

The Effect of Brand Image on Frozen Food Purchase Decisions With Purchase Intention as an Intervening Variable Among Consumers of PT Madusari Nusaperdana in Medan

Willy Zek Nasution, Yosie Rosanty, Dewi Nurmasari Pane

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of brand image on the purchase decision of frozen food products with buying interest as an intervening variable in PT Madusari Nusaperdana consumers in Medan City. The research approach used is quantitative with a survey method. Data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents who were consumers of PT Madusari Nusaperdana. The data analysis techniques used were regression analysis and mediation tests to determine the direct and indirect influence between variables. The results of the study show that brand image has a positive and significant effect on buying interest, as well as a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. In addition, buying interest also has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. The results of the mediation test proved that buying interest was able to mediate the influence of brand image on the purchase decision of frozen food products for consumers of PT Madusari Nusaperdana in Medan City. These findings indicate that strengthening a good brand image will increase consumer buying interest and ultimately drive purchasing decisions. Therefore, companies are advised to continue to build brand image through improving product quality, consistent marketing communication, and understanding of consumer needs.

Keywords: Brand Image, Buying Interest, Purchase Decision, Frozen Food

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Introduction

The development of the frozen food industry in Indonesia is accelerating along with changes in people's lifestyles who tend to choose food that is practical, quick to serve, and easy to obtain. This condition encourages competition between frozen food brands to be more intense, so companies need to build an advantage that not only relies on the product, but also on the strength of the brand in the minds of consumers. In the context of marketing, brand image is a strategic asset because it is able to shape consumer perception, trust, and preferences for the products offered.

A positive brand image can increase consumer confidence that a product is worth choosing, thus encouraging consumers to make a purchase decision. A number of empirical findings in the frozen food category show that brand image affects purchase decisions, both directly and together with other factors such as product quality and price (for example, in Golden Farm brand frozen food products) (Khoiriyah A, 2023). In addition, in the context of other frozen foods, it was also found that brand image is one of the important factors that contribute to consumer purchasing decisions (Yelline Ciu et al., 2024). This indicates that strengthening brand image can be a way to increase the company's competitiveness in a competitive market.

Promotion and brand image have a positive and significant effect on the decision to purchase Yamaha brand motorcycles for consumers of PT. Alfa Scorpii Medan. Partially, brand image is proven to have a more dominant influence than promotion, which shows that consumer perception of the Yamaha brand such as reputation, trust, and perceived quality is the main factor in encouraging consumers to decide to buy. Simultaneously, promotion and brand image together are able to improve consumer purchasing decisions. Thus, companies are advised to continue to strengthen their brand image while optimizing promotional strategies in order to increase interest and purchase decisions (Hernawaty, 2017)

However, the purchase decision process generally does not happen instantly. Consumers often go through a psychological stage in the form of purchase intent before actually deciding to buy. In the perspective of consumer behavior, purchase intent/interest is understood as the main driver that directs actual purchasing behavior, and approaches such as the Theory of Planned Behavior are widely used to explain the relationship between intent and purchasing behavior (Pusparini et al., 2024). Thus, buying interest can act as a "bridge" that explains how a positive perception of a brand ultimately turns into a purchase decision.

Recent studies also corroborate that buying interest can mediate the relationship between brand image and purchase decisions. For example, quantitative studies in the retail context show that brand image influences purchase decisions through purchase intent as an intervening variable (wiwin Julianti, 2024). Other findings show that the combination of brand image and purchase intention has a positive effect on purchase decisions (Nico Pratama et al, 2024). Especially in frozen food products, the latest conceptual framework also places brand image as an important factor related to purchasing decisions and advanced purchasing behavior (yoga adi pradana, 2023).

Based on this description, this study is focused on PT Madusari Nusaperdana in Medan City to analyze the influence of brand image on the purchase decision of frozen food products with buying interest as an intervening variable. This study is important because it can make an academic contribution in strengthening empirical evidence on the mechanism of influence of brand image on purchase decisions through buying interest, as well as providing practical input for companies in designing strategies to strengthen brand image and increase consumer buying interest to lead to higher purchase decisions.

Literature Review 2.1. Brand Image

Brand image is a set of perceptions, beliefs, and impressions formed in consumers' minds towards a brand. Brand image is consumer perception that is reflected through brand associations stored in memory (Kotler and Keller 2013). Viewing brand image as an important part of brand equity that serves to distinguish a product from competitors and provide added value for consumers. In the context of frozen food products, brand image becomes a signal of quality, safety, and reliability. Brands with a positive image tend to be more trusted, more memorable, and more preferred by consumers than brands that don't have clear differentiation. Therefore, strengthening brand image has the potential to affect consumer attitudes, interests, and purchasing decisions

2.2. Buying Interest

Buying interest is the tendency or intention of consumers to buy a product after conducting an evaluation process. Buying interest is a psychological stage that arises before actual purchasing behavior and is influenced by consumer attitudes, perceptions, and experiences. Within the framework of consumer behavior, buying interest serves as the closest predictor of purchase decisions (Kanuk et al, 2021) In frozen food products, buying interest can be triggered by perceptions of the brand (e.g., safety, taste quality, and practicality), marketing communication, and recommendations of other parties. Thus, buying interest acts as a mechanism that bridges consumer perception of brands with purchasing decisions.

2.3. Purchase Decision

Purchasing decision is the process in which consumers choose one brand from several alternatives and decide to make a purchase. Kotler states that the purchase decision is the result of a series of stages: the identification of needs, the search for information, the evaluation of alternatives, the purchase decision, and the post-purchase behavior. These decisions are influenced by internal factors (attitudes, perceptions, intentions) and external factors (brand, price, promotion, environment). In the competitive frozen food market, consumers' purchasing decisions are largely determined by trust in the brand, the suitability of the product with their needs, and previous experience. Brands with a strong image have the potential to speed up and solidify purchasing decisions.

2.4. Frozen food

Frozen food is food that is preserved by freezing at low temperatures so that the activity of microorganisms and the decay process can be slowed down. This freezing process aims to maintain the quality, taste, texture, and nutritional content of food for a longer period of time than fresh food. Frozen food or frozen food products are processed food products that are instant and stored in a frozen state, have a relatively long shelf life, and are easy and fast in their presentation. In simple terms, frozen food is food that has been processed or semi-finished, then frozen to make it more practical, durable, and easy to serve when needed (Karimah, 2023).

Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The quantitative approach was chosen because the research aims to objectively test the influence of variables through numerical data processing. The research design used is causal research (explanatory research), which is research that aims to explain the cause-and-effect relationship between variables: Brand Image (X) as an independent variable, Buying Interest (Z) as an intervening variable, and Purchase Decision (Y) as a dependent variable. This research was conducted on consumers of PT Madusari Nusaperdana in Medan City.

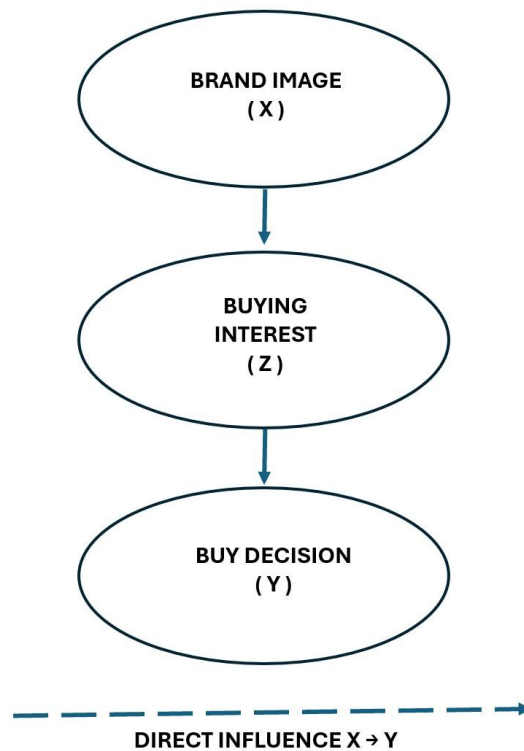


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of SEM PLS

The framework shows two paths of influence:

Direct Influence ($X \rightarrow Y$)

Brand image directly influences purchasing decisions. This means that consumers can make a purchase decision based only on a positive perception of the brand without going through long considerations.

Indirect Influence through Buying Interest ($X \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$)

Brand image also influences purchasing decisions indirectly through buying interest. A good brand image increases consumer buying interest (interest, purchase intent, and recommendations), and this increase in buying interest drives purchase decisions. Thus, buying interest acts as an intervening variable that bridges and strengthens the relationship between brand image and purchase decisions. This framework confirms that a company's success in building a positive brand image not only has a direct impact on purchasing decisions, but also through increased consumer buying interest. Therefore, the strategy of strengthening brand image is expected to increase buying interest while encouraging the purchase of PT Madusari Nusaperdana frozen food products in Medan City. The population in this study is all consumers of PT Madusari Nusaperdana in Medan City who have bought the company's frozen food products. The sampling technique used non-probability sampling with the purposive sampling method, namely respondents were selected based on criteria: had purchased frozen food products from PT Madusari Nusaperdana, domiciled in the city of Medan, willing to fill out a research questionnaire. The number of samples is determined using the Slovin formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(0,05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1+100(0,0025)^2}$$

$$n = 80$$

Number of Samples = 80 respondents **Description:**
 n = number of samples
 N = total population
 e = error rate, e.g. 5% (0.05)

Variable Measurement Scales using measurement scales, such as the Likert scale, help in measuring, classifying, and describing the relationships between the values collected in a variable. The Likert scale consists of answer choices such as very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied, with scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 in order. The Data Collection Technique uses questionnaires and observations, with the SEM PLS (Partial Least Square) data analysis technique is a model of SEM structural equations based on components or variants. SEM analysis with PLS is carried out in three main stages: external model analysis, inner model analysis, and hypothesis testing. Hypothesis testing is based on the path coefficient of the research variables. Testing of the significance of these influences was carried out using the bootstrapping method.

Results

The results of data processing and research discussion used the Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. The analysis was carried out with the help of SmartPLS on 80 respondents. The variables analyzed included Brand Image, Purchase Interest, and Buying Decision. The number of respondents in this study was 80 respondents. All data is declared valid because there is no missing value. The measurement scale used is the Likert scale of 1–5. The results of descriptive statistics show that the mean value of all indicators is above 3, which indicates that respondents tend to give a positive assessment of Brand Image, Purchase Interest, and Buying Decision. The validity of the convergence is assessed from the outer loading value of each indicator. The criterion used was the outer loading value ≥ 0.70 . The results of the analysis show that:

1. All Brand Image indicators (X1.1–X1.3) have an outer loading value between 0.838 – 0.880
 2. All Purchase Interest indicators (Z1–Z4) have an outer loading value between 0.877 – 0.975
 3. All Buying Decision indicators (Y1–Y5) have an outer loading value between 0.869 – 0.930
- Thus, all indicators are declared valid convergently because they meet the required criteria.

Significance Outer Loading Based

on the bootstrapping results:

1. All indicators have a T-statistic > 1.96
2. All indicators have a p-value = 0.000 (< 0.05)

This shows that each indicator is significantly able to reflect the latent construct being measured. The outer weight value of all indicators also showed a T-statistic > 1.96 and a pvalue of < 0.05 , so these indicators significantly contributed to forming their respective latent variables.

Direct Contact Testing (Path Coefficient)

The results of the direct influence test between variables can be summarized as follows:

Variable Relationships	Path Coefficients	T-Statistic	P-Value	Remarks
Brand Image → Buying Decision	0,897	43,041	0,000	Signifikan
Brand Image → Purchase Interest	0,893	48,530	0,000	Signifikan
Purchase Interest → Buying Decision	0,695	8,816	0,000	Signifikan

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that:

1. Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Buying Decision
2. Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Interest
3. Purchase Interest has a positive and significant effect on Buying Decision

This shows that the better the brand image, the higher the buying interest and purchase decisions of consumers.

Indirect Effect Testing

The indirect influence of Brand Image on Buying Decision through Purchase Interest shows a positive and significant coefficient value. This indicates that Purchase Interest plays a role as a mediation variable.

The distribution of indirect effect values displayed on the histogram graph shows:

1. The distribution of data forms a pattern close to normal
2. All values are above zero

Thus, Purchase Interest is proven to mediate the influence of Brand Image on Buying Decisions significantly.

Total Effect

Total effect is the accumulation of direct and indirect influences. The results of the total effect show:

Variable Relationships	Total Effect	P-Value	Remarks
Brand Image → Buying Decision	0,897	0,000	Very powerful
Brand Image → Purchase Interest	0,893	0,000	Very powerful
Purchase Interest → Buying Decision	0,695	0,000	Strong

The total effect histogram shows a consistent and stable distribution, which indicates that the model's estimation results have a good level of reliability.

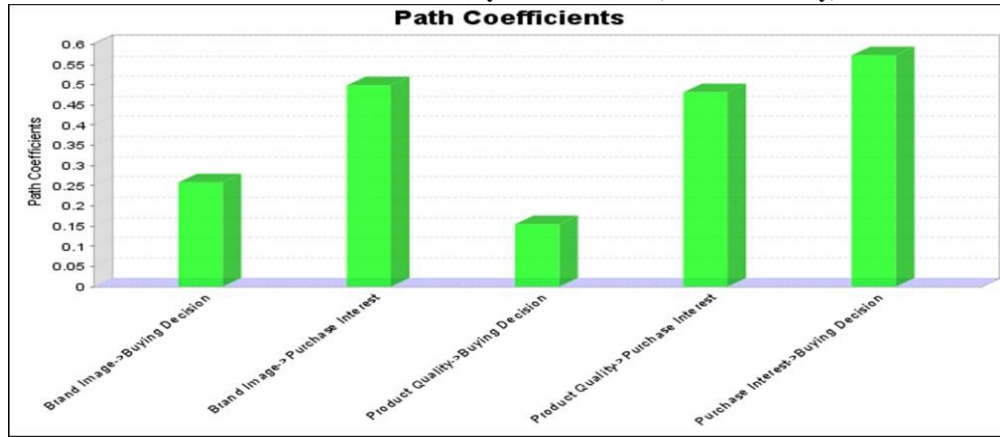


Figure 2. Path Coefficients

The Path Coefficient, Indirect Effect, and Total Effect histogram graph shows:

1. Centralized data distribution on positive values
2. There are no deviant extremes
3. Stable estimated values with narrow spreads

This confirms that the results of hypothesis testing are robust and reliable.

Conclusion

The results of the PLS-SEM analysis show that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Buying Decisions, both directly and indirectly through Purchase Interest. Brand image has been proven to have a strong influence in increasing consumer buying interest, and this buying interest significantly drives purchase decisions. In addition, Purchase Interest acts as a partial mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between Brand Image and Buying Decision. All research indicators have met the criteria of validity and reliability, so that the research model is declared feasible and the research results can be used as an academic basis and practical considerations in marketing strategies.

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