ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER PREFERENCES FOR PURCHASING WINGKO BABAD CAP KERETA API IN SEMARANG CITY

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The purpose of this study is to examine the connection between each product attribute and the purchase frequency of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api in Semarang City. The product attributes in question are flavor, price, packaging, and brand loyalty. Since the size of the population is not known with precision, the Lemeshow formula is used to determine the sample size. There were 100 responders as a result of the sample strategy's non-probability sampling using the accidental sampling methodology. The collection of respondent data was conducted using questionnaires and interviews. With the aid of SPSS version 25, the Chi-Square Test was used to examine the gathered data. The findings of the study indicate that flavor, price, packaging, and brand loyalty are significantly related to the purchase frequency of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api in Semarang City. Consumer preferences regarding these four product attributes are not the same. Consumers will make a purchase if each attribute of the Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api product is considered better compared to other brands of wingko babad. Based on the product attributes, consumer preference is for wingko babad with the right texture and level of sweetness, an affordable price that matches its quality, packaging that is easy to carry and has an attractive design, and a brand that is popular and better than other brands.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs stated that MSMEs contribute significantly to economic development because they can absorb up to 97% of the total workforce in Indonesia. The Indonesian economy also benefits greatly from MSMEs. In 2023, MSMEs accounted for 61% of Indonesia's GDP, totaling 9,580 trillion. The significant contribution indicates that MSMEs have great potential to be developed so that their contribution to GDP continues to increase annually (Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM, 2024).

Central Java is the province with the highest number of micro and small industrial enterprises in Indonesia. The number of these industrial companies fluctuated during the years 2018-2022 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). Out of 6 cities in Central Java Province, Semarang City has the highest number of micro and small industrial enterprises in Central Java Province over the past 5 years (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Jawa Tengah, 2024).

In 2023, the number of registered micro-entrepreneurs in Semarang City reached 30,024 entrepreneurs. The number of entrepreneurs is divided into several business clusters. The micro-entrepreneurs in the food processing cluster in Semarang City reach 3,137 (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Semarang, 2024). These entrepreneurs produce various types of processed food products, one of which is wingko babad. Wingko babad in Semarang City was introduced by Mrs. Mulyono around 1946. Since then, many entrepreneurs in Semarang have emerged to also produce wingko babad. This has led to the emergence of other wingko babad brands that claim their products are the original wingko babad (Sarwopeni & Saraswati, 2021).

Each consumer has a variety of brand choices they wish to consume depending on their individual preferences (Zulaicha & Irawati, 2016). The tendency of consumers to choose to use a product or service to achieve satisfaction in using that product is commonly referred to as consumer preference (Widodo, 2014). Based on the results of a pre-survey with a random sample of 42 respondents, it was found that there are 11 brands of wingko babad that have been purchased and liked by the community in Semarang City. Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api is the most preferred brand of wingko babad among the pre-survey respondents because of its authentic and delicious taste, as well as its reasonably affordable price.

The increasing number of wingko babad entrepreneurs in Semarang City can trigger a decline in sales levels if the entrepreneurs cannot compete with their competitors (Amanullah, 2013). As faced by the Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api company, which has experienced a continuous decline in sales over the past 10 years. In 2015, the company's revenue decreased by 5.28% from 2014. The decline in revenue in 2016 was 3.04%. The revenue in 2017 decreased by 4.17%. In 2018, the company's revenue decreased by 1.61%. The company's revenue in 2019 continued to decline by 1.98% (Umarjaya & Susan, 2022). The owner of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api, the fourth generation, Mr. Bryan, mentioned that the company's revenue over the past 5 years has still been declining but not drastically. The company's revenue has been more stable compared to the years 2015-2019. The main cause of the decline in revenue is that many consumers come from outside the city, so they stay in their respective cities and cannot buy this wingko babad all the time. Another reason is the numerous national holidays. There is no specific strategy implemented by the company Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api to increase consumer interest in visiting and purchasing their wingko babad products. Based on the issue, it is necessary to identify how consumer preferences regarding each product attribute can attract their interest in purchasing this wingko babad. A consumer would repurchase a product if the product previously bought can provide satisfaction to that consumer. This condition encourages an increasing frequency of purchases made by consumers over a certain period (Leksono & Herwin, 2017).

The Consumer Behavior Theory explains the allocation of consumer income in purchasing various products and services to maximize their utility. Consumer preferences are one of the basic steps to understanding consumer behavior because they can explain why consumers prefer or choose one product over another. The existence of preferences and limited income drives consumers to purchase combinations of products that can maximize their satisfaction (Pindyck & Rubinfeld, 2013). Consumers use product attributes to evaluate and determine product quality (Ai et al., 2024). Taste is the primary factor considered when choosing food, and it is a component of flavor (Drummond & Brefere, 2022). Packaging attributes provide ease in obtaining various information about a product. Packaging is also beneficial for protecting and preserving products during storage and transportation to prevent damage to the products (Ramadhan, 2021).

Before choosing a product, consumers also pay close attention to the price of that product (Pindyck & Rubinfeld, 2013). Price becomes an important attribute that determines the demand for a product (Mujiono, 2018). The price set by business actors greatly influences consumers in choosing a product because consumers would make a purchase if the price offered matches the quality of the product (Zulaicha & Irawati, 2016). In addition to these three attributes, other attributes such as brand loyalty are also considered important in influencing consumer preferences when purchasing a product. Brand makes it easier for consumers to identify and categorize the products they desire. The strength of a brand can cause consumers to prefer that product over products from other brands.

This research was conducted to build upon previous studies regarding consumer preferences in purchasing a product. Based on the flavor attribute, the research by Sulistyo (2015), Rohmah and Subari (2021), and Török et al. (2023) shows consistent results because flavor has a significant relationship with purchase and flavor is the most important attribute that can influence consumer preferences in making purchases. According to the price attribute, the studies by Sulistyo (2015), Mujiono (2018), and Donovan & Hurdawaty (2022) found consistent results since pricing is the second most important factor that might influence customer preferences when making purchases and has a substantial association with purchases. Unlike the research by Sutarni et al. (2018), which explains that consumers consider price as the least important factor in making a purchase.

From the perspective of packaging attributes, the studies by Sutarni et al. (2018), Ramadhan (2021), and Donovan & Hurdawaty (2022) mention similar results because packaging is the third most important attribute that can trigger consumer preferences in making purchases. On the brand loyalty attribute, the studies by Amanullah (2013), and Palupiningtyas & Aryaningtyas (2017) explain consistent results because brand loyalty has a significant relationship with purchases. In contrast to the research by Ai et al. (2024), brand is one of the least favored attributes by consumers when making a purchase.

From several previous similar studies, product attributes such as flavor, price, packaging, and brand loyalty have a strong relationship or association with consumer purchases. However, some previous studies still show different research results. This can occur due to differences in the objects, subjects, or research methods used. In previous research, the attributes of flavor, price, packaging, and brand loyalty have been studied. However, these four product attributes have never been studied simultaneously. Therefore, this research needs to be conducted to further examine how each product attribute can influence consumer preferences in purchasing Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Purchase frequency serves as the study's dependent variable, whereas flavor, price, packaging, and brand loyalty serve as its independent factors. The frequency of purchase is the average number of product or service purchases made by consumers over a certain period (Leksono & Herwin, 2017). Flavor is defined as a food attribute that includes taste, aroma, mouthfeel or texture, temperature, and the sound produced when chewing food (Drummond & Brefere, 2022). Price is the sum of money spent on a thing to get its advantages (Ashari & Darmastuti, 2022). Packaging is a product attribute that plays a role in protecting a product during the shipping or storage process (Mukhtar & Nurif, 2015). Brand loyalty refers to the extent to which consumers perceive a brand positively, are committed to that brand, and continue to purchase products from that brand in the future (Amanullah, 2013).

All consumers who have ever purchased or consumed Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api in Semarang City are the population in this research. Since the size of the population is not known with precision, the Lemeshow formula is used to determine the sample size. The minimum sample size needed for this study is 96 respondents, according to the findings of the calculation using that methodology. In this study, the sample size was refined to 100 respondents. By using the accidental sampling methodology, the sampling method employed non-probability sampling. In this case, it is the consumers who happen to meet while making purchases in the store or have previously bought Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api, so they are considered suitable as data sources in this research.

The data used in this research are primary data and secondary data. Primary data in the form of information about the most preferred wingko babad brand in Semarang City was obtained through a pre-survey. Then, primary data in the form of product attribute information related to consumer preferences in purchasing wingko babad was obtained through the distribution of questionnaires and interviews both offline and online with consumers who were making purchases or consumers who had previously consumed Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api. Meanwhile, secondary data was gathered by studying the literature from a variety of sources, including books, e-books, journals, scientific articles, and publications.

In this study, criteria respondents and research variables are described using descriptive statistics. Before the data analysis is conducted, the research questionnaire is tested through validity and reliability tests. Validity refers to the degree of accuracy between the data on the research object and the data obtained by the researcher, while reliability refers to how consistent and stable a data or finding is (Sugiyono, 2019). If the computed r value is higher than the table r value, all questionnaire items are considered valid. Then, if the cronbach alpha value is more than 0,60, they are considered trustworthy or reliable (Donovan & Hurdawaty, 2022).

After testing the questionnaire, the chi-square test was used to examine the data and ascertain how each product attribute and purchase frequency were related. The difference between the observed frequency and the expected frequency is measured using the chi-square test (Widodo, 2014). H_0 can be used as the basic hypothesis for the expected frequency and H_1 can be used as the basic hypothesis for the observed frequency (Widodo, 2014). The following is the hypothesis that was applied:

H_0: The frequency of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api purchases is unrelated to any of the product attributes.

H_1: The frequency of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api purchases is correlated with each product attribute.

There are 2 methods that can be used to determine the criteria in the chi-square test, namely comparing the computed x^2 value with the table x^2 value and using the probability value. Comparison between the computed x^2 value and the table x^2 value. If the calculated x^2 value > table x^2 value, then H_0 is rejected and H_1 is approved. Conversely, H_0 is accepted and H_1 is refused if the calculated x^2 value < table x^2 value. Using the probability value. If the probability value > 0,05 (5%), then H_0 is approved and H_1 is refused. Conversely, H_0 is refused and H_1 is approved if the probability value < 0,05 or 5%.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.1. RESULTS

The 100 respondents were categorized according to several factors, including gender, place of residence, age, last education, occupation, and income. This research is dominated by female respondents (68 respondents); residing in Semarang City (77 respondents); aged 20-40 years (60 respondents); with the highest education being high school and bachelor's degree (85 respondents); working as entrepreneurs, private employees, and students/university students (72 respondents); with an income range of 1-5 million rupiah (61 respondents). To ensure that the questions in the research instrument accurately measure the intended variables, a validity test was conducted. The results of the validity test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	r calculated	r table	Description
Flavor	0.662	0.1966	Valid
Price	0.624	0.1966	Valid
Packaging	0.694	0.1966	Valid
Brand Loyalty	0.809	0.1966	Valid
Purchase Frequency	0.822	0.1966	Valid

Source: Processed Data, (2024)

Based on Table 1, all questions for each research variable have a calculated r value greater than the table r value, which is > 0.1966. This means that all the research variable questions in this study's questionnaire are considered valid. This proves that in this study, there is no difference between the actual data occurring in the research object and the data presented by the researcher. To assess the consistency and reliability of the questionnaire, a reliability test was performed using Cronbach's Alpha. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Cronbach Alpha Minimum	Description
Flavor	0.750	0.60	Reliable
Price	0.775	0.60	Reliable
Packaging	0.749	0.60	Reliable
Brand Loyalty	0.689	0.60	Reliable
Purchase Frequency	0.678	0.60	Reliable

Source: Processed Data, (2024)

As seen in Table 2, the research questions for each variable have a cronbach's alpha value higher than the minimum cronbach's alpha, which is > 0.60. Reliability can be accepted because the cronbach's alpha value is upwards of 0.60. This means that all the research questions in this study's questionnaire are considered reliable. This explains that if a study is repeated or replicated in the same manner on the same object by different researchers, it will yield the same data. To determine the relationship between each product attribute and purchase frequency, a Chi-Square test was applied. Table 3 displays the results of this test, highlighting the significant relationship between the examined attributes and purchase behavior.

Table 3. Chi-Square Test between Each Product Attribute and Purchase Frequency

Variable	Pearson Chi-Square	Cronbach Alpha Minimum	Asymptotic Significance	Significance Level	Description
Flavor	53.673	26.296	0.000	0.05	Significantly Related
Price	42.761	26.296	0.000	0.05	Significantly Related
Packaging	41.340	26.296	0.000	0.05	Significantly Related
Brand Loyalty	152.135	26.296	0.000	0.05	Significantly Related

Source: Processed Data, (2024)

From Table 3, all product attributes have a calculated x^2 value greater than table x^2 (> 26.296) with df 16 and a probability value less than the 5% significance level (< 0.05), so H_0 is refused and H_1 is approved. This means that flavor, price, packaging, and brand loyalty have a significant relationship with purchase frequency. This indicates that consumer preferences regarding each product attribute in the purchase of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api are not the same.

3.2. DISCUSSION

According to the results of the Chi-Square Test, a significant relationship was found between flavor and purchase frequency. Based on Figure 1, the highest consumer rating is the delicious taste of wingko babad with a frequent purchase frequency. There are 31 consumers who chose that combination. This means that consumer preferences regarding the taste of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api are dominated by the good taste, with a purchase frequency of 2-3 times a month. Meanwhile, the lowest consumer rating is for the unpleasant taste of Wingko Babad, with very rare purchase frequency and only one consumer choosing that combination.

Consumers love the flavor of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api because of its authentic and delicious taste, the perfect texture and sweetness, a variety of flavors, and it is always sold warmly. Of the 5 flavors offered by Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api, most consumers prefer the original flavor because it has its own distinctive characteristic. Consumers also consider the original flavor to be tastier compared to other flavor variants, such as jackfruit, chocolate, king banana, and durian. Consumers do not like the flavor of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api because wingko babad from other brands has a better taste.

Based on the description, consumers have different preferences regarding the taste of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api. Consumers tend to make purchases because the taste of this Wingko Babad is considered better compared to Wingko Babad of other brands. The increasingly delicious taste can enhance consumer preference in purchasing that wingko babad. The higher the consumer preference for purchasing Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api, the greater the frequency of their purchases over a one-month period.
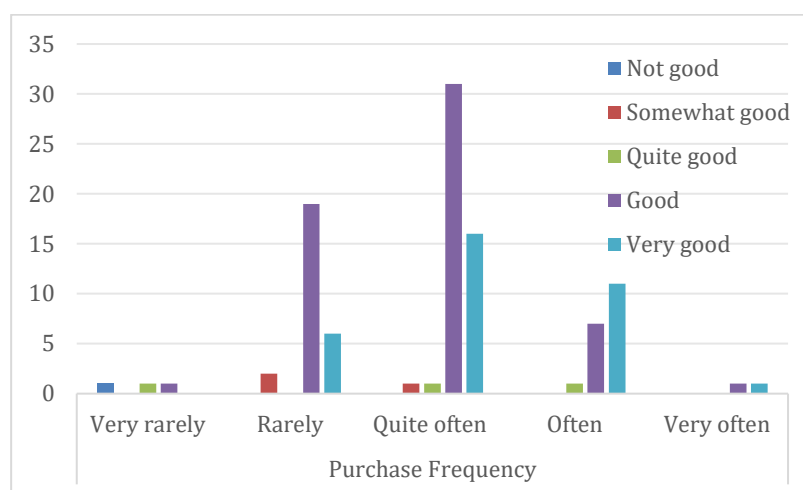
Figure 1. The relationship between Flavor and Purchase Frequency
Source: Processed Data (2024)

The findings of this research are in line with the opinion of Drummond & Brefere (2022), who explain that the most important consideration when choosing a food is the taste of the food itself. These findings are also supported by previous research, namely the studies by Sulistyo (2015), Rohmah & Subari (2021), and Torok et al. (2023). Sulistyo (2015) research found that consumer preferences regarding flavor have a significant association or relationship with purchases. The research by Rohmah & Subari (2021) explains that flavor is the most influential attribute in making product purchases because consumers prioritize taste over other attributes. The research by Torok et al. (2023) states that flavor is the most important attribute that can drive consumer preference in making purchases. Taste is subjective, so the assessment of one consumer may vary from that of another consumer. Consumers tend to associate the taste of a product before deciding to purchase it.

According to the results of the Chi-Square Test, a significant relationship was found between price and purchase frequency. As seen in Figure 2, the highest consumer rating is for the price of wingko babad, which is quite cheap, with a fairly frequent purchase frequency. As many as 27 consumers chose that combination of options. This means that consumer preference for the price of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api is dominated by a relatively low price with a purchase frequency of 2-3 times a month. Then, the lowest consumer rating is for the very expensive price of Wingko Babad with infrequent purchases, and only 2 consumers chose that combination.

Consumers like the price set by Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api because it is still affordable, and the quality matches the price of the wingko babad. The average consumer expenditure used to purchase or consume Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api in a month is between Rp68,000 - Rp250,000. Meanwhile, consumers do not like the price set by Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api because it is more expensive compared to other brands of wingko babad in Semarang City.

According to the explanation above, consumers have diverse preferences regarding the price set by Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api. Consumers tend to make purchases because the price set for this wingko babad is considered still affordable, even though it is slightly more expensive than wingko babad of other brands. The increasingly affordable price can enhance consumer preference for purchasing that wingko babad. The higher the consumer preference for purchasing Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api, the more their purchase frequency within a month also increases.
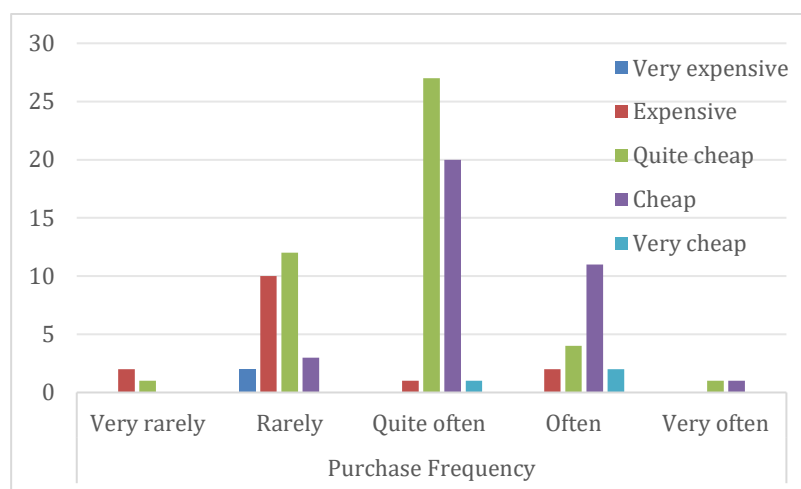
Figure 2. The relationship between Price and Purchase Frequency
Source: Processed Data (2024)

This finding is in line with the law of demand, which states that when other factors remain constant, consumers will buy more of a product when its price decreases. The quantity demanded depends on other factors, such as income, weather, and the prices of other products (Pindyck & Rubinfeld, 2013). These findings are also consistent with several previous studies, such as research by Sulistyo (2015), Mujiono (2018), and Donovan & Hurdawaty (2022). Sulistyo's (2015) research found that consumer preferences regarding price have a significant relationship with purchases. Mujiono's (2018) research states that a more suitable product price can increase consumer preference in purchasing that product. The level of price suitability tends to be assessed based on the alignment between the perceived benefits and the quality desired by consumers with their needs. The research by Donovan & Hurdawaty (2022) states that price is one of the important attributes that can drive consumer preference in purchasing certain products.

However, the findings of this study are not in line with the results of Sutarni et al. (2018). The research by Sutarni et al. (2018) states that consumers consider or rate price as the last attribute deemed important in making a product purchase. Three attributes that are considered more important are the organic certification on the product label, product availability/stock, and packaging.

Based on the results of the Chi-Square Test, a significant relationship was found between packaging and purchase frequency. In Figure 3, the highest consumer rating is for the attractive packaging of wingko babad with a fairly frequent purchase frequency. There are 24 consumers who chose that combination. This explains that consumer preferences regarding the packaging of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api are dominated by attractive packaging with a purchase frequency of 2-3 times a month. The lowest consumer rating is for the unappealing Wingko Babad packaging, with infrequent purchases, and only 1 consumer chose this combination.

Consumers like the packaging of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api because it is easy to carry, making it suitable as a souvenir, the design is attractive, it features a distinctive train image, and it is made of paper, making it environmentally friendly. Then, consumers do not like the packaging of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api because this wingko babad packaging lacks uniqueness. The packaging of this wingko babad is also considered to be quite similar to that of other wingko babad brands in Semarang City.

From the description above, consumers have varying preferences for the packaging of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api. Consumers tend to make purchases because the packaging of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api is considered more practical and more attractive than other brands of Wingko Babad. Better packaging can increase consumer preference for purchasing that wingko babad. The higher the consumer preference for purchasing Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api, the higher the frequency of their purchases within a month.
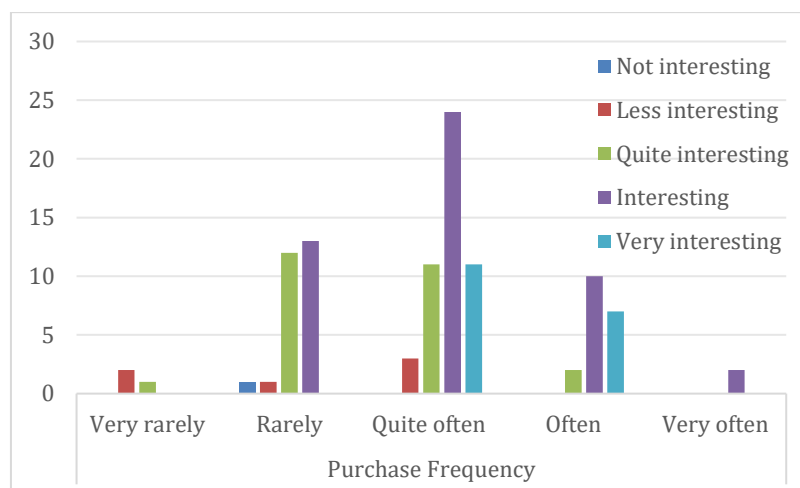

Figure 3. The relationship between Packaging and Purchase Frequency
Source: Processed Data (2024)

The findings in this study are consistent with previous research, including the studies by Sutarni et al. (2018), Ramadhan (2021), and Donovan & Hurdawaty (2022). The research by Sutarni et al. (2018) states that consumers prefer products that are neatly packaged, making them look more attractive. Ramadhan's (2021) research explains that packaging is one of the most important attributes that can drive consumer preference when purchasing a particular product. Packaging serves as a medium that can maintain the quality of the product, ensuring it remains good and safe. Research by Donovan & Hurdawaty (2022) explains that packaging is one of the important attributes that can drive consumer preference in making purchases. The packaging that becomes the consumer's preference is packaging that is easy to carry, able to maintain product safety, and has an attractive design.

According to the results of the Chi-Square Test, a significant relationship was found between brand loyalty and purchase frequency. From Figure 4, the highest consumer rating is loyalty to the Wingko Babad brand with a fairly frequent purchase frequency. A total of 25 consumers chose that combination of options. This indicates that consumer preference regarding loyalty to Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api is dominated by high loyalty, with a purchase frequency of 2-3 times a month. Meanwhile, the lowest consumer choice is disloyalty towards this Wingko Babad brand, with very infrequent purchase frequency, and only 3 consumers chose this combination of options.

Consumers are loyal to Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api and prefer to buy this brand of wingko babad compared to other brands because it has been popular for a long time. Its taste quality is consistently good, its price is still affordable, and it tastes better than other brands of wingko babad. As a result, consumers will make repeat purchases and recommend this brand to others. Unlike non-loyal consumers, the reason they are not loyal to Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api is because they rarely buy this wingko babad.

Based on the explanation above, consumers have diverse preferences regarding their loyalty to Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api. Consumers make purchases because their loyalty towards this brand of wingko babad tends to be higher compared to other brands of wingko babad. Increasing loyalty can enhance consumer preference for purchasing that wingko babad. The higher the consumer preference for purchasing Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api, the more their purchase frequency within a month also increases.
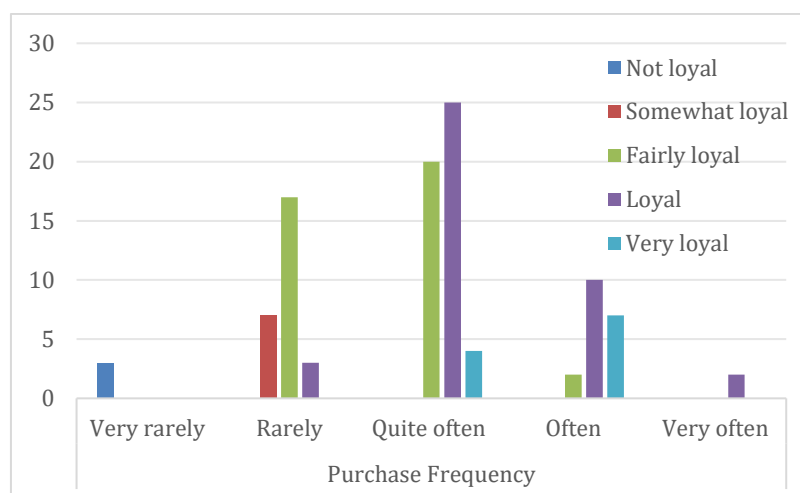

Figure 4. The relationship between Brand Loyalty and Purchase Frequency
Source: Processed Data (2024)

The findings are in line with the opinion of Wiastuti & Kimberlee (2018), who stated that consumers will make repeat purchases or increase their purchases of products they like consistently over time and are willing to become loyal customers who spend more money to support a brand. The findings are also in line with previous research, namely the studies by Amanullah (2013) and Palupiningtyas and Aryaningtyas (2017). Amanullah (2013) found that brand loyalty has a significant relationship with purchases. The research by Palupiningtyas and Aryaningtyas (2017) found that consumers always buy products from the same brand even though other brands are superior compared to the ones they usually buy.

However, the findings of this study are not in line with the findings of the study by Ai et al. (2024). The study by Ai et al. (2024) found that brand is one of the least liked and least considered attributes by consumers when purchasing a product. Nine attributes that consumers consider more important include quality and safety certification, freshness, production sustainability, feeding methods, traceability, yak species, price, yak meat origin, and purchasing channels. Then, the attribute that is considered last after the brand attribute is animal welfare.

4. CONCLUSION

All product attributes (flavor, price, packaging, and brand loyalty) have a significant relationship with purchase frequency. However, consumer preferences for each attribute of the Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api product are not the same. These differing preferences are caused by the varying tastes and incomes of each consumer. Consumers tend to make purchases because the flavor of this wingko babad is considered better compared to wingko babad of other brands, with the right texture and sweetness, a variety of flavors, and served warm. The price of this wingko babad is considered slightly more expensive compared to wingko babad of other brands. However, most consumers feel that the price is still affordable and in line with the quality of the wingko babad itself. Consumers buy this wingko babad because its packaging is considered more practical and more attractive compared to other brands of wingko babad, easy to carry, has an appealing design, features a distinctive train image, and is environmentally friendly. Consumers are loyal to this brand of wingko babad because they experience a consistent flavor, an affordable price, and the brand has become popular among the public.

The recommendation from this research is that the company Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api is expected to maintain the flavor of Wingko Babad Cap Kereta Api so that consumers remain loyal in purchasing this wingko babad. The company is also expected to offer the option to purchase wingko babad individually so that all segments of society can access and enjoy the wingko babad. Then, subsequent research is expected to use other independent variables that have the potential to be product attributes, to comprehensively explain consumer preferences in purchasing food or beverage products.

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