The Influence of Product Knowledge and Social Environment on Purchasing Decisions Through Product Familiarity in Frozen Processed Fish Products

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ABSTRACT

Makassar City is one of the marketing centers for various kinds of fishery products, both raw material-based and processed. Changes in the lifestyle of the people of Makassar City affect the food consumption patterns of the community. Makassar City residents are interested in instant food products that are durable and easy to serve. This study aimed to analyze the effect of product knowledge on product familiarity, social environment on product familiarity, product knowledge on purchasing decisions, social environment on purchasing decisions, product familiarity on purchasing decisions, product knowledge on purchasing decisions through product familiarity and social environment on purchasing decisions through product familiarity. This research was conducted in Makassar City. Data collection used an accidental sampling method with a questionnaire. The sample consisted of 384 consumers. The data were processed using Smart PLS Version 4.0. The results indicate that product knowledge has a significant effect on product familiarity. Similarly, the social environment significantly affects product familiarity. Product knowledge also significantly influences purchasing decisions, as does the social environment. Additionally, product familiarity has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. Product knowledge influences purchasing decisions through product familiarity, and the social environment also impacts purchasing decisions through product familiarity in the context of frozen processed fish food products.

INTRODUCTION

Developments in today's modern era have led to the emergence of new lifestyle behaviors in humans. A person's lifestyle is reflected in their daily activities, interests, and opinions, which shape their way of life **(Virya, 2018)**. Lifestyle can also be a means of expression and adaptation of a person to the culture that is sweeping. Thus, a person's actions are based on new patterns that are born due to the times. In this case, modern forms of culture present a modern lifestyle as a reference in behavior and action, including when new products are considered part of a symbolic form of today's lifestyle

(Alawiyah & Alata, 2020). People's thinking shifts from traditional ways of thinking to rational, practical and modern thinking patterns **(Sukirno, 2017)**. The reality of modern human life that occurs today shows that everything is easy to do and get, especially such as lifestyle and consumption as a result of changes and developments of the times **(Ufrida & Harianto, 2022)**. This condition will certainly lead to changes in the behavior of the community at large, including the behavior of fulfilling food needs. Each individual is predicted to need ready-to-eat food with a long shelf life, rather than having to maintain the intensity of fresh food shopping, as has been the habit so far **(Sula *et al.*, 2021)**.

Food supply at the household level has begun to shift from the use of fresh food to partially frozen food. These changes are caused by changes in consumer lifestyles, including changes in food consumption patterns, as a result of improved social conditions and changes in the strategic environment for business development **(Santoso *et al.*, 2018)** Consumers' desire for practical and convenient food options while traveling has led to an increased demand for easy-to-cook and convenient products, such as frozen foods and instant noodles. Furthermore, another advantage is that it can be stored and eaten for a long time **(Kyntani *et al.*, 2022)**.

Frozen food is food that is frozen with the aim of preserving food until it is ready for consumption. It can be easily found by consumers both at the traditional market level and in supermarkets **(Rosyida, 2018)**. Frozen food is widely chosen because it is practical, can be stored for a long time, and can be cooked at any time and can be created into various types of menus according to consumer tastes. Usually beef and chicken are processed into frozen food, but now there are more and more variations of raw materials that can be utilized, for example, ingredients from marine products **(Wahab, 2018)**.

The fisheries sector is one of the assets that must be managed sustainably. This sector provides the staple food of fish which contains nutrients in its meat and is very good for human health. This is evidenced by the level of fish consumption in Indonesia of 50.69kg/capita/year in 2018 and 54.50kg/capita/year in 2019. This fish consumption rate increased in 2022 to 56.48kg/capita/year **(KKP, 2023)**. Marine products are not only rich in the diversity and number of flora and fauna that live in the sea, but various sources of essential vitamins and minerals are contained in them. The compound content that is not owned by fauna/flora products (animals and plants) is the content of long-chain fatty acids, omega 3 owned by fish. This content has a disadvantage in that it can accelerate the process of fish spoilage. The process of fish spoilage or quality deterioration occurs due to the oxidation of fatty acids and the degradation of proteins contained in fish. One way to resist the rate of quality deterioration in fish is to process fish into fast food **(Damongilala, 2021)**.

Makassar City is one of the marketing centers for a wide range of agricultural, fishery and livestock products, both based on raw materials and processed products. Changes in the lifestyle of the people of Makassar City affect their food consumption

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patterns. Like residents in other big cities, residents of Makassar City are interested in instant food products that are durable and easy to serve **(Akra, 2023)**. This is evidenced by the sales data for processed frozen fish in Makassar City from 2017 to 2021, which increased by 61,888,945kg, or 0.95%. As a result, the average annual sales volume in Makassar City is 12,377,789kg. Additionally, the rise in frozen food stores is providing solutions to the growing demand for practical food options. Several large frozen food stores in Makassar City are spread in several locations.

Several factors can influence purchasing decisions, including product knowledge, the social environment, and product familiarity. Product knowledge refers to a collection of information about products, such as product categories, terminology, characteristics, and specific brands. Adequate knowledge and information for consumers is very important to make consumers familiar with the product **(Kandemir *et al.*, 2019)**. In addition, the social environment can stimulate consumption by increasing consumer involvement with the product, developing certain social norms, and related to the availability of products in the market that can be reached by consumers **(Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006)**. Product familiarity is defined as the amount of knowledge related to products known by consumers, especially product brands and experience as the ability to conduct investigations related to products. Product familiarity is an attitude that can lead to consumer buying interest **(Zhang & Hou, 2021)**.

Based on the background above, this study aimed to optimize the understanding of consumer behavior regarding frozen processed fish products, helping to identify the key determinants influencing Indonesian consumers' purchasing decisions. The findings of this research can assist industry stakeholders in developing more effective strategies to reach the target market and drive sustainable growth in the industry.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Study site

This research was centered in Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. This location was chosen with the consideration that Makassar City is the fourth largest city in Indonesia and the largest in Eastern Indonesia, so it has great potential in trading frozen food products.

2. Data collecting method

The sample approach utilized in this study was an incidental sampling. According to **Sugiyono (2019)**, incidental sampling is a sampling strategy based on chance, which means that anyone who occurs to meet the researcher can be utilized as a sample if they match the conditions established by the researcher. The sample size in this study was determined using the Lemeshow formula, with a sampling error of 5%. As a result, the

study included 384 samples. This study used a Likert scale with 5 points as follows: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

The data sources in this study consisted of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from questionnaires and observations, while secondary data or supporting data were obtained from various literature and documents related to problems in the field. Data collection techniques were carried out by observation, documentation and questionnaires. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using statistical analysis, namely partial least square-structural equation modeling (PLS SEM) with SmartPLS4.0 software. SEM is a powerful data distribution model and does not depend on many assumptions and normal data distribution, while PLS can handle relatively small sample sizes and reflective and formative indicators **(Riptanti *et al*, 2024)**. Statistical analysis was used to analyze the effect of product knowledge and social environment on purchasing decisions with product familiarity as an intervening variable.

RESULTS

1. Measurement Model Testing

Partial Least Square (PLS) uses a bootstraping or random doubling method where the normality assumption will not be a problem for PLS. The results of the following model analysis will be explained in four stages as follows:

Individual item reliability

A high factor loading value indicates that the indicator does explain the variable it measures. According to **Hair *et al.* (2016)** and **Salsabila *et al.* (2021)**, indicators with a factor loading value of 0.7 or higher are considered acceptable.
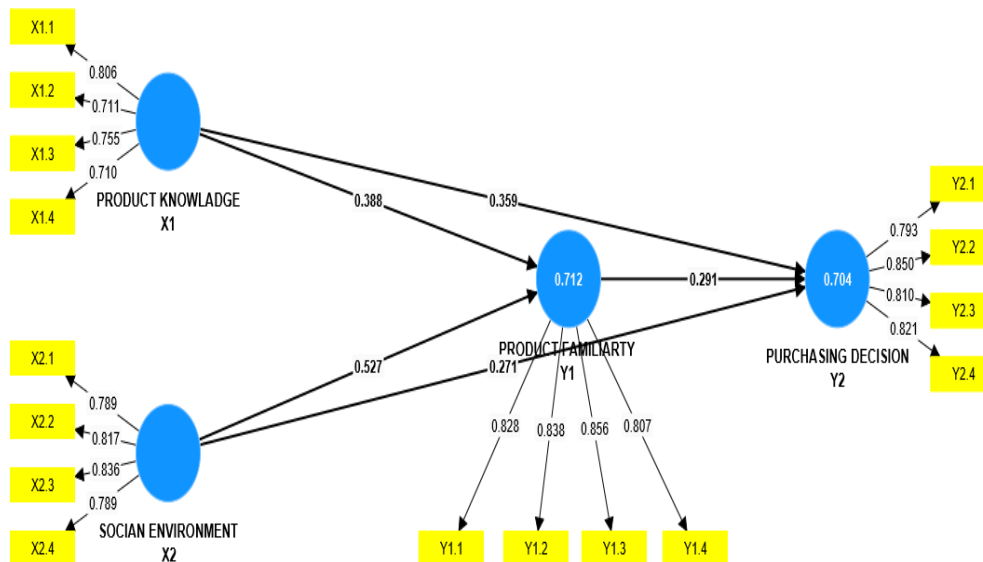
Fig. 1. Output outer model

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Table 1. Outer model output

Variable	Indicator	Loadings factor	Criteria	Test results
Product knowledge (X1)	X1.1 (Nutrition)	0,806	> 0,700	Valid
	X1.2 (Durability)	0,711	> 0,700	Valid
	X1.3 (Preservative free)	0,755	> 0,700	Valid
	X1.4 (Brand)	0,710	> 0,700	Valid
Social environment (X2)	X2.1 (Family/friends)	0,789	> 0,700	Valid
	X2.2 (Lifestyle)	0,817	> 0,700	Valid
	X2.3 (Social class)	0,836	> 0,700	Valid
	X2.4 (Product availability)	0,789	> 0,700	Valid
Product familiarity (Y1)	Y1.1 (Product consumption rate)	0,828	> 0,700	Valid
	Y1.2 (Product liking)	0,838	> 0,700	Valid
	Y1.3 (Product sensitivity)	0,856	> 0,700	Valid
	Y1.4 (Product packaging)	0,807	> 0,700	Valid
Purchase decision (Y2)	Y2.1 (Attention stage)	0,793	> 0,700	Valid
	Y2.2 (Attraction stage)	0,850	> 0,700	Valid
	Y2.3 (Desire/intent stage)	0,810	> 0,700	Valid
	Y2.4 (Stage of deciding to buy)	0,821	> 0,700	Valid

Source: SmartPLS4

As shown in Fig. (1) and Table (1), all indicators have a factor loading above 0.7, indicating that the data meet the requirements. Therefore, the next stage of testing can proceed.

Internal consistency reliability

Testing was conducted using the composite reliability (CR) value, which measures the internal consistency or accuracy of the research instruments. A research instrument is considered reliable if it shows satisfactory values for both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability **(Hair & Sarstedt, 2011)**. According to the SmartPLS system, the research instrument is considered reliable when both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are above 0.7, with composite reliability typically being higher than Cronbach's alpha. However, **Hair *et al.* (2011)** noted that a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.60 or higher is acceptable and indicates reliability.

Table 2. Composite reliability value

Variable	Cronbach 's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Criteria	Test results
Product familiarity	0,900	0,852	> 0,700	Valid
Purchase decision	0,890	0,837	> 0,700	Valid
Social environment	0,882	0,822	> 0,700	Valid
Product knowledge	0.834	0,734	> 0,700	Valid

Source: SmartPLS4

The composite reliability test in Table (2) is accepted and declared valid since the value of each variable meets the requirements, namely the value> 0.70.

Average variance extracted (AVE)

At this stage of testing, the average variance extracted (AVE) value is examined. A value is considered valid if the AVE is above 0.5 (**Hair & Sarstedt, 2011**).

Table 3. Average variance extract (AVE) value

Variable	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Criteria	Test results
Product familiarity	0,693	> 0,500	Valid
Purchase fecision	0,670	> 0,500	Valid
Social environment	0,653	> 0,500	Valid
Product knowledge	0,558	> 0,500	Valid

Source: SmartPLS4

The test results in Table (3) show that the AVE values for each variable exceed the minimum threshold of 0.5. Therefore, all AVE values are considered good and meet the required criteria.

Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity testing was carried out to test how far the latent construct is really different from other constructs. A high discriminant validity value indicates that a construct is able to explain the phenomenon being measured. Discriminant validity testing was done by looking at Fornell-Lacker's cross loading value.

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Table 4. Fornell-Lacker' cross loading

No.		Product familiarity	Purchase decision	Social environment	Product knowledge
1	Product familiarity	0.,832			
2	Purchase decision	0,777	0,819		
3	Social environment	0,796	0,752	0,808	
4	Product knowledge	0,754	0,766	0,694	0,747

Source: SmartPLS4

According to the results of the two-stage cross loading measurement, there is no difficulty with the discriminant validity test. This assertion is supported by the results of Table (4), which demonstrate that the root AVE value is greater than the correlation between constructs and other constructs.

2. Testing the inner model (Structural model)

The structural model refers to the internal model or measurement. The inner model describes the link between latent variables. The predicted values for the path relationships in the structural model should be assessed in terms of their strength and relevance. The structural model in PLS was evaluated using R2 for variables. Exogenous and path coefficient values for endogenous variables were then evaluated for significance using the t-statistic value for each path. The proposed research model's prediction model performs better as the r-square value increases. The path coefficient value indicated the level of significance in hypothesis testing.

R-square (R^2) and Q-square ($Q^{2)}$)

The R-square and Q-square values range from 0 to 1.00, with values closer to 1.00 indicating better model fit.

Table 5. R-Square results

Variable	R^2	R^2 adjusted	Q^2 (1-SSE/SSO)
Product familiarity (Y1)	0,712	0,710	0, 487
Purchase decision (Y2)	0,704	0,702	0, 469

Source: SmartPLS4

Based on Table (5), it can be seen that the R-square value of the purchase decision has a value of 0.704, which can be interpreted that the decision variable can be explained by the product knowledge and social environment constructs. Product familiarity has an R-square value of 0.712, which means that the familiarity variable can be explained by the product knowledge and social environment constructs. The R-square value of the two constructs is included in the moderate/medium category since the R-square value is> 0.50. The Q-square value shows evidence that the model has good predictive relevance because the value obtained is more than 0 (zero). Based on the research results, the Q-square value of the purchasing decision variable was 0.469> 0.25 (moderate prediction accuracy), and product familiarity was 0.487> 0.25 (moderate prediction accuracy).

Goodness of fit index (GoF index)

In validating the overall model, both the outer and inner models were assessed using the goodness of fit (GoF) index. The GoF values range from 0 to 1, with a communality value of 0.50 and an R-square value. The interpretation of GoF values is as follows: a small GoF value is 0.10; a medium GoF value is 0.25; and a large GoF value is 0.36 **(Ghozali, 2008)**. Telnelnhaus' GoF calculation was as follows:

$$GoF = \sqrt{Rata-rata\ AVE\ X\ Rata-rata\ R\ square}$$

$$GoF = \sqrt{0.643\ X\ 0.708}$$

$$GoF = \sqrt{0.455}$$

$$GoF = 0.674$$

Based on the results of the Tenenhaus GoF calculation, the GoF value was 0.674. This indicates that the research model has a strong GoF, as the value is greater than 0.36.
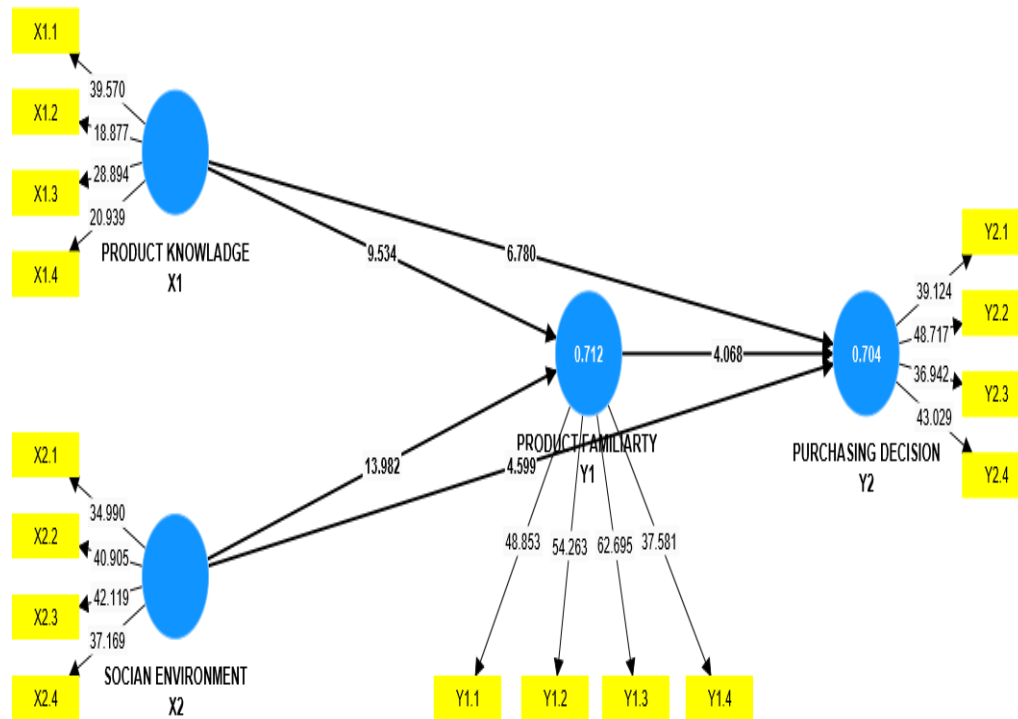
Hypothesis test

The requirements for this test are that the t-statistic value must be greater than 1.96, and the *P*-value must be less than 0.05 for the result to be considered significant.

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The hypothesis test results of this study are presented in Tables (6, 7), while the inferential model results can be seen in Fig. (2).

Fig. 2. Inner model testing results

In Fig. (2), this research hypothesis was carried out with the help of SmartPLS (Partial Least Square) 4.0 software. These values can be seen from the bootstrapping results which can then determine the direct effect and indirect effect.

Direct effect

Direct effect analysis was useful for testing the hypothesis of the direct effect of an influencing variable (exogenous) on the influenced variable (endogenous).

Table 6. Results of path coefficients direct effect

	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	*P*-values	Descr iption
Product familiarity -> Purchase decision	0,291	0,071	4,068	0,00 0	Signif icant
Social environment -> Product familiarity	0,527	0,038	1,.982	0,00 0	Signif icant
Social environment -> Purchase decision	0,424	0,047	9,046	0,00 0	Signif icant
Product knowledge -> Product familiarity	0,388	0,041	9,534	0,00 0	Signif icant
Product knowledge ->Purchase decision	0,471	0,048	9,905	0,00 0	Signif icant

Source: SmartPLS4

Based on Table (6), it can be concluded that all exogenous variables have a positive and significant effect on product familiarity and purchasing decisions with a *P* value <0.0

Indirrect effect

This analysis was used to test the hypothesis of the indirect effect of an influencing variable (endogenous) on the influenced variable (endogenous) which was mediated by an intervening variable (mediator variable).

Table 7. Results of path coefficients indirrect effect

	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDE V|)	*P*-values	Desc ripti on
Social environment ->Product familiarity ->Purchase decision	0,153	0,040	3,839	0,00 0	Signific ant
Product knowledge -> Product familiarity -> Purchase Decision	0,113	0,030	3,756	0,0 00	Signific ant

Source: SmartPLS4

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Based on Table (7), it can be deduced that all exogenous variables have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions through the intervening variable of product familiarity.

DISCUSSION

1. The effect of product knowledge on product familiarity

The test results demonstrate that product knowledge has a favorable and significant impact on purchasing decisions. This is supported by the route coefficient value of 0.388, which is positive (+), indicating that the product variable has a positive impact on purchasing decisions. The t-count value of 4.068 exceeds the t-table value of 1.96, and the significance value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating that the product knowledge variable has a significant effect on product familiarity. Product knowledge is very instrumental for consumers in making considerations to find out information about a product. If consumers already know a product, then consumers will also be familiar with the product and will make a purchase.

The results of this study are in accordance with the opinion of **Akra (2023)**, who postulated that product knowledge has a significant effect on product familiarity. Meanwhile, this is not in line with the opinion of **Santoso *et al* (2018)**, who assessed that product knowledge has no significant effect on product familiarity.

2. The influence of the social environment on product familiarity

The test results demonstrate that the social environment has a favorable and considerable impact on purchasing decisions. This is supported by the path coefficient value of 0.527, which is positive (+), indicating that the social environment variable has a positive impact on product familiarity. The t-count value of 13.982 exceeds the t-table value of 1.96, and the significance value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating that the social environment variable has a significant effect on product familiarity. Consumers are more likely to be familiar with a product if they have heard about it from friends and family.

The findings of this study are consistent with **Santoso *et al.* (2018)**, who elucidated that the social context has a major impact on product familiarity.

3. The effect of product knowledge on purchasing decisions

The test results demonstrate that product knowledge has a favorable and significant impact on purchasing decisions. This is supported by the path coefficient value of 0.471, which is positive (+), indicating that the knowledge variable has a positive impact on purchasing decisions. The t-count value of 9.905 exceeds the t-table value of 1.96, and the significance value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating that the

product knowledge variable has a significant impact on product decisions. Consumers who already have knowledge or information about a product are more likely to make a purchase since they have already considered it.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of **Endah and Handaruwati (2022)**, who denoted that product knowledge has a substantial impact on purchase decisions.

4.   The influence of the social environment on purchasing decisions

The test results demonstrate that the social environment has a favorable and considerable impact on purchasing decisions. This is supported by the path coefficient value of 0.424, which is positive (+), indicating that the social environment variable has a positive impact on purchase decisions. The t-count value of 9.046 is bigger than the t-table value of 1.96, and the significance level of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating that the social environment variable has a significant impact on purchase decisions. The social environment will influence people's shopping decisions. A person's predisposition to follow what others buy will impact their purchasing decisions.

The results of this study are in accordance with the opinion of **Gusrita and Rahmidani (2019)**, who clarified that the social environment has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

5.   The effect of product familiarity on purchasing decisions

The test results demonstrate that product familiarity has a favorable and significant impact on purchasing decisions. This is supported by the path coefficient value of 0.291, which is positive (+), indicating that the product familiarity variable has a positive impact on purchasing decisions. The t-count value of 4.068 exceeds the t-table value of 1.96, and the significance value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating that the product familiarity variable has a substantial effect on purchasing decisions. Product familiarity influences purchasing decisions, as consumers who are familiar with a product are more likely to consider purchasing it.

The results of this study are in accordance with those of **Santoso *et al.* (2018)**, noting that product familiarity has a significant and positive effect on purchasing decisions.

6. The effect of product knowledge on purchasing decisions through product familiarity

The test results show that product knowledge has a favorable and significant impact on purchasing decisions via product familiarity. This is supported by the route coefficient value of 0.113, which is positive (+), indicating that the product knowledge variable has a positive influence on purchasing decisions via product familiarity. The t-count value is 3.756, which is more than the t-table value of 1.96, and the significance value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating that the product knowledge variable has a substantial impact on purchase decisions via product familiarity. The existence of

knowledge of a product will make someone know information related to the product so that someone will feel familiar with the product and then make a purchase. This shows that product knowledge can influence purchasing decisions through product familiarity as an intervening variable.

The results of this study align with the findings of **Kusuma and Untarini (2014)**, who suggested that product knowledge serves as a key consideration for acquiring product-related information, thereby influencing product familiarity. Additionally, these results are supported by **Akra (2023)**, who stated that product familiarity has a significant impact on purchasing decisions.

7. The influence of the social environment on purchasing decisions through product familiarity

The research results show that the social environment influences purchasing decisions positively and significantly through product familiarity. This is supported by the route coefficient value of 0.153, which is positive (+), indicating that the social environment variable has a positive influence on purchasing decisions via product familiarity. The t-count value of 3.839 is more than the t-table value of 1.96, and the significance value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating that the social environment variable influences purchase decisions via product familiarity. Consumer behavior can be influenced by the environment such as family and friends, so that these conditions can influence consumers in getting to know a product which can then be a consideration in making a purchase.

The results of this study concur with the findings of **Santoso *et al.* (2018)**, who reported that the social environment has a positive and significant effect on product familiarity. This is further supported by **Akra (2023)**, who found that product familiarity has a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the previous section's research and debate, it is concluded that product knowledge and social environment are the components that have the greatest direct influence on product familiarity. Product familiarity, product expertise, and social environment are the three aspects that have the greatest direct influence on purchasing decisions. Product familiarity, as an intervening variable, can mitigate the effects of purchasing decisions on product knowledge and the social environment.

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