

The Role of Brand Image and Price Perception in Driving Consumer Purchase Decision

Florencia Hanjani ¹, Vanessa ², Yunita Setiawati ³, Juliana ^{4*}, Amelda Pramezwarly ⁵

^{1,2,3,4*} Hospitality Management Department, Universitas Pelita Harapan, Tangerang Regency, Banten Province, Indonesia.

⁵ Magister of Tourism Department, Universitas Pelita Harapan, Tangerang Regency, Banten Province, Indonesia.

Corresponding Email : juliana.stpph@uph.edu ^{4*}

Abstrak. Studi ini meneliti pengaruh citra merek dan persepsi harga terhadap keputusan pembelian konsumen di Starbucks Coffee. Dengan munculnya budaya kopi premium, Starbucks telah memposisikan dirinya sebagai pemimpin global dalam industri ini, yang menarik beragam pelanggan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi pendorong utama di balik pilihan konsumen dengan meneliti bagaimana citra merek Starbucks, yang dikaitkan dengan kualitas dan gaya hidup, di samping nilai yang dirasakan dari strategi penetapan harganya, memengaruhi perilaku pembelian pelanggan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 150 responden melalui survei terstruktur. Hal baru dari studi ini terletak pada pemeriksaannya terhadap pengaruh gabungan citra merek dan persepsi harga terhadap keputusan pembelian dalam konteks konsumsi premium sehari-hari, khususnya Starbucks area yang kurang mendapat perhatian terfokus dalam penelitian sebelumnya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa citra merek dan persepsi harga memengaruhi keputusan pembelian secara signifikan, dengan citra merek memainkan peran yang lebih kuat dalam memengaruhi loyalitas konsumen dan pembelian berulang. Penelitian ini menawarkan wawasan berharga bagi pemasar dalam memahami bagaimana identitas merek dan strategi penetapan harga dapat dioptimalkan untuk meningkatkan kepuasan konsumen dan mendorong penjualan. Implikasi dari temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa mempertahankan citra merek yang kuat dan positif sangat penting, bahkan dalam menghadapi harga premium, untuk mempertahankan keunggulan kompetitif di pasar kopi spesial.

Kata kunci: Citra Merek; Persepsi Harga; Keputusan Pembelian Konsumen.

Abstract. This study explores the influence of brand image and price perception on consumer purchasing decisions at Starbucks Coffee. With the rise of premium coffee culture, Starbucks has positioned itself as a global leader in the industry, attracting a diverse range of customers. The research aims to identify the key drivers behind consumer choices by examining how Starbucks' brand image, associated with quality and lifestyle, alongside the perceived value of its pricing strategy, affects customer purchasing behavior. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 150 respondents through structured surveys. The novelty of this study lies in its examination of the combined influence of brand image and price perception on purchase decisions within the context of premium everyday consumption, specifically Starbucks an area that has received limited focused attention in prior research. The findings indicate that both brand image and price perception significantly impact purchase decisions, with brand image playing a stronger role in influencing consumer loyalty and repeat purchases. This research offers valuable insights for marketers in understanding how brand identity and pricing strategies can be optimized to enhance consumer satisfaction and drive sales. The implications of these findings suggest that maintaining a strong, positive brand image is critical, even in the face of premium pricing, to sustain competitive advantage in the specialty coffee market.

Keywords: Brand Image; Price Perception; Consumer Purchase Decision.

Introduction

Starbucks Coffee has established itself as a global leader in the premium coffee industry, becoming synonymous with quality, experience, and status. The company's success can largely be attributed to its ability to craft a strong brand image that appeals to consumers not only for its products but also for the lifestyle it represents (Sin *et al.*, 2024). In addition to brand image, the perception of pricing has also played a critical role in shaping consumer behavior (Ferdyani *et al.*, 2025). Despite higher prices compared to other coffee outlets, Starbucks continues to command consumer loyalty, suggesting that its perceived value extends beyond price alone (Chang, 2020; Kim *et al.*, 2020). However, the dynamics between brand image and price perception in influencing consumer choices remain underexplored, particularly in the context of premium coffee consumption. This study aims to fill this research gap by examining how these two factors drive purchasing decisions at Starbucks. The influence of brand image on consumer behavior has been widely studied, particularly in luxury goods and high-end services (Aquinia *et al.*, 2020; Hou *et al.*, 2024; Lacap & Sicat, 2022).

Consumers often associate a strong brand image with higher product quality, exclusivity, and enhanced social status, leading to an increased willingness to pay premium prices (Andini & Tuti, 2024; Duhan & Rinaldo, 2021; S. Khan & Siddiqui, 2020). In the case of Starbucks, the brand has successfully created a perception of quality and social belonging that transcends the functional benefits of coffee (Goedertier *et al.*, 2024; Kato, 2021; Laradi *et al.*, 2024). However, limited research has been conducted on how brand image, in conjunction with price perception, affects consumer decision-making in the coffee industry, where price sensitivity might play a more significant role than in luxury goods (Bulkis *et al.*, 2021; Dewi *et al.*, 2020). Price perception is another critical factor in consumer purchasing decisions, especially in industries where product differentiation is minimal. The perceived value of a product relative to its price can either encourage or deter purchases (Cindy

& Zai, 2024; Fanesya *et al.*, 2024; Putra *et al.*, 2024). Starbucks, known for its premium pricing strategy, faces the challenge of maintaining consumer loyalty despite the availability of cheaper alternatives (Amellinda *et al.*, 2023; Bulkis *et al.*, 2021; Rosanti *et al.*, 2021). Previous studies suggest that price perception interacts with the brand image to form a holistic assessment of value in the consumer's mind (Alita *et al.*, 2023; Darmayanti & Aminah, 2023; Laradi *et al.*, 2024). However, there is limited empirical evidence on how this interaction plays out in the context of everyday consumer goods, such as coffee, where price sensitivity might differ from luxury or high-involvement products. The research gap becomes more evident when considering the specific context of Starbucks, where both brand image and price perception might be more closely intertwined than in other sectors. Most existing studies focus on either brand image or price perception independently, neglecting how the two might work together to shape consumer preferences. This research aims to bridge this gap by investigating the joint effect of these factors on consumer choices in a high-competition, premium-priced market like Starbucks.

Additionally, while many studies have explored brand loyalty and price sensitivity in general, few have focused on the coffee industry, particularly with a brand as iconic as Starbucks. The novelty of this research lies in its integrated approach, combining brand image and price perception into a single framework to explain consumer purchasing behavior. Unlike previous studies that treat these variables in isolation, this study explores the synergistic relationship between how consumers perceive Starbucks' brand image and its pricing strategy. By focusing on a single brand with a unique market position, this study offers insights that are more context-specific and actionable for marketers. The novelty of this study lies in its examination of the combined influence of brand image and price perception on purchase decisions within the context of premium everyday consumption, specifically Starbucks an area that has received limited focused attention in prior research. Furthermore, Starbucks represents an interesting case study due to its global reach, consistent branding, and premium pricing, offering a rich context to examine

consumer behavior dynamics. This research offers practical implications for marketing managers, particularly in premium markets where brand strength can mitigate the effects of higher pricing. Starbucks has been a leader in branding, but understanding the balance between its premium pricing and brand loyalty is essential for long-term sustainability in a competitive market. This study aims to provide actionable insights on how Starbucks and similar brands can maintain consumer loyalty and market share through effective brand management and pricing strategies. By focusing on Starbucks, this study also fills a contextual gap in the existing literature. While the brand is well-studied in terms of its marketing practices and brand equity, there is limited empirical research on how its pricing interacts with its brand image to influence customer purchasing decisions. Most research has concentrated on either price perception or brand image in isolation, but few studies have explored their combined effects in a real-world, everyday consumer setting. This research addresses that gap by investigating the intersection of these two critical factors.

This research contributes to the literature by offering a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between brand image, price perception, and consumer choices at Starbucks. The study's findings are expected to provide both theoretical insights and practical recommendations, particularly for brands operating in premium markets where pricing is a sensitive issue. By addressing the research gaps identified, this study aims to advance the understanding of consumer behavior in the coffee industry and offer strategies for leveraging brand image and pricing to influence purchasing decisions. This study refines the theoretical positioning within the framework of brand equity theory by examining how brand image and price perception influence consumer purchase decisions in the context of premium everyday products, specifically Starbucks. While prior research has often isolated these variables or examined them in the context of luxury or utilitarian goods, this study highlights their interplay in a more accessible, high-frequency consumption category. The findings reinforce the core tenet of brand equity theory that

strong brand image significantly enhances consumer preferences and loyalty by demonstrating that brand image exerts a relatively stronger influence than price perception. This outcome underscores the role of symbolic and emotional value embedded in premium branding, even in everyday product categories, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in modern retail environments. Brand image plays a significant role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions, particularly for premium brands like Starbucks (Goeltom *et al.*, 2020; Djakasaputra *et al.*, 2018; Juliana, 2018, 2019). A strong brand image is often associated with higher perceived quality, trust, and emotional connections with consumers (Akoğlu & Özbek, 2021; Ichou & Manar, 2024; Rahman *et al.*, 2024). Starbucks, through its branding strategies, has successfully cultivated an image of sophistication, quality, and a unique coffee experience, which elevates its products beyond just functional offerings.

This image enhances consumers' willingness to pay a premium, as they perceive added value beyond the product itself (Chang, 2020; Chiengkul & Junla, 2023; Gadi *et al.*, 2024; Ichou & Manar, 2024; Moon *et al.*, 2022; Nida & Sukresna, 2023). Based on this, the study hypothesizes that a positive brand image will have a significant and positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions at Starbucks. H1: Brand image positively influences consumer purchasing decisions at Starbucks. Price perception also influences consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in competitive markets. Consumers generally evaluate the value they receive relative to the price they pay, and this perceived value plays a critical role in their purchase decisions (Çakici & Tekeli, 2021; Hasmalawati *et al.*, 2024; Putera *et al.*, 2022). Starbucks' pricing strategy positions it as a premium brand, and while higher prices might deter some customers, others may interpret higher prices as indicative of superior quality or status. Research shows that in premium or luxury markets, consumers may be less price-sensitive and more focused on the overall value they associate with the brand (Fu, 2023; Kleinhans & LaTour, 2021; Mandel & Griffiths, 2024; Yao, 2023). Therefore, it is expected that

price perception will significantly impact purchasing decisions at Starbucks, either as a deterrent for price-sensitive consumers or a reinforcement for those associating higher prices with higher value. H2: Price perception positively influences consumer purchasing decisions at Starbucks.

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design using a structured survey to examine the role of brand image and price perception in driving consumer purchase decisions at Starbucks Coffee (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Data were collected from 150 respondents who had previously purchased Starbucks products, selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research objectives. The survey instrument included validated Likert-scale items measuring perceptions of brand image, price perception, and purchase decision behavior. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis to determine the relative influence of each independent variable on purchase decisions. Reliability and validity checks were conducted to ensure the robustness of the measurement instruments, and all analyses were performed using statistical software to ensure accuracy and rigor in the findings.

The measurement indicators for the variables in this study were adopted and adapted from recent empirical literature to ensure the validity and relevance of the constructs. The brand image was measured using items developed and validated by (Juhaeri, 2020; Wasi & Mahjudin, 2022; Wasik *et al.*, 2023; Yahya & Ambarwati, 2024) with four items that have been widely applied in consumer product and service research. Price perception was assessed based on established scales from (Juhaeri, 2020; Pratiwi *et al.*, 2022; Rahayu *et al.*, 2023; Soebiantoro *et al.*, 2022) with five items and both of which provide comprehensive measures for perceived price fairness and value

in consumer decision-making. Finally, purchase decision was measured using indicators sourced from (Fahmy *et al.*, 2024; Samudra *et al.*, 2024; Steven *et al.*, 2021; Wasi & Mahjudin, 2022; Yahya & Ambarwati, 2024) with five items who have developed and validated scales reflecting consumer purchase intentions and behaviors in the contemporary marketplace. These references collectively provide a robust foundation for the operationalization of the study's variables.

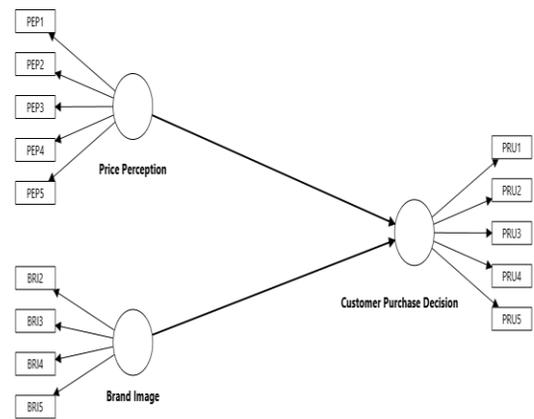


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Results and Discussion

Results

The demographic profile of the 150 respondents indicates a diverse representation, with 60% female and 40% male participants. Most respondents were aged between 21–30 years (45%), followed by those aged 31–40 years (30%), under 20 years (15%), and above 40 years (10%). In terms of educational background, most held a bachelor's degree (55%), while others had completed a diploma (25%), a master's degree (15%), or high school (5%). Occupationally, 40% were private-sector employees, 25% were students, 20% were entrepreneurs, and 15% were civil servants. This demographic composition reflects a predominantly young, educated, and professionally active population.

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho-a)	Composite Reliability (rho-c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Result
Brand image	0.771	0.777	0.853	0.593	Valid and Reliable
Customer Purchase Decision	0.852	0.867	0.893	0.626	Valid and Reliable
Price Perception	0.825	0.827	0.877	0.588	Valid and Reliable

Table 1 and Figure 2 present the construct reliability and validity test results for Brand Image, Customer Purchase Decision, and Price Perception, using PLS-SEM. All constructs demonstrate strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7 (Brand Image = 0.771; Customer Purchase Decision = 0.852; Price Perception = 0.825). The composite reliability (both rho-a and rho-c) for each construct also surpasses the minimum criterion of 0.7, confirming construct reliability. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all construct are above 0.5 (Brand Image = 0.593; Customer Purchase Decision = 0.626; Price Perception = 0.588),

indicating adequate convergent validity. Based on these results, it can be concluded that all variables in the measurement model are both valid and reliable for further hypothesis testing.

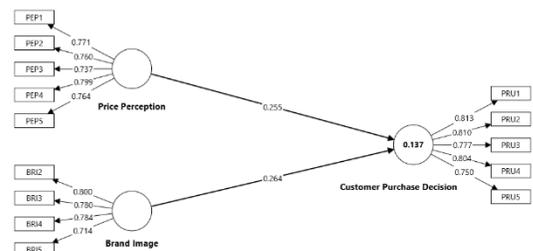


Figure 2. Outer Model

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Variable	Brand image	Customer Purchase Decision	Price Perception
Brand image	0.316		
Customer Purchase Decision		0.099	
Price Perception			0.301

Table 2 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values, which are used to assess discriminant validity among the study's constructs: Brand Image, Customer Purchase Decision, and Price Perception. HTMT values below the threshold of 0.85 (or more conservatively, 0.90) indicate that each construct is empirically distinct from the others, confirming adequate discriminant validity (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). In this table, all HTMT values are considerably low—Brand Image and Customer Purchase Decision (0.316), Brand Image and Price Perception (0.099), and Customer Purchase Decision and

Price Perception (0.301) which strongly supports that the constructs are well differentiated from one another. Thus, there is no evidence of overlap between constructs, and discriminant validity is established in your measurement model.

Table 3. Multicollinearities

Variable	VIF
Brand image → Customer Purchase Decision	1.000
Price Perception → Customer Purchase Decision	1.000

Table 5 presents the R Square and Adjusted R Square values for the endogenous variable, Customer Purchase Decision. The R Square value of 0.137 indicates that the independent variables included in the model Brand Image and Price Perception collectively explain 13.7% of the variance in Customer Purchase Decisions. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.125 provides a slightly more conservative estimate, taking into account the number of predictors and the sample size. According to Chin (2010, 1998), R Square values of around

0.19 are considered weak, 0.33 moderate, and 0.67 substantial in behavioral research. Therefore, the explanatory power of the model is classified as weak, suggesting that while Brand Image and Price Perception have a statistically measurable influence, the majority of variance in Customer Purchase Decisions is explained by other factors not included in the model. Nevertheless, the result still provides valuable insight into the specific contribution of these variables.

Table 4. R Square

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Customer Purchase Decision	0.137	0.125

Table 6 presents the f Square (effect size) values for the relationships between Brand Image and Customer Purchase Decision (0.081) and between Price Perception and Customer Purchase Decision (0.075). The f Square statistic measures the individual impact of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable by assessing the change in R Square when that particular predictor is omitted from the model. According to Cohen (1988), f Square values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are interpreted as indicating small, medium, and

large effect sizes, respectively. Based on these guidelines, both Brand Image (0.081) and Price Perception (0.075) exhibit small effect sizes on Customer Purchase Decisions. This means that while each variable makes a positive contribution to explaining Customer Purchase Decisions, their impacts are relatively modest. These findings suggest that other variables, beyond Brand Image and Price Perception, may also play important roles in influencing customer purchase decisions.

Table 5. f Square

Variable	F Square	Result
Brand image → Customer Purchase Decision	0.081	Small effect size
Price Perception → Customer Purchase Decision	0.075	Small effect size

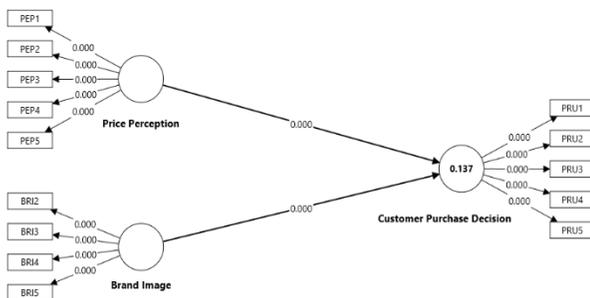


Figure 3. Inner Model

Table 7 and Figure 3 present the results of hypothesis testing for the structural model. The path coefficient from Brand Image to Customer Purchase Decision is 0.264, with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant and positive relationship. Similarly, the path coefficient from Price Perception to

Customer Purchase Decision is 0.255, also with a p-value of 0.000, confirming a significant positive effect. Both p-values are below the conventional threshold of 0.05, supporting the respective hypotheses. These results suggest that improvements in Brand Image and positive Price Perception both significantly enhance Customer Purchase Decisions. The standard deviations (0.073 and 0.074) indicate stable estimates across bootstrap samples, reinforcing the reliability of these findings. Overall, the results provide empirical support for the hypothesized relationships in the research model.

Table 6. Hypothesis Test

Variable	Original Sample	Standard deviation	P values	Result
Brand image → Customer Purchase Decision	0.264			Hypothesis supported
Price Perception → Customer Purchase Decision	0.255	0.073 0.074	0.000 0.000	Hypothesis supported

Table 7. PLS POS Analysis

	Original sample R squares N=150	Segment1 N=96	Segment2 N=54
Brand image → customer purchase decision	0.264	0.479	0.224
Price perception → customer purchase decision	0.255	-0.325	1.002

The PLS POS analysis (Table 7) using PLS-SEM reveals notable variations in how brand image and price perception influence customer purchase decisions across different consumer segments. For the overall sample (N = 150), both brand image ($\beta = 0.264$) and price perception ($\beta = 0.255$) exhibit a positive and relatively balanced effect, suggesting that consumers generally consider both the symbolic strength of the Starbucks brand and the fairness of its pricing in their purchasing decisions. This aligns with prior findings in premium everyday consumption, where both emotional branding and perceived economic value play important roles in shaping consumer behavior. However, segmented analysis provides deeper insights into distinct behavioral patterns. In Segment 1 (N = 96), brand image has a stronger influence ($\beta = 0.479$), while price perception unexpectedly shows a negative effect ($\beta = -0.325$), indicating that brand-oriented consumers may prioritize emotional and symbolic connections over pricing concerns—potentially viewing excessive price focus as a contradiction to the lifestyle value of the brand. In contrast, Segment 2 (N = 54) is highly sensitive to price perception ($\beta = 1.002$) and less influenced by brand image ($\beta = 0.224$), suggesting a more value-driven customer base. These contrasting findings imply the existence of brand-driven and price-driven subgroups within the Starbucks customer population, emphasizing the need for differentiated marketing strategies. For practitioners, this calls for a combination of

brand storytelling and experiential branding to target image-conscious consumers, while offering transparent pricing and promotional incentives to engage price-sensitive segments. Future research could further explore the influence of moderating factors such as income, brand loyalty, or frequency of visits to better capture the nuances in consumer decision-making.

Discussion

The present study finds that brand image has a positive and significant effect on customer purchase decisions (path coefficient = 0.264, $p < 0.001$). This result is supported by recent studies that consistently emphasize the importance of brand image in shaping consumer buying behavior. For instance, (Doshi, 2022) found that a strong brand image enhances perceived trust and quality, which significantly increases consumers’ purchase intentions. Similarly, (Agdigos *et al.*, 2022; Guliyev, 2023; Shaikh, 2024) reported that brand image directly impacts consumers’ willingness to choose a product, especially in highly competitive markets. (Khan *et al.*, 2022; Zou, 2023) also demonstrated that brand image positively influences perceived value, which in turn drives purchase decisions in the e-commerce sector. In the context of digital brands, Dewi and Rahmawati, (2020) highlighted that a positive brand image fosters customer confidence and repeat purchases. Furthermore, Lee *et al.* (2021) underlined the mediating role of brand image between marketing efforts and

actual purchase decisions, showing that improvements in brand image consistently lead to higher purchase rates. These findings confirm that strengthening brand image is a vital strategy for companies seeking to positively influence customer purchase decisions. The study also reveals that price perception has a positive and significant effect on customer purchase decisions (path coefficient = 0.255, $p < 0.001$). Recent literature reinforces this finding, demonstrating that favourable price perception enhances consumers' propensity to purchase. Saputra and Djumarno, (2020) ; Saputra (2021);(2021) showed that when consumers perceive prices as fair and aligned with the perceived value, their purchase intentions rise significantly. Saputra (2021); Saputra *et al* (2025) found that transparent and reasonable pricing positively influences purchase behaviour across online and offline settings. Saputra *et al* (2024); Tiani *et al* (2023) observed that price perception is a key determinant of consumer satisfaction and purchase intention, particularly in the retail industry. Juliana, *et al* (2020); Juliana *et al*. (2021) ; Oliver *et al.*, (2020) ; Juliana *et al*. (2021) also discovered that positive price perception moderates the relationship between product value and actual purchase in the context of fast-moving consumer goods. Aryani (2020) ; Goeltom *et al.* (2020); Juliana *et al.* (2023) ; Ratnasari *et al.* (2024) documented that competitive pricing strategies, which improve price perception, are critical for increasing customer conversion rates. Collectively, these studies affirm that price perception is a significant and reliable predictor of customer purchase decisions.

Conclusion

This study examines the influence of brand image and price perception on consumer purchase decisions, revealing that both factors significantly and positively affect consumer behavior. A strong brand image not only enhances trust and perceived value but also distinguishes products in the marketplace, making consumers more likely to choose those brands. Likewise, favourable price perception when customers believe prices are fair and

justified encourages purchasing by reinforcing the overall value of the offer. Despite these significant relationships, the study also notes that brand image and price perception account for only part of the variance in purchase decisions, indicating that other elements such as product quality, consumer experience, or external influences may also play essential roles. These results underscore the importance of a holistic approach for companies seeking to shape consumer choices effectively. Future research is encouraged to incorporate additional variables such as brand loyalty and social media influence, as well as to adopt qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, to capture deeper insights into consumer behavior and perception within the premium coffee market. From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study suggest that Starbucks should continue to invest in strengthening its brand image through compelling brand storytelling that emphasizes authenticity, lifestyle relevance, and emotional connection. Given the premium nature of its products, Starbucks is encouraged to tailor its marketing messages to address varying economic conditions, highlighting product value, quality, and brand legacy to appeal to more price-sensitive segments during times of financial uncertainty.

Additionally, clear and transparent communication about pricing strategies can help manage customer expectations and reinforce perceived value. Segment-specific approaches that distinguish between loyal customers and occasional buyers may also enhance message relevance and retention, ultimately supporting sustained brand equity in a competitive and evolving market. Theoretically, the segmentation analysis highlights the heterogeneous nature of consumer decision-making in the premium coffee market. The varying influence of brand image and price perception across customer segments reinforces the need for a nuanced understanding of brand equity theory within the context of everyday premium consumption. The results also suggest that consumer evaluations of brand image and price are not uniform; instead, they are shaped by underlying psychographic or behavioral factors, which

warrant further exploration in future research through moderating variables such as income, brand loyalty, or lifestyle orientation. From a managerial perspective, Starbucks and similar premium coffee brands should consider implementing differentiated marketing strategies that cater to the distinct needs of brand-driven and price-sensitive customers. For brand-oriented segments, companies should strengthen emotional branding through storytelling, experiential marketing, and consistent brand identity across touchpoints. This group values symbolic meaning and lifestyle association over price, so marketing efforts should reinforce exclusivity, authenticity, and customer experience. In contrast, for price-conscious segments, firms should enhance value communication through transparent pricing, loyalty programs, and targeted promotions that justify the premium price point. Marketing strategies could also include bundling offers or highlighting cost-benefit advantages to appeal to this more rational consumer group. Ultimately, a dual approach that balances brand equity building with value-based messaging may help Starbucks maintain broad appeal while deepening customer engagement across segments.

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