

Product Differentiation: Can It Be a Right Strategy Instead of Focusing on A Market Leader Position? A Case of Yamaha Lexi and Yamaha Forego in Indonesia

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Abstract:

Differentiation was a good strategy which at least offered two advantages. Firstly, giving more alternatives to consumers and secondly, increasing sales. However, the strategy should be carefully employed. When a particular product had already been a market leader, the differentiation might jeopardize the position, since resources that likely be more useful to strengthen the position, were in use to encourage the alternatives. The creation of Yamaha Lexi and FreeGo which was arranged to give alternatives beside Yamaha NMax that had already been a market leader, likely didn't intensify intention to buy. The aim of the study was to look for evidence that market did not support the availability of alternatives. In addition, the relation between perceived quality, perceived price, perceived differentiation and perceived second price to attitude would be tested whether they were suitable determinants of attitude. Furthermore, the study would be further looking for whether the relation of attitude and subjective norm were in accordance with theory of planned behavior. A sample consisted of 122 respondents was withdrawn through judgment and convenience technique. Data submitted by questionnaires, employing Likert scale, ranging from 1= completely disagree to 5= completely agree, and distributed through Google Form. An Amos 22.0 and SPSS 21.0 were exercised to analyze data. The finding showed that attitude and subjective norm did not produce intention to buy whether Lexi or FreeGo. Perceived quality, perceived price, perceived differentiation and perceived second price did not have significant effect on attitude. Furthermore, the relation of attitude and subjective norm were in accordance with theory of planned behavior.

Keywords: attitude, subjective norm, intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

For years Yamaha NMax likely has dominated the market particularly for scootic (scooter matic) medium market (150-160 cc). The market is likely just dominated by two main brands, Yamaha NMax and Honda PCX. Even though Suzuki actually also produces *Suzuki Burgman* 150 cc, but its sales is not many, so it is likely ignored. Honda PCX is firstly imported from Thailand. The first version presents 125 cc and priced at about IDR 40 million. Some consumers likely have a good response; probably because it is the only one version in the market. However, the sale is not in accordance with the expectation, even though on 2012 PCX 150 substitutes the old version.

Yamaha NMax is launched on February 2015, which its price is IDR 27.4 million. On June 2015 NMax non ABS is produced and its price is only IDR 23.5 million. The 150 cc machine capacity with the lower price than PCX rapidly grabs the market's attention.

NMax's performance sales overlap PCX's sales. On 2015, units PCX sold are only 3.803, smaller than NMax's (15.199 units). On 2016 both performance decrease, but NMax's is very far ahead. The distance is very extreme between both on 2017, NMax's is 207.423 units while PCX's is only 4.593 (Table 1).

Table 1. Sales Data PCX and NMax 2015-2017

Year	PCX (units)	NMax (units)
2015	3.803	15.199
2016	269	11.772
2017	4.593	207.423

Source: AISI

On 2017 PCX is manufactured locally. The price goes down from IDR 40 million to around IDR 27 million. It is expected that the decreasing price will induce the sales. Unfortunately, it doesn't happen. The sales data of both show that on January 2018, while PCX's sale is still zero, NMax's has run to 28.402. On February 2018, even though PCX can achieve 9.661 units sold, NMax's jumps to 34.044. PCX's could increase almost two fold to 16.623 on March 2018, but NMax fastens its sales on 40.965 units. On April and May, though NMax's sales diminish, the performance is still far from PCX reach (Table 2)

Table 2. Sales Data of PCX and NMax Jan-May 2018

Month	PCX (unit)	NMax (unit)
January	0	28.402
February	9.661	34.044
March	16.623	40.965
April	17.408	38.807
May	17.570	32.769

Source: DJB

NMax and PCX revise the old one. NMax second generation comes into market on December 2019 with 155 cc machine capacity. The price is IDR 29.5 million and IDR 33.75 million. PCR 160 cc comes in the beginning of 2021. Its price varies from IDR 30.35 million to 33.95 million. The sales data still indicate that NMax is still the winner. On May 2021 NMax's sale denotes 32.769 units and 24.875 units on June. Conversely, PCX just gets 17.570 units and 11.149 units on the same months.

The superiority likely let Yamaha Indonesia Motor Manufacturing (YIMM) suppose that there is still a lot consumers who wants to buy NMax but they mind about the price. It leads YIMM to produce FreeGo and Lexi. Lexi is introduced on January 2018 and

FreeGo on October 2018; both are 125 cc and their price are lower than NMax. FreeGo's prize is IDR 20.665 million and Lexi's is IDR 21.205 million. Theoretically, giving other varies of product popularly denotes to differentiation (Kotler & Keller, 2013). It looks likely good letting consumers to have a lot of choices. However, in some extent it is supposed will weaken the particular product which always dominates the market and posts a market leader. It will be appreciated if the firm moves the resources to strengthen the market leader post by making everything relating with the brand be better off. For instances, having the amount of service centers be much more available and the service cost be much lower, the availability of spare parts be ready in time and the price be much cheaper, the efforts of managing market be much harder *etc.* In short, the brand equity is much more important than differentiation.

The aim of the study accordingly, firstly, is to look for evidence that market doesn't support the availability of alternatives, *i.e.* FreeGo and Lexi. In other words, consumers' attitude doesn't create intention to buy. In addition, the study wants to know that perceived quality, perceived price, perceived differentiation and perceived second price might determine consumers' attitude.

Reviewing previous studies, it could be presented as follows. Delafrooz *et al.* (2009) state that while the online shopping is determined by attitude, the attitude itself is affected by utilitarian orientations, convenience, price and wider selection. The study of Naeem & Li (2011) indicates that visual perception, learning and group influence have effect on attitude. Zhang & Kim (2013) find that brand consciousness, social comparison and fashion innovativeness have significant impact on attitude, the attitude influences intention to buy. In addition, Kaakeh, Hassan and Almazor (2019) proclaim that image, awareness, Shariah compliance and individualism affect attitude. Also, the attitude has impact on intention.

The concept of attitude, intention and behavior actually refers to the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). Studies exercising TPB doesn't investigate factors affecting attitude, the theory just determines that attitude is formed by behavioral belief and outcome evaluation. The studies more emphasize on the relation between attitude and intention to behave. The result usually support the theory that attitude has effect on intention to behave (*e.g.* Ramayah *et al.*, 2004; Martin & Kulinna, 2004; Wiethoff, 2004; Marrone, 2005; Kouthouris & Spontis, 2005; Santosa, 2011; 2015; 2016; 2018; 2019; 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2020e; 2020f).

The previous studies let the study being exercised be different. This study positions perceived quality, perceived price, perceived differentiation and perceived second price as determinants of attitude. It is not in accordance with TPB and not similar with determinants of attitude from the previous studies. In addition, referring to the title, this study employs two models simultaneously. Accordingly, this study is

unique which is never carried out beforehand.

2. FORMULATING HYPOTHESES

Perceived quality is the way a consumer sees the quality (Kotler & Keller, 2013). Any perception will be automatically administered by affective or cognitive system, which in turn generates outcomes, such as attitude (Peter & Olson, 2014). Also, an attitude can be likely produced by knowledge and needed perception, along with direct experience and information relating with the object (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014). Santosa (2015), Na & Yoo (2016), Kadi & Citaningtyas (2016) and Khan (2019) indicate that perceived quality has impact on attitude. In addition, Chen & Saalem. 2007, Khare, Achtani and Khattar(2014) and Kadi & Citaningtyas (2016) say that perceived price has effect on attitude too. So, the hypotheses could be formed as follows:

- H1a: Perceived quality of Lexi (PQL) affects attitude toward Lexi (AbL)
- H1b: Perceived quality of FreeGo (PQF) affects attitude toward FreeGo (AbF)
- H2a: Perceived price of Lexi (PPL) affects attitude toward Lexi (AbL)
- H2b: Perceived price of FreeGo (PPF) affects attitude toward FreeGo (AbF)

Referring to Kotler & Keller (2013) perceived differentiation is the way a consumer sees the differentiation. Likewise, being pertinent to Peter & Olson (2014) and Schiffman & Kanus (2014), next hypotheses could be developed as follows:

- H3a: Perceived differentiation of Lexi (PDL) affects attitude toward Lexi (AbL)
- H3b: Perceived differentiation of FreeGo (PDF) affects attitude toward FreeGo (AbF)
- H4a: Perceived price second of Lexi (PPSL) affects attitude toward Lexi (AbL)
- H4b: Perceived price second of FreeGo (PPSF) affects attitude toward FreeGo (AbF)

Employing theory of planned behavior (TPB) that behavioral belief and outcome evaluation are components of attitude; also normative belief and motivation to comply are components of subjective norm. In addition, attitude and subjective norm are the predictors of intention. While the efficacy of the TPB is corroborated by some studies (*i.e.* Ramayah *et al.*, 2004; Martin & Kulinna, 2004; Wiethoff, 2004; Marrone, 2005; Kouthouris & Spontis, 2005; Santosa, 2011; 2015; 2016; 2018; 2019; 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2020e; 2020f). the study accordingly posts the hypotheses as follows:

- H5a: Behavioral belief toward Lexi (bL) is a predictor of attitude toward Lexi (AbL)
- H5b: Behavioral belief toward FreeGo (bF) is a predictor of attitude toward FreeGo (AbF)
- H6a: Outcome evaluation toward Lexi (eL) is a predictor of attitude toward Lexi (AbL)
- H6b: Outcome evaluation toward FreeGo (eF) is a predictor of attitude toward FreeGo (AbF)

- H7a: Normative belief toward Lexi (NBL) is a predictor of subjective norm toward Lexi (SNL)
- H7b: Normative belief toward FreeGo (NBF) is a predictor of subjective norm toward FreeGo (SNF)
- H8a: Motivation to comply toward Lexi (MCL) is a predictor of subjective norm toward Lexi (SNL)
- H8b: Motivation to comply toward FreeGo (MCF) is a predictor of subjective norm toward FreeGo (SNF)
- H9a: Attitude toward Lexi (AbL) has effect on intention toward Lexi (IL)
- H9b: Attitude toward FreeGo (AbL) has effect on intention toward FreeGo (IF)
- H10a: Subjective norm toward Lexi (SNL) has effect on intention toward Lexi (IL)
- H10b: Subjective norm toward FreeGo (SNF) has effect on intention toward FreeGo (IF)

3. RESEARCH MODEL

Based on the hypotheses proposed, a research model could be drawn as at Fig.1 and Fig.2.

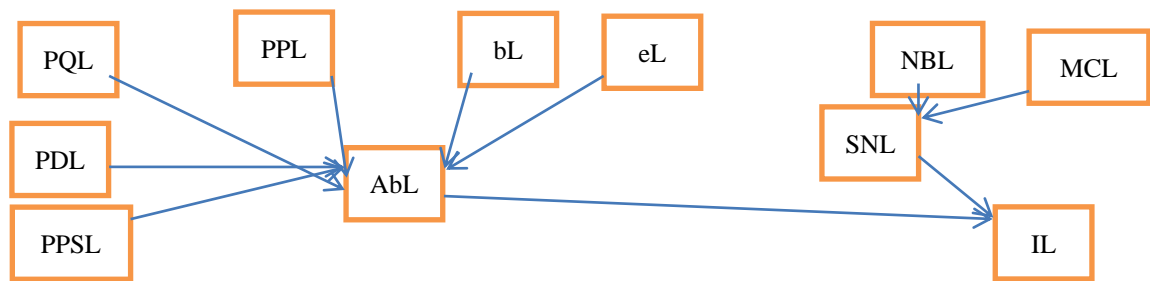


Figure 1. Research model 1

Note

- PQL : Perceived quality toward Lexi
- PPL : Perceived price toward Lexi
- PDL : Perceived differentiation toward Lexi
- PPSL : Perceived price second toward Lexi
- bL : Behavioral belief toward Lexi
- eL : Outcome evaluation toward Lexi
- AbL : Attitude toward Lexi
- NBL : Normative believe toward Lexi

MCL : Motivation to comply toward Lexi
 SNL : Subjective norm toward Lexi
 IL : Intention toward Lexi

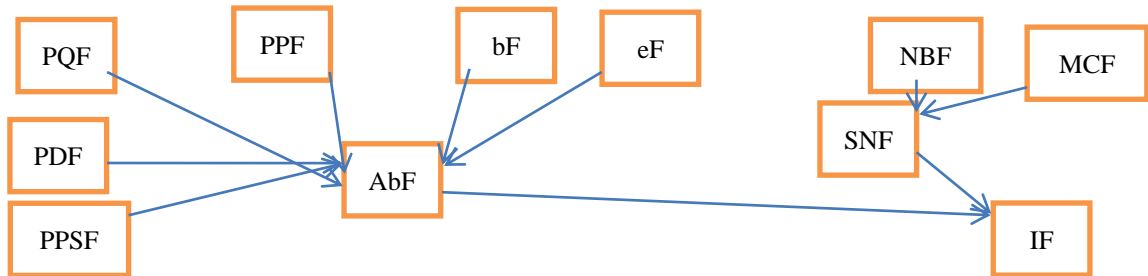


Figure 2. Research model 2

Note

PQF : Perceived quality toward FreeGo
 PPF : Perceived price toward FreeGo
 PDF : Perceived differentiation toward FreeGo
 PPSF : Perceived price second toward FreeGo
 bF : Behavioral belief toward FreeGo
 eF : Outcome evaluation toward FreeGo
 AbF : Attitude toward FreeGo
 NBF : Normative believe toward FreeGo
 MCF : Motivation to comply toward FreeGo
 SNF : Subjective norm toward FreeGo
 IF : Intention toward FreeGo

4. METHODS

A sample of 122 respondents is withdrawn applying convenience and judgment technique (Cooper & Schindler 2008). Respondents are those who are interested on Yamaha, particularly on scootic (scooter matic). Questionnaire technique is in use employing Likert scale 5 points, ranging from 1= completely not agree to 7= completely

agree, and distributed through Google Form. The instrument is tested by exercising confirmatory factor analyze and Cronbach's alpha. Data are analyzed by the use of AMOS 22.0 and SPSS 21.0.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Test of Validity

In accordance with the result of confirmatory factor analyze (CFA), most indicators employed in this study are more than 0.5. Those are PQ1, PQ2, PQ3, PQ4, PQ5, PQ6, PP1, PP2, PP3, PP4, PD1, PD2, PPS1, PPS2, b, e, NB, MC, IL1, IL2, IL3 and IL4. Consequently, those are valid (Ghozali, 2008) (Table 3). PQ7 is indicated less than 0.5. It means that it is not valid and will not be in use.

Table 3. The Result of CFA

Indicators	Lexi	FreeGo	Threshold	Criterion
PQ1	0.790	0,749	0.5	Valid
PQ2	0.716	0,823	0.5	Valid
PQ3	0.768	0,880	0.5	Valid
PQ4	0.725	0,828	0.5	Valid
PQ5	0.774	0,864	0.5	Valid
PQ6	0.670	0,772	0.5	Valid
PQ7	0.307	0,468	0.5	Not Valid
PP1	0.682	0,700	0.5	Valid
PP2	.0,741	0,765	0.5	Valid
PP3	0.675	0,397	0.5	Valid

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PP4	0.628	0,685	0.5	Valid
PD1	0.794	0,779	0.5	Valid
PD2	0.794	0,704	0.5	Valid
PPS1	0.775	0,751	0.5	Valid
PPS2	0.775	0,638	0.5	Valid
b	0.884	0,906	0.5	Valid
e	0.901	0,916	0.5	Valid
NB	0.884	0,927	0.5	Valid
MC	0.890	0,929	0.5	Valid
I1	0.899	0,899	0.5	Valid
I2	0.916	0,916	0.5	Valid
I3	0.895	0,893	0.5	Valid
I4	0.893	0,895	0.5	Valid

Source: data analyses

5.2 Test of Reliability

Table 4 shows that most all variables employed have Cronbach’s alpha score more than 0.6. It means that they are reliable (Ghozali, 2013) (Table 4). Variables PD and PPS are less than 0.6, so they are not reliable. However, since there is no important reason to dismiss, they are likely still in use (Ferdinand, 2006).

Table 4. The Reliability of Ab, SN, PBC, IS, RC and S

Variables	Cronbach’s alpha		Threshold	Criterion
	Lexi	FreeGo		
PQ	0.794	0.875	0.6	Reliable
PP	0.728	.0835	0.6	Reliable
PD	0.405	0.518	0.6	Not Reliable
PPS	0.336	0.411	0.6	Not Reliable
NB	0.915	0.862	0.6	Reliable
MC	0.895	0.908	0.6	Reliable
b	0.868	0.910	0.6	Reliable
e	0.923	0.903	0.6	Reliable
IL	0.933	0.917	0.6	Reliable

Source: data analyses

5.3 Structural Equation Modeling

An initial structural equation model likely doesn’t need any modification. It is worthy to use since CMIN/DF, GFI and TLI meet the criteria for goodness of fit (Fig 3 and Fig 4).

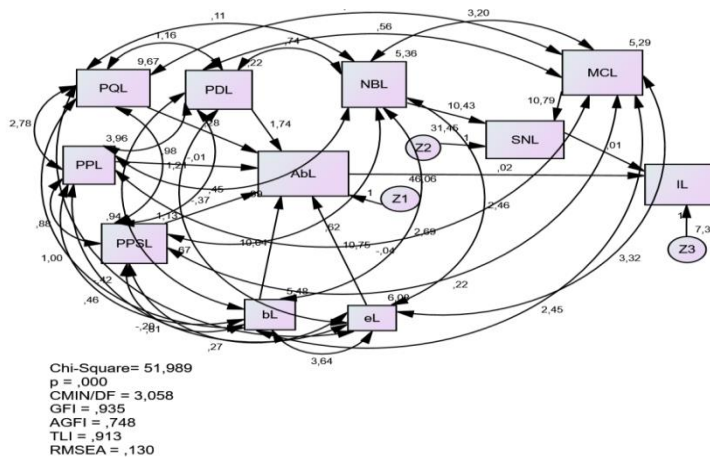


Figure 3. The Research Model1 in Use

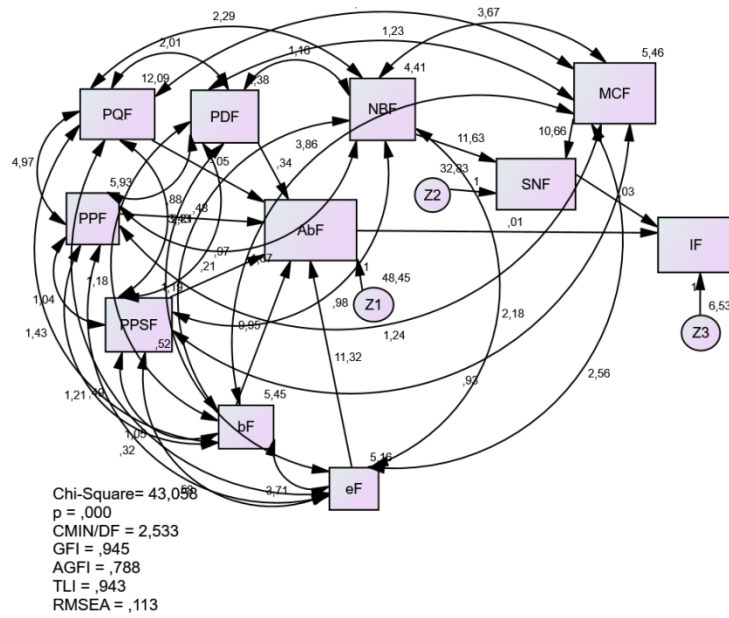


Figure 4 The Research Model1 in Use

5.4 Test of Hypotheses

5.4.1 Lexi

Table 5 shows that among six variables which assumed affecting attitude, only three variables are significant. Those are PDL ($p = 0.012$), b ($p = 0.000$) and e ($p = 0.000$). On the contrary the influence of PQL, PPL and PPSL are not significant ($p = 0.228$; $p = 0.984$; $p = 0.589$). It means that H3a, H5a and H6a are supported empirically, while H1a, H2a and H4a are not.

Table 5. Regression Weight among Variables for Lexi

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
AbL	<---	PDL	1.742	0.690	2.524	0.012	par_1
AbL	<---	PQL	.280	0.232	1.207	0.228	par_2
AbL	<---	PPL	-0.008	0.385	-0.020	0.984	par_3
AbL	<---	PPSL	-0.365	0.677	-0.540	0.589	par_4
SNL	<---	NBL	10.430	0.276	37.852	***	par_6
SNL	<---	MCL	10.790	0.277	38.913	***	par_7
AbL	<---	bL	10.036	0.360	27.902	***	par_24
AbL	<---	eL	10.753	0.331	32.509	***	par_25
IL	<---	AbL	0.023	0.007	3.395	***	par_5
IL	<---	SNL	0.010	0.007	1.465	0.143	par_8

Source: Amos output

The predictors of SN *i.e.* NB and MC, have significant effect of SN ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.000$). So, H7a and H8a are supported. The determinants of IL in this study *i.e.* AbL and SNL do not simultaneously affect attention. Only AbL that has significant effect ($p = 0.000$) on IL, Conversely, SNL doesn't have ($p = 0.143$). Therefore, only H9a is supported, H10a is not (Table 5).

5.4.2 FreeGo

Table 6. Regression Weight among Variables for FreeGo

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
AbF	<---	PDF	0.336	0.510	0.659	0.510	par_1
AbF	<---	PQF	-0.046	0.258	-0.177	0.859	par_2
AbF	<---	PPF	0.477	0.326	1.462	0.144	par_3
AbF	<---	PPSF	0.208	0.849	0.245	0.806	par_4
SNF	<---	NBF	11.630	0.374	31.098	***	par_6
SNF	<---	MCF	10.659	0.336	31.698	***	par_7
AbF	<---	bF	9.946	0.417	23.867	***	par_24
AbF	<---	eF	11.322	0.396	28.619	***	par_25
IF	<---	AbF	0.012	0.007	1.724	0.085	par_5
IF	<---	SNF	0.026	0.007	3.714	***	par_8

Source: Amos output

Four variables predicting attitude *i.e.* PQF, PPF, PDF and PPSF do not have significant effect on AbF ($p = 0.859$; $p = 0.144$; $p = .0510$; $p = 806$). Thus, H1b, H2b, H3b and H4b are not supported empirically. Variables bF and eF also have significant effect on AbF ($p = 0.000$; $p = 0.000$). Likewise, NBF and MCF affect SN significantly ($p = 0.000$; $p = 0.000$). Accordingly, H5b, H6b, H7b and H8, are supported empirically (Table 6).

The predictors of IF, *i.e.* AbF and SNF, do not simultaneously affect attention. Only SNF that has significant effect ($p = 0.000$) on IF, Conversely, AbF doesn't have ($p = 0.143$). Therefore, only H10b is supported, H9b is not (Table 6).

6. DISCUSSION

The insignificance effects of PQL, PQF, PPL and PPF on attitude do not support the findings of Santosa (2015), Na & Yoo (2016), Kadi & Citaningtyas (2016), Khan (2019), Chen & Saalem. 2007, Khare, Achtani and Khattar(2014). In addition, the insignificance effects of PQL, PPL, PPSL, PQF, PPF, PDF and PPSF on attitude apparently represent the initial sign of no intention to buy. Consumers seemingly do not take attention about Lexi's or FreeGo's quality. Good or bad quality is out of mind. Likewise about the price, even though they are priced cheaper than NMax, consumers do not care. The purpose of the company (YIMM) to offer other alternative instead of NMax, particularly in the case of FreeGo, is likely useless. However, it might work for Lexi (PDL has significant effect

on attitude). Probably its design is almost similar as NMax. In addition, its design offers alternative that NMax don't have.

The unfavorable attitude toward FreeGo likely is predicted by consumers' behavioral belief and outcome evaluation. The significant of both on attitude could be interpreted that internally consumers assure, not to buy FreeGo is good conviction (bF and eF have significant effect on AbF; AbF has insignificant effect on IF).

On the contrary, what happens on Lexi is in opposition. The significant effect of consumers' behavioral belief and outcome evaluation could be interpreted that internally consumers believe, that buying Lexi is good opinion. It is denoted by the significant effect of AbL to IL.

The findings also indicate that bL and eL have significant effect AbL. So are NBL and MCL on SNL. In addition, bF and eF also have significant effect on AbF. Furthermore, NBF and MCF also have significant effect on SNF. The significant effects are in line with studies of Ramayah *et al.*, 2004; Martin & Kulinna, 2004; Wiethoff, 2004; Marrone, 2005; Kouthouris & Spontis, 2005; Santosa, 2011; 2015; 2016; 2018; 2019; 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2020e; 2020f. It is certainly in accordance with theory of planned behavior.

7. CONCLUSION

The consumers' attitude could develop intention to buy Lexi, but when subjective norm is not encouraging, the intention to buy Lexi could not be grown. Similarly, even though consumer's subjective norm could affect intention to buy FreeGo, but when consumers' attitude fails to develop intention, the attention to buy FreeGo is never occurred. The conclusion represents the main point of the study's aim. The creation of giving alternatives which are cheaper than NMax while NMax in a market leader is no use. It would be better off if the company focuses on a market leader position of NMax and builds fortress around to save and maintain the position.

Other findings demonstrate that perceived quality, perceived price and perceived price second are not good predictors for attitude. So is perceived differentiation in the case of Lexi. In addition, behavioral belief and outcome evaluation are good influencers of attitude. So are normative belief and motivation to comply for subjective norm.

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