

Strategy for Strengthening Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in Facing the Free Trade Era

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Abstract. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) have an important and strategic role in Indonesia’s economy. But the competitiveness of MSME in Indonesia is still lower compared to those of developed countries. This study aims to improve the MSME brand strategy established at Qlapa.com. This research is quantitative with a consumer survey approach on Qlapa.com, while data analysis uses Partial Least Square. The results show that Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) has a significant influence on purchasing decisions; consumer psychology has a significant influence on purchasing decisions; consumer psychology has an influence on the formation of CBBE; CBBE has a moderating role with a significant mediating influence on changes in acquisition results; and CBBE has a moderating role with imperfect mediation effects on the formation of purchasing decisions for MSME products. Therefore, to improve the MSME brand strategy established at Qlapa.com, it is necessary to increase the influence of CBBE on purchasing decisions for MSME products.

Keywords: CBBE, MSME, purchase decision.

Introduction

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in Indonesia play a very important and strategic role in the structure of the economy. Apart from playing a role in economic development and employment, MSMEs have been able to make their existence in the Indonesian economy.

Statistical data have shown that in 2013, MSMEs in Indonesia were able to contribute of 5.440 trillion rupiahs (at current prices) to national GDP, absorb employment of 114.14 million people, and attract investment of 1,655.2 trillion rupiahs. The contribution of MSMEs to National GDP in 2013 was 57.6 percent of which 30.3 percent came from micro-enterprises, 12.8 percent came from small businesses, and 14.5 percent came from medium-sized businesses ((Badrudin, 2012); (Susilo, 2010); (Syukriah & Hamdani, 2013)). According to the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs, the graph of growth in number of business units for the period 2008 - 2014 is given in Figure 1.

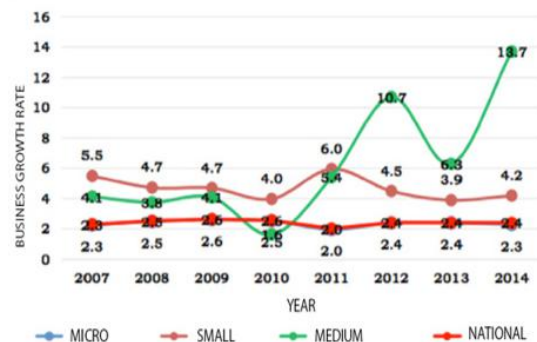


Figure 1. Graph of Growth in the Number of Business Units, 2008 - 2014

The competitiveness of MSMEs in Indonesia is still the lowest compared to other developed countries. The study conducted by Cohen and Stretch in (Suntivong, 2014) reveals that most of the problems faced by SME owners are marketing problems. If the competitiveness of SMEs can be increased, the economic condition of a country will experience significant progress (Yanah, Nakhwatunnisa,

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Accredited S2 based on the decree No.10/E/KPT/2019 until 2024. Indexed by DOAJ, Sinta, Garuda, Crossreff, Dimensions

& Sukarno, 2018). Competitiveness is measured through index score between 1.0 (lowest competitiveness) and 10.0 (highest competitiveness) which is developed based on a number of factors including the technology used, the production methods applied, and the types of products made which all contain important element, namely technology. Indonesia is one of the countries whose SMEs have low competitiveness with index scores below 4, one of the countries that have the lowest competitiveness index compared to the other 13 APEC countries ((Maruta, Andi, & Nanis, 2017); (Rifai, Indrihastuti, Sayekti, & Gunawan, 2017)).

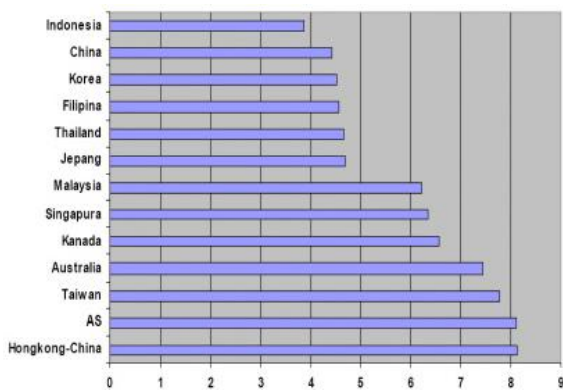


Figure 2. Graph of Competitiveness in a Number of APEC Countries 2011-2012 (APEC, 2006)

In connection with free trade, Indonesia in January 2010 has implemented the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA) agreement. One of the effects of CAFTA agreement is the flood of Chinese products in Indonesian market, both offline and online, and foreign products, including those that are competitors of Indonesia’s MSME products. The enactment of Asean Economic Community (MEA) agreement starting in 2015 is a challenge and also an opportunity for products produced by Indonesian MSMEs. Thus, increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs becomes the main factor in facing challenges and maximizing opportunities for the MEA and CAFTA.

The government cooperates with e-commerce to enable the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to access the internet. Foreign products still control around 60% of the e-commerce market, while the share of SMEs has only reached 40%. To overcome that, a massive increase needs to be made (Rifai et al., 2017).

The Minister of Communication and Information stated that the value of e-commerce transactions in 2015 reached IDR

45.50 trillion, while the government targets the value of e-commerce transactions to reach US \$ 130 billion by 2020. From these data it can be seen that the e-commerce market is very potential and e-commerce-based companies must implement the right strategies to excel in e-commerce industry (Syukriah & Hamdani, 2013). Based on a survey conducted by Nielsen Global Survey of e-Commerce in 2014, internet users and online purchases in Indonesia are given in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Graph of Internet Users and Online Purchases in Indonesia

This figure is not surprising because based on data, internet users in Indonesia spend more than five hours each day accessing the internet. Then, 4 out of 15 internet users in Indonesia access e-commerce sites or shop online one to three times each week. It means the online buyer is on average spending at least once in a month. According to a 2014 survey conducted by TNS Indonesia, the online shopping behavior of internet users in Indonesia is very compatible with the characteristics of handmade products because 78% of the items purchased are fashion. One of the e-commerce sites of Indonesian handmade products that is currently developing in Indonesia is Qlapa.com and has accommodated 4,000 MSMEs that offer hundreds of thousands of Indonesian local handicraft products. Number of MSMEs that have penetrated e-commerce sector is still relatively low, reaching only 6-7%. These MSMEs needs supports to be able to explore the potential of digital marketing and expand the Indonesian economy (Yanah et al., 2018).

In this study, a conceptual model and effective brand equity implementation strategy will be developed to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs joined in Qlapa.com in order to face competition in the MEA and CAFTA era (Syukriah & Hamdani, 2013).

Based on the above description, the formulation of the research problem is as

follows: (1) How is the influence of customer-based brand equity on purchasing decisions for MSME products incorporated in Qlapa.com?; (2) How is the influence of consumer psychology on the formation of purchasing decisions for MSME products incorporated in Qlapa.com in response to facing free competition in the MEA and CAFTA era?; (3) What is the influence of consumer psychology on the formation of MSME brand equity incorporated in Qlapa.com in an effort to increase competitiveness to face free competition in the MEA and CAFTA era?; and (4) Does the Customer Base Brand Equity mediate the influence of Consumer Psychology on the formation of purchasing decisions for MSME products incorporated in Qlapa.com in response to facing free competition in the MEA and CAFTA era?

Based on the description of problems mentioned above, this research was conducted with the following objectives: (1) Analyzing the influence of customer-based brand equity on purchasing decisions for MSME products incorporated in Qlapa.com; (2) Developing effective brand conceptual reinforcement models to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs incorporated in Qlapa.com in facing the MEA and CAFTA competition era based on consumer psychology; (3) Mapping the influence of consumer psychology in the formation of customer base brand equity in MSME products that are currently incorporated in Qlapa.com as a strategy to face competition in the MEA and CAFTA era; and (4) Explain the role of Customer Base Brand Equity as a mediator that influences the formation of purchasing decisions for MSME products incorporated in Qlapa.com in response to facing free competition in MEA and CAFTA era.

Based on the partial least square test, it can be concluded that the customer base brand equity has a significant effect on the purchase decisions of MSME products incorporated in Qlapa.com with an effect of 44.1%.

The concept of Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) is an equity approach of a brand based on the perspective of its consumers. According to Keller, the basic concept of CBBE is the strength of a brand based on consumer experience of what has been learned, perceived, noticed, and captured related to that brand for some time. The definition of consumer-based brand equity is a form of brand differentiation in brand knowledge as a result of brand-

consumer experience. Keller pointed out the process of the steps in building a brand, arranging the right brand identity, creating brand meaning in accordance with what was formulated, stimulating the expected response of the brand, and establishing the right brand relations with consumers. There are four important questions about the brand: (1) What are the identities of the brand; (2) What are the messages from the brand to be conveyed to the public; (3) What are the public images that can be caused by the brand; and (4) What is the reciprocal relationship between the brand and the public. Referring to Keller (2013), graph of CBBE pyramid as given in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Graph of CBBE Pyramid

The main assumption of Keller’s model (2013) is that the strengths of brands lie on what has been learned, perceived, noticed, and captured by consumers related to the brand as a result of consumer experience for some time. A brand is said to have a positive CBBE when consumers respond better to the commodities offered. In addition, when viewed from the way the product is marketed, CBBE positively has an identifiable brand. Referring to what Keller said, the most important thing to be considered in building brand equity is the message to convey to the consumers which includes knowledge and description of the brand. Brand equity will be successfully built when the consumers have a high level of knowledge and description of a brand, has strong reciprocal associations, positive images, and is always remembered.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2008) state: “Psychological characteristics refer to the characteristics of self or the essence of individual consumers” ((Schiffman & Leslie, 2008)). According to Khotler & Armstrong (2008): “psychology can be interpreted as science that seeks to measure, explain, and sometimes change the behavior of humans

and other creatures". From those definitions above, the researchers can conclude that the psychological consumer is a behavior driven by the soul/mental of consumer to do all the activities. Choices or Consumer purchasing choices or decisions are influenced by four main psychological factors, namely: motivation, perception, learning, and trust / attitude (Khotler & Armstrong, 2008).

This stage is carried out in the purchasing decision process where a consumer actually buys the product. In previous stage, consumers were evaluated by forming preferences among a set of selected brands. Likewise, consumers can have the desire to purchase a lot of selected brands. In carrying out the intention of purchase, consumers can form five sub-decisions namely brand, distributor, quantity, time, and payment method. Purchasing decisions consist of brand selection, channel choice, number of purchases, and method of payment.

Based on research background and some basic theories as well as an understanding of previous research, then the description of conceptual framework in this study is as Figure 5.

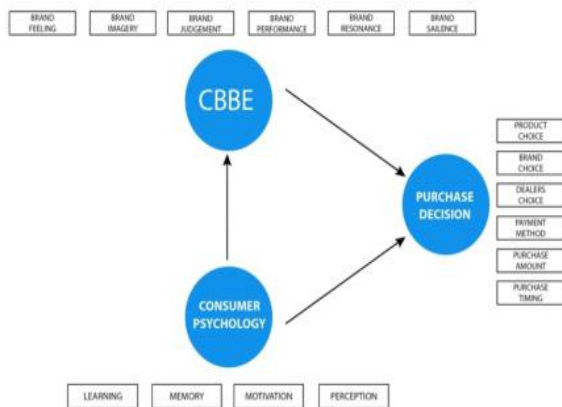


Figure 5. Conceptual Framework.

Based on the research framework in Figure 5, the hypothesis of this research is described as follows:

- H1: Customer Based Brand Equity has a significant positive impact on the purchase decision.
- H2: Consumer psychology has a significant positive impact on the purchase decision.
- H3: Consumer psychology has a significant positive impact on the establishment of Customer Base Brand Equity.
- H4: Customer Base Brand Equity mediates the influence of Consumer Psychology on Purchase Decision.

Research Methodology

This study is quantitative with survey research approach where questionnaires are carried out using online and offline surveys to 100 consumers who have made transactions at Qlapa.com. Number of respondents used sample measurement guidelines of Bernoulli formula in (Sumi, 2017) with the results of $n = 96.4$. To facilitate the distribution of questionnaires, number of samples rounded up to 100 respondents. Furthermore, the data obtained is processed using Partial Least Square (PLS) analysis technique. PLS is considered effective because it has the advantage of being able to analyze various types of data scales (nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio) and using easily adjusted assumptions (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004).

Analysis stage using Partial Least Square (PLS)-SEM must at least go through six step processes where each step will affect the next stage. The stages consist of: conceptualization of the model, determining the method of algorithm analysis, determining the method of resampling, drawing path diagrams, evaluating models, and testing the hypotheses ((Ahmad, Zulkurnain, & Khairushalimi, 2016); (Morard & Simonin, 2016)). Referring to Ahmad et al., (2016), the stages of analysis using PLS-SEM can be seen in Figure 6.

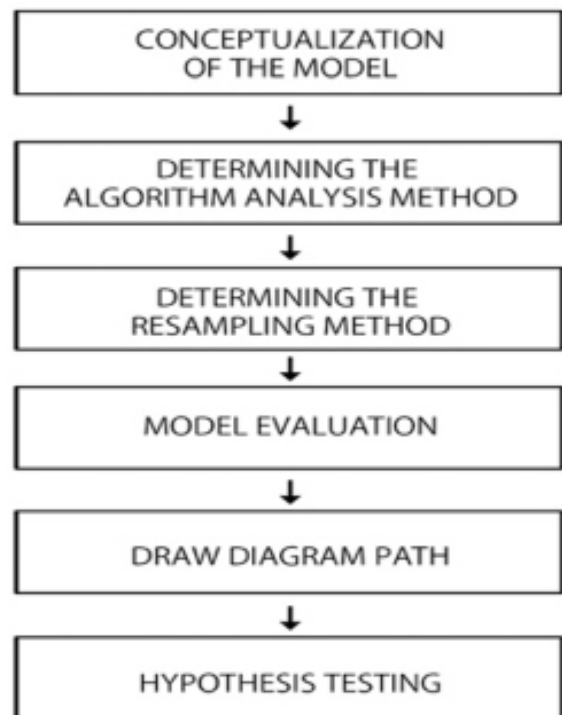


Figure 6. Stage of Analysis Using PLS-SEM

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the profile data of 100 respondents of in this study. Demographic data on respondents' profiles consist of gender, age, education and resources.

**Table 1
Sex and Age of Respondents**

Profile	F	(%)
Sex		
• Man	39	39%
• Women	61	61%
Total	100	100%
Age		
• 15 Yo - 20 Yo	3	3%
• 21 Yo - 26 Yo	55	55%
• 27 Yo - 32 Yo	32	32%
• 33 Yo - 38 Yo	7	7%
• 39 Yo - 44 Yo	1	1%
• 45 Yo - 51 Yo	1	1%
• > 58 Yo	1	1%
Total	100	100%
Education		
• Senior High school	22	22%
• Undergraduate	68	68%
• Master Degree	10	10%
Total	100	100
Resources		
• Social Media	17	17%
• Word of Mouth	5	5%
• WhatsApp	1	1%
• Google Ads	5	5%
• Friend	3	3%
• Blog	1	1%
• E-Paper	1	1%
• TV		

Evaluation of Goodness of Fit Measurement Model (Outer Model)

In SmartPLS analysis technique, validating the outer model is done by using

three criteria, namely: convergence validation test, discrimination validation test, and composition reliability test. Convergence validation test was conducted using a measure of correlation between component scores which was carried out with the help of SmartPLS Software. Ahmad et al. (2016) said that at the initial stage of research on the development of a measurement scale, the loading factor of 0.5-0.6 was considered sufficient. Convergent validity test with reflective indicator approach can be seen by the number of weighting factors for each indicator which is determined based on the psychology of the consumer, the customer base brand equity, and purchasing decisions ((Högström, Gustafsson, & Tronvoll, 2015); (Rahab, 2009)). The convergent validity test results are presented in the Figure 7.

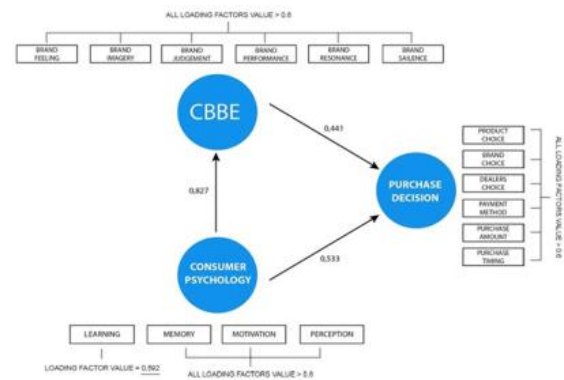


Figure 7. Convergent Validity Test Results Based on Factor Load

Based on number of weighting factors determined, it can be inferred that consumer psychology extract is one item that has a loading factor value below 0.60 which is L1 (Learning) of 0.592, but this is still considered adequate. On reflective indicator that mentions the test criteria, the indicator is considered to meet the convergent validity requirements if it has a value of loading

**Table 2
Average Variance Value Extracted**

Variables	Cronbach'sAI	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
CBBE	0.967	0.969	0.970	0.633
Consumer Psychology	0.827	0.849	0.870	0.595
Purchase Decision	0.960	0.962	0.965	0.664

factors $L > 0.50$. Based on the testing criteria for the value of loading factors, there is one item worth above 0.50 but below 0.6, so that there is no need to eliminate the items in the construct of consumer base brand equity.

In this study, the value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construction is greater than 50%. Thus, from model testing, it can be concluded convincingly that it is a valid convergence. Each construct has an AVE value of 0.633 in CBBE, 0.595 in the construct of consumer psychology, and 0.664 in the construct of purchase decision.

Since there is no problem with convergence validity, then the following variables are tested for problems related to discriminant validity. Testing the validity of discriminant is done by comparing the cr square root with the correlation value between constructs (Wang, French, & Clay, 2017).

Table 3
Value of Discriminant Validity

Variables	CBBE	Consumer Psychology	Purchase Decision
CBBE	0.795		
Consumer Psychology	0.827	0.772	
Purchase Decision	0.882	0.898	0.815

Observing table 3, it can be explained that the square root value of AVE (0.795; 0.772 and 0.815) shows that the value is greater than the correlation of each construct. To be more convincing about the level of significance associated with measurement, the next step of evaluating the external model is to test the unidimensionality of the model.

The unidimensionality test was performed using a measure of composition reliability and Cronbach alpha. Related to these two measures, the limit value given is 0.7.

Table 4
Composite Reliability Value

Variables	Composite Reliability
CBBE	0.970
Consumer Psychology	0.870
Purchase Decision	0.965

The calculation results in Table 4 illustrate that all constructs have a value of composition reliability greater than

0.7. Therefore, the level of reliability/ unidimensionality in the model built is quite significant.

Evaluation of Outer Model Based on R Square

Evaluation of the model can be done using three methods of, and (Tenenhaus et al., 2004). The results of the R Square calculation are given in Table 5.

Table 5
Value of R Square

Variables	Values
CBBE	0.687
Purchase Decision	0.968

Testing the inner model can be done by attention value (appropriate value estimator). To perform the calculation of, the following formula can be used:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2)(1 - R_2^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0.687)(1 - 0.868)$$

$$Q^2 = 0.959.$$

PLS-SEM technique is used to find the Goodness of Fit () value. Unlike CB-SEM, GoF values generated in PLS-SEM must be traced manually.

$$GoF = \sqrt{AVE \times R^2}$$

$$GoF = 0.699.$$

According to (Tenenhaus, Amato, & Vinzi, 2000), the small values of = 0.1; medium = 0.25, and large > 0.38. describe the compatibility degree of data with model estimator. The analysis shows that Goodness of Fit () generated value of 0.699 in the large category. Result of, and testing indicates that the model estimator produced is strong, meaning that the model estimator parameters are fixed and relatively unchanged when the sample is reduced or added to the total population. Hence, the next hypothesis test can be performed (Ahmad et al., 2016).

Bootstrapping Test Results

Performing a hypothesis test can be seen through the bootstrapping test as illustrated in Table 6.

From the bootstrapping test results,

Table 6
Bootstrapping Test Results

Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistic (Q2)	P-Values
CBBE Purchase	0.441	0.455	0.115	3.845	0.000
Consumer Psychology > CBBE	0.827	0.833	0.039	21.137	0.000
Consumer Psychology > Purchase Decision	0.533	0.519	0.116	4.951	0.000

it can be seen that the influence of CBBE on Purchase Decision has the path value coefficient of 0.441, with significant influence ($t = 3.845$; $p < 0.005$). Influence factor of Consumer Psychology on CBBE has the path value coefficient of 0.827, with a significant influence ($t = 21.137$; $p < 0.005$). Influence factor of Consumer Psychology to Purchase Decision has the path value coefficient of 0.533, with a significant influence ($t = 4.951$; $p < 0.005$). Results of this hypothesis test can answer the formulation problem in point 1.2 and 3. To examine the indirect effects as being asked in the fourth problem formulation needs further testing. Furthermore, the indirect effect test can be carried out based on a formula introduced by Kenny and Baron in 1986 (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004).

According to Kenny and Baron, investigating the indirect effects needs three variables to be considered, namely predictors, decision criteria, and mediators. Indirect influence tests are carried out in four stages. The first test is the direct influence of predictors on decision criteria. The results of the indirect effect test model as shown in Figure 8.

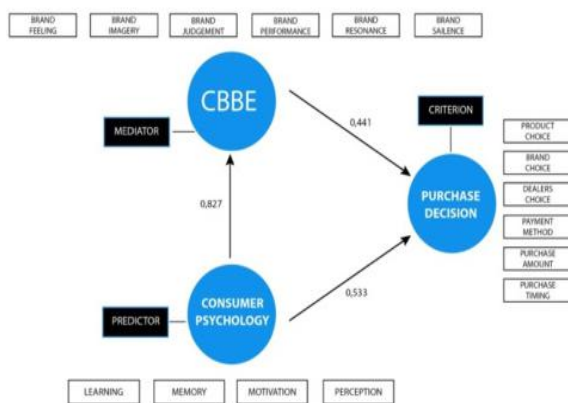


Figure 8. Indirect Effect Test Model

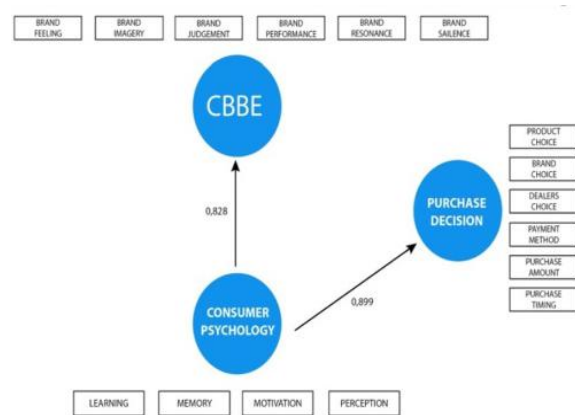


Figure 9. Direct Influence Model of Predictors on the Criteria

The first step shows that Customer Psychology produces a value of direct influence on the Purchase Decision of 0.899.

Then, the second and third step are proceed to see whether the predictor has an influence on the predictors and mediators that indicates an influence on decision criteria.

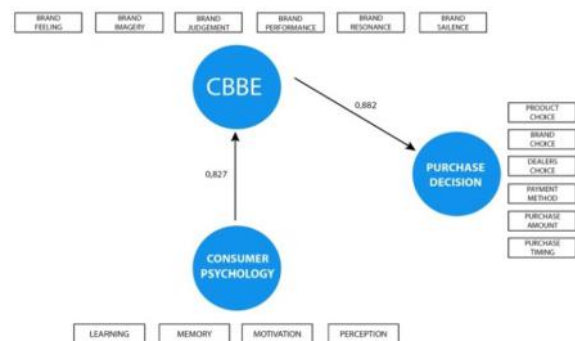


Figure 10. Model of Influence of Predictors on Mediators and the Influence of Mediators on Decision Criteria

The second step shows that the predictor (Customer Psychology) influences

the mediator (Customer Base Brand Equity), and the third step shows that the mediator influences the decision criteria (Purchase Decision). By following the steps of Kenny and Baron in 1986 at Haenlein and Kaplan (2004), it appears that the Customer Base Brand Equity mediates the effect of Customer Psychology on the Purchase decision. To determine whether Customer-Based Brand Equity provides perfect mediation (total mediation) or partial mediation, it can be done based on fourth steps. The fourth step determines whether the predictor (Customer Psychology) has an effect on criterion (Purchase decision) while still holding the influence of mediator (Customer Base Brand Equity).

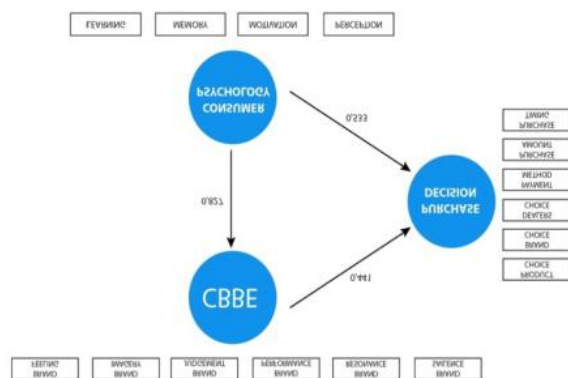


Figure 11. Full Partial Mediation Test Model

In Figure 11 only illustrates the final weight of the assessment, different from Figure 7 which explains the load factor for each forming indicator. The indicator weight shows how much influence each indicator has in forming a weight for each variable. The test indicates that when the mediator influence is included in the model, Customer Psychology does not significantly influence the Purchasing Decision. This is different from the first step when the influence of mediator is not included in the model. With the loss of direct influence from the predictor (Customer Psychology) on criterion (Purchase Decision), it can be said that the Customer Base Equity Brand has an imperfect mediation effect (non full mediation).

Conclusions

This research is carried out the strategy of strengthening MSME to face the free trade era, with the object of research are MSME as members of Qlapa.com. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that: (1) Customer based brand equity and consumer psychology have

a significant effect on the purchase decisions of MSME products; (2) Consumer psychology has a significant influence on the formation of customer base brand equity in MSME products; (3) Customer base brand equity has a moderate role with a significant part of the influence of mediation on the formation of purchasing decisions for MSME products; (4) Customer-based brand equity has a moderate role with imperfect mediation effects in the formation of purchasing decisions for MSME products. Therefore, to improve the MSME brand strategy incorporated in Qlapa.com, it is necessary to increase the influence of customer base brand equity on purchasing decisions for MSME products.

The first, this study only involves three variables, namely: customer base brand equity, consumer psychology, and purchasing decisions, and also only for MSME who are members of Qlapa.com. The next research is expected to involve more than three variables, and not only for MSMEs who are members of Qlapa.com. The second, research shows that perceptions have the greatest value and it can be interpreted that decision making will be dominated by perceptions forms, therefore MSME at Qlapa.com must consider these factors.

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