



Strategy for strengthening brand association and perceived quality of private label products to increase repurchase intentions among indomaret consumers in Palembang city

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ABSTRACT

The growth of modern retail in Indonesia is driving increased competition, one of which is through the development of private label products. Indomaret, as one of the largest retail chains in Palembang, strives to increase its competitiveness by offering private label products. However, consumer doubts remain regarding the quality and brand associations of these products. This study aims to analyze the influence of brand associations and perceived quality on the repurchase intention of private label products among Indomaret consumers in Palembang City. This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method, where data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 384 respondents. Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. The results showed that both brand associations and perceived quality had a positive and significant effect on the repurchase intention of private label products. This finding indicates that the stronger the brand association and the better the consumer's perception of product quality, the greater the likelihood of consumers making repeat purchases.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Competition in the modern retail business in Palembang is becoming increasingly fierce in line with economic growth and rising purchasing power among the population. As a center of trade and industry, Palembang has enormous market potential, creating competitive challenges for modern retail businesses. This is supported by changes in consumer behavior, which has become increasingly selective and critical in choosing a product. Consumers today not only consider factors such as price, quality, promotion, and service, but also seek added value that reflects the identity and association of the brand in building a positive perception of a product. The existence of a brand is crucial in marketing strategy, as it encompasses more than just a name or symbol; it is a defining factor that establishes a unique identity for a product. Brands help shape perceptions of quality among consumers and foster specific associations (Sansone et al., 2021).

Brand associations are the main foundation that shapes perceptions of quality. Positive and relevant brand associations reinforce consumers' perceptions of the brand's superiority and quality. When brand associations are linked to positive elements such as reliability, sustainability, or innovation, consumers are more likely to perceive the brand as being of good quality (Kotler et al., 2021). Another factor that affects repurchase intention is perceived quality. This aspect is crucial because consumers often reassess their experiences based on the quality of the products or services they receive. When perceived quality is high, it enhances consumer satisfaction, which in turn increases the likelihood of repurchase (Aaker, 1996). Repurchase intention is crucial because it not only indicates the likelihood of consumers buying the product again but also reflects their intention to recommend it to family and friends. When consumers have a positive experience, they generally develop a favorable perception of the product.

The Private Label Product phenomenon is a marketing strategy in which retailers develop and sell products under their brand name. These Private Label products are typically manufactured to be priced more competitively than National Brand products, while still maintaining a high level of quality (Caprice, 2017). One of the retail companies that sells private label products is Indomaret. Indomaret has become a leading modern retailer with significant growth in the city of Palembang. According to data from the Palembang City DPM-PTSP in 2021, there were 318 Indomaret outlets, and this number continues to grow each year. The diversity of products offered by Indomaret is a key factor supporting the success and appeal of modern retail among the residents of Palembang City (Iya, 2021). However, consumers still perceive the brand association and quality of private label products as low. This hesitation stems from consumers not being convinced of the quality and reliability of these products, which affects their willingness to purchase them. Many consumers prefer products from well-known brands that have proven quality. In addition, private label products are often stigmatized as low quality, even though in reality many of them are produced by the same manufacturers as national brand products. This situation shows that there is still a knowledge gap among the public regarding private label products.

This study is based on Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT), a model used to understand consumer behavior, particularly in the context of repurchase intention. This theory focuses on how consumers' initial expectations influence their satisfaction after using the product and how satisfaction can influence their intention to repurchase. Repurchase intention arises when consumers' expectations match their expectations. If consumers are satisfied with their previous purchasing experience, they are more likely to make a repurchase. The process in ECT theory that influences consumer behavior in repurchase intention consists of initial expectations, experience (performance), confirmation, satisfaction, repurchase behavior, and purchase behavior (Oliver, 1980).

Brand association reflects everything connected in consumers' memories about a brand, including product attributes, benefits, experiences, symbols, and even emotions that arise when consumers think about the brand (Aaker, 2014). Perceived quality is consumers' perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Brand associations play an important role in shaping consumers' repurchase intentions, where brands that successfully build positive associations in consumers' minds can not only increase the likelihood of repurchase but also create long-term loyalty (Holbrook & Chaudhuri, 2001).

Perceived quality is a key factor influencing repurchase intention, whereby consumers who perceive a product to be of high quality tend to feel satisfied, trust the brand, and ultimately make repeat purchases (Kassim et al., 2021). Several previous studies have examined the influence of brand association and quality perception on repurchase intention, with varying results. Research conducted by Ali (2019) shows that brand association has a significant positive influence on repurchase intention. These results are also shown by several other studies that state the same thing (Afandi &

Muthohar, 2023; Ikhsani & Hudaya, 2020; Pranata & Permana, 2021; Samuel & Widjaja, 2024). Meanwhile, research conducted by Aquinia & Soliha (2020) found that brand association has no significant effect on repurchase intention.

Research conducted by Ratnafuri et al (2022) found that quality perception has a significant positive effect on repurchase intention. Several other studies have produced similar results, namely that quality perception has a significant positive effect on repurchase intention (Ali, 2019; Maulana & Rachmawati, 2024). Meanwhile, Wibisono (2023) research found that quality perception has no significant effect on repurchase intention. This study focuses on Indomaret in Palembang because Indomaret dominates the city's modern retail market and has the largest outlet network compared to competitors such as Alfamart. Palembang also represents a rapidly growing urban market, making it a relevant setting to examine consumer perceptions and repurchase intentions toward private label products.

This study aims to analyze how brand association and quality perception affect the intention to repurchase private label products. Ultimately, it seeks to provide insights into how Indomaret, especially in Palembang, can enhance its competitiveness in a challenging modern retail environment through effective private label product development strategies.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach. The quantitative method aims to identify independent variables (Brand Association X1 and Quality Perception X2) that influence the dependent variable (Repurchase Intention Y). The research used primary data. Primary data was collected directly from the field through interviews using a questionnaire. This data was obtained from Indomaret consumer respondents in Palembang City, South Sumatra Province. To ensure that the respondents were actual buyers of Indomaret private label products, a screening question was included at the beginning of the questionnaire asking whether they had ever purchased Indomaret private label items. Only respondents who answered "yes" were allowed to continue filling out the survey.

The instrument used in this survey-based research is a questionnaire. The selected research locations consisted of four 24-hour Indomaret branches located in Palembang City, South Sumatra Province (Indomaret Fresh Jendral Sudirman 4, Indomaret Demang 35, Indomaret Puncak Sekuning, and Indomaret Fresh Kemang Manis). The selected locations were in strategic and densely populated areas, making them one of the choices for consumers to meet their needs.

The sampling technique used in this study was based on the Lemeshow formula, with the population taken from the number of visitors to several Indomaret stores in Palembang City. Sampling was conducted using the Lemeshow formula with a 5% error rate.

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{z^2_{1-\alpha/2} \cdot P(1-P)}{d^2} \\
 n &= \frac{1,96^2 \times 0,5(1-0,5)}{0,05^2} \\
 n &= \frac{3,8416 \times 0,25}{0,0025} \\
 n &= \frac{0,9604}{0,0025} \\
 n &= 384,16 = 384
 \end{aligned}$$

Based on the above calculations, the sample to be used in this study consists of 384 respondents. The total of 384 respondents was proportionally distributed among the four outlets according to each store's visitor traffic, ensuring balanced representation of consumers from different retail areas. The operational implementation of the sampling

technique was conducted proportionally at each selected outlet based on the average daily number of visitors, ensuring representation from various demographic segments. The inclusion criteria were consumers aged 18 years and above who had purchased Indomaret private label products, while individuals who had never purchased such products were excluded from participation. The table below shows the operational variables used in this study, which contain variables and indicators for each research variable.

Table 1. Operationalization

| Variable | Indicator |
|--|---|
| <p>Brand Association (X_1)</p> <p>It is everything related to the memory of a brand, which is remembered by consumers and connected in their minds (Aaker, 1996).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product Attributes • User Experience • Lifestyle • <i>Customer Benefit</i> (Aaker, 2014) |
| <p>Perceived Quality (X_2)</p> <p>It is the customer's perception of the overall quality or excellence of a product or service in relation to what the consumer expects (Kotler et al., 2021).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance • Durability • <i>Conformance Quality</i> • Reliability (Kotler et al., 2021) |
| <p>Repurchase Intention (Y)</p> <p>It is the consumer's decision to repurchase the same product or service, which is influenced by the level of satisfaction, perceived quality, and value obtained from the product. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transactional Intent • Referential Intent • Preferential Intent • Exploratory Intent (Kotler et al., 2021) |

The data analysis technique uses Structural Equation Model- Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). SEM-PLS is a technique used to predict relationships between constructs, confirm theories, and relationships between latent variables. Furthermore, SEM-PLS does not require normally distributed research data. In SEM analysis, there are two models, namely the measurement model or outer model and the structural model or inner model. In testing the measurement model, validity is tested using convergent (the score must be greater than 0.70 and the loading between 0.50 and 0.60) and discriminant (comparing the square root of the extracted mean-variance, i.e., $AVE > 0.50$) criteria. Next, reliability is tested using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. The construct is considered reliable if the composite and Cronbach's alpha values are > 0.70 . A multicollinearity test was performed to examine the correlation among independent variables, and the results indicated that the model was free from multicollinearity issues, ensuring the validity of the SEM-PLS analysis. In this study, testing of the inner model was conducted through coefficient of determination tests, t-tests, and F-tests. The PLS-SEM method was chosen because it does not require strict assumptions, making it more flexible for use in various research contexts.

In addition to conducting quantitative analysis using SEM-PLS, this study also employs SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) as an additional analytical technique to enrich the interpretation of the research findings. SWOT analysis is a strategic planning instrument employed to identify and assess internal and external factors influencing an organization, product, or program (Dalton, 2019). The SWOT analysis aims to identify the strategic position of Indomaret's private label products based on the empirical results from the SEM-PLS analysis. Through this

approach, the quantitative findings are transformed into actionable managerial strategies, particularly focused on strengthening brand association and enhancing quality perception to boost consumer repurchase intention. In addition to the quantitative results, the SWOT analysis was also supported by brief interviews with Indomaret store supervisors to validate and enrich the interpretation of internal and external strategic factors.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Outer Model Evaluation

a. Validity Test

Validity testing is a statistical procedure designed to assess how well a research instrument, such as a questionnaire or survey, measures what it is intended to measure. The outer model testing stage serves to ensure that each construct has adequate validity and reliability, which can be reviewed through convergent validity and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014). Validity testing through Convergent Validity is viewed through Outer Loading and AVE (Average Variance Extracted). The results of the study based on Figure 1 below show that the Outer Loading value for each indicator is more than 0,6 for each construct. Indicators with an outer loading value of at least 0,5 can still be retained, while indicators with a value below 0,5 should be eliminated from the analysis (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

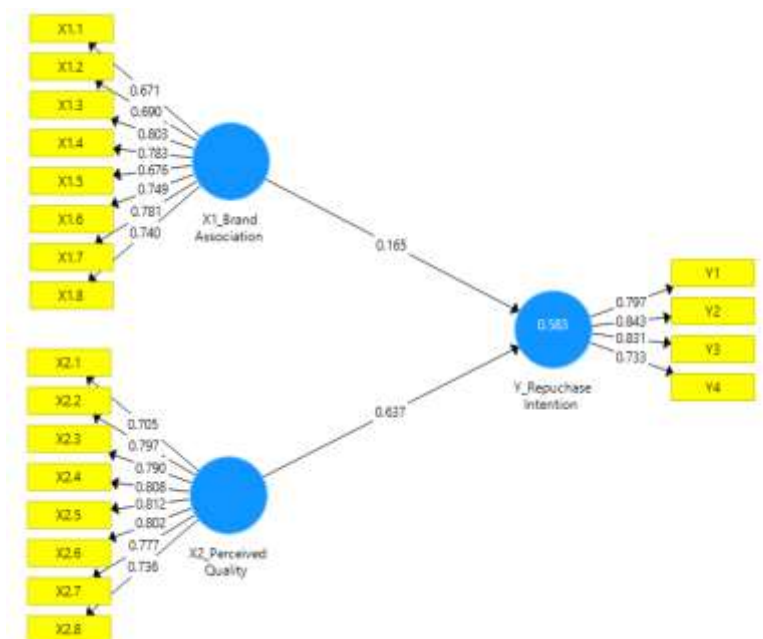


Figure 3. Outer Loadings
Source: SmartPLS Data Processing Results, 2025

Convergent validity is assessed not only through outer loading, but also through the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value. With an AVE value above 0,5, it can be concluded that the latent construct has the ability to explain more than half of the variance of the indicators it measures.

Table 2. AVE (*Avarage Variance Extracted*)

| Variable | AVE |
|-------------------------|-------|
| X1_ Brand Association | 0,545 |
| X2_ Perceived Quality | 0,607 |
| Y_ Repurchase Intention | 0,644 |

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing Results, 2025

In this study, the results of outer loading and AVE testing showed good results and it was concluded that the questionnaire instrument used met the validity criteria for further analysis.

b. Reliability Test

The reliability test was assessed based on composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values. In this study, the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values for each variable were obtained above 0,7. This indicates that the instrument has met the reliability criteria, as the minimum required threshold is 0,7 (Ghozali, 2018; Hair et al., 2014).

Tabel 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

| | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| X1_ Brand Association | 0,880 | 0,883 | 0,905 | 0,545 |
| X2_ Perceived Quality | 0,907 | 0,910 | 0,925 | 0,607 |
| Y_ Repurchase Intention | 0,814 | 0,816 | 0,878 | 0,644 |

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing Results, 2025

Based on Table 2, the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are above 0,7, so the questionnaire is considered reliable and suitable for measuring the research variables.

3.2. Inner Model Evaluation

a. Coefficient of Determination

The structural model or Inner Model refers to the relationship between latent variables in the model. The first inner model test performed is the coefficient of determination (R^2) or model fit test, which assesses the suitability of the model by looking at the amount of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is classified as: very weak (<0.3), weak (0,3–0,5), moderate (0,5–0,7), and strong (>0,7).

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination

| Variable | R Square | R Square Adjusted |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Y_ Repurchase Intention | 0,583 | 0,581 |

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing Results, 2025

Based on Table 3, the R Square (R^2) value for the repurchase intention variable (Y) is 0.583. This indicates that 58,3% of the variation in repurchase intention can be explained by the independent variables used in the model, while the remaining 41,7% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. The model has moderate predictive ability, in line with the interpretation category of the coefficient of determination.

b. Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

Hypothesis testing using the t-test is conducted to draw conclusions from the research results and answer the hypotheses that have been formulated previously. A hypothesis can be accepted if its significance value (P-value) is below 0.05, whereas if the value is greater than 0,05, the hypothesis is rejected (Ghozali, 2021)

Table 4. Direct Effect

| | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics (O/STDEV) | P Values |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| X1_ Brand Association -> Y_ Repurchase Intention | 0,165 | 0,171 | 0,059 | 2,783 | 0,006 |
| X2_ Perceived Quality -> Y_ Repurchase Intention | 0,637 | 0,631 | 0,057 | 11,196 | 0,000 |

Source: SmartPLS Data Processing Results, 2025

Based on the results of data processing using SmartPLS shown in Table 4, it can be seen that the Brand Association variable (X1) has a significant effect on Repurchase Intention (Y). This can be seen from the p-value of 0,006, which is less than 0,05. Thus, the hypothesis stating that brand association has a positive effect on repurchase intention can be accepted. Furthermore, the Perceived Quality variable (X2) is also proven to have a significant effect on Repurchase Intention (Y). The original sample value of 0.637 indicates a positive relationship, supported by a p-value of 0,000, which is less than 0,05. This means that the hypothesis regarding the positive effect of perceived quality on repurchase intention can also be accepted.

c. F Statistical Test

F test aimed at determining whether independent variables simultaneously have a significant effect on dependent variables in the research model (Sugiyono, 2018). In this study, an F test was conducted by comparing the calculated F value with the F table. Based on the calculation results, it is known that the R Square value is 0.583, with two independent variables (K), namely brand association and Perceived Quality, and a sample size (n) of 384 respondents at a significance level of 5%. Referring to Sugiyono (2018), the calculated F value can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
 F_{hitung} &= \frac{R^2/K}{(1 - R^2)/(n - k - 1)} \\
 &= \frac{0,583/2}{(1 - 0,583)/(384 - 2 - 1)} \\
 &= \frac{0,2915}{0,00109} = 267,4
 \end{aligned}$$

Based on calculations using the f-calculated formula, the f-calculated value is 267,4 compared to the f-table value of 3,02 at a significance level of 5%. The results show that brand association and Perceived Quality have a combined effect on repurchase intention.

3.3 Discussion

a. The effect of brand association on repurchase intention

The results of these findings can be further analyzed to show that the stronger the Brand Association variable is, the higher the tendency to repurchase, in this case private

labels at Indomaret. These results also indicate that brand association shapes positive consumer perceptions and can increase loyalty, including the intention to repurchase the same product. Furthermore, these results support previous studies that found brand association contributes to strengthening repurchase intention (Afandi & Muthohar, 2023; Ali, 2019; Ikhsani & Hudaya, 2020; Pranata & Permana, 2021; Samuel & Widjaja, 2024). This suggests that effective brand association not only enhances consumer satisfaction but also fosters a deeper emotional connection, which ultimately drives repeat purchases. As a result, businesses can leverage strong brand associations to cultivate customer loyalty and sustain sales over time. This strategy is particularly vital in competitive markets where differentiation can be challenging. By focusing on building and maintaining positive brand associations, companies can create a loyal customer base that is less likely to switch to competitors, even in the face of better pricing or alternative options.

b. The effect of perceived quality on repurchase intention

The perceived quality variable (X2) has a greater influence on repurchase intention (Y) than brand association, with a coefficient value of 0,637. These results indicate that consumers' assessment of the quality of Indomaret's private label products plays an important role in encouraging repurchase decisions. If consumers perceive Indomaret private label products to be of good quality and in line with their expectations, their intention to repurchase will be higher. This result is consistent with previous studies that state that perceived quality has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention (Ali, 2019; Maulana & Rachmawati, 2024; Ratnafuri et al., 2022). This suggests that maintaining high-quality standards for private label products is crucial for retailers like Indomaret, as it directly influences consumer loyalty and repeat purchases. Consequently, focusing on quality can enhance customer satisfaction and drive sales growth. Retailers should also consider incorporating customer feedback into their quality improvement processes, as this can further strengthen the relationship between consumers and private label brands. By actively engaging with shoppers and addressing their concerns, retailers can foster a sense of community and trust that encourages long-term loyalty. The findings of this study primarily reflect consumer behavior in Palembang City, which serves as a representative example of Indonesia's growing urban retail markets. Therefore, the generalization of results should be interpreted within similar metropolitan contexts. However, considering that Indomaret implements standardized private label strategies nationwide, these findings may also provide valuable insights applicable to other cities with comparable market characteristics.

3.4 SWOT Analysis

The SEM-PLS analysis shows that brand association and perceived quality have a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention. The next step is to do a SWOT analysis to help with strategic interpretation. This analysis seeks to formulate strategies that can improve the standing of Indomaret's private label products in the Palembang retail market, while transforming quantitative results into practical policy recommendations for efficient brand management. Indomaret has a number of strengths that help it do well. First, it has a large and easy-to-reach network of stores, which gives the retailer a lot of access to the market. A strong brand image is also an important tool for building consumer trust in its private label products. Also, the fact that Indomaret has made its products more affordable and better quality shows that it has done a good job of creating a positive image of its products. This is in line with what research has shown about how perceived quality affects people's plans to buy something again.

However, several weaknesses remain unaddressed. People still don't know much about private label products compared to national brands, and the packaging designs

don't yet fully show the quality that customers expect. Not giving consumers enough information or education about the benefits of these products could also make them think they are less valuable. Also, there aren't many private label products yet, so people still don't choose them for everyday needs.

In terms of opportunities, changes in consumer behavior, which are becoming more rational and leaning towards choosing high-value but affordable products, present an important opportunity for the development of private labels. The modern retail sector in Palembang is growing, and the city's residents have more money to spend, which means there are more chances for growth. Digital media and the Poinku app can also help strengthen brand communication and promote products. Working with local MSMEs could also help improve the reputation of product quality and show support for the local economy. At the same time, threats come from other retailers, like Alfamart, which is also making private label products with aggressive strategies. Some people have a hard time buying private label products because they think "cheap means low quality." Changes in the prices of raw materials and quickly changing trends in what people buy can also put Indomaret's product quality and competitiveness at risk.

Considering these four aspects, several strategies can be developed to strengthen the brand. First, Indomaret should improve brand communication through digital promotions and stories. This will help strengthen the value and identity of its private label products. Second, making the packaging design more informative can help people think the product is better quality and build trust. Third, there should be more focus on educational campaigns that use social media and in-store displays to show off the products' quality, safety, and cost-effectiveness. Lastly, adding more products and working with local producers can help you stand out from modern retail competitors.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that brand association and quality perception have a positive and significant effect on the intention to repurchase private label products at Indomaret in Palembang City. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening brand-related attributes and improving product quality perception to increase customer loyalty to private label products. From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the enrichment of consumer behavior and brand management literature by reaffirming that perceived quality and brand association are key determinants of repurchase intention, even within the context of local retail markets in developing countries. It also provides fresh insights into consumer behavior within Indonesia's modern retail industry by exploring how brand association and perceived quality drive repurchase intention for private label products—an area that remains underexplored in existing literature. The findings enrich both theoretical perspectives and practical applications in retail marketing, particularly in emerging market contexts. Furthermore, these results provide opportunities for further research to explore broader factors such as customer trust, price perception, or promotional strategies that may also contribute to repurchase intention. In terms of practical implications, Indomaret can apply these insights to refine its marketing strategy and increase its competitiveness in the modern retail market.

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