

## ANALYSIS OF THE BENEFITS OF THE 7P MARKETING MIX STRATEGY ON THE IMAGE OF THE BUTONG TEA BRAND AT PT PERKEBUNAN NUSANTARA IV BAH BUTONG

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### Abstract

The competition in the tea beverage industry in Indonesia is getting tighter along with the increasing number of brands and the variety of products offered to consumers. This condition requires every company to have the right marketing strategy in order to be able to maintain its existence while building a strong brand image in the minds of consumers. One of the most widely used approaches in modern marketing strategies is the 7P marketing mix which includes products, prices, venues, promotions, people, processes, and physical evidence. This research analyzes the benefits of implementing the 7P marketing mix strategy (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Process, People, Physical Evidence) on the brand image of Butong Tea produced by PTPN IV Bah Butong. The research method uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The population is all consumers of PTPN Nusantara Butong Tea with a sample sampling technique using non-probability sampling with purposive sampling. The research results show that each 7P element contributes positively to improving brand image. Quality products, competitive prices, wide distribution, creative promotions, structured operational processes, skilled human resources, and an attractive physical appearance play an important role in strengthening a brand. This strategy creates a strong relationship with consumers and increases the brand's competitiveness in the market. From the data I got after I conducted interviews with approximately 30 respondents, there are still many who don't know about Butong Tea, this is because Butong tea factories market their products more overseas, such as Malaysia, Singapore and other countries. The implications of the research results provide a basis for consideration for the management of PTPN Nusantara IV and related stakeholders in developing brand-based plantation product marketing policies

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## INTRODUCTION

Nusantara Plantation IV (PTPN IV) Bah Butong Unit is one of the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) located in Bah Butong Village, Sidamanik District, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra Province which is engaged in the agricultural sector, namely agroindustry. Originating from the Bah Butong tea plantation located in the highlands of North Sumatra, this product is known to have a distinctive taste and aroma thanks to its favorable geographical conditions, such as the altitude of the location, the cool climate, and the fertile soil. Butong tea is one of the superior products of PTP Nusantara IV which has a reputation as a high-quality tea in Indonesia.

Butong Tea as one of the superior products of PTPN Nusantara IV Bah Butong has the potential for good product quality and is supported by a standardized production process. However, the brand image of Butong Tea in the market is still relatively weak and has not been able to compete optimally with other national tea brands that are better known by consumers. This condition indicates a gap between the potential of the product owned and the brand perception formed in the minds of consumers. In addition, the implementation of marketing strategies that have been carried out so far tends to not be comprehensively evaluated based on the 7P marketing mix concept, where the marketing focus is still dominant on product and price aspects, while other elements such as promotion, people, process, and physical evidence have not been utilized optimally. On the other hand, empirical studies examining the influence of the 7P marketing mix strategy on brand image in state-owned agribusiness products, especially tea commodities, are still very limited. As a result, PTPN Nusantara IV Bah Butong does not have a strong empirical basis to identify the most influential elements of the 7P marketing mix in building the brand image of Teh Butong in the midst of increasingly fierce tea market competition (Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D. 2018).

The influence of marketing strategies on brand image has become a major concern for researchers and business practitioners in identifying the factors that influence consumer perception of a brand. Butong Tea, one of the widely known tea brands in the market, has a variety of marketing strategies implemented to improve its brand image. In this case, the 7P marketing mix concept (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Process, People, Physical Evidence) is the main basis for analyzing the extent of the influence of the marketing strategy on the image of the Butong tea brand. (Marcelina & Tantra, 2017; Sukotjo & Radix, 2020).

This study aims to explore and analyze the benefits of the implementation of the 7P marketing mix strategy on the brand image of Butong tea and the 7P marketing mix strategy implemented at PTPN IV. Taking into account these four elements of marketing strategy, this study will explain how each aspect can affect the image of the Butong tea brand in the eyes of consumers. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide valuable insights for business people in designing effective marketing strategies to strengthen their brand image in a competitive market.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research method approach, in this study with the aim of observing and managing these social activities directly in the field and understanding the social interactions built through interviews and observations. Information is obtained from key people who are workers who work in the marketing department including the marketing manager, in addition to distributors or retailers of butong tea products. By using qualitative research methods, researchers usually use data collection techniques in accordance with the stipulations of criteria to obtain information according to the sample used, including (1) interviews, where the process of interaction between researchers and key informants (sources) in the form of direct questions and answers with the aim of obtaining data or research information using a structured list of questions or questionnaires; (2) observation, where the researcher can directly observe the object to be studied in order to get accurate results. We conducted this research at Nusantara Plantation IV (PTPN IV) Bah Butong Unit is one of the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) located in Bah Butong Village, Sidamanik District, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra Province which is engaged in the agricultural sector, namely agroindustry. (Yulita, Daryanto, & Indrawawan, 2021).

The data analysis method uses qualitative decryption with the Miles and Huberman Model through: (1) Data Reduction that selects, focuses and presents data from interviews from key persons, (2) Data presentation with a 7p marketing mix matrix and a summary table of perceptions from key persons, (3) Drawing conclusions and verification, drawing meanings and patterns of relationships between 7P marketing mix strategies, consumer perception and brand image of Teh Butong.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Benefits of the 7P marketing mix strategy on the brand image of the butong tea

The 7P marketing mix strategy provides important benefits in shaping and strengthening the brand image of Butong Tea in the minds of consumers. Application of elements Products quality and consistency to increase consumer perception of quality and brand trust. Elements Pricing relatively affordable strengthens the image of Butong Tea as a tea product with economic value and can be reached by various consumer segments. Aspect square or limited distribution indicates that the availability of the product has an effect on the level of brand recognition. Meanwhile, the Promotions The has not optimally impacted low brand awareness. From the side people, process, dan physical evidence, Fairly good service, standardized production processes, and functional product packaging help build the brand image as a safe, reliable, and state-owned tea product, although it still needs to be strengthened in terms of visual and brand communication. Overall, the 7P marketing mix strategy plays a role in shaping the brand image of Teh Butong, but the benefits have not been maximized because not all 7P elements have been applied optimally and integrated (Schiffman, L. G., & Wisenblit, J. L, 2015)

## 2. 7P Marketing Mix Strategy That Has Been Implemented by Butong Tea Factory

Based on the results of qualitative descriptive analysis, the Butong Tea factory has implemented several elements of the 7P marketing mix strategy, namely:

- a. In terms of **product**, Butong Tea is produced with selected tea raw materials and standardized processing processes, so that product quality is relatively maintained. PTPN IV has high-quality and quality products that will help strengthen the brand image of Teh Butong as a quality tea producer. Product innovations such as new flavor variants or attractive packaging can increase consumer appeal and strengthen brand image. Putri, Y. R., & Astuti, S. R. T. (2017).
- b. The **pricing** aspect is set at a competitive and affordable level for consumers. Determining a price that matches the value of Butong Tea products will create a good perception of value in the eyes of consumers. A competitive and transparent pricing strategy can strengthen consumer trust in the Teh Butong brand. (Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L., 2016).
- c. In the **place** aspect, product distribution still focuses on certain areas and has not yet reached a wider market. The distribution of Butong Tea products needs to expand market share so that it is not only in the North Sumatra area but can be outside the province and even abroad. But on the other hand, PTPN IV also ensures that Butong Tea products can be easily accessed in various distribution places such as supermarkets, minimarkets, and online stores will expand the market reach and strengthen the brand image as a reliable and accessible brand. In addition, many butong tea products are traded abroad.
- d. The **promotional** aspect is still limited, especially relying on conventional marketing and has not made optimal use of digital media. Conducting consistent and creative promotions, whether through social media, advertising, or collaborations with influencers or special events can increase Teh Butong brand awareness among consumers. PTPN IV builds a positive brand image through promotions that convey the values of brand identity and the excellence of Teh Butong products.
- e. The **people element** is reflected in the involvement of factory employees and the marketing department in maintaining the quality of products and services. In implementing a marketing mix strategy for people, PTPN IV has determined human resources (HR) that are in accordance with their respective tasks. PTPN IV is an internal party in carrying out the tasks that have been set by the head office and has skills in the field of marketing. As a person who has contributed to the head office, the company has people who are involved in marketing and have different duties such as the marketing admin of PTPN IV who is in charge of managing every process in product sales, the digital marketing department is in charge of marketing products using social media and the head office marketing department is in charge of direct sales such as events or bazaars or online. (Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D, 2018)

In the selection of people involved in promoting tea products, it must involve a person who has skills in the field of marketing and has good public speaking and is under the auspices of an administrative assistant. It can be concluded that in the

application of the marketing mix strategy, namely people, the researcher can conclude that the people involved in the marketing department have their own duties in accordance with the tasks that have been set in the product distribution process, both people involved in PTPN IV marketing and marketing people from the head office. People in the company involved in promoting tea products are also selected who have skills in the field of marketing and are under the auspices of PTPN IV's corporate administrative assistant.

- f. The **process aspect** can be seen from the production and packaging flow that already has standard operating procedures (SOPs). In applying a marketing mix strategy to the process, PTPN IV company carries out several stages in providing services, sales and marketing products until the purchase and sale transactions occur according to the agreement of both parties and in accordance with working operating hours. From the information I got, for operational hours in the sales service process according to working hours. The head office held bazaar/event activities from morning to noon. Bazaar events/activities are carried out in a certain place, if the president and the minister of tourism come, the marketing department of the head office opens a stand to market tea products to consumers and provide services until buying and selling transactions occur.

Then, in the tea production process itself, it must be in accordance with the SOPs that have been implemented in order to create a good product. There are several processes in making Butong tea, namely the selection of tea quality according to the grade through the sorting process. The packaging process for powdered tea products is still manual while for tea bags, the packaging is in Bandung. The branding of the tea is that the tea that is marketed is a tea that has the characteristics of Simalungun regency with a distinctive taste and fragrant aroma and a more concentrated and thick color and the presence of Ulos cloth in the tea packaging. The availability of tea products itself has been found in large supermarkets, traditional markets and online stores.

It can be concluded that in the application of the marketing mix strategy, namely the process, the researcher can conclude that the company serves according to working hours. In the process of marketing products, the head office makes a stand if there is an event/activity in a certain place. The process of making Butong tea is according to the SOP and the quality of the tea is in accordance with the grade through sorting. The packaging of powdered tea products is still manual while the packaging of tea bags is in Bandung. Tea itself is widely available in large supermarkets, traditional markets and online stores. Product quality can affect the brand image of Teh Butong because of the satisfaction of customers who consume Teh Butong. With the distinctive taste of butong tea, it can make customers remember the brand they purchased. (Lupiyoadi, R. 2013)

- g. Meanwhile, **physical evidence** is shown through product packaging and brand identity, but it is still simple and does not fully reflect strong brand positioning. In applying a marketing mix strategy to the physical appearance of Butong tea products, the company makes packaging and produces quality tea to attract the attention of potential consumers.

The physical appearance of the "Butong Tea" product has its own characteristics, namely the packaging of ulos cloth and the name of the tea area, namely Simalungun. Packaging is varied, both packaged tea powder packaging and tea bags/tea powders with packaging in the box according to the packaged tea. such as

the product "Butong Tea" which has an image of ulos (a typical North Sumatran fabric) indicates that the tea is a premium tea (good quality), and that the usual packaging without ulos indicates ordinary/regular tea.

In the application of marketing mix strategies for physical appearance, researchers can conclude that the packaging used has two types, namely in the form of packaging and in the form of boxes, premium products that have packaging that has ulos, while regular products do not have ulos cloth and at the same time highlight the area where this tea is produced so that it can become a typical product of the region as well.

By implementing the 7P Marketing Mix strategy effectively and consistently, Teh Butong can strengthen its brand image in the eyes of consumers, differentiate itself from competitors, and win the hearts of consumers with its products. Most importantly, Butong Tea must continue to prioritize product quality, consumer satisfaction, and build strong relationships with customers to maintain and improve its brand image in the market. (Widodo, S., & Wahyuni, S. (2018).

Practically, this research provides strategic input for PTPN Nusantara IV Bah Butong in formulating and improving the marketing strategy of Teh Butong. The results of the study show that even though the quality of the product and the production process have gone well, the implementation of promotion and distribution strategies still needs to be improved so that the brand image of Butong Tea is stronger in the market. Therefore, companies need to optimize the use of digital media, expand distribution networks, and strengthen visual identities and product packaging to make them more attractive and easily recognizable to consumers. In addition, improving the competence of human resources in the field of marketing is also important to ensure that the implementation of the 7P marketing mix runs in an integrated manner and is oriented towards strengthening the brand image.

In addition, the implications of this research also provide a basis for consideration for the management of PTPN Nusantara IV and related stakeholders in developing brand-based plantation product marketing policies. The findings of the study show the need for policies that encourage integration between production quality and marketing strategies, so that tea products not only excel in terms of process and quality, but also have strong brand competitiveness. In addition, the results of this research can be used as a reference in marketing budget planning, especially in determining priorities in the 7P marketing mix elements that have the most influence on the brand image of Teh Butong.

## CONCLUSION

The 7P marketing mix strategy provides benefits in shaping the brand image of Butong Tea as a quality, reliable, and economically valuable tea product. The application of standardized product elements and production processes can increase consumer confidence, while affordable pricing strengthens the perception of brand value. However, the benefits of the 7P marketing mix strategy are not optimal because the implementation of promotion, distribution, and strengthening of product visual identity elements is still limited. PTPN Nusantara IV Bah Butong has implemented the 7P marketing mix strategy, especially in the aspects of product, price, people, and process, while the aspects of place, promotion, and physical evidence still need to be improved so that the brand image of Teh Butong is stronger and able to compete in the

market.

PTPN Nusantara IV Bah Butong is advised to optimize the implementation of the 7P marketing mix strategy in an integrated manner, especially by strengthening promotional aspects through the use of digital media and expanding the distribution network so that Butong Tea products are more easily accessible to consumers. In addition, strengthening the visual identity and product packaging needs to be done so that the brand image of Teh Butong is more attractive and easily recognizable in the market.

The company needs to improve the competence of human resources in the field of marketing and conduct periodic evaluations of each element of the 7P marketing mix, so that the strategies implemented can be more effective in building and maintaining the brand image of Teh Butong.

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