

The Role of Product Innovation to Support Brand Image and Word of Mouth Communication in Improving Customer Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study's objective is to investigate and assess the role that product innovation plays in contributing to the enhancement of brand image and word-of-mouth communication in order to improve consumer satisfaction. In Jakarta, automobile showrooms served as the locations for the research that was carried out using an explanatory design and a quantitative methodology. Path analysis was used as the analytical tool, and a saturation sampling technique was used to acquire the primary data. These data were then verified for validity, reliability, and homogeneity after they were obtained. According to the findings, factors such as brand image and word-of-mouth communication have a considerable impact on product innovation and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings indicate that product innovation itself has a powerful and decisive influence on consumer satisfaction. In addition, the innovations that are made to products have an indirect impact on the level of happiness that customers have with the brand. The research also highlights the fact that consumers' actual experiences with a product shape their references and recommendations to others. Furthermore, the study highlights that when word-of-mouth communication is reinforced by product innovations that emphasize quality, durability, uniqueness, technological transformation, diverse variants, and stylish design, the combined effect significantly enhances customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Brand image, Word-of-mouth communication, Product innovation, Customer satisfaction.

Citation: Nurjannah; Abdullah, Thamrin; Marwan, Jubery; **The Role of Product Innovation to Support Brand Image and Word of Mouth Communication in Improving Customer Satisfaction** E-ISSN: 3090-6962 Vol 2 Number 1 Page 141-162

Background

Through the utilization of contemporary digital technology, actions in the process of addressing product changes for the better are given a distinctive hue, which ultimately results in increased usability and pleasure (Assauri, 2014: 2019). As a direct consequence of this, customers are becoming more circumspect when selecting the things they acquire. As a result of the huge number of vehicle products that are comparable to one another in terms of their shapes, functions, and other characteristics, it is difficult for customers to determine which product to purchase. The value of the larger benefits that customers will gain from a product or service in comparison to the expenditures that they will incur is the consequence for consumer considerations in product selection (Jubery Marwan; 2021). The decisions that consumers make about the purchase of a car product are impacted by a multitude of intricate factors. Additionally, buyers take into consideration the amount of money that they will need to spend in order to get the goods (Kotler & Keller, 2016: 73). Toyota, in its capacity as the sole agent for automobile brands (ATPM), is continuously developing new goods in order to capture the attention of consumers. According to Firdaus (2017), this is due to the fact that consumer purchasing interest increases as a result of reasons and characteristics that fit with the aforementioned goals and needs in using a product. Customers that have a greater understanding of the product

have superior abilities in the areas of memory, recognition, analysis, and logic in comparison to those who have a lesser understanding of the product. Consequently, those who believe they have a greater level of product knowledge have a tendency to depend on intrinsic cues rather than stereotypes when making judgments about the quality of a product. This is because they are aware of the significance of product information (Lin & Lin, 2007). With this information, individuals will evaluate products based on the quality of the products since they are confident in their understanding of the products. At this point, the significance of promotion as an essential component in the process of constructing a product's brand awareness becomes apparent.

PT Toyota-Astra Motor (TAM), which is responsible for the production of the Kijang Innova Zenix HEV in 2024, has had a remarkable boost in sales as compared to the previous year. This is a product innovation that is transforming the automobile industry by transforming product innovation. One of the most important functions of corporate management is to demonstrate a commitment to product innovation. This is due to the fact that product innovation can decide the quality of marketing performance and make sales promotions easier to implement. It is said that product innovation is a creative process that requires a profound comprehension of the requirements and experiences of users, in addition to the development of novel and efficient solutions to fulfill the requirements of promotional activities

(Brown, T, 2009). Product innovation is also utilized in the whole operations of the organization, which includes the creation and marketing of a new product, as well as innovation in all of the functional and usage processes (Crawford & De Benedetto, 2010:12).

During the Indonesia International Motor Show (IIMS, 2024), it was observed that Toyota's sales at IIMS 2024 climbed by thirty percent compared to the previous year's total of 1,947 SPKs. This gain was mostly driven by the increasing sales of electric cars (xEV). As a result of the Kijang Innova Zenix HEV, which achieved a total of 411 SPK, the overall number of new Toyota automobile orders reached 2,540 SPK, representing 16.2% of the total car orders. Yaris Cross HEV comes in third place with 217 SPK, which is equivalent to 8.5% of the total, followed by the Toyota Avanza, which holds the second position with 380 SPK (15%). This was followed by Veloz, which finished in fourth place with 190 SPK (7.5%), and Kijang Innova Zenix Gasoline, which finished in fifth place with 180 SPK (7.1%). As a result of the rise in demand (SPK), particularly for Innova automobiles, it is anticipated that the sales target would be exceeded this year. Product quality, competitive prices, and increasingly effective financing, as well as increasingly attractive brand image variables, the growth of dealer network services, and strong environmental and regulatory variables, are the factors that have contributed to this increase. It would appear that the public's appreciation for electrification models in general and Kijang in particular

is able to be reflected in the supremacy of the 411 SPK achievement of the Kijang Innova Zenix HEV, which topped Toyota's sales performance at the IIMS event. The public's significant interest in this sophisticated and contemporary medium-sized multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) was further strengthened by the fact that it was awarded Car of the Year by a number of important media publications in the year 2023. In addition, the reliability of the Toyota Kijang in terms of its usefulness, ruggedness, and driving capabilities has not been compromised. This is further reinforced with a battery warranty that is either eight years or sixteen hundred thousand kilometers long, which gives its users piece of mind. In addition, the resale value of Toyota's electric vehicles is typically quite good, and in certain models, they even surpass their gasoline-powered equivalents in terms of financial performance.

Strong promotion is also required in order to enhance the public's awareness of the technological sophistication of the Toyota Kijang Innova Reborn and Zenix HEV. It has been demonstrated that skilled marketers are able to comprehend the qualities of consumers by observing their behavior, which can be accomplished through the use of surveys or current research. Due to the fact that customers, in their capacity as decision-makers in the purchasing process, are able to evaluate the products that they intend to purchase as a factor in their decision-making process (Kotler & Keller; 2016:136). An idea that is employed in the field of marketing to refer to the

perception and image that is projected by a brand or product is referred to as product image (Nurlia, 2022). In addition to brand awareness, product image is also related to a product. The way in which people perceive and react to a brand is influenced by its brand image, which functions as a visual and psychological representation of the identity of the business. The term "brand image" refers to a broader concept that incorporates a variety of components, including color palettes, emblems, mottos, and even behavioral patterns that are associated with a particular company. Due to the fact that it influences the decisions that consumers make when selecting a particular brand, the existence of brand image is an extremely important factor in the field of the marketing industry. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), consumers who have a favorable perception of a brand are more likely to consider making a purchase of that brand.

As a result of consumers' impressions of brand image, their enthusiasm in making purchases will improve, and they will be able to reduce worry regarding product quality as well as any other negative ideas. According to Nugraheni and Dwiyanto (2016), a positive brand image is what generates a positive value for a brand. In addition to this, it will provide consumers with a sense of fulfillment. According to Muharam and Soliha (2017), this is due to the fact that they will constantly have a good attitude towards the brand image, which will result in consumers making purchasing decisions that will further boost customer

satisfaction. An image of a brand can be a symbol of a name, sign, term, or design; it can also be referred to as a combination, and it can be used to refer to products or services offered by a vendor. (Firmansyah, M. Anang 2019: 60) On the other hand, a group of sellers who are utilized to differentiate their goods or services from those of competitors or other sellers. The findings of Suryani (2024) indicate that perceptions of customer satisfaction are highly influenced by product or service brand image. According to Nurfadila, Sutomo, and Asriadi (2015) and Suryani and Rosalina (2019), the image of a brand will have an effect on that of the consumer. The image of a brand is formed by experiences that demonstrate the degree to which customers and businesses are invested. According to Yunanto (2016), this interaction will take place if the organization is successful in satisfying its clients. Additionally, a powerful brand image has the potential to provide favorable experiences for potential customers. This is in line with the premise that the impressions that consumers have of a brand directly influence the level of satisfaction that they have with that brand.

According to Primansa (2017), consumers have a tendency to pay greater attention to referrals from other people regarding the benefits and worth of the product itself, in addition to the image of the brand. When people hear positive things about a product from their friends, family, or coworkers, they are more inclined to consider making a purchase of that product by themselves.

Regardless of whether they have seen commercials for the goods in issue or heard positive things about it from friends and family, customers have the right to explore their options before making a purchase in order to ensure that they are satisfied with the product. When it comes to disseminating information about a company, "word of mouth" communication has a competitive advantage over other methods. According to Tjiptono (2016), word-of-mouth communication is a natural phenomenon that comes from the opinions of the surrounding environment or from someone who is trusted to be more honest. Furthermore, there is no predetermined reason to communicate information to other consumers within the organization. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), word-of-mouth communication results in the creation of more persons who make an effort to personally suggest information about the benefits of the product that they have purchased to other individuals, either individually or in groups. It will indirectly make people aware of the importance of product value, which will result in high purchasing interest (Apriansyah., R (2021)). This will be accomplished by offering understanding through word of mouth. The communication that occurs through word of mouth is a very effective tool that can be used to increase market share and deepen the relationship that exists between businesses and their customers.

Word-of-mouth communication can originate from a variety of sources, including personal experiences, product endorsements, or

referrals from others in the same social circle (Nugraha, 2023). Due to the fact that it has the potential to increase consumer trust in a brand, word of mouth plays an extremely important part in marketing. If a consumer is pleased with a product, they are more likely to tell others about their positive experience with the product, which might ultimately lead to an increase in brand awareness and sales (Wahyudi, 2021).

Literature Review

Brand Image

According to Supranto (2011:128), the concept of brand image refers to the thoughts and emotions that consumers have when they view or hear the name of a particular brand. To put it simply, customers have acquired knowledge about the brand based on their own personal impressions. A person's self-image as well as other people's opinions of the user or owner can be improved through the employment of brands (Rahman, A., 2010:181). Meanwhile, according to Kotler and Keller (2016:47), brand image is defined as the following: 1) The assumption about the brand that is reflected by consumers who hold in the consumer's memory; 2) The way in which people think about a brand in an abstract manner in their thoughts, even when they think about it, they are not directly confronted with the product. Building a positive brand image may be accomplished by implementing a powerful marketing program for the product, which is distinctive and has highlighted features that set it apart from other items on the market. Creating a powerful brand image for customers can be accomplished through the effective integration of these supporting aspects. It is possible to draw the conclusion that brand

image is a perception or signal that is generated from consumers who utilize the brand. This conclusion is based on numerous definitions of brand image that have been presented above. In order for a brand image to be effective, it is necessary for it to be shared through all of the channels of communication that are available within the brand's interaction. The term "brand image" refers to the general impression that consumers have of a particular brand, which is shaped by information and previous interactions with the brand. A brand's image is connected to attitudes, which can be characterized as beliefs and preferences toward a certain brand. According to Suryani, T. (2008):113, brand image is used to describe the overall perception that consumers have of a brand. This perception is built by information and experiences that consumers have had with the brand.

In accordance with Kotler and Keller's (2016:83) findings, the following indicators are associated with brand image: a) the product is in good condition (favorable), b) the product has its own qualities that set it apart from other products, and c) the product has strengths. Because of this, brand image is the perception and belief that customers have about a brand, which is represented in the connections that take place in the memory of consumers. Therefore, the following factors are taken into consideration while evaluating the brand image in this study: 1) Products that have strengths consisting of the following indicators: first, it is of high quality; second, it is long-lasting; a) Products that are innovative, b) products that are technological, and c) products that are in good condition (favorable condition) comprising of product variants and diverse styles. 2) Products that have their own uniqueness consisting of: a) innovative products, b) technology products. Where the

Toyota brand Innova Zenix HEV car product has strengths related to: a) the quality of the car has facilities such as: a choice of 1987 cc gasoline engine, producing 150 hp, peak torque of 187 with a capacity of 7 passengers, variable speed CVT transmission, accompanied by security system facilities equipped with stabilizer vehicle stability control and Central Locking & Power Door Locks security system. b) the car has a capacity of 7 passengers. The car is resistant to the effects of weather and traffic on the road; b) Innovation and technology; this car has been transformed from the previous type and has very high technology such as air conditioning front and rear, automatic climate control, air conditioning ventilation and heater, power outlet front and rear, drive mode Eco, electric vehicle, power, bottle holder, cup holder, keyless entry, adaptive cruise control, front and rear power windows, wireless charger, venity mirror, and so on; and it is affordable. product variants are the third option. The following are examples of product variants: the Modelista MPV Hybrid CVT, 2.0L V HV; the Hybrid CVT TSS MPV 2.0L Q HV; and the Hybrid MPV CVT 2.0L Q HV CVT TSS Modelista. These three types of variants are nearly identical to one another in their respective classes.

Word of Mouth Communication

According to Kotler and Keller (2016:512), word of mouth communication is a form of marketing activity that is carried out amongst individuals as a result of their experiences with a product or service. This type of communication can take place verbally, in writing, or through electronic communication devices that are connected to the internet. It is possible to define word of mouth as an activity that involves the dissemination of information, evaluations, or views of a product or service to those who are closest

to you, regardless of whether the product or service is suitable for consumption or not, to other individuals who may be interested in purchasing it. The term "word of mouth" refers to the communication that occurs between individuals or groups regarding their opinions or evaluations of a product or service. The purpose of this communication is to provide consumers with personal information.

Sutisna (2016:185) identifies a number of variables that can inspire a consumer to discuss a product, including the following of these characteristics: 1) A person may have a strong interest in a specific product or activity and might have the intention of talking about it with other people, which would result in the creation of word of mouth. 2) An individual may be someone who is knowledgeable about a product and utilize discussion as a technique of informing other people about the product. When it comes to this particular scenario, word of mouth can serve as a technique to give others the idea that we possess a particular level of knowledge and competence; It is possible for someone to initiate a conversation by bringing up a topic that is not directly related to the primary topic of discussion. One possible explanation for this is the impulse or desire that other people should not make the incorrect selection of products or services and should not lose time looking for information about a certain brand of product; When you ask your friends, family, neighbors, or other close relatives for information, the information is more reliable, which in turn reduces the amount of time spent searching for and evaluating brands. This is why word of mouth is a method for minimizing uncertainty.

In this study, the variable of word-of-mouth communication is measured by five dimensions or indicators, which are collectively referred to as the 5T. These dimensions and indicators are as follows:

Talkers (speakers), Topics (topics), Tools (tools), Talkingpart (participation), and Tracking (monitoring). This study adopts and elaborates on several opinions, such as (Sernovitz;: 2018:31; Kotler & Keller: 2016:512). An explanation of the fundamental components of Word of Mouth 5T is provided in the following sentences: a) Talkers, also known as speakers; Speakers are a set of targets, and those who will talk about a brand are typically referred to as influencers. These talkers can be anyone, including acquaintances, neighbors, family members, coworkers at work, and other relatives who are particularly close to you. People that are eager to engage in conversation are constantly willing to do so. When it comes to discussing their experiences, they are always the most eager. a) Topics (topics); What the talkers are talking about is related to the themes that are being discussed. This topic is connected to the options that a brand provides. Examples include new products, discounts, special deals, and services that meet or exceed expectations. A good topic is one that is easy to carry, straightforward, and organic. A topic that is interesting to talk about is the starting point for every single word of mouth; b) Tools (tools); This tool is a means of disseminating the topic and talker to different persons. A tool that assists in the operation of the subject or message is also required for existing topics. The use of this technology makes it simple for individuals to discuss or communicate the products or services offered by the organization to other individuals; d) Talking portion (participation); a talking part is a dialog that will be lost if there is only one person talking about and discussing a product. Therefore, it is essential for more individuals to take part in the discussion in order to ensure that the spreading of word of mouth can continue; e) Tracking in the sense of monitoring; tracking refers to the activity of a corporation of monitoring and supervising the replies of customers. The business is able to evaluate

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both good and negative input from customers and draw lessons from both types of feedback in order to make additional improvements.

Product Innovation

Product innovation, as defined by Rogers, E. M. (2003), is a process in which new products or ideas are distributed through successful interpersonal communication or marketing channels according to the organization. As an additional point of interest, Crawford and De Benedetto (2010:12) state that product innovation is an innovation that is utilized across the entirety of the company's operations, including the creation and marketing of a new product, as well as innovation in all of the functional processes that are involved in its utilization. When we talk about product innovation, we are referring to the process of developing or creating new products or services, as well as making major improvements to what is already available. According to Brown (2009), the creative process of product innovation requires a comprehensive grasp of the requirements and perspectives of users, as well as the development of innovative and efficient solutions to fulfill those requirements. Product innovation can be understood as the process of producing new ideas, refining existing products, and disseminating new products or ideas to the market in an efficient manner. This interpretation allows for the conclusion that product innovation encompasses all of these processes. The ability to spread the product or idea to the market, along with a comprehensive grasp of the market and users, as well as inventiveness in the design of solutions, comprise this combination.

According to Cynthia and Hendra (2014), there are three categories that may be used to classify product innovation. These categories are as follows: 1) Product Extensions (line extensions); Product expansion is a product that is still familiar to

business organizations but new to the market; 2) Product imitation (what are known as "me-too" items); and 3) Product Innovation. 3) New Products (new-to-the-world products): New products are items that are deemed new by both businesses and companies. Product imitation is a product that is considered new by businesses but is something that is already familiar to the market. In the meantime, Kotler and Keller (2016:478) state that the innovative nature of the product itself will be the determining factor in the rate of dissemination. This pace will be supported by five variables, which are relatively advantageous, compatible, complicated, divisible, and communicable. In this study, the product innovation variable is in line with Kotler and Keller (2016), who state that there are three indicators of product innovation. These indicators are product quality, product variants, and product style and design. This study takes into consideration the opinions of a number of experts within the context of the product innovation perspective.. a) Product quality, which refers to the capacity of a product to carry out its functions, which may include the fact that it is durable, reliable, and accurate; b) Product varieties as they are manufactured. The term "competitive" refers to the capability of distinguishing one product from another, or between one's own product and the product of a rival; c) Product style and design, which is an additional method of providing value to clients. Design is a notion that encompasses more than just style, whereas style is simply used to describe the outward appearance of a specific product.

Customer Satisfaction

According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2013):162, there are four aspects that influence the perceptions and expectations of customers. These three factors are as follows: 1) The information that customers have obtained from other customers through word of mouth contact. This is a potential factor that plays a

role in determining the expectations of other customers. This means that a customer has a company that is expected to provide high-quality service based on recommendations from friends or neighbors; 2) Customer expectations are highly dependent on individual characteristics where personal needs (personnel needs); 3) Past experience in using services can also influence the level of customer expectations; 4) Communication with external parties (external communication) from service providers plays a key role in shaping customer expectations. On the basis of communication with the outside world, service providers have the ability to convey messages to their clients either directly or indirectly. Therefore, the possibility that exists between the quality of service (service) that a client receives and the quality of service that they anticipate receiving is that the consumer will be satisfied if the quality of service that they receive is superior to these expectations. It is possible that customers will not care if the quality of service they receive is identical to what they had anticipated receiving. When the level of service that is provided to customers is lower than what they had anticipated, the customers will feel disappointed. According to Wilson et al. (2008): 231, customer happiness is the driving force behind client loyalty, which in turn drives repeated purchases and recommendations from satisfied customers. According to the arguments shown above, customer satisfaction can be defined as the feelings (whether positive or negative) that accompany a customer's experience with a product or service. These sentiments are an effective and emotional response that arises from the customer's thoughts. When the customer's expectations are met, they are satisfied; on the other hand, when they are not satisfied with their experience, they leave feeling dissatisfied. According to Irawan (2004: 37), which outlines five primary dimensions of customer happiness, the following are the dimensions that are used to

measure customer satisfaction: 1) The cost; for customers who are sensitive to costs, low prices are typically a significant source of satisfaction because they provide a great value for the money. When it comes to those who are not particularly price-sensitive, this aspect of the price is relatively unimportant; 2) The quality of the service, which is strongly dependent on three specific factors: people, technology, and systems. When it comes to the quality of service, it is frequently challenging to repeat customer happiness.

This is due to the fact that cultivating attitudes and behaviors that are in line with the aims of the firm is not a simple undertaking. In order to make improvements, it is necessary to begin with the recruitment process, training, and the culture of the workplace; 3) The Quality of the Product; If the product is of high quality, the customer will consider themselves satisfied after acquiring and utilizing the goods. The fourth factor is the emotional factor, which is demonstrated by customers as the level of enjoyment they experience when utilizing a product or service that instills a sense of pride and self-confidence in them. Customers are more likely to be satisfied with a product or service if it is reasonably easy, comfortable, and efficient to receive it. This is because the convenience of obtaining the product or service and the ease of making a payment can both contribute to customer satisfaction.

Research Methods

Quantitative research with a positivist paradigm that places an emphasis on theory testing through empirical data is the methodological technique that was utilized in this study. Explanatory study is the type of research that tries to determine the link or influence of independent factors on dependent

variables in a phenomenon. This form of research falls under the category of explanatory research. According to Imam Ghozali (2013), this approach can also be utilized to test or confirm whether a construct or variable that has been formed theoretically can be confirmed by empirical data. Research that is undertaken with the purpose of explaining (confirmatory research) by offering causal explanations or correlations between variables (hypothesis testing) explored through hypothesis testing was utilized in this study (Sugiono, 2009). Additionally, this research utilized hypothesis testing.

In Jakarta, Toyota dealerships served as the locations where this investigation was carried out. At these Toyota dealerships, the population consisted of all prospective consumers who attended. February and March of 2025 were the months that were used for the sampling period. Instruments are methods or procedures that are used for collecting primary data (Sugiono, 2009). The data source utilized primary data that was gathered through direct data collection with respondents. The population consisted of 132 individuals who were either potential customers or consumers of Toyota automobiles at dealerships located in Jakarta, Indonesia. A census sample method was utilized, which meant that the entire population was included in the sampling process. A survey was carried out by means of a questionnaire that was developed for potential consumers and purchasers through the use of Google Forms. The questionnaire was then distributed

immediately through email or WhatsApp to the individuals who were interested in purchasing the product.

The method of data analysis that was utilized was called path analysis. Through the utilization of SPSS version 23 and the Sobel-Test program, this method of analysis is employed to ascertain the influence or participation of the relationship between the independent, mediator, and dependent variables in a research model equation. This can be done in a direct or indirect manner. The multiple regression method was utilized in the direct effect study, and the equation that was applied was as follows:

$$Y = a \pm bX_1 + bX_2 + bZ + e$$

Description:

Y : Customer Satisfaction Variable

A : Constant Value

b1 to b3: Regression Coefficients

X1 : Brand Image Variable

X2 : Word of Mouth Communication Variable

bZ : Product Innovation Variable

The variables involved in this study are brand image (X_1), word of mouth communication (X_2) as independent variables, product innovation (Z) as intervening variable, and customer satisfaction as dependent variable (Y). To analyze the indirect effect (path

analysis), the Sobel test was used with the following equation:

$$t = ab / \sqrt{S_{ab}}$$

Description:

T : Sobel test value

a : Regression coefficient of the independent variable on the mediator variable.

b : Regression coefficient of the mediator variable on the dependent variable.

S_{ab} : Standard error of the product of a and b (ab). Formulated as follows:

$$S_{ab} = \sqrt{(S_{ea}^2 b^2 + S_{eb}^2 a^2)}$$

S_{ea} : Standard error of the regression coefficient a.

S_{eb} : Standard error of the regression coefficient b.

To determine the results of the path analysis test, the assumption of high-quality and normal data (feasibility) is required. Data is considered high-quality if it meets the validity and reliability tests. As a prerequisite for multiple regression analysis, the data must also be normally distributed.

RESULT

A questionnaire is considered valid if the statements distributed to respondents accurately reveal what the questionnaire measures and demonstrate a strong relationship between indicators within a

variable. In addition to validity, an instrument must also be reliable. A questionnaire instrument is considered reliable if its results remain consistent over multiple measurements. The results of the validity and reliability tests can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1.
Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Result Pearson Correlation (All Indicator)	Cronbach's Alpha	Item	Description
Brand Image	Tinggi, lebih besar dari 0.6	0.956	7	Valid & Reliable
Word of Mouth Komunication	Tinggi, lebih besar dari 0.6	0.969	10	Valid & Reliable
Product Innovation	Tinggi, lebih besar dari 0.6	0.966	9	Valid & Reliable
Customer Satisfaction	Tinggi, lebih besar dari 0.6	0.977	8	Valid & Reliable

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The results of the validity test for all variables indicate that all questions for each indicator are valid, because the Pearson correlation value is greater than the product moment value and is categorized as having a high classification relationship between variables above 0.60%. Likewise, the results of the reliability test for all variables have a Cronbach's alpha value > 0.70 , thus the data for all variables are reliable and then the data can be tested for normality or not a data variant so that the data can be used for analysis. The results of the data normality test can be seen in the following table:

Table 2.
Results of Data Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		132
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.000000
	Std. Deviation	1.39339724
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.073
	Positive	.068
	Negative	-.073
Test Statistic		.073
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.083 ^c

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

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The multiple regression analysis aims to measure the direct influence of product image, word-of-mouth communication, and product innovation on customer satisfaction. The results of the multiple regression analysis are shown in the following table:

Table 3.

Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model 1		Coefficients ^a			t 0	Sig. .000
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standar dized Coeffici ents		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	42.628	1.418			
	Transform Citra Produk	-.329	.123	-.738	-2.686	.008
	Transform Komunikasi WOM	.265	.093	.765	2.843	.005
	Transform Inovasi Produk	-.221	.027	-.584	-8.134	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Transform Kepuasan Pelanggan

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Based on the multiple linear regression analysis table above, the constant a value is 42.628. The unstandardized coefficient B value for the product image variable is -0.329, word of mouth communication is 0.265, and product innovation is -0.221. These results have significant values of 0.008, 0.005, and 0.000, respectively, which are less than the 0.05 or 5% significance level. Therefore, all independent variables partially influence customer satisfaction. Next, to calculate the indirect effect (path analysis), the Sobel test was used, with the following results:

Results of the first equation: The unstandardized path coefficient (B) for the influence of product image on product innovation is -0.329, and the unstandardized coefficient (standard error) is 0.123. Furthermore, the unstandardized coefficients (B) for product innovation on customer satisfaction were -0.221, with an unstandardized coefficient (standard error) of 0.027. Therefore, the Sobel test results indicate a statistical value of -4.06134 with a

two-tailed significance level of 0.000. We can then compare this with the t-table value of -1.9785. If the Sobel test t-statistic is greater than the t-table (-4.06134 > 1.9785) and a significance level of 0.000, or less than 0.05, this result indicates that product image significantly influences customer satisfaction through product innovation.

The second equation results: The unstandardized coefficients (B) for the influence of word-of-mouth communication on product innovation are 0.265, with an unstandardized coefficient (standard error) of 0.093. Furthermore, the unstandardized coefficients (B) path value of product innovation on customer satisfaction is -0.221 and the unstandardized coefficients (std.error) value is 0.027. Thus, the results of the Sobel-Test test show that the Sobel test statistical value is 3.49794 with a two-tailed probability significance level of 0.000. Next, we can compare it with the results of the t table value of 1.9785. If the Sobel test statistical t value is greater than the t table (-3.49794 > -1.9785) and the significance result is 0.000 or less than 0.05. These results conclude that word of mouth communication has a significant effect on customer satisfaction through product innovation.

Discussion

This analysis summarizes the statistical test results, referring to relevant theories, and confirms previous research findings, along with an in-depth analysis of the research findings. The research findings are as follows:

1. Brand Image Influences Product Innovation in the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV.

The product image variable significantly influences product innovation. This finding is based on statistical calculations of the t-test results and significance values, which indicate that the calculated t-value of 4.470 is greater than the t-table value of 1.9785, and the sig. value is 0.000, lower than the 0.05 significance level. These results indicate that the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV has met customer expectations. They believe that the company's developed brand image serves as a fundamental reminder before making a purchase. In their minds, the product image is characterized by physical strength, quality, durability, uniqueness, innovation, and technology, product variants, and distinct styles. They think of a brand abstractly, even when they don't directly encounter the product. They can build strong memories of the product because it has been innovative and transformed, creating a sense of pride. Cars are unique and boast advantages that distinguish them from other products.

This finding aligns with Hakim (2017), who stated that a good brand image positively impacts a company by providing customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is created in the minds of customers because the product they purchase boasts innovation. Innovative products possess uniqueness and advantages that highlight quality, price, design, and service. Product

innovation can increase consumer appeal (Aristiyowati et al., 2015).

2. Word of Mouth Communication Influences Product Innovation of the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV Car.

The variable of word of mouth communication has a significant effect on product innovation, this is due to the t-value obtained of -3.746 which is greater than the t-table value of -1.9785 and the Sig result obtained a value of 0.000 or smaller than the significance level of 0.05. This result indicates that by utilizing person-to-person intermediaries either verbally, in writing, or through electronic communication tools connected to the internet based on their experience in using the product. They talk positively about the quality of the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV car product and the services provided to consumers. They recommend products and services to others and even encourage friends or relations to make purchases of the company's products and services. The motivation for their involvement in discussing the product is that the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV car has innovated according to their expectations. They assume that the product has high technology, has product variants, and has a different style. They think about a brand abstractly in their minds, even when they think about it, they are not directly confronted with the product. However, they can build a strong memory of the product because the product has unique characteristics and advantages that can be highlighted, so

they can clearly differentiate it from other products.

This finding aligns with Kotler and Keller (2016:512) who stated that several factors can serve as the basis for motivating consumers to discuss a product, namely: 1) Someone may be highly involved with a particular product; 2) Someone may know a lot about the product and use conversation as a way to inform others; 3) Someone may initiate a discussion by talking about something outside the main focus of the discussion. They are motivated by the desire to ensure that others do not make the wrong choice and do not waste time searching for information about a product brand; 4) They are motivated to reduce uncertainty because by asking friends, family, neighbors, or other close relatives, the information is more reliable, thus reducing the need to search and evaluate products that have innovated according to their expectations.

3. Brand Image Influences Customer Satisfaction of the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV.

Brand image significantly influences customer satisfaction. This is due to the calculated t-value of -4.963, which is greater than the t-table value of -1.9785. The sig. value is 0.000, lower than the 0.05 significance level. These results indicate that the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV has transformed and evolved in line with the technological innovations they expect. They believe that brand image can serve as a fundamental reminder before making a purchase. In their minds,

the product image has met their expectations. The product possesses physical strengths, durable qualities, uniqueness, innovation, and technology, various product variants, and a stylish style. Consequently, customers feel satisfied when using the product because the product is unique and has advantages that can be highlighted, allowing them to clearly differentiate it from other products.

This finding aligns with Hakim (2017), who stated that a good brand image positively impacts a company because it can satisfy its customers. In the minds of consumers, product quality and service are primary considerations before making a product choice. This is because brand image is a collection of consumer perceptions about a particular product. Building a good product image leads to other aspects that impact customer satisfaction (Kotler, Keller, and Chernev, 2022). Customer satisfaction is reflected in the cost-benefit they have incurred in accordance with their expectations. Satisfaction is also reflected in how good the product quality and service have been, resulting in customer satisfaction after using the product. Consumers will also feel satisfied when using a product that instills a sense of pride and high self-confidence. Consumers also feel that there is ease in obtaining the product with a relatively easy, convenient, and efficient payment method.

4. Word of Mouth Communication Influences Customer Satisfaction in the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV.

Word-of-mouth communication significantly influences customer satisfaction. This result is supported by the calculated t-value of 4.627, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.9785. The sig. value is 0.000, lower than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that people are more likely to consider purchasing a product if they have heard good things about it from friends, family, or coworkers. This is regardless of whether they have seen a promotion for the product or heard good things about it from friends and family. Consumers have the right to consider their options before making a purchase to achieve satisfaction. Word-of-mouth information impacts customer satisfaction because potential buyers trust word-of-mouth information, which spreads quickly across a wide area and can reach a more tangible audience than promotional advertising. Information about product advantages impacts customer satisfaction. They can do it themselves and even form buzzers to spread the information through social media platforms available on the internet. This effort is highly effective due to the real-life experience of consumers who have used the product, which meets their expectations, resulting in satisfaction.

This finding aligns with Ramadhanti & Sukma (2023) who found that consumers typically share their experiences after using a product with friends, relatives, and colleagues, confirming that the

product met their expectations. Customers then share their experiences through word of mouth with others, sharing their experiences and sharing them with others. This information can spread quickly across various social events.

5. Product Innovation Influences Customer Satisfaction of the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV.

The product innovation variable significantly influences customer satisfaction. This is due to the calculated t value of -9.560, which is greater than the t table value of -1.9785, and the Sig result obtained a value of 0.000, or less than the significance level of 0.05. These results indicate that the product innovation of the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV car developed has a relative advantage in the form of a combination of hybrid technology, compatibility with engine performance and stylish design, complexity of mechanical transmission system technology and other indicators, has been tested and meets international standards (trialability), and has been carefully observed in several trial phases so that customers feel the benefits received (Observability). The level of product satisfaction achieved has been felt (perceived) in accordance with customer expectations, namely when the quality has met or exceeded customer expectations, desires, and needs. Customers can then recommend the car's technological superiority to friends or even the public.

This finding aligns with Prety Diawati et al. (2020) that product innovation influences customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is achieved when quality meets or exceeds consumer expectations, desires, and needs. Conversely, consumers who are dissatisfied with the goods or services they consume will seek out other companies that can meet their needs. Customer satisfaction is the level of feeling a person feels after comparing a product's perceived performance with their expectations. Satisfaction (in terms of being satisfied with the product and its service) is characterized by continued loyalty to the product and willingness to recommend it to others.

6. Brand Image Influences Customer Satisfaction Through Product Innovation in the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV.

The Sobel test results show a statistical value of -4.06134 with a two-tailed significance level of 0.000. We can then compare this with the path coefficient (standardized coefficients, beta) for the effect of product image on customer satisfaction, which is -1.556, or a t-table of -1.9785. If the Sobel test t-statistic is greater than the t-table ($-4.06134 > -1.9785$) and the significance value is 0.000, or less than 0.05, this indicates that the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV has a superior product image compared to its competitors, significantly impacting customer satisfaction. In the minds of customers, a product image that meets their expectations will satisfy them. They perceive the product image as

possessing physical strengths, durability, uniqueness, and technological innovation, transforming it for the better. It offers diverse product variants and a stylish style. Considering the car's image, product innovations with specific uniqueness and sophistication will satisfy customers.

These findings align with Pusparani & Rastini (2016) who stated that the higher the product and service quality, the more satisfied consumers will be with the product. If a company can design an attractive product and provide excellent service, the impact will be on consumer satisfaction because their needs are met. A well-formed product image has a positive impact on the company because it can satisfy its customers. In the minds of consumers, product quality and service are primary considerations before making a product choice (Hakim, 2017). This is because brand image is a collection of consumer perceptions about a particular product. Building a good product image leads them to other aspects that impact customer satisfaction (Kotler, Keller, and Chernev, 2022).

7. Word-of-Mouth Communication Influences Customer Satisfaction Through Product Innovation in the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV.

The Sobel test results show a statistical value of 3.49794 with a two-tailed significance level of 0.000. We can then compare this with the path coefficient (standardized coefficients, beta) of the influence of word-of-mouth communication on customer satisfaction,

which is 1.451, or a t-table value of 1.9785. If the Sobel test t-statistic is greater than the path coefficient (standardized coefficients, beta) or t-table ($-3.49794 > -1.9785$), and the significance value is 0.000, or less than 0.05, this result indicates that word-of-mouth communication significantly influences customer satisfaction through product innovation. This finding indicates that people are more likely to consider purchasing a product if they have heard positive things about it from friends, family, or colleagues. Consumers consider information and word-of-mouth promotions before making a purchase. Potential buyers trust that word-of-mouth, which spreads quickly across a wide area, can achieve a more tangible reach. Promotion can be done by creating buzzers and disseminating information through social media platforms readily available online. This promotion is highly effective in satisfying customers. Real-life consumer experiences can provide references and recommendations for the benefits of the product they have purchased to others. However, word-of-mouth promotion alone is insufficient without being balanced with strong product innovation. Product innovation aims to ensure customers understand the product's physical strength, durability, uniqueness, innovation and technological advancements, product variants, and distinct styles. Consequently, customers feel satisfied because the product has unique features and advantages that can be highlighted, allowing them to clearly differentiate it from other products.

This finding aligns with Ramadhan & Sukma (2023) that consumers typically share their experiences after using a product with friends, relatives, and colleagues, as they believe the product has met their expectations. Then, customers talk through word of mouth to others to share their experiences in consuming and conveying it to others and can spread to various moments of activity quickly. This information, if balanced with product knowledge that has physical strengths that have good durability, has its own uniqueness and the product has been innovative and technological, and has product variants, and different styles. The impact is that customers feel satisfied because the product has uniqueness and has advantages that can be highlighted so that they can differentiate it from other products well.

Conclusion

The results of this study comprehensively demonstrate that brand image, word-of-mouth communication, and product innovation play significant and interrelated roles in shaping customer satisfaction toward the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV in Jakarta. Each of these variables exerts both direct and indirect effects that reinforce one another, ultimately determining consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in the competitive hybrid vehicle market.

First, brand image has been proven to strongly influence product innovation and customer satisfaction. The positive perception of Toyota's image—

associated with quality, durability, technological advancement, and distinctive design—forms a foundation for customer confidence and loyalty. Consumers tend to view the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV not merely as a vehicle but as a representation of innovation and modern technology, leading to a sense of pride and emotional attachment. This finding confirms that a well-established brand image not only strengthens consumer trust but also encourages the company to continuously innovate its products in response to evolving customer expectations.

Second, word-of-mouth communication significantly affects both product innovation and customer satisfaction. Consumers' willingness to share their positive experiences, whether through personal interactions or digital platforms, acts as an effective promotional tool that extends beyond conventional advertising. Positive recommendations from trusted sources enhance consumer confidence and accelerate the dissemination of information about product quality, technological superiority, and service reliability. However, this effect is most powerful when supported by continuous innovation that ensures customer experiences remain consistent with the positive image being shared.

Third, product innovation emerges as a central determinant of customer satisfaction. The Toyota Innova Zenix HEV's hybrid technology, advanced mechanical systems, and modern design provide tangible value that aligns with customer needs for efficiency,

environmental consciousness, and driving comfort. The product's trialability and observability—its ability to be tested, evaluated, and visibly proven effective—further enhance customer satisfaction. Consumers perceive innovation as not only technical improvement but also as a sign of Toyota's commitment to excellence and responsiveness to market changes.

Moreover, product innovation mediates the influence of both brand image and word-of-mouth communication on customer satisfaction. A strong brand image encourages innovation that meets or exceeds customer expectations, while word-of-mouth communication amplifies these innovations by validating them through real consumer experiences. Together, these factors form a synergistic effect—where innovation acts as the bridge between perception and satisfaction, ensuring that what consumers expect from the brand and hear from others is reflected in the actual product performance.

In conclusion, this research confirms that the success of customer satisfaction and purchasing intention for the Toyota Innova Zenix HEV is determined by an integrated strategy combining brand strength, innovative capability, and consumer-driven communication. For companies, maintaining a consistent brand image, encouraging positive word-of-mouth through superior experiences, and continuously investing in product innovation are crucial to sustaining competitiveness in the hybrid automotive market. Ultimately, customer satisfaction

is achieved not merely through product features but through the harmony between perception, communication, and innovation that collectively define the consumer's overall experience.

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