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MAPPING IDEA & LITERATURE FORMAT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Brand Equity and Product Innovation on Purchase Intention with Competitive Advantage as a Mediator: A Study on Mie Sedaap Consumers in Garut

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to examine how brand equity and product innovation influence purchase intention, with competitive advantage acting as a mediating variable among Mie Sedaap consumers in Garut Regency. The research employs an explanatory survey with 400 respondents, and the data are analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4 software. The findings reveal that both brand equity and product innovation have a positive and significant impact on purchase intention, both directly and indirectly through competitive advantage. This suggests that gaining a competitive advantage is crucial in enhancing the effects of brand strategy and product innovation on consumer purchasing decisions. The study's results imply that companies should focus on maintaining and improving brand equity, conducting product innovations aligned with market trends, and strengthening differentiation strategies to sustain competitive positions and boost consumer purchasing interest.

Keywords: Brand Equity, Product Innovation, Competitive Advantage, Purchase Intention.

I. Introduction

Facing increasingly fierce market competition, companies are required to continuously innovate and formulate adaptive and efficient marketing strategies to maintain operational continuity and strengthen their competitive position in the market. The rapid development of the business sector in Indonesia, accompanied by the emergence of various new product variants, has made consumer behavior increasingly critical and selective in their choices. Therefore, implementing a well-targeted marketing strategy is a crucial factor in achieving a company's long-term goals sustainably.(Purnama et al., 2025). In recent years, the global instant noodle industry has experienced rapid growth. This phenomenon is reflected in rising consumption levels, particularly in developing countries, influenced by lifestyle changes and shifting consumer preferences. One key factor driving this trend is the growing middle class, which contributes to high demand for convenient and easy-to-prepare food products like instant noodles. (Hananto et al., 2024)Instant noodles are a fast food category that has experienced significant development in line with changing times and changing consumer needs. The product's popularity is driven by its practicality in preparation and the variety of flavors available,

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allowing consumers to customize their product choices to suit their individual preferences. Globally, the number of instant noodle consumers is high and continues to show an increasing trend year after year. (Hananto et al., 2024). According to data released by the World Instant Noodles Association via CNBC Indonesia, Indonesia ranks second in the world for instant noodle consumption. This fact reflects the strategic role of instant noodles as a convenient food alternative that is in demand by the public, especially in the face of the dynamics of modern life brought about by globalization. (Aji, 2024).

Table 1. List of Countries with the Highest Instant Noodle Consumption in the World

Ranking	Country	Consumption (Billion Packs)
1	China	42.21
2	Indonesia	14.54
3	India	8.68
4	Vietnamese	8.13
5	Japan	5.84
6	United States of America	5.1
7	Philippines	4.39
8	South Korea	4.04
9	Thailand	3.95
10	Nigeria	2.98

Source :Aji (2024)

Based on data released by the World Instant Noodles Association (WINA), Indonesia ranks among the top three countries with the highest instant noodle consumption in the world. In 2023, total instant noodle consumption in Indonesia reached 14.54 billion servings, experiencing a consecutive increase from the 2019–2022 period, namely 12.52 billion servings (2019), 12.64 billion servings (2020), 13.27 billion servings (2021), and 14.26 billion servings (2022). Although this figure is considered high, the level of instant noodle consumption in Indonesia is still below that of China/Hong Kong, which in 2023 recorded a total consumption of 42.21 billion servings. However, this achievement shows a downward trend compared to previous years, namely 46.36 billion servings (2020), 43.99 billion servings (2021), and 45.07 billion servings (2022). India ranks third after China/Hong Kong and Indonesia, with a total consumption of 8.68 billion servings in 2023. This data shows a significant gap between the level of instant noodle consumption in India and the top two countries.(Aji, 2024)The high consumption figures in these countries indicate that instant noodles have become the main consumption choice that is relevant to the fast-paced and dynamic lifestyle of urban communities. These findings can serve as a basis for formulating strategic recommendations for businesses to optimize market opportunities, given the high consumer interest in instant noodle products in Indonesia, supported by a relatively large market share. This situation reflects the promising potential for business development in the ready-to-eat food industry, particularly in the instant noodle segment.

Table 2. List of the Most Popular Instant Noodles in Indonesia

Ranking	Brand	Consumption (%)
1	Indomie	72.5
2	Delicious Noodles	16.2
3	Sarimi	2.6
4	Gaga 100/Mie 100	1.7
5	Supermi	1.3

Source :Annur (2023)

Data presented by databoks.katadata.co.id illustrates the popularity of various instant noodle brands in Indonesia based on consumption proportion or market share. Although Indomie still dominates the market

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with a consumption contribution of 72.5%, Mie Sedaap ranks second with a market share of 16.2%. Although the difference is quite large, this figure still shows that Mie Sedaap has a significant position in the national instant noodle industry competition. Below Mie Sedaap, there are other brands such as Sarimi (2.6%), Gaga (1.7%), and Supermi (1.3%), whose contribution to national consumption is relatively small. (Annur, 2023).

Mie Sedaap currently ranks second in the national instant noodle industry, indicating that this brand has become one of the main choices for consumers amidst intense competition. Although this achievement reflects Mie Sedaap's success in building a brand image and attracting market interest, its position is still below Indomie as the market leader, which controls the majority of the market share in Indonesia. This condition indicates that Mie Sedaap still faces strategic challenges to expand its influence in the market, both through strengthening brand equity, developing innovative products that suit consumer tastes, and implementing more effective marketing strategies to increase competitiveness and approach the market dominance held by Indomie.(Estiawan et al., 2024)This study specifically selected local consumers in West Java Province, focusing on Garut Regency as the research location. This area selection was based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), which shows that Garut Regency occupies a relatively low position in instant noodle consumption levels, with average consumption ranging from 0.900 to 1.150 during the 2019–2023 period.(BPS, 2024b)This condition reflects the variation in consumption patterns compared to other regions, making it interesting to study further to understand the factors that influence purchase intention, brand equity, product innovation, and competitive advantage. Therefore, Garut Regency is a relevant location to test the influence of these variables on consumer purchase intention, while also providing an empirical picture that can be used as a basis for formulating more effective marketing strategies for producers, especially Mie Sedaap.

Previous studies have yielded mixed findings regarding the influence of brand equity on purchase intention. Some studies have shown that brand equity has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention.(Al-Hanaan et al., 2023)However, on the other hand, there are also research results that show that brand equity does not have a significant influence on purchase intention.(Fendy, 2020). A similar thing also happened with the product innovation variable, which had a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.(Heri et al., 2022)Meanwhile, other research actually states that product innovation does not have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.(Kusuma et al., 2020)In the context of the relationship between brand equity and competitive advantage, previous research shows that brand equity has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage.(Aldiesi & Wahyudin, 2024)Meanwhile, other research shows that brand equity does not influence competitive advantage.(Asari et al., 2024). A similar thing is also seen in product innovation, which, in several findings, has been proven to contribute positively to competitive advantage.(Fadhillah et al., 2021)However, other researchers have found that product innovation does not affect competitive advantage.(Purba & Nuvriasari, 2025). Previous researchers stated that competitive advantage has a significant influence on purchase intention.(Ismayli & Italiana, 2020)Other research states that competitive advantage has no significant effect on purchase intention.(Harahab et al., 2023).

Similarly, the Brand Equity variable also shows inconsistent findings regarding its relationship with Competitive Advantage and Purchase Intention. Several studies have shown that Brand Equity has a positive effect on Competitive Advantage, which in turn increases Purchase Intention. Furthermore, Brand Equity has also been found to have a direct effect on Purchase Intention.(Al-Hanaan et al., 2023),(Aldiesi & Wahyudin, 2024), And(Ismayli & Italiana, 2020)On the other hand, other researchers stated that there was no significant influence of Brand Equity, Competitive Advantage, and Purchase Intention.(Fendy, 2020),(Asari et al., 2024), as well as(Harahab et al., 2023)Therefore, this study focuses on re-examining this relationship through a mediation model approach, in order to gain a deeper and more accurate understanding of the mechanism of Brand Equity's influence in the context of consumer behavior towards Purchase Intention.(Joseph F. Hair et al., 2021).

A similar condition was also found in the Innovation Product variable, which showed inconsistent results in terms of requirements with Competitive Advantage and Purchase Intention. Several studies have stated that an innovative Product has a positive effect on Competitive Advantage and Purchase Intention, and

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Competitive Advantage also influences Purchase Intention. (Heri et al., 2022),(Ismayli & Italiana, 2020), as well as(Fadhillah et al., 2021). However, other studies show that Product Innovation does not have a significant effect on Competitive Advantage or Purchase Intention, and Competitive Advantage also does not have an effect on Purchase Intention. (Kusuma et al., 2020),(Purba & Nuvriasari, 2025), as well as(Harahab et al., 2023). Therefore, this study focuses on re-examining this relationship through a mediation model approach, in order to gain a deep and accurate understanding of the mechanism of Brand Equity's influence in the context of consumer behavior towards Purchase Intention. (Joseph F. Hair et al., 2021).

Although various studies have examined the relationship between Brand Equity, Product Innovation, Competitive Advantage, and Purchase Intention, the results obtained still show inconsistencies, particularly regarding the role of Competitive Advantage as a mediating variable. The majority of previous studies have focused on the direct influence between variables, while studies that explicitly examine Competitive Advantage in its mediating capacity are still relatively limited. This condition indicates a research gap that requires attention, so further research is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of indirect influence in the context of consumer behavior. This study, entitled "The Effect of Brand Equity and Product Innovation on Purchase Intention through Competitive Advantage", is relevant to evaluate the role of brand equity and product innovation in creating competitive advantage and its impact on consumer purchasing intention, especially on Mie Sedaap instant noodle products, which have a high level of popularity in the market.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Brand Equity

Brand equity (BE) is the added value perceived by consumers as a result of the strength of a brand name, which consciously influences consumer attitudes and behavior toward a product. This value is often reflected in the level of consumer attachment to the brand, including loyalty and preference in purchasing decisions.(Zia et al., 2021)Brand equity plays a strategic role in enhancing a company's competitiveness and serves as a foundation for effective marketing decision-making. In increasingly competitive conditions, developing and strengthening brand equity is a primary focus for building consumer loyalty and solidifying a brand's position in the market.(Alsaraireh et al., 2022)This approach emphasizes that understanding consumer responses is a key element in building, maintaining, and managing brand strength sustainably.(Araujo et al., 2023). Several indicators can be used to measure the extent of the impact of brand equity, namely brand awareness, namely the level of consumer recognition and memory of the brand, brand loyalty, namely the consumer's commitment to continue choosing the brand, and perceived quality, namely the consumer's assessment of the superiority and reliability of the brand's products or services.(Aryanti et al., 2021).

2.2. Innovation Product

Product innovation is a company's adaptive response to market changes by developing value-added products to enhance customer satisfaction. Products with superior quality can strengthen competitive positions and drive purchasing interest, particularly in routine consumer categories.(Ade Yusuf, 2021)Product innovation is the process of creating new products by utilizing new materials or by modifying the characteristics of existing products, either partially or completely. (Ismanu et al., 2021)As a strategy to increase competitiveness, product innovation is believed to strengthen company performance by driving consumer purchasing decisions. This innovation can take the form of increasing the value of existing products or developing new products not yet available in the market, thus potentially driving consumer interest consistently and sustainably.(Hidayah & Rahmawan, 2021)Several indicators can be used to measure the impact of product innovation, namely Product Expansion, which is the development of new variants or features of existing products.

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2.3. Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is the result of implementing a strategy that creates unique added value that competitors do not possess. This advantage can be sustained in the long term if it is difficult for competitors to imitate or match.(Obeidat et al., 2021). Competitive advantage is defined as a unique strength that an organization possesses compared to its competitors, which is reflected through strategies such as offering competitive prices accompanied by greater benefits and quality services that exceed the value received by consumers.(Darmawan & Grenier, 2021)Competitive advantage is a key factor in improving business performance amidst the dynamics of market competition. This advantage is achieved through the implementation of collaborative strategies that enable companies to generate added value more efficiently and effectively.(Naninsih et al., 2022). Several indicators can be used to measure the extent of the impact of competitive advantage, namely, product uniqueness, which is a characteristic or feature that differentiates the product from competitors, product quality, which is the level of quality and reliability of the product, and competitive prices, which are competitive price offers compared to similar products on the market.(Yanti & Astuti, 2023).

2.4. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is defined as the consumer's desire or intention to purchase a brand, which is influenced by the perception of suitability between the consumer's reasons for purchasing and the known characteristics of the brand.(Swastika & Hapsari, 2023)Purchase intention reflects a consumer's psychological motivation to make a purchase, which is formed after passing through the pre-purchase stage. At this stage, consumers search for information related to their needs and identify products that are deemed capable of meeting those needs.(Septyadi et al., 2022). Purchase interest is an individual's internal expression that shows a tendency towards interest in purchasing a product in a certain amount.(Agustin & Amron, 2022). Several indicators can be used to measure how big the impact of purchase intention is, namely Transactional interest is the interest in making a transaction or purchase, Referential interest is the desire to recommend a product to others, Preferential interest is the preference or tendency to choose a particular brand, and Exploratory interest is the desire to seek more information about a product before buying.(Buchori & Harwani, 2021).

2.5. Framework

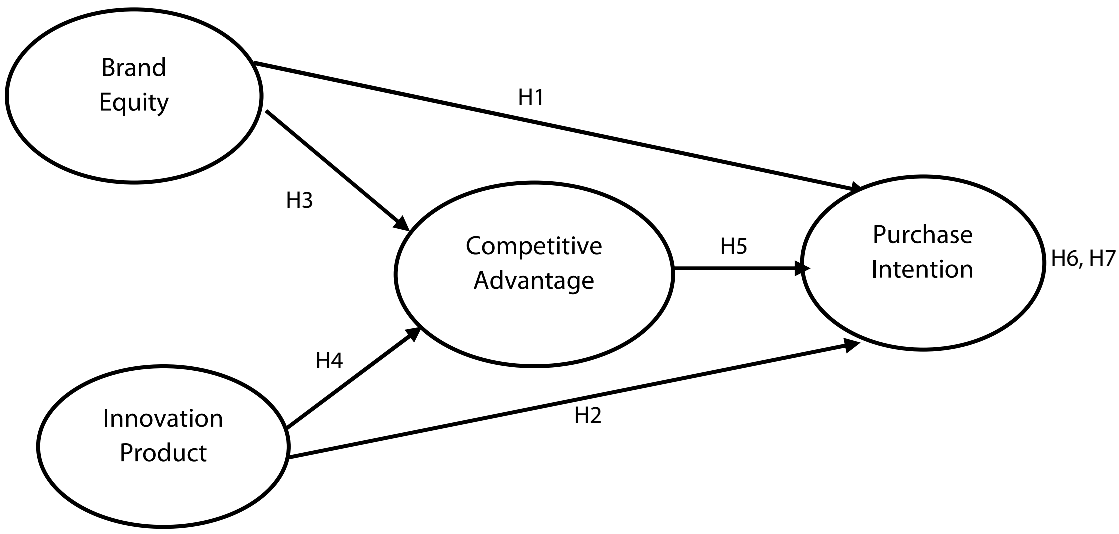

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

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This study aims to test the influence of brand equity and product innovation on purchase intention, with competitive advantage as a moderator variable. Based on these findings, I hypothesize that:

H1: Brand Equity has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention
H2: Product Innovation has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention
H3: Brand Equity has a positive and significant effect on Competitive Advantage
H4: Product Innovation has a positive and significant effect on Competitive Advantage
H5: Competitive Advantage has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention
H6: Brand equity has a positive effect on purchase intention through competitive advantage.
H7: Product innovation has a positive effect on purchase intention through competitive advantage.

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Design

This research applies a quantitative approach, which is a type of scientific research because it meets scientific principles, namely, concrete, empirical, objective, measurable, rational, and systematic. According toSugiyono (2013)Quantitative research is a research approach based on the philosophy of positivism. This approach is used to study specific populations or samples, using a sampling technique that is generally random. Data collection is carried out using research instruments, while data analysis is carried out quantitatively or statistically.(Lestari et al., 2020)This study aims to explore and analyze the influence of Brand Equity and Product Innovation on Purchase Intention, both directly and indirectly through Competitive Advantage as a mediating variable. The research focuses on consumers of Mie Sedaap products in Garut Regency, with the aim of determining the extent to which the company's brand strength and innovation are able to create competitive advantages that ultimately drive consumer purchase intention. The research method used is an explanatory survey, a method designed to explain the causal relationship between research variables. The main objective of an explanatory survey is to understand and explain the relationship between two or more variables in the study. (Wajdi et al., 2024). This design was chosen because it is able to provide an in-depth understanding of the influence mechanism between the independent variables (Brand Equity and Product Innovation), the mediating variable (Competitive Advantage), and the dependent variable (Purchase Intention).

3.2. Research Location and Time

This research was conducted in Garut Regency, targeting Mie Sedaap consumers who have or have previously consumed the product. This location was chosen based on the consideration that Garut has a large, diverse, and potential consumer population, making it considered representative for testing the influence of brand equity and product innovation on purchase intention through competitive advantage. This location is also easily accessible, allows for efficient data collection, and is relevant to produce generalizable findings. The research implementation period, from April to June 2025, was chosen because it provided sufficient time to systematically carry out all research stages, starting from instrument development, validity and reliability testing, questionnaire distribution, data collection, and final analysis. The findings obtained are expected to provide an empirical picture of the relationship between these variables, as well as provide a practical contribution to the development of effective marketing strategies to strengthen competitive advantage and increase consumer purchasing intentions.

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3.3. Population and Sample

The population in this study was all Mie Sedaap consumers residing in Garut Regency. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the population of Garut Regency is 2,716.95 thousand. This population is considered relevant because it reflects a potential and active segment of society that consumes instant noodle products, particularly Mie Sedaap.(BPS, 2024a)The sampling technique in this study uses purposive sampling, namely a non-probability method in which the selection is carried out deliberately based on specific criteria or considerations that have been determined by the researcher, so that only respondents who meet the research characteristics are selected as samples.(Sugiyono, 2020). The criteria used include: (1) respondents domiciled in Garut Regency, (2) at least 17 years old, and (3) have consumed Mie Sedaap. To determine the minimum sample size required for the research results to be representative of the population, researchers used the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error. This margin of error is considered acceptable in social research. Therefore, the sample size obtained is expected to provide a valid picture of the influence of brand equity and product innovation on purchase intention through competitive advantage as a mediating variable.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N\,(e2)}$$

Note: n = Number of samples
N = Population Size
e = Error Rate 5%

Based on the formula that has been explained, sample determination was carried out using the Slovin method:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N\,(e2)}$$

$$n = \frac{2{,}716.95}{1 + 2{,}716.95\,(0.052)}$$

$$n = \frac{2{,}716.95}{1 + 2{,}716.95\,(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2{,}716.95}{6{,}793{,}375} = 400$$

The formula has an error rate of 5%, so the number of respondents was 400.

3.4. Data Collection

Data collection in this study was conducted through primary data sources using a questionnaire instrument. The questionnaire was distributed to Mie Sedaap consumers in Garut Regency using both online and offline distribution methods. This instrument contained closed-ended and open-ended questions relevant to the research topic related to Mie Sedaap products. Respondents' answers were measured using a Likert scale, which serves to assess the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals and groups towards

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a social phenomenon. (Taqwin, 2022)Each statement item in the questionnaire is assessed using five score levels on a Likert scale, namely: 1) Strongly disagree, 2) Disagree, 3) Neutral, 4) Agree, 5) Strongly agree.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study used the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with the help of SmartPLS version 4 software. The selection of this method is based on its ability to test the relationship between complex latent variables, including mediation effects, without requiring normal data distribution.(Joseph F. Hair et al., 2021)The analysis process begins with testing the measurement model (outer model) to assess the validity and reliability of the indicators through loading factor values, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's Alpha. The next stage is testing the structural model (inner model) to assess the relationship between latent variables based on the path coefficient, R-square (R^2), and statistical significance obtained through the bootstrapping procedure. In addition, a mediation effect test is also conducted to determine the role of competitive advantage variables in mediating the relationship between brand equity and product innovation on purchase intention. The results of data processing are then visualized through a path diagram to facilitate comprehensive model interpretation.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Research ethics reflects a researcher's commitment to the moral values and scientific norms upheld in the academic community. Ethical principles serve as guidelines for maintaining research integrity, particularly in treating participants fairly and humanely. In the context of research involving human subjects, the application of ethics is crucial for protecting the rights, privacy, and safety of respondents. This research adheres to the main ethical principles of beneficence (providing benefits and minimizing risks), justice (fairness in the treatment of participants), and autonomy (respecting the freedom and right of individuals to give informed consent). Therefore, prior to data collection, researchers ensure that participants are given a clear explanation of the purpose, benefits, and rights of the research, including the freedom to withdraw at any time without consequence.(Hasan et al., 2021).

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Respondent Demographics

The demographic characteristics of respondents in this study include several variables, namely gender, age group, purchasing intensity, and domicile area. Based on gender distribution, the majority of respondents were female, namely 201 people (50.25%), while male respondents were recorded at 199 people (49.75%). In terms of age, the largest proportion came from the 17 to 27 year age group, namely 292 respondents (73%), while the 28 to 40 year age group numbered 108 respondents (27%). In terms of purchasing frequency, all respondents stated that they had made purchases more than once, which indicates a level of consumer engagement of 100%. All participants resided in Garut Regency, which also served as the research location. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents were young adults, with high purchasing intensity, and located in the same geographic area, providing a strong representation of local consumer behavior in the area.

Table 3. Respondent Demographics

Category	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	199	49.75%
	Female	201	50.25%

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Age	17-27 Years	292	73%
	28-40 Years	108	27%
Purchase Frequency	Once	400	100%
Domicile	Garut	400	100%

4.2. Statistical Results

a. Convergent Validity

An indicator is said to meet convergent validity if its outer loading value is above 0.70. Based on the analysis results presented in the previous table, all indicators in this study showed outer loading values exceeding this limit, thus being declared to meet the convergent validity criteria. No indicators were found with values below the minimum threshold of 0.50, indicating that all indicators were suitable for inclusion in the model. This indicates that each indicator consistently represents the construct being measured. Thus, all indicators can be used in the next analysis stage to support testing the validity and reliability of the measurement model. The outer loading values presented support the validity of the instrument used in this study.

Table 4. Outer Loading

Variables	Indicator	Outer Loading
Brand Equity	BE1	0.943
	BE2	0.922
	BE3	0.938
Innovation Product	IP1	0.940
	IP2	0.874
	IP3	0.921
Competitive Advantage	CA1	0.893
	CA2	0.874
	CA3	0.921
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.883
	PI2	0.882
	PI3	0.917
	PI4	0.917

b. Data analysis

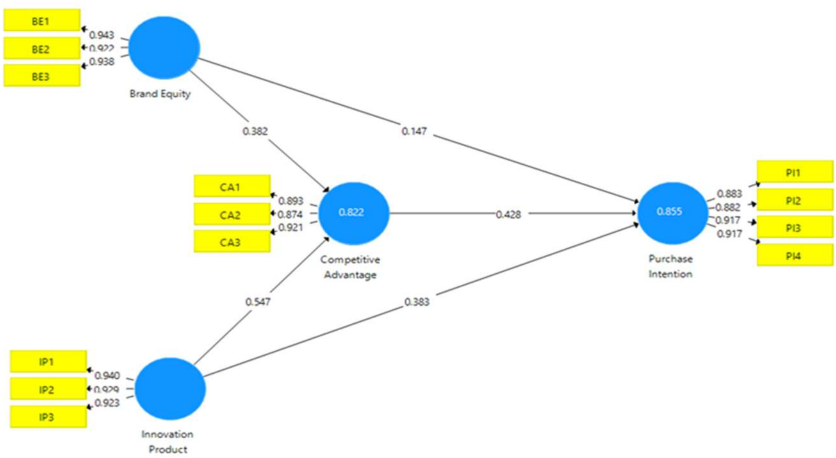

Figure 2. Outer Loading

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c. Discriminant Validity

The AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values obtained for all variables in this study were above the minimum threshold of 0.50, indicating that convergent validity criteria were met. Specifically, the AVE values for each variable are: Brand Equity (0.873), Product Innovation (0.886), Competitive Advantage (0.810), and Purchase Intention (0.803). These values indicate that each construct can explain a significant amount of variance in the measured indicators and has good internal consistency. Thus, all constructs in the model have met the requirements for discriminant validity and are suitable for use in further analysis.

Table 5. Average Variance Extracted

Variable	AVE (Average Variance Extracted Value)	Information
Brand Equity	0.873	Valid
Product Innovation	0.866	Valid
Competitive Advantage	0.803	Valid
Purchase Intention	0.810	Valid

d. Reliability Test

The Composite Reliability Test is used to assess the internal consistency of the indicators that form a construct in a research model. Unlike Cronbach's Alpha, which assumes uniform indicator reliability, Composite Reliability considers the weighted contribution of each indicator, resulting in more accurate measurements in the context of structural models such as Partial Least Squares (PLS). A construct is considered reliable if its composite reliability value exceeds 0.70. Based on the results in Table 4, all variables in this study showed composite reliability values that exceeded the threshold: Brand Equity (0.954), Product Innovation (0.951), Competitive Advantage (0.925), and Purchase Intention (0.944). These values reflect an excellent level of internal consistency for each construct. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables have met the composite reliability criteria and are suitable for use in further structural analysis.

Table 6. Composite Reliability

Variable	Composite Reliability
Brand Equity	0.954
Product Innovation	0.951
Competitive Advantage	0.925
Purchase Intention	0.944

Source :(SmartPLS, 2025)

e. Cronbach's Alpha

The Cronbach's Alpha test is a statistical method used to measure the level of internal consistency or reliability of a research instrument, particularly for constructs measured through a number of items or indicators in a questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0 to 1. The closer the value is to 1, the higher the internal consistency between indicators within a construct. Generally, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher is considered to meet the minimum standard to indicate that the indicators used consistently measure the same variable.

In the context of this research, the results of the Cronbach's Alpha test presented in Table 5 indicate that all analyzed variables have values above the recommended threshold, namely: Brand Equity (0.924), Product Innovation (0.922), Competitive Advantage (0.907), and Purchase Intention (0.927). These values indicate that each construct in the model has excellent internal reliability and that each indicator in the construct is able to work consistently in measuring the intended concept.

Table 7. Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Equity	0.928
Product Innovation	0.923
Competitive Advantage	0.881
Purchase Intention	0.922

Source :(SmartPLS, 2025)

f. Inner Model

An internal model evaluation was conducted to test whether the relationships between variables in the research model align with the proposed theoretical assumptions. This assessment included an analysis of the strength and direction of the relationships between constructs through path coefficient values, the significance of the relationships based on t-statistics and p-values, and the ability of the independent variables to explain the dependent variable as indicated by the R-squared value. The results of this evaluation provide a basis for assessing the statistical feasibility of the model and support the structural validity developed in the study. Thus, this test plays a crucial role in ensuring that the conceptual model has adequate empirical support. The following section presents the results of the internal model testing of this study.

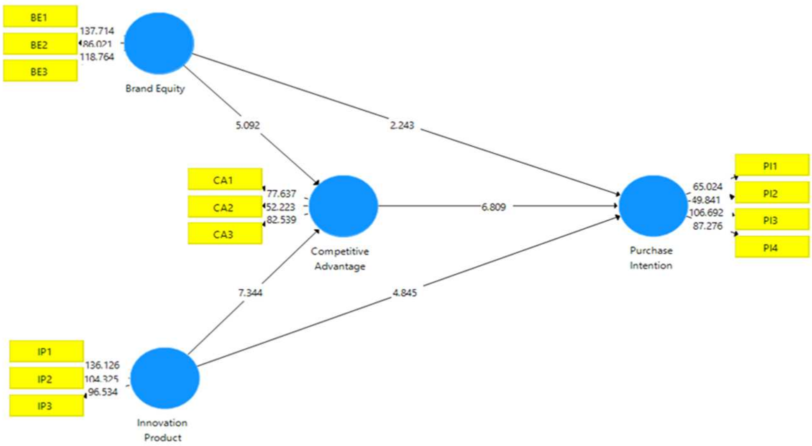

Figure3 Inner Model

g. Model Fit Test

The model fit test in this study was conducted using two main indicators, namely R-Square (R^2) and Q-Square (Q^2). The R^2 value is used to assess how much the independent variables are able to explain the variance of the dependent variable in the model. The higher the R^2 value, the greater the model's ability to explain the variables studied. The R^2 interpretation criteria are: 0.75 is categorized as strong, 0.50 as moderate, and 0.25 as weak. Based on Table 6, it is known that the independent variables in the model are able to explain the Competitive Advantage variable by 82.2% (strong category) and the Purchase Intention variable by 85.5% (strong category). These results indicate that the constructed model has high predictive power and strong theoretical relevance, where the constructs used provide a significant contribution to the formation of Competitive Advantage and Purchase Intention in the context of this study.

Table 8. R-Square Value

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Competitive Advantage	0.822	0.821
Purchase Intention	0.855	0.854

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h. Q2 Test

The Q-Square (Q^2) test is used to evaluate the model's predictive ability against endogenous variables by considering data not included in the estimation process. If the Q^2 value is greater than 0, then the model is considered to have adequate predictive power. A Q^2 value between 0 and 0.25 is categorized as weak, 0.25–0.50 as moderate, and above 0.50 indicates strong predictive ability. Based on the results in the table, it is known that the Q^2 value for the Competitive Advantage variable is 0.651 and for Purchase Intention is 0.683. Both values are above 0.50, indicating that the model has strong predictive ability against both endogenous variables. Meanwhile, the Q^2 value for the exogenous variables brand equity and product innovation is 1, indicating that these variables are not predicted but are used as predictors in the model, thus reflecting the full information from their own indicators.

i. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted by analyzing the path coefficient table to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between variables. The bootstrapping method was used to obtain t-statistics and p-values, which serve as the basis for determining the significance of the relationship between constructs. A relationship is considered significant if it has a p-value <0.05 or a t-statistic >1.96 at the 5% significance level. Conversely, if the p-value ≥0.05 or the t-statistic ≤1.96, the relationship between the variables is considered insignificant. The analysis process was carried out using SmartPLS version 4.0 software, and the results are presented in the form of path coefficient values that represent the magnitude of the influence of each variable in the structural model.

j. Path Coefficient

The results of the path coefficient test indicate that all relationships between variables in the structural model of this study are statistically significant. The Brand Equity variable is proven to have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention with a coefficient value of 0.147, t-statistic of 2.243, and p-value of 0.025. In addition, Brand Equity also has a significant effect on Competitive Advantage, indicated by a coefficient of 0.382, t-statistic of 5.092, and p-value of 0.000. The Product Innovation variable has a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention with a coefficient of 0.383 and a t-statistic of 4.845, as well as on Competitive Advantage with a coefficient of 0.547 and a t-statistic of 7.344. Meanwhile, Competitive Advantage also shows a significant relationship to Purchase Intention with a coefficient of 0.428 and a t-statistic of 6.809. All the resulting p-values are below the significance threshold of 0.05, so it can be concluded that all relationships between variables in this model are significant at the 95% confidence level.

Table 9. Path Coefficient (Direct Effect)

	Hypothesis	Original Sample	T-Statistic	P-Values	Information
Brand Equity -> Purchase Intention	H1	0.147	2,243	0.025	Significant
Brand Equity -> Competitive Advantage	H2	0.382	5,092	0,000	Significant
Product Innovation -> Purchase Intention	H3	0.383	4,845	0,000	Significant
Product Innovation -> Competitive Advantage	H4	0.547	7,344	0,000	Significant
Competitive Advantage -> Purchase Intention	H5	0.428	6,809	0,000	Significant

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k. Indirect Effect Testing

Based on the results of the H6 and H7 hypothesis testing, it was found that Brand Equity and Product Innovation have a significant indirect effect on Purchase Intention through Competitive Advantage as a mediating variable. In H6, the indirect effect of Brand Equity on Purchase Intention through Competitive Advantage is indicated by a coefficient of 0.164, with a t-statistic of 4.615 and a p-value of 0.000, which indicates significance at the 95% confidence level. This indicates that strengthening brand equity will increase competitive advantage, which in turn encourages consumer purchase intention. Meanwhile, H7 shows that Product Innovation also has a significant indirect effect on Purchase Intention through Competitive Advantage, with a coefficient of 0.234, a t-statistic of 4.447, and a p-value of 0.000. These findings confirm that effective product innovation enhances a company's competitive advantage, which in turn positively contributes to increased purchase intention. Thus, Competitive Advantage is shown to be a significant mediator in both relationships.

Table10. Specific Indirect Effect

	Hypothesis	Original Sample	T-Statistic	P-Values	Information
Brand Equity -> Competitive Advantage -> Purchase Intention	H6	0.164	4,615	0,000	Significant
Product Innovation -> Competitive Advantage -> Purchase Intention	H7	0.234	4,447	0,000	Significant

4.3. Discussion

a. H1: Brand Equity has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention

The test results show that brand equity has a path coefficient of 0.147, with a t-statistic of 2.243 and a p-value of 0.025, which is below the significance level of 0.05. This means that hypothesis H1 is accepted. This indicates that the higher the brand equity of Mie Sedaap, including brand awareness, brand loyalty, and perceived quality, the higher the consumer's purchase intention. These results are consistent with(Al-Hanaan et al., 2023)Who found that brand equity can shape positive perceptions and increase consumer purchasing tendencies. In the context of Mie Sedaap, a strong brand image helps consumers feel confident in the product's quality, thus encouraging them to make repeat purchases.

b. H2: Product Innovation has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention

The coefficient of influence of product innovation on purchase intention is 0.383, with a t-statistic of 4.845 and a p-value of 0.000; thus, H2 is accepted. This indicates that the development of flavor variants, packaging updates, and improvements in product quality contribute to increased consumer purchase intention. These results support the research.(Heri et al., 2022)This emphasizes that product innovation relevant to market needs will increase purchasing interest. In the case of Mie Sedaap, the strategy of launching new variants tailored to local tastes was a key driver of consumer enthusiasm.

c. H3: Brand Equity has a positive and significant effect on Competitive Advantage

A coefficient of 0.382, a t-statistic of 5.092, and a p-value of 0.000 indicate a significant positive relationship. This means that strong brand equity not only enhances consumer image but also strengthens a company's competitive position. This finding supports the results that brand equity is a strategic asset for creating competitive advantage.

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d. H4: Product Innovation has a positive and significant effect on Competitive Advantage

The coefficient value of 0.547, t-statistic = 7.344, and p-value = 0.000 indicate that product innovation significantly contributes to increasing competitive advantage. Consistent product innovation enables Mie Sedaap to create differentiation that is difficult for competitors to imitate. This finding is consistent withFadhillah et al., (2021)This states that innovation, both in terms of features and quality, is the main factor in forming a company's competitiveness in a competitive market.

e. H5: Competitive Advantage has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention

The test results show a coefficient of 0.428, a t-statistic of 6.809, and a p-value of 0.000; thus, H5 is accepted. This proves that competitive advantage, whether through product uniqueness, superior quality, or competitive pricing, directly encourages consumers to make purchases. This is in line withIsmayli & Italiana (2020)This states that consumers will tend to choose products that offer more value than competitors, both in terms of quality, price, and features.

f. H6: Brand Equity has a positive effect on Purchase Intention through Competitive Advantage

The indirect effect shows a coefficient of 0.164, t-statistic = 4.615, and p-value = 0.000, thus H6 is accepted. This means that competitive advantage mediates the relationship between brand equity and purchase intention. That is, strong brand equity increases competitive advantage, and in turn, this competitive advantage increases consumer purchase intention. This finding supports the view that brand equity not only has a direct impact but also works through strengthening competitiveness to encourage purchasing behavior.

g. H7: Product Innovation has a positive effect on Purchase Intention through Competitive Advantage

The mediation results showed a coefficient of 0.234, a t-statistic of 4.447, and a p-value of 0.000; thus, H7 was accepted. This proves that competitive advantage also mediates the relationship between product innovation and purchase intention. The innovations made increased Mie Sedaap's competitiveness, and this competitiveness played a role in attracting consumer interest in purchasing. This finding is in line withObeidat et al., (2021)This states that continuous product innovation will strengthen competitive position and influence purchasing decisions.

V. Conclusion

This study was conducted to examine the influence of brand equity and product innovation on purchase intention, both directly and indirectly through competitive advantage as a mediating variable, with a focus on Mie Sedaap consumers in Garut Regency. The test results show that brand equity has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, indicating that brand strength can shape positive consumer perceptions and encourage purchasing tendencies. Similarly, product innovation has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, indicating that updates to product taste, packaging, and quality play an important role in attracting purchasing interest. Furthermore, brand equity and product innovation each had a positive and significant influence on competitive advantage, indicating that both factors contribute to strengthening Mie Sedaap's competitive position in the market. Competitive advantage was also shown to have a positive and significant influence on purchase intention, confirming that competitive advantage is a strong driving factor in consumer purchasing decisions. The results of the mediation analysis revealed that competitive advantage significantly mediated the relationship between brand equity and product innovation on purchase intention. This finding suggests that brand strengthening and product innovation will be more optimal if accompanied by a strategy to increase competitiveness. The practical implication of this study is the importance for Mie Sedaap producers to maintain brand strength, carry out product innovations relevant to market needs, and strengthen differentiation strategies to encourage purchase intention.

From a consumer benefit perspective, these findings assure that brand strengthening and product innovation can enhance the quality of the consumption experience, expand the choice of variants, and add functional and emotional value to purchased products. Meanwhile, for companies, the results of this study can form the basis for more effective marketing strategies to maintain customer loyalty, increase market competitiveness, and drive sustainable sales growth. However, this study has limitations because it only focuses on one instant noodle brand and one research area, so the results may not necessarily represent conditions in other regions or brands. Future research is recommended to expand the scope of research objects and locations, and add variables such as brand trust, customer satisfaction, or perceived value to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing purchase intention.

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