

THE INFLUENCE OF WORDS OF MOUTH AND BRAND IMAGE ON MCDONALDS PRODUCT PURCHASE DECISIONS IN PALEMBANG CITY (CASE STUDY OF WORLD BRANDS THAT SUPPORT ISRAEL)

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Abstract

The war that occurred between Israel and Palestine at the end of 2023 has changed the world's perception of brands. Especially if the brand supports Israel. The majority of countries carry out boycotts, but in Indonesia several brands that outside the country support Israel actually provide assistance to Palestine. McDonalds Indonesia is one of the biggest brands that has actually provided assistance to Palestine since the end of 2023 until now. McDonalds Indonesia itself received an award from Baznas in 2024 for participating in providing assistance to Palestine. It is hoped that the influence of Word of Mouth on this matter will be able to maintain the number of consumers from boycotting their products in Indonesia, especially since McDonalds has its own Brand Image. It is hoped that this will still be able to maintain the brand image which will ultimately make consumers continue to decide to consume McDonalds.

Keywords: *Word of Mouth, Brand Image, McDonalds*

INTROCUCTION

Humanity is sometimes one of the reasons why something is not used. Humanity is also one of the reasons why product boycotts occur in several places. This has happened in almost all countries in recent times.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine that occurred at the end of 2023, which caused the most casualties in the Palestinian state, has become the reason for the boycott of several products that are considered or actually support Israel. Reported by CNBCIndonesia on November 12 2023, many countries have boycotted Israel. This boycott is carried out in many ways, such as refusing visas from the state of Israel, boycotting flights to Israel and boycotting products that express support for Israel. Several countries that clearly boycott and condemn Israel's attacks on Palestine include Russia, North Korea, Turkey, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq and Indonesia.

However, several countries also stated that they were defending Israel. An example is the United States. The United States clearly states that it defends Israel. This has caused several products originating from or affiliated with these two countries to be boycotted in several countries that support Palestine. These products vary from fashion, fast food, daycare to consumer goods. Several products that are known to be boycotted in several countries because they are affiliated with Israel include Starbucks, McDonalds, KFC, Pizza Hut, Coca Cola, Pepsi and many more products that are affiliated with Israel.

In Indonesia itself, especially in the city of Palembang, Israeli affiliated products such as McDonalds, KFC, Pizza Hut and Star Bucks are products that are quite popular with all groups. Moreover, all of them are food and beverages products with a good brand image in the eyes of the Indonesian people. The unique taste and diversity of products in this brand has become an attraction in the eyes of the public, especially young people from generation Z and millennials. However, in reality, this product is an Israeli-affiliated product that is almost not used in other countries.

As a fast food restaurant that already has a strong brand image, McDonalds is also inseparable from the brand that has been abandoned since the war between Israel and Palestine in October 2023. The calls and invitations to boycott brands that support Israel have caused many

consumers to reduce the frequency of using or consuming brands affiliated with Israel. Reported by detik.com on January 3 2024, McDonalds in Malaysia was boycotted resulting in a loss of 20 billion rupiah. McDonalds Malaysia also demanded a boycott, which sparked criticism in the neighboring country. Meanwhile, since McDonald's Israel has openly supported and provided assistance to their soldiers, in the Middle East, this franchise restaurant has started to become quiet, even causing several outlets to close.

However, this does not mean that consumers in the world have abandoned this brand, there are still consumers who consume this brand. Moreover, several brands that are considered to support Israel made donations of IDR 1.5 billion through Baznas in November 2023, as reported by detik.com. Not only that, currently McDonalds is collaborating with Baznas and continues to provide humanitarian aid aimed at Palestine. This is an example of the implementation of Amplified word of mouth carried out by McDonalds Indonesia to build a positive image in Indonesia that they are a brand that cares about humanity, especially Palestine. This has been campaigned since November 2023 and to date, McDonalds Indonesia is one of the brands that consistently provides aid to Palestine, whether in the form of money or goods through Baznas. Even in March 2024, McDonalds Indonesia through PT Rekso Nasional Food received an award at the 2024 BAZNAS Award. The award category received was 'Best Company Contributing Donations to Palestine.

McDonalds in the city of Palembang is one of the well-known fast food brands with a large number of consumers. This is indicated by the many McDonalds restaurants that can be found in Palembang City. McDonalds also has a variety of food menus such as chicken and burgers which are liked by everyone. Based on information from <https://www.mcdonalds.co.id>, there are 6 outlets spread across Palembang City which can be seen in the table below:

Table 1
Restoran McDonalds Palembang

No	Branch	Address
1	McD Ruko Sudirman	Jl. Jendral Sudirman No. 149
2	McD R.Sukanto Palembang	Jl. R. Sukanto No.90A Palembang
3	McD Ryacudu	Jl. HM Ryacudu, Rt.44/12, 7 Ulu
4	McD Citra Grand City	Citra Grand City Palembang Blok B 01 No. 01 95/20
5	McD Kenten Palembang	JL. HM Noerdin Pandji, Suka Maju, Kec. Sako, Kota Palembang
6	McD Sudirman KM 5	Jl. Kolonel H. Burlian KM5

Source: www.mcdonalds.co.id

Therefore, the author carries the theme "The Influence of Word of Mouth and Brand Image on Decisions to Purchase McDonalds Products in Palembang City" where McDonalds itself is one of the brands in Indonesia that is active in providing aid to Palestine, but overseas McDonalds is one of the brands that also supports it. Israel.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Word of Mouth

Word of mouth is an English term which means the power of the mouth. The word word in Indonesian means word, while mouth means mouth. So this strategy is a marketing strategy to market a business by word of mouth. According to Kotler and Keller (2009:512), Word of Mouth is a marketing activity through person-to-person media, either verbally, in writing, or via electronic communication tools connected to the internet, which is based on experience with products or services.

Sunyoto (2015:161) explains that word of mouth is information from customers who will talk to other customers or other people about their experiences using the products they purchased. So word of mouth is also advertising that is a reference from other people, and this reference is made by word of mouth.

Fakhrudin (2021) believes that word of mouth is word of mouth communication regarding views or assessments of a product or service, both individually and in groups, which aims to provide personal information. Word of mouth is a very effective strategy that influences consumer decisions in using products or services and word of mouth can build a sense of trust among customers. Siswanto & Maskan, (2020) state that word of mouth communication is a story in the form of an impression from consumers to their friends regarding a pleasant service and promotion of a product or service.

According to Sernovitz quoted by Sernovitz (2014: 5) WOM itself is divided into 2 types, namely:

1. Word of mouth Organic that occurs naturally. People who feel happy and satisfied with a product have a natural desire to share their support and enthusiasm.
2. Amplified Word of Mouth Amplification occurs by design by the company. This type of WOM is WOM that occurs when marketers/companies carry out campaigns designed to encourage or accelerate WOM in consumers.

According to Ali, (2020) there are 3 indicators of word of mouth, namely 1) Talking about positive experiences, product quality, 2) Recommending with friends, family, 3) Encouraging by persuading friends, inviting family.

Joesyiana, (2018) has the opinion that the types of word of mouth communication can be grouped into two types, namely: 1. Positive word of mouth, is the process of conveying information by word of mouth carried out by one individual to another individual based on a positive experience with a product, service or company. 2. Negative word of mouth, is a process of word of mouth interaction that is based on negative experiences obtained from one individual to another regarding a product, service or company. Word of mouth communication process cannot occur without a process, starting from the source to the destination. Each channel has importance that should not be ignored. According to Soraya & Marlana, (2020), in the traditional view, the word of mouth communication process starts with information conveyed through mass media, then informed or captured by opinion leaders who have followers and are influential. Information captured by opinion leaders is spread to their followers through word of mouth communication. In fact, broadly speaking, the model also includes information custodians (gatekeepers) as parties involved in the communication process.

Brand Image

According to Keller (2020:76), brand image is the perception of a brand as reflected by the brand associations that exist in consumers' memories. It can be concluded that brand image is consumers' understanding of a brand as a whole with their beliefs and views towards a brand.

Brand image is related to how consumers perceive a brand in their minds, resulting in perceptions. This perception is formed due to consumer interactions and experiences when using the brand in question. The perceptions that emerge can be good, bad, or neutral. Kotler and Keller (2014: 315) explain that brand image is the consumer's perception and beliefs which are reflected in the associations that occur in the consumer's memory. These associations will equate and differentiate similar products with different brands. Brand image is a differentiating image that is produced and used as a comparison in these associations.

Understanding brand image According to (Nurhalim, 2020) brand image is a representation of all perceptions of a brand and is built from information and past experiences.

According to Keller (2020:76) that brand image consists of the following components:

- 1) Attributes are descriptive definitions of the features in a product or service.

- a. Product related attributes (product attributes) are defined as the ingredients needed for the function of the product that consumers are looking for to work. Relating to the physical composition or requirements of a service offered, it can function.
 - b. Non-product related attributes (non-product attributes) are external aspects of a product that are related to the purchase and consumption of a product or service. Consists of: information about price, packaging and product design, people, groups or celebrities who use the product or service, how and where the product or service is used.
- 2) Benefits: Personal values attributed by consumers to the attributes of the product or service.
- a. Functional benefits: related to fulfilling basic needs such as physical and security needs or problem solving.
 - b. Experiential benefits: related to the feelings that arise from using a product or service. This benefit satisfies the need for experimentation such as sensory satisfaction
 - c. Symbolic benefits: related to the need for social approval or personal expression and one's self-esteem. Consumers will appreciate the values of prestige, exclusivity and brand fashion style because these things are related to their self-concept.

According to Schiffman & Kanuk in Murti (2019) the factors that influence and shape brand image include the following:

- 1) Quality, related to the quality offered by producers of both goods and services. In terms of education, it includes the competence of teaching staff and the capabilities of alumni as well as the breadth in obtaining employment.
- 2) Trusted, related to the views or opinions created by the public or consumers regarding a product consumed.
- 3) Profit, related to the benefits of a product or service that consumers can use.
- 4) Service, regarding services provided to consumers by makers or producers.
- 5) Consequences, related to the effects that consumers may face, both the size of the consequences or the advantages and disadvantages after consumers or students choose or decide on a product or college of education.
- 6) Cost, related to the small or large amount of money or costs for a product that consumers or students spend to study in the future.
- 7) The image of the brand itself is related to opinions, perceptions and news about a product from a particular brand.

According to Aaker & Biel in Keller & Swaminathan (2020:239), brand image indicators can be seen from:

- 1) Corporate Image, namely a set of associations perceived by consumers towards companies that make goods or services. Includes: popularity, credibility, company network, and the users themselves.
- 2) Product/consumer image, namely a set of associations that consumers perceive regarding a good or service. Includes: product attributes, benefits for consumers, and guarantees.
- 3) User image, namely a set of associations that consumers perceive towards users who use a good or service. Includes: the user himself, as well as his social status.

Buying decision

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018: 177), purchasing decisions are consumers' decisions to buy the most preferred brand. In the evaluation stage, consumers rank brands and form purchase intentions. In general, there are two factors that arise between purchasing intentions and purchasing decisions, namely the attitudes of other people and unexpected situational factors.

According to Kotler (2015), "The purchasing decision is a stage where consumers have a choice and are ready to make a purchase or exchange between money and a promise to pay for the

right to own or use a good or service." Kotler (2015) also explains that what is meant by a purchasing decision is a problem solving process which consists of analyzing or recognizing needs and desires to behavior after purchase.

Kotler and Keller (2016: 198) explain that purchasing decisions are a process in the evaluation stage where consumers form preferences among brands in a collection of choices that make it possible to form the intention to purchase the most preferred brand.

According to Kerin and Hartley (2018:96), purchasing decisions are a five-stage process that buyers go through in making choices about which products and services to buy, including problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchasing decisions, and post-purchase behavior.

According to Kotler and Armstrong in Pradana et al. (2017), purchasing decision indicators are as follows:

1) Buying stability after knowing product information.

Customers will buy products because they already know information about the product. So, consumers make purchasing decisions after searching for information in various media. For example, consumers buy brand A cosmetic products because they already know information about the product. Starting from the content which does not contain allergens, to the color which is considered suitable for facial skin.

2) Deciding to buy because the brand is most liked by customers.

This purchasing decision indicator explains that consumers will buy a product because it is the brand they like most. Either because it is compatible with products from that brand, or for other reasons. For example, consumer A tends to choose shoe brand Z because they really like the flexible material, the brand is well-known, and the shoes are durable.

3) Buy because you want and need it

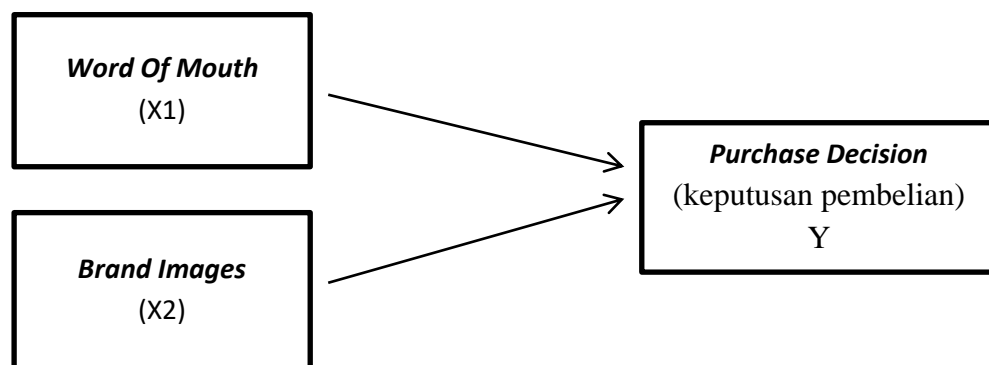
Consumers will make purchasing decisions if they feel they want and need it. Want means having a desire to have a product. Meanwhile, need means that you really need the product to fulfill your needs. For example, consumer A buys a motorbike because he needs it as a means of transportation. Meanwhile, consumer B bought a motorbike because he wanted a new motorbike and was bored with his old motorbike.

4) Buy because you get recommendations from other people

Lastly, this purchasing decision indicator states that the purchasing decision of a person or group of people can actually be influenced by other people's recommendations. For example, consumer A recommends food product S to his friend, namely B. Then, out of curiosity, B tries to buy and use the product on the recommendation of someone else.

Theoretical Framework

Graph 1
Theoretical Framework



Hipotesis

Based on the framework above, the hypothesis that the author proposes is:.

H1: There is an influence of Word of Mouth on purchasing decisions

H2: There is an influence of Brand Images on purchasing decisions

H3: There is an influence of Word of Mouth and Brand Images on purchasing decisions

H4: There is no influence of Word of Mouth on purchasing decisions

H5: There is no influence of Brand Images on purchasing decisions

H6: There is no influence of Word of Mouth and Brand Images on decisions purchase

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used by the author is a quantitative research method, based on data obtained from distributed questionnaires. This type of research is associative. According to Sugiyono (2019:65) associative research is a research problem formulation that asks about the relationship between two or more variables. The variables linked in this research are Word of Mouth (X1) and Brand Image (X2) to purchasing decisions (Y).

The population in this study were consumers of McDonalds restaurants in the city of Palembang. The McDonalds restaurant itself in the city of Palembang has 6 outlets as mentioned previously. Therefore the sample was determined using the random sampling method. Simple Random Sampling is taking sample members from a population randomly without paying attention to the strata in that population. Because the population is clearly McDonalds consumers in the city of Palembang, the author randomly distributed questionnaires to 100 consumers at random.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Questionnaires were distributed randomly to McDonalds restaurant consumers in the city of Palembang. Of the 100 consumers who filled out the questionnaire distributed, the results showed that 56 consumers were female, and the rest were male. This can be seen in the table below.

Table 2
Customer's Gender

No	Gender	Total	Percentage
1	Male	44	44%
2	Female	56	56%

Source: data process

The next thing is the age of consumers. As is known, McDonald's restaurants in the world have a menu that is quite popular with many people. Based on a survey conducted on 100 people, it was found that 21 consumers were under 20 years old. This is the same for consumers aged over 40 years as many as 21 people. Meanwhile the rest are aged 21-40 years. This can be seen in the table below:

Table 3
Consumer's Average Age

No	Average Age	Total	Percentage
1	< 20 years old	21	21%
2	21-40 years old	58	58%
3	>40 years old	21	21%

Source: data process

The jobs of the respondents were quite diverse. A total of 28 people are students and pupils in Palembang City. Meanwhile, 43 people are private employees or self-employed. The remaining 29 people are State Civil Apparatus or BUMN employees. This can be seen in the table below.

Table 4
Consumer's Occupation

No	Occupation	Total	Percentage
1	Students	28	28%
2	Private Employee/ Entrepreneur	43	43%
3	Civil Worker	29	29%
4	Retired	0	0%

Source: data process

The last thing studied was the frequency of consuming the McDonald's menu, either eating on site or take away in the last 3 months. A total of 14 respondents stated that they rarely consumed McDonalds in the last 3 months. A total of 51 respondents sometimes consumed McDonalds during the last 3 months, while 35 people said they often consumed McDonalds during the last 3 months. This is interpreted in the table below.

Table 5
Frequent Consuming McDonalds

No	Frequent	Total	Percentage
1	Rare	14	14%
2	Sometimes	51	51%
3	Often	35	35%

Source: data process

Calculation of research results begins by using a validity test to measure whether a questionnaire is valid or not. A questionnaire is said to be valid if the questions in the questionnaire are able to reveal something that the questionnaire will measure. This research uses a margin of error of 5% or an R table value of 0.1946 because the total number of respondents is 100 people.

Based on the results of the validity test for each questionnaire question, no calculated R value was found that was below the table R value, namely 0.1946. The 15 questions show an average figure above 0.1946, so it is concluded that each questionnaire item is valid.

After testing the validity of the statements in the questionnaire and declaring them valid, then a reliability check was carried out using the Cronbach Alpha formula to ensure the consistency of the items. The reliability of questionnaire question items can be determined if the Cronbach's Alpha score is greater than 0.60. In the reliability test, results were obtained as in the table below:

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.767	15

Source: data process SPSS 26

Based on the table above, N of items shows the statement in the questionnaire, namely 15 items, and Cronbach's Alpha shows the number 0.767, or greater than 0.60. So it can be concluded that the question items in the questionnaire can be said to be consistent or reliable. Meanwhile, it was previously explained that the number of respondents who participated was 100 people. Because there is no empty data or in the sense of the word all respondents filled in the questionnaire, the level of validity is 100%. This can be seen from the calculation results in the table below:

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	100	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	100	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Source: data process SPSS 26

Multiple linear regression is a regression model that involves more than one independent variable. Multiple linear regression analysis was carried out to determine the direction and how much influence the independent variable has on the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2018)

In this study there are 2 X variables and 1 Y variable.

The multiple linear regression equation is mathematically expressed by:

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + \dots + b_n X_n$$

Explanation:

Y = dependent variable (value of the variable to be predicted)

a = constant

b₁, b₂, ..., b_n = regression coefficient values

X₁, X₂, ..., X_n = independent variables

In this research, SPSS was used to carry out the calculations needed for regression analysis. As seen in the table below, the accompanying analysis produces the following findings.

Coefficients^a

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	8,986	1,887		4,762	,000
	(X1) word of mouth	,208	,103	,211	2,027	,004
	(X2) brand image	,384	,102	,392	3,775	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Source: data process SPSS 26

The regression equation from the results of statistical calculations is obtained as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2$$

$$\text{Purchase Decision} = 8.986 + 0.208 + 0.384$$

1. The constant value (a) is 8.986, meaning that Word of Mouth and Brand Image are assumed to be zero, so the purchasing decision is worth 8.986.
2. The regression coefficient value for the Word of Mouth variable is 0.208. What this means is that for every 1 unit increase in Word of Mouth, it will increase purchasing decisions by 0.208 assuming other variables remain constant.
3. The regression coefficient value for the Brand Image variable is 0.384. This means that for every 1 unit increase in Brand Image, it will increase purchasing decisions by 0.384 assuming other variables remain constant.
4. Standard error of probability. Standard error of influence on Y but not included in the equation.

The t test is used to test the significance of the relationship between variables X and Y, whether variables X1 and X2. In the Word of Mouth variable, it is known that t count is $2.029 > t \text{ table } 1.660$ and $\text{sig } 0.004 < 0.05$. This means that the Word of Mouth variable has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

Meanwhile, for the Brand Image variable, it is known that t count is $3.775 > t \text{ table } 1.660$ and $\text{sig } 0.000 < 0.05$. This means that the Brand Image variable has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

The F test basically shows whether all independent or independent variables have a joint influence on the dependent or dependent variable. To prove this, an F test is carried out, the results of the simultaneous regression test or F test can be seen in the table below:

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	82,823	2	41,412	20,028	,000 ^b
	Residual	200,567	97	2,068		
	Total	283,390	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

Source: data process SPSS 26

In the table above, the results of hypothesis testing show that the calculated F value is $20.028 > F \text{ table } 3.936$ with $\text{sig } 0.000 < 0.05$, meaning that the independent variables together have a significant effect on the independent variable..

CONCLUSION

From the results of the multiple linear regression equation above, it can be seen that Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on the performance of purchasing decisions for McDonalds products with a regression coefficient value of 0.208. Meanwhile, the Brand Image variable also has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for McDonald's products with a regression coefficient of 0.384.

The results of hypothesis testing on the Word of Mouth variable show that t count is $2.029 > t \text{ table } 1.660$ and $\text{sig } 0.004 < 0.0005$, meaning that the Word of Mouth variable has a significant effect on purchasing decisions for McDonalds products. In the Brand Image variable, it is known that t count is $3.775 > t \text{ table } 1.660$ and $\text{sig } 0.000 < 0.005$, meaning that the Brand Image variable has a significant effect on the decision to purchase McDonalds products. The results of the F test show that the calculated F value is $20.028 > F \text{ table } 3.936$ with a sig of $0.000 < 0.05$, meaning that the independent variables together have a significant effect on the independent variable. Simultaneously or together the Word of Mouth and Brand Image variables influence the decision to purchase McDonalds products.

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