

Increasing Purchase Intention through Emotional Appeal, Brand Ambassador and Brand Image: A Study of Brand Awareness Mediation

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Abstract

This inquiry scrutinizes the cognitive determinants driving Purchase Intention among Generation Z consumers, explicitly validating the critical mediating function of Brand Awareness. The conceptual model evaluates the impact of Emotional Appeal, Brand Ambassador, and Brand Image within the specific context of the Pocari Sweat market. Utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze data from 144 respondents, the empirical evidence identifies Brand Image as the paramount antecedent for establishing Brand Awareness. A pivotal contribution of this study is the confirmation of Brand Awareness as a full mediator; this implies that marketing stimuli such as Emotional Appeal and Brand Ambassador possess no direct efficacy on purchase intent unless they are successfully internalized into brand cognition. Theoretically, this research advances consumer behavior literature by framing brand memory as a non-negotiable cognitive prerequisite in the Gen Z decision-making hierarchy, challenging the assumption that external stimuli trigger automatic conative responses. Consequently, the findings suggest that managerial strategies must pivot from maximizing visual exposure to prioritizing memory retention to effectively drive sales conversion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Survival in the crowded isotonic drink market depends on one thing: whether people actually intend to buy. Marketing researchers have spent years trying to figure out what drives this decision. Hussain et al., (2020) claim that emotional storytelling is the secret weapon for building a connection. Others, like Muljani & Koesworo, (2019), argue that it really comes down to how high-quality the product looks. Then you have the celebrity factor. Research from (Prasetio & Purnamawati, 2022; Jatmiko et al., 2025) consistently shows that a credible brand ambassador does more than just smile; they boost the brand's image and make people want to buy it.

The data tells an interesting story. In 2024, Pocari Sweat dominated the sector with a massive Top Brand Index of 62.2% (Marketing.co.id, 2024). But here is the interesting part: they are using a humor strategy with Fadil Jaidi to do it. Ayuningtyas & Regi, (2024) confirmed that Fadil's comedy creates huge spikes in online engagement. Dewi & Chandra, (2025) added that his personal values align with the audience, creating a real emotional bond. But does this actually work everywhere? We need to check if this strategy holds up for Generation Z in developing regions like

Bengkulu. This group has totally different media habits compared to people in big cities, yet nobody is really studying them.

Even with all the existing studies, we are still missing a piece of the puzzle. Most literature assumes a straight line: you see an emotional ad or a celebrity, you recognize the brand, and then you buy. But real life is rarely that linear. There is conflicting evidence suggesting that emotional ads might just trigger a quick, impulsive feeling without actually planting the brand in your long-term memory. This leaves us with a big question: is Brand Awareness actually necessary, or is it just an optional extra? The experts haven't agreed on this yet.

This research attempts to fix that confusion. We are using a quantitative approach to test how emotional appeals, celebrities, and brand reputation really impact Pocari Sweat sales in Bengkulu. We want to see the messy, complex reality of how Gen Z makes decisions. On a theoretical level, we are also stress-testing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The goal is simple: does this established framework still work when applied to the chaos of modern digital marketing? We aim to provide hard evidence on whether these old theories can survive in today's online landscape .

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention isn't just a number calculating the odds of a sale; it acts as a messy mix of what a person thinks and feels. In the world of decision-making, this variable is the single best predictor of what someone will *actually* do. It relies heavily on a tug-of-war between personal attitude, social pressure, and how much control they feel they have (Rohmawati & Mangifera, 2024). Modern studies remind us that this doesn't happen in a vacuum. It is the end result of everything a consumer thinks about a brand's reputation, quality, and price (Muljani & Koesworo, 2019). Champion Febrianta & Basiya, (2023) back this up, basically calling it the 'crystallization' moment where all those external marketing signals turn into a solid preference. That is why it sits at the very center of marketing models .

Emotional Appeal

Unlike rational arguments that try to convince your brain with logic, emotional appeal tries to bypass your defenses entirely by hitting the limbic system. Vrtana & Krizanova, (2023) suggest that ads focused on emotion build a psychological bond that is far stronger at triggering impulse buys than any logical argument could ever be. The mechanism is simple: tell a story that makes people feel something, and they will automatically associate that good feeling with the brand. Letsoin & Riorini, (2023) confirm that this emotional spark acts like a catalyst. It drastically pushes up the intent to buy, especially for products that people consume based on feelings rather than technical specs.

Brand Ambassador

In today's marketing landscape, brand ambassadors do more than just stand there and look good. They act as agents of 'social proof,' lending their own personality and trust to the brand equity. Looking at the findings from Dian Ajnya & Jatra, (2024), the real power of someone like Fadil Jaidi for Pocari Sweat lies in his ability to shape how the audience defines credibility. Theoretically, these figures change how we understand a brand Ghadani et al., (2022), Their personal reputation acts like a bridge. It takes a corporate message and makes it acceptable to the consumer, directly speeding up the decision to purchase.

Brand Image

Brand image is basically the total sum of everything stuck in a consumer's memory—every interaction and experience rolled into one. Samudra & Juanda, (2024) stress that this isn't just a logo or visual identity. It is a competitive edge made up of values, benefits, and attributes. When you look at the causal model, a positive image acts as a safety net of trust. It lowers the risk people feel, which drives loyalty and buying decisions (Saninaya et al., 2023). Furthermore, Dian Ajnya & Jatra, (2024) see brand image as a 'collector' variable. It takes outside influences like a famous ambassador and integrates them into the consumer's mind, giving a rational reason to back up the intent to buy.

Brand Awareness

Think of brand awareness as the brain's readiness to spot a brand when it's time to buy (Sukirman et al., 2023). High awareness isn't just about being popular. It is a cognitive requirement; it validates that the brand even exists in the consumer's list of options (Nurhandayani et al., 2019). Strategically, Ghadani et al., (2022) place awareness as a crucial 'middleman.' The argument is straightforward: marketing tricks like ambassadors or fancy images can't drive sales if they don't break through the noise first. So, brand awareness acts like a filter gate. It decides whether those marketing efforts actually convert into a purchase or just fade away

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

H1: *Emotional Appeal* has a significant positive effect on *Purchase Intention* .

According to *the Theory of Planned Behavior* (Ajzen, 1991) stated that emotional appeals influence purchase intentions through the formation of positive attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Emotional appeals create emotional experiences that fulfill consumers' social and psychological needs, thus encouraging positive attitudes toward products (Alshohaib, 2024). Ads that manage to touch a customer's emotions have a powerful effect: they cement the bond with the brand. As noted by (Rohman & Azizah, 2023). this emotional link drives loyalty up and pushes purchase intentions higher. Therefore, using emotion isn't optional. It serves as a vital strategy to build a stronger brand image and actually drive purchasing decisions

Empirically, emotional advertising has a significant influence on purchase intention. Positive emotions such as affection and pride increase consumer interest in a product (Le et al., 2024). Research (Agmeka et al., 2019) shows that consumers who view emotional advertisements have higher purchase intentions than those who view advertisements without an emotional approach. Sri Vandayuli Riorini's (2023) findings also demonstrate that Fadil Jaidi's campaign for Pocari Sweat strengthens brand awareness and brand image, thereby increasing purchase intention.

H2: *Brand Ambassador* has a significant positive effect on *purchase intention*.

According to *the Theory of Planned Behavior* (Ajzen, 1991) stated that purchase intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Brand ambassadors are not just passive promoters; they actively craft positive perceptions and elevate the overall appeal of a brand. According to Nurhasanah & Purwanto, (2023) highlight that these figures do more than just promote; they actively shape how consumers feel about a product. The effect of choosing the *right* ambassador is double-edged. First, it grabs consumer attention exactly when they are making a decision. Second, it forges a genuine emotional bond. It is this specific bond—as supported by (Anandyara & Samiono, 2022) (Nurhasanah & Purwanto, 2023). The credibility and attractiveness of brand ambassadors have also been shown to increase trust and a positive brand image (Laurie & Sukaris, 2022). that directly hardens the intention to buy

Empirically, brand ambassadors have a significant influence on purchase intention. Agmeka et al., (2019) and Susilo & Handayani, (2023) demonstrates that advertisements featuring brand ambassadors perform far better than those without. They highlight that endorsements from public figures do more than just grab attention; they strengthen brand image and actively boost purchasing decisions. Ultimately, the emotional allure of an ambassador heightens awareness, which then cascades down to influence the final purchase intent.

H3: *Brand image* has a significant positive effect on *purchase intention*.

Through the concept of *brand equity* , brand image influences purchase intention. Brand image is a customer's perception of a brand, formed through experiences and interactions, which increases consumer trust and loyalty (Afiftama & Nasir, 2024). When a brand image is positive, it builds a foundation of trust and loyalty. This naturally pushes consumers to actually buy the product. Because of this, a distinct and strong image helps a brand stand out in a crowded market and directly boosts the intent to purchase.

The data backs this up. Empirical studies prove that brand image is a major driver of purchase intention. Agmeka et al., (2019) found that a solid reputation directly fuels the desire to buy. Similarly Anggraini et al., (2024) showed that when consumers view a brand positively, they are far more likely to make a purchase. This cements brand image as a non-negotiable factor in the decision-making process

H4: *Emotional Appeal* has a positive effect on *Brand Awareness*

Emotional appeals in marketing communication strategies play a crucial role in increasing brand awareness. Advertisements with emotional elements connect consumers with the brand and strengthen brand recall (Ohara et al., 2025). Information processing theory explains that emotions influence how consumers absorb messages, making emotional advertisements more memorable and increasing brand awareness (Bagozzi et al., 1999).

There is solid empirical backing for the link between emotional appeal and brand awareness. Haliza et al., (2024) revealed that ads infused with emotion actually make brand recognition stronger. Similarly, Enrico et al., (2022) confirmed that taking an emotional angle helps the audience not just understand the brand, but remember it too. This proves that emotion is a major building block for creating awareness.

H5: *Brand Ambassador* has a significant positive effect on *Brand Awareness*

Social influence and personal appeal are the main tools brand ambassadors use to solidify awareness. they are the ones responsible for building the image and expanding product recognition (Prasetio & Purnamawati, 2023). (Firdaus et al., 2025) take it a step further, emphasizing that a truly *effective* ambassador deepens consumer understanding and

forges a positive relationship. It is essentially social proof in action: consumers naturally follow the lead of figures they trust. So, when an ambassador speaks, the audience listens, and brand awareness naturally spikes. Furthermore, a positive brand ambassador image has been shown to foster strong connections with consumers (Osak & Pasharibu, 2022).

Empirical evidence shows that brand ambassadors have a significant impact on brand awareness. (Haliza et al., 2024) Mentioning emotional elements in advertisements helps consumers understand and remember brands more easily. (Suci et al., 2025) added that popular brand ambassadors increase brand awareness, especially among teenagers. This finding is supported by (Martaputri et al., 2022) who confirmed that a positive brand ambassador image can strengthen consumer brand recognition and awareness.

H6: Brand Image has a significant positive effect on Brand Awareness

A positive reputation is a massive driver for boosting awareness. Osak & Pasharibu, (2022) point out that when a brand leaves a good impression, it becomes much easier for customers to spot and remember it. (Miranda et al., 2025) back this up, noting that a solid image simplifies the entire recognition process. Similarly, Sisca et al., (2021) found a similar link: a strong image builds trust, which directly increases the odds that a consumer will keep that brand in mind. In a competitive market, a positive brand image can boost brand awareness (Yasin, 2024).

Empirical evidence supports the influence of brand image on brand awareness. (Agmeka et al., 2019) showed that a positive brand image strengthens consumers' ability to find and remember a brand. This is confirmed by (Muliawan & Waluyo, 2021) who stated that a strong brand image increases brand awareness and purchasing decisions. Other research also confirms that a positive brand image strengthens consumer brand recognition ((Osak & Pasharibu, 2022).

H7: Brand Awareness has a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention

The Theory of Planned Behavior explains that brand awareness plays a significant role in influencing purchase intentions, as attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control contribute to consumer decisions. (Prasetio & Purnamawati, 2023) emphasizes that brand knowledge, namely the ability to recognize and remember a brand, is the first step in forming a positive attitude toward a product. Emotional appeal generates positive emotions that strengthen consumer perceptions of a brand (Dian Ajnya & Jatra, 2024b). This is in line with (Ghadani et al., 2022a), who showed that high brand awareness will increase consumers' tendency to have purchase intentions for a product.

Empirical evidence also supports that brand awareness has a significant positive influence on purchase intention. (Hardana et al., 2025) found that increasing consumer knowledge about a brand can boost purchase intention. (Agmeka et al., 2019) showed that consumers with high levels of brand awareness tend to be more willing to purchase advertised products. Similar results were shown by (Kim et al., 2018), stating that higher brand awareness, a stronger influence on purchase intention.

H8: Brand Awareness acts as a mediating variable between emotional appeal and Purchase Intention

Advertisements that use *emotional appeal* aim to trigger a deep emotional response in consumers, which will then increase the emotional attachment between consumers and the brand (Hussain et al., 2020b). However, this positive emotion cannot be directly translated into purchases without cognitive recognition of the brand. Therefore, *emotional appeal* must first create a memorable impression and increase consumers' ability to remember the brand. This process shows that *emotional appeal* functions as a catalyst that makes the brand message more easily recorded in memory, thereby increasing *brand awareness*. This increase in *brand awareness*, as a strong cognitive variable, ultimately drives the formation of *purchase intention*.

Empirical evidence supports this relationship, with (Oroh et al., 2022) finding that *emotional appeal* significantly impacts *brand awareness* by increasing positive perceptions of advertising messages. Similar findings were also presented by (Agmeka et al., 2019), who stated that strong emotional messages help consumers recall brands more easily. Furthermore, research (Ghadani et al., 2022a) also shows that effective *emotional appeal* can increase *brand awareness* because positive emotions strengthen brand recall and increase consumer recognition of the product.

H9: Brand Awareness acts as a significant mediating variable between Brand Ambassador and Purchase Intention.

A credible and highly attractive (Firdaus et al., 2025) *Brand ambassadors* can build a positive brand image. However, their greatest impact is on brand visibility and recognition, where *they* can increase brand awareness and recognition in the minds of consumers (Prasetio & Purnamawati, 2023). The increased brand recognition and recall caused by *the Brand Ambassador figure* is a manifestation of *Brand Awareness*. Therefore, although *Brand Ambassadors* aim to increase *Purchase Intention*, their influence path is most effective when they successfully increase *Brand Awareness*, which in turn is a direct predictor of *Purchase Intention*.

Empirical evidence supports the mediating role of *Brand Awareness* in the relationship between *Brand Ambassador* and *Purchase Intention*. Research by (Suci et al., 2025) shows that *brand ambassadors* have a significant influence on *brand awareness*, which then increases consumer purchase intention. Similar findings were presented by (Agmeka et al., 2019), who found that the presence of public figures with a positive image strengthens brand awareness

and drives purchase intention by increasing brand recognition. Furthermore, research by (Anandyara & Samiono, 2022) emphasized that *Brand Ambassadors* who have a good reputation are able to strengthen *Brand Awareness*, which is a key factor in building *Purchase Intention*.

H10: Brand awareness acts as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between brand image and purchase intention.

brand image, which encompasses consumers' perceptions of a brand's functional and symbolic attributes, is a powerful cognitive asset. A good brand image makes a brand more easily recognized and understood by consumers, which directly increases *brand awareness*. (Nurdiyanto A.D. & Purnomo M., 2020). The high *brand image* of Pocari Sweat (related to health and quality) makes this brand more accessible in consumer memory. In the context of purchasing decisions, *brand image* works efficiently by increasing brand awareness. This increased *brand awareness* then serves as a major driver of purchase intention, because memorable brands are perceived as more reliable and reduce purchase risk. Therefore, *brand image* significantly influences *purchase intention through increased brand awareness*.

Empirical evidence strengthens the mediating role of *Brand Awareness* in the relationship between *Brand Image* and *Purchase Intention*. Research by (Agmeka et al., 2019) shows that a strong *Brand Image* increases *Brand Awareness*, which in turn has a positive effect on *Purchase Intention*. Similar results were also found by (Ramadhan Aprian Aditama et al., 2023), who proved that a positive brand image strengthens brand recognition and increases consumer purchase intention. In addition, research (sutrismo et al., 2023) confirmed that a good *Brand Image* not only builds positive perceptions but also strengthens *Brand Awareness*, which plays an important role in driving *Purchase Intention*.

Research Thinking Framework

This framework illustrates the relationship between Emotional Appeal, Brand Ambassador, and Brand Image on Purchase Intention, with Brand Awareness as a mediating variable. Each independent variable has a direct effect on Purchase Intention and an indirect effect through Brand Awareness.

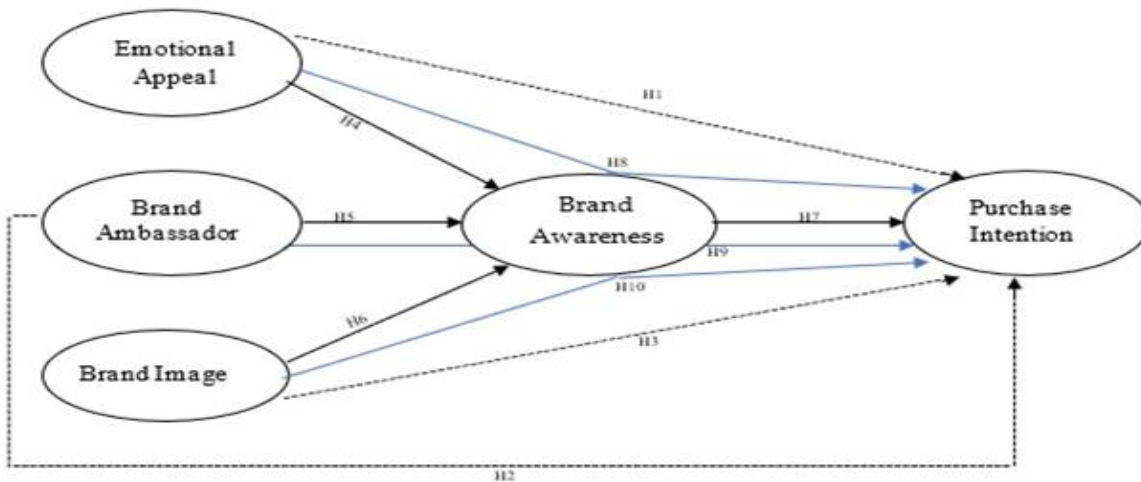


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. METHOD

To really get a handle on these digital dynamics, we decided to go beyond just describing things. We set up a quantitative framework to test the actual cause-and-effect links. We zeroed in on five specific variables: Emotional Appeal, Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, Brand Awareness, and the final intent to buy.

Gen Z is everywhere in Indonesia, but we chose to focus strictly on Bengkulu Province. Why pick this spot? The numbers back it up. Internet penetration here is hitting 77.63% (APJII, 2023; BPS Bengkulu Province, 2024). That represents a mature digital environment where people are highly engaged online.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability technique that targets respondents based on specific pre-defined traits relevant to the study's objectives. As Etikan, (2016) points out, this non-probability technique is the best move when random selection just isn't practical for a massive population. To make the cut, respondents had to tick three boxes: they had to be Gen Z, live in Bengkulu, and be active users of digital platforms.

RRI Bengkulu (2024) reports high social media intensity in this area, which supports our choice. It means this

demographic is heavily exposed to digital ads. This context is crucial. It lets us observe how marketing tools—like emotional appeals and ambassadors—work in a non-metropolitan region, something that research often ignores.

For the analysis, we crunched the numbers using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) via SmartPLS 4 software. SEM is chosen because it can estimate complex relationships and handle measurement errors at the same time. We specifically picked the PLS approach for its predictive power and because it doesn't demand perfect data normality (Hair et al., 2021). The PLS approach was specifically selected for its predictive power and its ability to handle models without needing strict data normality assumptions

We evaluated the model in a systematic, two-step process. First, we checked the 'Measurement Model' to ensure our tools were accurate. We looked for reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability > 0.70) and validity (AVE > 0.50). Once that cleared, we moved to the 'Structural Model.' Here, we analyzed the R Square to gauge predictive power and checked the path coefficients to see which relationships were actually significant.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent characteristics are shown in Table 2, which includes categories of gender, age, education level, and occupation. A total of 46.8 percent were male and 53.2 percent were female, with an age range of 18 to 34 years. The majority of participants had a high school/vocational high school education or equivalent, and based on occupation, 64.9 percent of respondents were students.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

No	Classification	Frequency	Presentation
1.	Gender		
	Man	72	46.8%
	Woman	82	53.2%
2.	Age		
	<18 Years	7	4.5%
	18-24 Years	142	92.2%
	25-34 Years	5	3.2%
3.	last education		
	Elementary/Middle School	2	1.3%
	High School/Vocational School	129	83.8%
	Diploma (Bachelor degree)	5	3.2%
	Bachelor degree)	18	11.7%
4.	Work		
	Students	100	64.9%
	Private sector employee	22	14.3%
	Government employees	2	1.3%
	Businessman	22	14.3%
	Prison Workers	6	3.9%
	Professional Working Alone	1	0.6%
Not yet working	1	0.6%	

Source: Research Data, 2025

- **Measurement of variables**

Table 3. Variable Measurement

Variables	Variable Indicator	Item	Code
Emotional Appeal (Hussain et al., 2020b)	Positive emotional appeal	I feel happy and excited when watching Pocari Sweat advertisement.	EA1
		Pocari Sweat advertisement makes me feel more emotionally close to the product.	EA2
	Negative emotional appeal	The Pocari Sweat advertisement made me aware of the importance of keeping my body hydrated.	EA3
		I feel worried if I don't take care of my body's health as suggested in the Pocari Sweat advertisement.	EA4
Brand Ambassador (Oroh et al., 2022)	Product quality impression	I view Pocari Sweat as a drink of good quality.	BA1
		I think Pocari Sweat has ingredients and flavors that reflect high quality.	BA2
	Product quality association	I consider Pocari Sweat as a good product for health.	BA3
		Pocari Sweat is suitable for consumption when I feel the need to maintain my body's fitness.	BA4
	Trust in the brand	I trust Pocari Sweat because of its positive image in the public eye.	BA5
		I believe that Pocari Sweat is a brand that is consistent in maintaining its reputation.	BA6
Brand awareness (Nurhandayani et al., 2019b)	Ability to recognize brands	I immediately recognize Pocari Sweat when I see it in stores or advertisements.	BAW1
		I can differentiate Pocari Sweat from other similar beverage products.	BAW2
	Ease of remembering the brand	I easily remember Pocari Sweat compared to other isotonic drinks.	BAW3
		I often mention Pocari Sweat when discussing isotonic drinks with others.	BAW4
	Consistency in choosing	I prefer Pocari Sweat because I am familiar with this brand.	BAW5
		I chose Pocari Sweat because I have been used to seeing and hearing this brand for a long time.	BAW6
Emotional appeal Lu, Sha'ari, et al. (2023)	Willingness to buy	I am willing to buy Pocari Sweat products if they are available in the nearest store.	PI1
		I felt interested in buying Pocari Sweat after seeing the advertisement.	PI2
	Intention to buy in the near future	I plan to buy Pocari Sweat in the near future.	PI3
		Pocari Sweat will be my first choice when I want to buy an isotonic drink.	PI4

Source: Research data, 2025

- **Validity Test**

Table 3. Validity test results

Item indicators	Convergent validity		Discriminant validity	Status
	Loading factor	AVE	Cross loading	
EA1	0,766	0,617	0,766	Valid
EA2	0,792		0,792	Valid
EA3	0,790		0,790	Valid
EA4	0,783		0,783	Valid
BA1	0,724	0.677	0,724	Valid
BA2	0,765		0,765	Valid
BA3	0.785		0.785	Valid
BA4	0,826		0,826	Valid
BA5	0.826		0.826	Valid
BA6	0,783		0,783	Valid
BI1	0.816	0.703	0.816	Valid
BI2	0.809		0.809	Valid
BI3	0.843		0.843	Valid
BI4	0.824		0.824	Valid
BI5	0.836		0.836	Valid
BI6	0.806		0.806	Valid
BAW1	0,792	0,613	0,792	Valid
BAW2	0,835		0,835	Valid
BAW3	0.831		0.831	Valid
BAW4	0,852		0,852	Valid
BAW5	0.851		0.851	Valid
BAW6	0,869		0,869	Valid
PI1	0.838	0,679	0.838	Valid
PI2	0.821		0.821	Valid
PI3	0.800		0.800	Valid
PI4	0.836		0.836	Valid

Source: Primary Data, Processed in 2025

The results of the convergent and discriminant validity tests indicate that all indicator items of this study are declared valid. Convergent validity is met because all *Loading Factor values* are above the threshold of 0.7 (ranging from 0.724 to 0.869) and the *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)* value for each variable also exceeds 0.5, proving that the items in one variable consistently measure the same concept. In addition, discriminant validity is also met because the *Loading Factor value* of each item in its own variable is very high, confirming that each variable (Emotional Appeal, Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Intention) measures a unique and empirically different construct, so that all research instruments can be relied upon for further hypothesis analysis.

- **Reliability Test**

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (ρA)	Composite Reliability (ρC)	Status
Brand ambassador	0.875	0.876	0.906	Reliable
Brand awareness	0.916	0.919	0.934	Reliable
Brand image	0,904	0,906	0.926	Reliable
Emotional appeal	0,790	0,791	0.863	Reliable
Purchase intention	0,843	0,850	0.894	Reliable

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

The results of the reliability test indicate that all constructs in this study are reliable and consistent. The reliability criteria are met because the *Cronbach's Alpha* and *Composite Reliability values* are high. (ρC) for all variables— *Brand Ambassador* ($\rho C = 0.906$), *Brand Awareness* ($\rho C = 0.934$), *Brand Image* ($\rho C = 0.926$), *Emotional Appeal* ($\rho C = 0.863$), and *Purchase Intention* ($\rho C = 0.894$) all well above the threshold of 0.70. This high internal consistency confirms

that your questionnaire instrument is stable and capable of producing consistent results when repeated measurements are taken, making your research data reliable for further hypothesis testing.

- **Structural model**

Table 5. R- Square Test Results

Variable	R- Square
Brand awareness	0, 736
Purchase intention	0, 581

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

The results of the R-Square analysis indicate that the structural model of the study has good predictive ability. The R2 value for the Brand Awareness variable is 0.736, which means that 73.6% of the variation in Brand Awareness can be effectively explained by the independent variables (*Emotional Appeal* , *Brand Ambassador* , and *Brand Image*), indicating a strong level of explanation (*Substantial*). Meanwhile, the R2 value for the Purchase Intention variable is 0.581, which indicates that 58.1% of the total variation in Purchase Intention can be explained by all predictor variables in the model, classified as a moderate level of explanation (*Moderate*). Overall, the variables studied are very successful in predicting Brand Awareness and have a fairly good ability in predicting Purchase Intention.

- **Path Co-Efficients Test**

Table 6. Path Co-Efficient Test Results

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
EA → PI	0.259	0.279	0.101	2,575	0.010
BA → PI	0.093	0.095	0.048	1,963	0.050
BI → PI	0.305	0.288	0.104	2,949	0.003
EA → BAW	0.107	0.110	0.066	1,639	0.101
BA → BAW	0.195	0.207	0.076	2,561	0.010
BI → BAW	0.640	0.627	0.079	8,066	0.000
BAW → PI	0.477	0.457	0.149	3,199	0.001
EA → BAW → PI	0.051	0.050	0.034	1,506	0.132
BA → BAW → PI	0.093	0.095	0.048	1,963	0.050
BI → BAW → PI	0.305	0.288	0.104	2,949	0.003

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

The Original Sample (β) value indicates the strength and direction of the influence between variables, supported by the Sample Mean as a stable path coefficient estimate, and a low Standard Deviation (STDEV) as evidence of statistical reliability. The T Statistics and P Values definitively determine significance, where the relationship is accepted if P Values ≤ 0.05 (or T Statistics ≥ 1.96). The results of the path coefficient analysis presented in Table 6 indicate that of the ten hypotheses tested, eight are significant (P ≤ 0.05), while two are not significant. Specifically, EA has a significant effect on PI ($\beta = 0.259$; P = 0.010). BA has a significant effect on PI ($\beta = 0.093$; p = 0.050). BI has a significant effect on PI ($\beta = 0.305$; p = 0.003). EA has no significant effect on BAW ($\beta = 0.107$; p = 0.101). BA has a significant effect on BAW ($\beta = 0.195$; p = 0.010). BI has a significant effect on BAW ($\beta = 0.640$; p = 0.000). BAW has a significant effect on PI ($\beta = 0.477$; p = 0.001).

EA directly has a significant effect on PI even though it is mediated by BAW ($\beta = 0.051$; $p = 0.132$) indicating that BAW does not fully mediate the relationship between EA and PI. Furthermore, BA directly and indirectly influences PI through BAW ($\beta = 0.093$; $p = 0.050$) indicating that BAW fully mediates the relationship between BA and PI. Meanwhile, BI directly and indirectly influences PI through BAW ($\beta = 0.305$; $p = 0.003$) indicating that BAW fully mediates the relationship between BI and PI.

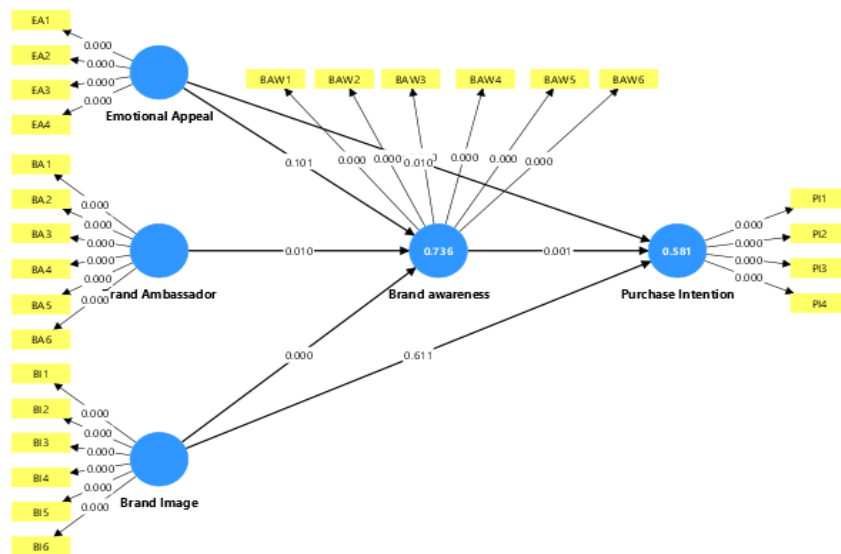


Figure 2. Structural Model

Discussion

We now have solid proof of what actually pushes consumers to buy Pocari Sweat. It turns out that Emotional Appeal, Brand Ambassadors, and Brand Image all pull the trigger on purchase intention, but they do it in totally different ways. The finding regarding the efficacy of Emotional Appeal corroborates the work of Hussain et al. (2020) and Sriram et al., (2021); when content is entertaining and hits an emotional chord, it creates an instant connection. It makes people want to buy without forcing their brains to overthink the process. Beyond the emotional dimension, the critical roles of credibility and reputation are also confirmed. The significant influence of the Brand Ambassador on purchase intention aligns with Prasetyo and Purnamawati (2023) as well as Nguyen et al., (2023), It essentially comes down to 'social validation'—if a trusted figure uses it, the decision is swayed. We see the same pattern with Brand Image. Similarly, regarding Brand Image, this research reinforces the perspectives of Angraini et al. (2024) and Chen et al., (2021), which posit that a positive brand image characterized by perceived quality and health assurances effectively mitigates consumer risk perception, thereby elevating the probability of purchase.

But here is the twist. While Emotional Appeal is great for triggering a quick urge to buy, it hits a wall when it comes to Brand Awareness. It doesn't significantly boost it. Because of that dead end, it fails to influence purchase intention through the mediation path. This result offers a divergent perspective from the assumptions held by Enrico et al. (2022) and Gamali and Fernando (2025), who link emotion to the fortification of brand memory. This phenomenon can be better understood through the lens of Balaskas et al., (2023) regarding the behavior of younger consumers; although emotional appeals successfully sway attitudes and intentions instantaneously, they often function as "momentary affect." This fleeting emotional response does not necessarily convert into a long-term cognitive memory structure. In this context, the audience responds to the advertisement impulsively, yet fails to anchor the experience as deep-seated, top-of-mind awareness.

In stark contrast to the emotional aspect, the formation of Brand Awareness in this study hinges heavily on consistent visual assets and tangible figures. The dominance of Brand Image in driving Brand Awareness confirms the national observations of Oroh et al. (2022) and is statistically substantiated by the global research of Zia et al., (2021), proving that strong brand image associations serve as the fundamental bedrock of consumer memory. A parallel dynamic is observed regarding the Brand Ambassador; these findings support Suci et al. (2025) and correspond with Hendarsin et al., (2024) regarding the "Idol" phenomenon, concluding that the utilization of popular figures on social media effectively translates audience attention into superior brand recognition.

Ultimately, this research positions Brand Awareness as a vital mediator within the purchase decision trajectory. Consistent with Agmeka et al. (2019) and Liu & Yu, (2024), heightened brand awareness is shown to enhance "diagnosticity," or the consumer's ability to evaluate the product, which drastically strengthens purchase intention. Consequently, the significant mediation observed in the Brand Ambassador and Brand Image pathways as supported by Karhoma Wijaya and Bahroni (2023) and Ghadani et al. (2022) underscores that for variables rooted in cognition and

credibility, marketing strategies must first conquer the consumer's "mind" (awareness) before influencing the final decision. This stands in clear distinction to Emotional Appeal, which appears capable of bypassing cognitive checkpoints to impact purchase intention directly through an affective route.

CONCLUSION

Our data from Bengkulu paints a clear picture: Brand Awareness is the real engine driving Purchase Intention, but it relies heavily on a solid Brand Image to work. We found a fascinating split in how the other variables behave. Brand Ambassadors are effectively doing double duty—boosting recognition and sales simultaneously—while Emotional Appeal acts more like a temporary spark. It might trigger an impulse buy, but it fails to stick in the long-term memory. This proves that Gen Z isn't just reacting to feelings; their decisions are actually grounded in a structured, cognitive thought process.

This finding puts fresh weight behind the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in the digital context. We are seeing exactly how external forces, like Ambassadors and Image, shape consumer control through specific cognitive steps. It also fills a massive gap in research regarding non-city populations. The evidence suggests that for Gen Z in emerging markets, cognitive factors—simply knowing and trusting the brand—beat out pure emotion when it comes to making the final call.

For Pocari Sweat, this signals that a strategy shift is overdue. Relying solely on emotionally charged campaigns is no longer enough to win this market. The focus has to pivot toward locking in a rock-solid reputation and choosing Ambassadors who actually align with Gen Z values. That is the only realistic way to secure that top-of-mind position and drive sustainable growth. Image-based assets require consistent management to ensure the sustainability of purchase intention over time, rather than relying on short-term emotional spikes.

Notwithstanding these insights, several constraints merit acknowledgement. Primarily, the geographical scope is confined to Bengkulu Province, implying that generalizing these results to a national scale requires caution. Additionally, the reliance on a cross-sectional design captures consumer behavior at a single instance in time. For further research, it is recommended to consider additional variables such as *brand trust* or *customer engagement* to deepen our understanding of the formation of *purchase intention* in the digital marketing era.

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