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**THE EFFECT OF BRAND IMAGE, PRODUCT QUALITY, AND HALAL LABELING ON JUNKFOOD PRODUCT PURCHASE DECISION  
(CASE STUDY OF FEB STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SURAKARTA)**

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**Abstract**

This study explores the influence of Brand Image, Product Quality, and Halal Labeling on the purchase decisions of junk food products among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. Using a quantitative approach, data were obtained from 150 purposively selected active consumers through structured questionnaires with a 5-point Likert scale. The analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that Brand Image and Product Quality significantly and positively influence purchase decisions, indicating that favorable brand perception and perceived quality drive student preferences for junk food. Conversely, Halal Labeling does not show a significant effect, despite the predominantly Muslim student population. This surprising result suggests a possible shift in consumer priorities or limited awareness of halal concepts, warranting further qualitative research. Methodologically, the use of PLS-SEM is appropriate; however, the sample's restriction to one faculty and purposive selection limits generalizability. The study provides valuable insights for marketers to improve product appeal while maintaining halal certification. Future research should broaden the sample scope, include additional variables such as price and promotion, and consider mixed-method approaches to deepen understanding of consumer behavior.

**Keywords:** Brand Image, Halal Labeling, Product Quality, Purchase Decision, Junk Food



## INTRODUCTION

Globalization and urbanization have significantly altered the dietary landscape in Indonesia, particularly among urban youth and the middle-to-upper economic class, who increasingly adopt fast food consumption habits. This shift is driven not only by changing cultural preferences but also by lifestyle demands in major cities, where convenience, speed, and affordability outweigh nutritional value. According to the Health Education Authority, individuals aged 15–34 comprise the largest demographic of fast food consumers. Within this context, university students aged 17–24 represent a critical group, as they are in the late adolescent stage where dietary choices directly impact growth and long-term health. However, despite awareness of health implications, fast food remains popular due to its accessibility, modern appeal, and strong brand presence.

The increasing reliance on junk food raises essential concerns about consumer decision-making, particularly among Muslim students who are expected to consider religious values, including halal consumption. While factors such as brand image and product quality strongly influence consumer preferences (Chalil et al., 2020; Kotler & Armstrong, 2016), halal labeling introduces a unique dimension to purchasing decisions in a Muslim-majority country like Indonesia. A product's brand image, shaped by consumer experiences and associations, often serves as a powerful marketing tool that builds trust and loyalty. Meanwhile, product quality, defined by how well a product meets consumer expectations, remains a primary driver in purchase behavior. However, these commercial attributes may either reinforce or conflict with religious considerations, particularly when halal status is ambiguous or missing from product packaging.

Despite extensive studies on consumer behavior and marketing strategies, limited research has specifically examined how halal awareness intersects with brand image and product quality in shaping junk food purchase decisions among young Muslim consumers. This is especially pertinent in modern urban environments where brand loyalty and taste preferences often override religious guidelines. Moreover, while Islamic-based universities such as Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS) aim to instill Islamic values into students' academic and social lives, the extent to which this translates into halal-conscious purchasing behavior remains unclear. Prior studies have highlighted a disconnect between



halal knowledge and actual consumption patterns (e.g., Shafie & Othman, 2006; Wilson & Liu, 2011), indicating that awareness does not always equate to compliance.

Therefore, this study addresses a critical gap by investigating how brand image, product quality, and halal labeling simultaneously influence purchase decisions of junk food products among students at FEB UMS. By integrating marketing and religious considerations into a unified framework, this research seeks to offer a more holistic understanding of consumer behavior in a context where commercial and spiritual values may intersect or conflict. The findings are expected to inform marketers, educators, and policy-makers in developing more ethically aligned and consumer-aware strategies.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Purchase Decision**

Purchase decision refers to a consumer's final choice after evaluating various alternatives, representing a pivotal stage in the decision-making process (Kotler & Keller, 2022). Schiffman and Kanuk (2021) emphasize that it involves a selection among competing alternatives, requiring problem-solving to identify the most suitable option. While classical models outline five stages—problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation their linearity often oversimplifies real-world behavior, particularly in habitual or low-involvement contexts such as junk food consumption among university students. In such cases, the decision process may be compressed, influenced more by peer recommendations, brand visibility, or convenience rather than thorough evaluation. Time constraints, limited budgets, and social environments significantly alter the rational nature of decision-making, suggesting a need to contextualize theoretical frameworks to actual student behavior.

### **The Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Decision**

Brand image serves as a reference for consumers when evaluating products, especially when they lack sufficient knowledge about them. A strong brand image can shape consumer perceptions and influence their purchasing behavior. According to Aditya Sasabila Akbar (2021), brand image has a positive impact on employee performance, which indirectly reflects



the broader importance of brand perception. Thus, it can be hypothesized that brand image positively influences purchase decisions (H1).

### **The Influence of Product Quality on Purchase Decision**

Product quality refers to a product's ability to perform its intended functions, including durability, reliability, precision, ease of use, and other valuable attributes. High-quality products are more likely to meet or exceed customer expectations, leading to greater satisfaction and stronger purchase intent. Jessica Natalia (2023) found that product quality has a positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction. Based on this, it is hypothesized that product quality positively influences purchase decisions (H2).

### **The Influence of Halal Labeling on Purchase Decision**

Halal labeling is a certification granted to products that meet Islamic dietary laws and is particularly important for Muslim consumers. It serves as a trust factor in the decision-making process. Research by M. Immamudin et al. reveals that halal labeling influences purchase decisions of packaged products among students by 20.5%, indicating a significant and positive impact. Therefore, it is hypothesized that halal labeling positively influences purchase decisions (H3).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative approach conducted at Campus 2 of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta from November to December 2023, targeting 150 purposively selected FEB students who are active junk food enthusiasts, drawn from an estimated population of 1,000 students. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale, supported by field observations and literature reviews to enhance validity and reliability. The study examined three independent variables—brand image (X1), product quality (X2), and halal labeling (X3)—and one dependent variable, purchase decision (Y). Brand image reflects consumer perceptions of the overall brand offering, product quality indicates the product's capacity to meet consumer expectations, and halal labeling refers to certified indicators on packaging. Purchase decision encompasses the consumer's selection process regarding product choice, brand, timing, and payment. Data analysis utilized the PLS-SEM method via SmartPLS 3, suitable for complex models involving multiple constructs.



The analysis involved evaluating the outer model (indicator reliability and validity) and inner model (structural relationships). Outer model validity was assessed through convergent validity (loadings >0.70), discriminant validity (AVE >0.50, cross-loadings >0.70), composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha (both >0.70), with multicollinearity checked via VIF (<5). The inner model was evaluated using path coefficients, Q-Square for predictive relevance, normed chi-square ( $X^2/df <3$ ) for model fit, and hypothesis testing, where a p-value <0.05 indicated statistical significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Respondent Data Description

The respondents in this study were selected using purposive sampling, targeting active students of the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS) who had experience consuming or purchasing junk food. The key selection criteria included awareness of product quality and consideration of halal labeling in their food purchase decisions. However, it is important to note that the study did not implement a formal screening process to verify the extent of respondents' involvement with junk food consumption. This limitation opens the possibility of selection bias, as the label “junk food enthusiasts” remains loosely defined.

The rationale for choosing FEB students lies in their basic academic exposure to consumer behavior concepts, making them analytically relevant for evaluating the influence of brand image, product quality, and halal labeling on purchasing decisions. Nevertheless, this segment's homogeneity, particularly in age and educational background, may limit the generalizability of findings:

**Table 1.**  
**Respondent Characteristics by Gender, Age, and Income**

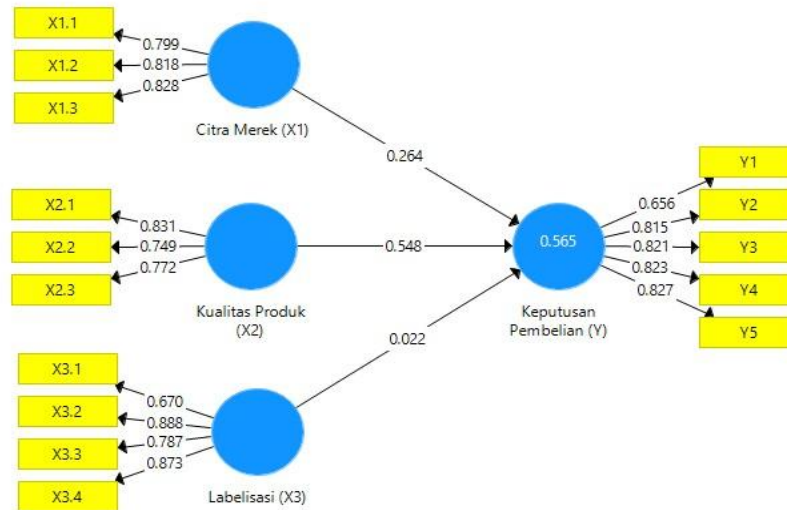
Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	56	37.0
	Female	94	63.0
Age	17 - 21 years	24	16.0
	22 - 23 years	112	75.0
	> 24 years	14	9.0
Income	< Rp. 500,000	4	2.0

	Rp. 500,000 - 1,000,000	11	7.0
	Rp. 1,000,000 - 2,000,000	30	20.0
	Rp. 2,000,000 - 3,000,000	86	57.0
	> Rp. 3,000,000	16	10.0

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The sample was predominantly female (63%), and a large proportion fell within the 22–23 age range (75%). This demographic concentration may shape specific behavioral patterns, especially since gender and age have been shown to influence food consumption habits and perceptions of branding and labeling. Most respondents reported moderate income levels (Rp2,000,000–Rp3,000,000), suggesting moderate purchasing power relevant to the affordability of fast-food or junk food products.

**PLS Program Scheme**



**Figure .1  
Outer Model**

**Outer Model Analysis  
Convergent Validity**

**Table 2.  
Outer Loading Value**

Variables	Indicator	Outer Loading
Brand Image(X1)	X1.1	0,799



	X1.2	0,818
	X1.3	0,828
Product Quality(X2)	X2.1	0,831
	X2.2	0,749
	X2.3	0,772
Labeling(X3)	X3.1	0,670
	X3.2	0,888
	X3.3	0,787
	X3.4	0,873
Buying decision(Y)	Y.1	0,656
	Y.2	0,815
	Y.3	0,821
	Y.4	0,823
	Y.5	0,827

Source: Processed primary data, 2025.

Referring to Table 2 above, each indicator variable in the study has an outer loading value greater than 0.70, indicating that all indicators are valid and suitable for use in this research. In addition to outer loading values, convergent validity is also assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where a minimum AVE value above 0.5 signifies good convergent validity. The AVE values for each research variable are as follows:

**Table 3.**  
**Average Variance Extracted Value**

Variables	AVE	Information
Brand Image(X1)	0,664	Valid
Product Quality(X2)	0,616	Valid
Labeling(X3)	0,655	Valid
Buying decision (Y)	0,626	Valid

Source: Processed primary data, 2025.

Based on Table 3, all variables in this study have AVE values greater than 0.5, indicating validity. Specifically, Brand Image (X1) has an AVE of 0.664, Product Quality (X2) 0.616, Labeling (X3) 0.655, and Purchase Decision (Y) 0.626. Therefore, all variables are considered valid.



**Discriminant Validity**

**Table 4.**  
**Fornell – Larcker**

	<b>Brand Image</b>	<b>Buying Decision</b>	<b>Product Quality</b>	<b>Labeling</b>
(X1)	0,815			
(Y)	0,622	0,791		
(X2)	0,643	0,723	0,785	
(X3)	0,276	0,244	0,273	0,809

Source: Processed primary data, 2025.

Based on Table 4, each indicator in this study shows the highest Fornell-Larcker value within its respective variable compared to other variables. This indicates that the indicators possess good discriminant validity in measuring their respective constructs.

**Reliability Test**

**Table 5.**  
**Composite Reliability**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>
Brand Image(X1)	0,856
Product Quality(X2)	0,827
Labeling(X3)	0,882
Buying decision(Y)	0,892

Source: Processed primary data, 2025.

Based on Table 5, the composite reliability values for all indicators in this study exceed 0.7, with Brand Image (X1) at 0.856, Product Quality (X2) at 0.827, Labeling (X3) at 0.882, and Buying Decision (Y) at 0.892. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables demonstrate high reliability.

**Cronbach’s Alpha**

**Table 6.**  
**Cronbach’s Alpha**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>
Brand Image(X1)	0,750
Product Quality(X2)	0,686
Labeling(X3)	0,841
Buying decision(Y)	0,849

Source: Processed primary data, 2025.



Based on Table 6, the Cronbach’s Alpha values for all variables in this study are greater than 0.7, except for Variable X2, which has a value of 0.686, indicating it is not reliable. Variables X1, X3, and Y have Cronbach’s Alpha values of 0.750, 0.841, and 0.849, respectively, confirming their reliability.

**Multicollinearity Test**

**Table 7.**  
**Collinearity Statistic (VIF)**

	Buying decision (Y)
Brand Image(X1)	1,736
Product Quality(X2)	1,733
Labeling(X3)	1,101

Source: Processed primary data, 2025.

Based on Table 7, the Collinearity Statistics show tolerance values above 0.1 and VIF values below 5 for all variables, indicating no multicollinearity issues in this study.

**Inner Model Analysis**

**Goodness of Fit Test**

**Table 8**  
**R-Square Values**

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Buying decision (Y)	0,565	0,557

Source: Processed primary data, 2025.

Based on Table 8, the R-Square values indicate a strong relationship, with Brand Image (X1), Product Quality (X2), and Labeling (X3) explaining 56.5% and 55.7% of the variance in Buying Decision (Y). Additionally, the Q-Square test assesses the model’s predictive relevance, where a Q2 value greater than 0 signifies good predictive relevance, while a value below 0 indicates poor predictive relevance. The following are the Q2 calculation results:

**Table 9.**  
**Q-Square Values**

	Q-square
Buying decision (Y)	0.330

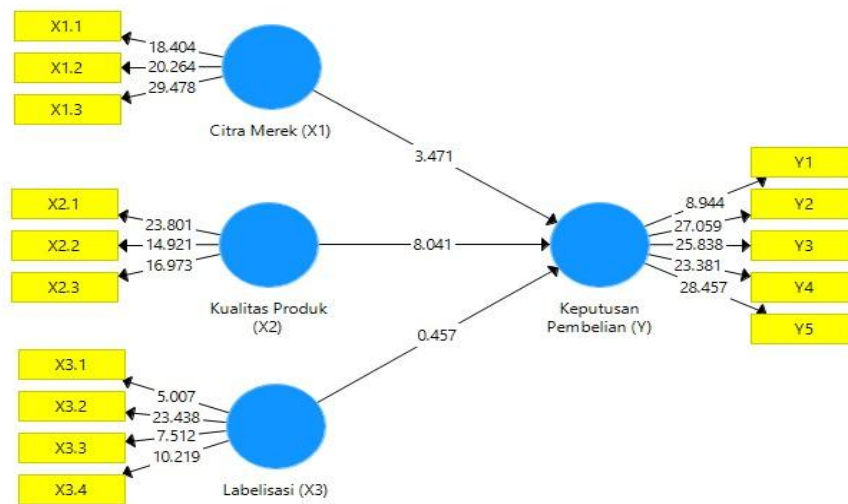
Based on Table 9, the Q<sup>2</sup> value for the Buying Decision (Y) variable is 0.330, which is greater than zero. This indicates that the research model has good predictive relevance.

**Normed Fit Index Model****Table 10.  
Fit Model**

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,104	0,104
d_ULS	1,306	1,306
d_G	0,494	0,494
Chi-Square	398,512	398,512
NFI	0,665	0,665

Source: Processed primary data, 2025.

Based on Table 10, it is known that the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) value or the average value of all residuals in this study is 0.104, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value is 0.665, so it can be said that all indicators in this test have good fit values.

**Figure .2  
Inner Model**



**Hypothesis Testing**

**Path Coefficient Test**

**Table 11**  
**Path Coefficient (Direct Effect)**

	Hipotesis		t- statistics	P Information Values	
	Original	Sample			
Brand Image (X1) ->Buying Decision (Y)	H1	0.264	3.549	0.000	Significant Positive
Product Quality(X2) -> Buying Decision (Y)	H2	0. 548	8.197	0.000	Significant Positive
Labeling(X3) ->Buying decision(Y)	H3	0.022	0.450	0.653	Not Significant

Source: Processed primary data, 2025.

Based on Table 11, the results show that Brand Image positively influences Buying Decision with a t-value of 3.549, effect size of 0.264, and p-value of 0.000, supporting Hypothesis 1. Similarly, Product Quality significantly impacts Buying Decision with a t-value of 8.197, effect size of 0.548, and p-value of 0.000, confirming Hypothesis 2. However, Labeling Halal does not have a significant effect on Buying Decision, as indicated by a t-value of 0.450, effect size of 0.022, and p-value of 0.653, leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 3.

**The Influence of Brand Image on Buying Decision**

The study shows that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on the buying decision of junk food. This is supported by Brilie & Adhitama (2023), who found that brand image influences the buying decision of sardine products in Banyuwangi, demonstrating that a strong brand reputation enhances perceived quality even in low-priced, highly competitive markets. Similarly, Purnama & Faiz (2025) revealed that male students prefer skincare products from well-established brands due to greater trust and perceived safety. Although in a different context, this behavior also applies to fast food, where students’ perceptions of certain brands influence their trust and purchase intention.

**The influence of product quality on buying decisions**

The findings indicate that Product Quality has the strongest influence on Buying Decision, with the highest coefficient among the variables. This aligns with Utami & Jati (2023), who found that Product Quality directly affects consumer perception in instant noodle purchases, particularly regarding taste, nutritional content, and convenience. Additionally, Sayyaf et al. (2023) highlight that millennial and Gen Z consumers are more selective about food quality, including texture, flavor, and presentation, suggesting that FEB UMS students critically evaluate junk food performance before making purchase decisions.

**The Influence of Halal Labeling on Buying Decisions**

This study found that Halal Labeling does not significantly influence Buying Decision, which is notable given that most respondents are Muslim. This aligns with Nurjannah et al. (2022), who argue that although Muslim consumers are aware of halal, labeling is not always a key factor in purchasing decisions when the product is already popular or widely trusted. Conversely, Sayyaf et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of halal education and promotion, especially for street food products. In the context of branded junk food, where trust is more associated with the brand than halal label verification, students may rely more on perceived quality and safety.

**CONCLUSION**

This study examined how Brand Image, Product Quality, and Halal Labeling influence the buying decisions of junk food among FEB UMS students. The findings indicate that both Brand Image and Product Quality exert significant positive influences, suggesting that strong brand perception and high-quality products increase the likelihood of purchase among students. In contrast, Halal Labeling was found to have no significant effect, a surprising result given the Muslim-majority context. This outcome may reflect a form of halal normalization where halal certification is so ubiquitous that it becomes a background assumption rather than a decisive factor. It could also suggest shifting generational attitudes, where younger Muslim consumers place greater trust in familiar brands or assume halal compliance by default, thereby prioritizing taste, quality, or brand identity over explicit halal cues.



While the study offers important insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. The sample was limited to students of FEB UMS, who may not represent broader Muslim consumer behavior. The purposive sampling of self-identified junk food consumers could have skewed responses toward taste and brand loyalty, diminishing the perceived salience of halal concerns. Furthermore, relying solely on quantitative methods may have overlooked deeper, culturally embedded motivations underlying food choices—something qualitative or mixed methods could better capture. The exclusion of relevant variables such as price sensitivity, advertising exposure, and peer influence may also limit the explanatory power of the model.

For practitioners, it is recommended that junk food companies enhance their brand appeal through youth-oriented marketing, continuously improve product quality through innovation and ingredient refinement, and maintain visible halal certification not merely as a legal necessity but as part of a culturally respectful branding strategy. Future research should consider integrating qualitative approaches to unpack consumer narratives, include a more demographically diverse sample, and explore additional behavioral and contextual variables to deepen understanding and broaden generalizability.

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