

Assessing Adolescents' Preferences for Contemporary Drink Attributes

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ABSTRACT

The rising popularity of contemporary beverages among adolescents, despite their high sugar content and low nutritional value, has raised significant public health concerns. This study investigates the key factors influencing the consumption of contemporary beverages—such as boba milk tea, cheese tea, milk coffee, and Thai tea—among secondary school students in Bandung, Indonesia. Employing a quantitative, cross-sectional descriptive method with a sample of 110 respondents aged 15–19, data were collected via structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings reveal that price is the most influential factor driving consumption interest (75%), followed by packaging (71%), quality (68%), and brand (68%). Adolescents prioritize affordability and functional packaging features such as portability and spill resistance, while sensory preferences (e.g., taste, temperature, and texture) and customizable options (e.g., sugar and ice levels) enhance perceived quality. Although brand recognition contributes to purchasing decisions, it is secondary to practical and economic considerations. The study underscores the need for targeted health communication strategies and product reformulation to align adolescents' beverage preferences with healthier consumption behaviors. These insights are valuable for stakeholders in the beverage industry and public health sectors aiming to balance market demands with adolescent nutrition education.

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INTRODUCTION

Food and beverages are fundamental human needs, requiring sufficient nutrition and hydration for daily survival (1). Alongside societal advancements, innovations in food and drinks have emerged, with contemporary beverages standing out for their unique flavors and appeal. These popular drinks, often termed *minuman kekinian*, are the result of creative modifications to traditional products.

Adolescents, driven by strong curiosity and a desire for new experiences, are prime consumers of such beverages (2). A study by Kushargina et al. (3) found that 66.67% of high school students consumed boba drinks more frequently than tea or coffee. Similarly, Veronica and Ilmi (4) reported that 89.4% of youth aged 16–24 enjoyed contemporary beverages, with bubble tea as the top choice.

Despite their popularity, contemporary drinks are often high in calories and sugar but low in essential nutrients (5). A single boba milk tea can contain up to 84 grams of sugar—more than twice the recommended daily limit set by the Indonesian Ministry of Health (5).

Interest in these beverages is influenced by various product-related factors. According to Kotler and Keller (6), purchase interest stems from prior experience and is shaped by factors such as quality, brand, packaging, price, availability, and marketing. Natasya et al. (7) emphasized curiosity, convenience, pricing, and packaging as key motivators, while other studies highlight lifestyle, location, and product quality as

additional considerations (8). Astiti and Telagawathi (9) further added that brand image, service channels, and family influence also play roles in consumer decision-making.

Adolescence represents a transitional developmental period between childhood and adulthood, characterized by significant physical, cognitive, and psychosocial changes. Adolescents, typically categorized as individuals aged 11–20 years, are particularly vulnerable to nutritional issues that may impact their health. This vulnerability stems from the substantial physical, cognitive, and behavioral development occurring during this period. These changes cause adolescents to experience numerous shifts in lifestyle and food selection behaviors (10).

Secondary school students generally range in age from sixteen to nineteen years and are in the adolescent developmental stage. Adolescents experiencing both physical and psychological growth are significantly influenced by their social environment. For instance, adolescents aged approximately 12–15 years undergo numerous internal and external changes. Observing their surroundings reveals many adolescents with heightened curiosity regarding social interactions, as they are encountering new phenomena compared to their previous developmental stages.

Curiosity is a natural motivational force in human learning and development, making individuals more responsive to novel stimuli and cognitively demanding tasks. Kashdan et al. (11) differentiate between two forms: curiosity about new experiences and curiosity for deeper exploration of complex subjects. This drive encourages individuals to seek diverse perspectives and accurate information.

Consumption behavior reflects how individuals make choices to meet their needs, though decisions are not always rational and may be driven by desire (12). Adolescents, in particular, are expected to differentiate between needs and wants. Indrianawati and Soesatyo (13) explain that while basic needs are typically prioritized, adolescent consumption patterns are now shaped more by desires, aligning with Dhaliwal et al.'s (14) view on the influence of social trends and peer environments.

Poor dietary habits are common among adolescents, who often prefer fast food and sweet beverages (15). According to Riskesdas (2018), 11.2% of adolescents aged 15–20 consumed instant food daily, and 67.6% consumed it 1–6 times per week. Riskesdas (2013) also reported that 53.1% of Indonesians aged 10+ consumed sweet foods or beverages at least once daily. Laksmi et al. found that 41% of adolescents consumed sweetened drinks daily.

Nuri Utami et al. (16) reported that 21.2% of university students preferred contemporary beverages over water, 36.9% admitted to addiction, and 46.7% attributed their consumption to peer influence. Factors such as personal preference, social circles, accessibility, and media exposure all contribute to consumption behavior (17). Individuals who enjoy sweet drinks tend to consume them more frequently (18).

Peer influence significantly shapes adolescent food and drink choices, as they often mimic their friends' habits for acceptance and bonding (19). Masri (18) also found that peer-driven groups showed higher rates of high-calorie beverage consumption.

While water is sufficient for hydration, the rise of curiosity has driven diversification in drink options, making beverages like coffee and bubble tea part of youth culture. Veronika (4) found that 74% of contemporary drink consumers used toppings—most commonly boba (254 respondents). Eva et al. observed that most respondents consumed boba or coffee drinks 1–3 times per week, with some making it a daily habit.

Contemporary drinks, with their eye-catching packaging and strong social media presence, appeal especially to adolescents. However, their excessive consumption poses health risks, including potential addiction. The combination of novelty, customization, and aesthetic appeal continues to fuel strong interest in these beverages.

Contemporary beverages serve as a term for innovative and popular drinks, distinguished by their taste and unique characteristics. Several types of contemporary beverages include bubble tea, cheese tea, milk coffee, and Thai tea (20).

This study aims to investigate the factors influencing contemporary beverage consumption among secondary school students in Bandung, focusing specifically on quality, brand, packaging, and price factors. The findings will contribute to the understanding of adolescent consumer behavior in the contemporary beverage market and provide insights for both beverage industry stakeholders and public health initiatives addressing youth nutrition.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive research method and cross-sectional design. According to Sugiyono (21), descriptive research methodology aims to determine the value of one or more independent variables without making comparisons or establishing connections between variables. The cross-sectional design was selected for data collection at a single point in time, which was deemed appropriate for examining factors influencing contemporary beverage consumption among secondary school students in Bandung.

Participants

The participants in this study were adolescents attending secondary schools in Bandung, with ages ranging from 15 to 19 years. According to the Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Bandung (bandungkota.bps.go.id), the total population of male and female adolescents aged 15 to 19 years in 2020 was 212,428.

Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of active students currently enrolled in secondary education in Bandung, aged approximately 15-19 years. To determine an appropriate sample size from this population, the Slovin formula was used with a sampling error tolerance of 0.1 (or 10%). Based on a total population of 212,428, the calculation showed that the required sample size was approximately 100 respondents.

Rounding to 100 samples and adding a 10% allowance for potential non-responses resulted in a final sample size of 110 participants. The inclusion criteria specified male or female adolescents, aged 15 to 19 years, currently enrolled in secondary education in Bandung, who had previously consumed contemporary beverages.

This study utilized quota sampling technique, which according to Sugiyono (22), is a method for determining samples from a population with specific characteristics until the desired quota is achieved. Data collection concluded once the predetermined quota of 110 participants was reached.

Instrument

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire. According to Sugiyono (23), a questionnaire is a data collection technique implemented by providing a set of written questions or statements for respondents to answer. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Form, a web-based application that enables individuals to provide responses to questions or surveys quickly and remotely using internet-connected computers, laptops, or mobile phones (24).

The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items with five predetermined response options: strongly agree, agree, moderately agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was classified as closed-ended because alternative answers were provided, allowing respondents to select the option that best matched or most closely aligned with their preference (25).

The questions included in the questionnaire were related to factors influencing secondary school students' interest in consuming contemporary beverages in Bandung. To measure consumer satisfaction, a Likert scale was employed. According to Sugiyono (22), the Likert scale is used to measure attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals regarding social phenomena. The scoring system applied was as follows. A score of 5 was given if consumers strongly agree, a score of 4 if consumers agree, a score of 3 if consumers moderately agree, a score of 2 if consumers disagree, and a score of 1 if consumers strongly disagree.

Data Analysis

According to Sugiyono (22), data analysis begins after data collection and includes grouping responses by variables and respondent types, tabulating and presenting them, and performing calculations to answer research questions and objectives. Descriptive statistical techniques are employed to summarize the data without drawing general conclusions (26).

To calculate ideal scores, Sugiyono's (27) formulas were used by determining maximum and minimum index values based on score ranges and number of respondents. These were converted into percentages, used to calculate the variable range, and divided into class intervals. Each variable's percentage score was derived by dividing the total actual score by the maximum possible score, then multiplying by 100%. Finally, the results were interpreted using a classification table based on criteria from Sugiyono (23).

Table 1. Interpretation Criteria for Consumption Interest Variable Factors

Interpretation Criteria (%)	Category
20 - 35	Very Uninterested
36 - 51	Uninterested
52 - 67	Moderately Interested
68 - 83	Interested
84 - 100	Very Interested

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This study surveyed 110 secondary school adolescents in Bandung City who consumed contemporary beverages (boba milk tea, cheese tea, coffee milk, and Thai tea) at least once weekly. The demographic

analysis revealed that 64% of respondents were female and 36% were male. Age distribution showed 79% were 15-17 years old, while 21% were 18-19 years old.

Regarding beverage preferences, 37% preferred boba milk tea, 32% chose cheese tea, 21% selected coffee milk, and 10% favored Thai tea. Daily pocket money distribution showed 44% received Rp 8,000-20,000, 39% received Rp 21,000-40,000, 11% received Rp 41,000-60,000, 5% received Rp 61,000-80,000, and 1% received Rp 81,000-100,000. The average pocket money was Rp 34,000 per day.

Table 2. Interpretation Criteria for Consumption Interest Variable Factors

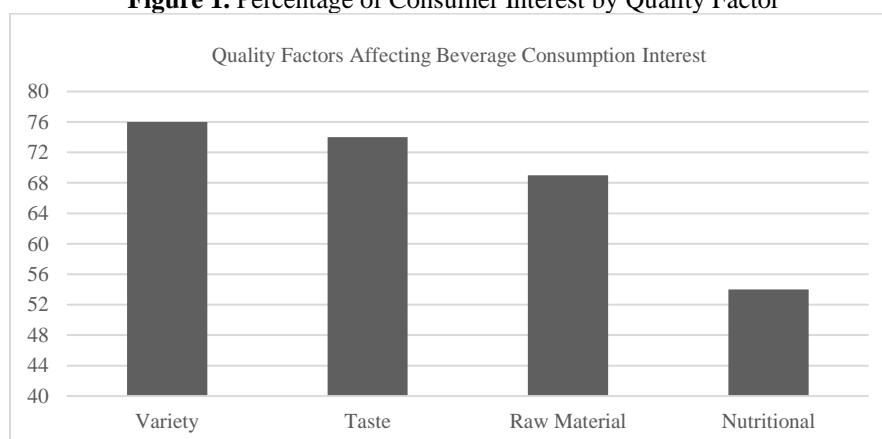
Category	Description	Percentage/Value
Demographic Characteristics		
Gender	Female	64%
	Male	36%
Age of Respondents	15-17 years	79%
Pocket Money	Average	IDR 34,000/day
	Highest	IDR 100,000/day
	Lowest	IDR 8,000/day
Beverage Preferences		
Favorite Beverage Type	Boba Milk Tea	37%
	Cheese Tea	32%
	Others	31%
Contemporary Beverage Price	'Haus' Brand	Starting from IDR 14,000
Adolescent Age Range	Early Adolescence	10-14 years
	Middle Adolescence	14-17 years
	Late Adolescence	17-20 years
Educational Information		
Average age of high school students	-	15-18 years
Age limit for high school enrollment	Maximum	21 years

Factors Affecting Contemporary Beverage Consumption Interest

The overall analysis of factors influencing contemporary beverage consumption interest revealed that price considerations ranked highest at 75%, followed by packaging (71%), with quality and brand factors both at 68%. All factors fell within the "interested" category according to the established scale.

Quality-Based Consumption Interest

Figure 1. Percentage of Consumer Interest by Quality Factor

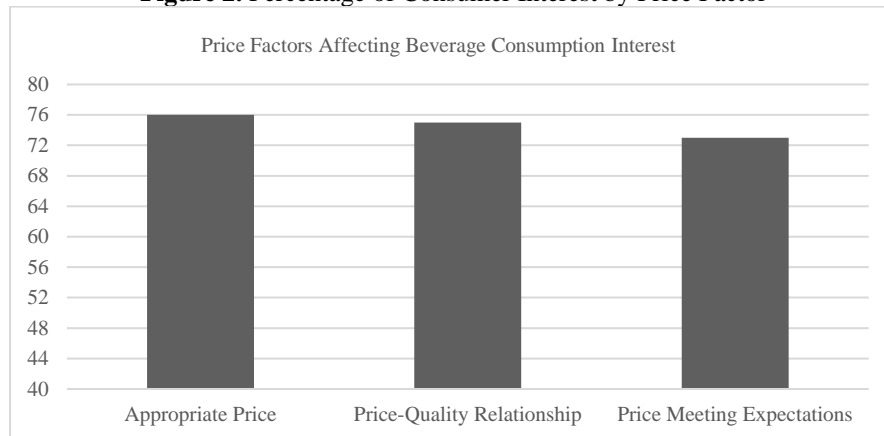


Factors affecting contemporary beverage consumption interest can be viewed through several quality-based aspects. Nutritional impact indicators showed 66% interest in high sugar content resulting in sweet taste, and 68% interest in gaining energy from calories derived from sugar and toppings. In contrast, only 28% expressed concern about obesity from excessive consumption. The average interest percentage for nutritional impact was 54%.

Taste impact revealed higher interest levels. Indicators showed 68% interest in attractive appearance, 72% in distinctive aroma, 78% in sweet taste, 75% in diverse textures from toppings, and 79% in customizable temperature. The average interest percentage for taste impact was 74%. Raw material impact also contributed to consumption interest, with 69% expressing interest in beverages using fresh raw materials. In terms of variety impact, the data showed 79% interest in flavor variety, 69% in topping variety, 80% in beverage size options, and 76% in customizable sugar and ice levels. The average interest percentage for variety impact was 76%. Overall, the average interest in quality-based factors affecting contemporary beverage consumption was 68%.

Price-Based Consumption Interest

Figure 2. Percentage of Consumer Interest by Price Factor

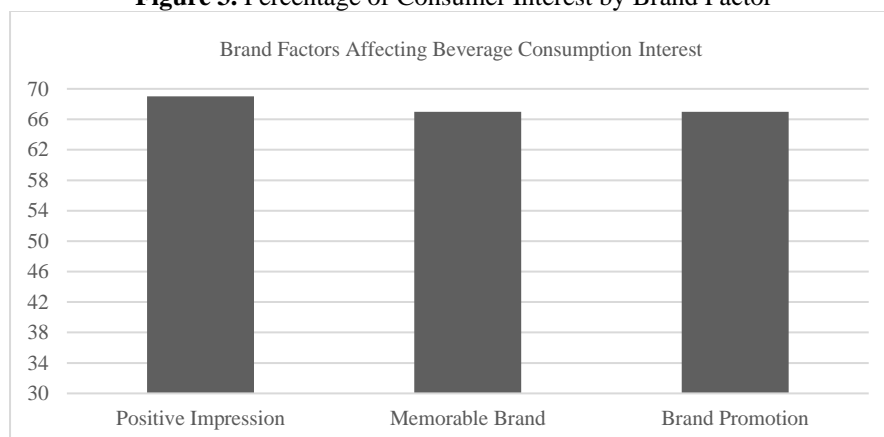


Factors affecting contemporary beverage consumption interest also include price-based considerations. The appropriate price indicator revealed that 76% of respondents showed interest in prices perceived as balanced—not too expensive and not too cheap. Price-quality relationship indicators showed strong alignment between price and perceived value. A total of 76% of respondents were interested in prices that matched the quality of service, while 75% were interested in prices that reflected product quality. The average interest percentage for this aspect was 75%.

In terms of price meeting expectations, 73% expressed interest in prices that aligned with their pocket money, and 72% in overall affordability. The average interest percentage for this aspect was 73%. Overall, the average interest in price-based factors influencing beverage consumption was 75%.

Brand-Based Consumption Interest

Figure 3. Percentage of Consumer Interest by Brand Factor



Factors affecting contemporary beverage consumption interest can also be seen from brand-based aspects. Memorable brand indicators showed 69% interest in brand names or symbols that are easy to remember, and 66% interest in distinctive names or symbols compared to competitors. The average interest percentage for memorable brand impact was 67%.

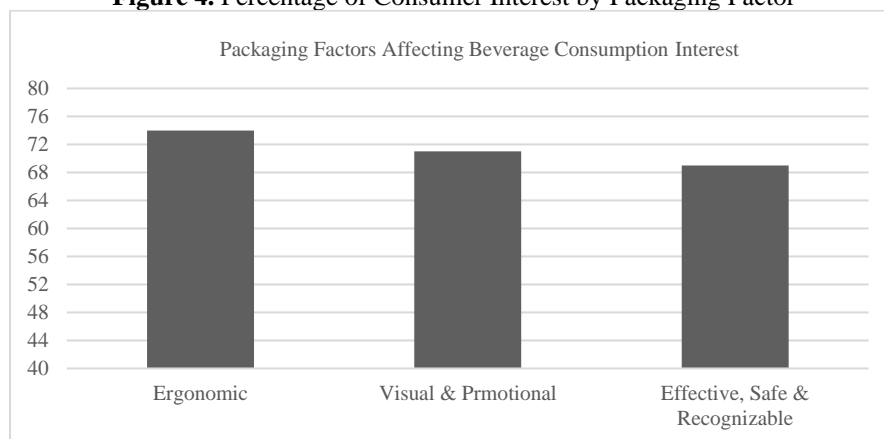
Positive impression indicators revealed a relatively consistent level of interest. As much as 69% of respondents were interested in brands they regularly consume, 70% in brands that guarantee quality, and

68% in brands that leave a positive impression. The average interest percentage for positive impression impact was 69%.

Brand promotion impact also played a role. Indicators showed 67% interest in attractive brand names and 67% in names that are easy to pronounce. The average interest percentage for brand promotion impact was 67%. Overall, the average interest in brand-based factors affecting beverage consumption was 68%.

Packaging-Based Consumption Interest

Figure 4. Percentage of Consumer Interest by Packaging Factor



Factors affecting contemporary beverage consumption interest also include packaging-related aspects. Effective packaging indicators showed 70% interest, particularly in packaging that maintains appropriate temperature. Safety indicators showed 69% interest, especially in packaging that does not contaminate the product. Recognizability received 68% interest in packaging designs that are easy to identify. The average interest percentage for effective, safe, and recognizable packaging was 69%.

Ergonomic packaging factors revealed the highest interest level at 74%. Specifically, portability received 75% interest, ease of opening/closing 73%, and spill resistance 74%. This indicates that functional aspects of packaging are highly valued by consumers.

Visual appeal and information also influenced consumption interest. Aesthetic packaging received 74% interest, reflecting the appeal of attractive designs. Informational and promotional packaging elements showed 73% interest for comprehensive product information, 70% for social media visibility, and 68% for word-of-mouth promotion. The average interest percentage for visual and promotional packaging impact was 71%. Overall, the average interest in packaging-based factors affecting beverage consumption was 70.9%.

DISCUSSION

The predominance of female adolescents among contemporary beverage consumers aligns with broader patterns showing that females tend to be more engaged with food and beverage trends (4). This demographic inclination is further contextualized by the concentration of consumers in late adolescence, a developmental period identified by Tinanbunan et al. (5) as critical for habit formation. At this stage, consumption behavior is strongly shaped by peer influence and the persuasive power of social media marketing.

Popular beverages such as boba milk tea, cheese tea, coffee milk, and Thai tea reflect not only evolving taste preferences but also expressions of social identity. As Veronica and Ilmi (4) note, these beverage choices symbolize youth culture and group affiliation, with boba milk tea standing out due to its customizable features, aesthetic presentation, and vibrant social media visibility—factors that have contributed to its status as a cultural icon among Indonesian adolescents.

Economic factors also significantly affect consumption patterns. The affordability of trendy beverages has transformed them into accessible lifestyle products rather than occasional luxuries. This observation reinforces Wahyu's (28) assertion that adolescents' purchasing frequency is closely tied to their financial capacity, indicating that economic accessibility is a major driver in establishing routine consumption behavior in this age group.

Among the various factors influencing adolescents' beverage choices, price emerges as the most decisive. This finding is consistent with Kotler's (29) assertion that price remains a central element in consumer decision-making, especially for those with limited discretionary income. For adolescents, affordability often determines whether a beverage is consumed regularly or reserved for special occasions.

Despite the dominance of price, packaging also plays a vital role, functioning both as a utilitarian feature and a symbolic element. Silayoi and Speece (30) highlight how visual design components—such as

color, shape, and labeling—can significantly affect consumers' first impressions and trigger purchasing impulses, particularly in trend-driven markets like beverages.

In addition, quality and brand reputation, though not as heavily emphasized, remain influential. Hilal (31) emphasizes that product quality builds consumer trust and loyalty, while Mulyadi (32) argues that brand uniqueness enhances value by offering assurance and clear differentiation in a competitive market. Interestingly, adolescents appear to value quality and brand equally, suggesting a nuanced decision-making process that integrates both concrete product characteristics and perceived brand strength.

These findings further support Sari and Prihartono's (33) view that consumers often equate higher prices with better quality, though budget limitations may still constrain choices. This dynamic indicates a complex interaction between adolescents' desire for quality and their economic realities, where value judgments are constantly negotiated.

Quality-Based Factors Influencing Contemporary Beverage Consumption

Adolescent beverage consumption reveals an intriguing paradox regarding nutritional awareness. While respondents expressed interest in beverages with high sugar content and energy-boosting attributes, they simultaneously showed reluctance toward those that could contribute to obesity. This contradiction illustrates the complex relationship adolescents have with nutrition knowledge and their consumption choices. Ratih et al. (34) highlighted that adolescents often prioritize immediate sensory gratification over long-term health considerations, leading them to favor high-sugar beverages despite being aware of the potential negative health consequences. This suggests that nutritional awareness alone does not significantly influence consumption decisions among adolescents when compared to the appeal of sensory experiences and social influences. The tendency to disregard future health risks in favor of immediate satisfaction presents a critical challenge for health education initiatives targeting this demographic.

Sensory experience plays a dominant role in adolescent beverage consumption decisions. A strong preference for sweet taste, customizable temperatures, and diverse textures indicates that multisensory appeal significantly influences consumption choices. This finding aligns with Putri and Sudrajat's (35) research, which emphasizes the strong relationship between sensory perception and purchasing decisions, particularly among younger consumers. The high interest in temperature customization points to the growing importance of personalization in the consumption experience. Adolescents not only seek to control temperature but also customize sugar levels, ice content, and topping options, suggesting that the ability to tailor a product enhances its perceived quality.

The importance of raw material quality and authenticity is also evident in adolescent preferences. There is a notable interest in fresh ingredients, reflecting a broader trend toward valuing natural, transparent food production processes. As Asman (36) points out, the quality of raw materials is crucial in shaping product perception, and Situmeang et al. (37) further observe that quality perception directly impacts customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Adolescents appear to distinguish between artificial and natural components, with a clear preference for authenticity. This aligns with broader food trends that emphasize the value of natural ingredients, and it highlights the importance for beverage producers to not only focus on ingredient quality but also communicate sourcing and processing methods effectively to appeal to quality-conscious adolescents.

Finally, product variety and customization are key factors influencing adolescent beverage choices. The strong interest in size options and flavor variety underscores the importance of choice and personalization in contemporary beverage consumption. This finding supports Kojongian et al. (38), who demonstrate a positive relationship between product variety and purchasing decisions. The preference for size options may be driven by both economic factors (such as price-portion relationships) and consumption contexts (e.g., portability and sharing). Additionally, the desire for customizable sugar and ice levels further reinforces the role of personalization in shaping quality perception among adolescents. These preferences reflect a broader consumer trend toward personalized products and experiences, suggesting that expanding customization options could be an effective strategy for beverage producers to enhance perceived quality and consumer interest.

Price-Based Factors Influencing Contemporary Beverage Consumption

Adolescents show a sophisticated approach to pricing, preferring products that are perceived as fairly priced rather than simply the cheapest option. This aligns with Mursid's (39) assertion that market-aligned pricing attracts consumer interest. Instead of focusing solely on low prices, adolescents assess value for money, seeking beverages where price corresponds to service and product quality. Kotler and Gary (29) argue that consumers prefer products where the price matches the expected benefits, emphasizing the importance of price positioning to communicate value.

Economic accessibility also plays a critical role in beverage choices, as adolescents prioritize products within their budget. Simamora (40) notes that purchase interest is influenced by both product appeal and the feasibility of purchase, with pocket money providing sufficient capacity for occasional premium beverage

consumption. While adolescents are willing to pay more for high-quality drinks, prices must remain within their financial reach, explaining the popularity of premium beverage brands that maintain accessible pricing for this demographic.

Brand-Based Factors Influencing Contemporary Beverage Consumption

Adolescents' moderate interest in brand attributes suggests that brand recognition plays a significant but secondary role in beverage choices. The preference for memorable brand names or symbols over unique brand elements indicates that cognitive accessibility is more important than distinctiveness. This aligns with Musay's (41) assertion that brand recall is linked to purchase likelihood. The relatively low emphasis on brand identity suggests that beverage consumption among adolescents is more influenced by product attributes and peer recommendations than by brand alone, presenting challenges and opportunities for brands seeking to build stronger loyalty.

Trust in brands is a significant factor in adolescent choices, with preferences leaning toward brands that are familiar, quality-guaranteeing, or positively perceived. This supports Yoestini and Sulistyari's (42) claim that a positive brand image influences purchase interest. The slightly higher preference for quality-guaranteeing brands indicates that adolescents prioritize functional reliability over emotional brand associations. This suggests that brand trust is important but secondary to factors like price and quality, with brand loyalty developing through consistent product experiences.

The moderate interest in easily remembered and pronounceable brand names reflects the importance of linguistic attributes, supporting Yenata's (43) observation on the significance of brand name memorability. However, this interest is not as influential as product quality or price, indicating that while accessible brand names contribute to brand appeal, they should not overshadow product and value considerations for brands targeting adolescents.

Packaging-Based Factors Influencing Contemporary Beverage Consumption

This study highlights the strong influence of packaging on adolescents' interest in contemporary beverages. Consistent with findings by Willy and Nurjanah (44), features such as portability and spill resistance are particularly valued, indicating that functional aspects of packaging are crucial for adolescents who often consume beverages on the go. The emphasis on usability suggests that packaging is not merely a container but a facilitator of lifestyle compatibility.

In addition to functionality, aesthetic appeal significantly shapes consumer interest. Attractive packaging is not only visually pleasing but also serves a symbolic role, particularly among adolescents who are active on social media and sensitive to peer perception. As Willy and Nurjanah (44) note, appealing packaging can enhance product image and social visibility, making it more desirable among youth.

Informational and promotional elements on packaging also play a role, supporting Widiati's (45) assertion that packaging serves as a medium for brand communication and product information. Interestingly, the preference for clear and complete information appears to outweigh interest in social media promotion, suggesting that adolescents value clarity and transparency in product presentation.

While safety and distinctiveness received relatively less attention compared to other factors, they remain relevant. Concerns about hygiene and environmentally safe packaging are consistent with growing consumer awareness, echoing Widiati's (45) findings. Additionally, unique and recognizable packaging supports Raheem et al.'s (46) conclusion that packaging functions as a tool for product differentiation in competitive markets.

Overall, the findings confirm that packaging significantly shapes adolescent purchasing decisions, supporting broader literature that positions packaging as a critical marketing tool that affects both perception and behavior (46,30).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that among various determinants, price exerts the strongest influence on adolescents' interest in consuming contemporary beverages, followed by packaging, quality, and brand considerations. Adolescents demonstrate a high level of discernment when evaluating the affordability and value alignment of these products with their limited financial resources. Packaging functionality emerges as a critical factor, indicating a strong demand for convenience and lifestyle compatibility. Furthermore, taste, customizable features, and diverse options reflect the centrality of sensory satisfaction and personalization in adolescent consumption behavior.

Although adolescents are aware of the potential health risks associated with high-sugar beverages, these concerns are often outweighed by peer influence, social trends, and immediate gratification. Brand trust and recognition, while contributing to consumer loyalty, are less influential than tangible product attributes. These findings underscore the complex interplay between economic, psychological, and social factors that shape beverage consumption patterns among adolescents.

RECOMMENDATION

To mitigate the potential negative health impacts of excessive contemporary beverage consumption among adolescents, public health initiatives should prioritize the development of targeted educational campaigns that focus on the long-term consequences of high sugar intake while promoting healthier lifestyle choices. Stakeholders in the beverage industry are encouraged to innovate by offering healthier alternatives with reduced sugar content, leveraging appealing yet informative packaging to attract adolescents without compromising nutritional integrity. Future research should explore the psychological motivations and peer dynamics underlying adolescent food and beverage preferences to inform more comprehensive intervention strategies.

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