The Influence of Brand Image on Purchasing Decision Making at UD Serlin Gido District Nias Regency

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A R T I C L E I N F O	ABSTRACT
	This study investigates the influence of brand image on consumer purchasing decisions at UD. Serlin, a trading company in Gido District, Nias Regency, Indonesia. The research was driven by the increasingly intense competition in the trading sector, which requires businesses to establish a strong brand image to maintain customer loyalty. A quantitative associative method was applied with a population of 175 consumers, from which a sample of 35 respondents (20%) was selected. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed through validity and reliability tests, normality and heteroskedasticity tests, simple linear regression, t-test, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) using SPSS 24. The findings revealed that all instruments were valid and reliable, the data were normally distributed, and no heteroskedasticity issues were detected, ensuring the regression model was feasible. The t-test yielded a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05), indicating that brand image significantly influences purchasing decisions. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.701 suggests that brand image explains 70.1% of purchasing decision variance, with the remaining 29.9% influenced by other factors. The study concludes that strengthening brand image is crucial for enhancing purchasing decisions. Companies should improve service quality and reinforce brand identity to sustain competitiveness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, business competition is becoming increasingly fierce, forcing companies to create distinctiveness to attract and retain customers. Consumers today are more critical and selective in purchasing products, carefully considering not only product quality but also the values and credibility that a brand represents. With the rapid growth of product availability in the market, consumers have greater freedom of choice, which makes brand image a decisive factor in purchasing decisions (Girardi & Rubim Sarate, 2023).

Brand image represents the unique identity of a product or company that differentiates it from competitors. According to Kotler and Keller, brand image is the perception and belief held by consumers toward a brand based on their prior experiences. A strong and positive brand image enhances consumer trust and confidence, encouraging them to choose the brand even when alternatives are available. In other words, a brand is not only a symbol of quality but also a reflection of consumer expectations and values (Eneis et al., 2022). In the Indonesian context, especially in local markets such as Nias Regency, consumer purchasing behavior is strongly influenced by perceptions of brand identity. Local businesses are increasingly required to build and maintain a

positive brand image to survive amidst the presence of both traditional and modern competitors. Companies that fail to develop a strong brand image risk losing consumer trust and experiencing a decline in sales (Mahazan, 2024).

UD Serlin, located in Gido District, is an example of a local business facing these challenges. As a trading company providing consumer goods, UD Serlin has to compete not only with traditional stores but also with larger modern retailers. The company has experienced a decline in consumer purchasing interest, partly due to inconsistencies in product offerings and mismatches between product benefits and prices (Pant et al., 2024). This decline reflects the critical role of brand image in shaping consumer purchasing behavior. Purchasing decisions involve a series of cognitive processes through which consumers recognize needs, seek information, evaluate alternatives, and finally make choices. A positive brand image influences these processes by providing assurance about quality, reducing risk, and enhancing the emotional connection between consumers and the product. In essence, brand image reduces consumer uncertainty and accelerates decision-making (Sapu et al., 2023).

Several factors determine a strong brand image, including brand identity, personality, association, attitudes, and perceived benefits. Each of these aspects contributes to how consumers evaluate the brand and decide whether it meets their needs. In the context of UD Serlin, the absence of a consistent and strong brand image could weaken consumer trust, leading to declining purchasing decisions (Arsawan et al., 2022). The importance of brand image is further underlined by its ability to foster customer loyalty. Consumers are not only motivated by rational considerations such as price and product quality but also by the symbolic and emotional values attached to a brand. Therefore, a business must continuously reinforce its image through communication, customer service, and consistent product delivery (Rohman et al., 2023).

Previous studies have demonstrated the significant impact of brand image on consumer purchasing decisions across various industries. Research by (Prabhu & Srivastava, 2023) confirmed that brand image plays a vital role in encouraging consumers to purchase lifestyle products, while (Easton & Steyn, 2023) showed that brand image significantly affects purchasing behavior in the sports apparel industry. These findings highlight the universality of brand image as a predictor of consumer behavior. However, in local contexts like UD Serlin, empirical evidence remains limited. There is a need to assess whether brand image exerts a similar influence in traditional trading settings where consumers are influenced by both cultural values and modern marketing. Addressing this gap will not only enrich academic understanding but also provide practical insights for local businesses seeking to enhance their competitiveness (Sari, 2025).

This study, therefore, focuses on the effect of brand image on purchasing decisions among UD Serlin consumers. The objective is to determine whether brand image significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions and to quantify the extent of its impact (Salman et al., 2023). By doing so, the study provides evidence-based recommendations for local business strategies in the face of growing competition. The research is expected to contribute theoretically by supporting or challenging existing theories on consumer behavior and brand management. Practically, it offers guidance to UD Serlin and similar businesses in designing marketing strategies that strengthen consumer trust and loyalty. Moreover, it provides insights into how businesses in rural or semi-urban contexts can compete with larger players by leveraging brand image as a key competitive tool (Aini Adzan Nisa et al., 2023).

The study also emphasizes the dynamic relationship between brand image and consumer behavior, suggesting that businesses must constantly adapt to changing consumer preferences. Consumers today are more informed and have higher expectations, making brand management a continuous process rather than a one-time effort (Aini Adzan Nisa et al., 2023). In summary, the introduction of this study establishes the significance of brand image as a determinant of purchasing decisions, contextualizes the problem within UD Serlin, reviews relevant theoretical foundations, and identifies the research gap. It sets the stage for empirical investigation into how brand image influences consumer decisions in a competitive local market. The central research questions are: (1) Does brand image influence purchasing decisions at UD Serlin? and (2) To what extent does brand image explain the variance in purchasing decisions? Answering these questions will help develop a

more comprehensive understanding of the role of brand image in consumer behavior within the local business landscape.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a quantitative associative approach designed to analyze the causal relationship between brand image (independent variable) and purchasing decision (dependent variable). The study focused on measuring how brand image influences consumer behavior in a competitive retail environment (Stollberger et al., 2023). The population comprised 175 consumers of UD. Serlin, from which 35 respondents (20%) were selected using purposive sampling (Ndruru et al., 2025). A Likert-scale questionnaire served as the primary instrument, developed based on established brand image and consumer decision-making indicators. Data were processed using SPSS 24, applying validity and reliability tests, normality and heteroskedasticity tests, simple linear regression, t-test, and coefficient of determination (R^2). These analyses ensured robust testing of the hypothesis regarding the influence of brand image on consumer purchasing decisions (Halawa, Anggraini, et al., 2023).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The demographic characteristics of respondents provide an overview of the consumer base of UD Serlin. Out of 35 respondents, 63% were male and 37% female, suggesting that male consumers dominate the purchasing activities in this retail setting. This composition may reflect cultural and social dynamics in Nias where men often play a significant role in household purchasing decisions. However, the participation of female respondents, though smaller, indicates the importance of gender diversity in consumer behavior analysis (Halawa, Sridadi, et al., 2023).

Age distribution showed that 34% of respondents were between 26–30 years old, 31% were above 30, 26% were between 20–25, and only 9% were under 20 years old. This implies that the majority of UD Serlin's customers are in their productive age group, which typically demonstrates stronger purchasing power and more rational evaluation of product attributes. Older respondents tend to value product consistency and reliability, while younger respondents are more sensitive to trends and peer influence. Educational background also plays a role in shaping consumer perceptions. The majority of respondents (51%) had completed senior high school, 29% held bachelor's degrees, 14% had completed junior high school, and 6% reported other educational backgrounds. This distribution suggests that most respondents have adequate knowledge to critically evaluate products and form perceptions about brand image (Hamza et al., 2022). The relatively high percentage of educated consumers increases the likelihood that brand image strongly affects their decision-making process.

Occupational background was varied: 29% were students, 26% entrepreneurs, 20% farmers, 20% civil servants, and 6% others. This diversity illustrates that UD Serlin's consumer base is broad, including both income-stable groups such as civil servants and farmers as well as younger groups with evolving consumption habits. Students and entrepreneurs showed stronger responsiveness to promotional activities, while farmers and civil servants emphasized product reliability and fair pricing. Validity testing confirmed that all items in the questionnaire were valid, with correlation coefficients exceeding the critical r-table values. This indicates that each item accurately measured the intended constructs of brand image and purchasing decisions. Reliability testing also showed that Cronbach's Alpha values were greater than 0.6, confirming that the instruments were internally consistent and dependable. These results establish a strong foundation for the credibility of the data collected (Mahazan, 2024).

Normality testing using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated that the data were normally distributed, as the significance level exceeded 0.05. This finding suggests that the assumption of normal distribution required for regression analysis was satisfied. Furthermore, the heteroskedasticity test using the Glejser method showed no evidence of variance inconsistency across residuals, confirming that the regression model was appropriate for analysis. The results of the simple linear regression analysis demonstrated a positive relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions. The regression coefficient was positive, meaning that an increase in brand image is associated with an increase in consumer purchasing decisions. The statistical significance

of this relationship was validated through the t-test, which produced a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05), strongly supporting the research hypothesis that brand image significantly affects consumer purchasing decisions (Arsawan et al., 2022).

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated at 0.701, which indicates that 70.1% of the variance in purchasing decisions can be explained by brand image. The remaining 29.9% is attributed to other factors outside the model, such as product pricing, service quality, availability, or consumer trust influenced by social and cultural factors. This finding highlights the substantial influence of brand image while acknowledging the relevance of other variables in consumer decision-making. Descriptive analysis further showed that consumers positively evaluated UD Serlin's brand image on attributes such as trust, product consistency, and community presence. However, some respondents expressed concerns about price and consistency of product availability, suggesting areas where the brand image could be further strengthened. Positive evaluations outweighed negative perceptions, reinforcing the finding that brand image contributes significantly to consumer purchasing decisions (Sari, 2025).

Overall, the research results provide empirical evidence that brand image plays a dominant role in influencing consumer purchasing behavior at UD Serlin. By confirming the significance and magnitude of this effect, the study underscores the importance for UD Serlin to continuously invest in building and maintaining a positive brand image. The results also serve as a benchmark for future research and a reference point for local businesses seeking to strengthen their competitiveness through strategic brand management.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that brand image has a significant and positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions at UD Serlin, with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.701. This means that 70.1% of the variance in purchasing decisions is explained by brand image, leaving 29.9% influenced by other factors such as price, product quality, and service quality. This result supports the theoretical framework proposed by Kotler and Keller, which emphasizes that brand image is a central determinant of consumer choice (Salman et al., 2023).

The strong explanatory power of brand image highlights its role in reducing consumer uncertainty in decision-making. Consumers in the study associated a positive brand image with trustworthiness, reliability, and emotional satisfaction, which are consistent with the attributes suggested in previous literature. When consumers perceive UD Serlin as having a credible and consistent brand identity, they are more likely to engage in repeat purchases and long-term loyalty. Compared to previous studies, this finding is consistent with (Stark et al., 2022), who reported that brand image significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions in modern retail settings. Similarly, (Sobari & Tussoleha Rony, 2025) confirmed that brand image plays a crucial role in the sports apparel market. The alignment of results across contexts suggests that the impact of brand image is not limited to specific industries but is universally relevant.

However, the context of UD Serlin also highlights unique challenges. Unlike large retailers that can invest heavily in advertising and brand campaigns, UD Serlin operates within a local market where consumer trust is shaped more by interpersonal interactions and word-of-mouth communication. This means that customer service, consistency in product offerings, and community engagement are critical dimensions of brand image in this setting. The results also point to the importance of non-brand factors. Although brand image accounts for 70.1% of purchasing decisions, nearly one-third is explained by other determinants (Stark et al., 2022). For instance, pricing strategies, availability of products, and convenience of access play essential roles in influencing consumers, especially in a community with limited purchasing power. This suggests that while brand image is critical, it must be complemented with competitive pricing and reliable product availability.

The study underscores the interconnection between functional and emotional aspects of brand image. Consumers not only evaluate UD Serlin based on the quality of products but also on the symbolic value associated with the brand. Positive associations such as trust, familiarity, and reputation contribute to strengthening consumer preference. This aligns with the concept of brand equity, which views brand image as an intangible asset that adds value beyond functional attributes. Furthermore, the findings indicate that brand image can act as a strategic tool for differentiation. In

highly competitive markets where product offerings are relatively homogeneous, a strong brand image becomes the main driver of competitive advantage (Prabhu & Srivastava, 2023). For UD Serlin, building a distinct and credible brand identity can serve as a protective shield against competitors offering similar products.

The empirical evidence also reinforces the notion that brand image fosters customer loyalty. Repeat purchases observed in the study suggest that consumers are likely to maintain their relationship with UD Serlin when they perceive the brand positively. This highlights the need for the company to implement long-term brand-building initiatives rather than relying solely on short-term promotions. At the same time, the discussion acknowledges that brand image is dynamic and must be continually nurtured (Harefa et al., 2024). Consumer preferences evolve rapidly due to cultural shifts, technological advancements, and market trends. Thus, UD Serlin must continuously monitor consumer perceptions and adjust its strategies accordingly.

Another important implication of the study is its contribution to local business strategy. Unlike multinational corporations with abundant resources, local businesses such as UD Serlin rely heavily on community reputation. Strengthening ties with local consumers through personalized services and community-based marketing can enhance brand image effectively. The study also raises the issue of consistency in maintaining brand image (Rohman et al., 2023). Consumers reported dissatisfaction when product offerings did not match expectations or when pricing lacked transparency. Such inconsistencies weaken brand credibility and negatively impact purchasing decisions. Therefore, maintaining alignment between promises and delivery is essential.

In addition, the discussion suggests that UD Serlin can leverage digital platforms to reinforce its brand image. Even though the business operates in a local context, the growing use of social media in Nias provides opportunities for low-cost branding efforts. By showcasing positive customer experiences online, UD Serlin can expand its reach and strengthen consumer perceptions. The research further emphasizes that brand image should not be viewed in isolation but as part of an integrated marketing strategy (Budaya et al., 2024). Elements such as pricing, promotion, distribution, and service quality all interact with brand image to shape consumer decisions. A holistic approach will ensure that the positive effects of brand image are fully realized.

Finally, this study contributes to the broader discourse on consumer behavior in developing regions. It demonstrates that even in rural and semi-urban markets, brand image is a decisive factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions. This finding validates the universal relevance of brand image while also highlighting the need for contextual adaptation in strategy. In conclusion, the discussion confirms that brand image plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions at UD Serlin. The challenge for the company is to maintain consistency, build trust, and leverage its local identity to strengthen competitiveness (Easton & Steyn, 2023). By integrating brand image management with other marketing efforts, UD Serlin can achieve sustainable growth and long-term consumer loyalty.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that brand image significantly and positively influences purchasing decisions at UD. Serlin, explaining 70.1% of the variation, while the remaining 29.9% is shaped by other factors. To strengthen consumer loyalty, UD. Serlin should consistently enhance service quality, ensure product reliability, and build a distinctive brand identity through sustained marketing strategies. Future studies are recommended to incorporate other variables such as price perception, service quality, and consumer trust to obtain a more comprehensive analysis. The researcher sincerely thanks Universitas Nias, the Faculty of Economics, and especially the consumers of UD. Serlin who participated in this study. Special appreciation is extended to the academic supervisors for their invaluable guidance and to colleagues and family members for their continuous encouragement and support throughout the completion of this research.

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