

The Effects of Brand Image, Product Quality, and Price on Purchase Decisions: The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention for Softex Sanitary Pads

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Abstract

Competition in Indonesia's sanitary pad industry is becoming increasingly intense, requiring companies to understand the factors influencing consumers' purchase decisions. This study aims to analyze the effects of brand image, product quality, and price on purchase decisions through purchase intention as a mediating variable for Softex sanitary pads. The study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. The study population consisted of female students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon, who had previously used or purchased Softex sanitary pads. Purposive sampling was used to select 200 respondents. Primary data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using structural equation modeling–partial least squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4 software. The results show that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, whereas product quality and price have no significant effect on purchase intention. Furthermore, purchase intention has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. Mediation analysis shows that purchase intention mediates the effect of brand image on purchase decisions, but does not mediate the effects of product quality or price on purchase decisions. These findings emphasize that strengthening brand image is a more effective strategy for increasing purchase intention and purchase decisions for Softex sanitary pads than relying solely on product quality or pricing strategies.

Keywords

Brand Image; Product Quality; Price; Purchase Intention; Purchase Decision.



I. Introduction

Competition in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry is becoming increasingly intense as consumers demand greater product quality, innovation, and value from brands. One FMCG category with a high level of consumption is feminine care products, particularly sanitary pads. These products are essential for women of reproductive age because they are associated with reproductive health, hygiene, and comfort during menstruation. As women become more aware of reproductive health, sanitary pad manufacturers are required not only to provide quality products but also to build a strong brand image and set prices that align with consumers' perceptions of value (Kotler et al., 2022; Tiwari et al., 2024; Vas & Munjal, 2025). These conditions make consumers' purchase decisions increasingly complex, as they are influenced by a combination of functional and psychological factors.

Indonesia is a promising market for the feminine hygiene industry, supported by a large female population, particularly among women of reproductive age. Market growth has intensified competition among sanitary pad manufacturers, including Charm, Laurier, Softex, Hers Protex, and Kotex, which continue to innovate products, develop their brands, and implement marketing strategies to gain a competitive advantage. Nevertheless, a brand's success is determined not only by its ability to offer quality products but also by its ability to

build positive perceptions in consumers' minds that influence purchase intention and purchase decisions (Amin & Fitriyah, 2023; Andre & Widoatmodjo, 2024; Asniwati & Latief, 2024). This phenomenon indicates that companies need to understand the factors influencing consumer behavior to maintain their competitiveness amid increasingly intense competition.

Softex is one of the sanitary pad brands that has operated in Indonesia for many years. Although recognized as a pioneer of sanitary pads in Indonesia, Softex remains behind Charm and Laurier in market competition. Top Brand Index data show that Softex's index increased from 12.10% in 2021 to 15.70% in 2025, but it still ranked third behind its two main competitors. This situation indicates that increased brand recognition has not been fully accompanied by stronger consumer preferences and purchase decisions, suggesting continuing challenges in strengthening Softex's competitive position in the market.

These findings are reinforced by a preliminary survey of female students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon. The survey showed that only 36.8% of respondents intended to purchase Softex in the near future, while 63.2% reported having no such intention. Although most respondents still considered Softex as an alternative choice, their limited interest in purchasing indicates that purchase intention toward the brand remains suboptimal. This situation suggests that other factors influence the formation of purchase intention before consumers decide to make a purchase.

From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), a purchase decision is a behavior preceded by the formation of purchase intention (Ajzen, 1991). The stronger consumers' purchase intention, the more likely they are to make an actual purchase. Purchase intention develops after consumers evaluate various types of product information, such as brand image, product quality, and price. Therefore, purchase intention is often positioned as a psychological mechanism that explains how marketing factors influence purchase decisions (Ajzen, 1991; Kotler et al., 2022).

Among these marketing factors, brand image is a strategic corporate asset for creating competitive advantage. Brand image represents the perceptions, beliefs, and associations that consumers hold about a brand. A brand with a positive image is more likely to gain consumer trust, increase loyalty, and encourage purchase intention. Conversely, a weak brand image may reduce consumer confidence even when the product offered is of good quality (Mayangsari et al., 2024; Sarah et al., 2024; Setiawaty, 2017). In the context of sanitary pads, brand image is also associated with perceptions of safety, comfort, and concern for women's reproductive health.

In addition to brand image, product quality is an important determinant of consumer behavior. Product quality reflects a product's ability to meet consumers' needs and expectations through its characteristics, features, durability, and comfort in use. For sanitary pads, product quality is assessed not only by absorbency but also by comfort, material safety, and the ability to provide protection during use. Previous studies show that good product quality can increase consumer satisfaction, purchase intention, and purchase decisions (Wahyudin et al., 2023; Lukitaningsih et al., 2024; Martaputri et al., 2025).

Price is another factor influencing consumer behavior. In a competitive market, price is often a primary consideration because it relates to consumers' ability to obtain the expected benefits of a product. According to the concept of perceived value, consumers compare the benefits they receive with the sacrifices they make. A price perceived as appropriate for the

product's quality increases perceived value, thereby encouraging purchase intention and purchase decisions. Conversely, a price considered disproportionate to the benefits obtained may reduce consumer interest in a product (Zeithaml, 1988; Orlando & Harjati, 2022; Kartika & Aprianingsih, 2025).

Although the relationships among brand image, product quality, price, purchase intention, and purchase decisions have been widely studied, previous research has produced mixed findings. Lahay and Wolok (2020) found that brand image positively influences purchase intention for Softex sanitary pads. Rosiana and Purwanto (2022) reported that product quality positively influences purchase intention for Laurier sanitary pads. However, market conditions show that Softex has not become the market leader despite having a relatively recognizable brand image, competitive product quality, and relatively affordable prices. Moreover, research specifically examining the mediating role of purchase intention in the relationships among brand image, product quality, price, and purchase decisions for sanitary pads, particularly among female students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon, remains very limited.

Based on these empirical conditions and research gaps, this study offers novelty by integrating brand image, product quality, and price as determinants of purchase decisions through purchase intention as a mediating variable for Softex sanitary pads. Unlike previous studies, which generally examined only direct effects between variables, this study positions purchase intention as a mechanism explaining how purchase decisions are formed. The findings are expected to contribute to the consumer behavior literature and provide companies with insights for developing marketing strategies that strengthen Softex's position amid competition in the feminine hygiene industry.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), explains that individual behavior begins with the formation of intention, which is influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In marketing, this theory explains that purchase decisions are a consequence of purchase intention formed after consumers evaluate information about a product or brand. The stronger consumers' purchase intention, the more likely they are to make an actual purchase (Ajzen, 1991; Kotler et al., 2022).

For everyday necessities such as sanitary pads, purchase decisions are influenced not only by functional needs but also by consumers' perceptions of brand image, product quality, and price. These three factors shape consumers' evaluations before purchase intention emerges. Therefore, purchase intention is positioned as a mediating variable explaining the relationship between a company's marketing strategies and consumers' purchase decisions (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019; Kotler et al., 2022).

2.2 Brand Image

Brand image is a set of perceptions, beliefs, and associations formed in consumers' minds about a brand. According to Keller (2013), brand image is built through experiences, marketing communications, and information received by consumers, shaping perceptions of a product's quality, advantages, and characteristics. Brands with a positive image are more likely to gain consumer trust and create strong emotional relationships than brands with a weak image (Keller, 2013; Kotler et al., 2022).

In competition among fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), brand image is an intangible asset that can enhance a company's competitive advantage. Consumers tend to

choose familiar brands with a good reputation because they are perceived to offer greater assurance of quality and safety. For sanitary pads, brand image is also related to perceptions of comfort, material safety, and concern for women's reproductive health (Mayangsari et al., 2024; Sarah et al., 2024).

Various studies show that brand image positively influences both purchase intention and purchase decisions. Lahay and Wolok (2020) found that brand image significantly influences purchase intention for sanitary pads. Amin and Fitriyah (2023) and Andre and Widodoatmodjo (2024) also showed that a strong brand image can increase consumer trust, thereby encouraging purchase decisions.

2.3 Product Quality

Product quality is a product's ability to meet consumers' needs and expectations through its characteristics, performance, reliability, durability, and features. Kotler et al. (2022) define product quality as a product's ability to perform its functions and provide benefits consistent with consumer expectations. Therefore, product quality is one of the main indicators consumers use to evaluate a product before purchasing it.

For sanitary pads, product quality involves not only absorbency but also comfort in use, material safety, surface softness, resistance to leakage, and protection of reproductive health. The higher the product quality perceived by consumers, the more likely they are to intend to purchase and reuse the product (Garvin, 1987; Kotler et al., 2022).

Previous research shows that product quality positively influences purchase intention and purchase decisions. Wahyudin et al. (2023) state that product quality increases consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Lukitaningsih et al. (2024) also show that product quality is a key determinant of increased purchase intention for FMCG products.

2.4 Price

Price is the value consumers must sacrifice to obtain the benefits of a product or service. According to Kotler et al. (2022), price functions not only as a means of economic exchange but also as an indicator of the value received by consumers. In an increasingly competitive environment, price is a major factor considered before purchase because it relates to consumers' financial capacity and perceptions of product quality.

According to the concept of perceived value, consumers compare the benefits they receive with the costs they must incur. When price is perceived as consistent with product quality and benefits, perceived value increases, encouraging purchase intention and purchase decisions. Conversely, a price considered too high relative to the benefits obtained may reduce consumer interest in a product (Zeithaml, 1988; Kotler et al., 2022).

Orlando and Harjati (2022) show that competitive prices positively influence purchase decisions. This finding is reinforced by Kartika and Aprianingsih (2025), who state that price perceptions aligned with product quality can increase purchase intention for everyday necessities.

2.5 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is consumers' psychological tendency to buy a product after evaluating the available information. According to Ajzen (1991), intention is the factor most closely associated with actual behavior; thus, the stronger an individual's purchase intention, the more likely that individual is to make a purchase.

Purchase intention is influenced by marketing factors such as brand image, product quality, price, promotion, and consumer experience. For sanitary pads, purchase intention develops when consumers believe that a product can meet their needs in terms of both quality and the value offered. Amin and Fitriyah (2023) show that brand image positively influences purchase intention, while Wahyudin et al. (2023) find that product quality is an important factor in increasing consumers' purchase intention.

In this study, purchase intention is positioned as a mediating variable explaining how brand image, product quality, and price influence purchase decisions.

2.6 Purchase Decision

A purchase decision is the final stage of consumers' decision-making process, following need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and the formation of purchase intention, and culminating in the purchase action. According to Kotler et al. (2022), purchase decisions result from consumers' evaluations of available alternatives based on expected benefits.

For sanitary pads, purchase decisions are influenced by both rational and emotional factors. Consumers consider not only product quality and price but also brand image, feelings of safety, comfort, and previous usage experience. Therefore, purchase decisions result from the interaction of marketing factors evaluated by consumers before an actual purchase (Kotler et al., 2022; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019).

Various studies show that brand image, product quality, price, and purchase intention are closely related to purchase decisions. Consumers who hold positive perceptions of a brand, supported by good product quality and appropriate prices, tend to have strong purchase intention, increasing the likelihood of a purchase decision (Andre & Widodoatmodjo, 2024; Mayangsari et al., 2024).

III. Research Methods

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to test the causal relationships of brand image, product quality, and price with purchase decisions through purchase intention as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was selected because it can objectively explain relationships between variables through hypothesis testing using statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The population comprises all female students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon, who have previously used or purchased Softex sanitary pads. Non-probability sampling was employed using purposive sampling, in which respondents were selected according to criteria established by the researchers to ensure alignment with the study objectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). The sample size was determined using the approach of Hair et al. (2022), yielding 200 respondents, which was considered sufficient to meet the minimum requirements for structural equation modeling–partial least squares (SEM-PLS) analysis.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed directly to respondents. The research instrument was developed from indicators used in previous studies and measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (Likert, 1932). All research variables were operationalized using several indicators adapted from the marketing and consumer behavior literature to comprehensively measure respondents' perceptions.

The independent variables are brand image (X_1), product quality (X_2), and price (X_3). The dependent variable is purchase decision (Y), while purchase intention (Z) serves as the mediating variable. Each variable was operationalized based on the marketing theories proposed by Kotler et al. (2022), Keller (2013), and Ajzen (1991).

Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling–partial least squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4 software. SEM-PLS was selected because it can test both direct and indirect relationships between variables while simultaneously evaluating the measurement and structural models. In addition, SEM-PLS offers advantages in analyzing research models

involving mediating variables and does not impose strict requirements for normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2022).

The analysis began with an evaluation of the outer model to test the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Convergent validity was assessed using outer loadings (>0.70) and average variance extracted (AVE) (>0.50), while construct reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, with a minimum value of 0.70. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loadings to ensure that each construct had adequate discriminatory ability (Hair et al., 2022).

The inner model was then evaluated using R-square (R^2) to determine the independent variables' ability to explain the endogenous variables, effect size (f^2) to measure each exogenous variable's contribution, and hypothesis testing using bootstrapping. Research hypotheses were accepted when the t-statistic exceeded 1.96 and the p-value was below 0.05, indicating a significant effect at a 95% confidence level (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 1. Operational Definitions of Variables

Variable	Indicators	References
Brand Image	Strength of brand associations, brand favorability, brand uniqueness	Keller (2013); Kotler et al. (2022)
Product Quality	Performance, durability, features, reliability, comfort	Garvin (1987); Kotler et al. (2022)
Price	Price affordability, price–quality alignment, price competitiveness	Kotler et al. (2022); Zeithaml (1988)
Purchase Intention	Transactional, preferential, referral, and exploratory interest	Ajzen (1991); Ferdinand (2014)
Purchase Decision	Product choice, brand choice, purchase timing, purchase quantity	Kotler et al. (2022)

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was evaluated using outer loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2022), indicators are considered valid when their outer loadings exceed 0.70 and AVE exceeds 0.50.

Table 2. Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable	Outer Loading	AVE	Status
Brand Image	0.798–0.862	0.698	Valid
Product Quality	0.779–0.873	0.656	Valid
Price	0.779–0.868	0.677	Valid
Purchase Intention	0.776–0.855	0.677	Valid
Purchase Decision	0.774–0.868	0.663	Valid

All indicators have outer loadings above 0.70, and all constructs have AVE values above 0.50; therefore, all constructs meet the requirements for convergent validity.

4.2 Discriminant Validity

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Test Results (Fornell–Larcker)

Construct	CM	H	KM	KP	QP
Brand Image	0.835				
Price	0.734	0.823			
Purchase Intention	0.766	0.650	0.823		
Purchase Decision	0.831	0.742	0.779	0.815	
Product Quality	0.813	0.740	0.695	0.755	0.810

The square root of AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with the other constructs; therefore, all variables meet the requirements for discriminant validity.

4.3 Construct Reliability

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Brand Image	0.856	0.902
Price	0.841	0.893
Purchase Intention	0.842	0.893
Purchase Decision	0.830	0.887
Product Quality	0.825	0.884

All constructs have Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values above 0.70; therefore, the research instrument is considered reliable.

4.4 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

a. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 5. R-Square Values

Variable	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Purchase Intention	0.610	0.604
Purchase Decision	0.606	0.604

The R^2 value of 0.610 indicates that brand image, product quality, and price explain 61.0% of the variation in purchase intention. Furthermore, purchase intention explains 60.6% of the variation in purchase decisions.

b. Effect Size (f^2)

Table 6. Effect Size Values

Relationship	f^2	Interpretation
Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.223	Medium
Price → Purchase Intention	0.021	Small
Product Quality → Purchase Intention	0.017	Small
Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	1.539	Very Large

The strongest effect in the model is that of purchase intention on purchase decisions, whereas product quality and price make relatively small contributions.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

a. Direct Effects

Table 7. Direct Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t	p	Decision
H1	Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.538	6.401	0.000	Accepted
H2	Price → Purchase Intention	0.143	1.907	0.057	Rejected
H3	Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.779	20.041	0.000	Accepted
H4	Product Quality → Purchase Intention	0.152	1.727	0.084	Rejected

b. Indirect Effects

Table 8. Mediation Effect Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t	p	Decision
H5	Brand Image → Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.419	6.293	0.000	Accepted
H6	Price → Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.111	1.903	0.057	Rejected
H7	Product Quality → Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.118	1.673	0.094	Rejected

4.6 Discussion

a. The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Intention

The test results show that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, with a path coefficient of 0.538, a t-statistic of 6.401, and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). This finding indicates that the better Softex's brand image in consumers' eyes, the stronger their intention to purchase the product. A positive brand image builds perceptions of product quality, safety, and comfort, thereby increasing consumers' confidence in making purchase decisions.

This finding is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991), which explains that behavioral intention is formed through a positive evaluation of an object. In this study, brand image serves as a stimulus shaping consumers' positive evaluations, thereby increasing purchase intention. Furthermore, according to Keller (2013), brand image is a set of associations embedded in consumers' minds that can create competitive advantage and increase customer loyalty.

These results are also consistent with Amin and Fitriyah (2023), Andre and Widodoatmodjo (2024), and Mayangsari et al. (2024), who found that brand image positively influences purchase intention. For sanitary pads, a strong brand image is associated with perceptions of material safety, absorbency, and comfort during use. Therefore, strengthening brand image through effective marketing communications and increased brand awareness is an important strategy for increasing consumers' purchase intention.

b. The Effect of Price on Purchase Intention

The results show that price has no significant effect on purchase intention, with a path coefficient of 0.143, a t-statistic of 1.907, and a p-value of 0.057 (>0.05). This finding indicates that price is not the main factor respondents consider when forming an intention to purchase Softex products.

Sanitary pads are a basic necessity, so consumers prioritize comfort, safety, and trust in the brand over price differences between products. Price differences among sanitary pad brands in Indonesia are also relatively small and therefore insufficient to strongly influence purchase intention. This situation indicates that consumers focus more on the benefits received than on the financial sacrifices incurred.

These results differ from those of Orlando and Harjati (2022) and Kartika and Aprianingsih (2025), who found that price positively influences purchase intention. This difference is presumed to arise from the characteristics of the respondents, who were predominantly female university students and placed greater emphasis on product comfort and safety than on price. The finding shows that price reductions may not increase purchase intention unless accompanied by improvements in consumers' perceived value.

c. The Effect of Product Quality on Purchase Intention

The test results show that product quality has no significant effect on purchase intention, with a path coefficient of 0.152, a t-statistic of 1.727, and a p-value of 0.084 (>0.05). This indicates that product quality is not a dominant factor in shaping purchase intention for Softex products.

This finding indicates that most respondents consider the quality of sanitary pads across brands to be relatively similar. Consequently, product quality is no longer a differentiating factor capable of increasing purchase intention. Consumers pay more attention to emotional factors, such as brand reputation and previous usage experiences.

These results are inconsistent with Wahyudin et al. (2023) and Lukitaningsih et al. (2024), who state that product quality positively influences purchase intention. The difference may be influenced by the characteristics of the research object, as sanitary pads have relatively uniform quality standards, leading consumers to rely more on brand perceptions than on technical evaluations of product quality.

d. The Effect of Purchase Intention on Purchase Decisions

The analysis shows that purchase intention has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, with a path coefficient of 0.779, a t-statistic of 20.041, and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). The high coefficient indicates that purchase intention is the main factor determining purchase decisions for Softex products.

This finding supports the Theory of Planned Behavior, which states that intention is the strongest predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The stronger consumers' purchase intention, the more likely they are to make a purchase. In this study, purchase intention serves as a psychological stage bridging consumers' evaluations of the brand and their actual purchase actions.

These results are consistent with Kotler et al. (2022) and Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019), who explain that purchase decisions are a consequence of the formation of purchase intention. Therefore, companies need to increase purchase intention through marketing strategies that strengthen consumers' positive perceptions of the brand.

e. The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention in the Relationship Between Brand Image and Purchase Decisions

The indirect effect test shows that purchase intention mediates the effect of brand image on purchase decisions, with a path coefficient of 0.419, a t-statistic of 6.293, and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). This indicates that brand image not only has a direct influence on consumers

but also increases purchase decisions through the formation of purchase intention.

This finding reinforces the TPB concept that a marketing stimulus influences actual behavior through the formation of intention. A strong brand image increases consumers' confidence in a product, fostering purchase intention that ultimately encourages purchase decisions. Therefore, companies need to continue strengthening brand image through product innovation, consistent marketing communications, and improved customer experiences.

f. The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention in the Relationship Between Price and Purchase Decisions

The test results show that purchase intention does not mediate the relationship between price and purchase decisions, with a p-value of 0.057 (>0.05). This finding indicates that price does not generate purchase intention that subsequently encourages purchase decisions.

This situation indicates that respondents do not use price as their primary basis for choosing sanitary pads. Instead, consumers prioritize comfort in use and trust in the brand. Therefore, pricing strategies need to be balanced with improvements in product value to enhance consumers' perceptions of the benefits obtained.

g. The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention in the Relationship Between Product Quality and Purchase Decisions

The results show that purchase intention does not mediate the relationship between product quality and purchase decisions, with a path coefficient of 0.118, a t-statistic of 1.673, and a p-value of 0.094 (>0.05). This indicates that product quality has not increased purchase decisions through the formation of purchase intention.

This finding shows that good product quality does not necessarily generate purchase intention when consumers consider product quality across brands to be relatively equivalent. Under these conditions, psychological factors such as brand image play a more dominant role than product quality. Therefore, companies need not only to maintain product quality but also to strengthen brand differentiation through effective marketing communication strategies.

Overall, the results show that brand image is the main determinant influencing purchase intention and purchase decisions for Softex products, while price and product quality have not shown significant effects. These findings emphasize that in an increasingly competitive sanitary pad market, corporate success is determined not only by product quality or pricing strategies but also by the ability to build a strong, credible brand image that creates consumer trust. Thus, marketing strategies focused on strengthening brand image will be more effective in increasing purchase intention and purchase decisions than strategies focused solely on the functional aspects of the product.

V. Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the effects of brand image, product quality, and price on purchase decisions through purchase intention as a mediating variable for Softex sanitary pads. Analysis using structural equation modeling–partial least squares (SEM-PLS) with 200 respondents yielded several conclusions.

First, brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. This finding shows that consumers' positive perceptions of the Softex brand increase their interest and intention to purchase the product. Conversely, price and product quality have no significant effect on purchase intention, indicating that these two factors are not respondents' main considerations when forming purchase intention.

Second, purchase intention has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. This result confirms that the stronger consumers' purchase intention, the more likely they are

to purchase Softex products. Thus, purchase intention plays an important role in bridging consumers' evaluation processes and purchase decisions.

Third, mediation testing shows that purchase intention mediates only the relationship between brand image and purchase decisions. Conversely, purchase intention does not mediate the relationships of either price or product quality with purchase decisions. These findings indicate that brand image is the most dominant factor influencing consumers' purchase decisions, both directly and through increased purchase intention.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by showing that purchase intention is a psychological mechanism connecting consumers' perceptions of a brand with actual purchasing behavior. In practical terms, the findings imply that companies should focus their marketing strategies on strengthening brand image, increasing brand awareness, and developing marketing communications that build consumer trust and positive perceptions. Meanwhile, strategies focused solely on price adjustments or product quality improvements without stronger brand image are expected to be insufficiently effective in increasing purchase decisions for Softex sanitary pads.

This study has limitations because it involves only female students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon; therefore, the results cannot yet be generalized to a broader population. Future research is advised to expand the respondent pool, include different consumer groups from various regions, and incorporate other variables such as brand trust, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), customer satisfaction, perceived value, or brand loyalty to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing consumers' purchase decisions.

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