

The Influence of Consumer Perception and Brand Image on Gen Z Consumers' Purchase Decisions for Danone (AQUA) Products After the Peak of the Boycott Issue (A Study of Management Students of The Faculty of Economics and Business, Makassar State University)

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of consumer perception and brand image on Gen Z consumers' purchase decisions for Danone (AQUA) products after the peak of the boycott issue, focusing on Management students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Makassar State University. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method using a Likert-scale questionnaire to measure consumer perceptions, brand image, and purchase decisions. The analysis techniques used included validity testing, reliability testing, classical assumption testing, multiple linear regression, and t-tests and F-tests to examine partial and simultaneous effects using SPSS version 25. The results of the study indicate that consumer perceptions of AQUA are in the "high" to "very high" category, so that students continue to sort information and tend to maintain a positive view despite the boycott issue. Brand image is also classified as "high", indicating that the quality, symbolic value, and consumer experience with AQUA remain good. Purchasing decisions are also in the "high" to "very high" category, indicating that although the boycott issue influences considerations, product quality remains the main reason for choosing AQUA. Regression tests prove that consumer perceptions and brand image have a significant influence, both partially and simultaneously, on purchasing decisions.

Keywords: consumer perception, brand image, purchasing decisions, gen z, aqua

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh persepsi konsumen dan citra merek terhadap keputusan pembelian produk Danone (AQUA) pada konsumen Generasi Z pasca puncak isu boikot, dengan fokus pada mahasiswa Manajemen Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Negeri Makassar. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei melalui kuesioner berskala Likert untuk mengukur persepsi konsumen, citra merek, dan keputusan pembelian. Teknik analisis yang digunakan meliputi uji validitas, uji reliabilitas, uji asumsi klasik, regresi linear berganda, serta uji t dan uji F untuk melihat pengaruh parsial dan simultan menggunakan program SPSS versi 25. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa persepsi konsumen terhadap AQUA berada pada kategori "tinggi" hingga "sangat tinggi", sehingga mahasiswa tetap memilah informasi dan cenderung mempertahankan pandangan positif meskipun ada isu boikot. Citra merek juga tergolong "tinggi", menandakan bahwa kualitas, nilai simbolik, dan pengalaman konsumen terhadap AQUA tetap baik. Keputusan pembelian pun berada pada kategori "tinggi" hingga "sangat tinggi", menunjukkan bahwa meskipun isu boikot memengaruhi pertimbangan, kualitas produk tetap menjadi alasan utama dalam memilih AQUA. Uji regresi membuktikan bahwa persepsi konsumen dan citra merek berpengaruh signifikan, baik secara parsial maupun simultan, terhadap keputusan pembelian.

Kata kunci: persepsi konsumen, citra merek, keputusan pembelian, gen z, aqua

1. INTRODUCTION



The boycott of Danone (AQUA) products, publicized through social media in 2023-2024, became a phenomenon that captured public attention, particularly among Generation Z. This group is known for its highly active access to digital information and high sensitivity to social, ethical, and moral issues. The impact of the dissemination of boycott information through digital platforms not only influences consumer perceptions but can also impact brand image and purchasing decisions. AQUA, Indonesia's largest bottled water brand, felt the pressure of public opinion resulting from the boycott campaign, despite its historically strong reputation for product quality and safety. Consumer perception is a crucial factor in determining how individuals interpret and respond to information received, particularly regarding emerging negative issues. In the context of a boycott, consumer perception plays a role in determining whether they will maintain their trust in a product or be influenced by social opinion. Furthermore, brand image plays a crucial role, as brands that have long been trusted by consumers tend to be more resilient in the face of reputational crises. This interaction between consumer perception and brand image ultimately influences purchasing decisions. The purchasing decision is the final stage in a consumer's consideration process when selecting a product. In the digital age, this decision is driven not only by quality and functional needs, but also by public opinion, social values, and moral judgments about the company. The AQUA boycott phenomenon has introduced a new dynamic to consumer behavior, particularly among students of productive age who are critical of current issues. This study was conducted to analyze the influence of consumer perception and brand image on purchasing decisions of AQUA products among Management students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Makassar State University as representatives of Generation Z. This study is important to see the extent to which the boycott issue influences consumer behavior and how the strength of brand image plays a role in maintaining purchasing decisions amidst the pressure of public opinion. By using a quantitative approach, this study is expected to provide an empirical understanding of consumer behavior after a reputation crisis and become a reference for companies in formulating communication strategies and brand image recovery.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Perception

Consumer perception is the process by which individuals select, organize, and interpret information to form an image or understanding of an object. Kotler and Keller (2016) state that perception functions as a filter that influences how consumers respond to marketing messages, experiences, and the information they receive. Consumer perception is not always objective but is heavily influenced by psychological factors, values, beliefs, and prior experiences. Consumer perception consists of three main mechanisms: selective attention, selective distortion, and selective retention (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Selective attention describes consumers' tendency to pay attention only to information they deem relevant. Selective distortion indicates that consumers interpret information according to their pre-existing beliefs and attitudes. Selective retention describes individuals' tendency to only remember information that supports their personal views. In the context of boycott issues, these three aspects play a significant role in determining whether consumers accept or reject negative information about a particular brand.

Brand Image

Brand image is the perception and belief consumers have of a brand, formed through experience, information, and interaction with the product. According to Aaker (1997), brand image is a consumer's mental representation of a brand, encompassing the associations, symbols, characteristics, and emotional value attached to the product. A

strong brand image can increase consumer loyalty, perceived quality, and trust in a product, even in the face of negative pressure. Brand image is generally constructed through three dimensions: functional image, symbolic image, and experiential image (Aaker, 1997). Functional image relates to the quality, reliability, and superiority of the product. Symbolic image relates to the self-identity, lifestyle, and social values consumers associate with the brand. Meanwhile, experiential image reflects consumer satisfaction, familiarity, and interaction when using the product. In the case of AQUA, these three dimensions are important indicators of how the brand image persists after the boycott issue.

Purchasing Decisions

The purchase decision is the final stage in the consumer behavior process, where individuals choose whether or not to purchase a product after going through a series of considerations. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), purchasing decisions are influenced by internal factors (motivation, perception, knowledge) and external factors (family, culture, environmental information). The purchasing decision process includes five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. Purchasing decisions can change when consumers receive new information that influences their perceptions, including negative issues such as boycotts. However, previous research has shown that when brand image and product quality perceptions are strong, consumers tend to persist with purchases despite social pressure (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2016). Therefore, analyzing AQUA's purchasing decisions helps understand the extent to which brand image and consumer perceptions persist during a crisis.

The Relationship between Consumer Perception and Purchasing Decisions

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2004), perception is defined as the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. This process can be described as how we see the world around us. Perception is a major factor influencing a person's purchasing decisions. Perception itself is a component of psychological factors. A person's perception of a product does not always align with the decision-making process. Every stimulus and piece of information a consumer receives about a product is processed and interpreted with varying perspectives and attitudes, which vary from one consumer to another. Research by Rachman et al. (2022) also shows that consumer perception has a significant influence on the purchasing decision-making process. The stronger the perception of a product, the higher the likelihood of a purchase. The influence of consumer perception on purchasing decisions can reach 74.4%.

The Relationship between Brand Image and Purchasing Decisions

Brand image is a consumer's perception of a brand, formed from associations embedded in their minds, including product superiority, brand personality, and the product's uniqueness compared to competing products. According to Kotler and Keller (2012), a strong brand image encompasses the following dimensions: brand association superiority, association strength, and association uniqueness, which constitute a brand's distinctive identity. A positive brand image creates a better perception of quality, increases consumer trust, and fosters brand loyalty. Research by Jaya et al. (2025), conducted in 2024, showed that brand image has a significant positive influence on purchasing decisions, with a correlation coefficient of 0.517 and a determination coefficient of 0.267. This means that brand image explains approximately 26.7% of the variation in purchasing decisions. This research confirms that a positive brand image significantly influences consumers' decisions to purchase a product.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Research type and Design

This type of research is included in the category of causal associative research, namely a type of research that aims to examine the cause-and-effect relationship between two or more independent variables on the dependent variable. Causal associative research not only looks at the relationship between variables, but also analyzes the influence or direct impact of one variable on another. In the context of this research, the researcher wants to know the extent of the influence of consumer perception (X1) and brand image (X2) on purchasing decisions (Y) on Generation Z consumers (Management students of FEB UNM) who consume Danone (AQUA) products, after the emergence of boycott issues that affect the image and trust in the brand.

Location and Time of Research

According to Sugiyono (2008:119), a research location is the area targeted during a research or observation to obtain accurate data for a study. The selection of a research location is crucial for the accuracy of the data collected; therefore, the research location must be determined beforehand. Location has the same meaning as place or position. The research location is the area where the author conducts research or evaluates the issues to be studied. The research was conducted on Gen Z consumers who are familiar with or consume AQUA products in the Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Makassar State University. The research timeframe is the time span required to conduct the research and the length of time determined by the researcher.

Population and Sample

According to Sugiyono (2017:117), population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics that are determined by researchers to be studied and then conclusions drawn and according to Sugiyono (2017:118), sample is part of the number and characteristics possessed by the population. The population in this study included 1,183 active Management students from the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) UNM, graduating in the 2022-2024 intake. They were members of Generation Z (born 1997-2012), and were familiar with or had consumed AQUA products. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. The researcher wanted to ensure that the respondents were relevant to the study's focus (Gen Z who were/were aware of the boycott issue and consumed AQUA). This ensured that the data obtained were more representative of the phenomenon under study. The criteria were as follows:

1. Active Management students from the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) UNM, graduating in the 2022-2024 intake.
2. Belonging to the Gen Z category.
3. Have consumed AQUA products.
4. Aware of the boycott issue.

The sample size was also determined using the Slovin Formula. The Slovin Formula is a method for determining sample size in research, especially when the population size is known and the researcher wants to estimate a representative sample size with a certain margin of error.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Description:

n: Number of Samples

N: Population Size

e: Margin of Error (%)

Data collection technique

This research used a questionnaire as a data collection technique, a frequently used tool to collect data from respondents. This study also employed a Likert Scale, a research method used to measure attitudes and opinions.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe respondent profiles and response patterns using SPSS to test relationships between variables.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents in this study were active Management students from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Makassar State University, graduating in the 2022-2024 intake, who had consumed and were aware of the boycott of Danone (AQUA) products. The 106 respondents exceeded the total sample size of 100. Data collection was conducted using a Google Form questionnaire. The data obtained revealed the following characteristics.

Respondent Characteristics

Table 4.1 Characteristics Based on Age

No.	Age	Total	Percentage
1	19 Years old	3	3%
2.	20 Years old	74	70%
3.	21 Years old	16	15%
4.	22 Years old	5	5%
5.	23 Years old	8	8%
Total		106	100%

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the age characteristics in the table above, it can be seen that the age of 20 years was the most respondents in this study with a total of 74 people, 19 years old numbered 3 people, 21 years old numbered 16 people, 22 years old numbered 5 people, and 23 years old numbered 8 people. With this age, the characteristics of Gen Z were fulfilled in this study.

Table 4.2 Characteristics Based on Student Generation

No.	Angkatan	Number	Percentage
1.	2022	102	96%
2.	2023	1	1%
3.	2024	3	3%
Total		106	100%

Source: Data Processed (2025)

The data shows that the majority of respondents were from the class of 2022, namely 102 students (96%), so the research results more closely represent the views of middle-level

students who are active in academic activities and surveys. Only one respondent (1%) from the class of 2023 and three respondents (3%) from the class of 2024 represented the class, so the contribution of new students is still very small. Therefore, the perceptions and experiences related to the AQUA boycott issue in this study primarily reflect the perspectives of students from the class of 2022.

Validity Test

Validity testing according to Ghozali (2011:45) is used to measure the validity of a questionnaire. An instrument is said to be valid if it has high validity, namely the calculated r correlation $>$ r table, conversely, an instrument that is less valid means it has low validity with a calculated r correlation value.

Table 4.6 Validity Test Results Consumer Perception

Statement Items	r Hitung	r Tabel	sig	Status
1	0,455	0,225	0.000	Valid
2	0,639	0,225	0.000	Valid
3	0,397	0,225	0.000	Valid
4	0,557	0,225	0.000	Valid
5	0,376	0,225	0.000	Valid
6	0,244	0,225	0.012	Valid
7	0,627	0,225	0.000	Valid
8	0,630	0,225	0.000	Valid
9	0,671	0,225	0.000	Valid
10	0,615	0,225	0.000	Valid

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the table above, all statement items in the Consumer Perception variable (X1) can be declared valid because all statement items have a calculated r value greater than the table r value of 0.225. Although statement item 6 has a lower calculated r than the other statement items, it is still stated, but its contribution is the smallest to the total score.

Table 4.7 Validity Test Results Brand Image

Statement Items	r Hitung	r Tabel	sig	Status
1	0,842	0,225	0.000	Valid
2	0,863	0,225	0.000	Valid
3	0,878	0,225	0.000	Valid
4	0,868	0,225	0.000	Valid
5	0,842	0,225	0.000	Valid
6	0,810	0,225	0.000	Valid
7	0,858	0,225	0.000	Valid
8	0,897	0,225	0.000	Valid
9	0,926	0,225	0.000	Valid
10	0,874	0,225	0.000	Valid

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Furthermore, based on the table above, all statement items in the brand image variable (X2) can be declared valid because all statement items have a calculated r value greater than the table r value of 0.225.

Table 4.8 Validity Test Results Purchasing Decision

Statement Items	r Hitung	r Tabel	sig	Status
1	0,896	0,225	0.000	Valid
2	0,466	0,225	0.000	Valid
3	0,155	0,225	0.112	No Valid
4	0,281	0,225	0.004	Valid
5	0,865	0,225	0,000	Valid
6	0,862	0,225	0.000	Valid
7	0,882	0,225	0.000	Valid
8	0,881	0,225	0.000	Valid
9	0,896	0,225	0.000	Valid
10	0,911	0,225	0.000	Valid
11	0,903	0,225	0.000	Valid

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the table above, overall the statement items in the purchasing decision variable (Y) can be declared valid apart from statement item number 3 which has a significance value greater than 0.05, but all statement items have a calculated r value greater than the r table result of 0.225.

Reliability Test

Ghozali (2011:47) states that reliability is a number that indicates the consistency of a measuring instrument in measuring the same object. To measure the consistency of a research instrument, the criterion for reliability is if the Cronbach's Alpha value is > 0.70.

Table 4.9 Reliability Test Results

No.	Variabel	Cronbach Alpha	Status
1.	Consumer Perception (X1)	0,707	Reliabel
2	Brand Image (X2)	0,962	Reliabel
3.	Purchasing Decisions (Y)	0,905	Reliabel

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the table above, it can be seen that all the statement items regarding consumer perception, brand image and purchasing decisions are stated to be reliable because they have a Cronbach Alpha value of more than 0.70.

Normality Test

The normality test aims to determine whether the confounding variables or residuals in a regression model have a normal distribution (Ghozali, 2012:160).

Table 4.10 Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		106
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	3,58521070
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,107
	Positive	,067
	Negative	-,107
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1,099
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,179

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on Table 4.10, the Asymp. Sig. value for the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is 0.179. Therefore, it can be concluded that the distribution of the residual variance obtained is said to be normal because the significance value is greater than 0.05 or $0.179 > 0.05$.

Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test aims to determine whether a regression model exhibits a correlation between independent variables (Ghozali, 2012:105). According to Ghozali (2011:91), multicollinearity can be detected by:

1. Having a VIF value less than 10.
2. Having a tolerance value close to 1.

This test is used to determine whether the independent variables are highly correlated. A model is declared free of multicollinearity if the tolerance value is > 0.10 and the VIF is < 10 .

Table 4.11 Multicollinearity Test Results

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-7,267	3,040		-2,390	,019		
	PERSEPSI_KONSUMEN	,578	,103	,291	5,591	,000	,612	1,634
	CITRA_MERK	,703	,052	,701	13,479	,000	,612	1,634

a. Dependent Variable: KEPUTUSAN_PEMBELIAN

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on table 4.11 above, it can be seen that the tolerance value of the consumer perception and brand image variables is 0.612 and the VIF is 1.634, so it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity because the tolerance value is greater than 0.1 and the VIF value is less than 10.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Ghozali (2012:139) states that the heteroscedasticity test aims to determine whether there is inequality in the residual variances of one observation to another in a regression model. The heteroscedasticity test using graphical analysis is performed by observing a scatterplot. If the scatterplot forms a specific pattern, it indicates the presence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model. Conversely, if the scatterplot is randomly distributed, it indicates the absence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model (Suliyanto, 2011:95). To test for inequality in residual variances, the Glejser test or scatterplot can be used. The model is declared free of heteroscedasticity if the Sig. > 0.05 .

Table 4.12 Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3,838	2,138		1,795	,076		
	PERSEPSI_KONSUMEN	-,046	,073	-,080	-,635	,527	,612	1,634
	CITRA_MERK	,011	,037	,039	,311	,756	,612	1,634

a. Dependent Variable: ABS_RES

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the results of the Glejser method heteroscedasticity test, it is known that the significance value of each independent variable is above 0.05. This indicates that the consumer perception variable (X1) and brand image (X2) do not significantly influence the

absolute value of the residual. This means that if the absolute residual is not influenced by variable X, then the data is free of heteroscedasticity.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

According to Ghozali (2011:91) Multiple linear regression is a statistical method for assessing the relationship between a dependent variable and several independent variables with the aim of seeing whether the independent variables partially or simultaneously have a significant influence on the dependent variable.

Table 4.13 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Test Results

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-7,267	3,040		-2,390	,019
	PERSEPSI_KONSUMEN	,578	,103	,291	5,591	,000
	CITRA_MEREK	,703	,052	,701	13,479	,000

a. Dependent Variable: KEPUTUSAN_PEMBELIAN

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the calculation results in Table 4.13, the following multiple regression equation can be formed:

$$Y = -7.267 - 0.578X_1 + 0.703X_2 + e$$

The equation above can be explained as follows:

1. The constant is negative, at -7.267, meaning that if the Consumer Perception (X1) and Brand Image (X2) variables are zero or have no effect, then the baseline value for the purchase decision is -7.267.
2. The consumer perception coefficient is 0.578, meaning that every 1-unit increase in Consumer Perception will increase the Purchase Decision by 0.578 units, assuming other variables remain constant. Since the sig value is 0.000 < 0.05, consumer perception has a significant effect on the purchase decision.
3. The brand image coefficient is 0.703, meaning that every 1-unit increase in Brand Image will increase the Purchase Decision by 0.703 units, assuming other variables remain constant. Because the sig value is 0.000 < 0.05, brand image has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

T-test

The t-test basically shows how far the influence of one independent variable individually in explaining the variation of the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2011:98). The Consumer Perception Criteria for H1 are: 1) If the significance value of the t-test > 0.05 then Ho is accepted and H1 is rejected which means that Consumer Perception does not influence Purchasing Decisions. 2) If the significance value of the t-test ≤ 0.05 then Ho is rejected and H1 is accepted which means that Consumer Perception influences purchasing decisions.

Table 4.14 t-test Result

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-7,267	3,040		-2,390	,019
	PERSEPSI_KONSUMEN	,578	,103	,291	5,591	,000
	CITRA_MEREK	,703	,052	,701	13,479	,000

a. Dependent Variable: KEPUTUSAN_PEMBELIAN

Source: Data Processed (2025)

The t-table value can be obtained from the formula $df = n - k$ or $106 - 3 = 103$, the calculated t is obtained from table 4.9 and the t-table is found in the statistical table at a significance level of 0.05: $2 = 0.025$ (two-tailed test). The t-table value is 1.98326. The test criteria are: if the significance value is <0.05 and the calculated $t > t$ -table, then H_0 is rejected (there is an effect). Conversely, if the significance value is >0.05 , the calculated $t \leq t$ -table, then H_0 is accepted (there is no effect). The hypothesis is as follows:

A. Consumer Perception Variable (X1)

The table above shows that the calculated t-value for the consumer perception variable (X1) is 5.591, while the t-value is 1.98326, with a significance value of 0.000. Therefore, the calculated t-value is $<t$ -value and the significance value is >0.05 , meaning H_0 is accepted. This means that consumer perception (X1) partially influences purchasing decisions (Y).

B. Brand Image Variable

The table above shows that the calculated t-value for the brand image variable (X2) is 13.479, while the t-value is 1.98326, with a significance value of 0.000. This means that the calculated t-value is $<t$ -value and the significance value is >0.05 , meaning H_0 is accepted. This means that brand image (X2) partially influences purchasing decisions (Y).

F-test

The F-test is conducted to determine whether the substructure of the model used is significant, thus ensuring whether the model can be used to predict the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable (Priyatno, 2012:120).

The testing procedure used is as follows:

- 1) The significance level is set at 0.05,
- 2) The testing criteria

Table 4.15 F-test Result

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6571,452	2	3285,726	250,755	,000 ^a
	Residual	1349,642	103	13,103		
	Total	7921,094	105			

a. Predictors: (Constant), CITRA_MEREK, PERSEPSI_KONSUMEN

b. Dependent Variable: KEPUTUSAN_PEMBELIAN

Source: Data Processed (2025)

The calculated f value is obtained from table 4.15 which is 250.755 and the f table is searched in the statistical table at a significance of 0.05 $df_1 = k - 1$ or $3 - 1 = 2$, and $df_2 = n - k$ or $106 - 3 = 103$. Then it can be seen that the f table value is 3.08. The testing criteria are if the significance value is < 0.05 and the calculated $f > f$ table then H_0 is rejected (there is an influence) and vice versa if the significance value is > 0.05 f calculated $\leq f$ table then H_0 is accepted (there is no influence) then the hypothesis is as follows: $H_0: b_1 = b_2 = 0$, meaning that perception (X1) and brand image (X2) simultaneously do not influence consumer decisions (Y). H_a : not all $b = 0$, meaning that consumer perception (X1) and brand image (X2) simultaneously influence consumer decisions (Y). From the table above, it can be seen that the calculated f value is 250.755, while the table f value is 3.08 and the significance value is 0.000. The results of this study indicate that the calculated f value is $>$ table f value and the significance value is < 0.05 , meaning that consumer perception (X1) and brand image (X2) simultaneously influence the purchase (Y) of Danone (AQUA) products.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

According to Ghozali (2012:97), the coefficient of determination (R²) essentially measures the extent to which a model can explain variations in the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination value is between zero and one.

Table 4.16 Results of the Determination Coefficient Test

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,911 ^a	,830	,826	3,61985

a. Predictors: (Constant), CITRA_MEREK, PERSEPSI_KONSUMEN

b. Dependent Variable: KEPUTUSAN_PEMBELIAN

Source: Data Processed (2025)

The table above shows a coefficient of determination of 0.830, or 83%, on the adjusted R-square. This means that the consumer perception and brand image variables contribute 83% to the purchasing decision of Danone (AQUA) products, while the remaining 17% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the results of a study examining the influence of consumer perception and brand image on purchasing decisions for Danone (AQUA) products among Management students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Makassar State University, it can be concluded that consumer perception ranges from high to very high. This indicates that Generation Z students are still able to sort and filter information regarding the boycott issue and maintain a positive view of AQUA's quality. AQUA's brand image is also high, indicating that the functional quality, symbolic meaning, and user experience of the product are still perceived favorably by respondents despite the boycott issue. Purchasing decisions also range from high to very high, indicating that despite the boycott issue influencing several considerations, consumers still choose AQUA due to confidence in its product quality. The results of the regression analysis indicate that consumer perception and brand image have a significant influence, both partially and simultaneously, on AQUA purchasing decisions. Therefore, it can be concluded that both variables play a crucial role in maintaining the stability of purchasing decisions following the boycott issue.

Recommendations

Based on the research results, several recommendations can be made. Danone AQUA is advised to continue improving the quality of its communication and transparency of information to consumers, especially when addressing sensitive issues such as boycotts. The company needs to strengthen its digital communication strategy, social campaigns, and sustainability programs to maintain a positive and relevant brand image for Generation Z, who are highly concerned about ethical and environmental issues. Furthermore, consistency in maintaining product quality is crucial, as quality has been shown to be the primary reason consumers continue to choose AQUA despite the boycott issue. Consumers are encouraged to be more discerning in responding to circulating information by verifying the source before evaluating a product, so that purchasing decisions are not influenced by inaccurate information. Meanwhile, future researchers are advised to expand the scope of the study to a more diverse group of respondents and include other variables such as consumer loyalty or social media influence to achieve more comprehensive results. The results of this study can also be used by academics to understand consumer behavior in the digital era and the impact of social issues on purchasing decisions.

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