THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE AND SERVICE QUALITY ON PURCHASING DECISIONS

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the influence of brand image and service quality on purchasing decisions at Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung. Data were collected from 112 buyers at the store using the Accidental Sampling method. Data analysis employed multiple linear regression, correlation coefficient tests, t-tests, F-tests, and coefficient of determination tests. The results indicate that both brand image and service quality, both individually and collectively, have a significant positive impact on purchasing decisions. Brand image and service quality together explain a substantial portion of the variance in purchasing decisions, emphasizing the crucial role of these factors in attracting and retaining customers in a competitive market. These findings provide valuable insights for the management of Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung to enhance their marketing strategies and brand management to optimize customer experiences and expand their customer base in a dynamic market.

Article Info

1. Introduction

This study aims to provide a better understanding of the factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions at Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung and offer useful recommendations for store management to enhance their performance in this competitive market. Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung is one of the branches of the renowned Gramedia bookstore chain in Indonesia. Situated in the Merdeka area of Bandung, it occupies a strategic location with diverse business and cultural activities.

The history of Gramedia reflects its status as one of the leading brands in the Indonesian book retail industry. Established in the 1970s, Gramedia has grown into a major player in the book industry, offering various services including bookstores, publishing, distribution, and e-commerce. Over the years, Gramedia has expanded its network of stores across Indonesia, including in Bandung. Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung is one of many Gramedia stores aimed at catering to the reading needs of the Bandung community.

Gramedia stores focus on culture and education, serving not only as bookstores but also as centers for cultural and educational activities. They frequently organize events such as book discussions, book launches, and author meetings to foster a vibrant reading community and

support literacy development in society. Gramedia plays a vital role in enhancing literacy rates in Indonesia by providing easy access to a wide range of titles across various genres and categories.

In addition to selling physical books, Gramedia continues to innovate by providing digital services such as e-books and reading apps, enabling readers to access reading materials more flexibly in line with technological advancements.

The primary objective of Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung is to become a focal point for community literacy in Bandung. By offering a diverse range of books across various genres and categories, the store aims to promote reading interest and enhance literacy levels among the population. Furthermore, it strives to create a welcoming and comfortable environment for readers to gather, discuss, and share knowledge. Through events like book discussions, book launches, and author meetings, the store seeks to build an active and enthusiastic reading community.

Brand Image refers to the consumer's perception of a particular brand, encompassing various aspects such as product quality, brand reputation, brand value, and other attributes associated with the brand (Sudirjo et al, 2023; Prakoso & Nathasya., 2022). It is the overall impression that consumers form about a brand based on their experiences, interactions, and communications with the brand over time. Brand image plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards the products or services offered by the brand (Manansala et al, 2022).

A positive brand image can create a sense of trust, credibility, and loyalty among consumers, leading to increased brand preference, repeat purchases, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. On the other hand, a negative or unfavorable brand image can deter consumers from engaging with the brand, resulting in loss of sales, damaged reputation, and diminished competitive advantage (Henderson, 2007). Various factors contribute to shaping brand image, including product performance, customer service, brand messaging, advertising, packaging, and endorsements (Kusuma et al., 2022). Consistent delivery of high-quality products, exceptional customer service, and authentic brand messaging are essential for building a strong and positive brand image.

Furthermore, brand image is dynamic and can evolve over time in response to changes in market trends, consumer preferences, competitive landscape, and brand actions. Therefore, businesses must continuously monitor and manage their brand image to ensure alignment with their desired brand identity and positioning in the market (Huang & Ku, 2016; Alguacil et al., 2021). This requires ongoing assessment of consumer perceptions, feedback, and market dynamics to identify areas for improvement and opportunities for innovation.

Service Quality refers to the level of service provided by a company to its customers. It can be assessed based on various factors, including responsiveness, reliability, speed, ease of use, and customer satisfaction (Hadi, 2023). Good service quality often plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions (Situmorang, 2022). Businesses that consistently deliver high-quality service are more likely to build strong relationships with customers, enhance brand loyalty, and generate positive word-of-mouth referrals.

In today's competitive marketplace, where consumers have numerous options available to them, service quality has become a key differentiator for businesses. Customers expect not only quality products but also exceptional service experiences that meet or exceed their

expectations. Therefore, businesses must prioritize service quality as an integral part of their brand strategy and invest in resources, training, and technology to deliver superior customer experiences.

Moreover, similar to brand image, service quality is not static and can change over time. Factors such as employee turnover, operational efficiency, technological advancements, and shifts in consumer preferences can impact service quality levels. Therefore, businesses must continuously evaluate and adapt their service delivery processes to maintain high standards and address evolving customer needs.

By focusing on both brand image and service quality, businesses can create a compelling value proposition that resonates with consumers and sets them apart from competitors. This holistic approach to brand management not only drives customer satisfaction and loyalty but also contributes to long-term business success and sustainability in the ever-changing marketplace.

Consumer purchasing decisions are made when individuals feel a desire or need for a product. Factors determining purchasing decisions at Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung include brand image and service quality. According to Aulia (2022:9), brand image involves evaluating a brand comprehensively based on experiences and knowledge gained. Praptiningrum & Talumantak (2022:13) define service quality as the level of service provided by a company, which consumers assess based on their perceptions of the service, whether it meets their expectations or not.

Studies by Puspita et al. (2020) and Rahmasari et al. (2022) demonstrate that brand image and service quality significantly influence purchasing decisions. These findings emphasize the importance of businesses prioritizing both brand image and service quality in their strategies to attract and retain customers. By investing in building a positive brand image and delivering exceptional service experiences, businesses can differentiate themselves in the marketplace, foster customer loyalty, and ultimately drive long-term success and sustainability. Moreover, as consumer preferences and market dynamics continue to evolve, businesses must remain vigilant in monitoring and adapting their brand image and service quality strategies to stay competitive and meet the changing needs and expectations of their target audience.

Preliminary research conducted by the author, involving interviews with 30 customers who made multiple purchases, revealed the main reasons for returning to Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung. 37% cited the store's renowned reputation for suitable service, encompassed within Brand Image; 30% praised the quality of service provided, summarized in Quality of Service; 20% mentioned its proximity to their residence, while the remaining 13% stated recommendations from family and acquaintances. The primary purpose of brand image is to create and instill a strong and memorable identity in consumers' minds, distinguishing the product or service from its competitors (Widiya Avianti et al., 2023). Given this background, the author aims to conduct further research into the factors influencing these reasons provided by customers, particularly regarding brand image and service quality.

2. Methods

This research utilized a quantitative approach to examine the impact of brand image and service quality on purchase decisions among customers at Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung. The study targeted the entire buyer population at the store since its establishment, although the

precise number of buyers was unknown. To collect data, the researchers employed accidental sampling, where individuals encountered randomly were selected if they matched predefined sample characteristics. Following the Lemeshow formula, a minimum of 100 respondents was required for the study, leading to the collection of 120 responses. After data recapitulation, 112 valid responses were retained for further analysis.

The analysis included multiple linear regression, correlation coefficient, t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination (R^2). These statistical techniques were applied to assess the relationships between brand image, service quality, and purchase decisions. Through this methodological approach, the study aimed to provide insights into consumer behavior within the context of Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung, aiding in the enhancement of marketing strategies and brand management practices in a competitive market environment.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the frequency at Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung, 112 respondents were obtained, indicating the distribution as follows:

Table 1. Description of respondents based on frequency at Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung

Frequency of Treatment				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Once	14	12,5	12,5
	Twice	12	10,7	10,7
	Three times/ more	86	76,8	76,8
	Total	112	100	100

Source: Processed Data, (2024)

The table above illustrates the frequency of visits by respondents to Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung during the study period. There were 14 respondents (12.5%) who visited for the first time, 12 respondents (10.7%) who visited for the second time, and 86 respondents (76.8%) who visited for the third time or more. This indicates that consumers choosing Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung have made repeat visits, especially those who have visited for the third time or more.

The data indicates that the majority of patients visiting Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung are those who have made repeat visits, particularly those who have visited for the third time or more, accounting for 76.8% of the total respondents. This suggests that Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung has a loyal customer base who tend to return for healthcare services repeatedly. This phenomenon could result from patients' trust in the quality of services provided by Toko Gramedia Bandung, or due to the convenience and accessibility of the location of Toko Gramedia for those residing in the vicinity of the Gramedia Merdeka Bandung area. Further analysis of the factors influencing customers' decisions to make repeat visits could provide valuable insights for management at Toko Gramedia in enhancing services and retaining existing customers. Additionally, understanding customer visit patterns can assist in resource planning and time management to ensure that each customer receives timely and quality service.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Answers Overall

	N	Total			Average Answers		
		Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean
Brand Image (X1)	112	36,00	60,00	50,86	3,00	5,00	4,24
Quality of Service (X2)	112	36,00	50,00	43,35	3,60	5,00	4,33
Election Decision (Y)	112	36,00	50,00	40,14	2,50	5,00	4,01
Valid N	112						

Source: Processed Data, (2024)

From the table above, it is evident that the respondents, overall, provided an average score of 4.24 for 12 statements regarding Brand Image, indicating that the average category of respondents' answers regarding brand image is "agree." The total responses for 10 statements regarding Service Quality yielded an average score of 4.33, signifying that the average category of respondents' answers regarding Service Quality is "agree." Additionally, the total responses for 10 statements concerning Purchase Decisions yielded an average score of 4.01, indicating that the average category of respondents' answers regarding Purchase Decisions is "agree." The results of the linearity test using the linearity test method can be interpreted by examining the "Deviation from Linearity" value. According to the criteria, if the significance value of the linearity deviation > 0.1, it indicates that the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is linear. Conversely, if the significance value of the linearity deviation < 0.1, it suggests that the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is nonlinear (Suryani & Hendryadi, 2015:322).

Table 3. Results of Image Brand Linearity Test

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
			Annova Table				
Election Decision * Brand Image	Between Groups	(Combined)	1879,215	20	93,961	6,212	,000
		Linearity	1603,007	1	1603,007	105,974	,000
		Deviation from Linearity	276,208	19	14,537	,961	,513
	Within Groups		1376,499	91	15,126		
	Total		3255,714	111			

Source: Processed by the Author (2024)

Table 4. Results of Service Quality Linearity Test

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
			Annova Table				
Election Decision * Service Quality	Between Groups	(Combined)	1981,211	13	152,401	11,719	,000
		Linearity	1833,892	1	1833,892	141,013	,000
		Deviation from Linearity	147,319	12	12,277	,944	,507
		Within Groups	1274,503	198	13,005		

| | | | Total | 3255,714 | 111 | | | |

Source: Processed by the Author (2024)

Based on the results of the linearity test, it is observed that the significance value of the deviation from linearity is 0.513, which is greater than 0.1. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a linear relationship between brand image and purchase decisions. Similarly, the significance value of the deviation from linearity for service quality and purchase decisions is 0.507, also greater than 0.1. Thus, it can be inferred that there is a linear relationship between service quality and purchase decisions.

Table 5. Results of Autocorrelation Test

	Unstandarized Residual
Test Value*	0,43259
Cases < Test Value	56
Vases >= Test Value	56
Total Cases	112
Number of Runs	49
Z	-1,519
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,129
a. Median	

Source: Processed by the Author (2023)

In the table of the run test for autocorrelation, the test value is 0.43529 with a probability of 0.129, which is not significant at the 0.1 level. This indicates that the data in this study exhibit random residuals or no autocorrelation.

Table 6. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandarized Coefficients		Standarized Coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-8,734	3,954		-2,209	0,029
	Brand Image	0,303	0,126	0,261	2,413	0,018
	Service Quality	0,722	0,156	0,536	4,946	0,000
a. Dependent Variable: Selection Decision						

Source: Processed by the Author (2024)

The constant value (α) of -8.734 is negative [Y = -8.734 + 0.303 X1 + 0.772 X2], meaning that if the Brand Image and Service Quality are both zero, the Purchase Decision at Gramedia Merdeka Bandung store will decrease. The regression coefficient for variable ($\beta 1$) is 0.303, and for variable ($\beta 2$) is 0.772. It can be interpreted that for every increase of 1 unit in both Brand Image and Service Quality (assuming the other variable remains constant), the decision to purchase at Gramedia Merdeka Bandung store will increase.

Coefficient of Determination Test (R2)
$R2$ can be interpreted as Brand Image and Service Quality collectively influencing the Purchase Decision by 58.5%, with the remaining 41.5% being influenced by factors other than Brand Image and Service Quality that are not explained in this study.

Table 7. Results of Correlation Coefficient Test

Correlations	
	Election Decision
Brand Image	0,702
Service Quality	0,751

Source: Processed by the Author (2023)

The correlation coefficient between Brand Image ($X1$) and Purchase Decision (Y) is 0.702. This indicates a "strong" level of relationship because the correlation coefficient falls within the range of 0.60 – 0.799. Similarly, the correlation coefficient between Service Quality ($X2$) and Purchase Decision (Y) is 0.751, which also falls within the range of 0.60 – 0.799, indicating a "strong" positive relationship.

The Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions

In the t-test, Brand Image has a t-value > t-table (2.413 > 1.658) at a significance level of 0.018 < 0.1. Thus, the brand image variable has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. This aligns with the study by Rahmasari et al. (2022), which demonstrated that brand image positively affects election decisions. Based on descriptive statistics, respondents' overall average ratings for the 12 brand image statements ranged from 3.00 to 5.00, with a mean of 4.24, indicating respondents' agreement with brand image. Among the brand image indicators, "Reputation" had the highest average rating of 4.491. Therefore, hypothesis (H1) stating that brand image influences purchase decisions at Gramedia Merdeka Bookstore, Bandung, is accepted.

The results of the t-test indicate that Brand Image significantly influences Purchase Decisions at Gramedia Merdeka Bookstore in Bandung. This finding is consistent with previous research conducted by Rahmasari et al. (2022), which also found a positive relationship between brand image and consumer decisions. The significance of Brand Image in influencing purchase decisions underscores the importance of building and maintaining a strong brand image for businesses, particularly in the retail sector.

The descriptive statistics further support the significance of Brand Image in this study. Respondents' average ratings for the brand image statements were generally high, with a mean rating of 4.24, indicating a favorable perception of the brand among consumers. The indicator "Reputation" received the highest average rating of 4.491, suggesting that consumers place significant importance on a brand's reputation when making purchasing decisions.

These findings highlight the critical role of brand image, particularly aspects such as reputation, in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing their purchase decisions. A positive brand image not only attracts customers but also fosters trust and loyalty, leading to increased sales and market share for businesses (Vitrika & Susila, 2022). Therefore, businesses should invest in strategies aimed at enhancing and maintaining a favorable brand image, such as providing quality products and services, engaging in effective marketing and communication efforts, and actively managing their reputation.

The Influence of Service Quality on Purchase Decisions

The t-value for Service Quality is > t-table (4.946 > 1.658) at a significance level of (0.000) < 0.1. This indicates that service quality significantly influences purchase decisions. This is consistent with the findings of Puspita et al. (2020), stating that service quality positively affects election decisions. The correlation coefficient between Service Quality (X2) and Purchase Decisions (Y) is 0.751, indicating a strong correlation. According to Sugiyono (2017), a correlation coefficient between 0.60 and 0.799 is considered strong. Therefore, Service Quality has a strong influence on Purchase Decisions. In the multiple linear regression analysis, the regression equation is obtained as Y = -8.734 + 0.303 X1 + 0.772 X2, indicating that Service Quality (X2) has an influence of 0.772 points on Purchase Decisions for every 1-point increase in X2.

Based on descriptive statistics, respondents' average ratings for the 12 service quality statements ranged from 3.00 to 5.00, with a mean of 4.24, indicating respondents' agreement with service quality. Among the service quality indicators, "Assurance" had the highest average rating of 4.642. Thus, hypothesis (H2) stating that service quality influences purchase decisions at Gramedia Merdeka Bookstore, Bandung, is accepted.

The results of the t-test reveal that Service Quality significantly influences Purchase Decisions at Gramedia Merdeka Bookstore in Bandung. This finding is consistent with prior research by Puspita et al. (2020), which also concluded that service quality positively impacts consumer decisions. The significance of Service Quality underscores its crucial role in shaping consumers' perceptions and influencing their purchasing behaviors.

The correlation coefficient between Service Quality (X2) and Purchase Decisions (Y) further supports the strong relationship between these variables. With a correlation coefficient of 0.751, falling within the range considered as "strong" according to Sugiyono (2017), it is evident that Service Quality has a substantial influence on Purchase Decisions. This suggests that consumers highly value the quality of service provided by Gramedia Merdeka Bookstore when making their purchasing decisions.

In the multiple linear regression analysis, the regression equation Y = -8.734 + 0.303 X1 + 0.772 X2 indicates that Service Quality (X2) contributes significantly to Purchase Decisions. Specifically, for every one-point increase in Service Quality (X2), there is an increase of 0.772 points in Purchase Decisions. This highlights the importance of maintaining high service quality standards to attract and retain customers, as even minor improvements in service quality can lead to significant positive effects on purchasing decisions.

Overall, the findings emphasize the critical role of Service Quality in influencing consumer behavior and driving purchasing decisions. Businesses, including Gramedia Merdeka Bookstore, should prioritize efforts to enhance and maintain service quality standards to meet customer expectations and achieve competitive advantage in the marketplace (Sweis et al, 2018). By delivering exceptional service experiences, businesses can not only increase customer satisfaction and loyalty but also drive revenue growth and long-term success.

The Influence of Brand Image and Service Quality Together on Purchase Decisions

The results of the F-test reveal a significant simultaneous influence of both Brand Image and Service Quality on Purchase Decisions at Gramedia Merdeka Bookstore in Bandung. This discovery, consistent with prior studies by Puspita et al. (2020) and Rahmasari et al. (2022), highlights the combined impact of brand image and service quality on consumer decisions. The

significance of this simultaneous influence underscores the importance of considering these factors together to comprehend and forecast consumer behavior effectively.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R Square) provides additional support for the collective influence of Brand Image and Service Quality on Purchase Decisions. With an R Square value of 0.585, it is evident that Brand Image and Service Quality collectively elucidate 58.5% of the variance in Purchase Decisions. This suggests that a significant portion of consumers' decision-making process is shaped by Brand Image and Service Quality. Nonetheless, it's crucial to acknowledge that 41.5% of the variance in Purchase Decisions remains influenced by other unaddressed factors, emphasizing the intricacy of consumer behavior.

In the multiple linear regression analysis, the regression equation $Y = -8.734 + 0.303 X1 + 0.772 X2$ reveals the individual influences of Brand Image (X1) and Service Quality (X2) on Purchase Decisions. For every one-point increase in Brand Image (X1), Purchase Decisions see a corresponding increase of 0.303 points, while for every one-point increase in Service Quality (X2), there is an increase of 0.772 points in Purchase Decisions. These findings emphasize the pivotal role of both Brand Image and Service Quality in steering consumer purchasing decisions.

It is imperative to delve deeper into the implications of the findings for businesses operating in the retail industry, particularly those in the book-selling sector. The significant simultaneous influence of Brand Image and Service Quality on Purchase Decisions underscores the pivotal role of these factors in shaping consumer behavior (Rahayu et al., 2023). For businesses, this implies the necessity of adopting comprehensive strategies that not only enhance the brand image but also improve service quality to attract and retain customers effectively. By investing in initiatives aimed at bolstering these aspects, such as enhancing store ambiance, training staff to deliver exceptional customer service, and implementing effective marketing campaigns to reinforce brand identity, businesses can create a more compelling value proposition for consumers.

Moreover, the coefficient of determination (R Square) sheds light on the extent to which Brand Image and Service Quality collectively elucidate the variance in Purchase Decisions. While the findings indicate a substantial influence of these factors on consumer behavior, it is crucial for businesses to recognize that a significant portion of the variance remains unexplained by Brand Image and Service Quality alone. This underscores the complexity of consumer decision-making, which may be influenced by various other factors, including price, product variety, and external influences. Therefore, businesses need to adopt a holistic approach to consumer engagement, considering multiple facets of the customer experience beyond just brand image and service quality (Lorenzon & Pilotti, 2017).

Additionally, the insights gained from the multiple linear regression analysis provide valuable guidance for businesses seeking to optimize their marketing strategies. By understanding the individual contributions of Brand Image and Service Quality to Purchase Decisions, businesses can tailor their efforts more effectively to capitalize on these influences. For instance, they can focus on initiatives aimed at enhancing specific aspects of brand image, such as reputation or brand loyalty programs, while simultaneously improving service quality through initiatives like staff training and process optimization. By aligning these efforts with consumer preferences and market trends, businesses can position themselves competitively and drive sustained growth in the dynamic retail landscape.

Hence, businesses ought to acknowledge the significance of both Brand Image and Service Quality in molding consumer perceptions and preferences. Investing in strategies aimed at augmenting these factors can facilitate the attraction and retention of customers, drive sales, and secure sustainable competitive advantage in the market.

4. Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the analysis of the research data shed light on several significant aspects regarding consumer behavior and the retail environment at Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung

Firstly, it's evident that Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung enjoys a loyal customer base, as indicated by the high rate of repeat visits among buyers. This underscores the trust and satisfaction customers have in the quality of service provided by the store. Such loyalty is a valuable asset for any retail establishment, indicating positive brand perception and customer satisfaction.

Secondly, the study confirms the substantial influence of brand image and service quality on purchase decisions at Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung. Consumers' perceptions of the store's brand and the quality of service offered significantly shape their purchasing behavior. This highlights the critical role played by effective brand management and the delivery of high-quality service in attracting and retaining customers in a competitive market.

However, it's important to acknowledge the limitations of the study. The research was conducted solely at Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other retail contexts. Theoretical limitations arise from the narrow scope of variables examined, which may not capture all factors affecting purchase decisions in different retail environments. Additionally, practical limitations may stem from the specific characteristics of the research site and the sample population, which may not fully represent the broader consumer demographic.

Moving forward, there are several avenues for further research that could enhance our understanding of consumer behavior in retail settings like Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung. Exploring additional variables such as pricing strategies, promotional activities, or customer perceptions of convenience could provide deeper insights into the factors driving purchase decisions. Comparative studies across different retail environments or investigations into online purchasing behavior could also offer valuable insights into consumer decision-making processes.

In conclusion, while the current study underscores the importance of brand image and service quality in influencing consumer behavior at Toko Gramedia Merdeka Bandung, it's crucial to acknowledge its limitations and propose directions for future research. By addressing these limitations and exploring new avenues of inquiry, we can continue to advance our understanding of consumer behavior in retail environments and inform strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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