The Impact of Market Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning on Sales Volume Growth with Purchase Decision as a Mediating Variable at PT. Suud Group 88, Bondowoso Regency, Indonesia

Adinda Jennifer Pardede 1*, Toni Herlambang 2 and Budi Santoso 3

[1]Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember; adindajennifer@yahoo.co.id
[2]Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember, toniherlambang@unmuhjember.ac.id
[3]Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember, budisantoso@unmuhjember.ac.id

*Correspondence: Adinda Jennifer Pardede

Email: adindajennifer@yahoo.co.id

Abstract: This study examines the impact of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) on sales volume growth at PT. Suud Group 88, with purchase decisions as a mediating variable. The research employs a quantitative approach using WarpPLS to analyze the relationships between these variables. Data were collected from management and customers of PT. Suud Group 88 in Bondowoso, Indonesia. The findings reveal that effective segmentation enables the company to target specific consumer groups, improving marketing efficiency and customer satisfaction. Targeting strategies are shown to significantly enhance consumer engagement by focusing on high-potential segments, while positioning differentiates the company's products from competitors, shaping consumer perceptions, fostering loyalty, and increasing purchase decisions. The mediation analysis confirms that purchase decisions significantly influence the relationship between STP strategies and sales volume growth, highlighting the importance of aligning product offerings with consumer preferences to optimize marketing outcomes. This study contributes to the literature by applying STP strategies to the tobacco industry, offering insights into how traditional sectors can adopt modern marketing frameworks to achieve competitive advantage and sustain business growth. Additionally, the findings suggest that businesses across industries can benefit from incorporating consumer purchase decision analysis into their STP strategies to drive growth, enhance market positioning, and ensure long-term sustainability in competitive markets

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Marketing Strategies, Market Segmentation

INTRODUCTION

Management involves a series of processes such as planning, organizing, directing, and controlling organizational resources to achieve set objectives efficiently and effectively (Robbins & Coulter, 2020). These processes are essential for maintaining sustainability and growth, especially in highly competitive environments (Daft & Macintosh, 2019). Marketing management, in particular, is the process of planning and implementing strategies around product concepts, pricing, promotion, and distribution to meet both organizational and consumer goals (Kotler et al., 2019). This involves market analysis, setting target markets, and developing appropriate marketing strategies (Lamb et al., 2020). For PT. Suud Group 88, effective marketing management is critical in managing the production and distribution of cigarettes in an increasingly competitive market (Sari et al., 2021).

Bondowoso, located in East Java, Indonesia, is not only known for its natural beauty but also for its economic role, particularly in the cigarette industry. The region is a key center for cigarette production in East Java,

leveraging local skilled labor and strong infrastructure for distribution. PT. Suud Group 88, founded in 1957, plays a vital role in this industry by producing high-quality cigarettes at affordable prices, catering to various market segments with brands such as Golden Taste 88 and Revo Kretek 88. The company has modern, integrated production facilities with advanced technology and strict quality control systems, ensuring high production standards and compliance with industry regulations. In addition to its business operations, PT. Suud Group 88 is committed to social responsibility, engaging in community development programs and environmental conservation efforts.

The company's sales performance from 2019 to 2023 has shown significant fluctuations, raising questions about the effectiveness of its marketing strategies and external market factors. In 2019, PT. Suud Group 88 achieved a slight 1% increase in sales volume, followed by an 11% rise in 2020. However, the company faced a sharp 20% decline in sales in 2021, with an additional 10% drop in 2022, before recovering with a 30% increase in 2023. These fluctuations suggest the need for further investigation into the company's marketing strategies, particularly its approach to market segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP), and how these factors influence sales volume. The variability in sales also points to the potential impact of purchase decisions as a mediating variable in the relationship between STP strategies and sales outcomes.

Market segmentation is a key strategy in marketing that divides a broad market into smaller, distinct groups based on demographic, geographic, psychographic, or behavioral factors (Christian & Qi, 2022). By segmenting the market, companies can tailor their marketing efforts to meet the specific needs of each segment, leading to more efficient resource allocation and higher customer satisfaction (Sintaro et al., 2020). Effective segmentation also helps companies optimize their promotional strategies and product offerings, ultimately enhancing sales performance (Sintaro et al., 2020). Targeting, on the other hand, allows companies to focus on the most profitable segments, ensuring that marketing efforts are directed where they are most likely to yield returns (Sumarni, 2022). Through precise targeting, companies can improve customer engagement and conversion rates, contributing to higher sales volumes (Mandasari et al., 2021). Positioning is the process of creating a unique and favorable image of the product in the minds of consumers, differentiating it from competitors (Hanifah & Pantas, 2022). Proper positioning enables companies to align their brand with the values and preferences of their target audience, enhancing brand loyalty and driving sales growth (Zeeva, 2023).

Research has shown that the implementation of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies has a significant impact on sales performance. Several studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between STP strategies and sales volume increases (Basri, 2023; Mohammadian & Makhani, 2019). Specifically, segmentation enables companies to identify and serve lucrative market segments, leading to increased market penetration and sales (Evdokimova, 2021). Additionally, targeting has been shown to improve the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, leading to higher conversion rates and sales (Feng et al., 2020). Positioning, when aligned with consumer preferences, enhances brand perception and increases the likelihood of purchase decisions (Manik, 2021; Sarita et al., 2022). However, some studies indicate that external factors, such as market competition and consumer behavior changes, may moderate the direct impact of STP strategies on sales volume (Chevhanova & Vasiuta, 2021). This indicates the need for a deeper understanding of how these strategies interact with other variables, such as purchase decisions, to affect sales performance.

Purchase decisions are a critical factor in the success of marketing strategies, as they reflect the consumer's final choice to buy a product based on a variety of factors, including quality, price, and brand perception (Saputra & Roswaty, 2020). The decision-making process is influenced by both functional and emotional considerations, such as the perceived value of the product and the trustworthiness of the brand (Juliana, 2019). Research has shown that purchase decisions have a significant positive impact on sales volume (Arswani &

Albanna, 2022). However, external factors such as shifts in consumer preferences or economic conditions can alter the strength of this relationship, highlighting the complexity of consumer behavior in dynamic markets (Sakinah et al., 2023). For PT. Suud Group 88, understanding the factors that drive purchase decisions is crucial for aligning marketing strategies with consumer expectations and maximizing sales.

Despite the established importance of market segmentation, targeting, positioning, and purchase decisions, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding their combined effects on sales volume, particularly in the tobacco industry. While numerous studies have explored the individual components of the STP framework or the direct relationship between marketing strategies and sales performance, few have examined how purchase decisions mediate the relationship between STP strategies and sales volume (Gea, 2022; Mirnasari & Yamin, 2021). Additionally, the mixed findings in previous research indicate that the impact of these strategies may vary depending on industry context and external market conditions (Basri, 2023; Sudarso, 2022). This research aims to address these gaps by investigating the influence of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning on sales volume, with purchase decision as a mediating variable, at PT. Suud Group 88. By exploring these relationships, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how STP strategies can be optimized to drive sales growth in a competitive market. The insights gained from this research will not only benefit PT. Suud Group 88 in refining its marketing strategies but also contribute to the broader body of knowledge on marketing strategy and sales performance in industries facing similar challenges

METHOD

The research design is a systematic plan to test the influence of segmentation, targeting, and positioning on sales volume growth, with purchase decisions as an intervening variable at PT. Suud Group 88, Bondowoso Regency. This study adopts a quantitative approach, utilizing a survey method to collect data from respondents, including management and customers of PT. Suud Group 88. A quantitative approach allows for objective measurement and statistical analysis of the relationships between variables. WarpPLS, a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) software, is used for data analysis. PLS-SEM is chosen for its ability to handle multicollinearity issues and analyze complex relationships between latent variables. The population includes all management and customers of PT. Suud Group 88, with purposive sampling selecting respondents who possess relevant knowledge about the variables being studied. The primary instrument is a Likert-scale questionnaire designed to assess these variables.

Data collected through the survey will undergo measurement and structural model testing using WarpPLS. Measurement model testing evaluates the validity and reliability of the constructs, focusing on convergent and discriminant validity, using metrics like Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha will assess construct reliability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

At this stage, an evaluation of the inner model is conducted to test the causal relationships between latent variables, including direct effects, indirect effects, and mediation effects. The inner model assesses how strongly the independent variables market segmentation, targeting, and positioning (X1, X2, X3) influence the dependent variables, such as purchase decisions (Z) and sales volume increase (Y). This step is crucial to understanding the extent to which these marketing strategies impact customer behavior and overall business performance.
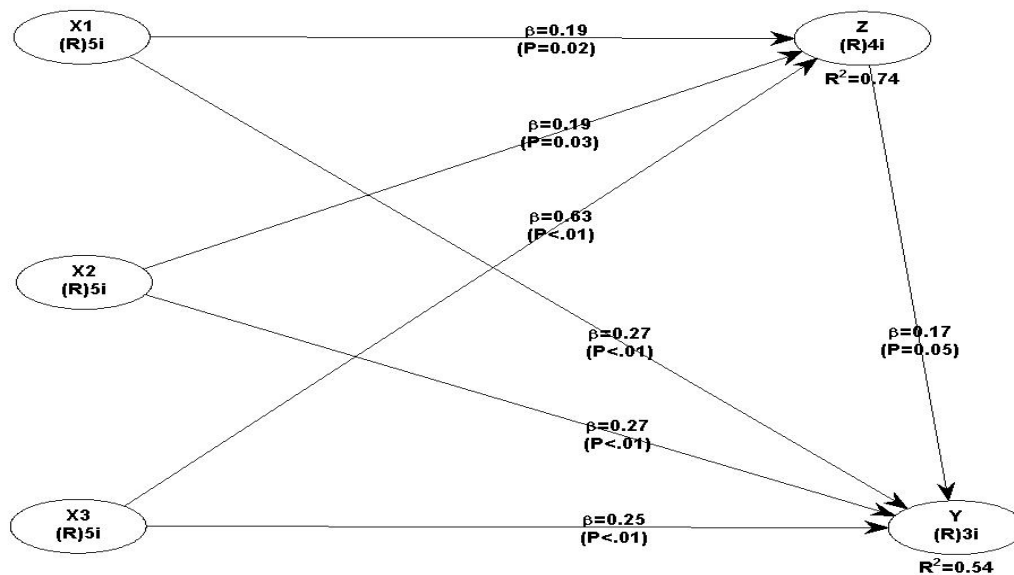
Figure 2: Path Coefficients

Figure 2 illustrates the results of the path analysis, depicting the relationships between the variables of market segmentation (X1), targeting (X2), positioning (X3), purchase decision (Z), and sales volume increase (Y). The analysis shows that X1, X2, and X3 have direct effects on Z, with path coefficients (β) of 0.19, 0.19, and 0.63, respectively, all significant at $P < 0.05$. Additionally, Z has a significant effect on Y, with a path coefficient (β) of 0.17 ($P = 0.05$). X1, X2, and X3 also exhibit direct effects on Y, with path coefficients of 0.27, 0.27, and 0.25, respectively. The R^2 value for Z is 0.74, and for Y, it is 0.54, indicating that the model successfully explains a substantial portion of the variability in purchase decisions and sales volume increase.

Table 2: Synthesis of Significance Test Results

Relationship Between Variables	Path Coefficient (β)	P-Value	Description
X1 -> Z	0.193	0.024	Positive and Significant
X2 -> Z	0.190	0.026	Positive and Significant
X3 -> Z	0.633	<0.001	Positive and Significant
X1 -> Y	0.268	0.003	Positive and Significant
X2 -> Y	0.273	0.002	Positive and Significant
X3 -> Y	0.249	0.005	Positive and Significant
Z -> Y	0.165	0.046	Positive and Significant
X1 -> Z -> Y	0.132	0.027	Positive and Significant
X2 -> Z -> Y	0.131	0.030	Positive and Significant
X3 -> Z -> Y	0.105	0.048	Positive and Significant

Table 2 shows that all relationships between the independent variables (Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning) and the mediating variable (Purchase Decision), as well as the dependent variable (Sales Volume Increase), are both positive and significant. The path coefficients indicate that Positioning (X3) has the strongest direct impact on Purchase Decision (Z) and Sales Volume Increase (Y), with coefficients of 0.633 and 0.249, respectively. Additionally, Purchase Decision (Z) positively mediates the relationship between all independent

variables (X1, X2, X3) and Sales Volume Increase (Y), confirming the significant role of Purchase Decision in influencing the overall sales performance. All P-values are below 0.05, validating the statistical significance of these relationships.

Discussions

The Influence of Market Segmentation on Sales Volume

The study found that market segmentation has a significant positive effect on sales volume, with a path coefficient of 0.268 (P = 0.003). This finding supports the research by Nwabufo et al. (2024), which showed that segmentation improves sales performance by targeting distinct consumer needs. Other studies, such as those by Yoseph et al. (2020) and Osei et al. (2021), demonstrated that segmentation can enhance customer satisfaction and drive sales growth across industries, including retail and banking. Kotler & Keller's (2021) segmentation theory emphasizes that dividing a heterogeneous market into smaller, homogeneous groups allows companies to better address consumer preferences, which leads to improved sales outcomes. In the context of PT. Suud Group 88, effective segmentation enables the company to tailor its product offerings to meet the specific needs of different market segments, particularly within the competitive tobacco industry. The novelty of this research lies in its application of segmentation to a traditional, highly regulated industry, showcasing how market segmentation can improve sales volume in the local market of Bondowoso. The findings suggest that segmentation can help PT. Suud Group 88 optimize resource allocation and target more profitable customer groups, leading to sustained business growth.

The Influence of Targeting on Sales Volume

Targeting showed a positive and significant effect on sales volume, with a path coefficient of 0.273 (P = 0.002). This finding aligns with prior research by Basri et al. (2023) and Mandasari et al. (2021), who emphasized that targeting the most profitable market segments leads to higher conversion rates and sales. Additionally, Sumarni (2022) argued that targeting allows companies to allocate resources more efficiently, improving marketing effectiveness. Faturrachman & Ratmono (2022) also found that targeted marketing efforts, including advertising and personal selling, significantly boost sales. In the context of PT. Suud Group 88, targeting the right customer segments, such as those that prefer premium or traditional cigarette products, is crucial for improving sales volume. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the local tobacco market, where targeting specific consumer groups can provide a competitive advantage in an increasingly saturated market. This research suggests that PT. Suud Group 88 can further refine its targeting strategies to enhance customer engagement and drive sales growth in key market segments.

The Influence of Positioning on Sales Volume

Positioning was found to have a significant positive impact on sales volume, with a path coefficient of 0.249 (P = 0.005). This result is consistent with the findings of Hooge et al. (2022), who demonstrated that positioning products around values such as sustainability and authenticity can influence consumer perceptions and drive sales. Other studies, such as those by Hanifah & Pantas (2022) and Adrian et al. (2019), highlighted the importance of effective positioning in differentiating a brand from its competitors, which helps to attract the right market and increase sales. Positioning strategies that align with consumer preferences, such as emphasizing product quality or exclusivity, have been shown to enhance brand loyalty and sales growth (Zeeva, 2023). The novelty of this study is its application to the tobacco industry, where product differentiation plays

a critical role in influencing consumer preferences. For PT. Suud Group 88, positioning its cigarette brands in line with consumer expectations, such as offering premium or traditional kretek products, is essential for maintaining competitive advantage and boosting sales volume. This research suggests that effective positioning strategies can help PT. Suud Group 88 enhance its brand appeal and capture a larger share of the local market.

The Influence of Market Segmentation on Purchase Decisions

Market segmentation had a significant positive effect on purchase decisions, with a path coefficient of 0.193 (P = 0.024). This result aligns with previous studies by Irawati & Prakoso (2022), who found that segmentation tailored to consumer needs positively influences purchasing behavior. Similarly, Sintaro et al. (2020) demonstrated that market segmentation helps companies develop more relevant product offerings, which in turn leads to better purchase decisions. Kotler & Keller (2021) also noted that precise segmentation allows companies to align their marketing efforts with the specific needs and preferences of different consumer groups, improving their decision-making process. The novelty of this research lies in its application of segmentation strategies to the tobacco industry, where consumer preferences are influenced by cultural and demographic factors. For PT. Suud Group 88, understanding the unique needs of each market segment allows the company to create targeted marketing campaigns that effectively influence purchase decisions. This study suggests that segmentation can significantly enhance PT. Suud Group 88's ability to meet consumer expectations and drive purchasing behavior in key market segments.

The Influence of Targeting on Purchase Decisions

Targeting had a significant positive effect on purchase decisions, with a path coefficient of 0.190 (P = 0.026). This finding supports previous research by Feng et al. (2020) and Sumarni (2022), who showed that targeted marketing strategies lead to higher purchase conversion rates by aligning products with consumer needs. Wan et al. (2021) also found that targeted segments are more likely to make purchase decisions because they receive tailored marketing efforts that resonate with their preferences. In the context of PT. Suud Group 88, targeting specific consumer groups with personalized marketing messages such as promoting the quality and heritage of traditional kretek products can significantly influence purchase decisions. The novelty of this study is its focus on the local tobacco industry, where consumer choices are heavily influenced by cultural and regional factors. This research suggests that effective targeting strategies can help PT. Suud Group 88 better meet consumer expectations, leading to higher purchase rates in targeted segments.

The Influence of Positioning on Purchase Decisions

Positioning had a significant positive effect on purchase decisions, with a path coefficient of 0.633 (P < 0.001). This aligns with previous studies by Garachkovska et al. (2021) and Saqib (2020), which found that strong product positioning helps consumers identify offerings that meet their specific needs, leading to increased likelihood of purchase. Fluhrer & Brahm (2023) also demonstrated that positioning strategies that highlight unique product attributes can significantly enhance consumer perceptions, leading to stronger purchasing behavior. In the context of PT. Suud Group 88, positioning its products to emphasize traditional values, quality, and exclusivity can positively influence consumer decisions to purchase their cigarettes. The novelty of this research lies in its application of positioning strategies to the local tobacco industry, where brand perception plays a crucial role in consumer choices. This study suggests that PT. Suud Group 88 can further strengthen its positioning to influence consumer purchase decisions and boost market share in competitive segments.

The Influence of Purchase Decisions on Sales Volume

Purchase decisions were found to have a significant positive effect on sales volume, with a path coefficient of 0.165 (P = 0.046). This result is consistent with the findings of Saputra & Roswaty (2020) and Arswani & Albanna (2022), who demonstrated that positive purchase decisions driven by factors like product quality, price, and brand perception lead to higher sales volumes. Juliana (2019) also noted that purchase decisions are influenced by both functional and emotional factors, such as perceived value and brand trust, which directly impact sales. In the context of PT. Suud Group 88, understanding the factors that drive purchase decisions such as consumer loyalty to traditional kretek products can help the company refine its marketing strategies to boost sales volume. The novelty of this research is its exploration of purchase decisions as a key driver of sales in the tobacco industry. This study suggests that PT. Suud Group 88 can leverage consumer insights to improve purchase decision-making processes, resulting in sustained sales growth.

The Mediation of Purchase Decisions in the Relationship Between Market Segmentation and Sales Volume

The mediating role of purchase decisions in the relationship between market segmentation and sales volume was confirmed, with a path coefficient of 0.132 (P = 0.027). This finding is consistent with previous studies by Manggu & Beni (2021) and Schlegelmilch (2022), who demonstrated that segmentation strategies enhance purchase decisions by aligning product offerings with consumer needs, which subsequently leads to higher sales. Dolnicar et al. (2020) also found that personalized marketing based on segmentation improves purchase decisions and drives sales growth. In the context of PT. Suud Group 88, segmentation strategies that target distinct market segments such as younger consumers or traditional smokers can improve purchase decisions, leading to increased sales. The novelty of this study lies in its application of segmentation strategies to a local tobacco company, where market segmentation plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing behavior and sales performance. This research suggests that PT. Suud Group 88 can enhance its segmentation efforts to drive better purchase decisions and ultimately increase sales volume.

The Mediation of Purchase Decisions in the Relationship Between Targeting and Sales Volume

The mediating effect of purchase decisions in the relationship between targeting and sales volume was significant, with a path coefficient of 0.131 (P = 0.030). This result supports previous studies by Feng et al. (2020) and Wan et al. (2021), which found that targeted marketing strategies improve purchase decisions, leading to higher sales. Research by Cowgill & Dorobantu (2023) also confirmed that precise targeting enhances consumer engagement and purchase behavior, which subsequently drives sales volume. In the context of PT. Suud Group 88, targeting specific consumer segments such as premium cigarette buyers can improve purchase decisions, leading to increased sales. The novelty of this study lies in demonstrating the mediating role of purchase decisions in the tobacco industry, where targeting efforts can significantly influence sales outcomes. This research suggests that PT. Suud Group 88 can refine its targeting strategies to improve purchase decisions and boost overall sales performance.

The Mediation of Purchase Decisions in the Relationship Between Positioning and Sales Volume

The mediation of purchase decisions in the relationship between positioning and sales volume was confirmed, with a path coefficient of 0.105 (P = 0.048). This finding aligns with studies by Milosevic et al. (2019) and Wang et al. (2020), which showed that effective positioning enhances consumer perceptions, leading to stronger purchase decisions and increased sales volume. Hakim (2023) also demonstrated that positioning a product as premium or environmentally friendly positively influences purchase decisions, contributing to sales

growth. In the case of PT. Suud Group 88, positioning their products to align with consumer preferences for traditional, high-quality cigarettes significantly influences purchase decisions, which in turn boosts sales. The novelty of this research lies in its application of positioning strategies in the local tobacco industry, where consumer perceptions are closely linked to brand image and sales performance. This study suggests that PT. Suud Group 88 can further leverage its positioning strategies to enhance consumer purchase decisions, resulting in increased sales volumes

CONCLUSION

This study shows that market segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) significantly influence sales volume growth at PT. Suud Group 88, with purchase decisions acting as a key mediator. Effective segmentation helps the company target distinct consumer groups, while targeting strategies improve engagement by focusing on high-potential segments. Positioning differentiates products, shaping consumer perceptions, driving loyalty, and increasing sales. These findings, applied to the tobacco industry in Bondowoso, offer insights into how traditional sectors can use modern marketing to gain competitive advantage. The study suggests PT. Suud Group 88 refine its STP strategies by aligning product offerings with consumer preferences and monitoring purchase behavior to optimize marketing efforts. These insights extend beyond PT. Suud Group 88, showing that businesses across industries can use STP and consumer behavior analysis to drive growth, improve market positioning, and ensure long-term sustainability in competitive environments.

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