
Predicting the Mediation Impact of Brand Image on the Correlational Relationship between Price Perception, Product Quality, Promotion and Purchasing Decision

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Abstract

The on going COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia has changed consumer behavior in shopping, such as prioritizing convenience, prioritizing products that are needed most, and shopping online. Social restrictions imposed by the government also have an impact on how consumers perceive or evaluate the brand of the product they will buy, in other words, consumers will purchase a brand that is perceived as good.

This study aims to analyze brand image as a mediator of price perception, product quality and promotion towards customer purchasing decisions on frozen food products at Riza Food outlets. This study uses a sample of 150 respondents who are consumers of frozen food products where the respondents are the object of research. This study uses Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) hypothesis testing tool to answer the research problems.

The results of this study indicate that brand image cannot be predicted as a mediator of product quality with purchasing decisions because the p -value is 0,125 and the T-statistic value is 1,535. This means that brand image is not a driver or mediator for consumers to buy products when it is associated with product quality. However, brand image can be predicted as a mediator between price perceptions and purchasing decisions, with p -value 0,026, and can also be predicted as a mediator between promotions and purchasing decisions, with p -value 0,016. Therefore, the brand image of frozen food products sold at Riza Food outlet is capable of encouraging consumers to make purchases through price perception and promotion. This means that the perception of price and promotion is the most vital role in the minds of consumers, other than how the product can provide benefits to consumers. A product has been trusted by the consumers and consumers will be consequently satisfied when purchasing or having the certain product.

Keywords: Price Perception, Product Quality, Promotion, Brand Image and Purchasing Decision.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic situation in Indonesia has been ongoing for almost two years, and there are still no signs of ending. The COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on business sector, including changes in people's behavior in their daily lives. This pandemic condition also affects national economic growth, especially in the food and beverage industry. This case will obviously

affect the current business situation and there will be changes in the future. Some of the causes are changes in consumer behavior such as: purchasing needed products, proximity to shopping places, shopping online, quick shopping experience and urgent needs. In addition, the social restriction policy also causes various business and family activities to not be able to freely go anywhere due to various rules or regulations that have been set, so that many activities are disrupted and not as flexible as prior to pandemic era.

Herlinda (2020) stated that if the pandemic condition continues, it will be difficult for the real sector to return to normal (rebound), because it will take a long time to restore consumer purchasing power and public confidence to consume at the domestic level which is the main driver of all real sector in economic activity nationally. This condition will certainly lead to changes in consumer behavior broadly. Every consumer is predicted to need more ready-to-eat food with a long shelf life (Lovell, 2011).

Products that have a large enough market opportunity during a pandemic and become a trend in the future are frozen food products. When consumers have limited time and there are social movement restrictions that regulated by government policies, frozen food is an alternative choice because it has several advantages in serving: more practical, low price, fast, easy to obtain and can meet protein needs for health. Frozen food was originally produced and intended for consumers who are busy with various activities, do not want or are unable to prepare food for themselves (Lovell, 2011:23).

Frozen food industry still has good prospects, based on lifestyle in today's society, especially the millennial group. By starting to switch from conventional to modern lifestyle, people are starting to switch or adapt to consumption patterns that exist in developed countries, such as consuming frozen food products.

When a pandemic occurred, Riza Food's company that sold frozen food products experienced problems related to distribution, service and sales as a result of changes in consumer behavior in buying a product which resulted in slowing sales and market growth. Below shown is Riza Food data on sales of frozen food products in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, as follows

Table 1.1 Sales Data in 2018 - 2021

No.	Year	Sales (Rp)	% Increase (Decrease)
1.	2018	3.093.657.800	-
2.	2019	3.861.000.247	24,80 %
3.	2020	4.127.855.651	6,91 %
4.	2021	4.356.339.814	5,54 %

Source: company internal data PT FRS, 2022

The marketer's obligation is to know and understand what is going on in consumers' minds, between the onset of external marketing stimuli and the final purchase decision (Kotler and Keller, 2016:200). Some of the strategies that is often done by marketers to increase sales is providing good service, sharpen distribution strategies by adding distribution channels and shortening distribution channels from producers to consumers.

However, along with changes in the marketing system and changes in consumer tastes and orientations inevitably require companies to rethink their marketing activities, so that they are closer to their consumers. Promotion is one of the marketing activities that is easier to use to approach consumers and is able to build consumer perceptions in the direction desired by marketers. Promotion can be used as a model of a marketing strategy that involves a mixture of several old models such as brand image, price perception and purchasing decisions (Jiang, Shang and May, 2015). Research on consumer behavior can show what consumers need according to their wants, how consumers' mindsets, how consumers feel and choose product brands (Nisar, 2014:137). Rahdini (2014) defines that brands have an important role in consumer preferences in choosing products, followed by price, product quality and packaging. Other than that, Nguyen and Gizaw (2014) state that brand is not a factor that influences consumers in choosing a product, but is influenced by factors of price and quality suitability.

In this study, the researcher proposes an analytical model by predicting brand image as a mediator on the relationship between price perception, product quality, promotion and purchasing decisions. This model is an alternative model that can be proposed by researchers as it is known that promotion and brand image are often placed as the main variables in every marketing activity (Sood dan Keller 2012, Keller 2009, Erdeem, Kuksov dan Peters 2016).

This research is also reinforced by the opinion of Afwan and Santosa (2020) which states that product quality, price perception, service quality and brand image affect purchasing decisions and product quality has the strongest influence. Napik et al (2018) research states that there is a significant influence on purchasing decisions in terms of price perceptions, product quality, brand image and promotion. Hermiyenti and Wardi (2018) implies that promotion, price and brand image have a significant and direct influence on purchasing decisions.

2. Literature Review

Price Perception

Schiffman and Kanuk (2008:186) explain that price perception is a perception or opinion related to price and customers view the product price as low, high, and reasonable, so that it can have a strong influence on buying goals and buying satisfaction. Perceived price can be defined as the amount of money that has certain benefits that are needed by consumers to get a product or service (Tjiptono and Chandra, 2020:412).

Perceptions of price can be identified with the perception of costs and perceptions of quality issued by consumers in obtaining a product (Monroe, 2003:161). In this study using the theory of

Kotler and Armstrong (2016:326) stating that price perceptions can be measured using indicators that are influenced by: price suitability with product quality, price suitability with benefits, competitive prices and affordable prices.

Product Quality

Kotler and Keller (2016:157) identify about the quality of products and services which are the result of customer satisfaction and company profits that have interrelated relationships. The higher level of quality of a product will result in higher the level of consumer satisfaction. Product quality can also be expressed as the ability of a product to perform its functions, including the overall benefits of durability, reliability, ease of operation (Kotler and Armstrong, 2017:208).

Product quality can be measured using the theory of Tjiptono and Chandra (2020:99) which states that product quality is influenced by several indicators: performance quality (*performance*), reliability (*reliability*), additional features (*features*), conformance to specifications (*conformance*) dan durability (*durability*).

Promotion

Tjiptono and Chandra (2020:483) explain about promotion which is one of the principle in marketing communication, consisting of several marketing activities that seek to provide, disseminate information, persuade, influence, remind the target market of the company and its products so that they purchase, accept. and be loyal consumers to the products offered by the company. Under certain conditions, promotional activities are a business activity that can influence other parties. Specifically, promotion is one of the component in the company's marketing mix. Promotion can also be defined as a mechanism in marketing communications, the exchange of information between buyers and sellers (Setyaningrum, 2015).

In this study, promotion can be measured using indicators of advertising, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, personal selling and direct marketing (Simamora, 2017:6.13).

Brand Image

Kotler and Armstrong (2017:209) identify that brand image is a perception and beliefs in the mind of consumers and reflected in the associations that occur in consumers' memories. Kotler and Keller (2016:315-316) also describe the brand image that can be influenced by several factors such as: attributes, benefits, usage, values, culture and personality.

Kotler and Armstrong (2016) state that brand image can be measured using several indicators such as *strengthness*, *uniqueness* and *favorable*.

Purchasing Decision

Schiffman and Kanuk (2008) states that the purchase decision is an act of selection against several choices or alternatives, with other objectives being an alternative choice that must be available to someone when making a decision. Besides, Setiadi (2011:332) defines purchasing decision is a series of integration processes that can combine knowledge, evaluate several alternative behaviors and choose one of these options.

The purchase decision is the next stage after there is an intention and desire to buy from consumers, but the purchase decision is not the same as the actual purchase (Morissan, 2015:111). Kotler (2012) explains that purchasing decisions can be measured using indicators of stability in a product, habits in buying products and providing recommendations to others.

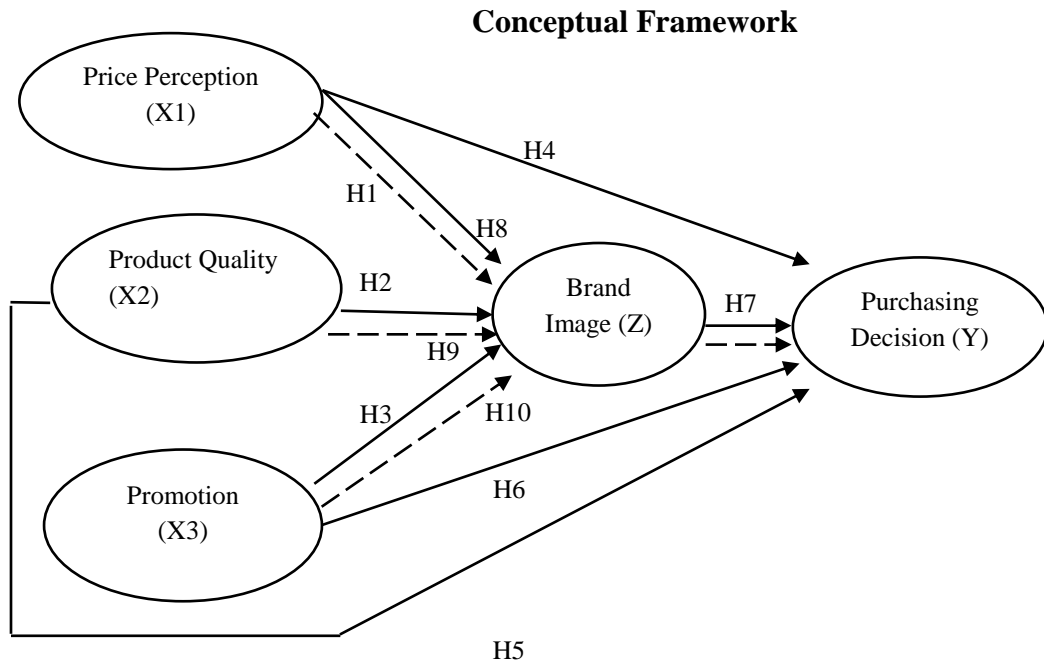


Image 2.1

Research Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher Thoughts Results, 2022

Research Hypothesis

- H1 : Price perception has an effect on brand image.
- H2 : Product quality has a positive and significant effect on brand image.
- H3 : Promotion has a positive and significant effect on brand image.
- H4 : Price perception has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.
- H5 : Product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.
- H6 : Promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.
- H7 : Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.
- H8 : Price perception has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions with brand image as a mediating variable.
- H9 : Product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions with brand image as a mediating variable.
- H10 : Promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions

with brand image as a mediating variable.

3. Research Methods

This study uses quantitative research method by conducting a survey. The population used is consumers who come to Riza Food outlet in Gresik area, East Java. A total of 150 respondents are taken using purposive sampling method. The analytical tool used to test the hypothesis in this study is *Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)*.

4. Discussion

Structural Model Test (Inner Model)

Implementation of testing on the inner model is used to test the possible relationship between latent construct. *Inner model* consists of structural model, inner relation and substantive theory which can describe the relationship between latent variables based on substantive theory.

The inner model can be tested by looking at the R- square, Q-square, *path coefficient* (koefisien jalur) dan *indirect effect* to obtain important information on how much the dependent latent variable can be influenced by the independent latent variable, as well as the results of the significance test to test the significance value of the effect or relationship between variables (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The results of Smart Pls analysis can be shown in the following image:

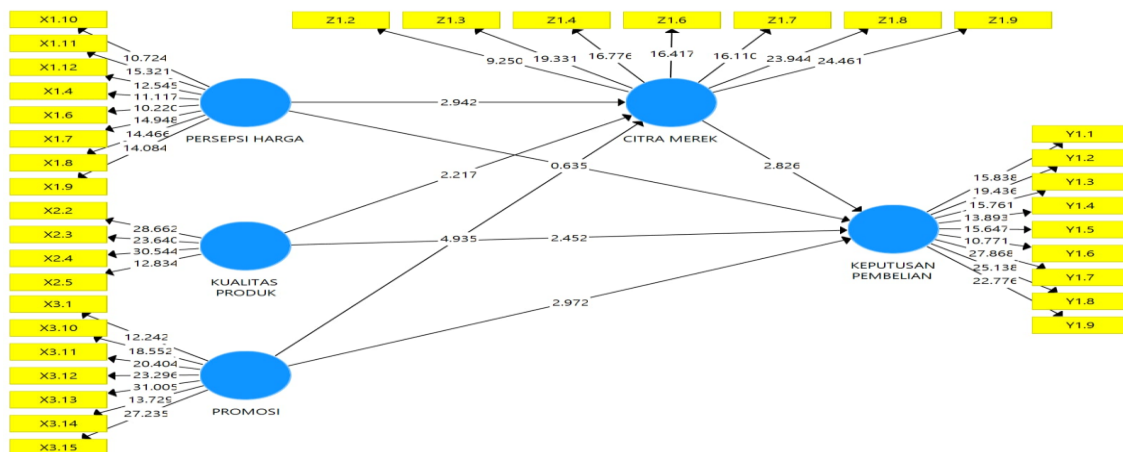


Figure 4.1 Inner Model Test Results

Source: Processed primary data (2022)

R-Square Test

Based on the presentation of the data in Table 4.1, it can be seen that R-Square value for the price perception variable, product quality and promotion is 0,506. The value obtained explains that the percentage of price perception, product quality and promotion can be explained by brand image of 50.6%, which means that this variable can indicate a moderate category value. Then,

the R-Square value obtained from the purchase decision variable is 0,570. This value explains that the perception of price, product quality and promotion can be explained by 57.0% of purchasing decisions, meaning that this variable can indicate a moderate category value. In addition to it, this model also shows that the R-Square of brand image of 0,506 is smaller than the R-Square of purchasing decisions of 0,570, meaning that the model is good and appropriate in this study.

Table 4.1 R-Square Value

Variable	R-Square
Brand Image	0,506
Purchasing Decision	0,570

Source: Processed primary data (2022)

Model Goodness Test (*Goodness of Fit*)

The *goodness of fit* assessment can be seen from the *Q-Square* value, this value has an identical meaning to the *coefficient determination (R-Square)* in regression analysis, where higher *Q-Square* value means that the model is considered to be better or more fit with the data. The results of the calculation of the *Q-Square* value are obtained from the approach used by the following formula (Hengky and Ghozali, 2012):

$$Q\text{-Square} = 1 - [(1 - R21) \times (1 - R22)]$$

$$= 1 - [(1 - 0,506) \times (1 - 0,570)] = 1 - (0,494 \times 0,430) = 0,787$$

Based on the results of the above calculations, obtained a Q-Square value of 0,787. This value shows the magnitude of the diversity of the research data described in the research model is 78.7%. While the remaining 21.3% is explained or influenced by other factors that are outside this research model. Thus, from these results, this research model can be declared to have a good and positive goodness of fit.

Direct Effect Test (*Path Coefficient Test*)

Based on the results of the direct effect test, the following hypotheses are tested:

Table 4.2 T-Statistics Value and P-Values, Direct Effect

Variable	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P-Values	Description
H1: Price Perception -> Brand Image	0,258	2,942	0,003	Accepted
H2: Product Quality -> Brand Image	0,201	2,217	0,027	Accepted
H3: Promotion -> Brand Image	0,388	4,935	0,000	Accepted

H4: Price Perception Purchasing Decision	->	0,060	0,635	0,526	Rejected
H5: Product Quality Purchasing Decision	->	0,236	2,452	0,015	Accepted
H6: Promotion Decision	-> Purchasing	0,320	2,972	0,003	Accepted
H7: Brand Image Decision	-> Purchasing	0,283	2,826	0,005	Accepted

Source: Processed primary data (2022)

Based on the *T-Statistics* and *P-Values* in Table 4.2 above, the following explanation can be given:

1. The effect of price perception on brand image: H1

Testing the price perception variable (X1) on the brand image (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,258 indicating a positive direction. Because *T statistics* value of 2,942 is still higher than 1,96 and *p-value* of 0,003 is smaller than 0,05, it can be concluded that Ho is rejected and H1 can be accepted, thus there is a positive and significant effect of price perception variable (X1) on brand image (Z).

2. The effect of product quality on brand image: H2

Testing the product quality variable (X2) on the brand image (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,201 indicating a positive direction. Because *T statistics* value of 2,217 is higher than 1,96 and *p-value* of 0,027 is smaller than 0,05, it can be concluded that Ho is rejected and H2 can be accepted, thus there is a positive and significant effect of product quality variable (X2) on brand image (Z).

3. The effect of promotion on brand image: H3

Testing promotion variable (X3) on the brand image (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,388 indicating a positive direction. Because *T statistics* value of 4,935 is higher than 1,96 and *p-value* of 0,000 is smaller than 0,05, it can be concluded that Ho is rejected and H3 can be accepted, thus there is a positive and significant effect of promotion variable (X3) on brand image (Z).

4. The effect of price perception on purchasing decisions: H4

Testing the price perception variable (X1) on purchasing decisions (Y) obtained a coefficient value of 0,060 indicating a positive direction. Because *T statistics* value of 0,635 is still smaller than 1,96 and *p-value* of 0,526 is higher than 0,05, it can be concluded that Ho is accepted and H4 is rejected, thus there is a positive but not significant effect of price perception variable (X1) on purchasing decisions (Y).

5. The effect of product quality on purchasing decisions: H5

Testing the product quality variable (X2) on purchasing decisions (Y) obtained a coefficient value of 0,236 indicating a positive direction. Because *T statistics* value of 2,452 is higher than 1,96 and *p-value* of 0,015 is smaller than 0,05, it can be concluded that Ho is rejected and H5 is accepted, thus there is a positive and significant effect of product quality variable (X2) on purchasing decisions (Y).

6. The effect of promotion on purchasing decisions: H6

Testing promotion variable (X3) on purchasing decisions (Y) obtained a coefficient value of 0,320 indicating a positive direction. Because *T statistics* value of 2,972 is higher than 1,96 and *p-value* of 0,003 is smaller than 0,05, it can be concluded that Ho is rejected and H6 is accepted, thus there is a positive and significant effect of promotion variable (X3) on purchasing decisions (Y).

7. The effect of brand image on purchasing decisions: H7

Testing brand image variable (Z) on purchasing decisions (Y) obtained a coefficient value of 0,283 indicating a positive direction. Because *T statistics* value of 2,826 is higher than 1,96 and *p-value* of 0,005 is smaller than 0,05, it can be concluded that Ho is rejected and H7 is accepted, thus there is a positive and significant effect of brand image variable (Z) on purchasing decisions (Y).

Indirect Effect Test

Indirect effect testing is done by looking at the results of the path tested, if all the paths traversed are significant then the indirect effect is also significant, and if there is a non-significant path then the indirect effect is said to be non-significant. The indirect effect path coefficients are presented in the following table:

Table 4.3 T-Statistics Value and P-Values, Indirect Effect

Variable	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Desc.
H8 : Price Perception -> Brand Image -> Purchasing Decision	0,073	2,231	0,026	Accepted
H9 : Product Quality -> Brand Image -> Purchasing Decision	0,057	1,535	0,125	Rejected
H10: Promotion -> Brand Image -> Purchasing Decision	0,110	2,412	0,016	Accepted

Source: Processed primary data (2022)

The results of processed data based on the presentation of table 4.3 *T-Statistics* and *P-Values* above, it can be seen that the hypothesis proposed in this study can be explained by the relationship between variables, as follows:

8. The effect of price perception on purchasing decisions through brand image mediation: H8
 Testing price perception variable (X1) on purchasing decisions (Y) through brand image mediation (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,073 indicating a positive direction. Because *T statistics* value of 2,231 is higher than 1,96 and *p-value* of 0,026 is smaller than 0,05, it can be concluded that Ho is rejected and H8 is accepted, thus there is a positive and significant effect of price perception variable (X1) on purchasing decisions (Y) through brand image mediation (Z).

Based on these results it is stated that the brand image variable (Z) can partially mediate the price perception variable (X1) on purchasing decisions (Y).

9. The effect of product quality on purchasing decisions through brand image mediation: H9 Testing product quality variable (X2) on purchasing decisions (Y) through brand image mediation (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,057 indicating a positive direction. Because *T statistics* value of 1,535 is smaller than 1,96 and *p-value* of 0,125 is higher than 0,05, it can be concluded that Ho is accepted and H9 is rejected, thus there is a positive but not significant effect of product quality variable (X2) on purchasing decisions (Y) through brand image mediation (Z). Based on these results it is stated that the brand image variable (Z) cannot partially mediate the product quality variable (X2) on purchasing decisions (Y).

10. The effect of promotion on purchasing decisions through brand image mediation: H10 Testing promotion variable (X3) on purchasing decisions (Y) through brand image mediation (Z) obtained a coefficient value of 0,110 indicating a positive direction. Because *T statistics* value of 2,412 is higher than 1,96 and *p-value* of 0,016 is smaller than 0,05, it can be concluded that Ho is rejected and H10 is accepted, thus there is a positive and significant effect of the promotion variable (X3) on purchasing decisions (Y) through brand image mediation (Z). Based on these results it is stated that the brand image variable (Z) can partially mediate the promotion variable (X3) on purchasing decisions (Y).

Based on the results of research conducted at the Riza Food company for frozen food products, there are several things that can be used as further policy improvements as follows:

- a) This study shows that price perception has a positive but not significant effect on purchasing decisions. In addition, it turns out that most consumers who buy frozen food products at outlets are not affected by price perceptions as long as the price is still reasonable and still affordable in the mind of consumers. Consumers are more interested in considering aspects of product quality, promotion aspects carried out and the influence of brand image of the product.
- b) Price perception can have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions when mediated by brand image. This means that brand image plays a very important role in sales because consumers pay more attention to brand image than price perception, because as long as the product is good and has a good reputation, consumers will still buy, as long as the product is still needed.
- c) It turns out that most consumers who buy frozen food products pay more attention to aspects of quality assurance on their products and promotions. Furthermore, the product must be good, safe, provide benefits, must be able to meet needs, can be consumed at any time, have the power to be stored for a long time in a frozen state and are even very easy to prepare and relatively fast to prepare.
- d) It turns out that promotion can have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions directly without having to go through brand image mediation, this can be shown from the results of the original sample value of 0,320 which is greater than the value of 0,110.
- e) As an effort of going forward, outlets need to take steps to develop sales by selling new product variants and new brands. In addition, attractive packaging and new size adjustments of certain product are determining factors in sales.

f) Because product quality has a positive but not significant effect on purchasing decisions, even though it is mediated by brand image. However, the effect is stronger if product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions directly without being mediated by brand image. Because most consumers who buy frozen food products look more at the quality aspect of the product itself.

g) This study shows that brand image is only effective if it is applied as a mediating influence on price perception on purchasing decisions. In addition, brand image is also effective if it is used as a mediating influence on the promotion of purchasing decisions.

5. Conclusion

According to the results of testing, ten hypotheses on frozen food products that have been carried out in this study, a conclusion can be drawn, as follows:

- 1) Price perception has a positive and significant effect on brand image.
- 2) Product quality has a positive and significant effect on brand image.
- 3) Promotion has a positive and significant effect on brand image.
- 4) Price perception has a positive and insignificant effect on purchasing decisions.
- 5) Product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.
- 6) Promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.
- 7) Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.
- 8) Price perception has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions by being mediated by brand image variables.
- 9) Product quality has a positive and insignificant effect on purchasing decisions by being mediated by brand image variables.
- 10) Promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions by being mediated by brand image variables.

Based on the results of research, discussion and conclusions obtained on frozen food products, the recommendations that can be given are as follows:

- 1) In further research, it is expected that the determination of research variables will pay more attention to the factors that form the basis routine of consumer buying patterns as control variables for consumer behavior research on products that are low involvement (low involvement).
- 2) The sample taken in the consumer purchasing model point (1) is expected to be more heterogeneous in the form of a sample from the population group with the premium segment so that a clear picture of consumer expectations can be obtained for the product and it can contribute to the improvement of marketing strategy.
- 3) Can be used as a reference for further researchers who will examine the same concept, namely the influence of price perception, product quality and promotion on purchasing decisions with brand image as a mediating variable.
- 4) For the next researchers, it is recommended to use samples that have almost the same characteristics so that it is easier to get results and conclusions.

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