

MAPPING IDEA & LITERATURE FORMAT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Product Quality, Brand Image, Digital Marketing, and Human Resource Competence on Purchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

The digital era offers substantial opportunities for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to access broader markets and expand their businesses. However, Gambir Tea MSMEs face challenges as product sales have not yet reached their optimal level. These challenges stem from limited consumer awareness of product quality and benefits, weak brand recognition that hinders the development of a strong brand image, and insufficient utilization and mastery of digital technologies, all of which ultimately affect purchase intention. Such conditions pose significant challenges for Gambir Tea MSMEs that rely heavily on consumer purchase intention to sustain and grow their businesses. This study aims to examine the effects of product quality, brand image, digital marketing, and human resource competence on purchase intention among Gambir Tea MSMEs in Pakpak Bharat Regency, Indonesia. An explanatory research design with a quantitative approach was employed, and data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS–SEM). The findings reveal that product quality, brand image, and digital marketing have positive and significant effects on purchase intention. In contrast, human resource competence does not have a significant effect on purchase intention. This study contributes theoretically by extending the relational marketing framework. It provides practical insights for MSMEs on developing sustainable purchase intentions through improved product quality, stronger brand image, and effective digital marketing strategies focused on consumer satisfaction.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Purchase Intention, Product Quality, Brand Image, SME.

I. Introduction

Gambir is one of Indonesia's smallholder plantation commodities and serves as an export product. Indonesia holds a highly strategic position as the world's largest gambir producer, supplying approximately 80 percent of global demand. The country's comparative advantages, including favorable climate and topography suitable for gambir cultivation, contribute positively to its production levels. As a result, Indonesia exports gambir annually and remains the primary global supplier (Endang et al, 2009). Gambir is a product derived from the extraction of leaves and young twigs of the gambir plant. Unlike tea or coffee, the benefits and functions of gambir are not widely recognized by the public. This limited awareness constitutes a major constraint in the marketing of gambir in Indonesia. According to Yogi, as cited in Sagala (2000), Indonesia's



gambir supply largely originates from North Sumatra Province, particularly from Pakpak Bharat Regency. Pakpak Bharat Regency is one of the largest gambir-producing areas in North Sumatra, following Dairi, Deli Serdang, Central Tapanuli, and Mandailing Natal Regencies. In general, gambir is marketed as sap and dried gambir for both domestic and export markets. In North Sumatra Province, gambir cultivation is concentrated in only a few regencies. Among them, Pakpak Bharat Regency has the largest plantation area, covering 1.156.00 hectares with a production output of 1.206.00 tons. Gambir is considered a location-specific and leading commodity in Pakpak Bharat Regency. It serves as one of the primary sources of livelihood for farmers and significantly increases their income. The following section presents the plantation areas and gambir production in several regencies of North Sumatra.

Table 1. Plant Area and Production of Gambier Crops in Community Plantations in Several Districts of North Sumatra

Regency/City	Plant Area (Ha)			Production (tons)		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Christmas Decorations	12.00	12.00	12.00	3.00	4.00	5.00
Central Tapanuli	20.00	22.00	25.00	7.00	18.00	13.00
Düsseldorf	460.00	463.00	473.00	255.00	363.00	414.00
Pakpak Bharat	1.153.00	1.150.00	1.158.00	1.109.00	1.130.00	1.208.00
North Sumatra	1.645.00	1.647.00	1.668.00	1.374.00	1.515.00	1.640.00

Source: Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of North Sumatra Province, 2025.

Pakpak Bharat Regency is endowed with abundant natural resources and fertile soil, making it suitable for the cultivation of various crops and for agricultural and plantation activities. One of the endemic plants that thrives in this area is gambir, which is known for its numerous benefits and uses. This endemic crop has been cultivated by farmers in Pakpak Bharat Regency for generations. The land area and gambir production in Pakpak Bharat Regency are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Gambier Production and Planted Area by District in Pakpak Bharat Regency, 2022–2024

District	Plant Area (Ha)			Production (tons)		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Salak	144.00	144.00	115.62	60.00	50.00	60.10
STTU Jehe	1.082.00	249.00	386.18	1,834.00	330.00	334.00
Pagindar	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.00
STTU Julu	8.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	0.80	1.00
PGGS	219.00	314.00	307.43	12.00	210.00	211.00
Kerajaan	59.00	58.50	75.34	12.00	210.00	211.00
Tinada	27.00	27.00	54.50	24.00	24.00	31.30
Siempat Rube	13.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	1.00	1.00
Pakpak Bharat (Total)	1.577.00	612.50	939.07	1.957.25	680.80	719.90

Source: Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Pakpak Bharat Regency, 2025.

One of the main and superior products of the Gambier plant plantation in Pakpak Bharat Regency is gambier tea, a business that processes gambier leaves into tea bags with many health benefits. Based on the table above, 8 sub-districts produce gambier and gambier tea, namely Salak, STTU Jehe, Pagindar, STTU Julu, PGGS, Kingdom, Tinada, and Siempat Rube. Below is a picture of gambier leaf plantations, processing of gambier leaf drying and gambier leaf tea products in Pakpak Bharat Regency.



Figure 1. Gambir Leaf Plantation in Sondel Hamlet, Kuta Tinggi Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency



Figure 2. Drying of Gambier Leaves Prior to Processing into Tea
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Figure 3. The Process of Packaging Gambier Tea into Bags Prior to Boxing in Sondel Hamlet, Kuta Tinggi Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency

Figure 4 below shows that the packaging of gambir tea from Pakpak Bharat Regency remains relatively simple and does not yet stand out in terms of aesthetics or strong branding compared to other established herbal tea products on the market. Many gambir tea products from Pakpak Bharat found on online

marketplaces such as Tokopedia or Shopee still use basic sachet packaging or clear transparent plastic bags. When processed into tea bags, the packaging commonly used is a standard cardboard box with a simple design. The tea bags themselves are likely packed in individual sachets. This indicates a primary focus on functionality and low production costs.



Figure 4. Packaging of Gambier Leaf Tea

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Figure 5. Gambier Leaf Tea Produced in Pakpak Bharat Regency

Marketing plays a vital role across all economic activities, including trade, manufacturing, and services. Marketing procedures encompass tangible and intangible elements, such as product, price, promotion, distribution, and other components, aimed at satisfying consumer needs and preferences. In this context, consumers are generally attracted to purchase a product after being exposed to it. This exposure can stimulate their interest in the product and eventually generate the intention to buy, as reflected in their purchasing plans and the quantity they intend to purchase within a specific period. Gambier tea is a brewed beverage that was introduced to the market in 2013 by UD Sondel. This drink is produced from selected young leaves to create a tea beverage. Gambier tea is manufactured without preservatives and is made from natural ingredients processed from gambier leaves, which differ from conventional tea leaves. The local government has also established a regional company, PT PAL, to manage the marketing of gambier tea products, including gambier extract, exported to several countries such as India, Japan, China, Malaysia, and Pakistan (Source: Antara North Sumatra, 2021). Gambier tea products, particularly the flagship Sondel gambier leaf tea, are

available in nearly all wholesale stores in Pakpak Bharat and are sold online through various digital resellers, platforms, and wholesalers. Gambir tea from Pakpak Bharat Regency, especially Sondel gambir leaf tea, has been marketed to various regions across Indonesia, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Domestic Marketing Areas of Gambier Leaf Tea from Sondel, Pakpak Bharat Regency

No.	Destination Region	Remarks
1	North Sumatra	Medan, Dairi, Karo, Toba, and Samosir (sold in traditional markets and souvenir shops)
2	Aceh	Border areas such as Subulussalam and Aceh Singkil
3	Jakarta and Surrounding Areas	Marketed through e-commerce platforms and the Pakpak Bharat nomadic community
4	Bandung, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta	Distributed through reseller networks and social media platforms

Source: Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Pakpak Bharat Regency, 2025.

The products are marketed as tea bags, gambir leaf powder, and herbal extracts, both through direct sales and on online marketplaces. Common distribution channels include local markets and wholesalers in North Sumatra and Aceh, resellers and cooperatives outside the region, online marketplaces such as Shopee and Tokopedia, and interregional trade partnerships between regencies and cities. Gambir leaf tea from Pakpak Bharat is an innovative processed product derived from the gambir plant, which can be consumed and is believed to offer numerous health benefits. Produced by Rumah Gambir Papun, this gambir leaf tea offers a distinctive appeal, with a characteristic jasmine aroma that enhances its flavor. The combination of jasmine fragrance and gambir leaf aroma, blended with expert craftsmanship, offers a unique sensory experience for tea enthusiasts. Pakpak Bharat Regency also participated in the Anugerah Pesona Indonesia event by registering gambir leaf tea in the Best Traditional Drink category. Gambir tea from Pakpak Bharat Regency successfully won third place at the Anugerah Pesona Indonesia Awards 2022, based on information from the official Pakpak Bharat website. Table 4 indicates that the realized sales of gambir tea declined from 2020 to 2024. This situation has become a concern for the Government of Pakpak Bharat Regency and local small and medium enterprises, prompting efforts to identify solutions to address the issue. Strategies are also being explored to expand the market share of gambir tea beyond Pakpak Bharat, Dairi, Aceh, and Medan to major cities across Indonesia, as well as to international markets such as India, Japan, China, Malaysia, and Pakistan. The following section presents sales and pricing data for gambir tea during the 2020 to 2024 period.

Table 4. Budgeted and Actual Sales Data and Pricing of Gambier Tea (2020–2024)

No.	Year	Budgeted Sales	Actual Sales	Price (IDR)
1	2020	1,100	1,190	5,000
2	2021	1,211	1,282	5,500
3	2022	1,336	1,390	5,500
4	2023	1,352	1,254	6,000
5	2024	1,415	1,191	6,500

Source: Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Pakpak Bharat Regency, 2025.

The data presented in the table above indicate a decline in realized sales from 2020 to 2024. The current issue facing the company stems from the suboptimal sales performance of gambir tea products. This suggests that consumer purchase intention for gambir tea remains relatively low, despite the product's proven quality. The brand image of gambir tea has not yet established a stronger position than its competitors. As a result, many consumers choose not to purchase the product, leading to limited public awareness of its benefits and quality. The sales volume of gambir tea in Pakpak Bharat Regency continues to fluctuate and has

not yet met the targeted levels. The following table presents sales data for gambir tea products marketed by the small and medium enterprises in Pakpak Bharat Regency.

Table 5. Sales Volume of Gambier Tea in Salak District, Pakpak Bharat Regency (2020–2023)

Village	Year	Monthly Sales Volume (Boxes)	Annual Sales Volume (Boxes)	Price per Box (IDR)	Annual Revenue (IDR)
Salak I	2020	400	4,800	6,500	31,200,000
	2021	650	7,800	6,500	50,700,000
	2022	750	9,000	6,500	58,500,000
	2023	750	9,000	6,500	96,000,000*
Salak II	2020	1,000	12,000	6,500	78,000,000
	2021	1,300	15,600	6,500	101,400,000
	2022	1,500	14,400	6,500	93,600,000
	2023	900	10,800	10,000	108,000,000
Boangmanalu	2020	500	6,000	6,500	39,000,000
	2021	800	9,600	6,500	62,400,000
	2022	950	11,400	6,500	74,100,000
	2023	900	10,800	10,000	108,000,000
Lae Mbulan	2020	600	7,200	6,500	46,800,000
	2021	800	9,600	6,500	62,400,000
	2022	850	10,200	6,500	66,300,000
	2023	1,000	12,000	10,000	120,000,000
Kuta Tinggi	2020	700	8,400	6,500	54,600,000
	2021	900	10,800	6,500	70,200,000
	2022	1,500	18,000	6,500	117,000,000
	2023	2,000	24,000	10,000	240,000,000
Sibongkaras	2020	500	6,000	6,500	39,000,000
	2021	800	9,600	6,500	62,400,000
	2022	1,500	18,000	6,500	117,000,000
	2023	1,000	12,000	10,000	120,000,000

Source: Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of Pakpak Bharat Regency, 2024.

The data presented in the table above indicates that the sales volume of gambir tea fluctuated during the 2020 to 2023 period. The current issue facing the company is suboptimal sales of the gambir tea product. This condition suggests that consumer purchase intention for gambir tea remains relatively low, even though the product's quality has been proven. The brand image of gambir tea has not yet established a stronger position than its competitors. As a result, many consumers choose not to purchase the product, leading to limited public awareness of its quality. In the face of increasingly intense competition and rapid technological advancements, companies must adapt to ongoing developments, particularly in marketing, to expand their market share. In addition to Pakpak Bharat Regency in North Sumatra, other well-known regions for gambir leaf tea production in Indonesia include Limapuluh Kota Regency in West Sumatra, Babat Toman District in Musi Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra, and the Riau Islands. West Sumatra is the main center of gambir production in Indonesia, accounting for more than 80% of the country's gambir exports. Several gambir farmer groups in Kapur IX, Limapuluh Kota, West Sumatra, also produce gambir tea. Marketing plays a crucial role across all economic activities, including trade, manufacturing, and services. Marketing procedures involve various tangible and intangible elements such as product, price, promotion, brand image, communication, and other factors aimed at satisfying consumer needs and preferences. According to Annisa and Kotler, as

cited in Yuliana and Pratiwi (2020), consumers are generally interested in purchasing a product after exposure. Given the intense market competition, industry owners must strive to retain existing customers through effective marketing strategies. In this context, Pakpak Bharat's gambier tea must establish a strong, positive image in consumers' minds. A favorable image will shape positive consumer perceptions of the brand. Gambir tea is a brewed beverage introduced to the market in 2013 by UD Sondel. It is produced from selected young leaves to create a tea drink. The manufacturing process is preservative-free and uses natural ingredients derived from gambir leaves, unlike conventional tea leaves.

The quality of this product is well established. It offers various health benefits, including boosting immunity, slowing premature aging, improving digestion, and alleviating complaints such as stomach pain, ulcers, and diarrhea. Therefore, gambir tea is considered suitable for daily consumption. Interest in drinking tea has continued to grow among Indonesian society over the years. The increase in tea consumption is influenced not only by population growth but also by long-established cultural habits, with preparation methods adjusted to consumer preferences. Currently, numerous tea brands and varieties are available on the market. According to Tjiptono, as cited in Rijal (2023), purchase intention is a prerequisite for consumers who are interested in buying a product. It can therefore be argued that purchase intention represents a stage at which consumers evaluate and select products or services among available alternatives and proceed to purchase according to their needs. Tea is one of the products customers most consistently consume. It is a beverage that can be served anytime, anywhere, and alongside various types of food. Although preparation methods may vary according to individual preferences, whether served hot or iced, tea remains a constant companion during mealtime. Purchase intention is a consumer's desire to buy a product. According to Rusahana's research, consumer purchase intention plays a crucial role in ensuring that a company remains competitive, because without consumer interest in purchasing, the products produced will not generate revenue for business operations. Swastha et al., as cited in Kusuma (2019), define purchase intention as individual activities directly involved in obtaining and using goods and services, including the decision-making process for preparing and determining those activities. Consumer purchase intention toward gambir tea, as the willingness to buy the product, remains relatively low. As shown in Table 5, consumer interest in gambir tea declined during the 2020-2023 period. Purchase intention is essential to maintaining a company's competitiveness, as without consumer demand, its products will not generate income to support its operations.

According to Pramono, consumer purchase intention is the stage at which consumers form preferences among the brands in their consideration set and ultimately decide to purchase the most preferred alternative, or the process by which consumers decide to buy a product or service based on various considerations. These considerations related to purchase intention influence sales volume. Consequently, over the past few years, the sales volume of gambir tea in Pakpak Bharat Regency has fluctuated and has not yet reached the targeted level. Gambir products are recognized for offering numerous health benefits, including boosting immunity, slowing premature aging, improving digestion, and relieving conditions such as stomach pain, ulcers, and diarrhea. Therefore, gambir tea is considered suitable for daily consumption. However, the quality of gambir tea has primarily been emphasized for its health benefits. In contrast, other quality dimensions, such as performance, features, reliability, conformance to specifications, durability, availability, and aesthetics, have not been clearly demonstrated. Product quality is a critical factor that companies must address to strengthen Gambir Tea's brand image. One of the main issues in this context is limited brand recognition, as not all Pakpak Bharat residents are familiar with the product. Promotional activities have not been sufficiently intensive, and the company still relies mainly on conventional marketing methods. Online marketing remains limited due to insufficient technological capabilities and budget constraints, hindering access to modern markets. As a result, the gambir tea industry tends to rely on manual marketing, keeping the product relatively unknown to a broader audience. In an era where internet use is unavoidable and plays a significant role, especially for entrepreneurs, digital platforms offer substantial opportunities for product promotion and broader market recognition. Research by Nopera et al (2024)

indicates that brand image has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention for cosmetic products in Pagar Alam City.

Furthermore, research by Iwan Kurniawan, as cited in Maslichan (2012), indicates a positive relationship between product quality and repurchase intention. Product quality is therefore essential in enhancing a company's brand image. According to Faiz et al. (2016), brand image encompasses consumer associations and trust toward a particular product brand. A positive brand image can increase sales opportunities and contribute to sustainable growth. The stronger the consumer's purchase intention and loyalty toward a brand, the more favorable its image becomes. Nurhalim et al. (2020) state that brand image is formed based on consumers' experiences and the information they receive while using the product. Consumers believe that a strong brand image provides added value, leading them to be willing to pay a premium for the desired product. A strong brand image contributes positively to the overall corporate image. Brand image generally refers to what consumers think or feel when they encounter a particular brand, shaping a distinct perception that influences purchasing behavior. Brand image is shaped when consumers evaluate a brand from either a positive or a negative perspective. A brand also significantly affects expectations and purchase intention toward a product. A brand name is essential for an organization when its products are marketed or sold, as it promotes both the company and its offerings. Therefore, brand image plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchase intention. Establishing a strong brand image is a fundamental responsibility of a company's marketing division. When a company possesses a powerful brand image, it substantially affects consumer acquisition and product preference. In the face of increasingly intense competition and rapid technological advancements, companies must adapt to ongoing changes.

Businesses that fail to keep pace with technological developments risk falling behind their competitors. This situation directly impacts business growth and sustainability. Consequently, companies must consistently implement effective strategies to stimulate consumer purchase intention toward their products. Digital marketing refers to the promotion of a company's products through digital media that are easily accessible to potential consumers. This approach enables both companies and prospective customers to introduce and recognize products more effectively. According to Wicaksana, as cited in Apriani and Arifin (2020), this effectiveness stems from the fact that product-related information can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. Digital marketing also allows companies to reach a broader market, thereby increasing the potential number of interested consumers. Digital marketing implemented by marketers today enables products to become recognized more quickly by consumers, thereby accelerating the growth of purchase intention. Romadlon et al. (2020), Keuper et al. (2020), and Pangkey et al. (2019), as cited in Romadlon et al. (2020), emphasize that digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on increasing consumer purchase intention. Consumer interest in a company's products can be generated through various strategies, including digital marketing. Digital marketing of small- and medium-sized enterprise products through digital media provides easier access for potential customers. However, small and medium-sized gambir tea enterprises have not yet effectively utilized digital platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram to provide product information. Currently, these enterprises primarily sell their products through Shopee and Tokopedia. In this context, Shopee and Tokopedia primarily serve as sales platforms rather than strategic media channels for introducing products to target markets. In addition to product quality, brand image, and digital marketing, human resource competence is also an important factor that can stimulate purchase intention.

Competence refers to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and personal characteristics that underlie an individual and are directly related to job performance effectiveness. Human resource competence is the ability an individual possesses, encompassing knowledge, skills, and personality characteristics that directly influence performance and contribute to achieving organizational goals. Competence also reflects an individual's capacity to perform satisfactorily in the workplace, including the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge in new situations and to enhance the agreed benefits or outcomes. Performance has a causal relationship with competence or ability. Performance is a function of competence, attitudes, and actions. Competence describes the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and experience required to perform a particular job

or role effectively. Winanti (2021) found that competence significantly influences team member performance in achieving product quality. Product quality also serves as a benchmark for consumer interest, as high-quality products hold greater value in consumers' eyes. A technician's level of competence strongly influences the quality of the products they produce. This is consistent with the view expressed by Kreitner and Kinicki, as cited in Samsuni (2018), who state that competence is an ability reflecting stable characteristics related to an individual's maximum physical and mental capacity. In terms of brand recognition, Gambir Tea's promotional efforts among small- and medium-sized enterprises have not been sufficiently intensive, resulting in limited public awareness of the brand. These enterprises still rely predominantly on conventional marketing methods.

Online marketing remains limited due to inadequate technological adoption and financial constraints, hindering access to modern markets. Consequently, the gambir tea industry tends to rely on manual marketing, which keeps the product relatively unknown to the broader public. In an era where the internet is ubiquitous and plays a crucial role, particularly for small and medium enterprises, digital platforms offer substantial opportunities to expand market reach and enhance product recognition. Sales of gambir tea produced in Pakpak Bharat Regency are not widely available in either traditional or modern markets outside the local area. Sales are primarily concentrated in traditional markets within Pakpak Bharat Regency. The limited consumer purchase intention toward gambir tea from Pakpak Bharat, especially in the domestic market, can be attributed to several factors, including low national brand recognition, minimal digital promotion and social media activity, limited marketplace optimization, insufficient communication of product benefits, and inadequate human resource competence in adapting to technological advancements. Based on the above phenomena, this study aims to examine the influence of product quality, brand image, digital marketing, and human resource competence on purchase intention for gambir tea in Pakpak Bharat Regency.

Based on the research background and the limitations described above, the research problems can be formulated as follows:

- a. Does product quality have a significant effect on purchase intention?
- b. Does brand image have a significant effect on purchase intention?
- c. Does digital marketing have a significant effect on purchase intention?
- d. Does human resource competence have a significant effect on purchase intention?
- e. Do product quality, brand image, digital marketing, and human resource competence simultaneously have a significant effect on purchase intention?

This study is expected to achieve the following objectives:

- a. To identify and analyze the influence of product quality, brand image, digital marketing, and human resource competence on purchase intention.
- b. To provide an overview of purchase intention in relation to product quality, brand image, digital marketing, and human resource competence of Gambir Tea products in Pakpak Bharat Regency.
- c. To provide accurate and relevant information for improving product quality, brand image, digital marketing, and human resource competence of Gambir Tea, while increasing the realization of its potential market in Pakpak Bharat Regency.

The expected benefits of this research, derived from the entire research process and its findings, are divided into two categories: practical and academic. This study is expected to provide empirical insights into product quality, brand image, digital marketing, and human resource competence for the Gambir Tea small and medium industry and the relevant local government department in Pakpak Bharat Regency. The findings are intended to support better marketing performance and inform policy implementation for stakeholders involved in the development of gambir tea products. The academic benefit of this research is to enrich the scientific literature on the influence of product quality, brand image, digital marketing, and human resource

competence on purchase intention, particularly in research contexts that differ from this study in terms of the object and population.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Definition of Marketing

According to Kotler and Armstrong, as cited in Juwita (2015), marketing is a process by which companies create value for customers and build strong relationships with them, to capture value from customers in return. Hasan, as cited in Paradista et al. (2018), defines marketing as the process of identifying, creating, and communicating value, as well as maintaining customer satisfaction relationships in order to maximize company profits. Based on these expert definitions, it can be concluded that marketing is a company's business strategy and a set of processes to identify, create, communicate, and deliver value to customers, as well as to manage customer relationships aimed at achieving stakeholder satisfaction, including customers, employees, and shareholders, in order to generate profit. Marketing is a social and managerial process carried out by individuals or groups to obtain what they need and want by creating, offering, and exchanging valuable products with other parties. This statement indicates that the essence of marketing lies in activities aimed at fulfilling the needs and desires of interested parties through exchanges that provide satisfaction to all parties, particularly consumers who use the goods or services offered.

According to Kotler, as cited in Susilowati (2015), the marketing mix is a set of marketing tools consisting of product, price, place, and promotion that companies use to pursue their marketing objectives. Zeithaml and Bitner, as cited in Anjani et al. (2023), define the marketing mix as the organizational elements that emerge as core variables in every marketing text or marketing plan. Based on these definitions, the marketing mix consists of interrelated marketing elements that are combined, organized, and applied appropriately to enable companies to achieve practical marketing objectives while satisfying consumer needs and desires. According to Booms and Bitner, as cited in Debi et al. (2020), the traditional 4P approach, namely product, price, place, and promotion, often works well in the marketing of goods. However, three additional elements are required for service marketing, namely people, process, and physical evidence, because people, including team member selection, training, and motivation, deliver most services. These three elements are also related to the nature of services, in which production or operations and consumption occur as an inseparable sequence that directly involves both consumers and service providers.

2.2. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is part of the behavioral component within consumption attitudes. Pramono, as cited in Achmad et al. (2024), defines consumer purchase intention as the stage at which consumers form their preferences among several brands included in a choice set and ultimately make a purchase of the most preferred alternative, or as the process consumers go through when deciding to buy a product or service based on various considerations. According to Kotler and Keller, as cited in Achmad et al. (2024), consumer purchase intention is a form of consumer behavior in which individuals have a desire to buy or choose a product based on their experience selecting, using, consuming, or even desiring it. It also reflects the total value customers derive from owning or using a product or service. Meanwhile, Durianto and Liana, as cited in Achmad et al. (2024), state that purchase intention refers to a consumer's plan to buy a particular product and the quantity needed within a given period. Based on these definitions, purchase intention is a mental state that reflects consumers' plans to purchase a specific quantity of products from a particular brand. Interest or desire to purchase a product or service represents one form of consumer behavior. In this context, purchase intention reflects potential consumers, namely individuals who have not yet made a purchase at present but are likely to do so in the future and are often referred to as prospective buyers.

According to Kotler and Keller, as cited in Achmad et al. (2023), purchase intention is formed through learning and cognitive processes that shape consumer perceptions. According to Asshidin et al. (2016), purchase intention has been recognized as part of consumer behavior. Therefore, companies need to identify the factors that encourage consumers to intend to purchase a product. Consumer behavior refers to the actions consumers take when searching for, buying, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services they expect will satisfy their needs. Consumer purchasing behavior can change over time due to factors such as social lifestyles, a country's level of industrialization, and globalization, which may affect consumers' product evaluations. The interest that arises when making a purchase is continuously recorded in the mind and becomes a powerful drive. Ultimately, when consumers need to fulfill their needs, they actualize what has been formed in their thoughts. Thus, purchase intention emerges during the decision-making process.

According to Ferdinand, as cited in Arum and Asmi (2020), purchase intention can be identified through the following indicators:

- a. Transactional intention refers to an individual's tendency or willingness to purchase a particular product.
- b. Referential intention refers to an individual's tendency to recommend a product to others.
- c. Preferential intention refers to an interest that reflects an individual's behavior in having a primary preference for a particular product.
- d. Exploratory intention refers to an interest that reflects an individual's behavior in actively seeking information related to the desired product, to support positive perceptions of the product.

2.3. Product Quality

Kotler and Keller, as cited in Jonathan et al. (2023), state that product quality is the ability of a product to deliver performance that meets or even exceeds customer expectations. According to Tjiptono, as cited in Jonathan et al. (2023), product quality refers to efforts to meet or exceed customer expectations and encompasses products, services, people, processes, and the environment. Quality is a condition that continuously changes. According to Asshidin et al. (2016), quality is the evaluation of a product or service's overall excellence or superiority. This evaluation occurs when consumers receive information or cues about product characteristics during shopping or consumption. This also implies that perceptions of quality vary depending on several factors, such as the timing of purchase or consumption and the place where the product is purchased or consumed. According to Assauri, as cited in Rina and Sheli (2019), achieving the desired level of product quality requires standardization of quality. This aims to ensure that the products meet established standards so that consumers do not lose trust in them. Customer experience with purchasing good- or poor-quality products will influence whether consumers make repeat purchases. Therefore, business actors must be able to create products that match consumer needs and preferences. When products fail to meet consumer expectations, companies must respond quickly by developing products in line with those expectations. In conclusion, product quality is a product's ability to fulfill consumer needs in line with their expectations and desires.

Product development requires companies to understand product levels to respond to and keep pace with market needs and preferences. The following are the five levels of a product according to Kotler and Keller, as cited in Alda (2022):

- a. The core benefit refers to the fundamental benefit that customers actually need and consume from a product.
- b. The basic product is the essential version of the product that can fulfill its primary and most basic function.

- c. The expected product is a formal product offered with various attributes and conditions that are typically and reasonably expected and agreed upon for purchase, including a set of product attributes and conditions anticipated by buyers at the time of purchase.
- d. The augmented product consists of additional product attributes and service benefits that provide extra satisfaction and differentiate the product from competitors.
- e. The potential product includes all possible additions and modifications that may be developed for the product in the future, or all forms of enhancement and transformation that a product may undergo over time.

Suyadi Prawirosentono, as cited in Didi (2022), states that creating high-quality products is more attractive to consumers and can ultimately increase sales volume. Beyond this, high-quality products have several important aspects, as follows:

- a. Consumers who purchase products based on quality generally show stronger product loyalty than those who purchase based on price. Consumers who buy for product quality will continue to purchase the product until it no longer satisfies them because another product offering higher quality becomes available. However, as long as the product continues to innovate and improve its quality, consumers will remain loyal and continue purchasing it. In contrast, consumers who buy based on price tend to seek cheaper products regardless of the brand.
- b. Contrary to traditional business thinking, producing high-quality products does not automatically cost more than producing low-quality products. Many companies find that producing high-quality products does not necessarily result in higher prices; they can remain competitive. Producing high-quality products simultaneously increases productivity by improving material efficiency and reducing unnecessary costs.
- c. Selling low-quality products can result in numerous consumer complaints and product returns. This leads to higher repair and handling costs and can damage the company's image.

Based on these three reasons, producing high-quality products yields greater profits for producers than producing low-quality products. According to Lupiyoadi and Hamdani, in the research of Cely (2024), et al., the dimensions of product quality are as follows:

- a. Performance relates to the functional aspects of a product and represents the primary characteristics considered by consumers when purchasing a product.
- b. Features refer to the special characteristics that function as secondary or supplementary attributes to the product's performance.
- c. Conformance relates to the degree to which a product meets predetermined specifications based on consumer expectations. It reflects the extent to which a product's design and operating characteristics comply with established standards.
- d. Durability is closely related to how long a product can continue to be used under normal conditions.
- e. Aesthetics refer to the product's appeal to the senses.
- f. Perceived quality refers to the product's image and reputation, as well as the company's responsibility toward the product. Due to limited consumer knowledge of product attributes, buyers often assess quality based on price, brand name, and the company's reputation.

According to Kotler and Keller, as cited in Cely (2024), there are several benchmarks or indicators of product quality, which include the following:

- a. Form: Form refers to the size, shape, or physical structure of a product.
- b. Feature: Features are product attributes that complement the basic function of a product.

- c. Customization: Customization refers to the ability of marketers to differentiate products according to individual consumer preferences.
- d. Performance Quality: Performance quality becomes an increasingly important dimension for differentiation when companies apply a value model and offer higher quality at a lower cost.
- e. Conformance Quality: Conformance quality refers to the degree to which all produced units are identical and meet the promised specifications.
- f. Durability: Durability is a measure of the expected operating life of a product under normal or stressful conditions and is a valuable attribute for specific products.
- g. Reliability: Reliability is a measure of the probability that a product will not experience malfunction or failure within a specified period of time.
- h. Repairability: Repairability refers to the ease with which a product can be repaired when it fails or does not function properly.
- i. Style: Style describes the appearance and sensory appeal of a product to buyers.
- j. Design: Design refers to the totality of features that influence the appearance, feel, and function of a product based on customer needs.

2.4. Brand Image

According to the American Marketing Association, as cited in Supriyadi (2016), a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of these elements intended to identify the goods or services of a seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from others. Kotler, as cited in Nopera et al. (2020), states that brand image refers to a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination thereof that is used to identify the goods or services of an individual or a group of sellers and to distinguish them from competing products. According to Tjiptono, as cited in Nopera et al. (2020), brand image is the perception and belief held by consumers, as reflected in associations embedded in customer memory, which are often the first to be recalled when hearing a slogan and remain firmly rooted in consumers' minds. A positive brand image will encourage purchase intention toward a product or service. It can be concluded that brand image represents consumers' overall understanding of a brand or product, accompanied by trust and confidence in that brand. Brand associations consist of several types, including attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Attributes are related to aspects such as price, product characteristics, users, and usage image. The benefits derived from brand associations include functional, symbolic, and experiential benefits.

Brand elements can create positive perceptions when they are effectively enhanced, enabling a product's image to dominate market share. According to Schiffman and Kanuk, as cited in Winnie et al. (2025), several factors contribute to the formation of brand image, namely:

- a. Quality refers to the level of excellence of the products or services provided by the company.
- b. This factor relates to public opinions or collective agreements regarding a product or service that is used or demanded by consumers.
- c. Usefulness is associated with the functionality of a product or service that consumers can utilize.
- d. Service is related to the company's mission to serve and satisfy consumers.
- e. Risk refers to the level of potential consequences, including possible gains and losses, that consumers may experience.
- f. Price, in terms of how high or low it is or how much money consumers must spend, can influence brand image in the long term.

According to Rangkuti, as cited in Erni (2024), the steps to build brand image are as follows:

- a. Having Appropriate Positioning.
A brand must be able to position itself effectively so that it consistently becomes the primary and top choice in consumers' minds.
- b. Having Appropriate Brand Value
Producers must create the correct brand value to build a strong brand personality, making the brand more valuable and competitive in consumers' minds. Brand personality tends to change more quickly than brand positioning because it continuously adapts to consumer demands and preferences.
- c. Having the Right Concept
To communicate appropriate brand value and positioning, a suitable concept is required that aligns with the product, market segmentation, marketing approach, target market, and service quality. This helps companies build a positive brand image in consumers' minds.

According to Kartajaya, as cited in Erni (2024), the factors that influence brand image include the following:

- a. Communication from other sources that may differ from those conducted by marketers. Such communication can come from other consumers, retailers, and competitors.
- b. Consumer experience through experiments or direct usage can change previously held perceptions. Therefore, the various perceptions that arise will form the brand's overall image.
- c. Product development, in which brand positioning toward a product is relatively unique. On one hand, the brand serves as an umbrella for a product, meaning that by being associated with a brand, the product's value can increase.

Kotler and Keller, as cited in Erni (2024), state that the indicators of brand image include the following:

- a. Consumer perceptions of product recognition.
- b. Consumer perceptions of product quality.
- c. Consumer perceptions of product size and whether it meets their needs.
- d. Consumer perceptions of packaging design or model. The more attractive the packaging design, the more appealing and memorable the product will be to consumers.
- e. Consumer perceptions of product color.
- f. Consumer perceptions of price.

2.5. Digital Marketing

According to Keke (2022), marketing is a business activity that involves creating, communicating, distributing, and exchanging value offerings to consumers or society. At the same time, the internet is a digital medium that greatly facilitates access to the information needed in daily life. Purchasing goods and many other activities can be done online. As a result, the internet has become an important medium for companies or entrepreneurs to exchange value. Based on this explanation, digital marketing has emerged in the current digital era. Therefore, digital marketing refers to marketing activities conducted through digital media by offering a company's brand. Digital marketing is a marketing activity that uses online platforms to reach target consumers. Furthermore, according to Punnavanam et al. (2022), digital marketing is a form of direct marketing that connects consumers with sellers electronically using interactive technologies such as email, websites, online forums, interactive television, mobile communication, and others. Entrepreneurs use digital marketing activities to enhance the adoption of internet-based media in the market. Digital marketing has two main advantages:

- a. Relatively low cost, Digital marketing is much cheaper and can more easily reach a large number of potential consumers compared to conventional advertising. Its nature also allows consumers to easily check and compare products.
- b. Broad and effective media reach, Digital marketing enables the delivery of information on a much larger and broader scale compared to conventional media such as print media, radio, and television. In addition, digital marketing can accurately store data for business purposes.

According to Tabuena et al. (2022), the use of digital marketing is a way for companies to understand better the communication objectives that can be achieved through the use of the internet, as follows:

- a. Information Dissemination, One of the primary purposes of using a website is to provide comprehensive and in-depth information about a company's products. Businesses that use digital marketing have many opportunities to engage consumers. Therefore, the use of internet media in marketing is considered the most appropriate means for delivering comprehensive information to a broad audience.
- b. Creation of Popularity, Digital marketing often helps companies become more widely recognized, including the goods and services they produce. For companies with limited advertising budgets, digital marketing offers opportunities to create brand awareness more effectively than traditional media.

For research purposes, companies use digital marketing not only for marketing activities but also to conduct market research and gather information about competitors and target consumers. To raise awareness, companies implement digital marketing strategies to build public awareness and a positive corporate image. For product trials, companies use digital marketing to offer their products to visitors and encourage consumers to try them. In improving service, digital marketing plays a role by providing information and responding to customer questions and complaints. The capabilities of digital marketing can also enhance service quality and build strong relationships between businesses and their consumers. In terms of distribution enhancement, digital marketing offers various ways to market, promote, and display products. One such method is through websites designed to collaborate with affiliates. Links represent partnerships among multiple websites. Through this approach, companies can expand product distribution through website collaborations. According to Piranda et al. (2022), digital marketing refers to marketing activities that utilize digital technology. The role of digital marketing is vital. It depends on the development of digital technology as well as the formulation of plans to attract customers and direct them through a combination of electronic and conventional communication channels. Entrepreneurial strategies that use digital marketing, particularly through social media, can provide methods and steps to expand consumer networks in product marketing, thereby enabling traders to enhance their competitive advantage. According to Chaffey et al., as cited in Jasri et al. (2022), there are six main digital media channels, as follows:

- a. Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Search engine marketing involves the use of online advertisements on search engine results pages to help visitors find products offered on marketplace websites. Search marketing techniques are divided into two types: sponsored links using a pay-per-click system and position listings using search engine optimization, so that search engines can easily find products.
- b. Online Public Relations, Online public relations focuses on maximizing positive mentions and interactions related to the company's products and website through social media or blogs visited by potential consumers.
- c. Online Partnerships, Online partnerships involve creating and managing long-term agreements to promote a company's online services on third-party websites or through email communication.

- d. Interactive Advertising, Interactive advertising uses online advertisements such as banners and multimedia ads to increase brand awareness and encourage audience clicks that direct users to the target website.
- e. Opt In Email Marketing, Opt-in email marketing uses internal mailing lists to support customer engagement and retention. This approach expands email marketing contact lists by adding registered consumers who are aware they will regularly receive promotional emails from marketers.
- f. Social Media Marketing, Social media marketing is an important category of digital marketing that interacts with and encourages communication with customers through company-owned websites or social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as publisher websites, blogs, and forums. Social media marketing is a marketing strategy that uses various social media platforms and is widely recognized as an effective method for promoting goods or services in internet-based marketing.

According to Yazer Nasdini, as cited in Salsa (2024), the indicators of digital marketing are as follows:

- a. Accessibility: Accessibility refers to the ability of users to access information and services provided through online advertising. This concept is generally associated with how easily users can access digital platforms, including social media.
- b. Interactivity: Interactivity is the level of two-way communication between advertisers and consumers. It reflects both parties' ability to engage in reciprocal communication and respond effectively to feedback or input.
- c. Entertainment: Entertainment refers to the ability of advertisements to provide enjoyment or amusement to consumers. Many digital advertisements aim to entertain audiences while simultaneously delivering promotional messages.
- d. Credibility: Credibility refers to the degree of consumer trust in online advertisements. It indicates the extent to which advertising content is perceived as trustworthy, unbiased, competent, reliable, and specific.
- e. Irritation: Irritation refers to adverse reactions caused by online advertising, such as intrusive content, excessive repetition, or misleading information that may lead to consumer dissatisfaction.
- f. Informativeness: Informativeness is the ability of advertising to provide valuable and relevant information to consumers. As a core element of advertising, informativeness ensures that consumers receive accurate product representations, enabling them to make informed purchasing decisions and obtain economic benefits.

Business actors need to establish social media platforms, as they currently play a significant role in boosting sales. Social media platforms commonly used by businesses include the following:

- a. Facebook marketing refers to marketing activities conducted through Facebook. The objectives of Facebook marketing include:
 1. Building communication and community. Community is a crucial element in Facebook marketing because it enables the formation of groups of people who may eventually become the company's customers.
 2. Creating Connectivity. In the business world, relationships between sellers and consumers are essential. Facebook marketing can serve as a connecting medium that enables interaction between both parties.
 3. Creating credibility and prestige. Credibility is the ability to build customer trust through Facebook marketing. Beyond sales, companies must also build a strong reputation to be recognized as experts in their field.

4. Enhancing communication. Communication is necessary in marketing activities because businesses can easily reach consumers through Facebook's features.
5. Selling products. Through Facebook, businesses can sell products using existing features, including creating an online store on a Facebook fan page.
6. Attracting visitors. One goal of Facebook marketing is to attract visitors to the company's website, thereby increasing overall business activity.

Instagram is a social media platform for sharing photos and videos, and it has attracted many users who engage in online business by promoting their products. Instagram operates on a follower-based system, where users can follow other accounts and gain followers in return. Communication among users takes place through features such as likes, comments, direct messages, and content sharing. In addition, Instagram provides specialized business tools that enable companies to understand better and engage with their audience. Through business features, companies can obtain customer insights, analyze post-performance, monitor engagement metrics, and promote content to support their marketing objectives. These features also allow customers to access important business information directly from a company's profile, such as contact details, product catalogs, and promotional updates. One of Instagram's main advantages is its advertising capability, which facilitates targeted product promotion to specific market segments. Within the broader context of social media marketing, there are six categories of social networking platforms, as follows:

1. Social Networking: This category emphasizes listening to customers and sharing engaging content. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are widely used to build relationships and interact with consumers.
2. Social Knowledge: Social knowledge platforms provide information-based content, such as Yahoo! Answers, where companies can assist users in solving problems and demonstrate how their products have benefited others.
3. Social Sharing: Social sharing platforms, such as Pinterest, focus on distributing visual content, including images and videos, making it easier for users to discover and share engaging materials.
4. Social News: Social news platforms emphasize the dissemination of news and trending information. Twitter is one of the most widely used platforms for sharing and accessing news-related content.
5. Social Streaming: Social streaming refers to platforms that enable real-time streaming of videos, photos, or podcasts. YouTube is a prominent example of this category.
6. Company-Generated Content and Community: Unlike independent social media platforms, this category refers to corporate-managed digital spaces integrated with product content, customer support communities, or company blogs that include user reviews and feedback.

2.6. Human Resource Competence

According to Bintoro and Daryanto, as cited in Minarto et al. (2021), Human Resource Management is a field of knowledge that governs the relationships and roles of human resources or labor, enabling individuals to optimize performance and achieve the objectives of the company, employees, and society. Therefore, to improve organizational and corporate efficiency and effectiveness, human resources must be managed appropriately, as they are the primary element in organizations and companies, compared to other elements such as technology. This is because humans themselves control and manage other elements. According to Sunarto, as cited in Kina and Ulul (2020), employee competence refers to the ability to carry out assigned duties and responsibilities, supported by an educational background, skills, and experience that enable the company to remain competitive. Such abilities can only be achieved when employees possess adequate education, training, and experience to perform their assigned tasks and responsibilities. Each employee is encouraged to demonstrate professionalism in their work to optimize skills, time, energy, knowledge, and resources in accordance with their field, thereby affecting employee performance.

According to Wibowo, as cited in Wulandari et al. (2022), competence refers to an employee's ability, based on skills, knowledge, attitudes, and personal characteristics, that can influence success in their work. Boyatzis, as cited in Ika (2022), states that competence is the capacity employees possess that leads to behaviors aligned with job demands and organizational standards, which, in turn, produce desired outcomes. Competence also reflects the knowledge and skills individuals possess or require to perform tasks and responsibilities effectively and to improve professional quality standards at work. Therefore, competence is highly important in an organization, as it helps create a high-performance culture. It can be concluded that human resource competence is an individual's ability, comprising knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics, that directly influences performance in achieving desired objectives. Competence represents an individual's ability to perform satisfactorily in the workplace, including the capacity to transfer and apply skills and knowledge in new situations and to enhance agreed-upon benefits.

According to Prihadi, as cited in Harun et al. (2020), there are several benefits of human resource competence, namely:

- a. Predictor of career success. An accurate competency model can precisely determine the knowledge and skills required to succeed in a particular job. When an individual possesses competencies that match their field of interest, their success can be more reliably predicted.
- b. Recruiting competent employees. Once the competencies required for a specific position are clearly identified, they can serve as fundamental criteria for recruiting new employees.
- c. Basis for employee assessment and development. Accurate identification of competencies can also serve as a benchmark for assessing individual capabilities. Through a competency-based system, it can be determined whether an employee has developed their potential through training and coaching or needs to be transferred to another position.

According to Michael Zwell, as cited in Ningsih (2021), several factors can influence human resource competence:

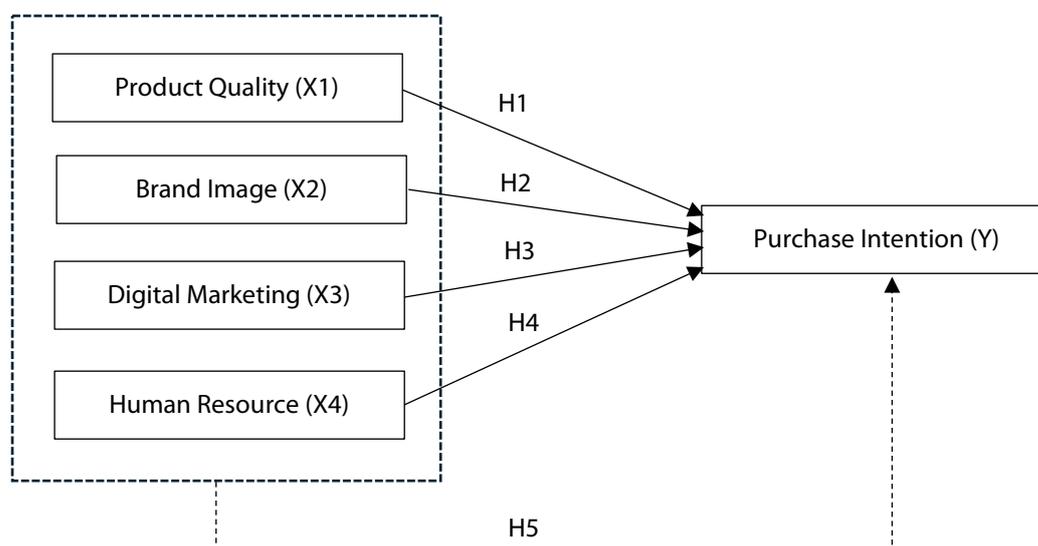
- a. Beliefs and values. These refer to the belief that oneself and others have a significant impact on actions taken. If individuals believe that they are not creative or innovative, they will not attempt to think of new or different ways of doing things.
- b. Skills. Skills play a major role in most competencies. Public speaking is a skill that can be learned, practiced, and improved. Writing skills can also be enhanced through instruction, practice, and feedback.
- c. Experience. Experience represents expertise gained from various competencies that require practice in managing, speaking in public, and solving problems.
- d. Personality characteristics. Personality traits are relatively complex to change, though not entirely fixed. Over time, personality can evolve and influence various competencies, including conflict resolution, interpersonal concern, teamwork ability, influencing others, and building relationships.
- e. Motivation. Motivation is a competency factor that can be enhanced through encouragement, appreciation for subordinates' work, recognition, and individual attention from leaders.
- f. Emotional issues. Emotional barriers can limit competence, such as fear of making mistakes, feelings of embarrassment, or a sense of being unwanted or undervalued, thereby restricting motivation and initiative.
- g. Intellectual ability. Intellectual ability is a competency related to cognitive thinking, such as conceptual and analytical thinking, and cannot be easily improved through organizational interventions.
- h. Organizational culture. Organizational culture is a factor that influences human resource competence in carrying out activities.

According to Hutapea and Thoha, as cited in Siti et al. (2025), there are three main indicators or components of human resource competence:

- a. Knowledge refers to the information possessed by an individual to carry out tasks and responsibilities in accordance with their field of interest. The knowledge or information a person possesses can be applied in real working conditions. An individual's level of knowledge determines the success of task execution, and sufficient knowledge can improve organizational efficiency.
- b. Skills refer to the ability to perform tasks and responsibilities assigned by the company effectively and optimally, such as the ability to cooperate by understanding and motivating others, both individually and in groups.
- c. Attitude refers to an individual's pattern of behavior in carrying out tasks and responsibilities in accordance with company regulations. When a person has an attitude that supports achieving organizational goals, assigned tasks will be carried out correctly.

2.7. Conceptual Framework

According to Sugiyono, as cited in Suryani (2019), a conceptual framework is a synthesis that reflects the relationships among the variables studied and serves as a guide for solving research problems and formulating research hypotheses. It is generally presented as a flowchart accompanied by quantitative explanations. In the purchasing process, individuals usually consider the product they plan to buy beforehand, which helps them build confidence in their purchase. Based on the literature review, a research conceptual framework can be constructed with independent variables consisting of Product Quality (X1), Brand Image (X2), Digital Marketing (X3), and Human Resource Competence (X4), and the dependent variable being Purchase Intention (Y), as illustrated in the following figure.



Description :

—————▶ : Influence of Variables Partially

-----▶ : Influence of Variables Simultaneously

Figure 6. Conceptual Framework

2.8. Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a provisional answer to a research problem that remains tentative because it must be empirically tested. According to Sugiyono, as cited in Suryani (2019), a hypothesis is a provisional answer to a research problem. Because it is provisional, its validity must be verified through empirical data collection and analysis.

H1 : Product Quality is presumed to have a partial effect on Purchase Intention.

H2 : Brand Image is presumed to partially affect Purchase Intention.

H3 : Digital Marketing is presumed to have a partial effect on Purchase Intention.

H4 : Human Resource Competence is presumed to have a partial effect on Purchase Intention.

H5 : Product Quality, Brand Image, Digital Marketing, and Human Resource Competence are presumed to have a simultaneous effect on Purchase Intention.

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Design and Location

This study employs a quantitative research design, emphasizing numerical data and logical analysis through structured research instruments. Quantitative research involves the collection and analysis of data in the form of numbers or data that can be quantified and measured using statistical techniques. According to Sugiyono, as cited in Megasari (2024), quantitative research is characterized by data presented in numerical form or data that can be scored and analyzed statistically. Furthermore, this study adopts a causal research approach to examine the relationships among the research variables. The objective is to determine the degree and strength of the relationships, the direction of influence among variables, and the extent to which independent variables affect the dependent variable. In this context, the relationships among variables are causal, meaning that changes in one variable are assumed to cause changes in another. The research was conducted at Gambier Tea Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) located in Pakpak Bharat Regency.

3.2. Population and Sample

According to Sugiyono, as cited in Megasari (2024), a population refers to a generalized area consisting of objects or subjects that possess specific characteristics and qualities, as determined by the researcher, to be studied and from which conclusions are drawn. Based on this definition, the study's population includes all consumers who have purchased Gambier Tea and those who intend to repurchase it. However, the exact population size is not known with certainty. A sample is defined as a portion of the population that represents the characteristics relevant to the research objectives. This study employs a purposive sampling technique, in which respondents are selected based on predetermined criteria. The selected respondents are consumers who have purchased Gambier Tea at least twice. According to WarpPLS guidelines, a sample size of 200-300 respondents is considered adequate to ensure reliable data analysis. Therefore, this study uses a total sample of 270 respondents. The distribution of respondents by district in Pakpak Bharat Regency is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents of Gambier Tea MSMEs in Pakpak Bharat Regency

No.	District	Number of Villages	Gambier Tea–Producing Villages	Respondents (Persons)
1	Salak	6	6	50
2	Kerajaan	10	10	38
3	STTU Jehe	10	10	39

No.	District	Number of Villages	Gambier Tea-Producing Villages	Respondents (Persons)
4	STTU Julu	6	6	32
5	Siempat Rube	5	5	22
6	Pagindar	4	4	32
7	Pergetteng-getteng Sengkut	6	6	35
8	Tinada	5	5	22
Total		270		

3.3. Research Variables

Independent variables are often referred to as stimulus, predictor, or antecedent variables. In Indonesian, it is often referred to as an independent variable. An independent variable is a variable that affects another variable that is independent in nature. This variable is usually denoted by X. The independent variables (X) in this study are Product Quality, Brand Image, Digital Marketing, and HR Competence. Dependent variables are often defined as those that respond to independent variables. The dependent variable in the study is Buying Interest.

This study comprises five interrelated variables: four independent (exogenous) and one dependent (endogenous). The independent variables are Product Quality (X1), Brand Image (X2), Digital Marketing (X3), and Human Resource Competence (X4). The dependent variable in this study is Purchase Intention (Y). The operational definitions of the research variables, along with their respective indicators and references, are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Operational Definition of Variables

No.	Variable	References	Indicators
1	Product Quality (X1)	Kotler & Keller	a. Form b. Features c. Design d. Performance e. Conformance to specifications f. Reliability Durability
2	Brand Image (X2)	Kotler & Keller	a. Product perception b. Perceived ability to meet needs c. Perception of product attributes (e.g., color) d. Price perception
3	Digital Marketing (X3)	Smith & Chaffey	a. Content b. Media or channels Interaction c. Consumer response Personalization d. Call to action
4	Human Resource Competence (X4)	Stuart & Thoha	a. Knowledge b. Skills c. Attitude d. Communication
5	Purchase Intention (Y)	Arun & Asmi	a. Transactional interest b. Referential interest c. Preferential interest Exploratory interest

3.4. Measurement of Research Variables

Research variables were measured using a Likert scale to assess respondents' responses to questionnaire items. Each questionnaire item was assigned a score based on the respondent's level of agreement. According to Wiratna, as cited in Sarmin et al. (2023), the Likert scale is used to measure individuals' or groups' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions toward social phenomena. In this study, respondents were provided with five response categories, each with a corresponding score:

- a. Strongly Agree (SA): Score 5
- b. Agree (A): Score 4
- c. Neutral (N): Score 3
- d. Disagree (D): Score 2
- e. Strongly Disagree (SD): Score 1

3.5. Types and Sources of Data

This study utilizes both primary and secondary data. According to Husein Umar, as cited in Sicilian (2023), primary data refers to data obtained directly from the source, such as individuals or respondents, typically through interviews, observations, or questionnaires conducted by the researcher. Secondary data refers to data previously collected and processed by other parties and presented in reports, tables, diagrams, or other documented sources. In this study, primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed directly to respondents. The questionnaire consisted of structured statements measured on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 5 represents the highest level of agreement and 1 the lowest. The responses were compiled and processed for further statistical analysis.

3.6. Data Analysis Tools

The data analysis technique employed in this study is Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a variance-based approach to structural equation modeling. According to Ghozali and Latan, as cited in Megasari (2024), the primary objective of PLS-SEM is theory development and prediction-oriented analysis. PLS-SEM is used to examine the presence or absence of relationships among latent variables and to assess the predictive power of the research model. Furthermore, as stated by Ghozali in Megasari (2024), PLS is considered a robust analytical method because it does not require strict assumptions regarding data distribution or measurement scale. It is also suitable for studies with relatively small sample sizes. SmartPLS uses a bootstrapping procedure that resamples to estimate the stability and significance of parameter estimates. Therefore, the assumption of normality is not required. In addition, bootstrapping enables SmartPLS to be applied without imposing stringent minimum sample size requirements, making it appropriate for research with limited samples. PLS-SEM analysis comprises two submodels: the measurement model (outer model), which assesses the validity and reliability of the constructs, and the structural model (inner model), which assesses the relationships among latent variables. The stages of data analysis in this study are described as follows:

3.6.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics are used to describe or provide an overview of the characteristics of the research data, based on the sample or population as it is, without drawing generalized conclusions. According to Sugiyono, as cited in Megasari (2024), descriptive statistics function to summarize and present data in a meaningful way to facilitate interpretation.

3.6.2. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The evaluation of the measurement model, also known as the outer model, assesses the validity and reliability of the constructs used in the study. The following tests are conducted:

a. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity in a reflective measurement model is assessed by examining the correlation between the indicator scores and their respective construct scores. A reflective indicator is considered to have strong convergent validity if its loading on its associated construct exceeds 0.70. However, in exploratory research or during the early stages of scale development, loading values between 0.50 and 0.60 are still considered acceptable. This criterion is supported by Ghozali, as cited in Megasari (2024).

b. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is evaluated by examining the cross-loadings between indicators and their respective constructs. An indicator is said to demonstrate good discriminant validity if its correlation with its own construct is higher than its correlation with other constructs. This indicates that the latent construct explains its indicators better than it explains the indicators of other constructs. Another method used to assess discriminant validity is the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which compares the square root of each construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with the correlations between that construct and other constructs in the model. According to Ghozali, as cited in Megasari (2024), a construct is considered to have adequate discriminant validity if the square root of its AVE is greater than its correlations with other constructs. Furthermore, the AVE for each construct should exceed 0.50, indicating that the construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators.

c. Reliability

In addition to validity testing, reliability testing is conducted to evaluate the consistency and stability of the measurement instrument in assessing the constructs. Reliability analysis ensures the accuracy and consistency of indicators used to measure latent variables. In PLS-SEM using SmartPLS 3.0, construct reliability with reflective indicators is assessed using two criteria: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. According to Ghozali, as cited in Megasari (2024), a construct is considered reliable if both the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0.70.

3.6.3. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model, also referred to as the inner model, describes the relationships and the strength of the estimated effects among latent variables based on the underlying theoretical framework. The evaluation of the structural model includes the following assessments:

a. R-Square (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to evaluate the predictive power of each endogenous latent variable in the model. The R^2 value indicates the proportion of the endogenous variable's variance that the exogenous variables can explain. In structural model evaluation, R^2 serves as a measure of the model's explanatory capability. Changes in the R^2 value can be used to assess the substantive impact of specific exogenous latent variables on endogenous variables. According to standard criteria in PLS-SEM, R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 indicate strong, moderate, and weak explanatory power, respectively.

b. Path Coefficients Estimation

The next step in evaluating the structural model is to examine the significance of the relationships among variables by analyzing the path coefficients. This involves assessing both the magnitude of the

parameter coefficients and their statistical significance using bootstrapping. According to Ghozali, as cited in Megasari (2024), bootstrapping is used to determine the significance of the hypothesized relationships among latent variables.

3.6.4. Direct Effect Testing

The direct effect test examines the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing is performed by analyzing the t-statistic and the probability (p-value) obtained from the bootstrapping results. At a significance level (alpha) of 5 percent, the critical t-value is 1.96. Therefore, the decision criteria are as follows: the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected if the t-statistic exceeds 1.96. Alternatively, based on the probability value, H_a is accepted if the p-value is less than 0.05.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Results

4.1.1. Analysis of Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristics play an important role in this study, as they provide an overview of the demographic profile of individuals who consume Gambier Tea. The characteristics analyzed include gender, age, and occupation. The descriptive analysis of respondent characteristics is presented as follows:

a. Respondent Gender

Based on the demographic information provided in the questionnaires, the distribution of respondents by gender is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Distribution of Respondents by Gender

No.	Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Female	204	75.6
2	Male	66	24.4
	Total	270	100

Based on Table 8, the majority of respondents are female, accounting for 75.6% (204) of the total sample of 270. Male respondents represent 24.4% (66 respondents).

b. Respondent Age

The distribution of respondents based on age is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Distribution of Respondents by Age

No.	Age Range (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	20–30	6	2.22
2	31–40	100	37.04
3	41–50	160	59.26
4	51–60	4	1.48
	Total	270	100

Based on Table 9, the most significant proportion of respondents falls within the 41–50 years age group, representing 59.26% (160 respondents) of the total sample. This indicates that middle-aged consumers dominate the respondent profile in this study.

c. Respondent Occupation

The distribution of respondents based on occupation is shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

No.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Students	5	1.85
2	Civil Servants / TNI / POLRI	181	67.04
3	Private Employees	61	22.59
4	Self-employed	17	6.30
5	Professionals	6	2.22
	Total	270	100

Based on Table 10, the majority of respondents are Civil Servants, TNI, or POLRI personnel, accounting for 67.04% (181 respondents) of the total sample. This suggests that public sector employees constitute the dominant consumer group in this study.

4.1.2. Data Analysis

In this study, hypothesis testing was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach with SmartPLS version 3.0 software. The data analysis process was carried out through several stages, as described below:

a. Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Based on the results of the PLS Algorithm analysis, the evaluation of the measurement model includes validity and reliability testing, as well as the assessment of the coefficient of determination and path coefficients within the structural equation model. The output generated by the SmartPLS PLS Algorithm provides the necessary information to assess these criteria. The results of the measurement model evaluation are presented in the following figure.

b. Evaluation of the Outer Model (Measurement Model)

The final evaluation of the outer model in this study indicates that the Product Quality variable is reflected by seven indicators, Brand Image by five indicators, Digital Marketing by six indicators, Human Resource Competence by five indicators, and Purchase Intention by five indicators. The SmartPLS analysis evaluates the measurement (outer) model using several criteria to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. These criteria include Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach’s Alpha. The assessment is based on the values of factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, and Cronbach’s Alpha for each variable. The evaluation criteria are as follows:

1. Convergent Validity: An indicator is considered valid if the loading factor value exceeds 0.70. In this study, all indicator variables have loading values greater than 0.70, indicating that the indicators are valid.
2. Discriminant Validity: A construct is considered valid if the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each variable exceeds 0.50.
3. Composite Reliability: A construct is considered reliable if the Composite Reliability value for each variable exceeds 0.70.

4. Cronbach's Alpha: A construct is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value for each variable exceeds 0.70.

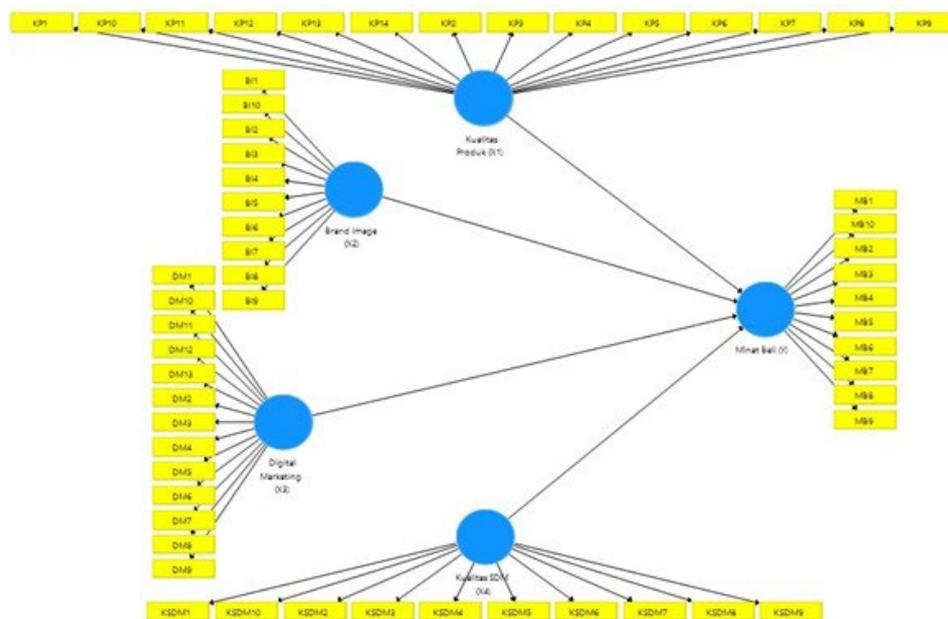


Figure 7. Outer Model Test Results

The results of these tests are presented below.

1) Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed by examining the outer loadings (loading factors). An indicator is considered to meet the criteria for convergent validity if its outer loading value exceeds 0.70. The outer loading values for each indicator in this study are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Outer Loadings

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loadings	Remarks
Product Quality (X1)	X1.1	0,798	Valid
	X1.2	0.819	
	X1.3	0,752	
	X1.4	0,786	
	X1.5	0,842	
	X1.6	0,806	
	X1.7	0,891	
	X1.8	0,848	
	X1.9	0,823	
	X1.10	0,824	
	X1.11	0,822	
	X1.12	0,825	
	X1.13	0,886	
	X1.14	0,862	
Brand Image (X2)	X2.1	0,810	
	X2.2	0,718	

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loadings	Remarks	
	X2.3	0,883		
	X2.4	0,873		
	X2.5	0,875		
	X2.6	0,888		
	X2.7	0,867		
	X2.8	0,903		
	X2.9	0,895		
	X2.10	0,889		
	Digital Marketing (X3)	X3.1		0,878
		X3.2		0,860
X3.3		0,857		
X3.4		0,898		
X3.5		0,847		
X3.6		0,857		
X3.7		0,909		
X3.8		0,900		
X3.9		0,908		
X3.10		0,894		
HR Competencies (X4)	X4.1	0,883		
	X4.2	0,869		
	X4.3	0,883		
	X4.4	0,888		
	X4.5	0,893		
	X4.6	0,910		
	X4.7	0,903		
	X4.8	0,888		
	X4.9	0,904		
	X4.10	0,902		
Purchase Intention (Y)	Y1	0,851		
	Y2	0,880		
	Y3	0,906		
	Y4	0,890		
	Y5	0,887		
	Y6	0,888		
	Y7	0,918		
	Y8	0,875		
	Y9	0,904		
	Y10	0,849		

Based on the SmartPLS output shown in Table 11, all indicators have outer loading values greater than 0.70. Although several indicators have loading values slightly above 0.70, they still meet the recommended threshold. Therefore, all indicators are considered valid and satisfy the criteria for convergent validity.

2) Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) method. A construct is considered to have adequate discriminant validity if the AVE value exceeds 0.50.

Table 12. Discriminant Validity Based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Method

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	AVE	Remarks
Brand Image	0.961	0.963	0.743	Valid
Digital Marketing	0.977	0.978	0.782	
Product Quality	0.965	0.966	0.686	
HR Competencies	0.972	0.972	0.796	
Purchase Intention	0.969	0.969	0.783	

According to Table 12, all variables have AVEs greater than 0.50. Specifically, Brand Image has an AVE of 0.743, Digital Marketing 0.782, Product Quality 0.686, HR Competencies 0.796, and Purchase Intention 0.783. These results indicate that each construct demonstrates adequate discriminant validity.

3) Composite Reliability Test

Composite Reliability is used to assess the internal consistency reliability of the indicators for each construct. A variable is considered reliable if its Composite Reliability value exceeds 0.70. The Composite Reliability values for each variable are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Remarks
Brand Image	0.961	0.963	0.966	Reliable
Digital Marketing	0.977	0.978	0.979	
Product Quality	0.965	0.966	0.968	
HR Competencies	0.972	0.972	0.975	
Purchase Intention	0.969	0.969	0.973	

Based on Table 13, all variables have Composite Reliability values greater than 0.70. Specifically, Brand Image has a value of 0.966, Digital Marketing 0.979, Product Quality 0.968, HR Competencies 0.975, and Purchase Intention 0.973. These results indicate that all five variables demonstrate strong internal consistency reliability and meet the Composite Reliability criterion.

4) Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha values further support the reliability results based on Composite Reliability. A construct is considered reliable if its Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.70. The Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable are presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Brand Image	0.961	Reliable
Digital Marketing	0.977	
Product Quality	0.965	
HR Competencies	0.972	
Purchase Intention	0.969	

Based on Table 14, all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.70. Brand Image has a value of 0.961, Digital Marketing 0.977, Product Quality 0.965, HR Competencies 0.972, and Purchase Intention 0.969. Therefore, it can be concluded that all constructs are reliable and meet the recommended reliability threshold.

5) Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test assesses whether the independent variables in the structural model are highly correlated. This test is conducted by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. The results of the multicollinearity test are presented in Table 15.

Table 15. Multicollinearity Test (Inner VIF Values)

Inner VIF Values	VIF Value	Remarks
Brand Image → Purchase Intention	6.826	Multicollinearity Detected
Digital Marketing → Purchase Intention	4.535	No Multicollinearity
Product Quality → Purchase Intention	5.913	Multicollinearity Detected
HR Competencies → Purchase Intention	4.036	No Multicollinearity

Based on Table 15, the VIF value for Brand Image on Purchase Intention is 6.826, while Product Quality on Purchase Intention has a VIF value of 5.913. Both values exceed the standard threshold of 5.00, indicating the presence of multicollinearity. Meanwhile, Digital Marketing has a VIF value of 4.535 and HR Competencies 4.036, both of which are below the threshold of 5.00. Therefore, these two variables do not indicate multicollinearity. In conclusion, two variables (Brand Image and Product Quality) exhibit multicollinearity, whereas Digital Marketing and HR Competencies do not violate the multicollinearity assumption.

c. Structural Model Test (Inner Model)

The structural model (inner model) is evaluated to examine the relationships among the latent constructs in the research framework. The inner model describes the structural relationships between latent variables based on the underlying substantive theory. The evaluation of the inner model is performed by analyzing several key indicators, including the R-square (R^2), Q-square (Q^2), and path coefficients. These measures provide important information regarding the extent to which the dependent (endogenous) latent variables are explained by the independent (exogenous) latent variables. In addition, significance testing is conducted to determine whether the relationships between variables are statistically significant (Ghozali). The results of the SmartPLS analysis are illustrated in Figure 8. In evaluating the inner model, the results of the R-square (R^2) test, the Q-square (Q^2) test, and the path coefficient test are presented, followed by an analysis of the direct effects among variables. Each of these tests is explained in the following sections.

1. R-Square Test (R^2)

Based on data processed with SmartPLS 3.0, the structural model was evaluated by examining the R-Square (R^2), also known as the coefficient of determination. The R^2 value indicates the proportion of the endogenous variable's variance that can be simultaneously explained by the exogenous variables in the model. According to Ghozali, an R^2 value of 0.67 is strong, 0.33 is moderate, and 0.19 is weak. Therefore, the R^2 value is used to assess the extent to which independent latent variables substantially influence the dependent latent variable. The results of the R-Square test are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. R-Square (R^2) Value

Variable	R Square (R^2)
Purchase Intention (Y)	0.808

Based on Table 16, the R-Square value for the endogenous variable Purchase Intention is 0.808. This result indicates that Product Quality, Brand Image, Digital Marketing, and HR Competence collectively explain 80.8% of the variance in Purchase Intention. The remaining 19.2% is influenced by other variables not included in this model. Since the R^2 value exceeds 0.67, the structural model can be categorized as strong, indicating a high explanatory power of the independent variables on Purchase Intention.

2. Model Goodness-of-Fit Test

The Q-Square (Q^2) value in PLS-SEM is used to assess the predictive relevance of the structural model. Goodness-of-fit can be evaluated using the Q^2 value. Conceptually, Q^2 has a similar interpretation to the coefficient of determination (R^2) in regression analysis, where a higher value indicates better predictive relevance and model fit. Q-Square measures how well the model and its parameter estimates reconstruct the observed values. A Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that the model is predictive. The Q-Square value in this study was calculated using the following formula (Ghozali):

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0.808)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - 0.192$$

$$Q^2 = 0.808$$

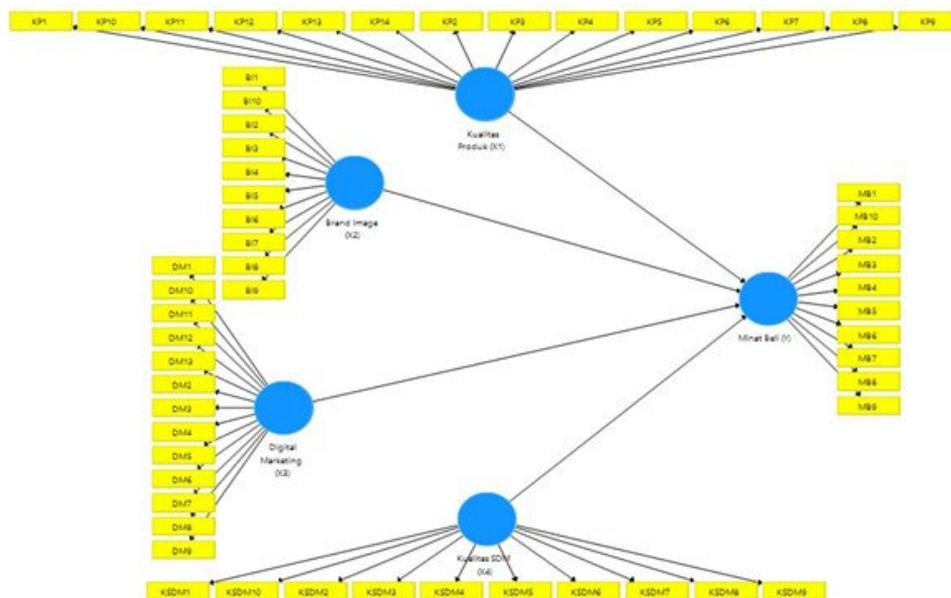


Figure 8. Inner Model Test Results

Based on the calculation above, the Q-Square value is 0.808. This result indicates that the structural model can explain 80.8% of the variance in the research data. In comparison, the remaining 19.2% is influenced by other factors not included in this study. Therefore, the model demonstrates strong predictive relevance. In addition, this study evaluates model fit using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). A model is considered to have a good fit if the SRMR value is less than 0.10, and it is considered unfit if the SRMR value exceeds 0.15 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The results of the SRMR calculation are presented in Table 17.

Table 17. SRMR Model Fit

Model	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.045	0.045

Based on Table 17, the SRMR value is 0.045, which is less than 0.10. Therefore, it can be concluded that the structural model in this study demonstrates a good model fit.

4.1.3. Path Coefficient Test (Direct Effect Test)

In the path coefficient test, the bootstrap procedure can show how much of a latent construct's relationship or influence is attributable to the latent construct. The constructs have a strong relationship if the coefficient path value is greater than 0.01. Also, the relationship between latent variables is considered significant if the path coefficient is 0.050 or higher (Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). In hypothesis testing, the t-statistic and the p-value indicate whether the null hypothesis is rejected. For hypothesis testing, using a 5% alpha level, the t-statistic is 1.96. So that the criteria for accepting/rejecting the hypothesis are H_a accepted, and H_0 is rejected when the t-statistic > 1.96. To reject/accept the hypothesis using probability, H_a is accepted if $p < 0.05$. The following are the results of the direct effect test based on the hypothesis tested:

Table 18. T-Statistics and P-Values (Direct Effects)

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Brand Image (X2) -> Buying Interest (Y)	0.526	0.503	0.110	4.772	0.000
Digital Marketing (X3) -> Buying Interest (Y)	0.182	0.199	0.090	2.028	0.043
Product Quality (X1) -> Buying Interest (Y)	0.184	0.194	0.094	1.967	0.050
HR Competency (X4) -> Buying Interest (Y)	0.051	0.049	0.080	0.635	0.525

Based on the data presented in the table 18, the proposed hypotheses can be evaluated as follows:

a. The Effect of Brand Image (X2) on Purchase Intention (Y)

The test results indicate that Brand Image (X2) has a T-statistic value of 4.772, a p-value of 0.000, and a path coefficient of 0.526, indicating a positive relationship. Since the T-statistic (4.772) exceeds the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), H_0 is rejected, and H_1 is accepted. Therefore, Brand Image has a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention.

b. The Effect of Digital Marketing (X3) on Purchase Intention (Y)

The results show that Digital Marketing (X3) has a T-statistic value of 2.028, a p-value of 0.043, and a path coefficient of 0.182, indicating a positive relationship. Because the T-statistic (2.028) is greater than the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05 ($0.043 < 0.05$), H_0 is rejected, and H_2 is accepted. Thus, Digital Marketing has a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention.

c. The Effect of Product Quality (X1) on Purchase Intention (Y)

The statistical test results show that Product Quality (X1) has a T-statistic value of 1.967, a p-value of 0.050, and a path coefficient of 0.184, indicating a positive relationship. Since the T-statistic (1.967) is slightly above the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value meets the 0.05 significance threshold ($0.050 \leq 0.05$), H_0 is

rejected, and H3 is accepted. Therefore, Product Quality has a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention, although the significance level is marginal.

d. The Effect of Human Resource Competence (X4) on Purchase Intention (Y)

The test results indicate that Human Resource Competence (X4) has a T-statistic value of 0.635, a p-value of 0.525, and a path coefficient of 0.051, indicating a positive but weak relationship. Because the T-statistic (0.635) is lower than the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($0.525 > 0.05$), H0 is accepted, and H4 is rejected. This means that Human Resource Competence does not have a statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention.

4.2. Research Discussion

4.2.1 The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Intention

The results of this study indicate that Brand Image (X2) has a T-statistic value of 4.772, a p-value of 0.000, and a path coefficient of 0.526, indicating a positive relationship. Since the T-statistic exceeds the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), H0 is rejected, and H1 is accepted. Therefore, Brand Image has a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention. These findings suggest that a stronger and more favorable brand image increases consumers' intention to purchase. Brand image reflects the set of perceptions, impressions, and associations formed in consumers' minds based on their experiences, information, and interactions with a brand. In modern marketing, building a positive brand image is a crucial strategy, as it enhances consumer confidence in a product's quality and reliability. A strong and positive brand image reduces perceived risk and encourages consumers to choose well-known brands over competitors. Brands with a distinctive, memorable image are more likely to be preferred in purchase decisions. Moreover, a positive brand image can create an emotional connection with consumers, which ultimately increases their intention to buy and repurchase the product. The findings of this study are consistent with prior research conducted by Ellyne and Aditya (2022), which found that brand image has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Similarly, research by Eko, Endi, and Irgi (2025) also reported that brand image significantly influences buying interest. Therefore, the results of this study reinforce the theoretical and empirical evidence that brand image plays a critical role in shaping consumer purchase intention.

4.2.2 The Effect of Digital Marketing on Purchase Intention

Based on the results presented in the table above, the statistical test for Digital Marketing (X3) on Purchase Intention (Y) shows a T-statistic value of 2.028, a p-value of 0.043, and a path coefficient of 0.182, indicating a positive relationship. Since the T-statistic exceeds the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05 ($0.043 < 0.05$), H0 is rejected, and H2 is accepted. Therefore, Digital Marketing has a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention. These findings highlight the importance of digital marketing strategies in stimulating consumer purchase intention. The results indicate that greater implementation of digital marketing activities leads to higher consumer interest in purchasing. From the consumer perspective, digital marketing serves as an essential channel for accessing information, evaluating products, and efficiently fulfilling purchasing needs. The findings of this study are consistent with those of I Gusti, Made Dian, and Mirah Ayu (2022), who concluded that digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, the results align with the study by Eko, Endi, and Irgi (2025), which also found that digital marketing significantly influences buying interest. In conclusion, enhancing digital marketing strategies increases purchase intention. Conversely, a lack of optimization in digital marketing efforts may reduce consumer interest in purchasing.

4.2.3. The Effect of Product Quality on Purchase Intention

Based on the test results presented in the table above, Product Quality (X1) has a T-statistic value of 1.967, a p-value of 0.050, and a path coefficient of 0.184, indicating a positive relationship. Since the T-statistic (1.967) is slightly above the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value meets the significance threshold of 0.05 ($0.050 \leq 0.05$), H_0 is rejected, and H_3 is accepted. Therefore, Product Quality has a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention, although the significance level is marginal. These findings emphasize the importance of maintaining and continuously improving product quality to enhance consumer purchase intention. The results indicate that better product quality leads to higher consumer interest in purchasing. Product quality is a key determinant of consumer perceptions and of their intention to buy. Product quality encompasses not only the product's physical attributes but also reliability, durability, performance, and the overall impression customers receive. High product quality fosters trust, satisfaction, and perceived value, which ultimately encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Ellyne and Aditya (2022), who concluded that product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. Similarly, I Gusti, Made Dian, and Mirah Ayu (2022) also found that product quality significantly influences consumer buying interest. Thus, the results of this study further strengthen empirical evidence regarding the critical role of product quality in driving purchase intention.

4.2.4. The Effect of Human Resource Competence on Purchase Intention

Based on the test results presented above, Human Resource Competence (X4) has a T-statistic value of 0.635, a p-value of 0.525, and a path coefficient of 0.051, indicating a positive but weak relationship. However, since the T-statistic (0.635) is lower than the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05 ($0.525 > 0.05$), H_0 is accepted, and H_4 is rejected. Therefore, Human Resource Competence does not have a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention. The findings of this study indicate that improvements in human resource competence do not directly influence consumers' intention to purchase. This result differs from the findings of Robertus Tamo et al. (2024), who reported that human resources have a significant impact on consumer buying interest. Similarly, research conducted by Mohammad Bahrul found that human resource competence has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. Knowledge and skills, as key dimensions of human resource competence, contribute substantially to increasing customer satisfaction. Higher levels of satisfaction can strengthen consumer trust in the company, which may ultimately lead to increased purchase intention. Although this study did not find a direct significant effect of human resource competence on purchase intention, its influence may occur indirectly through mediating variables such as customer satisfaction or trust.

V. Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the influence of product quality, brand image, digital marketing, and human resource competence on buying interest among MSME actors in Pakpak Bharat Regency. Based on the results of questionnaire-based data analysis, it can be concluded that product quality has a positive and significant effect on buying interest. Improvements in the quality of Gambir Tea, including compliance with BPOM registration and halal certification standards, increase consumer trust and purchase intention. Brand image also has a positive and significant influence on buying interest. A stronger, more favorable brand image enhances consumer perceptions and serves as an important reference point in purchase decisions, thereby increasing purchase intent. Digital marketing has likewise been shown to have a positive, significant impact on purchase intent. The effective use of social media platforms, content marketing, and other digital strategies enables MSMEs to reach broader markets, strengthen customer engagement, and develop innovative promotional approaches. In contrast, human resource competence does not have a significant effect on buying interest. Although efforts to improve HR competencies have been undertaken, these improvements

do not directly translate into increased consumer purchase intention, suggesting that other factors may play a more dominant role or that the impact of HR competence may take longer to be observed.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. Future researchers are encouraged to apply different research models and analytical techniques, incorporate additional variables beyond product quality, brand image, digital marketing, and human resource competence, and expand the sample size to obtain more comprehensive results. For MSME actors producing Gambir Tea in Pakpak Bharat Regency, it is recommended to consistently enhance product quality to meet consumer needs and expectations, thereby strengthening brand image and sustaining consumer interest. Considering the increasingly competitive business environment, maintaining strong branding strategies is essential to remain the preferred choice among consumers. MSMEs should also optimize cost efficiency while increasing customer interaction through educational and engaging social media content, incentive programs such as discounts and digital coupons, and improvements to website design to ensure a more user-friendly, visually appealing experience. Effective digital marketing management will support innovation in reaching and engaging customers. Furthermore, academics and readers are encouraged to broaden future studies by incorporating alternative variables and research models that may further explain variations in buying interest.

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