



The Role of Influencers and Product Quality in Purchasing Decisions of Honda BRIO in Surabaya City Mediated by Brand Image

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of influencer and product quality on purchase decisions for Honda Brio cars in Surabaya, as well as to analyze the role of brand image as a mediator. The study utilized a quantitative methodology via a survey of 150 participants aged 20-45 years, who are either current or prospective consumers of Honda Brio, data were analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results indicate that influencers do not have a direct effect on purchase decisions but strongly influence brand image. Conversely, product quality has a direct and indirect effect through brand image. Brand image was found to be a full mediator between influencers and purchase decisions, as well as a partial mediator between product quality and purchase decisions. These findings confirm that for automotive products, purchase decisions are more determined by product quality and brand image than by direct promotion from influencers.

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Introduction

Technological advancements and the rapid adoption of social media have fundamentally changed the marketing landscape. Conventional marketing is no longer reliable, and digital marketing must be adopted, one of which is thru influencer marketing. The use of influencers has been proven effective in influencing consumer behavior and purchasing decisions across various industries (Annisa & Fitriyasari, 2024; Wismo Subroto et al., 2023). However, this influence does not stand alone, but is affected by various other factors. One of the key factors that consistently influences consumer decisions is the quality of the product itself (Cahayani & Sutar, 2020; Jamal & Waluyo, 2022; Setiyadi et al., 2022; Tritama et al., 2021).

Products with good quality tend to build a positive image in consumers' minds and ultimately drive purchasing decisions (Cahayani & Sutar, 2020). In the automotive industry, particularly in the city car segment, market competition in Surabaya is very intense. Various brands are competing to attract consumer interest through various marketing strategies. The Honda Brio, as one of the leaders in this segment, continues to strive to maintain its position. In this context, it's important to understand how contemporary factors like influencer marketing, and fundamental factors like product quality, synergistically influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, previous research indicates that brand image plays a significant role as a mediating variable in the relationship between these variables and purchase decisions (Ratnasari & Suhartono, 2024; Yasinta & Romauli Nainggolan, 2023). A strong brand image, formed from positive experiences and public perception, becomes a valuable asset that can mediate brand ambassador and purchase decisions (Pantouw & Kurnia, 2022). Thus, this study aims to deeply analyze the complex relationship between these variables in the specific context of the Honda Brio car in Surabaya.

Research on factors influencing purchasing decisions has been widely conducted, but there are still interesting differences in findings (research gaps) that are worth exploring. For example, regarding the influence of product quality on purchasing decisions, some studies show a significant and positive effect (Jamal & Waluyo, 2022; Kubtiyah et al., 2024; Setiyadi et al., 2022; Tritama et al., 2021). However, other studies have found that product quality does not have a significant impact on purchasing decisions (Andrian et al., 2022). These differing findings suggest a research gap that may be influenced by different research objects, locations, or market contexts.

Additionally, the results regarding the influence of brand image are also varied. Some studies have found that brand image has a significant influence on purchasing decisions (Cahayani & Sutar, 2020; Ningsih et al., 2024; Ratnasari & Suhartono, 2024), while other research has found the opposite results (Tritama et al., 2021). This difference in results raises relevant academic debates and requires further validation. Additionally, although studies on the mediating role of brand image have been conducted on fashion and beauty products (Cahayani & Sutar, 2020; Yasinta & Romauli Nainggolan, 2023), its application in the automotive industry, particularly for cars, is still rare.

This research aims to fill the research gap by offering several novelties: first, combining the influence of influencers and product quality, which have each been studied separately, into a single research model; and second, examining the role of brand image as a mediating variable. Based on the problem identification and research gap, this study aims to examine the influence of influencers on the purchase decision of Honda Brio cars in Surabaya; the influence of product

quality on the purchase decision of Honda Brio cars in Surabaya; and the role of brand image as a mediator of the influence of influencers on the purchase decision of Honda Brio cars in Surabaya.

Influencers and purchasing decisions

Currently, consumers have different ways of seeking information about products before making a purchase decision, as a result of the development of digital technology. This phenomenon led to the emergence of Influencer Marketing as a marketing strategy considered effective in influencing consumer behavior. Influencers act as trusted sources for product information, thus influencing consumer perception and purchasing decisions. Influencer marketing is one of the strategies that places public figures as a medium for delivering marketing messages to their followers or audience thru credible and engaging content (Firdausi, 2024).

Previous research has shown that influencers will influence content creation, which ultimately impacts product purchase decisions (Firdausi, 2024). This confirms that trust and emotional closeness between influencers and their followers are important factors in shaping purchasing decisions. The research conducted by Gonçalves et al. (2024) also supports this finding, that digital influencers are able to shape consumer opinions and behavior during the purchasing process. Factors such as credibility, content authenticity, and emotional connection have been proven to increase trust and drive consumer purchasing decisions on social media.

Influencers who are consistent in providing product recommendations can strengthen brand image. Previous research has shown that influencer endorsements are one of the factors influencing purchase intention and purchase decisions (Ariesca & Saputro, 2025). This research informs us that the credibility and relevance of influencers with their target audience are able to increase purchase intention and actual purchase behavior. Influencer marketing is considered more effective than conventional marketing because it can create an emotional connection with consumers, and the influencer's personal experiences will be valuable to them. Aspects of influencer trust and personal appeal that foster brand loyalty (Darmawan & Kunci, 2024). Additionally, the effectiveness of influencer marketing is related to the level of consumer trust and engagement with the content shared by the influencer (Lim & Kesumahati, 2022). The credibility and consistency of influencers in providing product recommendations play a role in shaping a positive image and increasing purchase intention.

H₁. Influencers have a positive impact on purchasing decisions

Product Quality and Purchase Decisions

The purchase decision will be supported by product quality. Quality is believed to be a product's ability to meet customer needs and expectations. Previous research

has revealed that high-quality products create consumer satisfaction and trust, which drives purchasing decisions (Lorinda & Amron, 2023). In e-commerce platforms, perceived quality remains a key indicator in determining purchasing decisions, even tho interactions between sellers and buyers occur online (Rahayu, 2021).

Previous research findings revealed that brand image is a mediator of the influence of product quality on purchase decisions, as brand image is built by quality products, and subsequently, the decision to choose a product is based on that product's image (Chan & Muhyi, 2021). The purchase decision is determined by both product quality and brand image (Kapirossi & Probowo, 2023). Other findings confirm that product quality directly and indirectly affects purchase decisions thru purchase intention (Sakinah & Firmansyah, 2021). Good product quality not only enhances positive perceptions of the brand but also serves as a primary driver of purchase decisions (Rosanti & Salam, 2021).

H₂. Product quality has a positive influence on purchasing decisions.

Influencers and Brand Image

The development of social media has made it the preferred medium for companies to build their brand image. The credibility, authenticity, and appeal of the content shared by Influencers make them effective communicators in shaping positive perceptions of a brand (Jia et al., 2022). Effective influencer marketing not only directly shapes brand image but also through positive customer interaction and support (Sandra et al., 2024). Influencer marketing has been proven to be a factor influencing brand image through promotional activities (Mustajab & Mahadewi, 2025). Another finding supports the idea that influencers with sufficiently high attractiveness, expertise, and integration are able to increase consumer trust and strengthen the positive image of the brand they are promoting (Sari & Putri, 2025).

Some of these findings confirm that using influencers as a marketing strategy can strengthen consumers' positive perceptions of a brand. Collaboration between credible influencers and those aligned with brand values can enhance a company's positive image. Creative content such as unboxing, reviews, and daily use helps influencers build personal relationships with their audience, making the brand's role more easily accepted and remembered (Pasaribu et al., 2025). Another study revealed that perceived influence has a positive impact on brand image formation (Jia et al., 2022).

H₃. Influencers have a positive impact on brand image.

Product Quality and Brand Image

Product quality has a strong relationship with brand image. Transparency in the production process provides a high perception of product quality, thus strengthening the brand image in consumers' minds (Handayani & Bawono, 2020). Previous findings revealed that product image will be determined by product quality (Saputra et al., 2025). This finding reinforces the view that brand image is not only built through

marketing communication or paid influencer marketing, but also through customer perceptions of the product's quality itself.

Product attributes such as reliability, attractive design, and suitability to consumer needs are indicators that can influence brand image (Handayani & Bawono, 2020).. Brands that can stimulate positive emotions through meaningful stories will create an emotional connection with consumers (Chandra, 2023). A good brand reputation will strengthen consumers' positive image and perception of the brand. Equally important, product and service quality are the main values expected from any manufacturer (Cahayani & Sutar, 2020).

H4. Product quality have a positive impact on brand image

Brand Image dan Purchasing Decisions

Previous studies have revealed that brand image is capable of building consumer trust and loyalty, thereby driving purchasing decisions (Arifin & Wijaya, 2022). This is supported by other studies showing that product quality and electronic word-of-mouth positively influence purchase decisions, with brand image acting as a mediating (Marwida et al., 2023). This means the tendency to buy a product due to positive perceptions of its quality and brand image, with the role of brand image being that of a mediator in this relationship (Agung et al., 2023; Putu et al., 2024). High-quality products will enhance the perception of a good brand, making consumers confident in their purchasing decisions (Arifin & Wijaya, 2022). Influencer marketing, brand image, and customer trust simultaneously have a positive impact on purchasing decisions (Mariam & Sutawijaya, 2025).

H5. Brand image has a positive influence on purchase decisions

H6. Brand images mediate the influence of influencers on purchase decisions

H7. Brand images mediate the influence of product quality on purchase decisions

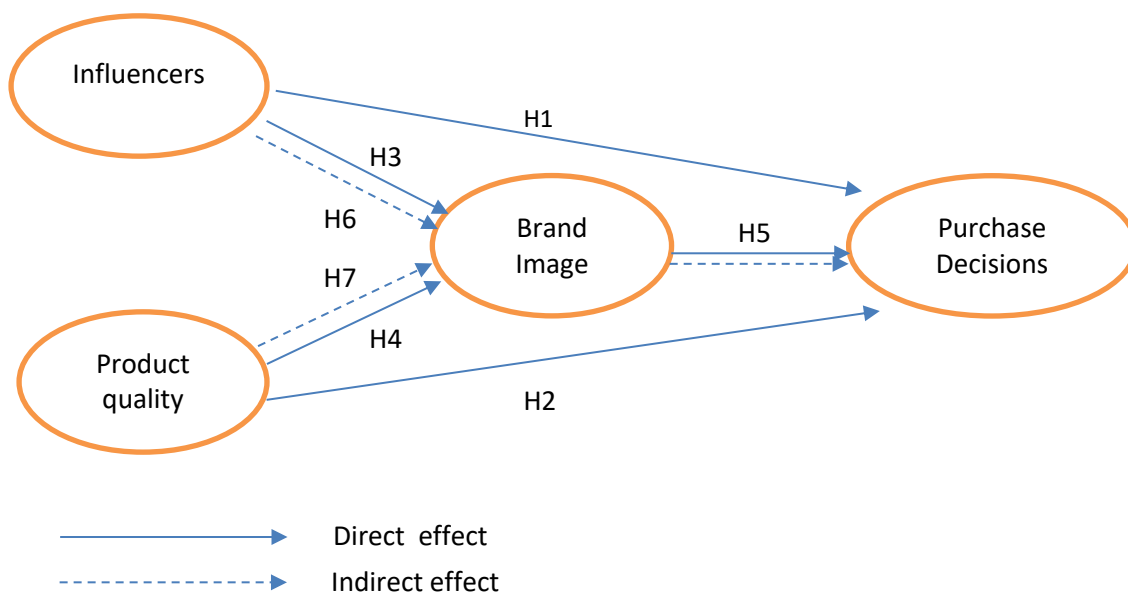


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Methods

This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. Primary data was collected through questionnaires distributed online to respondents. The study population consists of Honda Brio car consumers in Surabaya City. The study sample includes 159 people, determined to use the purposive sampling method, specifically members of the Honda Brio community in Surabaya, aged between 20 and 45 years. Data collection will be done through an online questionnaire that includes questions related to the research variables: Influencer, Product Quality, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision.

The Influencer variable is measured using four indicators: influencer credibility, content quality, interaction rate, and social values (Anggraini et al., 2025). The Product Quality variable is measured with eight indicators, including performance, extra features, reliability, conformity, durability, serviceability, esthetics, and perceived quality (Kumrotin & Susanti, 2021). The Brand Image variable is measured thru six indicators: attributes, benefits, values, culture, personality, and usage (Syaidah & Ramadhika, 2023). Meanwhile, the Purchase Decision variable is measured with four indicators: product selection, brand selection, purchase channel selection, and purchase time (Mappesona et al., 2020).

Table 1. Variable and Measurement

No.	Variable	Indicator
1.	Influencers (Anggraini et al., 2025)	1. Influencer credibility 2. Content quality 3. Engagement rate 4. Social value
2.	Product Quality (Kumrotin & Susanti, 2021)	1. Performance 2. Additional features 3. Reliability 4. Conformity 5. Durability 6. Serviceability 7. Esthetics 8. Perceived Quality
3.	Brand Image (Syaidah & Ramadhika, 2023)	1. Attributes 2. Benefits 3. Values 4. Culture 5. Personality 6. Usage
4.	Purchase Decision (Mappesona et al., 2020)	1. Selection of product 2. Selection of brand 3. Purchase channel selection 4. Purchase timing

Source: Author elaboration, 2025.

Before use, the instrument was pilot tested to measure the validity and reliability of the instrument used. Validity testing was conducted to assess whether the questionnaire instrument was able to accurately measure the research variables, using Pearson's bivariate correlation method. The instrument was considered valid if the significance value was < 0.05 . Subsequently, reliability testing was performed to measure the consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a value > 0.70 indicating good reliability. The final step is hypothesis testing using the Structural Equation Model (SEM), with the assistance of SmartPLS software.

Results

Profil of Respondents

Based on the data collected in Table 2, the respondents in this study consisted of 51% male and 49% female, with the majority aged 21–30 years (76%). Most respondents were students (47%), followed by private employes, government employes, and entrepreneurs. Regarding vehicle ownership, 62% of them consider the Brio their first car. Most respondents obtained their cars through their parents (58%), while the rest purchased them independently.

Table 2. Respondents Description

Description	Categori	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	80	51
	Female	79	49
Age	20-30 years	121	76
	31-40 years	37	23
	41-45 years	1	1
Work	Student	75	47
	Employe	43	27
	Government	19	11
	Entreprenur	22	14
Source of Ownership	Buying Myself	68	43
	Gift from Parents	92	58
Car Ownership	First Car Purchase	100	62
	Second/third t Car Purchase	59	37

Source: Data processed, 2025

Data Analysis

Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The measurement model includes testing the construct validity and reliability, covering outer loading, internal consistency reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity.

Table 3. Measurement Model

Constructs and Indicators	Outer Loading	Cronbach Alpha	AVE
Influencers		0.745	0.567
Influencer credibility	0.755		
Content quality	0.713		
Engagement rate	0.770		
Social value	0.772		
Product Quality		0.789	0.606
Performance	0.771		
Additional features	0.762		
Reliability	0.806		
Conformity	0.775		
Durability			
Serviceability			
Esthetics			
Perceived Quality			
Brand Image		0.841	0.558
Attributes	0.755		
Benefits	0.719		
Values	0.786		
Culture	0.749		
Personality	0.708		
Usage	0.764		
Purchase decision		0.703	0.627
Selection of product	0.816		
Selection of brand	0.795		
Purchase channel selection	0.764		
Purchase timing			

Source: Output PLS-SEM, 2025.

The analysis results in Table 3 show that the influencer indicator has loading value greater than 0.7, meaning it meets the validity criteria (Hair et al., 2011). Meanwhile, for product quality indicators, only the additional features, conformity, esthetics, and perceived quality indicators are valid because their values are above 0.7, so the performance, reliability, durability, and serviceability indicators are not used as measurement indicators. All brand image indicators have outer loading values greater than 0.7, meaning they meet the validity criteria, while for the purchase decision

indicator, indicator Y2 has a value less than 0.7, so it is not used as a measurement indicator, while indicators Y1, Y3, and Y4 are all valid. Next, the analysis was repeated after removing invalid indicators. The analysis test shows that all constructs meet the internal consistency reliability criteria (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7)(Hair et al., 2011).

Table 3 presents the results of convergent validity; each construct meets good convergent criteria, where the AVE value is > 0.5 (Hair et al., 2011). The results of discriminant validity testing using the Fornell-Larcker criteria (Table 4) show that all constructs meet the discriminant validity criteria(Hair et al., 2011).

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker criterion

Construct	Influencers	Product Quality	Brand Image	Purchase Decision
Influencer	0.753*			
Product quality	0.725	0.779*		
Brand Image	0.740	0.651	0.747*	
Purchase decision	0.661	0.654	0.724	0.792*

* AVE Square

Source: SmartPLS output, 2025

Structural Model (Inner Model)

The measurement model testing was conducted for two purposes: first, to test the model's quality (model fit), and second, to test the hypotheses. The criteria for testing model quality used the R² value (coefficient of determination) and f² (effect size). The analysis results show an R2 value of 0.588 for the purchase decision variable, and an R2 value of 0.576 for brand image. Therefore, the model has a moderate level of model quality (Hair et al., 2011). The effect size of influencers on purchase decisions has a f² value of 0.016, indicating a very small effect, while the effect size of influencers on brand image has an f² value of 0.358, indicating a large effect. The product quality variable has a small effect size (f2 values of 0.073 and 0.064, respectively). The brand image variable has a moderate effect size on purchasing decisions (f2 = 0.213) (Cohen, 2013).

Table 5 presents the results of the hypothesis test, where H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, and H7 are supported (p-value <0.05), while Hypothesis 1 is not supported (p-value >0.05). Influencers have been shown not to directly influence purchasing decisions, but their influence is mediated by brand image. Meanwhile, product quality influences purchasing decisions, both directly and through brand image.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Path	Coefficient	P-value	Hypothesis
Direct effect			
Influencers – Purchase decision	0.136	0.090	H1 non supported
Product quality – Purchase decision	0.259	0.000	H2 supported
Influencers – Brand Image	0.566	0.000	H3 supported
Product quality – Brand Image	0.240	0.018	H4 supported
Brand Image – Purchase decision	0.454	0.000	H5 supported
Indirect Effect (Mediation)			
Influencer – Brand Image – Purchase decision	0.257	0.000	H6 supported
Product quality – Brand Image – Purchase decision	0.109	0.031	H7 supported

Source: SmartPLS output, 2025

The results of the mediation effect test confirm that brand image has an important meaning as a mediator of both influencers and product quality. Mediation testing on the Influencer Influence path showed Full Mediation. This is because the direct path ($X1 \rightarrow Y$) is not significant (p value 0.090), but the indirect path ($X1 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$) is proven significant with an indirect effect value of 0.257 (p value 0.000). This indicates that influencers do not directly influence purchase decisions, but rather work effectively in shaping brand image, which subsequently influences purchase decisions. On the product quality path, the mediation test results show partial mediation. This is supported by the fact that although the direct path ($X2 \rightarrow Y$) is significant (p value 0.000), the indirect path ($X2 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$) is also significant with an effect value of 0.109 (p value 0.031). Product quality has been proven to directly drive purchases, but this influence is significantly strengthened by Brand Image. This means that consumers who already trust the quality of Honda Brio car products become more confident in making a decision when that quality is supported by Honda's strong and reliable brand image.

Discussion

The test results show that out of the seven hypotheses proposed, six were accepted and one was rejected. Generally, the model explains that the formation of purchasing decisions for the Honda Brio is stronger through the brand image path compared to the direct influence of influencers. This finding confirms that for automotive products, consumers not only consider promotional messages from influencers but also prioritize brand image reinforcement and product quality perception as the foundation of consumer trust before making a purchase. The test

results show that Influencers do not have direct effect on the purchase decision of the Honda Brio (p-value 0.090), therefore H1 is rejected. This result aligns with previous research that found the path from Influencer to purchase decision was not significant, indicating that exposure to Influencers does not necessarily automatically drive purchasing behavior if not supported by other factors (Satiawan et al., 2023).

The insignificance of this direct influence is due to the fact that buying a car is considered a high-involvement decision. Consumers consider financial, performance, and long-term experience risks. Thus, influencers play more of a role as an initial source of information or perception shapers, rather than as the final decision-makers for purchases. This pattern confirms that the influence of influencers often works through indirect channels, such as brand image first (Rahmawaty et al., 2025). The second hypothesis was supported, as product quality was proven to influence purchasing decisions, thus H2 was supported. This shows that Honda Brio consumers in Surabaya are very concerned about core vehicle attributes such as performance, durability, design esthetics, and quality perception when making a purchase. This finding is in accordance with the literature which states that product quality is one of the determining factors in purchasing decisions (Cahayani & Sutar, 2020).

Testing shows that influencers have a positive influence on brand image, meaning influencer activity is able to shape positive consumer perceptions of both the Honda Brio and the Honda brand in general. This finding aligns with research conducted by (Mustajab & Mahadewi, 2025; Rahmawaty et al., 2025), which states that credible, attractive, and relevant influencers can transfer personal reputation into a more modern and trustworthy brand image. Product quality also has a positive impact on brand image, so H4 is supported. This indicates that the image of the Honda Brio brand in consumers' minds is not only formed through marketing communication, but primarily through the actual perception of product quality. This finding reinforces that product quality and brand image are two related aspects. Strong quality can foster confidence that the brand is trustworthy (Cahayani & Sutar, 2020).

The research findings support H5, that brand image influences purchasing decisions. This finding aligns with various studies stating that a positive brand image fosters trust, reduces perceived risk, and strengthens consumer confidence to purchase. The research findings also show that brand image mediates the effect of influencers on purchasing decisions.

Since the direct path from influencer to purchase decision is not significant, brand image acts as a full mediator. Thus, influencers work effectively not by selling directly, but by building the image of the Honda Brio first, and it is that image that drives purchasing decisions. This finding supports the literature stating that influencer influence is often directed through brand image formation. A stronger brand image is the main mechanism thru which influencers influence consumer behavior (Rahmawaty et al., 2025).

The results of the mediation test for the path of product quality on purchase decisions proved to be mediated by brand image, thus H7 was accepted. This pattern is consistent with the literature stating that product quality can influence purchase decisions both directly and mediated by brand image (Cahayani & Sutar, 2020).

Conclusion

This research shows that out of the seven hypotheses proposed, six were accepted and one was rejected. Overall, the decision to purchase a Honda Brio in Surabaya is more influenced by brand image and product quality than by the direct influence of influencers. Influencers play an important role in shaping brand image, but they do not directly drive purchasing decisions. Product quality has proven to be the most consistent factor influencing purchasing decisions, both directly and thru the formation of a positive brand image.

The research findings have theoretical implications, particularly for marketing strategies, regarding the importance of product quality and brand image built by companies, as these factors will determine purchasing decisions. Marketing strategies using influencers are one of the factors that contribute to building brand image, but they do not necessarily lead to increased purchasing decisions. The research findings also have practical implications for companies seeking to improve their marketing performance. They must understand the factors influencing consumer decisions, namely product quality and brand image. These findings confirm that in the context of automotive products, which involve high-risk purchasing decisions, consumers place more emphasis on reliability, performance, and brand reputation than on the role of promotion delivered by influencers. Thus, brand image acts as a mediator connecting the influence of influencers and product quality on purchasing decisions. The results of this research are expected to serve as a reference for automotive companies, particularly Honda, in designing marketing strategies that balance product quality and brand communication thru relevant and credible influencers.

The research was limited to the Surabaya area, so its generalizability is still limited. Future research could be conducted in a wider area with a larger sample. This research is also only focused on consumer perceptions of the Honda Brio product. Future research could consider comparisons between products, both within Honda itself and with competitor products. Automobile products are products that require careful consideration from consumers, but this study did not examine price perspective or price consideration as a factor considered by consumers. Future research could incorporate price as a factor determining purchasing decisions.

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