour profile without weakening the basic controls that make the product credible. Recipe measurement, ingredient handling, cleanliness, order accuracy, and final checking should be managed as one process. Pricing should remain accessible and transparent, with clear differences between basic and premium variants. Promotions can support demand, but they should not replace the product value that encourages consumers to return after a campaign ends.

Future research should test the model across more outlets and include service, location, promotion, trust, brand image, and actual repeat-purchase behaviour. Such work can clarify whether the dominance of taste is specific to this outlet or reflects a broader pattern in Indonesia's contemporary tea market.

REFERENCES

- Anggraini, R. (2024). *Pengaruh citra merek, varian produk, dan harga terhadap keputusan pembelian smartphone Oppo (studi kasus mahasiswa S1 Fakultas Ekonomi Manajemen Semester 7 Universitas Tridinanti)* [Undergraduate Thesis (Skripsi)]. Universitas Tridinanti.
- Ariani, E. S., Andriyani, I., & Mayasari, V. (2025). The Influence Of Product Quality, Service Quality, And Promotion On Purchasing Decisions At PT. KOI Cafe Indonesia At Palembang Icon Mall. *Journal of Management, Economic, and Accounting*, 4(2), 861–868. <https://doi.org/10.37676/jmea.v4i2.926>
- Febrianti, R., & Ali, M. M. (2024). Pengaruh kualitas produk, citra merek dan harga terhadap keputusan pembelian Downy di Borma Dago. *JEMSI (Jurnal Ekonomi, Manajemen, Dan Akuntansi)*, 10(1), 675–697.
- Fitri, N., Basri, H., & Lewispri, M. (2023). Pengaruh kualitas layanan, kualitas produk, dengan kepercayaan sebagai variabel moderasi terhadap kepuasan nasabah. *Forum Bisnis Dan Kewirausahaan*, 13(1), 68–76.
- Gea, L. E. (2024). *Pengaruh Atribut Produk, Iklan, dan Harga terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Produk Skintific (Studi Kasus Mahasiswa/i Program Studi Manajemen Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Tridinanti)* [Undergraduate Thesis (Skripsi)]. Universitas Tridinanti.
- Humaira, M. S., Veybitha, Y., & Suprani, Y. (2025). Pengaruh aktivitas merek, citra merek dan harga terhadap keputusan pembelian produk Make Over pada Guardian Palembang Icon. *Strategi*, 15(2), 97–110.
- Imanulah, R., Andriyani, I., & Melvani, F. N. (2022). Pengaruh Citra Toko, Varian produk, dan Lokasi terhadap Keputusan Pembelian pada Restoran Pancious SOMA Palembang. *EKOMBIS REVIEW: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Dan Bisnis*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.37676/ekombis.v10i1.1743>
- Irayani, Amrillah Azrin, Mariyam Zanariah, Suharti, & Herman Efrizal. (2026). Enhancing sustainable growth through e-WOM, brand image, price, and customer loyalty: Evidence from Barenbliss cosmetics on Tokopedia. *Jurnal Ilmiah Akuntansi, Manajemen Dan Ekonomi Islam (JAM-EKIS)*, 9(1), 201–213. <https://doi.org/10.36085/jam-ekis.v9i1.9614>
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2018). *Principles of marketing* (17th ed.). Pearson.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson.
- Omega, N. (2025). *Pengaruh Green Product, Eco-Friendly Packaging, dan Green Advertising terhadap Keputusan Pembelian pada Produk Skincare Ramah Lingkungan (Studi pada Pembeli Produk Wardah di Toko Guardian Palembang Icon)* [Undergraduate Thesis (Skripsi)]. Universitas Tridinanti.
- Putri, Y. A. (2025). Pengaruh Brand Image Dan Perceived Value Terhadap Keputusan Menggunakan Aplikasi Bukalapak Dengan Dimediasi Oleh Trust Di Kota Palembang. *Akuntansi Dan Manajemen*, 20(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.30630/jam.v20i1.307>
- Putri, Y. A., & Sulbahri, M. (2022). Pengaruh bauran promosi terhadap keputusan pembelian pada PT XL Axiata Tbk di Kota Palembang. *Jurnal Bisnis Terapan*, 6(1), 23–32. <https://doi.org/10.24123/jbt.v6i1.4790>
- Setiawan, A., & Lukiarti, M. M. (2024). Pengaruh kualitas produk, harga, dan citra merek terhadap keputusan pembelian. Permana. *Jurnal Perpajakan, Manajemen, Dan Akuntansi*, 16(2), 277–288.
- Sugiyono. (2022). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Tsabita, T. K., & Sumaryanto, S. (2024). Pengaruh Cita Rasa, Harga dan Kualitas Pelayanan terhadap Keputusan Pembelian. *MENAWAN : Jurnal Riset Dan Publikasi Ilmu Ekonomi*, 2(4), 330–340. <https://doi.org/10.61132/menawan.v2i4.749>