

# Key Factors Influencing Distributor Purchase Decisions for NPK Phonska Plus Fertilizer

Key Factors  
Influencing  
Distributor Purchase

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Submitted:  
20 NOVEMBER 2024

Accepted:  
19 DESEMBER 2024

## ABSTRACT

Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium (NPK) fertilizer production in Indonesia is dominated by private producers and imported products, making PT Pupuk Indonesia's market share for NPK Phonska Plus relatively small. To increase sales and market penetration, companies need to understand distributor preferences as an important part of the supply chain. The study aims to identify purchasing preferences and distributor behavior that have a significant impact on product marketing. This study was conducted by surveying 212 distributors in East Java, which is the largest market for NPK Phonska Plus. Using observation and survey methods, data was processed using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) approach, targeting distributors in non-city areas of East Java. The results of the study provide an in-depth overview of the factors that influence distributor decisions, such as product quality, price, and service support. Strategic recommendations are formulated to increase competitiveness, strengthen relationships with distributors, and expand the company's market share. With this data-based marketing strategy, PT Pupuk Indonesia can strengthen its position in the domestic market, especially for its flagship product NPK Phonska Plus, facing the challenges of competition in the fertilizer industry in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Distributor, Fertilizer, Market Share, NPK, Purchasing Decision

## ABSTRAK

Produksi pupuk Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium (NPK) di Indonesia didominasi produsen swasta dan produk impor, menjadikan pangsa pasar PT Pupuk Indonesia untuk NPK Phonska Plus relatif kecil. Untuk meningkatkan penjualan dan penetrasi pasar, perusahaan perlu memahami preferensi distributor sebagai bagian penting rantai pasokan. Penelitian bertujuan mengidentifikasi preferensi pembelian dan perilaku distributor yang berdampak signifikan pada pemasaran produk. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan survei pada 212 distributor di Jawa Timur, yang menjadi pasar terbesar NPK Phonska Plus. Menggunakan metode observasi dan survei, data diolah dengan pendekatan Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS), menargetkan distributor di wilayah non-kota Jawa Timur. Hasil penelitian memberikan gambaran mendalam tentang faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi keputusan distributor, seperti kualitas produk, harga, dan dukungan layanan. Rekomendasi strategis dirumuskan untuk meningkatkan daya saing, memperkuat hubungan dengan distributor, dan memperluas pangsa pasar perusahaan. Dengan strategi pemasaran berbasis data ini, PT Pupuk Indonesia dapat memperkuat posisinya di pasar domestik, khususnya untuk produk unggulan NPK Phonska Plus, menghadapi tantangan persaingan industri pupuk di Indonesia.

**Kata kunci:** Distributor, Pupuk, Pangsa Pasar, NPK, Keputusan Pembelian

**JIMKES**

Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen  
Kesatuan  
Vol. 13 No. 1, 2025  
pp. 221-232  
IBI Kesatuan  
ISSN 2337 – 7860  
E-ISSN 2721 – 169X  
DOI: 10.37641/jimkes.v13i1.3069

## INTRODUCTION

The Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium (NPK) market in Indonesia continues to increase in line with the government's efforts to strengthen food security where based on data from Mordor Intelligence (Agrina, 2023). The Indonesian fertilizer market is expected to grow from USD 4.51 billion in 2023 to USD 5.61 billion in 2028, with a CAGR of 4.60%. The fertilizer market in Indonesia itself is currently dominated by five major players who control 53.74% of the total market, namely Asia Kimindo Prima, PT Saraswanti Anugerah Makmur Tbk (SAMF), PT. JADI MAS, Pupuk Indonesia Holding Company (PIHC) and Yara International ASA (Mordor Intelligence, 2022). Based on internal company data, Pupuk Indonesia Holding Company (PIHC) itself as a player with a State-Owned Enterprise (BUMN) background still has a small NPK fertilizer market share of around 10.9% with the largest market size consumers in East Java (BorneoNews, 2021; PIHC, 2024).

Based on internal company data, the amount of NPK Phonska Plus fertilizer sold has decreased drastically from year to year (PIHC, 2024). It is known that from the target of 40,000 tons, only 22,000 tons have been realized as of October 2024. Competition in the NPK fertilizer market itself is very competitive with competitor brands such as Mutiara, BASF, LaoYing, Pak Tani, Yara, and Tawon as the main players. With a small market share and tight competition, this indicates that there is marketing potential that has not been optimally explored by PIHC. The marketing of Pupuk Indonesia itself is greatly influenced by distributors who act as distribution channels to farmers to distribute products to be sold and maintain competitive advantages through services to the availability of fertilizers (Ramadhan 2021; Bulqis et al, 2023).

An internal survey by Pupuk Indonesia PIHC (2024), shows that distributors have the lowest Satisfaction Index, Loyalty, and Net Promoter Score compared to end-user farmers. The impact of product variable combinations on purchasing decisions has not been deeply analyzed. The study aims to identify purchasing preferences and distributor behavior that have a significant impact on product marketing. Understanding the preferences of retail distributors and aquariums in product selection is crucial. This is particularly important in East Java, the largest marketing area for PT Pupuk Indonesia. Such insights can help improve marketing strategies for NPK Phonska Plus effectively.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Demand can be defined as the total volume of a product that will be purchased by a certain customer group in a certain geographic area, within a certain time period, in a certain marketing environment, with a certain marketing program (Kotler & Keller, 2021). In analyzing demand, it is necessary to base it on the difference between demand and the amount requested. Demand describes the overall state of the relationship between price and the amount requested. While the amount of goods requested is intended as the amount of demand at a price level. According to Issifu et al. (2022), demand is influenced by several factors, Price, Substitute and Complementary Goods, Income Level, Public Taste, Population, and Consumer predictions about future conditions

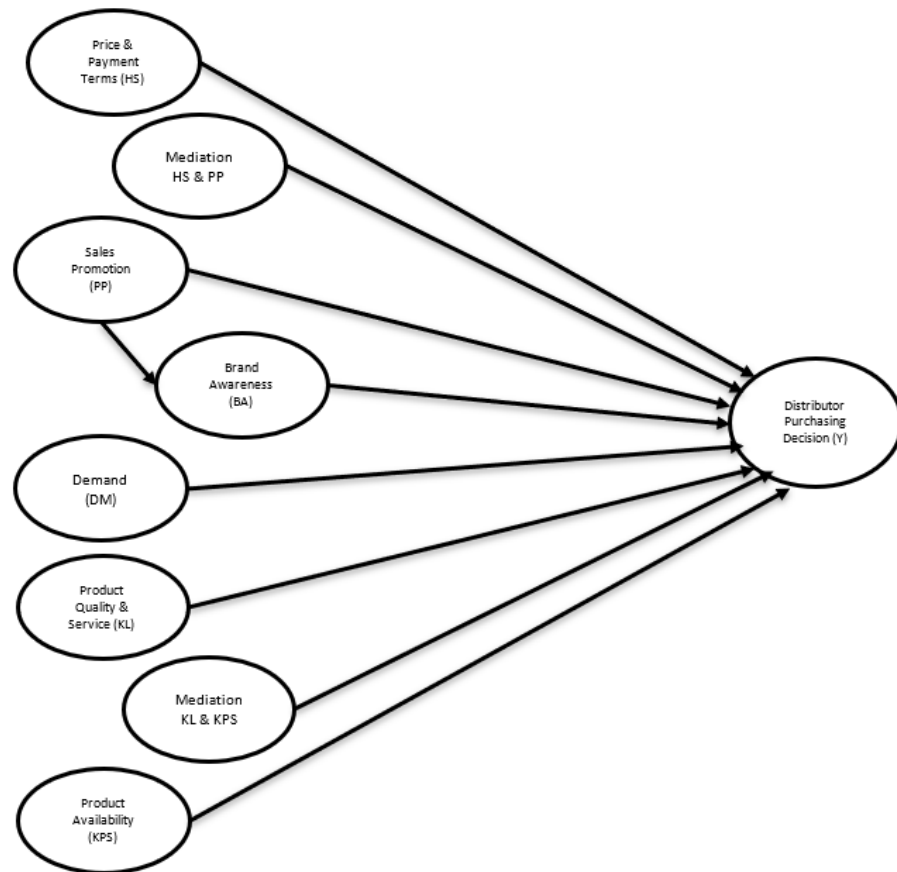
Brand awareness is a condition where a brand is considered first as a reference for consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Brand awareness is an effort by a buyer to be able to recognize or remember that a brand is part of a certain product category (Aaker, 2018). The existence of brand awareness enables a potential buyer to recognize or remember a brand that is part of a product category (Kartajaya et al., 2004; Muthiah & Setiawan, 2019). According to Aaker (2018), Categorization of brand awareness levels can be divided into Unaware of Brand, Brand recognition, Brand recall, and Top of mind. Product quality is defined as the ability of a product to perform its functions, where the ability includes durability, reliability, accuracy, which is obtained by the product as in its wholeness (Kotler, 2009). There are several benchmarks for product quality including Form, Features, Adjustment, Work quality, Quality of conformity, Durability, Reliability, Ease of repair, Style. Design. Meanwhile, Service is a company activity that allows customers to use the company's programs and receive their benefits temporarily

(Kotler & Keller, 2021). A service aims to create value for its customers. A service is generally in the form of assistance provided by a brand before, during, or after the sale.

Price is definitively a monetary cost borne by customers or their collaborators in a trade transaction to receive the benefits provided by the Company's offering (Kotler, 2009). Payment terms are an agreement between the seller and the buyer for payment of purchased merchandise (Supriatna, 2020; Darpito et al., 2023; Rosadi et al., 2024). The tighter the payment terms set, the faster the receivables will be returned so that the amount of the company's receivables will be smaller. Conversely, the more lenient the payment terms set, the longer the receivables will be returned, and the number of receivables will be greater (Rahmawati, 2020). Sales promotions are various short-term incentives to encourage trial or purchase of products or services including consumer promotions (such as samples, coupons, and premiums), trade promotions (such as advertising and display allowances), and business and sales force promotions (contests for salespeople) (Kotler, 2009). Sales promotions are aimed at buyers, retailers or wholesalers and are designed to obtain a specific and immediate response. Sales promotions themselves have two types of characteristics, namely Consumer sales promotions aimed at end consumers or buyers, and trade sales promotions aimed at customers in distribution channels such as distributors, wholesalers and retailers (Duncan, 2005).

Product availability is a factor in business related to the existence of a product or the ease of obtaining the product from the consumer's side in obtaining and consuming the expected product (Conlon & Mortimer, 2010). Product availability is a current asset in the company in the form of raw materials (raw materials, semi-finished materials / work in process and finished goods) (Prawirosentono, 2001). Product availability is closely related to supply chain management where effectiveness in supply chain management is very important in maintaining optimal product availability (Farida, 2023; Mubarok et al., 2024). Decision Making is the process of making choices from a number of alternatives to achieve desired results (Nurkusuma, 2017). Each person has a decision-making style that is described as a changing nature, where individuals often alternative easily. Purchasing decisions are part of consumer behavior about how individuals, groups, and organizations choose, buy, use, and how goods, services, ideas, or experiences can satisfy their needs and wants (Piercy et al., 2016).

Research Gap is a gap that occurs due to differences in results, concepts, data or theories from research results with those found in the field (Aulia, 2023). The types of gaps found by Miles (2017) is Knowledge Gap, There has not been much research on how marketing is done at the fertilizer distributor level. Existing research generally targets the end user level; Population Gap, the population studied in previous studies was at the city level. No one has studied it at the provincial level; Practical-Knowledge Gap, there needs to be field evidence that first proves the perception of consumer acceptance of recommendations for ongoing marketing strategies. This research combines the aspect that contribute to marketing strategy (Mubarok, 2015; Al Ubaidiyah, 2023; Rustian, 2019) and multiple variables of distributor purchasing decision (Budiman et al, 2023; Perdana et al, 2018; Nulhakim et al, 2021, Hakim & Saragih, 2019). The relationships between key variables such as demand, product availability, price and payment terms, sales promotion, product and service quality, brand awareness, and distributor purchasing decisions can be seen in figure 1.



Source: Authors, 2025

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

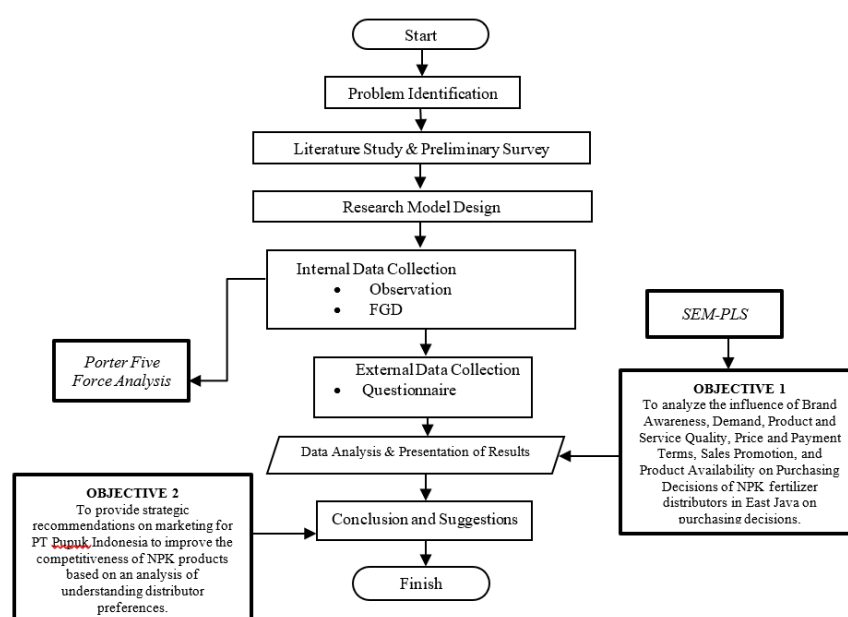
Based on the literature review and the theoretical framework, the following hypotheses have been formulated to examine the factors influencing distributor purchasing decisions for NPK Phonska Plus fertilizer:

- H1: Demand has a significant positive influence on distributor purchasing decisions.
- H2: Product availability has a significant positive influence on distributor purchasing decisions.
- H3: Price and payment terms have a significant positive influence on distributor purchasing decisions.
- H4: Sales promotion moderates the relationship between price and payment terms and distributor purchasing decisions.
- H5: Product and service quality moderates the relationship between product availability and distributor purchasing decisions.
- H6: Sales promotion has a significant positive influence on brand awareness.
- H7: Brand awareness has a significant positive influence on distributor purchasing decisions.
- H8: Sales promotion has a significant positive influence on distributor purchasing decisions.
- H9: Product and service quality has a significant positive influence on distributor purchasing decisions.

## METHODS

This study consists of three stages, namely problem identification, data collection, and data analysis. Problem identification is carried out by analyzing the national fertilizer market and evaluating the condition of Pupuk Indonesia. Data collection is carried out through observation, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and surveys aimed at distributors.

The collected data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) method. This study uses a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative analysis uses the Semantic Differential scale with four options to measure the tendency between opposing concepts (Albert & Tullis, 2013). The operational variables used include six constructs; namely Demand (X1), covering demand trends, consumer searches, and seasonal influences; Product Availability (X2), which highlights stock consistency and delivery timeliness; Price & Payment Terms (X3), which evaluates competitive prices, flexibility, and incentives; Sales Promotion (X4), which measures the effectiveness and clarity of promotions; Product & Service Quality (X5), which assesses product reliability and service professionalism; and Brand Awareness (X6), which explores consumer trust and brand recognition. The dependent variable is Distributor Purchase Decision (Y), which includes product recommendations, consumer preferences, and sales performance. The population consists of all NPK Phonska Plus distributors in East Java, totaling 212 distributors. Samples will be taken to represent the population based on guidelines from Sugiyono (2017) and Sinaga (2014), to ensure representativeness. This study provides a comprehensive approach to understanding distributor behavior, market challenges, and strategies to improve performance in the fertilizer industry. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods ensures actionable results for stakeholders. Step by step on how the research was conducted can be seen in figure 2.



Source: Authors, 2025

Figure 2. Research Method

## RESULTS

The table below describes the characteristics of respondents based on firmography, including marketing address, duration as a distributor, types of fertilizers distributed, and agricultural commodities served. This data shows that the distributors' operational areas are spread across various regions with the majority in the Others category. Most respondents have more than seven years of experience as fertilizer distributors. The type of fertilizer most widely distributed is subsidized NPK fertilizer, while the main commodity served is the food sector. This information provides an important picture of the distributor's profile and activities in the study.

**Table 1.** Respondent Characteristics (Firmography)

| Characteristics                            | Category                        | Respondents<br>Freq. | Respondents<br>Percent. |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Address and<br>Marketing Area              | Kab. Banyuwangi                 | 11                   | 5%                      |
|                                            | Kab. Blitar                     | 12                   | 6%                      |
|                                            | Kab. Bojonegoro                 | 10                   | 5%                      |
|                                            | Kab. Bondowoso                  | 8                    | 4%                      |
|                                            | Kab. Gresik                     | 4                    | 2%                      |
|                                            | Kab. Jember                     | 14                   | 7%                      |
|                                            | Kab. Jombang                    | 4                    | 2%                      |
|                                            | Kab. Kediri                     | 7                    | 3%                      |
|                                            | Kab. Lamongan                   | 5                    | 2%                      |
|                                            | OTHERS                          | 137                  | 65%                     |
| Duration As<br>Distributor                 | < 1 Year                        | 2                    | 1%                      |
|                                            | 1 - 3 Years                     | 11                   | 5%                      |
|                                            | 4 - 7 Years                     | 26                   | 12%                     |
|                                            | > 7 Years                       | 173                  | 82%                     |
| Types of Fertilizers<br>Distributed / Sold | Subsidized NPK                  | 127                  | 60%                     |
|                                            | Non Subsidized NPK              | 18                   | 8%                      |
|                                            | Subsidized & Non Subsidized NPK | 67                   | 32%                     |
| Agricultural<br>Commodities                | Food                            | 102                  | 48%                     |
|                                            | Food Horticulture               | 52                   | 25%                     |
|                                            | Food Horticulture Plantation    | 27                   | 13%                     |
|                                            | Food Plantation                 | 20                   | 9%                      |
|                                            | Horticulture                    | 11                   | 5%                      |

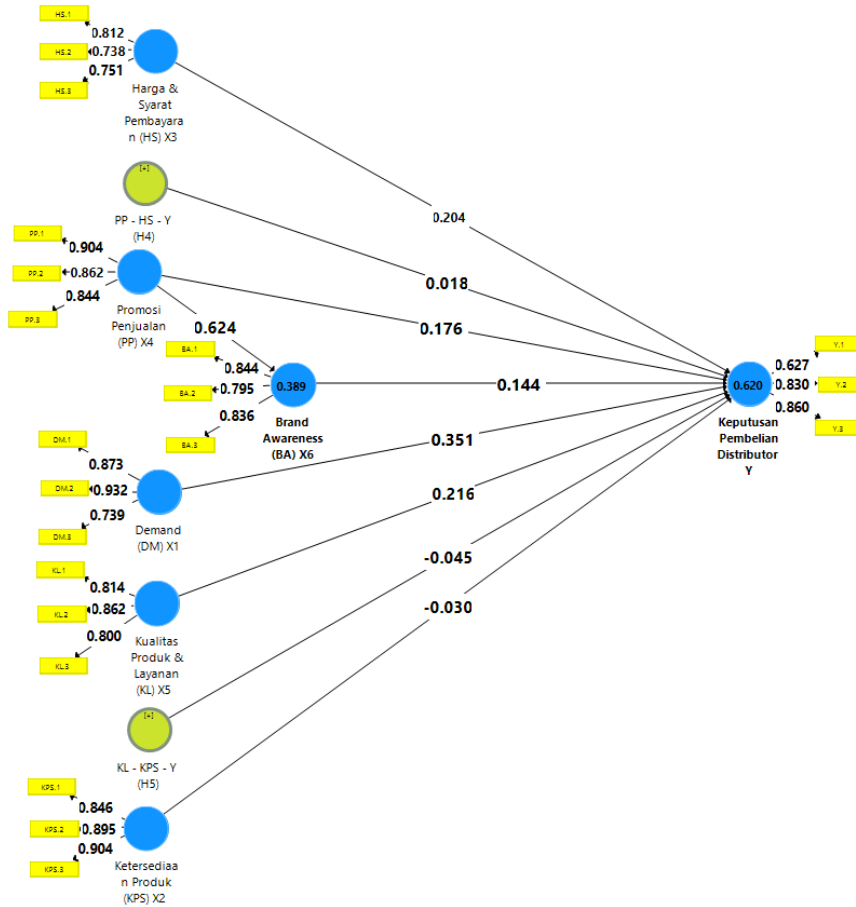
Source: Authors, 2025

Based on Table 1, the characteristics of the type of business (firmographics), Pupuk Indonesia distributors in East Java show a distribution pattern that is spread out with concentrations in outlying districts such as Banyuwangi (5%), Bondowoso (4%), Bojonegoro (5%), Gresik (2%), and Lamongan (2%), while 137 other distributors (65%) are spread across various other districts in East Java. In terms of agency duration, the majority of distributors have been operating for more than seven years (82%), followed by a range of 4-7 years (12%), and a small portion are in the range of 1-3 years (5%) and less than one year (1%). The types of fertilizers distributed are dominated by Subsidized NPK (60%), followed by a combination of subsidized and non-subsidized fertilizers (32%), and non-subsidized NPK alone (8%). The prioritized agricultural commodities are food (48%), followed by a combination of food and horticulture (25%), and horticulture alone (5%).

### Qualitative Result

Qualitative results from FGD and observations obtained that what is often felt by distributors is a comparison between products that become a preference for which product is value for money. This condition is also supported by external factors such as management support and intensive marketing promotions from competitors so that strong considerations arise for substitute products. Distributors pay close attention to price, sales conditions, and also the form of promotion provided by the manufacturer. The ease of promotion from manufacturers that increases Brand Awareness and also the right pricing strategy and payment terms will increase the choice of purchasing decisions by distributors. The main challenges faced by distributors are mainly in the ongoing promotion aspect, promotional materials that need to be strengthened especially at the regional level, to the need for better stock management factors to meet customer demand.

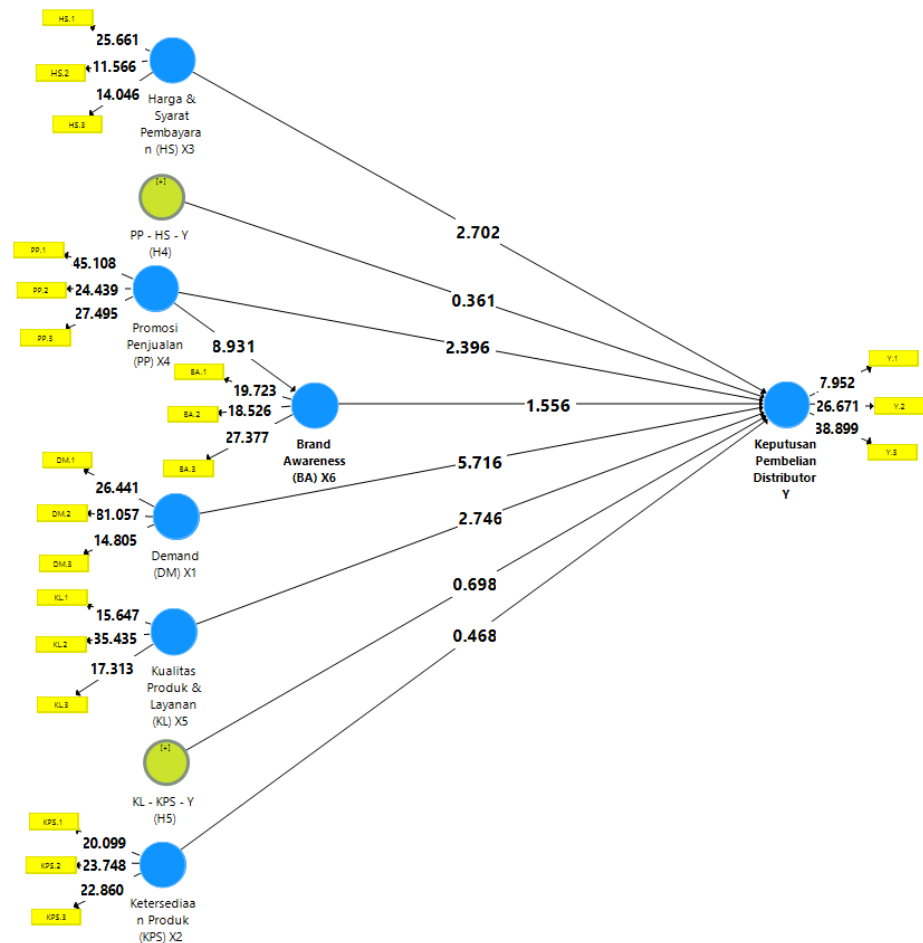
## SEM-PLS Evaluation



Source: Authors, 2025

Figure 3. SEM-PLS Outer Model

SEM-PLS testing in this study includes inner model and outer model tests yhat can be seen in figure 3. The results of the outer model provide outputs of all values from the indicator questions that meet the outer loading value above 0.6, the Average Variant Extracted (AVE) value above 0.5, composite reliability above 0.7, Cronbach's Alpha above 0.7. Thus, the model meets the outer model test. In the t-statistic test, the largest value is shown by the relationship between sales promotion and brand awareness of 9,042, followed by the relationship between demand and distributor purchasing decisions of 5,675. Meanwhile, the smallest value is the relationship between product availability and distributor purchasing decisions with a value of 0.480. This value affects the significance of the variables used where the higher the value, the higher the relationship between variables.



Source: Authors, 2025

Figure 4. SEM-PLS Inner Model

Figure 4 shows an R-Square value of 0.389 for the Brand Awareness variable. The value for the Distributor Purchase Decision variable is 0.620. The R-Square value of Brand Awareness is 0.386. This value indicates that the ability of the independent variable sales promotion in explaining the brand awareness variable is 38.6% and the rest is explained by other variables outside the study. While the R-Square value of Distributor Purchase Decision of 0.620 indicates that the ability of the independent variables sales promotion, brand awareness, product & service quality, price & payment terms, demand in explaining the distributor purchase decision variable is 60.5% and the rest is explained by other variables outside the study.

Table 2. T-Statistic & P-Values

| Variables                                                        | Path Coefficient | T Statistics | P Values | Description                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brand Awareness (BA) X6 -> Distributor Y Purchase Decision       | 0.144            | 1.560        | 0.119    | H7 Rejected. Brand Awareness (BA) Does Not Affect Purchase Decision                                                          |
| Demand (DM) X1 -> Distributor Y Purchase Decision                | 0.351            | 5.675        | 0.000    | H1 Accepted. Demand (DM) Affects Purchase Decision                                                                           |
| Price & Payment Terms (HS) X3 -> Distributor Y Purchase Decision | 0.204            | 2.721        | 0.007    | H3 Accepted. Price & Payment Terms (HS) Affect Purchase Decision                                                             |
| KL - KPS - Y (H5) -> Distributor Y Purchase Decision             | -0.045           | 0.705        | 0.481    | H5 Rejected. Product & Service Quality does not moderate the relationship between Product Availability and Purchase Decision |



| Variables                                                            | Path Coefficient | T Statistics | P Values | Description                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Product Availability (KPS) X2 -> Distributor Y Purchase Decision     | -0.030           | 0.480        | 0.631    | H2 Rejected. Product Availability does not have a positive influence on Purchase Decision.                          |
| Product & Service Quality (KL) X5 -> Distributor Y Purchase Decision | 0.216            | 2.785        | 0.005    | H9 Accepted. Product and Service Quality has a positive influence on Purchase Decision                              |
| PP - HS - Y (H4) -> Distributor Y Purchase Decision                  | 0.018            | 0.366        | 0.714    | H4 Rejected. Sales Promotion does not moderate the relationship between Price & Payment Terms and Purchase Decision |
| Sales Promotion (PP) X4 -> Brand Awareness (BA) X6                   | 0.624            | 9.042        | 0.000    | H6 Accepted. Sales Promotion has a positive influence on Brand Awareness                                            |
| Sales Promotion (PP) X4 -> Distributor Y Purchase Decision           | 0.176            | 2.357        | 0.018    | H8 Accepted. Sales Promotion has a positive influence on Purchase Decision                                          |

Source: Authors, 2025

The table 2 shows the results of path analysis that examines the relationship between several variables with distributor purchasing decisions. The results show that several factors have a significant influence. Demand (DM), Price & Payment Terms (HS), Product & Service Quality (KL), and Sales Promotion (PP) influence distributor purchasing decisions. Demand has a significant positive influence on purchasing decisions with a p value <0.05, while Sales Promotion is also proven to increase Brand Awareness (BA) and distributor purchasing decisions. However, the variables Brand Awareness (BA) and Product Availability (KPS) do not show a significant influence on purchasing decisions, with a p value greater than 0.05, so the hypothesis related to these variables is rejected. Overall, this study identified that several key factors such as market demand, price and payment terms, and product and service quality greatly influence distributor purchasing decisions.

## DISCUSSION

Based on results above, it can be concluded that this study has new insight. The Discussion section of this study describes the factors that influence the purchasing decisions of NPK Phonska Plus distributors in East Java. The results of the study indicate that Demand is the most significant variable in influencing distributor purchasing decisions. This finding is in line with Natalia (2024) and Arifah et al. (2024), which emphasizes the importance of demand in determining distributor purchasing patterns. In addition, Price and Payment Terms also have a significant positive influence on purchasing decisions, supporting the research of Yanto et al. (2013) and Wulandari (2018), which highlight the importance of price flexibility and payment systems in attracting distributors. The Sales Promotion variable contributes significantly to distributor purchasing decisions. This is consistent with the research of Solehat et al. (2017) and Hakim & Saragih (2019), which emphasize that effective promotions can increase brand awareness while encouraging purchases. In addition, Product and Service Quality also has a positive influence on purchasing decisions, supporting the results of research by Ardhana et al. (2024), which states that product and service quality contributes to distributor loyalty.

Brand Awareness moderation has a positive influence on Sales Promotion, as stated by Budiman et al. (2023) and Perdana et al. (2018). However, the direct influence of brand awareness on distributor purchasing decisions is not significant, so a more integrated marketing strategy is needed to strengthen its impact. Qualitative findings from Focus

Group Discussions (FGD) and observations support the results of the quantitative analysis. Distributors highlighted the importance of education related to product advantages through physical and digital networks, especially to increase brand awareness and customer loyalty. In addition, regional promotions and better stock management were identified as important aspects to increase product competitiveness.

The results of this study provide strategic implications for PT Pupuk Indonesia. The company needs to strengthen its marketing strategy through clearer and more effective promotions, flexibility in payment systems, and improved stock management to ensure product availability according to distributor needs. In addition, the company is advised to improve distributor education regarding the advantages of NPK Phonska Plus to be more competitive in the market. Thus, the results of this study not only provide theoretical contributions, but also offer practical recommendations for companies in increasing the competitiveness and market penetration of NPK Phonska Plus products in East Java. This can be a reference in making strategic decisions to strengthen the market share of PT Pupuk Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the SEM-PLS analysis show that several factors, namely Demand, Price and Payment Terms, Product & Service Quality, and Sales Promotion, have a significant influence on the purchasing decision of NPK Phonska Plus in East Java. Of all the factors analyzed, Demand emerged as the variable with the most dominant influence, followed by Sales Promotion, Product & Service Quality, and finally Price and Payment Terms. These findings indicate that the purchasing decision-making process by NPK Phonska Plus customers in East Java begins with an assessment of needs in the field (demand), which is then followed by matching the promotions offered by the company. After that, customers consider the quality of the product offered before finally calculating the applicable price and payment terms. With this understanding, Pupuk Indonesia needs to review the education strategy and payment system implemented to improve the sales performance of NPK Phonska Plus in Indonesia. A more effective strategy in educating customers about the product and offering a more flexible payment system can help improve customer satisfaction. With the right approach, it is expected to encourage better purchasing decisions and increase customer loyalty to NPK Phonska Plus products.

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*Key Factors  
Influencing  
Distributor Purchase*