

Research Article

## The Influence of Product Quality and Brand Image on Shell Fuel Consumers' Purchasing Decision in Surabaya

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**Abstract:** This study aims to identify and examine how people's views on product quality and brand image affect their decision to buy Shell fuel in Surabaya City. The study focuses on three key areas: first, how both product quality perception and brand image together influence purchase decisions; second, how product quality perception alone impacts purchase decisions; and third, how brand image alone affects purchase decisions. The group of people studied are those who buy and use Shell fuel in Surabaya. To select participants, a non-probability sampling method was used, with the criteria that respondents must be at least 17 years old, live in Surabaya, and have purchased Shell fuel. After distributing questionnaires, 100 people met these criteria. The data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0 software. The findings show that both product quality perception and brand image together have a significant effect on purchase decisions. Individually, product quality perception has a positive and significant impact on purchase decisions, and brand image also shows a positive and significant effect. These results suggest that improving product quality and enhancing brand image can help Shell increase consumer purchase decisions in Surabaya.

**Keywords:** Brand Image; Partial Least Squares; Product Quality Perception; Purchase Decision; Shell Fuel Consumers.

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### 1. Introduction

Fuel consumption has dramatically increased in Indonesia due to the transportation sector's rapid development over the past few decades. The nation's energy demand has increased due to an increase in motor vehicle ownership, public mobility, and transportation infrastructure. In addition to reflecting the contemporary mobility patterns of Indonesian society, transport today forms the foundation of the country's economy, trade, distribution, and tourism (Edy Soesanto et al., 2025).

According to a 2024 data by the Indonesian National Police Traffic Corps (Korlantas Polri), there were over 164 million motor vehicles in the nation, of which 137,3 million, or 83,6%, were motorbikes. The 5-7% annual car growth rate, which surpasses the capacity of the existing infrastructure, strengthens the nation's reliance on petroleum (Zahari & McLellan, 2024).

Polls show that 70% of respondents commute by motorbike on a daily basis. Additionally, 72% of respondents prefer private vehicles because public transport is less reliable and effective, according to statistics from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) (Jakpat, 2024). Fuel is now more than just a source of energy; it is an essential commodity that drives the nation's economy (Edy Soesanto et al., 2025).

Because of its extensive distribution network and reasonable rates, Pertamina continues to have a commanding 95-96% market share (Muliawati, 2025). However, multinational companies like Shell, BP, and Vivo are rapidly increasing their market share. According to the 2024 Top Brand Award, Pertamina has the greatest Top Brand Index (74,5%), followed by the Shell Super (10,0%). Shell shows a positive trend, particularly in the premium urban consumer segment.

Shell's limited number of filling stations and often higher costs in comparison to Pertamina are issues. Shell uses its global brand image and perceived product quality to draw customers in order to remedy this. While brand image is linked to a company's reputation, consistency in service, and superior value of its products, product quality includes vehicle performance, fuel efficiency, and engine dependability (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020).

Several studies demonstrate the importance of these components. While Rebuwalos et al. (2024) discovered that perceived quality was a significant predictor of fuel purchasing decisions, Keller and Swaminathan underlined that a strong brand image supports premium pricing tactics and helps preserve market share (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020). However, research on how perceived product quality and brand image affect fuel purchasing decisions in Surabaya is still lacking due to Pertamina's market dominance and intense price competition (Muliawati, 2025). Therefore, the goal of this study is to investigate how Surabaya customers' decisions to purchase Shell fuel products are influenced by brand perception and perceived product quality.

## 2. Theoretical Studies

### Consumer Behavior Theory

Consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals, groups, or organisations select, purchase, and use products and services to satisfy their needs and desires. Kotler and Keller (2021) state that motivation, attitudes, and preferences are internal processes that influence decision-making. Kotler & Armstrong (2020) define consumer buying behaviour as the actual actions of end consumers, including families and individuals, when they purchase goods and services for personal consumption. The consumer behaviour model demonstrates how marketing and environmental cues influence consumers' decisions to purchase. Consumer awareness can be impacted by a number of factors, including product, price, location, promotion, economic conditions, technology, culture, and social influences. Additionally, the decision-making process and the buyer's personal traits play a significant role in determining the ultimate result, which is the purchase decision (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). Kotler et al. (2021) state that the customer decision-making process consists of five steps: (1) problem identification; (2) information gathering; (3) evaluation of alternatives; (4) decision to buy; and (5) behaviour after the purchase. These stages demonstrate that consumers go through a variety of psychological processes rather than only reacting to market cues before choosing a certain brand of product. Customer behaviour is therefore crucial to comprehending how internal and external factors influence gasoline purchasing decisions in the setting of brand competition like Shell in Indonesia.

### Purchasing Decision

A purchase decision is the result of a consumer's process of recognizing a need, seeking information, evaluating alternatives, and ultimately selecting the product deemed most suitable. According to Kotler et al. (2021), the five steps of the purchase decision process include problem recognition, information search, alternative appraisal, buy choice, and post-purchase behaviour. Fandy Tjiptono (2020) asserts that customer decisions can be determined by a number of criteria, including product confidence, repeat purchases, recommendations to others, and consistency in repeat purchases. In the petrol (BBM) industry, purchase decisions indicate the degree to which consumers are satisfied, have faith in the product's quality, and remain loyal to a particular brand (Rizky & Hariasih, 2023).

### Perceived Product Quality

Perceived product quality is defined as a subjective evaluation made by consumers of the superiority or reliability of a product in meeting their needs. This perception is formed through usage experience, marketing information, and recommendations from others. Indicators of perceived product quality include performance, features, reliability, and conformance to specifications. Suprpto & Setyawardani (2022) found that perceived product quality has a

positive influence on purchase intention, with customer satisfaction acting as a mediating variable. Similarly, Anwar & Andrean (2021) emphasized that perceived quality significantly contributes to consumer purchase decisions. Thus, the higher the perceived quality, the greater the likelihood that consumers will make a purchase or engage in repeat purchases Dinata & Khasanah (2022).

H1: Perceived product quality has an effect on purchase decisions.

### **Brand Image**

Brand image refers to how consumers see a brand based on the associations, beliefs, and impressions that are deeply embedded in their minds. Kelly Sawlani (2021) asserts that a product's brand image is shaped by its experiences and expectations. Kotler et al. (2021) employ three main criteria to evaluate brand image: brand advantage, brand strength, and brand distinctiveness. Benhardy et al. (2020) found that brand trust acts as a mediating factor in the favourable influence of brand image on purchasing decisions. This outcome is consistent with Tahir et al. (2024), who emphasize that when a brand has a good image, consumers are more likely to make a purchase. Positive brand perception boosts consumer loyalty and supports a company's premium pricing.

H2: Brand image has an effect on purchase decisions.

### **Correlation and Relationship Between Variables**

Correlation explains the relationships between the variables under investigation in this study. A positive correlation indicates that a rise in one variable will be followed by an increase in another. Using the theoretical framework and previous research discussed in this thesis, the relationship between the variables can be represented as follows:

#### **a. The Connection Between Perceived Product Quality and Purchase Decision**

Perceived product quality has a big impact on purchasing decisions. Consumers who evaluate a product, whether through personal experience or information from others tend to develop greater trust and more likely to purchase it. Previous studies, such as Suprpto & Setyawardani (2022), which found that perceived product quality positively influences purchase decisions and that customer satisfaction functions as a mediating variable, support this viewpoint. Similarly, Anwar & Andrean (2021) confirmed that perceived quality has a major influence on consumer purchase behaviour. Perceived quality is a key component of brand value, which affects customer loyalty and purchase decisions, according to (Kotler et al., 2021)

#### **b. The Connection Between Brand Image and Purchase Decision**

Because it represents consumers' views, affiliations, reputation for quality, and the social or lifestyle values associated with the brand, brand image has a significant impact on purchasing decisions. According to Benhardy et al. (2020), brand trust serves as a mediating factor in the favourable relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions. In the meantime, Fandy Tjiptono (2020) stresses that a powerful, positive, and distinctive brand image may generate customer preference and loyalty. In a similar vein, Kotler et al. (2021) clarified that the stronger the brand image generated, the more favourable connections consumers had with the brand, which in turn increased trust, loyalty, and repurchase intentions. Tahir et al. (2024), who discovered that brand image significantly influence buying decisions, provide more evidence for this.

### **Research Hypotheses**

H1: Perceived product quality has a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision of Shell fuel products in Surabaya.

H2: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision of Shell fuel products in Surabaya.

## **3. Research Methods**

This study uses a correlational method to examine how Surabaya customers decide to buy Shell fuel, focusing on their views about product quality and brand image. A quantitative approach was selected because it helps measure the relationship between different factors (Sugiyono, 2021). To collect data, questionnaires were given sampling was used to make sure

the participants were relevant to the study. According to Hair & Alamer (2022), a total of 99 people were chosen as the sample.

The data were processed and examined through the utilization of SmartPLS 3.0 software, which employs the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach as part of the Structural Equation modeling (SEM) framework. Hypothesis testing was used to check if the independent variables have a significant impact on the dependent variable. Validity and reliability tests were also done to ensure the research tools are accurate and consistent. By combining direct data collection with quantitative analysis, this study ensures the results are precise and dependable.

### Data Collection Technique

The researcher used a survey method with a quantitative data gathering technique in this investigation. Customers who had bought Shell petrol in the city of Surabaya were given a structured questionnaire as the main tool. A purposive sampling was used to choose survey participants based on specified inclusion criteria, such as being at least 17 years old, residing in Surabaya, and having previously purchased Shell fuel products. A total of 99 respondents who participated in the survey met these criteria.

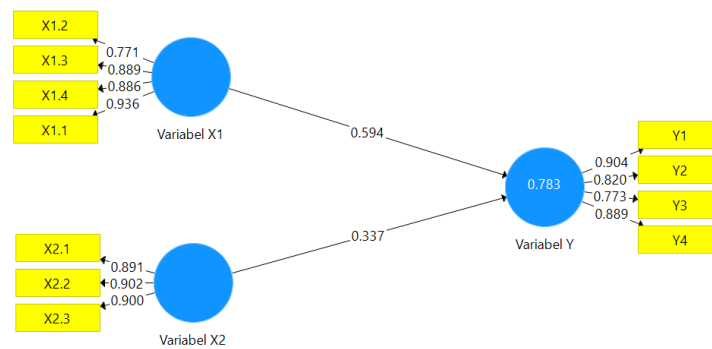
The questionnaire's design included a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of product quality, brand image, and purchasing decision (Simamora, 2022). Participants were properly informed about the purpose of the study, and the data collection process was conducted in an open and transparent manner to guarantee ethical considerations and voluntary participation. This strategy was chosen because it was effective in obtaining primary quantitative data from a particular population and in obtaining comprehensive insights relevant to the study's objective.

### Data Analysis Technique

This study explored the causal links between Shell fuel users' views on product quality, brand image, and their purchasing choices in Surabaya. It employed the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach along with the SmartPLS 3.0 software. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is effective in handling complex models with intricate relationships and very small sample sized, without requiring assumptions about data uniformity. The analysis involved two key phases: evaluating the measurement model, also known as the outer model, and examining the structural model, or inner model. For the outer model, we assessed outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), cross-loadings, and composite reliability to ensure convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, which helped confirm the accuracy and consistency of the indicators used. In evaluating the inner model, the author looked at R-square values, path coefficients, and the significance of hypotheses through bootstrapping techniques to measure the explanatory strength and statistical relevance of the model. This method not only provided reliable empirical evidence on how consumers' perceptions of product quality and brand image influence their purchasing decisions but also ensured that the research approach was methodologically sound.

## 4. Results

This study uses the Structural Equation Modeling technique with partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) and the SmartPLS 3.0 software to process the data. The model evaluation process in PLS consists of two main parts: the inner model, which looks at the relationships between different variables, and the outer model, which checks the measurement indicators for each concept. Both parts are analyzed together to ensure the measuring tools are valid and reliable, and to test the hypotheses proposed. A test was conducted on the outer loadings for the variables Product Quality Perception (X1), Brand Image (X2), and Purchase Decision (Y). Each of these variables was represented by several reflecting indicators that were developed based on both theoretical and practical evidence.



**Figure 2.** This is a figure. Schemes follow the same formatting.

All of the indicators used to measure the variables Product Quality Perception (X1), Brand Image (X2), and Purchase Decision (Y) are valid and suitable for use in this study, according to the analysis results, which show that all factor loading values for each indicator are above the threshold of 0,70. The cross-loading values provide additional evidence for each indication's validity; an indicator is deemed valid if it shows a higher loadingvalue on its relevant construct in comparison to other construct in comparison to other constructs. On the other hand, an indicator is considered illegitimate if it displays a lower cross-loading value on its assigned construct than on other constructions. Each construct's internal consistency and reliability were assessed using convergent validity and reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) values served as the basis for this evaluation; a construct is deemed dependable if its composite reliability is more than 0,70. To further verify the constructs' dependability, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was looked at. The following table displays the specific findings of various reliability and validity tests.

**Table 1.** Construct Reliability and Validity.

Variables	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Note
Product's Quality Perception (X1)	0,762	0,894	0,927	Valid & Reliable
Brand Image (X2)	0,805	0,879	0,925	Valid & Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,720	0,869	0,911	Valid & Reliable

*Source: PLS Data Processing Results (2025)*

The results of the measurement model evaluation demonstrate that all of the study's constructs meet the established criteria for vconvergent validity and reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for Product Quality Perception (0,762), Brand Image (0,805), and Purchase Decision (0,720) above the recommended threshold of 0,50, indicating that each construct can account for more than 50% of the variance in its corresponding indicators. This outcome shows that the indicators used appropriately capture the underlying hidden causes. Additionally, The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for Product Quality Perception (0,894), Brand Image (0,879), and Purchase Decision (0,869), all of which are above the lowest allowable value 0,70, demonstrate strong internal consistency among the measurement items. The results are further supported by the Composite dependability ratings of 0,927, 0,925, and 0,911, respectively, which all above the conventional dependability criterion of 0,70. Therefore, it can be concluded that all of the measuring constructs included in this study have sufficient levels of validity and reliability, ensuring the stability of the subsequent structural model analysis.

**Table 2.** R-Square.

Variables	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,783	0,779

*Source: PLS Data Processing Results (2025)*

The text continues here (Figure 2 and Table 2). By applying the Partial least Squares (PLS) technique through SmartPLS 3.0 software, the Purchase Decision (Y) variable obtained an R-Square value of 0,783 and an Adjusted R-Square value of 0,779. This means that the independent variables Brand Image (X2) and Product Quality Perception (X1) together explain 78,3% of the variation in Purchase Decision, while the remaining 21,7% is explained by other factors not included in this study's model. This suggests that the model has a strong ability to explain Surabaya consumers' choices when deciding to buy Shell petrol products.

The inner model, often referred to as the structural framework, shows the cause-and-effect connections between the study's hidden variables, such as Product Quality Perception, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision. These relationships are based on the research methods and the hypotheses proposed. This model explains how the different parts of the study interact, both the ones that are not influenced by other variables and those that are affected. The smartPLS 3.90 software tested the hypotheses using a method called bootstrapping. The results included Path Coefficients and p-values, which served to identify the strength and direction of the relationships among the variables.

**Table 3.** Path Coefficient.

Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P-Values
Product's Quality Perception (X1) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0,594	0,602	0,137	4,330	0,000
Brand Image (X2) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0,337	0,328	0,134	2,513	0,0012

*Source: PLS Data Processing Results (2025)*

The results from the hypothesis testing using SmartPLS 3.0 indicate that Product Quality Perception (X1) has a positive and significant impact on Purchase Decision (Y). The original sample value is 4,330, and the p-value is 0,000. Since the t-statistics exceeds 1,96 and the p-value is below 0,05, it can be inferred that Product Quality Perception (X1) has a significant effect on Purchase Decision (Y). Likewise, Brand Image (X2) records an original sample coefficient of 0,337, a t-statistic of 2,513, and a p-value of 0,012, which indicates it has a positive effect on Purchase Decision (Y). These findings are statistically significant at the  $\alpha = 5\%$  level, showing that Brand Image (X2) has a meaningful influence on Purchase Decision (Y). As a result, both research hypotheses H1 and H2 are supported by the evidence from the study.

## 5. Discussion

The hypothesis that Purchase Decision is positively and significantly impacted by Product Quality Perception is accepted with a path coefficient value of 0,594, a T-statistic value of 4,440  $> 1,96$ , and a p-value of 0,000  $< 0,05$ . The results of the study demonstrate that consumers' opinions of the product's quality have an impact on their decisions to purchase Shell petrol in Surabaya. If consumers think Shell is of better quality, they are more inclined to purchase it. The most important aspect impacting the opinion of product quality among the indicators is performance, which demonstrates the fuel's potential to increase vehicle efficiency and engine reliability. Customers who think Shell fuel is more dependable and performs better are more likely to be devoted and self-assured consumers. To strengthen its

competitive edge and encourage customer loyalty, Shell must maintain and enhance product quality through innovation and technological advancement.

The hypothesis that Brand Image likewise has a positive and significant impact on Purchase Decision is accepted with a path coefficient value of 0,337, a T-statistic value of 2,513  $> 1,96$ , and a p-value of 0,012  $< 0,05$ , indicating that the link is statistically significant (positive). The findings indicate that a strong and positive brand image influences consumers' decisions to buy Shell products. The most crucial indicator of brand image is brand strength, which stands for the company's standing, reliability, and global recognition. Customers are more likely to choose Shell's products when they think the firm is reputable and dependable, even in the face of price competition. A consistent brand identity and an effective marketing strategy build consumers' emotional attachment to a brand and raise the likelihood of a purchase.

Overall, the results demonstrate that consumers' opinions of the brand and product quality have a big impact on Shell petrol consumers in Surabaya. In the energy sector, consumer trust and decision-making are influenced by both technical excellence and product performance, although product quality remains the more crucial component. Shell should therefore continue to prioritise quality improvement and strengthen its brand positioning through marketing communication, service improvement, and customer engagement initiatives in order to sustain consumer preference and purchase commitment in a highly competitive market.

## 6. Conclusions and Suggestions

It is clear that both independent variables play a positive and significant role in influencing consumers' purchase decisions, as determined through the use of Partial least Squares (PLS) method with SmartPLS 3.0 software. The analysis focused on how Product Quality Perception and Brand Image affect the Purchase Decision of Shell fuel consumers in Surabaya. This result emphasizes the crucial role these two factors play in shaping consumer choices and encouraging them to prefer Shell petroleum products in a competitive market environment.

The first finding shows that consumers' opinion about the quality of products have a significant influence on their decisions to buy. If consumers think Shell fuel is reliable, effective, and of higher quality, they are more likely to choose it over competitors. The most crucial indicator in this construct is product performance, which gauges Shell fuel's ability to improve vehicle performance, maximize fuel efficiency, and ensure engine durability. This suggests that consumers' faith in product excellence is directly linked to higher purchase intention and loyalty. Therefore maintaining customer satisfaction and confidence requires maintaining exceptional product standards through constant innovation, technological improvement, and dependable product quality assurance.

The second findings demonstrates that brand image also as a favourable and significant impact on purchase decisions. Customer's associations with Shell's global reputation, reliability, and trustworthiness strengthen their emotional attachment to and confidence in the firm. The most important indicator in this construct is brand strength, which represents Shell's consistent brand positioning, widespread recognition, and dependable corporate identity. A positive brand image helps Shell maintain premium pricing strategies and long-term customer loyalty in addition to enhancing consumers' perceptions of product value. Therefore, increasing brand trust through integrated marketing communication, customer engagement programs and consistent brand experiences can further improve consumers' purchase decisions. Overall, the results indicate that technical performance and product dependability are the primary factors influencing consumer choice in the petroleum industry, with Product Quality Perception outweighing Brand Image. Nonetheless, brand image remains a crucial complementary component that promotes consumer trust and long-term commitment.

Given these results, a number of suggestions can be made. First, Shell should continue to prioritize improving the quality and inventiveness of its petrol products. Initiatives include developing more environmentally friendly formulae, enhancing engine protection systems, and adhering to fuel economy laws can improve consumers' perceptions of quality. Second, the company should use strategic marketing communications and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to enhance its brand image by showcasing its commitment to sustainability and consumer satisfaction. Using a consistent message throughout advertising, digital platforms, and on-site experiences will enhance the brand's perceived value and emotional appeal.

Third, it is recommended that future research expand the model by including elements such as pricing perception, customer happiness, service quality, and brand trust in order to gain a deeper understanding of consumer decision-making behaviour in the petroleum industry. Expanding the study's scope to encompass additional regions or brands would also enhance generalisability. Finally, from a management perspective, the results of the study emphasize the need for an integrated marketing strategy that combines strong brand equity with exceptional products. By coordinating product innovation, service consistency, and effective communication, Shell can sustain customer loyalty and strengthen its competitive edge in the ever evolving energy market.

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