
**THE EFFECT OF THE RIIZE BRAND AMBASSADOR AND BRAND IMAGE
ON PURCHASE DECISION OF RICHEESE NABATI PRODUCTS
ON GEN Z IN SURABAYA**



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Abstract

This study aims to assess the effect of the RIIZE brand ambassador and brand image on the purchase decision of Richeese Nabati products among Gen Z in Surabaya City. The employed research methodology is quantitative. The sample method utilized was non-probability sampling with purposive sampling. The population in this research is consumers of Richeese Nabati products who are included in the Gen Z category in Surabaya City and with a sample of 108 respondents. Data gathering methods encompass basic data obtained through surveys on a Likert scale, as well as secondary data through literature studies from relevant sources. The data analysis method uses the SmartPLS application with the PLS based SEM method. The results showed that the RIIZE brand ambassador and brand image had a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision of Richeese Nabati products on Gen Z in Surabaya City.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, Purchase Decision

INTRODUCTION

The increase in the food and beverage industry in Indonesia continues to be matched by the increasing consumption power of the people, one of which is the consumption of snacks. Statista.com (2024) predicts an annual increase of 0.1 kilograms per capita in Indonesia's snack consumption volume, particularly pastries and biscuits. Survey results from Mondelez International (2021) show Gen Z as the generation with the highest average snack consumption of 3.6 snacks per day. This indicates that Gen Z needs to be the company's main target market to win the snack industry competition.

One company that is facing competition in the snack industry is PT Kaldu Sari Nabati Indonesia (KSNI). Based on the top brand index for the last 5 years, Richeese Nabati products have decreased in 2023 by 1.2% and continued until 2024 by 2.7% (Top Brand Award, 2024). This shows the need to strengthen the marketing strategy for Richeese Nabati products. Companies need to design the right strategy so that consumers can make a purchase decision on these products (Muslikhun et al., 2022).

One effective marketing strategy is through a brand ambassador. The use of K-Pop artist RIIZE as the brand ambassador of Richeese Nabati products is an effective way to reach Gen Z consumers, who are the generation with the highest interest in K-Pop (IDNtimes.com, 2022). But besides that, the success of a brand ambassador also needs to be followed by the brand image of the product itself. Richeese Nabati products have a strong brand image as a pioneer of cream cheese wafers in Indonesia, but still experienced a decrease in the 2024 brand index score, which indicates that the brand image of Richeese Nabati is experiencing challenges in maintaining positive perceptions in the eyes of consumers (Topbrandaward, 2024).

The RIIZE brand ambassador and the brand image of Richeese Nabati products are important because both play a strategic role in efforts to influence purchase decisions, especially for Gen Z consumers who are close to social media so that they are easily influenced by figures/celebrities and like to form their own brand perceptions (McKinsey & Company, 2020). In use, a brand ambassador will function as a liaison between brands and consumers (Fadila et al., 2021). Meanwhile, brand image helps encourage consumer confidence in the brand (Manajemen.umsida.ac.id, 2024). Therefore, it is important to understand how brand ambassadors and brand image can influence consumer purchase decisions so that companies can design effective and targeted marketing strategies.

Previous research by Shaleha & Kolewora (2023) shows that brand ambassador and brand image can affect purchase decisions. However, research by Pancaningsih et al. (2023) shows that a brand ambassador has no effect on purchase decision. Research by Aliryanti & Roosdhani (2024) shows that brand image also has no effect on purchase decision. There is a research gap from previous research in the form of differences in the results of the influence of brand ambassador and brand image, as well as a population gap, where this research focuses on Gen Z in Surabaya City. The purpose of this study is to determine, test, and analyze the effect of the RIIZE brand ambassador and brand image on the purchase decision of Richeese Nabati products on Gen Z in Surabaya City.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Brand Ambassador

Agustini et al. (2022) define a brand ambassador as an individual or group of individuals who work for a company or organization and are trusted to promote certain brand products or services. According to Rohim & Asnawi (2023), a brand ambassador is involved by companies as a marketing communication technique to promote goods marketed to consumers so that they can make the right decisions. Fajrin et al. (2019) identify brand ambassadors as public figures employed by companies to contact and interact with buyers, either directly or indirectly, to persuade them to buy products. Indicators of brand ambassador revealed by Lea Greenwood in Rahma & Setiawan (2022), namely: (1) transference; (2) congruence; (3) credibility; (4) attractiveness; and (5) power.

Brand Image

Wardani & Istiyanto (2022) identify brand image as a description of information that enters and is stored in consumers' memories, differences with other brands as competitive value, and consumer attitudes that show love for a brand based on its quality and advantages. Meanwhile, Mahiri (2020) identifies brand image as customer' ideas about the name, symbol/design, and impression established in their thoughts about a brand. Efendi et al. (2023) defines brand image as what crosses consumers' minds when recognizing a brand in a product category that is different from other products. Indicators of brand image revealed by Kotler & Keller in Rahma & Setiawan (2022), namely: (1) strength of brand association; (2) favorability of brand association; and (3) uniqueness of brand association.

Purchase Decision

Tua et al. (2022) identifies purchase decision as consumer activities when determining to obtain goods or services that are appropriately selected with consumer preferences according to their needs. Widiyawati & Siswahyudianto (2022) define purchase decision as decisions made by consumers and influenced by various external and internal elements, which result in the views of consumers to digest information and make conclusions in the form of reactions to the goods to be purchased. Indicators of purchase decision revealed by Kotler & Armstrong in Pradana et al. (2017), namely: (1) consistency in purchasing following the acquisition of product knowledge; (2) making a purchase due to brand preference; (3) acquiring products that align with personal desires and requirements; and (4) purchasing based on external suggestions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a quantitative methodology. The population of this research is consumers of the Richeese Nabati product who are included in the Gen Z category in Surabaya City. The sample method utilized was non-probability sampling with purposive sampling. The sample size for this research was 108 respondents that met the responder requirements, namely: (1) consumers of Richeese Nabati products; (2) domiciled in Surabaya City; (3) have purchased Richeese Nabati products at least once; (4) the age of the respondent is included in the Gen Z category with an age range of 18 to 27 years in 2025. The data collection techniques in this study include primary data obtained through a questionnaire with a Likert scale, in addition to secondary data gathered from literature studies from diverse sources pertinent to this inquiry. The data analysis method used the SmartPLS application

with PLS based on the SEM method which includes validity test, reliability test, and hypothesis testing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The outer loading table may be used to examine the validity of the indicators during the convergent validity test. According to the data in Table 1, all reflecting indicators in the brand ambassador (X1), brand image (X2), and purchase decision (Y) have a loading factor value of acceptable convergent validity or good validity.

Table 1.

Outer Loading (Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P Values)					
	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
X1.1 <- (X1)	0,829	0,823	0,042	19,661	0,000
X1.2 <- (X1)	0,860	0,858	0,029	29,332	0,000
X1.3 <- (X1)	0,759	0,753	0,061	12,392	0,000
X1.4 <- (X1)	0,788	0,782	0,052	15,100	0,000
X1.5 <- (X1)	0,819	0,822	0,040	20,410	0,000
X2.1 <- (X2)	0,743	0,736	0,064	11,634	0,000
X2.2 <- (X2)	0,809	0,802	0,059	13,626	0,000
X2.3 <- (X2)	0,848	0,850	0,025	33,259	0,000
Y.1 <- (Y)	0,694	0,691	0,059	11,836	0,000
Y.2 <- (Y)	0,729	0,728	0,066	11,060	0,000
Y.3 <- (Y)	0,829	0,822	0,037	22,451	0,000
Y.4 <- (Y)	0,685	0,687	0,068	10,067	0,000

Source: Researcher Data (2025)

In reflective indicators, validity is determined by the average variance extracted (AVE) value in each construct (variable). According to the results in Table 2, the AVE value of the brand ambassador (X1) is 0.659, brand image (X2) is 0.642, and purchase decision (Y) is 0.543. As a result, all variables in this study are considered to have good validity.

Table 2.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	
	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Ambassador (X1)	0,659
Brand Image (X2)	0,642
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,543

Source: Researcher Data (2025)

The discriminant validity test is conducted using a cross-loading table. According to the data in Table 3, all values of the loading factor per indicator of each variable, which is brand ambassador (X1), brand image (X2), and purchase decision (Y), have a loading factor value that is higher than the loading factor value of other variable indicators, implying that all indicators in this study have good validity.

Table 3.
Cross Loading

	Brand Ambassador (X1)	Brand Image (X2)	Purchase Decision (Y)
X1.1	0,829	0,505	0,425
X1.2	0,860	0,420	0,497
X1.3	0,759	0,481	0,429
X1.4	0,788	0,503	0,443
X1.5	0,819	0,546	0,537
X2.1	0,396	0,743	0,521
X2.2	0,482	0,809	0,613
X2.3	0,565	0,848	0,625
Y.1	0,404	0,572	0,694
Y.2	0,332	0,552	0,729
Y.3	0,483	0,555	0,829
Y.4	0,484	0,481	0,685

Source: Researcher Data (2025)

In the composite reliability test, build reliability is measured using the composite reliability value. According to the results in Table 4, the composite dependability value of the brand ambassador (X1) is 0.906, brand image (X2) is 0.843, and purchase decision (Y) is 0.825. With that, all factors in this study may be considered credible.

Table 4.
Composite Reliability

	Composite Reliability
Brand Ambassador (X1)	0,906
Brand Image (X2)	0,843
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,825

Source: Researcher Data (2025)

Latent variable correlations show that any variable or construct might have a relationship with other variables, both exogenous and endogenous. According to the data in Table 5, the highest correlation value 0.735 is found between the brand image (X2) and the purchase decision (Y), implying that the relationship between the brand image (X2) and the purchase decision (Y) is the strongest when compared to the relationship between the other variables.

Table 5.
Latent Variable Correlations

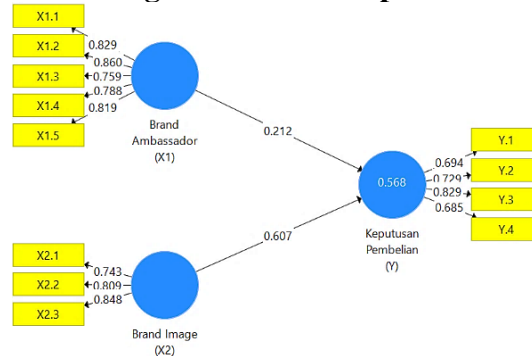
	(X1)	(X2)	(Y)
Brand Ambassador (X1)	1,000		
Brand Image (X2)	0,605	1,000	
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,579	0,735	1,000

Source: Researcher Data (2025)

The PLS output path diagram in Figure 1 shows the value of each indicator's factor loading, which lies between the arrow lines connecting variables to related indicators. Furthermore, the route coefficients are found along the arrows of the exogenous variables that correspond to the endogenous variables. The R-square value may be found in the circle representing the endogenous variable, which is the purchase decision (Y).

Figure 1.

Path Diagram of PLS Output Results



The R-square value in the link between latent variables indicates how well exogenous (independent) factors explain the research model's endogenous (dependent) variables. Based on the data in Table 6, the R-squared value is 0.568. This suggests that if this model can explain 56.8% of the phenomena of purchase decision (Y) after being impacted by the independent variables, like brand ambassador (X1) and brand image (X2), the remaining 43.2% is explained by factors not included in this study. Furthermore, this model is classified as moderate because its value is greater than 0.50 (50%).

Table 6.
R-square

	R-square	R-square Adjusted
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,568	0,560

Source: Researcher Data (2025)

The bootstrap technique is used to test hypotheses. Test results are evaluated using the coefficient value and T-statistic from the inner model. A connection is deemed to have a substantial effect when the T-statistic is more than 1.96 and the P-value is less than 0.05.

Table 7.

Path Coefficients (Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P Values)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
(X1) -> (Y)	0,212	0,221	0,078	2,707	0,004
(X2) -> (Y)	0,607	0,606	0,091	6,676	0,000

Source: Researcher Data (2025)

Based on the data in Table 7, conclusions can be obtained for the hypothesis, namely: H1: RIIZE brand ambassador has a positive influence on the purchase decision of Nabati Richeese products on Gen Z in Surabaya City can be accepted, with path coefficients of 0.212, T-statistic of 2.707 (>1.96), and P-values of 0.004 (<0.05), so it's significant (positive).

H2: Brand image has a positive influence on the purchase decision of Richeese Nabati products on Gen Z in Surabaya City can be accepted, with path coefficients of 0.607, T-statistic of 6.676 (>1.96), and P-values of 0.000 (<0.05), so it's significant (positive).

The Effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision

Based on the data analysis, the results reveal that a brand ambassador has an impact on promoting purchase decisions. The analysis results reveal that the more effective and relevant the brand ambassador employed by the organization, the greater the effects on purchase decisions. The results of the analysis in the brand ambassador variable show that the indicator with the strongest influence to encourage purchase decision is congruence, implying that RIIZE's harmony or compatibility as a brand ambassador is capable of properly representing the Richeese Nabati product it is promoting.

The study's conclusions are consistent with prior studies conducted by Haque et al. (2024) and Surbakti et al. (2025) which reveal that brand ambassadors influence purchase decisions. With that, choosing a brand ambassador who is strong and relevant to the brand is an effective marketing strategy to motivate consumers to decide to make purchases of marketed products or goods.

The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision

Based on the findings of the data test, it appears that brand image has an impact on purchase decisions. The analysis results reveal that the stronger and better a brand's image, the greater the effect on purchase decision. The results of the analysis in the brand image variable show that the indicator with the strongest influence to encourage purchase decision is the uniqueness of brand association. This means that the unique features of Richeese Nabati products are very important because they can make the brand more competitive than other competitors and can be a factor that encourages consumers to continue to choose these products.

The study's conclusions are consistent with prior studies conducted by Shofia & Soebiantoro (2023) and Maharani & Achmad (2024) which revealed that brand image influences purchase decision. With that, having a strong and good brand image for a brand is a major factor in marketing to encourage consumers' purchase decisions for products.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that: (1) RIIZE brand ambassadors contribute to driving purchase decisions of Richeese Nabati products on Gen Z in Surabaya City; and (2) Brand image contributes to driving purchase decisions of Richeese Nabati products on Gen Z in Surabaya City. As for suggestions for future research to examine other factors that can influence purchasing decisions of Richeese Nabati products, as well as consider broader locations and research methods to obtain more accurate results.

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