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Analysis of Product Uniqueness in Influencing Purchase Decisions

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Abstract—This study aims to uncover and analyze consumer perceptions of product uniqueness and to describe the consumer purchase decision-making process at Patara Wonosobo. A naturalistic qualitative approach was used, with data collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and supporting documentation. Informants were selected using non-probability sampling techniques, specifically snowball sampling, involving 12 individuals, including store owners, employees, and consumers. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, member checking, data presentation, drawing conclusions, and data reliability. The expected results include an overview of the characteristics of product uniqueness (shape, taste, packaging, and regional identity) as perceived by consumers, as well as an understanding of how consumers' beliefs, shopping habits, and responses influence the stages of the purchase decision-making process. This study concludes that product uniqueness is a crucial element that provides added value and distinguishes a product from its competitors; these findings are expected to serve as a strategic reference for MSMEs to optimize their products' unique characteristics, thereby enhancing competitiveness and driving sustainable growth in purchase volume.

Keywords— product uniqueness; consumer perception; purchase decision; souvenir shops; Wonosobo; qualitative study; keyword2; keyword3

I. INTRODUCTION

Wonosobo Regency, famous for the Dieng Plateau tourist destination, has a signature product—carica fruit—which has been processed by various small and medium-sized enterprises into souvenirs for the region. The abundance of similar souvenir shops along the tourist route from Wonosobo to Dieng has intensified competition in the industry. Therefore, every small and medium-sized business must highlight the unique characteristics of its products to differentiate itself from similar businesses.

One business that strives to highlight the uniqueness of its products is Toko Oleh-Oleh Patara, which operates under the Berkah Mandiri cooperative (KUB). They offer a variety of processed carica products, such as Carica Strudel, Carica Kombucha, Jellyca, Carica Jam, Carica Pulpy, and Krip-Krip Carica. Based on the researcher's initial observations at Toko Carica Patara, it appears that consumer responses differ between conventional processed carica products—such as candied fruit in syrup—and innovative products like Carica Strudel and Carica Kombucha. These innovative products often pique shoppers' interest, prompting them to stop and try them, take photos, and even spark conversations among shoppers, whereas conventional products are typically ignored and simply passed by. This difference in response indicates that a product's uniqueness is a key factor for consumers in noticing and deciding to make a purchase at the research site. This phenomenon can be explained by the concept of the purchasing decision—a continuous process in which consumers begin by recognizing a need, seek information, compare various options, and ultimately select the most suitable product to achieve satisfaction.

In the regional specialty souvenir industry, consumers' purchasing decisions are not determined solely by price or ease of access, but also by how well the product reflects the distinctive characteristics and cultural identity of its region of origin. This aligns with the concept of the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) discussed by Reeves in 1961, which states that every product must possess a characteristic or advantage that other products lack, thereby serving as the primary reason for consumers to decide to buy. This concept is supported by Kotler and Keller (2016), who emphasize that product differentiation is a crucial strategy for creating value and competitive advantage in the eyes of customers.

Previous studies conducted by Lubis et al. (2021), Pala'biran et al. (2024), and Pitutur et al. (2025) have found a relationship between product uniqueness and consumer purchasing decisions. These three studies generally employed a quantitative approach focused on testing relationships between variables, thereby demonstrating that product uniqueness

influences purchasing decisions. However, these studies have not thoroughly explained how consumers actually perceive and value product uniqueness in their purchasing decisions. This cause-and-effect oriented testing approach tends to overlook the subjective aspects of consumer interpretation, even though these aspects are crucial to understand in depth—especially for products with strong local identity values, such as processed carica. This gap is the primary reason why this study requires a qualitative review to explore consumer experiences and understand the meaning of product uniqueness from the consumers' perspective.

However, in practice, it is evident that product uniqueness is not the only factor driving consumer purchases, as consumers also consider other factors such as popularity, recommendations, and price. This situation has prompted researchers to gain a deeper understanding of how consumers perceive product uniqueness at each stage of the purchasing decision-making process, rather than merely examining whether there is a correlation between these two variables.

The innovation of this study lies in its focus on gaining an in-depth understanding of how consumers interpret the uniqueness of local products when making purchasing decisions—specifically, the subjective dimensions of this interpretation, which have not been extensively addressed by previous research, which has generally been quantitative and correlational in nature. This study focuses on an in-depth qualitative analysis of the carica souvenir industry in strategic areas along the Wonosobo-Dieng tourist route. The purpose of this study is to explore how consumers interpret the uniqueness of products based on their experiences during the purchase decision-making process, with the expectation that the characteristics of this uniqueness will emerge from the field findings.

II. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using naturalistic methods, which aim to gain an in-depth understanding of how consumer perceptions and behaviors emerge naturally in real-life situations (Moleong, 2017). This study has three main characteristics in line with the naturalistic approach: first, the researcher serves as the primary instrument for collecting and interpreting data; second, the research is conducted in a natural setting without altering or manipulating specific conditions; third, data are analyzed inductively, meaning the researcher builds understanding and draws conclusions from information gathered in the field to arrive at broader concepts, rather than the reverse (Moleong, 2017). The research was conducted at Toko Carica Patara, located in an easily accessible area directly in front of the Mendolo Type A Bus Terminal in Wonosobo Regency, from June through July 2026.

The informant selection technique used non-probability sampling with a snowball sampling approach. This approach was chosen because the first informants—the store owner and employees—had firsthand knowledge of both loyal customers and new customers visiting Patara, enabling them to help the researcher identify suitable subsequent informants who possessed extensive information about the shopping experience at the store. The study included 12 informants, consisting of 1 business owner (Mr. Wekso Priyantoro), 2 store employees (Fani Familia and Eni), and 9 consumers from various backgrounds (tourists, college students, and regular customers). Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews; preliminary observations were used to gain an overview of the field, and participatory observations were conducted at the store location. Secondary data was obtained from the company profile, Geographical Indication (GI) certification documents, and relevant scientific journals. Data validity was tested using two triangulation techniques:

1. Source Triangulation: Comparing and verifying the reliability of information obtained from the perspectives of business owners, employees, and consumers.
2. Technical Triangulation: Comparing the consistency of data from in-depth interviews, field observations of purchasing activities, pre-survey questionnaires, and official documentation.

In addition, participant checks and careful observation were conducted throughout the research period. Qualitative data analysis was carried out through the following stages: transcribing interview results, repeated reading of the data, coding, grouping the data into categories, identifying key themes, interpreting meanings, and drawing conclusions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of a qualitative analysis conducted through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation of 12 informants at the Patara Wonosobo Souvenir Shop, the researcher identified several key themes that illustrate how consumers and stakeholders perceive the uniqueness of products in influencing purchasing decisions.

Regarding the first theme, both the business owner and consumers view the uniqueness of the products as the key factor that distinguishes Toko Patara from similar souvenir shops in the Wonosobo area. This uniqueness is achieved through innovation and a variety of locally distinctive products that cannot be found elsewhere. This was emphasized by Mr. Wekso Priyantoro, the shop's owner:

"From the very beginning, we wanted carica to be more than just an ordinary candied fruit. That's why we've developed a variety of products—such as Carica Strudel, Carica Kombucha, and even Carica Krip-Krip—to set ourselves apart from other souvenir shops, especially since our carica already has a Geographical Indication certification."

Consumers also experience this differentiation firsthand when making purchasing decisions. As Nadzifah, a tourist visiting Toko Patara, explained:

"Even though it's a little more expensive than other souvenirs, I still bought it because it has a unique flavor and the packaging also reflects Wonosobo's identity. It just tastes different from what I usually come across."

These statements from owners and consumers indicate that the product's uniqueness serves as an effective differentiation tool or Unique Selling Proposition (USP). Uniqueness is not merely defined as physical differences or flavor variations, but rather as a form of innovation combined with local identity (Geographical Indication certification). When consumers are faced with a multitude of souvenir shops selling conventional carica candies, the uniqueness of Patara's product helps alleviate choice overload and serves as the decisive factor that guides their purchasing decision.

The second topic discusses how the store's unique offerings including its comprehensive product variety and functional packaging designs—can provide practical benefits and foster trust among consumers, especially regular customers. This was shared by Fadillah, a loyal customer of Toko Patara:

"It's great to shop here—I can find a wide selection of traditional carica souvenirs all in one place, so I don't have to go to other stores. The quality is also consistent every time I buy some to send to my family."

This trust and practicality are also supported by the variety of sizes and product options available, as Dinda explained:

"There are so many varieties and sizes, so it's easy to choose the right ones to send to my family out of town. The quality is consistent every time I buy them, so I feel confident sending them to my family."

These findings indicate that a product's uniqueness not only serves to attract attention initially but also provides functional value. The wide variety of processed carica products available in a single location offers time efficiency and convenience for consumers. Furthermore, consistent taste and packaging sizes adapted for long-distance shipping successfully build a sense of security and trust, which in turn encourages repeat purchasing decisions.

The uniqueness of Patara's products is also reflected in the modern aesthetics of its packaging, which resonates with the lifestyles of young consumers. The unique and contemporary packaging design has proven capable of creating instant visual appeal. Aini, a college student, shared her experience:

"I think the packaging is trendy it's different from the usual souvenirs, which I find tend to be monotonous. The size is also perfect for keeping in my dorm room. I like taking photos of the products to post on social media."

This initial visual appeal is also felt by first-time visitors, as Frariska explained:

"It was my first time in Wonosobo, and I saw that the products had such unique designs—I'd never seen anything like them before, and they piqued my family's curiosity. The packaging was also neat, so they were safe to take home. In the end, we bought several at once."

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The data above shows that the visual uniqueness of packaging and product design serves as a curiosity trigger. For young consumers, unique products are valuable not only in terms of consumption but also hold symbolic value for sharing on social media. This proves that modern and sleek packaging aesthetics can reach new market segments and drive impulse buying when consumers first see the product on store shelves.

The next theme illustrates how a product's uniqueness—rooted in local raw materials and regional identity—can foster emotional connections, emotional satisfaction, and a sense of pride in consumers. Hasna, a loyal customer, shared her feelings:

"I've been a regular customer of Patara products for family gathering gifts. They have a distinctive flavor, and the packaging always reflects the character of Wonosobo, so I'm proud to give them to my guests."

Aluna, who regularly chooses Patara products as souvenirs, echoed this sentiment:

"The main ingredient is carica, which, in my opinion, is rarely sold as a souvenir in other regions. The packaging is also durable enough to withstand long-distance shipping. I'm proud to be able to introduce Wonosobo to my relatives through this product."

This sense of personal satisfaction is also felt by Henti, a fan of regional souvenirs:

"I love collecting regional souvenirs, and these Patara products stand out from the rest, both in terms of packaging and taste. I'm so happy to have added something truly unique to my collection something you won't find in other stores."

These findings make it clear that consumers' perception of a product's uniqueness has shifted from merely its physical attributes to an emotional experience (emotional value). Patara products are perceived as symbols of Wonosobo's regional identity. When giving these souvenirs to others, consumers feel a sense of cultural pride and personal satisfaction. It is this emotional connection that strengthens the bond between consumers and the brand, so that purchasing decisions are no longer based solely on rational considerations but are driven by a sense of pride and emotional satisfaction.

In addition to personal and family needs, the uniqueness of Patara's products is also reflected in their functional value for formal or professional settings. The neat packaging and well-balanced flavor profile make these products suitable for the workplace, as Vita explained:

"The packaging is neat and looks professional—perfect for sharing with coworkers. The taste isn't too sweet, so it's suitable for a variety of tastes. I feel more confident giving this as a gift at the office."

This statement indicates that the product's uniqueness, combined with its neat packaging and balanced flavor (not too sweet), instills confidence in consumers in formal social situations. This functional suitability broadens the context of the product's use from merely a tourist souvenir to a tool for building professional relationships in the workplace.

To strengthen the validity of the research findings, the researchers used several different sources and methods. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from the owner of the Carica Patara store, employees, and customers. Meanwhile, methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, documents, and previous survey data from customers. A summary of the triangulation results is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Research Triangulation Results

Dimensions	Source Triangulation	Technical Triangulation	Conclusion
Different from Similar Products	Owners, employees, and customers say that Patara offers a variety of carica products that are different from those of its competitors	The interview results were supported by observations of product variations and documentation of Geographical Indication certificates.	The uniqueness of its products is what sets Toko Patara apart from other souvenir shops.
Eye-Catching	Informants stated that packaging and local identity are the main attractions.	Observations and documentation show that the packaging consistently reflects Wonosobo's identity	Local packaging and branding have proven to be an initial draw for consumers.
Functional	All informants found the packaging to be practical and available in various sizes.	Observations show that consumers choose sizes based on their needs, supported by product documentation.	The product is considered to offer practical benefits that meet consumer needs.
Evoking Positive Emotions	Consumers take pride in bringing home souvenirs unique to Wonosobo.	The interview results were supported by observations of consumer behavior and documentation.	A product's uniqueness can foster a sense of pride and satisfaction among consumers.

Liked and Wanted

Consumers say they are willing to repurchase the product and recommend it to others.

Supported by observational findings and pre-survey data on repeat purchases.

A product's uniqueness drives purchasing decisions and repeat purchases.

Based on Table 2, the triangulation results show that all thematic findings regarding product uniqueness operate consistently. The validity of this qualitative data confirms that the product uniqueness at Toko Patara has successfully been transformed from mere physical differentiation into emotional value, practicality, and local identity factors that strongly influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

The consumer purchasing decision-making process involves a series of complex stages, ranging from problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and purchase decision to post-purchase behavior.

The findings indicate that the informants perceive the product's uniqueness as a distinguishing feature that sets Patara apart from other souvenir shops. This perception shapes consumers' beliefs when making purchasing decisions.

The concept of product differentiation employed by Mr. Wekso Pribiantoro at KUB Berkah Mandiri aligns with the idea of a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) as described by Kotler and Keller (2016). They emphasize that a brand must possess certain distinctive characteristics in order to stand out and compete effectively in a highly competitive market. However, the results of this study reveal something more specific than merely confirming this theory for Toko Patara's customers. Product uniqueness is not defined solely by physical attributes such as shape, taste, or packaging, but rather as a representation of Wonosobo's local identity that fosters an emotional connection and a sense of pride when the product is carried or shared with others. As expressed by one consumer informant based on interview results: "I feel happy to be able to represent and introduce Wonosobo through the souvenirs I give to family and friends outside the region."

This perspective has not been extensively addressed in previous research, which generally stops at statistical tests of the relationship between product uniqueness and purchase decisions (Lubis et al., 2021; Pala'biran et al., 2024; Pitutur et al., 2025). In other words, the results of this study not only confirm the direction of the effect already identified by the three previous studies but also explain how it works, thereby deepening our understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, product uniqueness is important to consumers only if it is successfully transformed into an experience that evokes emotions and serves as a symbol of pride not merely a physical difference.

Nevertheless, findings from field research indicate that product uniqueness does not operate in isolation. Consumers' final purchasing decisions result from the synergy between product uniqueness and other supporting factors:

1. Consistency in Quality and Taste: The uniqueness of a product's physical appearance or packaging is only effective in driving the first purchase. To encourage repeat purchases, consistency in delicious taste and product hygiene are absolute requirements that must be maintained.

2. Affordability and Price Perception: Consumers consider the prices of products at Toko Patara to be fair when compared to the quality, uniqueness, and packaging they receive.

3. Store Location and Accessibility: Patara Store's location on the main road, directly across from the Mendolo Wonosobo Type A Bus Terminal, provides easy access for tourists using both public transportation and private vehicles.

4. Employee Service Quality: Friendliness, the availability of product samples, and employees' promptness in providing product information all contribute to a more comfortable shopping experience for customers.

These findings reinforce and expand upon the results of previous studies conducted by Lubis et al. (2021), Pala'biran et al. (2024), and Pitutur et al. (2025), which quantitatively demonstrated that product uniqueness has a positive effect on consumer purchasing decisions. The main difference lies in the depth of the findings obtained through in-depth interviews and direct observation in this study, which allowed consumers to share the meanings, feelings, and personal experiences underlying their decisions – aspects that are difficult to capture through structured questionnaires in previous quantitative studies. The closeness between the researcher and the informants during the interviews helped uncover consumers' stories and feelings more openly, allowing this study to understand consumer experiences more deeply than if it had relied solely on statistical test results. This study explains the rationale behind this contribution: a product's uniqueness stems not only from its physical characteristics but also reflects a local identity capable of providing customers with an emotional experience, thereby influencing their purchasing decisions. Therefore, product uniqueness rooted in local wisdom and food innovation can serve as a strategy to help local food-processing SMEs in Indonesia improve and become more competitive.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study and discussion regarding the role of product uniqueness in consumer purchasing decisions at the Carica Patara store in Wonosobo Regency, the researcher found that informants viewed product uniqueness as a key factor in their purchasing decision-making process. This uniqueness is evident in the distinctive flavor, attractive packaging design, local Wonosobo identity, consistently high product quality, and the availability of products that are hard to find in other souvenir shops. The study shows that buyers do not only consider price when purchasing goods but also pay attention to product characteristics that can provide additional benefits and a unique experience. Therefore, product uniqueness serves as a strong reason for consumers to choose a product, make repeat purchases, and recommend Patara products to others.

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