



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Brand Image and Brand Awareness on the Decision to Purchase an iPhone in Cirebon

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of brand image and brand awareness on the decision to purchase an iPhone in the city of Cirebon. The issue addressed is the shift in consumer behavior, where consumers no longer consider price alone but also psychological factors such as brand image and brand awareness when making purchasing decisions. The objective of this study is to determine the influence of brand image and brand awareness, both individually and collectively, on purchasing decisions. The method used is a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design, employing data collection via a questionnaire administered to 394 iPhone users, and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results indicate that brand image and brand awareness significantly influence purchasing decisions, both partially and simultaneously, with an R-square value of 62.2%, indicating a strong influence. The implications of this study highlight the importance for companies to enhance brand image and brand awareness through effective marketing strategies to drive consumer purchasing decisions, particularly in the premium smartphone market in the Cirebon region.

Keywords

Brand Image; Brand Awareness; Purchase Decision; Product Marketing; Quantitative Method; SemPLS.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Communication technology develops rapidly and shapes patterns of daily life in society. Smartphones have become an essential part of everyday activities because they support communication, work tasks, and access to information. In Indonesia, smartphone penetration increased significantly from 2015 to 2023, reaching 68.1 percent (GoodStats, 2024). Smartphone users also rose from 76 percent in 2021 to 86.6 percent in 2024 (Databoks, 2024). These data indicate a consistent increase in digital technology adoption across different social groups. This condition reflects a high level of dependence on digital devices in supporting modern activities that are increasingly integrated with internet-based systems and digital services.

Amid the rapid development of communication technology, Indonesia's economic conditions have faced quite complex dynamics. According to data Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (2024), Indonesia's inflation rate stood at 2.61% year-on-year, lower than the previous year's rate of 5.51% year-on-year. Inflation is a process of a general and continuous increase in prices related to market mechanisms, which can be caused by various factors, including increased public consumption or disruptions in the distribution of goods (Teguhati & Fadhillah, 2024). According to Bhima Yudhistira in (Kompas, 2024), although a low inflation rate theoretically reflects economic stability, this condition also indicates a weakening of consumer purchasing power. This weakening of purchasing power tends to encourage consumers to be more selective in their consumption of secondary and tertiary goods (Mariana *et al.*, 2024; Ramadhan, 2024).

The shift in the smartphone industry reflects a pattern that moves away from previous consumption behavior. In Indonesia, sales of entry-level smartphones declined, while demand for premium devices increased during the 2022 to 2023 period (Januar *et al.*, 2024). The iPhone brand plays a central role in shaping this movement. Consumers no longer rely solely on price when deciding to purchase a smartphone. Brand image and brand awareness influence how they evaluate product options and perceived value. Purchasing decisions now follow a more selective pattern, where symbolic value and perceived quality carry strong weight in shaping preference within the smartphone market.

From a marketing perspective, brand image plays a central role in shaping how consumers decide to purchase a product. Consumers tend to prefer brands that carry a positive image compared to brands with weaker or less favorable perceptions (Zainurossalamia, 2020). This perception often becomes a reference point when individuals evaluate available alternatives in the market. A strong brand image can build consumer trust and increase confidence in the purchasing process (Teguhati & Fadhillah, 2024). When trust is formed, consumers are more likely to proceed with a purchase decision without extensive hesitation. Research by Dewi & Rohana (2023) also confirms that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, showing that perception of a brand strongly shapes consumer behavior in competitive markets.

Brand awareness plays an important role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. It refers to the extent to which potential consumers can recognize and recall that a brand belongs to a specific product category (Rafqi Ilhamalimy, 2024). When consumers have a high level of brand awareness, they tend to include the brand in their consideration set before making a purchase decision. This increases the likelihood that the brand will be selected among competing alternatives in the market. Strong brand awareness also helps consumers feel more familiar with the product, which can reduce uncertainty during the decision-making process. Previous research shows that brand image and brand awareness together have a significant effect on purchasing decisions for smartphone products (Tondang & Silalahi, 2022).

In the context of Indonesia's smartphone industry, the iPhone is one brand that has successfully established a strong brand image and brand awareness through various marketing tactics such as promotions, sponsorships, and collaborations with influencers. This success is evident in the brand's steady year-over-year sales growth. Research conducted by Nurfadilah & Hutaeruk (2024) found that brand image and brand awareness have a significant influence on purchase decisions regarding the iPhone smartphone brand. Additionally, other studies have found that brand image and brand awareness consistently have a significant influence on purchasing decisions for various smartphone brands, indicating the importance of branding strategies in winning market competition in the smartphone industry (Hauzam & Nuryani, 2025; Muwafak & Indrayani, 2025).

Cirebon, which is part of a developing region in West Java, has a diverse economic landscape with variations in residents' purchasing power. This situation makes Cirebon an attractive subject for research, as consumers' product choices in this area are determined not only by price or product specifications but also by psychological factors such as brand image and brand awareness. In the purchasing decision-making process, consumers go through several steps, ranging from identifying needs, seeking information, evaluating options, to the final decision to purchase and post-purchase actions. In this context, brand image and brand awareness can serve as elements that influence consumers' perceptions and preferences regarding a product.

Previous studies examining the influence of brand image and brand awareness on purchasing decisions have reported inconsistent findings. Apriyanti (2024) found that brand image was the dominant factor influencing iPhone purchase decisions, whereas Suardana *et al.* (2024) reported that brand awareness had a stronger contribution in encouraging consumer purchasing behavior. In addition, Huwae *et al.* (2023) focused on brand image combined with

electronic word-of-mouth, while Leroya & Tiara (2025) examined brand awareness together with product quality and price. These differences indicate that the relative influence of brand image and brand awareness remains inconclusive and may vary across product categories and regional contexts. Therefore, further investigation is required to examine the simultaneous effects of both variables on iPhone purchase decisions in Cirebon, a region with unique socio-economic characteristics.

The identified research gap directs attention to the need for examining the effects of brand image and brand awareness, both individually and jointly, on iPhone purchase decisions in Cirebon. The analysis focuses on how these two factors shape consumer judgment when selecting premium smartphone products. The findings are expected to strengthen marketing literature by clarifying how brand-related variables influence purchasing behavior in competitive markets. On a practical level, the results can support companies in refining branding strategies that respond more precisely to consumer behavior patterns in the smartphone industry.

2 | BACKGROUND THEORY

2.1 Purchasing Decisions

Decision-making can be defined as a process of evaluating and selecting from various alternatives in accordance with specific interests, resulting in the selection of the option deemed most advantageous. According to Dewi & Rohana (2023), a purchasing decision is an action taken to address problems that arise and must be faced, or it consists of steps taken to achieve objectives as quickly as possible at the most efficient cost. Consumer purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by several key factors. Marketers must understand these factors to determine the strategies to be implemented. Consumer purchasing behavior is influenced by factors such as cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors (Sodikin *et al.*, 2024). According to Rumaidlany *et al.* (2022), the stages of the consumer purchasing decision-making process include problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, the purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior.

2.2 Brand Image

Brand image refers to how consumers perceive and interpret a brand based on the associations they build from experience, information exposure, and repeated interaction with the brand over time (Hidayat & Indayani, 2025). These perceptions are stored in memory and influence how individuals evaluate a product before making a purchase decision. A strong and positive brand image can increase consumer trust, create clear differentiation from competitors, and encourage higher purchase intention (Zainurossalamia, 2020). When consumers trust a brand, they tend to reduce hesitation in choosing its products compared to alternatives. Sawitri *et al.* (2025) explain that brand image can be assessed through three main indicators, namely corporate image, product image, and user image. Each indicator reflects how the brand is viewed from organizational reputation, product quality perception, and the characteristics of its users in the market.

2.3 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers can recognize and recall a brand within a specific product category (Rafqi Ilhamalimy, 2024). When brand awareness is high, consumers are more likely to include the brand in their consideration set during the purchasing process. This condition makes the brand more accessible in consumer memory and increases the chance of selection among competing products. As a key marketing asset, brand awareness shapes perceptions, preferences, and final purchasing behavior (Mariana *et al.*, 2024). Strong awareness often reduces uncertainty and supports quicker decision-making. Rohim (2022) explains that brand awareness consists of four levels, namely unaware of brand, brand recognition, brand recall, and top-of-mind awareness. Each level reflects the depth of consumer familiarity with a brand and its position in the consumer's memory structure within a competitive market environment.

2.4 Hypothesis Development

Brand image refers to how consumers construct perceptions of a brand based on accumulated experiences, information exposure, and interactions over time. These perceptions influence how individuals evaluate alternatives before making a purchase. A strong brand image tends to reduce hesitation because consumers feel more confident about what they are choosing. Research by Apriyanti (2024) shows that brand image has a significant and positive effect on iPhone purchase decisions and often plays a dominant role in shaping choice behavior. Maulana & Sari (2022) also report that brand image influences how consumers interpret product quality and trustworthiness. These findings indicate that consumer decisions do not rely solely on functional aspects of a product, but also on how a brand is perceived in everyday thinking and past experience. Strong perception can shift preference even when competing products offer similar technical features.

H1: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on iPhone purchase decisions in Cirebon

2.5 The Influence of Brand Awareness on Purchase Decisions

Brand awareness refers to consumers' ability to recognize and recall a brand. Brand awareness serves as the first step in the purchase decision-making process, as consumers typically choose brands they are familiar with. Findings by Suardana *et al.* (2024) indicate that brand awareness exerts a positive influence on purchase decisions, both directly and through mediating variables such as purchase intention. Other studies reveal that variables related to brand exposure and brand recognition influence purchasing decisions (Permana & Supiyadi, 2025).

H2: Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on iPhone purchase decisions in Cirebon.

3 | METHOD

The study applies a quantitative approach using primary data collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire. This approach allows relationships between variables to be examined using numerical measurement rather than subjective interpretation. Explanatory research design is used to test hypotheses and assess how far the proposed relationships hold based on empirical data (Suprianto & Maharani, 2022). The population consists of iPhone users in Cirebon, where the exact number of users cannot be determined. To address this limitation, Cochran's formula is applied to estimate an appropriate sample size (Sugiyono, 2024). The calculation results in 394 respondents as the final sample.

Data collection is conducted online using Google Forms distributed through social media platforms (Sugiyono, 2021). This method allows faster access to respondents who actively use smartphones, especially iPhone users, and supports efficient data gathering without geographical constraints. All measurement indicators are adapted from previous studies to maintain consistency in variable operationalization. Purchase decision indicators are adopted from Rumaidlany *et al.* (2022), brand image indicators from Sawitri *et al.* (2025), and brand awareness indicators from Rohim (2022).

Data analysis is carried out using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0. This technique is suitable for examining relationships between latent variables measured through multiple indicators. SEM-PLS also operates without strict requirements on data distribution, making it appropriate for behavioral research involving consumer decision patterns (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The method supports simultaneous testing of measurement and structural models, allowing evaluation of how variables interact within the proposed framework without relying on rigid statistical assumptions.

4 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Validity Test (Convergent Validity)

Ghozali (2021) states that indicator reliability is assessed through the loading factor value, where a threshold of ≥ 0.70 is considered acceptable. Indicators that meet this value are regarded as having strong representation of the latent construct being measured. However, during the early stage of scale development, loading values between 0.50 and 0.60 can still be accepted when supported by theoretical justification and measurement relevance. This approach allows initial model refinement while maintaining acceptable measurement quality standards.

Table 1. Results of the Convergent Validity Test

Variables	Item	Outer Loading	AVE
Brand Awareness	BA1	0,848	0,737
	BA2	0,844	
	BA3	0,863	
	BA4	0,859	
	BA5	0,878	
Brand Image	B11	0,838	0,720
	B12	0,859	
	B13	0,831	
	B14	0,839	
	B15	0,874	
Purchase Decision	PD1	0.818	
	PD2	0.860	

	PD3	0.852	0,720
	PD4	0.845	
	PD5	0.867	

Source: Data analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 by the researcher (2026)

According to Hair *et al.* (2016), a convergent validity score is considered acceptable when the outer loading value exceeds 0.70. Based on the results presented in Table 1, all values are above 0.70. Consequently, each indicator in the research questionnaire, as reflected by its outer loading value, can be considered valid. Therefore, all statements for each variable are confirmed to have passed the validity test.

4.1.2 Derkriminal Validity Test

Discriminant validity testing for reflective indicators is conducted to ensure that each construct is truly distinct from other constructs in the model. The evaluation is carried out through two main approaches. First, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is compared with interconstruct correlations to confirm that a construct explains its indicators better than it overlaps with other constructs. Second, cross-loading values from the PLS algorithm output are examined to verify that each indicator loads more strongly on its associated construct than on other constructs (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 2. Results of the Discriminant Validity Test

	Brand Awareness	Brand Image	Purchase Decision
BA1	0.848	0.725	0.629
BA2	0.844	0.678	0.576
BA3	0.863	0.694	0.635
BA4	0.859	0.69	0.668
BA5	0.878	0.673	0.671
BI1	0.679	0.838	0.697
BI2	0.699	0.859	0.666
BI3	0.698	0.831	0.609
BI4	0.674	0.839	0.583
BI5	0.667	0.874	0.639
PD1	0.601	0.654	0.818
PD2	0.637	0.607	0.86
PD3	0.647	0.626	0.852
PD4	0.606	0.672	0.845
PD5	0.659	0.648	0.867

Source: Data analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 by the researcher (2026)

Table 2 indicates that each indicator shows a higher correlation with its own construct compared to its correlation with other constructs. This pattern confirms that the indicators align more strongly with their respective latent variables than with different variables in the model.

4.1.3 Reliability Test

Reliability testing in the PLS model assesses whether measurement results remain consistent across indicators. Ghozali (2021) states that reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability as main indicators. Both measures assess the level of internal consistency among items that form a construct. When the values reach 0.70 or higher, the construct is considered reliable and suitable for further analysis. This threshold indicates that the indicators work together in a stable manner in representing the same variable. If reliability falls below this level, the measurement structure may produce inconsistent results, which can affect the accuracy of subsequent model testing.

Table 3. Results of the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha Tests

Variabel	Composite Reability	Cronbach Alpha
Brand Awareness	0,913	0,911
Brand Image	0,905	0,903
Purchase Decision	0,903	0,903

Source: Data analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 by the researcher (2026)

Table 3 shows the results of the reliability test using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha for all variables in the study. Brand Awareness records values of 0.913 and 0.911, Brand Image shows 0.905 and 0.903, while Purchase

Decision presents 0.903 for both indicators. All values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency across indicators. These results confirm that each construct is measured reliably and suitable for further structural analysis.

4.1.4 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in this study involves three variables arranged to test the relationships within the proposed framework. Purchase Decision acts as the endogenous variable, while Brand Image and Brand Awareness function as exogenous variables that influence it. The model uses 15 indicators to measure and represent the latent variables in a structured way. Each indicator plays a role in capturing variation within its respective construct, allowing relationships between variables to be evaluated more precisely. This structure enables assessment of how brand-related factors relate to consumer purchasing decisions based on the defined measurement model.

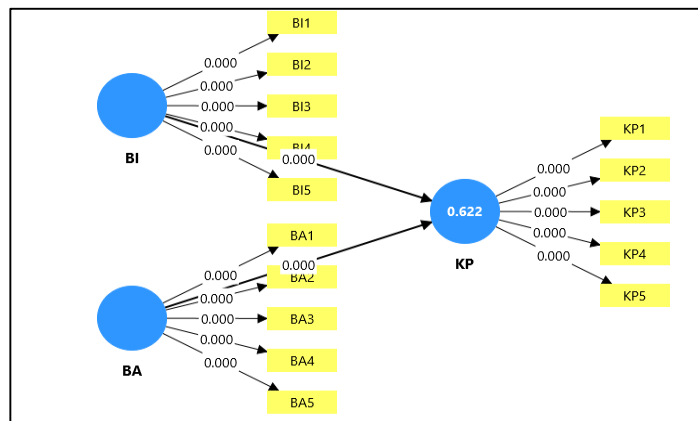


Figure 1. SEM Test

4.1.5 R-Square Test

R-Square testing is used to assess the strength of the structural model in explaining the variance of the dependent construct. Ghozali (2021) states that the R-Square value indicates how well the independent variables explain the dependent variable. The interpretation is categorized into three levels: 0.75 indicates strong explanatory power, 0.50 represents a moderate level, and 0.25 reflects a weak level. This classification shows the extent to which the model is able to account for changes in the construct being analyzed.

Table 4. R-Square Test Result

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Purchase Decision	0,622	0,620

Source: Data analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 by the researcher (2026)

Based on Table 4, the Customer Decision variable has an R-squared value of 0.622, or 62.2 percent of the construct’s variability, with the remaining 37.8 percent explained by other variables or factors outside the scope of this study. This value indicates that the Brand Image and Brand Awareness variables influence the Purchase Decision by 62.2% (strong).

4.1.5 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing examines relationships between variables in the proposed model using empirical data. This stage assesses whether Brand Image and Brand Awareness as exogenous variables have a significant effect on Purchase Decision as the endogenous variable. The evaluation is based on SEM-PLS results, particularly path coefficients and significance values, to determine the strength and direction of relationships. A hypothesis is accepted when it meets the required significance level, otherwise it is rejected.

Table 5. Results of the Bootstrapping Hypothesis Test

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
BA -> PD	0.38	0.378	0.07	5.412	< 0.001
BI -> PD	0.45	0.453	0.07	6.391	< 0.001

Source: Data analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 by the researcher (2026)

The bootstrapping results show that both proposed hypotheses are supported. Brand awareness positively affects purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.38$, $t = 5.412$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher consumer awareness of the iPhone brand increases the likelihood of purchase. Brand image also positively affects purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.45$, $t = 6.391$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that favorable perceptions of the brand encourage consumers to purchase iPhones. Furthermore, the effect of brand image is slightly stronger than that of brand awareness.

4.2 Discussion

The results of the study show that brand image and brand awareness both influence iPhone purchase decisions in Cirebon, although the level of influence is not balanced. Brand image has a stronger effect ($\beta = 0.45$) compared to brand awareness ($\beta = 0.38$). This finding indicates that consumers place greater weight on perceptions of quality, innovation, prestige, and reliability when selecting premium smartphones. Purchase decisions are not driven solely by rational evaluation but are also shaped by how consumers interpret a brand's position in the market. Findings from Apriyanti (2024) and Maulana & Sari (2022) reinforce this pattern, particularly regarding trust that emerges from a stable brand image. Once trust is established, the decision-making process tends to move faster with fewer doubts.

Brand awareness also plays a role in shaping purchasing decisions. Consumers who can recognize and recall the iPhone brand are more likely to include it in their initial consideration set. This increases the likelihood of the product being chosen over competing alternatives. Suardana *et al.* (2024) and Nugroho & Santoso (2023) explain that brand recognition influences how easily a brand appears in consumers' memory during evaluation. The more familiar a brand is, the more likely it becomes a primary option before consumers compare price or specifications in detail.

Taken together, brand image and brand awareness explain 62.2% of the variation in purchase decisions. This figure indicates that brand-related factors play a substantial role in shaping consumer behavior in the smartphone market. However, 37.8% of the variation is influenced by other factors outside the model, such as price perception, product features, lifestyle compatibility, device quality, and user experience. These factors may operate differently across consumer groups. Future research may include additional variables to achieve a more balanced analysis and better capture the dynamics of smartphone purchasing decisions.

5 | CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

The findings show that brand image and brand awareness have a positive and significant effect on iPhone purchase decisions in Cirebon. Brand image appears to exert a stronger influence, indicating that consumers respond more to how they evaluate quality, prestige, innovation, and trust linked to the iPhone brand. Brand awareness also plays a clear role by increasing the likelihood that consumers recognize and recall the brand during evaluation. Together, both factors shape how consumers narrow down choices in the premium smartphone market. From a practical standpoint, firms need to treat brand image as a long-term asset that requires consistent product improvement, stable quality delivery, and user experiences that match expectations formed in the market. Marketing communication also needs to stay active and targeted so that brand awareness remains present during the decision stage, not just at the introduction stage. Further research can improve analytical depth by including variables such as price perception, product quality, brand trust, lifestyle alignment, and consumer satisfaction. Broader geographic coverage and comparative design across regions can also help capture differences in consumer behavior patterns, especially in markets where smartphone competition continues to intensify.

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