

The Role Of Product Quality, Service Quality, And Social Engagement In Mediating The Influence Of Brand Image On Gen Z Purchase Decisions At Corner Nyonya

Naili Rahma Yuliani¹, Sisno Riyoko², Mohamad Rifqy Roosdhani³

¹²³ Pascasarjana Manajemen Universitas Islam Nahdlatul Ulama Jepara

E-mail: nailirahma20@gmail.com, sisno@unisnu.ac.id, mroosdhani@gmail.com

Abstract

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Brand Image, Product Quality,
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This study aims to analyze the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions mediated by product quality, service quality, and social media engagement among Generation Z at Corner Nyonya. Corner Nyonya is a contemporary culinary outlet that offers modern-style healthy food and drinks such as Vietnamese spring rolls, vegetable salads, coffee, and non-coffee drinks with distinctive Gen Z flavors, as well as processed banana and honey jackfruit snacks with various topping variants. The phenomenon of the rise of healthy lifestyle-based culinary businesses and social media trends encourages the need for marketing strategies that focus not only on products, but also on brand image and digital interactions with young consumers. This study uses a quantitative approach with the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. Data were collected through an online questionnaire using a Likert scale of 1–10 from 110 Generation Z respondents who had purchased products at Corner Nyonya. The results show that brand image has a significant effect on product quality, service quality, and social media engagement, and indirectly influences purchasing decisions through these three mediating variables. These findings emphasize the importance of building a strong brand image, maintaining consistent product and service quality, and utilizing social media as an effective means of interaction to improve purchasing decisions in the younger generation consumer segment.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the culinary industry in Indonesia has shown significant growth over the past decade. The transformation of people's increasingly modern and health-conscious lifestyles has given rise to new trends in food consumption, particularly among the younger generation. Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is known as a consumer group with unique characteristics: adaptable to technology, visually oriented, critical of quality, and highly consider the social and aesthetic value of a brand when making purchasing decisions. This demands that businesses, including those in the culinary sector, be able to develop marketing strategies that focus not only on the product but also on building brand image and the overall consumer experience.

One of the key elements in attracting young consumers is brand image. Brand image represents a product's identity, values, and promise to its consumers. According to Kotler and Keller (2021), a strong brand image can create positive perceptions, increase trust, and foster customer loyalty. However, a strong brand image will be ineffective if it is not accompanied by adequate product and service quality. In this context, product quality and service quality play a crucial role as concrete manifestations of the brand's promise to customers.

Product quality reflects the extent to which a product meets customer expectations regarding taste, cleanliness, appearance, and the raw materials used. Research by Waworuntu et al. (2022) shows that superior product quality can enhance consumer perception of brand image and strengthen purchasing decisions. Furthermore, service quality is a crucial aspect in shaping positive customer experiences. Fast, friendly, and responsive service can convey a professional impression while building an emotional connection between customers and the brand (Efendi & Giyana, 2025).

Furthermore, the digital era has introduced a new dimension to consumer behavior: social media engagement. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter have become the primary medium for younger generations to explore, evaluate, and share brand experiences. Consumer interactions through likes, comments, shares, and user-generated content create a viral effect that can expand promotional reach and strengthen brand perception (Utari & Susetyo, 2025). Thus, social media engagement serves not only as a promotional tool but also as a means of building long-term relationships with customers.

This phenomenon is clearly visible at Corner Nyonya, a local culinary outlet offering healthy snacks and contemporary drinks with a modern healthy food concept. Featured products such as Vietnamese spring rolls, vegetable salads, and processed bananas and honey jackfruit with various glaze toppings are symbols of culinary innovation that adapt to Gen Z tastes. Corner Nyonya's branding strategy emphasizes healthy lifestyle values and aesthetic experiences through attractive visuals on social media. However, the success of building a strong brand image is not always followed by increased purchasing decisions. This indicates a potential gap (research gap) between brand perception in the digital world and consumers' actual experiences with product quality and service.

Several previous studies have discussed the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions, but the results remain inconsistent. Research by Putri et al. (2024) found that brand image has a direct positive influence on purchasing decisions, while research by Qotrunnada & Marsasi (2023) showed that this influence is significant only when mediated by product and service quality. Furthermore, research specifically examining the role of social media engagement as a mediating variable in the relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions in the context of Gen Z consumers is still limited, particularly in the local culinary sector.

Based on the description, this study aims to analyze the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions with product quality, service quality, and social media engagement as mediating variables in Generation Z consumers at Corner Nyonya. Through this study, it is hoped

that a deeper understanding can be obtained on how the strength of brand image can be optimized through product quality, service, and digital engagement to improve purchasing decisions.

In addition to providing theoretical contributions to the development of marketing management science, the results of this study are also expected to provide practical contributions for local culinary business actors in designing marketing strategies that are more relevant to the behavior and expectations of young consumers in the digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Image

Brand image is a consumer's perception and belief of a brand as reflected in their memory. Kotler and Keller (2021) define brand image as a set of associations formed in consumers' minds about a brand. A strong brand image not only reflects product quality but also builds trust and emotional connection with consumers.

Research by Putri et al. (2024) shows that a positive brand image can foster loyalty and increase repeat purchase tendencies. For Generation Z, brand image is often associated with personal identity values, lifestyle, and the social message the brand promotes. In the context of a culinary business like Corner Nyonya, a modern, healthy, and aesthetic brand image is a key factor shaping young consumers' perceptions of brand value.

Product Quality

Product quality is the ability of a product to meet consumer expectations and needs (Garvin, 1987). Good quality encompasses aspects of taste, appearance, cleanliness, and consistency in presentation. Research by Waworuntu et al. (2022) shows that product quality positively influences purchasing decisions by increasing customer satisfaction.

In the context of contemporary food like Corner Nyonya, consistent product quality that meets Gen Z expectations—for example, fresh ingredients, an attractive appearance, and distinctive flavors—will strengthen brand image and drive purchasing decisions. Thus, product quality becomes a crucial dimension linking brand image to consumer purchasing decisions.

Service Quality

Service quality is the extent to which a service is able to meet consumer expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The five main dimensions of service quality are reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.

Research by Efendi & Giyana (2025) states that friendly, fast, and communicative service can increase positive brand perceptions and strengthen consumer purchase intentions. In culinary businesses targeting Gen Z, service is not just about fast service, but also about a pleasant, personalized, and easily shareable experience on social media. Therefore, improving service quality can strengthen the relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions.

Social Media Engagement

Social media engagement is the level of consumer participation and interaction with brand content on digital platforms. According to Hollebeek et al. (2014), this engagement reflects the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral levels of users interacting with the brand.

Research by Utari & Susetyo (2025) found that active engagement on social media, such as commenting, sharing content, or creating user-generated content, can increase trust and significantly influence purchasing decisions. For Corner Nyonya, a creative and interactive social media strategy plays a crucial role in building long-term relationships with digital-native Gen Z consumers.

Purchase Decision

Purchasing decisions are the mental processes consumers go through to select and purchase products based on both rational and emotional considerations (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2019). Factors such as perceived quality, brand image, service, and digital recommendations significantly influence this process.

Research by Dewi et al. (2022) confirms that purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by brand trust and positive consumer experiences, both in person and through social media. In the Gen Z context, purchasing decisions are often driven by social proof and the aesthetic value displayed in digital media.

Relevant Previous Research

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between the variables in this study.

1. Putri et al. (2024) found that brand image has a significant influence on purchase decisions through product quality.
2. Waworuntu et al. (2022) shows that service quality can strengthen the influence of brand image on customer satisfaction.
3. Utari & Susetyo (2025) proves that social media engagement plays an important mediation role in increasing digital consumer purchasing decisions.

However, research that comprehensively integrates the three mediating variables (product quality, service quality, and social media engagement) within the context of Gen Z consumer behavior in the local culinary industry is still limited. This constitutes a major research gap in this study.

Theoretical Framework of Thought

Based on previous theory and research, it can be concluded that a positive brand image will improve consumer perceptions of product quality, service quality, and social media engagement, ultimately impacting purchasing decisions. Therefore, this research's conceptual model illustrates that product quality, service quality, and social media engagement act as mediating variables between brand image and purchase decisions.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research method, aiming to explain the causal relationships between the variables studied. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for statistically testing the direct and indirect effects between independent, mediating, and dependent variables. The research focuses on analyzing how brand image influences purchase decisions, with product quality, service quality, and social media engagement as mediating variables for Generation Z consumers at Corner Nyonya outlets.

Population and Sample

The population in this study was all Corner Nyonya consumers who were included in the Generation Z category, namely between 18 and 25 years old and had made at least one purchase. Because the exact population size was unknown, the sample size was determined using a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique, namely selecting respondents based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives.

A total of 110 respondents were collected as the research sample. This number was deemed sufficient for analysis using Partial Least Squares (PLS), as it met the minimum sample size requirement of ten times the largest number of indicators in a single path (Hair et al., 2019).

Data collection technique

Primary data was obtained by distributing an online questionnaire (Google Form) to respondents. The research instrument was designed based on theoretical indicators adapted from various literature. Each variable was measured using a Likert scale of 1–10, with 1 indicating the lowest level of disagreement and 10 indicating the highest level of agreement.

The questionnaire instrument consists of five main parts which represent five research variables, namely:

1. Brand Image with five indicators that measure consumer perceptions of the CornerNyonya brand image
2. Product Quality with five indicators that assess taste, appearance, cleanliness, and quality of ingredients.
3. Service Quality with five indicators regarding friendliness, speed and accuracy of service
4. Social Media Engagement with five indicators related to consumer interaction and participation on social media
5. Purchase Decision with five indicators that describe consumer purchasing interest, confidence, and loyalty.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed using SmartPLS software version 4.0, with three main stages of analysis, namely outer model evaluation, inner model evaluation, and hypothesis testing.

The first stage, outer model evaluation, was used to assess the validity and reliability of the indicators. Validity testing was conducted through convergent validity analysis (factor loading values > 0.70) and discriminant validity (AVE values > 0.50). Construct reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability with a minimum threshold of 0.70.

The second stage, inner model evaluation, is conducted to test the relationships between latent variables using the R-square (R^2) value, path coefficient, and t-statistic. The R^2 value is used to determine the extent to which the independent and mediating variables are able to explain the dependent variable.

The third stage, hypothesis testing, was conducted through a bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS with a significance level of 5% ($p < 0.05$). The hypothesis was accepted if the t-statistic value was greater than 1.96 and the p-value < 0.05 . Furthermore, a mediation effect test was conducted to determine whether product quality, service quality, and social media engagement acted as significant mediators in the relationship between brand image and purchase decision

Operationalization of Variables

Each variable in this study is operationalized based on theory and previous research results.

1. Brand Image (X1) adapted from the concept of Kotler & Keller (2021), including the dimensions of corporate image, product image, and user image.
2. Product Quality (M1) measured with reference to Garvin (1987) which includes performance, durability, suitability and aesthetics.
3. Service Quality (M2) adapted from the SERVQUAL dimensions by Parasuraman et al. (1988), namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and physical evidence.
4. Social Media Engagement (M3) measured based on the theory of Hollebeek et al. (2014) which assesses the cognitive, affective, and behavioral involvement of consumers on social media.
5. Purchase Decision (Y1) adapted from Schiffman & Kanuk (2019) which includes awareness, interest, evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase.

This operationalization approach allows the study to test the causal relationship between the five variables with valid and reliable results, thus providing an empirical picture of Gen Z consumer behavior towards local culinary products in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive analysis was conducted to see the average perception of respondents towards each research variable based on a scale of 1–10.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variables	Average Score	Category
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Brand Image	8.47	Very good
Product Quality	8.39	Good
Service Quality	8.22	Good
Social Media Engagement	8.58	Very good
Purchase Decision	8.41	Good

The results show that all variables have an average value above 8, indicating a positive respondent perception of Corner Nyonya's brand image, product quality, service, and social media engagement. The highest value was obtained for social media engagement (8.58), indicating that Corner Nyonya's digital strategy is considered effective in attracting attention and creating interaction with Gen Z consumers.

Measurement Model Analysis Results (Outer Model)

Validation and reliability tests were conducted using SmartPLS. All indicators had outer loading values >0.70 , indicating that each questionnaire item was valid in measuring its construct. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all variables was above 0.50, indicating they met the convergent validity criteria. Furthermore, the Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables were greater than 0.70, indicating high reliability.

Table 2

Results of Reliability and Construct Validity Tests

Variables	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Brand Image	0.671	0.901	0.874	Reliable
Product Quality	0.688	0.915	0.888	Reliable
Service Quality	0.642	0.902	0.871	Reliable
Social Media Engagement	0.702	0.918	0.894	Reliable
Purchase Decision	0.676	0.909	0.880	Reliable

Thus, all constructs in this study are valid and reliable, so they can be used in structural model analysis (inner model).

Structural Model Analysis Results (Inner Model)

The R-Square (R^2) test is used to see the ability of the independent variable to explain the dependent variable.
The results of the analysis show:

Table 3

Structural Model Analysis Results (Inner Model)

Variables	R ²	Information
Product Quality	0.587	Strong
Service Quality	0.562	Strong
Social Media Engagement	0.614	Strong
Purchase Decision	0.693	Strong

This means that the variables brand image, product quality, service quality, and social media engagement together are able to explain 69.3% of the variation in purchasing decisions, while the rest is explained by other factors outside the model.

Hypothesis Test Results (Path Coefficient)

Based on the bootstrapping test (5000 samples), the following hypothesis testing results were obtained:

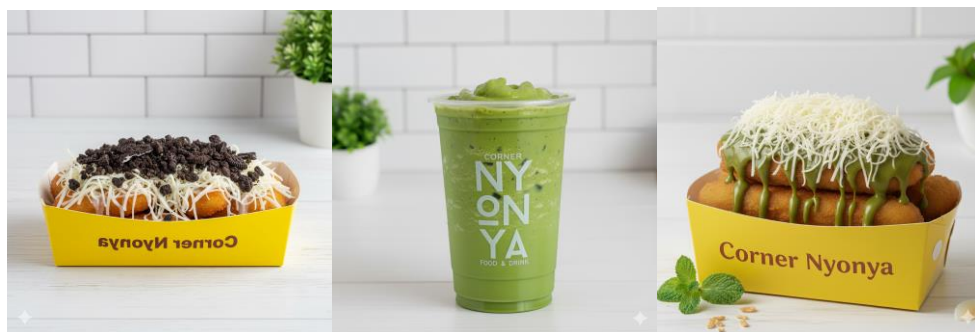
Table 4
Path Coefficient and Significance Test Results

Relationship between variables	Path Coefficient	t-statistic	p-value	Information
Brand Image → Product Quality	0.766	15,327	0.000	Significant
Brand Image → Service Quality	0.724	13,912	0.000	Significant
Brand Image → Social Media Engagement	0.682	11,508	0.000	Significant
Product Quality → Purchase Decision	0.412	7,258	0.000	Significant
Service Quality → Purchase Decision	0.268	4,187	0.000	Significant
Social Media Engagement → Purchase Decision	0.325	5,624	0.000	Significant
Brand Image → Purchase Decision	0.184	2,851	0.004	Significant

These results show that all relationships between variables are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Thus, all research hypotheses (H1–H9) are accepted.

Figure 1
Gen Z Style Food at Corner Nyonya



DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm that brand image has a positive influence on product quality, service quality, and social media engagement. This aligns with Kotler & Keller's (2021) findings, which state that a strong brand image reflects a company's commitment to maintaining product and service quality while strengthening emotional bonds with customers.

Gen Z consumers at Corner Nyonya view brands with compelling visual identities and messages relevant to a healthy lifestyle as representative of themselves. Therefore, enhancing brand image not only increases trust but also increases expectations for product and service quality.

Research findings also show that product quality has the greatest influence on purchasing decisions, compared to other variables. This confirms that while brand image is important, the final decision is still influenced by the actual experience of consuming the product. Consistency in taste, appearance, and cleanliness are key factors for Gen Z consumers to make repeat purchases.

Furthermore, service quality also significantly influences purchasing decisions. Fast, friendly, and welcoming service, in line with the expectations of the younger generation, creates a positive experience that strengthens customer loyalty. As Parasuraman et al. (1988) stated, satisfactory service can create emotional added value that is difficult for competitors to replace.

Furthermore, social media engagement has been shown to play a significant role in mediating the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions. This indicates that active interactions through social media, such as likes, shares, and user-generated content, can strengthen consumer engagement with brands. Generation Z not only buys products but also seeks social connections and authentic digital experiences. This finding supports research by Utari & Susetyo (2025), which states that the level of consumer engagement on social media is directly related to increased purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that Corner Nyonya has succeeded in building a positive brand image and high digital engagement, but needs to continue to maintain the quality of products and services so that brand value remains strong and consistent.

Research Implications

The results of this study provide practical implications for local culinary businesses in managing their brands in the digital era. First, strengthening brand image requires continuous improvement in product quality. Second, service must be oriented toward customer experience, not simply efficiency. Third, digital communication strategies must emphasize two-way interaction to increase consumer engagement.

Academically, this research enriches the literature on Generation Z consumer behavior by integrating the dimensions of brand image, product quality, service quality, and social media engagement as determining factors of purchasing decisions in the context of local culinary businesses in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion that have been carried out, this study concludes that brand image has a significant influence on the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers at Corner Nyonya, both directly and indirectly through product quality, service quality, and social media engagement.

First, brand image has been shown to positively influence product quality, service quality, and social media engagement. This indicates that positive consumer perceptions of the brand will lead to better assessments of the quality of Corner Nyonya's products, services, and digital interactions.

Second, product quality contributes the most to purchase decisions. This means that while brand image and social media engagement are important in attracting consumers, the final purchase decision is still determined by actual experience with the quality of the product consumed.

Third, service quality also has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, emphasizing the importance of fast, friendly, and personalized service in building a positive customer experience.

Fourth, social media engagement acts as a powerful mediator in strengthening the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions. Gen Z consumers' active engagement through digital interactions has been shown to increase loyalty and purchase interest in Corner Nyonya products.

Thus, it can be concluded that the success of building a brand image in the digital era does not only depend on visual appearance and communication messages, but also on consistent product quality, superior service, and social media strategies that are able to create two-way interactions with consumers.

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1. The author hopes that the results of this study can provide benefits for the development of science, especially in the field of marketing management and consumer behavior in the

digital era, as well as become an inspiration for local culinary business actors in strengthening competitiveness through brand and service strategies

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