

Increasing Brand Image through Product Quality and Hedonic Lifestyle

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of Product Quality and Hedonic Lifestyle on the Brand Image of Wuling-branded vehicles in the Jepara region. The research employs a survey method with an accidental sampling technique, involving 100 respondents. Data collected includes both primary and secondary sources, analyzed using multiple linear regression. The findings reveal that an improvement in product quality significantly contributes to Wuling's brand image, with a regression coefficient of 0.386, indicating that a 1% increase in product quality enhances the brand image by 0.386%. Additionally, hedonic lifestyle positively impacts brand image, with a coefficient of 0.210. These results underline the importance of product quality and engaging marketing strategies in attracting consumer interest. The uniqueness of this research lies in its focus on the interaction between product quality and hedonic lifestyle within the context of the automotive market in Jepara, a topic rarely explored in existing literature. This study provides new insights for Wuling manufacturers to formulate more effective marketing strategies while emphasizing continuous attention to product quality to maintain customer loyalty in a competitive market. Consequently, this research not only contributes to marketing theory development but also offers practical implications for Indonesia's automotive industry.

Keywords: Product Quality, Hedonic Lifestyle, Brand Image

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh Product Quality dan Hedonic Lifestyle terhadap Brand Image produk kendaraan bermerek Wuling di wilayah Jepara. Metode yang digunakan adalah survei dengan teknik pengambilan sampel accidental sampling, melibatkan 100 responden. Data yang dikumpulkan mencakup sumber primer dan sekunder, dan dianalisis menggunakan regresi linier berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan kualitas produk secara signifikan berkontribusi pada citra merek Wuling, dengan koefisien regresi 0,386, yang berarti setiap peningkatan 1% dalam kualitas produk dapat meningkatkan citra merek sebesar 0,386%. Selain itu, gaya hidup hedonis juga berpengaruh positif terhadap citra merek, dengan koefisien 0,210. Temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya kualitas produk dan strategi pemasaran yang menarik untuk menarik minat konsumen. Keunikan dari penelitian ini terletak pada fokusnya terhadap interaksi antara kualitas produk dan gaya hidup hedonis dalam konteks pasar mobil di Jepara, yang masih jarang dibahas dalam literatur. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan baru bagi produsen Wuling untuk merumuskan strategi pemasaran yang lebih efektif, serta menggarisbawahi

perlunya perhatian terus-menerus terhadap kualitas produk untuk mempertahankan loyalitas pelanggan di pasar yang kompetitif. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini tidak hanya berkontribusi pada pengembangan teori pemasaran tetapi juga memberikan implikasi praktis bagi industri otomotif di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Product Quality, Hedonic Lifestyle, Brand Image

INTRODUCTION

Improving Brand Image through Product Quality and Hedonic Lifestyle shows that the company is committed to providing high quality products that can improve brand image and provide customer satisfaction. This will increase the product's brand image in the eyes of customers (Kovalchuk, Gabrielsson and Rollins, 2023). So that it becomes a new force that can open new market niches for a product.

Apart from that, good product quality is also a new force to be reckoned with. The product will be easily accepted by consumers, not only is the price cheap, but quality is also part of it (Snyder *et al.*, 2022). This has become the most important part for producers to be able to maintain quality after the product is received by consumers.

That is why the combination of high quality products and brand image is an effective strategy for building a product image that is attractive to the target market (Cristina and Chi, 2019). An effective strategy is to build a good combination of these two strategies, so that the product is easily known to the wider community.

Improving brand image by offering high-quality products that meet customers' hedonistic lifestyles is not easy. This must be built over time so that it establishes an image in the minds of customers (Gregori, Holzmann and Wdowiak, 2021; Shah *et al.*, 2023). New products launched on the market cannot easily compete with products that are market leaders (Shi *et al.*, 2022). This is very difficult and not easy for new products to win the market.

As a newcomer vehicle manufacturer, Wuling has made an interesting breakthrough and is able to compete with its competitors in Indonesia. This condition is shown in Table. 1, where since 2017 Wuling has started to enter the top 10 best-selling cars in Indonesia and has been able to maintain its position to remain in the top 10 until 2024. According to (Leony and Artina, 2023) Wuling first entered Indonesia in 2015 and started selling its products in July 2017 and at the end of the year it had sales of 5,050 units by controlling 0.5% of the Indonesian automotive market which placed it in the 10th position of the best-selling car brands in Indonesia. This situation is certainly inseparable from what was expressed by (Nugraha, 2022) who stated that price, quality, service and promotional aspects. If we look at the implementation of Wuling, which currently has 150 branches throughout Indonesia, and provides after-sales service through a 24-hour call center (<https://wuling.id>) with a 3-year warranty, this brand is a brand that prioritizes product quality and a hedonic lifestyle that tends to want easy and satisfying service.

Table. 1
TOP 10 Best Selling Cars in Indonesia

No	Sales 2017		Sales 2018		Sales 2019		Sales 2020	
1	Toyota	371.332	Toyota	356.063	Toyota	331.797	Toyota	182.665
2	Honda	186.859	Daihatsu	200.178	Daihatsu	177.284	Daihatsu	100.026
3	Daihatsu	186.381	Honda	162.956	Honda	137.339	Honda	79.451
4	Mitsubishi	121.395	Mitsubishi Motors	146.805	Mitsubishi Motors	119.011	Suzuki	72.389
5	Suzuki	111.660	Suzuki	116.688	Suzuki	100.383	Mitsubishi Motors	54.768
6	Hino	29.419	Mitsubishi Fuso	51.132	Mitsubishi Fuso	42.754	Mitsubishi Fuso	24.000
7	Isuzu	20.085	Hino	40.072	Hino	31.068	Isuzu	17.855
8	Nissan	14.488	Isuzu	25.286	Isuzu	25.270	Hino	13.038
9	Datsun	10.484	Wuling	15.162	Wuling	22.343	Wuling	9.523
10	Wuling	5.050	Datsun	9.823	Nissan	12.302	Nissan	7.408
No	Sales 2021		Sales 2022		Sales 2023		Sales Nov 2024	
1	Toyota	290.499	Toyota	329.498	Toyota	325.395	Toyota	25.860
2	Daihatsu	151.107	Daihatsu	188.660	Daihatsu	194.108	Daihatsu	12.113
3	Mitsubishi Motors	104.407	Honda	125.441	Honda	128.010	Honda	8.765
4	Honda	91.393	Mitsubishi	97.936	Suzuki	82.244	Suzuki	6.240
5	Suzuki	89.596	Suzuki	89.067	Mitsubishi Motors	81.792	Mitsubishi Motors	6.102
6	Mitsubishi Fuso	34.375	Mitsubishi	38.397	Hyundai	35.736	BYD	2.833
7	Isuzu	27.278	Isuzu	33.715	Mitsubishi Fuso	33.283	Wuling	2.503
8	Wuling	23.920	Hyundai	30.193	Isuzu	31.597	Isuzu	2.454
9	Hino	19.793	Hino	29.880	Hino	27.729	Mitsubishi Fuso	2.360
10	Nissan	6.185	Wuling	24.270	Wuling	25.992	Hino	2.109

Source: Kompas Otomotif 2017 - 2024

Product quality and hedonic lifestyle are two important factors that can contribute to building a strong and long-lasting brand image. So that new products that become new competitors for competitors that have been on the market for a long time do not easily allow this to happen (Tey *et al.*, 2023). This condition is a concern for competitors who already exist in the market, not to relax the market strategy that has been implemented so far (Hong *et al.*, 2023). Competitors who are old players in the market will try hard to push new players out of the competition.

That is why companies can build a positive brand image by focusing on product quality and customers' hedonic lifestyles. This is starting to become a concern for business actors to be able to win market competition which is getting tighter every day (Ali *et al.*, 2023). New products that can compete in the market are products that have quality and new brands that were created to become part of customers' lifestyles (Jaroenjitrkam *et al.*, 2023). This is a very strategic combination for new producers entering new markets so they can compete and contribute to winning the market from competitors.

However, on the one hand, poor product quality is the biggest weakness for manufacturers in retaining customers. Customer loyalty will increasingly fade when the product produced after sales becomes worse and does not meet consumer expectations (Gerke, Benson-rea and Odlin, 2023). That is why manufacturers must always pay attention to product quality periodically, so that the product remains quality in the eyes

of customers (Haftor, Costa-climent and Ribeiro, 2023). This is very difficult for producers to consistently survive in the market and must be taken into account.

In addition, the imbalance between product quality and hedonic lifestyle will emphasize the importance of market balance. This occurs due to product quality and a hedonistic lifestyle in maintaining a positive brand image, but what happens in reality is negative (Haftor, Costa-climent and Ribeiro, 2023; Kingdom, 2023). So ignoring product quality for the sake of a hedonistic lifestyle can have fatal consequences for the brand image.

A weak brand image due to low product quality and an irresponsible hedonistic lifestyle will worsen the situation in the market (Kingdom, 2023). This suggests that the combination of low product quality and an irresponsible hedonistic lifestyle can lead to a weak and unattractive brand image (Evers *et al.*, 2023). In the long term, this condition will damage the market and market players will experience losses.

Based on this fact, building a fragile brand image by relying on product quality and a hedonistic lifestyle is very difficult to reconcile (Shah *et al.*, 2023). This shows that building a brand image based solely on product quality and a hedonistic lifestyle can result in a brand image that is fragile and easily influenced by market trends and changes (Wu *et al.*, 2023). So product quality and a hedonistic lifestyle can be a double-edged sword for brand image, depending on how the manufacturer introduces the product to be marketed and can manage it well.

Based on the background of the problem described above, the problem formulation in this research is what is the brand image through product quality and hedonic lifestyle in Wuling vehicle products in the Jepara area. Based on the problem formulation above, the aim of this research is to analyze brand image through product quality and hedonic lifestyle in Wuling vehicle products in the Jepara area.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research was conducted in 2024 in the Jepara area which has the potential for development of the Wuling brand car business. This product is starting to enter and can influence the car market in the Jepara area. The research uses a survey method, while determining the sample uses the accidental sampling method. The total sample size obtained was 100 respondents. Research data is empirical data collected from primary and secondary sources. Secondary data is data sourced from previous research that is relevant to the research objectives. Meanwhile, primary data comes from observations by distributing questionnaires to respondents. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, using SPSS software. Multiple linear regression analysis is used to analyze the relationship between two variables, namely the independent variable (product quality and hedonic lifestyle) and the dependent variable (Brand Image).

Operational definition

Brand Image (Y) is defined as the brand image or public perception of a brand or product. This perception is formed from various factors, such as product quality, customer service, price, marketing strategy, and the values promoted by the brand. In simple terms, brand image can be defined as a brand's reputation in the eyes of the public (Sambashiva, Rao and Acharyulu, 2021).

Brand image is dynamic and continues to develop. The public's perception of a brand can change over time, influenced by various factors such as personal experiences, the information they receive, and changing trends. Brand image is very important for a company (Alzate, Arce-urriza and Cebollada, 2022). A positive brand image can increase consumer trust, encourage sales, and increase customer loyalty. Building a positive brand image requires effort and time. Companies need to be consistent in conveying their brand messages and providing positive experiences to consumers.

Product Quality (X1) is product quality, referring to the overall characteristics, characteristics and specifications of a product, both goods and services, which are related to its ability to meet needs and satisfy customers.

Hedonic lifestyle (X2) is a form of lifestyle that focuses on the pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment. People who adhere to this lifestyle prioritize activities that bring instant pleasure and gratification.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis tools were used in this research to determine the direction of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Multiple linear regression analysis model, with the following equation:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$$

Where:

Y = *Brand Image (Y)*

α = constant

β_1 = regression coefficient for the Product Quality variable (X1)

β_2 = regression coefficient for the Hedonic lifestyle variable (X2)

X_1 = *Product Quality (X1)*

X_2 = *Hedonic lifestyle (X2)*

e = error term

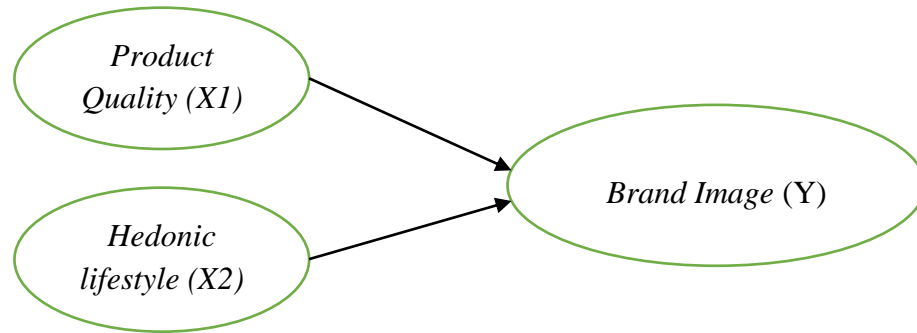


Figure 1. Research model

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research describes the characteristics of respondents based on gender, age, education. The characteristics of respondents based on gender are presented in Table 2. This is presented to see a general picture of the overall characteristics of the respondents who dominate the research object.

Table. 2
Respondents' rubberistics by gender.

Gender	Total	Percentage (%)
Man	98	98%
Women	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Source: processed data, 2024

Based on Table 1, the characteristics of respondents who are male dominate the need for car vehicles by 98%, while 2% are women. This condition shows that the "Wuling car brand" is accepted by the market and is dominated by male consumers.

Furthermore, the characteristics of respondents based on age and educational status are presented in table 3.

Table. 3
Respondents' rubberistic by age.

Age	Total	Percentage (%)
< 45 tahun	81	81%
45 tahun >	19	19%
Total	100	100%

Source: processed data, 2024

Based on table 3, it shows that the average Wuling brand car vehicle is favored by productive age under the age of 45 with a total of 81 respondents or 81%. While the remaining 19 respondents were dominated by the age of 45 and over. This condition shows that Wuling brand car driving is starting to be in demand by consumers.

Furthermore, respondents with educational status are presented in table 4. This condition is presented to see Wuling car consumers dominated by educated consumers at any level.

Table. 4
Respondents' Rubberistics Based on Education Status.

Education status	Total	Percentage (%)
Elementary school or equivalent	-	-%
Junior high school or equivalent	-	-%
High school or equivalent	38	38%
Bachelor	62	62%
Total	100	100%

Source: processed data, 2024

Based on table 4, the educational status of respondents who like Wuling cars is dominated by educated people. This is presented in table 4, that the highly educated respondents who like Wuling cars with a total of 62 respondents. Furthermore, respondents who were educated at the high school level or surrounding areas were only 38 respondents. Furthermore, the results of multiple liner regression analysis are presented in table 5.

Table. 5
Multiple Liner Regression Analysis Results

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.989	8.541		.350	.000
	Product Quality	.386	.198	-.458	.636	.000
	Hedonic Lifestyle	.210	.813	.660	.527	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image
Source: processed data, 2024

A. Effect of Product Quality on Brand Image

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis seen in Table 5 shows that *product quality* has a positive sign and affects brand image with a coefficient value of 0.386. This condition means that if there is an increase in *product quality* of Wuling car products by 1 percent, it will increase the brand image of Wuling car products in Jepara Regency by 0.386 percent. This refers to research conducted by Paul Ehrlich (1968) in Review (1991) that there is a direct influence between improving *product quality* on *brand image* which will increase sales of Wuling products in the community. According to Paul Ehrlich, the increase in sales is greatly influenced by the quality of products offered by manufacturers to customers.

Consumer views on products are still dominated by the quality of products on the market. Although Wuling car products have only penetrated the world of transportation in Indonesia, there have begun to be many enthusiasts. The comfort presented by Wuling car manufacturers in the view of consumers is already very extraordinary. This condition causes that car competitors in Indonesia will think again to develop cars with the best quality. This is due to the increasing need for transportation to be the main need. So that the desire of consumers is to try to find the best quality vehicle at an affordable price by consumers. In addition, support from the higher the income of the community, the higher the purchase of Wuling car products in the market.

B. The Effect of *Hedonic Lifestyle* on *Brand Image*

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis in Table 5, it can be seen that hedonic lifestyle has a positive influence on the brand image of Wuling vehicle products with a coefficient value of 0.210. This shows that an increase in hedonic lifestyle by 1% will increase the brand image of Wuling car products in Jepara Regency by 0.210%.

This finding is in line with the research of Paul Ehrlich (1968) in Review (1991) which showed a direct influence between increasing hedonic lifestyle on brand image. This has implications for increasing sales of Wuling products in the community. However, keep in mind that hedonic lifestyle is also an important factor that affects sales. According to Paul Ehrlich, the increase in sales is greatly influenced by the quality of the products offered by manufacturers to customers.

In this research lies in its dual focus on product quality and hedonic lifestyle as simultaneous influencers of brand image within a specific regional specifically in Jepara. This integrated approach offers a fresh perspective compared to previous studies that often examined these variables separately. So, in terms of current market dynamics, as consumer preferences evolve towards higher quality and lifestyle-oriented products, Wuling's strategy should prioritize maintaining high product standards while effectively marketing its vehicles as part of a desirable lifestyle. The empirical evidence gathered through this research highlights the necessity for manufacturers to continuously evaluate and enhance their offerings to meet consumer expectations and remain competitive.

CONCLUSION

Improving product quality and promoting a hedonistic lifestyle is an effective strategy to increase Wuling's brand image and product sales in Jepara Regency. Product quality must be a top priority for Wuling producers. A hedonic lifestyle can be promoted through advertising and marketing campaigns that attract consumer interest.

Product quality has a positive sign and influences brand image with a coefficient value of 0.386. This condition means that if there is an increase in product quality for Wuling car products by 1 percent, it will increase the brand image of Wuling car products in Jepara Regency by 0.386 percent.

Meanwhile, according to hedonic lifestyle, it has a positive influence on the brand image of Wuling vehicle products with a coefficient value of 0.210. This shows that an increase in hedonic lifestyle by 1% will increase the brand image of Wuling car products in Jepara Regency by 0.210%.

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