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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRODUCT INNOVATION AND ADVERTISING APPEAL TO INCREASE THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF MPV CARS

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ABSTRACT

The transportation sector in Indonesia has experienced significant growth, particularly in the development of cars. Among the various types of cars, MPV cars have shown remarkable progress. This research aims to enhance the competitive advantage of MPV car companies through product innovation and effective advertising strategies. The study focuses on MPV car users in Cirebon City as the target population. To ensure a representative sample, purposive random sampling technique was employed, resulting in a sample size of 207 participants, determined using Hair's formula. The data analysis method utilized in this study is Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). The findings reveal that advertising appeal has a greater influence on the competitive advantage variable compared to product innovation. This can be attributed to the fact that consumers are initially more interested in learning about the advantages highlighted in advertisements before considering the specific product innovations offered by MPV cars.

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INTRODUCTION.

The advancement of technology significantly influences human life, thereby impacting their consumption patterns. Currently, transportation is rapidly evolving worldwide, including in Indonesia. The transportation sector in Indonesia is experiencing rapid growth, particularly in the automotive industry. This growth is evident in the increasing number of car sales, as illustrated below:



Figure 1. Total Car Sales in Southeast Asian Countries (January-August 2022).

Indonesia is leading among other Southeast Asian countries, as depicted in Figure 1. The country offers a wide range of car specifications, including SUVs, MPVs, Hatchbacks, Jeeps, and more. However, the MPV car stands out as the most popular type in Indonesia due to its larger passenger capacity, making it an ideal choice for families. To foster sustainable economic transformation in Indonesia, it is crucial to instigate a cultural shift towards entrepreneurship, empowering the millennial generation (Fatimah & Suryana, 2023).

The Indonesian people's preference for a certain type of MPV car has sparked competition among car brand entrepreneurs to develop and introduce MPV cars with unique features. These features are highlighted by car companies to showcase their innovations. Recent technological advancements have demonstrated the potential for innovation to shape society (Sharma & Dahlstrand, 2023). Product innovation is a creative process undertaken by companies during production. It involves the development of new products or the enhancement of existing product functionalities. MPV products are constantly evolving to stay relevant in the market. Depending on the classification criteria, product innovation can take various forms (Zhang et al., 2024). Through consistent and distinctive product innovation, companies are able to drive innovation and introduce new or improved products to consumers (Lager & Simms, 2023).

The integration of new elements or subprocesses at the operational level, such as fresh materials, tasks, workflows, and tools utilized in manufacturing products to enhance output quality and cost efficiency (Saari et al., 2024). Companies produce quality products to meet consumer needs through digital innovation. Digital services and technologies allow companies to accurately represent customer credit and reduce information asymmetry in finance. It also assists companies in rapidly delivering information to consumers, as well as lowering transaction costs through the flow of credit funds using digital technology applications (Abbas et al., 2024).

Apart from product innovation, marketing strategies are utilized to boost the sales of MPV cars. Brands employ advertising not just for tactical purposes, but also to establish their position in the market compared to their rivals. Failing to respond adequately to competitors' marketing efforts can have more serious repercussions for managers than missing out on advertising opportunities or reacting excessively (Özturan et al., 2023). The adaptability of technology in advertising allows consumers to access desired information more easily, reducing the search costs and enhancing the click-through rate, ultimately providing greater convenience in their lives (Z. Wang et al., 2023).

An increasing number of real-world instances exist where platforms partake in forceful marketing tactics that expose price reductions through various advertising mediums (e.g. newspapers, emails, text messages, and web pages) (Poddar et al., 2022). Vague advertisements may prompt consumers to research the product, aiding them in making more informed choices. Ads spark curiosity in brands that are akin to one another, allowing products to be scrutinized (Soberman & Xiang, 2022).

To begin with, advertisers often incur additional data costs or experience an increase in the price of ad impressions when implementing targeting strategies (Kuncoro et al., 2023). This can have a detrimental effect on their profits. Furthermore, targeting efforts result in a decrease in the potential audience size, which subsequently reduces the overall number of conversions and, consequently, the advertisers' profits. Lastly, targeting is expected to enhance the performance of ad campaigns by improving at least one of the following metrics: click probability, conversion probability, and long-term margin per conversion (Ahmadi et al., 2024).

In order to gain a competitive edge, companies strive to innovate and create appealing advertising strategies. Innovation encompasses the ability of a company to generate novel concepts, devices, products, services, methods, practices, production processes, technologies, structures, or programs that serve as a fundamental source of value creation and a pathway to achieving a competitive advantage (Algarni et al., 2023). By differentiating themselves from their competitors, businesses can attain a competitive advantage. This advantage can be defined as a characteristic that empowers a company to capture a larger market share and surpass other firms operating within the same industry (Sakas et al., 2023).

Competitive advantage is attained by implementing value-added strategies that differ from those of current or potential competitors, making it challenging for others to duplicate the advantages. This results in the ability to replicate profits multiple times (Rua & Santos, 2022).

By adopting a distinct value creation strategy that is not imitated by rivals, a company can establish a competitive advantage (Pahuja et al., 2024). Technology frequently plays a crucial role in granting organizations a lasting competitive edge, bolstering their market standing in diverse sectors and countries (Liébana-Cabanillas & Blanco-Encomienda, 2024). This phenomenon is exemplified in the economic operations of industries such as hotels, travel agencies, airlines, and passenger transportation, including MPV cars (Hartono et al., 2020).

This study stands out from previous research that has explored numerous car brands within specific categories (Pawitri & Sholeha, 2019) (Alexander & Soegoto, 2022) (Skordoulis et al., 2020). However, the uniqueness of this research lies in its concentration on a single type of MPV car across different brands. Consequently, conducting this study becomes crucial as it aims to offer valuable insights to both the general public and car manufacturers.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT.

Ad Attractiveness. Advertising plays a crucial role in communication as it utilizes various mediums such as visual, oral, and written formats (Lutfia & Jamiati, 2023). The impact of advertising on individuals is significant, as it not only influences their choices but also motivates them to select products or services that cater to their desires and requirements. Consequently, advertising possesses the power to sway customers towards the brand being promoted. With its extensive reach, advertising has become one of the most popular and widely employed promotional strategies utilized by companies.

Ads need to captivate customers, convince them, and leave a lasting impression. The appeal of an advertisement can be conveyed in various ways, such as showcasing snippets of

individual or group life, portraying different lifestyles, creating fantasies around products, setting moods with music, and using symbols to bring messages to life. It can also highlight the company's expertise and experience in producing products. According to Suheri et al (2022), indicators of an appealing advertisement include viewers' interest, uniqueness, informativeness, clarity, and the desire to purchase the displayed products. One effective creative strategy to enhance advertisement delivery is by pushing the boundaries of product innovation.

Product Innovation. Based on the research conducted by Hasibuan A et al. (2022), it is emphasized that product innovation plays a crucial role in the business world. This involves the continuous effort of business individuals to create, enhance, develop, and upgrade products through various interconnected processes. The ultimate goal of product innovation is to serve as a means to boost consumer purchasing decisions. Particularly, the significance of product innovation lies in the creation of new products that can yield profits and introduce new technologies. Kotler (2016) further elaborates on the indicators of product innovation, which include relative advantage, compatibility, divisibility, and communicability (Hasibuan et al., 2022). Continuous implementation of product innovation is key in enhancing a company's competitive advantage. The capacity to innovate products stands as a critical and strategic factor in establishing a competitive edge. This notion is supported by Lestari et al (2019), who highlight the substantial impact of innovation variables on competitive advantage.

Competitive advantage. According to Nurachman (2021), competitive advantage is the company's capacity to effectively utilize all its resources to manufacture superior products compared to rivals, leading to customer satisfaction and a broader market share for the company. Competitive advantage can be synonymous with the company's competitive strategy. The company derives value from competitive advantage by executing its strategy, enabling it to achieve cost savings and outperform its competitors. The key indicators of competitive advantage highlighted by Arifin (2017) include customer retention, enhanced loyalty, and service enhancement. Several studies (Hotima & Yusianti, 2018) (Wahyudi, 2022) have indicated that innovation plays a crucial role in shaping a company's competitive advantage. Companies that prioritize continuous innovation are poised to strengthen their competitive edge over rivals (Evi & Rachbini, 2023).

METHOD.

The study utilized the Quantitative research method, which involves collecting data to identify variables and measuring them with numbers for systematic analysis. The research focused on consumers of MPV cars in Cirebon City. The Hair formula was used to determine the sample size since the population size was unknown (Memon et al., 2020). The number of samples was calculated by multiplying the number of indicators by 5 to 10, resulting in a total of 250 samples. However, due to the limited respondents in Cirebon City, the researcher selected 207 participants. The sampling technique employed was Purposive Random Sampling using a questionnaire. The data analysis method utilized in this study was Structural Equation Modeling- Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS), which allows for variant-based SEM analysis testing both the measurement and structural models.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION.

Result.

Respondent Demographics. The profile of the research respondents can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Respondent Demographics.

| Category | Description | Total | Percentage (%) |
|----------|--------------|-------|----------------|
| Gender | Men | 23 | 59,4 % |
| | Women | 5 | 41,1% |
| Ages | 17-25 years | 29 | 62,3% |
| | 25–35 years | 8 | 23,2% |
| | 35– 45 years | 8 | 8,7% |
| | 45- 60 years | 3 | 6,3% |

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

The data presented in Table 1 indicates that male individuals make up the majority of MPV car users, accounting for 59.4% of the total, particularly those in the 17-25 age group. This trend can be attributed to the fact that men continue to be the primary drivers of MPV cars.

Table 2. Car Brand.

| MPV Car Brand | Total | % |
|---------------|------------|--------|
| Honda | 62 | 29,9 % |
| Toyota | 79 | 38 % |
| Daihatsu | 54 | 26 % |
| Wuling | 12 | 5,7 % |
| Total | 207 | |

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

Table 2 indicates that Toyota is the preferred MPV car brand among the respondents of the research. This is due to Toyota's longstanding reputation in the public eye, as Toyota vehicles are known for their ability to comfortably accommodate large families.

Validity and Reliability Test. Validity analysis is carried out to describe the relationship between indicators and latent variables.

Table 3. Convergent Validity.

| Construct | Measurement Item | Loading | AVE |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Product Innovation (PI) | PI1 | 0.809 | 0.68 |
| | PI2 | 0.83 | |
| | PI3 | 0.78 | |
| | PI4 | 0.84 | |
| | PI5 | 0.84 | |
| | PI6 | 0.83 | |
| | PI7 | 0.84 | |

Table 3. Continuation.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------------------|------|-------|------|
| Advertising (AA) | AA1 | 0.74 | 0.59 |
| | AA2 | 0.73 | |
| | AA3 | 0.74 | |
| | AA4 | 0.75 | |
| | AA5 | 0.81 | |
| | AA6 | 0.72 | |
| | AA7 | 0.805 | |
| | AA8 | 0.79 | |
| | AA9 | 0.77 | |
| | AA10 | 0.75 | |
| | AA11 | 0.81 | |
| Competitive Advantage (CA) | CA1 | 0.88 | 0.74 |
| | CA2 | 0.86 | |
| | CA3 | 0.84 | |
| | CA4 | 0.84 | |
| | CA5 | 0.86 | |
| | CA6 | 0.86 | |

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

The Loading Factor values for all statement items in this study, as shown in table 3, are greater than 0.05. In quantitative research, a loading factor value is considered valid if it exceeds 0.5 for each variable indicator. Therefore, the results of the calculations in table 3 indicate that all statement items in this study are valid. Meanwhile, to find out the reliability can be seen in table 4 below:

Table 4. Composite Reliability.

| | Composite Reliability |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Advertising | 0.941 |
| Competitive Advantage | 0.946 |
| Product Innovation | 0.939 |

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

The reliability of research conducted through SEM PLS analysis is deemed reliable if the composite reliability value is above 0.7 for the research variables. Table 3 illustrates that all variables have a composite reliability value exceeding 0.7. Hence, the research variables are confirmed to be reliable, ensuring their suitability for subsequent analysis in this study.

Evaluation of Measurement Model (Inner Model - Structural Model). The results of the measurement model evaluation can be seen as follows:

Table 5. Total Effect.

| | Competitive Advantage |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Advertising | 0.473 |
| Product Innovation | 0.468 |

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

In Table 5 below, it shows that competitive advantage is partially influenced by 46% advertising. Product Innovation partially affects Competitive Advantage by 47%.

The R-Square (R2) is utilized to assess the structural model by considering the dependent construct alongside its independent constructs. The value is limited based on three classifications: 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19. According to the table provided, the R-Square value is 0.84 or 84%, indicating that the achievement of Competitive Advantage can be comprehensively explained by both Product Innovation and Advertising.

Table 6. R-Square Value.

| | R-Square |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Competitive Advantage | 0.840 |

Goodness of Fit evaluates measurement and structural models as well as simple measurements for overall model prediction with the following criteria:

1. Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) The PLS model is declared to have met the criteria for the fit model test if the SRMR value < 0.1 (Vicenzo, 2016:55).
2. Normal Fit Index (NFI) score range is 0 to 1 where the closer to 1 the better the model built.

The results of the GoF calculation can be seen as follows:

Table 7. Goodness of Fit (GoF).

| | Saturated Model | Estimated Model |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| SRMR | 0.056 | 0.056 |
| d_{ULS} | 0.927 | 0.927 |
| d_G | 0.700 | 0.700 |
| Chi-Square | 784.840 | 784.840 |
| NFI | 0.827 | 0.827 |

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

It can be seen from table 7, the SRMR value is $0.056 < 0.1$ and the NFI value is 0.827 (close to 1) so it is concluded that the data has described the overall model or model fit with the data The Structural Model of the Path Diagram can be seen from the figure below:

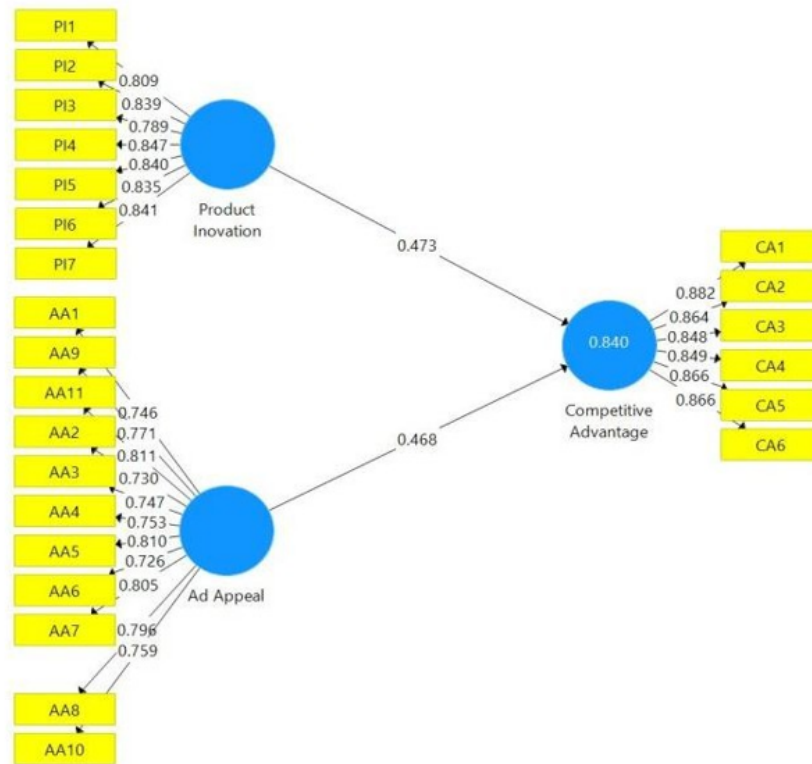


Figure 2. Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model - Measurement Model).

Hypothesis Test.

Hypothesis testing results can be seen in the table below:

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing.

| | H | t- statistic | Result | Values |
|----------|----|--------------|----------|--------|
| AA -> CA | H1 | 6.501 | Accepted | 0.000 |
| PI -> CA | H2 | 6.477 | Accepted | 0.000 |

Source: primary data processed, 2024.

Based on the calculation using bootstrapping, where the test results of the estimated coefficient of AA on CA with a t value of 6.501 and a p value of 0.000 < 0.05 so that H1 is accepted, which means that the direct effect of AA on CA is statistically significant. Furthermore, the test results of the PI estimation coefficient on CA with a t value of 6.477 and a p value of 0.000 < 0.05 so that H2 is accepted.

Discussion.

Product Innovation has a direct effect on Competitive Advantage. According to the hypothesis test, the t test findings indicate that the product innovation variable (X1) has a partial and significant impact on the competitive advantage variable (Y). This suggests that enhancing product innovation will lead to an increase in competitive advantage. As highlighted in the study conducted by Ernawati et al (2022) product innovation plays a tangible role in shaping competitive advantage.

An MPV car company is said to have a sustainable competitive advantage when its potential or current competitors cannot replicate it or it is very expensive to replicate. When adhering to a resource-based strategic vision, an MPV car company's resources must take advantage of opportunities and neutralize threats in a way that is legitimate and rare, and cannot be imitated. To have a competitive advantage, companies must be able to increase product innovation and development (Budianto & Setiawan, 2020). Products that are adapted to the times and the changing needs of consumers will be able to survive in the midst of competition.

Achieving excellence in competition is crucial for thriving in a rapidly evolving era. One key factor that can contribute to a competitive edge is the ability to introduce innovative products (Y. Z. Wang & Ahmad, 2024). Product innovation plays a significant role in today's technological landscape, shaping competitive advantage. It is imperative for companies to uphold the quality of their products consistently, as higher quality tends to attract more consumers who will continue to purchase and use their products. This approach can serve as a strategic move for companies to sustain their competitive advantage.

Advertising has a direct effect on Competitive Advantage. The outcomes of hypothesis testing are visible in table 8, indicating that advertising has the potential to impact competitive advantage. A direct correlation is observed between the appeal of an advertisement and its effectiveness (Ginting, 2020). The fundamental aspects of advertising include significance, distinctiveness, and dependability.

The appeal of MPV car advertisements is designed to attract consumers' attention and influence their feelings regarding the products or services offered. Thus, the attractiveness of these advertisements is expected to be able to move consumers, fulfill their wants or needs, in order to stimulate them to make purchases. Most consumers who buy MPV car products are due to the attractiveness of very good advertisements.

Advertising appeal can encourage MPV car companies to achieve competitive advantage strategies. Increasing the attractiveness of advertisements to increase competitive advantage can be continuously improved through promotions carried out, therefore the results showed that advertising attractiveness affects competitive advantage.

Advertising plays a crucial role in shaping the dynamics between companies in the product market (Liang, 2024). The impact of MPV car advertisements on the sales of MPV car products is directly influenced by their attractiveness. The more appealing an advertisement is, the greater the interest it generates among consumers for the product. In order to create captivating advertisements, designers must possess innovation and creativity. This factor significantly influences the competitive advantage of a company.

CONCLUSION.

This research presents a unique approach to gaining a competitive edge, focusing on the influence of product innovation and advertising appeal. By utilizing effective advertising strategies, companies can enhance their competitive advantage. The continuous development of technology allows for the refinement of advertising appeal, which in turn strengthens the competitive advantage. While previous studies have primarily focused on assessing the competitive advantage of a single MPV car brand, this research analyzes multiple brands within the MPV car type.

The study emphasizes the significance of advertising appeal for businesses, highlighting that competitive advantage is not solely dependent on internal product improvements but also on the creation of compelling and attractive advertisements. Future research can build upon these findings by considering additional factors. Moreover, these results can be applied to other countries with similar cultural and business characteristics, contributing to a better understanding of entrepreneurial success in Indonesia. Additionally,

the study's findings can guide consumers in their decision-making process when purchasing MPV cars, encouraging them to pay attention to the information conveyed through advertisements and explore the innovative features offered by each brand.

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