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Analysis of Relationship between Pioneer Brand Status and Consumer's Attitude toward a Brand (Case on Yamaha Automatic vs. Honda Automatic Transmission Motorcycle in Indonesia)

Arga Hananto* and Taryadi**

Previous research have indicated that brand pioneership provide some advantages such as high market share barriers to entry and consumers preference as well as higher consumer attitude. This paper intends to explore the relationship between perceived brand pioneership on consumers' brand attitude. The study focuses on two competing brands from automatic transmission motorcycle category, namely Yamaha and Honda.

Based on result from 90 respondents, this study confirms the perception that Yamaha (although not the true pioneer) is perceived by the majority of respondents as the pioneering brand in the automatic transmission motorcycle. This study also found that those respondents who perceived that Yamaha is the pioneer brand tend to ascribe higher brand attitude toward Yamaha than toward Honda.

Result from this study adds to the repository of studies concerning brand pioneership as well as adding to repository of knowledge about Indonesian consumer behavior.

Keywords: *brand pioneership, consumer attitude, automatic transmission motorcycle*

Penelitian terdahulu telah menunjukkan bahwa status sebagai merek pionir dapat memberikan keunggulan seperti pangsa pasar yang tinggi, hambatan masuk yang tinggi, preferensi konsumen, maupun sikap konsumen yang lebih positif. Paper ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi hubungan antara persepsi status pionir sebuah merek dengan sikap konsumen terhadap merek. Studi yang dilakukan dikhususkan Yamaha dan Honda, dua merek sepeda motor dalam kategori sepeda motor bertransmisi otomatis yang bersaing ketat.

Berdasarkan hasil survei 90 responden, studi ini mengkonfirmasi persepsi bahwa Yamaha (walaupun bukan pionir sepeda motor matic yang sesungguhnya) dianggap oleh mayoritas responden sebagai merek sepeda motor pionir dalam kategori sepeda motor bertansmisi otomatis. Hasil studi ini juga menunjukkan bahwa responden yang mempersepsikan Yamaha sebagai merek pionir juga cenderung memberikan sikap positif yang lebih tinggi terhadap merek Yamaha, daripada terhadap merek Honda.

Hasil studi ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap khazanah studi tentang *brand pioneership* maupun terhadap khazanah pengetahuan tentang perilaku konsumen Indonesia.

Introduction

The order to which a brand enters the market, thus gained reputation as "market pioneers" or "first movers" (Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989) has been suggested to provide some competitive advantage in the form of high market share (e.g. Robinson and Fornell 1985, Lieberman and Montgomery, 1988 quoted in Rettie, Hilliar

and Alpert 2002, Balaji, 2009), barriers to entry (e.g. Porter, 1985, Robinson and Fornell 1985, Lieberman and Montgomery 1988 quoted in Rettie, Hilliar and Alpert 1999) and consumers preference (Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989, Kardes and Kalyanaram 1992).

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According to Schmalensee (1982 quoted in Golder and Tellis, 1993), a pioneer is defined as the first appearance of a brand in distinctly new product category. Another definition suggest that a brand is considered pioneer if the brand was the first brand of a new type of product (Rettie, Hilliar and Alpert, 2002).

A study by Alpert and Kamins (1995) suggest that consumers tend to have a favorable perceptions of pioneer brand. According to Alpert and Kamins (1995) this fact also explains consumers' positive attitude toward pioneer brand in general.

Following Alpert and Kamins's approach, this paper intends to discuss the relationship between perceived pioneer brand status and consumers' attitude toward a brand. The brands of interest are competing brands of automatic transmission scooter produced by Japanese manufacturers, namely Yamaha and Honda. The two motorcycle brands are currently the leading brands in Indonesia's motorcycle market (Market Intelligence Report on Motorcycle Industry in Indonesia, 2009). Eventhough Honda and Yamaha produces a full line of motorcycle products, this study limits the product line only to automatic transmission scooter.

Based on literature review by Taryadi (2009), Yamaha introduced its automatic transmission scooter product line in 2003 with its Yamaha Nouvo and Mio lines, then followed by Honda with its Honda Vario lines. Nevertheless, it is also worth mentioning that Yamaha was not the true pioneer in automatic transmission motorcycle. The first manufacturer that introduced the concept was Kymco, but without much commercial success. It can be argued, however that Yamaha is the perceived market pioneer as Yamaha with its Mio lines is the manufacturer that makes this product category as popular as it is now.

This study aims to explore the relationships between perceived pioneer brand status and consumers' attitude toward the perceived pioneer brand. In particular, this study would like to empirically establish whether Yamaha is the perceived pioneer brand in this category, as it is widely believed in Indonesia.

A study on perceived pioneerships and its consequences is important for marketing strategy development. For instance, if it is established

that a brand perceived as the pioneer (not the real pioneer) do receive more favourable attitude, it means that first mover advantage may not be realized. A second mover with better blend of segmenting, targeting and positioning strategy accompanied with appealing marketing mix can reap more benefits than the original pioneer. This finding would corroborate Kalyanaram, Robinson and Urban's (1995) that order of market entry is not related to long term survival.

Literature Review

Throughout the past decades, branding has become more strategic asset for marketers. Kotler (2003) defines brand as name, terms, symbols or designs, or any combination of them, intended to identify goods or services of a group of seller and to differentiate the offering from those of competitors. A term suggested to illustrate importance of brands for marketers is "brand equity" (e.g. Aaker, 1991, Keller, 2003).

According to Aaker (1991), brand equity is defined as "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers." Keller (2003), defines brand equity as "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand.

According to Aaker (1991), elements of brand equity consist of five dimensions, namely brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other proprietary brand assets. Keller (2003) on the other hand proposes two dimensions, namely brand awareness and brand image.

Extending from brand equity conceptualizations, pioneer status of a brand can be regarded as a form of brand association, which Aaker defines as "anything linked in memory to a

Brand". Brand associations are believed to contain the meaning of the brand for consumers (Keller 1993), and this meaning becomes a product attribute from which consumers form attitude (Peter and Olson, 2005). Peter and Olson (2005) suggest that consumers can form attitude toward product class, product form, brand and model. Thus brand attitude is an important aspect of brand equity (Peter and Olson, 2005).

Kardes and Kalyanaram (1992) suggest that pioneer brands enjoy more benefits than follower brands. Status as pioneer brand can provide benefit due to its effect on learning and memory as well as its effect on judgment (Kardes and Kalyanaram 1992).

In terms of pioneer brand effect on learning and memory, Kardes and Kalyanaram (1992) explains that the process results from consumer perception that the first entrant in a new product category is novel and interesting, and since novel information is attention-drawing, much of the information will be encoded into long term memory (Anderson 1983 in Kardes and Kalyanaram 1992). Repeated information and rehearsal (Rundus 1971 in Kardes and Kalyanaram 1992) facilitate learning and increase the amount of information known about the pioneering brand. Thus pioneer brands will have higher chance of being known before the second entrant appears on the market. In line with Kardes and Kalyanaram (1992), Alpert and Kamins (1994) suggest that pioneer brand gets the first chance of being used, or at least known. This opportunity allows the pioneer brand to be learned better by consumers.

Kardes and Kalyanaram (1992) also suggest this increased learning about the pioneer has effects on influencing consumer judgment. Referring to Information integration theory, they suggest that the amount of information used to form an overall evaluation can influence the extremity of the overall evaluation and confidence in that evaluation. This means pioneer brand might enjoy more opportunities to be learned and remembered, and thus enjoy more favorable evaluations due to large amount of information about it available in consumer's memory.

Moreover, Alpert and Kamins (1994) relate the learning process above with cognitive psychology principle of 'serial positioning effect', which posits that first item (e.g. in this case a brand) in a sequence is learned better than the next, thus enhanced brand recall, and ultimately could have positive effect on initial global attitude and preference.

Evaluation regarding the pioneer brand and those of follower brands is suggested to differ as a function of time (Kardes and Kalyanaram, 1992). Since judgments of the pioneer are reinforced

and supported by a relatively large amount of attribute information stored in a rich, associative network in long-term memory, which are likely to be relatively persistent over time (Anderson 1983, quoted in Kardes and Kalyanaram, 1992).

But to what extent can a pioneer brand be correctly recalled? Alpert and Kamins (1995) suggest that consumers will consciously remember pioneership status since pioneership is considered inherent to the pioneer brand and pioneer brands gain benefit from enhanced learning (Kardes and Kalyanaram 1992). This proposition is partially supported for three out of five product categories studied by Alpert and Kamins (1995), namely personal computers, low calorie beers and color television. The authors think that degree to which pioneership status can be remembered is related to the possibility that the product categories were viewed as high involvement products, even though Alpert and Kamins did not control for low/high involvement in selecting product categories for their study.

A study by Rettie, Hilliar and Alpert (2002) found that pioneership is a distinctive attribute deemed relevant for consumers. They also found that communication of pioneer status during product introduction as well as at later times would enhance purchase interest, and this knowledge of the brand's pioneer status would encourage consumers to buy the brand. This indicates some evidence that pioneer brand enjoys enhanced consumer preference, attitude and awareness. Pioneer brands are also proposed as standard consumers use to judge other brands, by influencing how brand attributes are valued (Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989).

Pioneer status of a brand has been suggested to have impact on brand in terms of more favorable general attitude (Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989; Kardes and Kalyanaram, 1992). A study by Alpert and Kamins (1995) confirms that propositions. They found that consumers would indicate more favorable attitude toward pioneer brands than they would indicate toward follower brands.

Research on reseller by Alpert, Kamins and Graham (1992) has found that global attitude favoring the pioneer brand can be broken down into multiattribute item set that reveals more favorable perceptions of pioneer brands than that of follower brands. This suggests that attitude

should be seen as comprising of multiattribute dimensions attached to a brand (e.g. quality, status and innovation [Alpert and Kamis, 1994]). Alpert and Kamins (1995, based on findings of Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989, Kardes and Kalyanaram, 1992) further suggest that the attitudinal advantages enjoyed by pioneer brand should translate into a preference advantage.

Based on the theoretical discussions above, the authors developed the following hypothesis:

H1: Consumers who perceive that Yamaha is the pioneer brand in automatic transmission (AT) motorcycle would display more positive attitude toward Yamaha AT variant in contrast to Honda AT variant

Following multiattribute approach used by Alpert, Kamis and Graham (1992), in this research the authors develop mutiattribute measures consisting of nine attribute which was developed from discussion with motorcycle users, as well

as study on various publications regarding motorcycle. The nine attributes are price, styling, fuel efficiency, engine performance, after sales service, color, brand, label and versatile.

Attitude is derived using Fishbein's multiattribute attitude model (cited in Peter and Olson 2005, p.143) that proposes "that the evaluations of salient beliefs cause overall attitude". Thus a person's attitude can be formally conceptualized as the sum of product between strength of belief that an object has certain attributes and evaluation of those attributes.

Using five points likert scale, each respondents are asked to rate their salient beliefs of the two brands (Yamaha and Honda) as well as belief evaluation (evaluation of importance of each of the nine attributes). The items were originally developed in Bahasa, but for the purpose of this paper, the items are translated into English.

Table 1 contains the nine attributes, its definition and items used for measurement.

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No	Attribute	Attribute definition	Measurement itemsv
1	Price	Perceived expensiveness of the product price	Price of X is less expensive than other brands of similar motorcycle (salient beliefs) Unexpensive price among other similar motorcycle is important (belief evaluation/importance)
2	Styling	Overall perceived attractiveness of the motorcycle brand	X has attractive design and trendy (salient beliefs) Having attractive design and trendy appearance is important (belief evaluation/importance)
3	Fuel Efficiency	Perceived fuel economy of the motorcycle	X has efficient fuel consumption (salient beliefs) Having efficient fuel consumption is important (belief evaluation/importance)
4	Engine Performance	Perceived reliability, strength, durability and acceleration of the motorcycle engine	X has reliable, strong, durable and high acceleration engine (salient beliefs) Having engine reliability, strength, durability and acceleration is important (belief evaluation/importance)
5	After sales service and repair	Perceived satisfaction of after sales service centers and ease of finding the service centers	X's service center is satisfactory and its location is easy to find (salient beliefs) Having satisfactory and easy to find service centers is important (belief evaluation/importance)
6	Color	Color variety of the motorcycle and color attractiveness	X comes with attractive color variety and offers wide variety of colors available (salient beliefs) Having attractive and wide variety of color is important (belief evaluation/importance)
7	Brand Familiarity	Perceived brand familiarity/well known brand	X is a well known brand in its product category (salient beliefs) Having well known brand is important (belief evaluation/importance)
8	Accessories attractiveness	Perceived attractiveness of accessories available	X has attractive accessories Having attractive accessories is important (belief evaluation/importance)
9	Versatility	Perceived multi purpose use of the motorcycle (e.g. commuting to work, school	X can be used for a variety of purposes (e.g. go to school, work, recreation, etc)

Source: Taryadi (2009). Analysis of Influence of Pioneer Status Perception toward Consumer Attitude in Automatic Transmission Motorcycle in Greater Jakarta Area, unpublished undergraduate thesis, Universitas Indonesia.

Methodology

Research Design

This research adopts a quantitative descriptive research design using survey as data collection method. According to Malhotra (2007), descriptive research is a part of conclusive research design that specifically attempts to describe existing phenomenon.

Data collection and Sampling.

The intended population for this study is motorcycle users, since the authors assume that motorcycle users would be knowledgeable or at least aware of the brands studied because it can be assumed that these motorcycle users are involved with the product category. A study by Celsi and Olson (1988) suggest that involvement plays motivational role in consumers' attention and comprehension process, and that this involvement may come from intrinsic sources (e.g. car enthusiasts would regard information and activities relevant for them) or from situational sources.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts: (1) screening (attempts to identify whether the person approached is qualified to become respondent by asking whether the person rides a motorcycle.), (2) a battery of questions regarding the motorcycle used, purchase behaviors, and an item measuring perceived AT scooter pioneer (3) belief evaluation measurement (measuring whether a certain attribute is considered important factor in motorcycle purchase, and (4) respondent profile.

Data were collected by the first author from 120 respondents who are users of automatic transmission scooters (produced by Yamaha and Honda) in greater Jakarta, Indonesia area. Sampling method used is of non probabilistic type, using convenience sampling technique whereby respondents are selected because they happen to present at the location of data collection (Malhotra, 2007). The sampling was conducted in two batches. The first batch consisting of 30 respondents was conducted for the purpose of pretesting the instrument, while the second batch

of 90 respondents was conducted to gather the data required for analysis. Pretesting enables the authors to fine tune the questions, which then used for the actual data collection.

In the final 90 respondents, most of the respondents were men (86.7% of 90 respondents). In terms of age, forty per cent of respondents are of 18-24 year-old age group, 26.7% from 25-30 year-old age group, 17.8% come from >35 year-old and 15.6% come from age range between 31-35 year-old.

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the consistency of a measure (Field, 2005). Since respondents rate two objects using the same attributes, three separate reliability analyses was conducted. One reliability analysis conducted to assess reliability of salient beliefs for Yamaha brand, one for Honda brand's salient beliefs, and one reliability analysis conducted to measure reliability of belief evaluation/importance scale.

For Yamaha's salient beliefs, Cronbach's alpha was 0.823; for Honda's salient beliefs the Cronbach's alpha reported was 0.834, and for the belief evaluation/importance, the Cronbach's alpha reported was 0.8331. According to Field (2005), Cronbach's alpha over 0.7 can be considered generally acceptable.

Result and Discussion

Perceived Pioneer Brand

A majority of respondents (66.7%) perceive that Yamaha Mio is the pioneer brand, while only 10% perceive Jetmatic as the pioneer brand in AT scooter (Jetmatic is the actual brand that first market AT scooter). This findings substantiate authors' prediction that people perceive Yamaha Mio as the pioneer in AT scooter.

Association between perceived pioneership and brand attitude

To test the hypothesis presented in this paper, the authors conducted paired sample t-test to measure whether the brand perceived as the pioneer brand receive better consumer attitude rating. Before we examine the t-test result, it is worthwhile to first examine the mean brand attitudes for Yamaha and Honda to gain insight

regarding which brand tend to receive higher consumer attitude rating. Yamaha receive mean attitude rating of 134,24 (please note that highest possible attitude rating calculated with Fishbein's approach is 255), while Honda receive mean attitude rating of 125,64. Thus it appears that Yamaha receive higher mean attitude rating than Honda.

In order to establish the significance of the mean attitude rating difference above, paired sample t-test was performed. The result suggest significant difference between attitude toward Yamaha and attitude toward Honda ($t = 2,935$; $df = 89$ with p value of $0,004$). Thus, we can conclude that in general Yamaha has receive higher attitude rating than Honda. Nevertheless, this test still does not provide evidence that brand perceived as pioneer in a product category tend to gain higher attitude rating. Therefore, another paired sample t-test was conducted.

In the second paired sample t-test, only respondents indicating that Yamaha is the pioneer brand is selected for data processing. This filtering yields 63 respondents (out of 90 respondents). Central tendency measure for the second paired sample t-test reveals similar findings with the first t-test. Yamaha gains mean attitude rating of 140,13, while Honda gains mean attitude rating of 124,22.

T-test result also indicate significant difference in mean attitude rating between Yamaha and Honda ($t = 5,135$; $df = 62$; p value $=0,000$). This finding suggest that those who perceive Yamaha as the pioneer brand in AT scooter category tend to ascribe higher attitude rating toward Yamaha. This finding substantiate the notion that brand pioneership would bring some advantage to the brand in terms of higher consumer attitude rating, even if those brands are not the true pioneer, but perceived as pioneer..

Conclusion

This exploratory study has added another evidence showing that perceived pioneership tends to be associated with higher brand attitude as was found in earlier studies (Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989; Kardes and Kalyanaram, 1992, Alpert and Kamins, 1995). It seems that this effect can be contributed by Yamaha's move

to launch its AT scooter variant earlier than its rival, Honda and back it up with somewhat significant promotion activities. This brand attitude advantage can be considered an asset to the brand.

Using multiattribute models to measure brand attitude can also reveal some insights for marketers, such as identifying attributes which are most important or salient to consumers (Peter and Olson, 2005). Examination of questions regarding perceived importance/belief evaluation reveal consumers' evaluation of several attributes they consider important in motorcycle purchase. The findings is summarized in table 2 below.

Based on table 2, it seems that after sales service is considered the most important attribute, followed by the vehicle's multipurposeness (versatility), engine performance and fuel efficiency. Price is regarded as the least important attribute. This suggest that price competition can be reduced since price is not the primary consideration of Indonesian consumers in purchasing motorcycle.

Nevertheless, attitude toward an object may not correspond to actual purchase behavior (Peter and Olson, 2005). Thus eventhough on average, attitude toward Yamaha is higher than attitude toward Honda, it is worthy to remind marketers that positive consumer attitude may not always guarantee their sales. This study only measures consumers general attitude toward the two competing brands, not the actual purchase behavior or purchase intention. For future research, perhaps purchase intention or actual purchase behavior needs to be measured in addition to general brand attitude measurement. Another limitation of this study is the relatively

Table 2. Perceived importance of attribute in motorcycle purchase

Attribute	Mean Importance Rating
after sales service	4,23
versatility	4,22
engine performance	4,18
fuel efficiency	4,14
model	3,98
brand	3,89
color	3,78
label	3,78
price	3,56

Source: questionnaire data collected by the first author

small number of respondents as well as the nature of sampling method used (convenient sampling). For future studies, larger sample size should be

obtained, and more systematic sampling method could be used to improve generalizability.

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