HOW PRODUCT QUALITY AND BRAND AMBASSADORS DRIVE PURCHASE DECISIONS THROUGH BRAND TRUST TOWARD BADMINTON RACKETS

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ABSTRACT

Badminton, as a highly regarded sport in Indonesia, has increased the public's interest to play and thereby created opportunities for badminton's equipment companies. However, the competition between those companies has been very dense as they offer similar products which are purchased with low frequency by customers. Therefore, it is essential for the companies to examine factors that can affect customers' decision to purchase the equipment. This study aims to analyze the influence of brand ambassadors and product quality on purchase decisions for badminton rackets, with brand trust as a mediating variable. Data collection was conducted online by using Google Forms, employing a convenience sampling technique. The respondents comprise of 198 consumers who own and use badminton rackets. The data were analyzed by using the Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method, by utilizing the SmartPLS4 software. The results revealed that brand ambassadors have a significant and positive impact on brand trust but do not directly influence purchase decisions. In contrast, product quality significantly and positively affects brand trust and purchase decisions. Furthermore, brand trust was found to mediate the influence of brand ambassadors and product quality on purchase decisions. The findings of this study underline the crucial role of brand trust in enhancing consumer's purchase decisions. Additionally, superior product quality emerged as a more dominant factor that influence purchase decisions compared to brand ambassadors. These insights highlight the importance of prioritizing product quality and leveraging brand trust as a strategic focus for companies to drive consumer's purchase decision effectively.

Keywords: *Brand Ambassadors, Product Quality, Brand Trust, Purchase Decison*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, badminton is a sport that has achieved numerous accolades in international competitions, such as the Olympics, World Championships, Sudirman Cup, Thomas Cup, Uber Cup, and BWF Super Series Finals, earning a prominent reputation on the global stage. These achievements have sparked interest among the younger generation, inspiring them to train diligently in clubs and participate in national and international competitions.

Additionally, the achievements have fueled a growing enthusiasm for badminton among other generations as well. Hence, this rising interest presents significant business opportunities for badminton's equipment companies, as anyone who wants to play the sport will require the appropriate equipment, even if they play it as a leisure activity.

The main equipment in badminton is the racket, thereby the high public's interest in badminton has naturally led to an increase in demand for the product. However, this surge in demand has also resulted in the emergence of numerous badminton's equipment companies, which have intensified competition. Moreover, badminton racket is not a product that people purchase regularly, as they are durable and designed for long-term use. Therefore, these companies are

constantly striving to maintain their position amidst growing competition by attempting to influence public's purchase decision, which makes it crucial for them to identify the factors influencing purchase decisions, especially given that competing products share similar characteristics and function.

This study aims to examine the influence of brand ambassadors and product quality on customer's decision to purchase a racket because a collaboration with brand ambassador is a common strategy of racket brands, while every customer may have a very different opinion regarding a racket's quality as it depends on how they use it.

A brand ambassador is an individual who represents a brand and is responsible for providing customers a clear information regarding its products (Agustiningtyas, 2023). Brand ambassadors can expand a brand's reach and enhance public's awareness of its products. This is supported by Ftriahningsih (2020) who demonstrated that selecting the right brand ambassador can help remind consumers of a product and maintain brand stability. Furthermore, the information provided by brand ambassadors about a product can influence customers' decisions to choose that product.

Moreover, in general, the quality of a product is determined by its performance, features, reliability, durability, ease of use, repairability, and aesthetics (Kotler & Keller, 2019). According to Sumarsono and Santoso (2019), consumers perceive high-quality products as favourable, which drives purchase decisions. Superior product quality encourages consumers to choose and purchase the product because it is seen as having exceptional value.

Additionally, this study examines the mediating role of brand trust in the influence of brand ambassadors and product quality toward purchase decision. According to Portal et al. (2019), brand trust is a crucial element for establishing a successful relationship between a brand and its customers. Brand trust is built when the products meet consumer's needs and it fosters confidence in the quality of the product, which ultimately encourage consumers to make a purchase. This is further supported by Ali et al. (2021) who indicated that higher levels of consumer trust in a brand lead to increased purchase decisions for the product.

The role of brand trust in mediating the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions is supported by Wang et al. (2017). They explained that companies can build brand trust through the quality of information delivered by brand ambassadors. This statement is further reinforced by Primananda and Susanti (2021) who stated that consumer trust in a brand can mediate the relationship between brand ambassadors and purchase decisions.

Moreover, brand trust has also been proven to mediate the influence of product quality on purchase decisions. Rachmad et al. (2023) highlighted that high product quality can significantly increase consumer trust, which ultimately influence their purchasing behavior. Customers who believe a product to be high quality will always feel convinced that they are choosing the right product, which will eventually motivate them to choose the product.

According to the literature review, no studies have specifically examined the impact of brand ambassadors and product quality on purchase decisions through brand trust. Moreover, previous studies are relatively rare in focusing on purchase decisions related to sports products. Hence, this research is expected to help the racket company understand the factors that influence consumer's decisions to purchase badminton rackets. By gaining this insight, the

company can design more effective marketing strategies based on brand ambassadors, product quality, and brand trust, which will ultimately enhance customers' decision to purchase rackets.

Brand Ambassadors
A brand ambassador is a celebrity whose role is to introduce a product or service to consumers and is considered a representative of that product or service (Lailiya, 2020). According to Hafilah, Chaer, and Usman (2019), brand ambassadors aim to increase customer's interest, maintain or shape the brand image, and promote the product.

Based on these definitions, a brand ambassador is a well-known individual who serves as a communication medium who is responsible for enhancing customer's interest, shaping the brand image, and promoting the product. Banjanahor et al. (2023) stated that brand ambassadors have some unique characteristics, which are attractiveness and credibility that can improve the attractiveness of the promoted product.

Product Quality
Product quality can be defined as the characteristics and aspects of a product that demonstrate its ability to meet customer's satisfaction (Rosyidi & Izzah, 2021). Additionally, Cahyadi and Keni (2021) defined product quality as the physical condition of a product or service that can fulfill consumer's expectations.

Based on these definitions, product quality refers to the various aspects of a product that are related to its ability to meet customer's expectations and needs. Kotler et al. (2022) suggested that there are five dimensions of product quality, which are performance, reliability, conformance, durability, and aesthetics.

Brand Trust
Brand trust is the consumer's willingness to believe that a brand can fulfill its promised functions through the products it offers (Wirasakti & Purwanto, 2023). Additionally, brand trust is the belief that a brand can consistently meet customer's expectations and desires (Sanny et al., 2020; Wijaya and Keni, 2022). Based on these definitions, brand trust refers to the consumer's willingness to rely on a brand to perform the functions it promises.

Purchase Decision
Pasharibu (2019) defined purchase decision as an individual's action which is motivated by the desire to own or use a product or service. Additionally, purchase decision refers to the consumer's action of evaluating various aspects of a product before making the choice to purchase it (Oscar & Keni, 2019). Based on these definitions, a purchase decision is the process where consumers evaluate different brands and products, then choose the one they prefer the most.

Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model
The theory used in this study is the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model which was developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). This theory assumes that external factors (stimuli) can influence the internal state of the consumer (organism), which in turn leads to a specific response. This study examines the influence of product quality and brand ambassadors (stimuli) on the consumers of racket products (organism). Meanwhile, the response explored in this research includes consumer trust in the brand and the decision to purchase the product offered by the brand.

High-quality products serve as a stimulus that encourages consumers to form a positive perception, believing that the product is worth purchasing. Product quality can encompass durability and functionality, indicating that the brand is reliable and consistent in delivering the promised value. Additionally, a well-known and respected brand ambassadors can increase the likelihood of consumers purchasing the promoted product. This behaviour occurs because, in general, brand ambassadors are seen as experts on the products they promote, leading consumers to perceive the product as a good choice due to the endorsement by a trusted figure.

Furthermore, this study investigates brand trust as a mediating variable in the influence of product quality and brand ambassadors on purchase decisions. When product quality and brand ambassadors enhance consumer trust, consumers are more likely to choose the product, as they trust the information provided by the brand ambassador and the quality of the product offered.

The relationship between brand ambassadors and brand trust

Previous research has found that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant impact on brand trust (Digdowiseiso, Lestari, & An'nisa, 2021). When consumers see a credible celebrity as a brand ambassador, they are more likely to perceive the brand as trustworthy (Primananda & Susanti, 2021). Additionally, when a respected brand ambassador supports a product, consumers are more inclined to trust the brand, as it enhances positive perceptions and builds long-term trust with the brand.
H1: There is a positive influence of brand ambassadors on brand trust.

The relationship between product quality and brand trust

Consumer trust is formed when they perceive the product quality as having positive value (Ayu & Ketut, 2021). When consumers can experience or articulate the quality of a product, they are more likely to trust the brand that produces it. Additionally, consistent product quality can strengthen consumer trust in the brand. Dewi and Yasa (2019) also found that product quality has a positive and significant impact on brand trust.
H2: There is a positive influence of product quality on brand trust.

The relationship between brand trust and purchase decision

Previous research has found that brand trust significantly influences purchase decisions (Primananda & Susanti, 2021). When consumers are confident that the brand they choose can meet their expectations, they are more likely to purchase the product offered by that brand (Ayu & Ketut, 2021). Furthermore, when consumers believe that the brand is reliable and consistent with its quality, they are more likely to purchase products offered by that brand.
H3: There is a positive influence of brand trust on purchase decision.

The relationship between brand ambassadors and purchase decision

Previous research has found that brand ambassadors have a positive influence on purchase decisions (Kristian et al., 2021). Brand ambassadors can increase public's awareness of the promoted product and attract consumer's attention (Febrianti & Ratnasari, 2021), which can spark curiosity and ultimately influence purchase decisions (Husna & Pujiastuti, 2023). A brand ambassador can introduce a product to a wider audience, thereby encouraging purchase decision.
H4: There is a positive influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decision.

The relationship between product quality and purchase decision

Previous research has found that product quality has a significant impact on purchase decisions (Nguyen et al., 2019). Ayu and Ketut (2021) explained that companies must establish a level

of product quality that meets customer's expectations in order to increase the likelihood of customers choosing their product. When consumers can experience the quality of a product, they are more likely to choose that product again to enjoy its quality.

H5: There is a positive influence of product quality on purchase decision.

Brand trust mediates brand ambassadors and purchase decision

Agustin and Then (2024) found that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions through brand trust. This is supported by Primananda and Susanti (2021) who showed that consumer trust in a brand can mediate the effect of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions. A credible and well-known brand ambassador can enhance consumer trust in the brand, making consumers feel more confident about the brand and ultimately choose it.

H6: Brand trust can mediate the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decision.

Brand trust mediates product quality and purchase decision

Ayu and Ketut (2021) stated that brand trust mediates the effect of product quality on purchase decisions. Rachmad et al. (2023) suggested that high product quality can enhance consumer trust. Brand trust, built from positive experiences with product quality, helps consumers feel more confident in making a purchase. Consumers are more likely to make faster purchase decisions when they trust the quality of a product.

H7: Brand trust can mediate the influence of product quality on purchase decision.

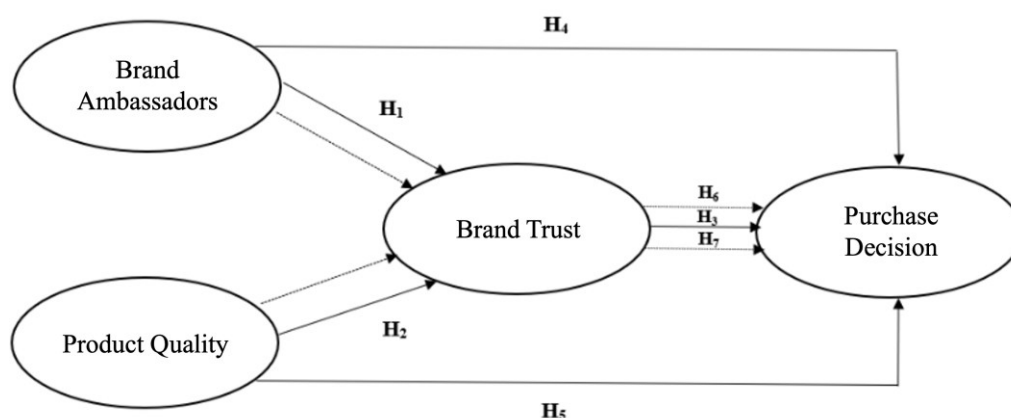The research model based on the hypotheses outlined above is as follows:

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive research design which aims to provide a clear overview of a phenomenon or population (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020), with a cross-sectional data collection method. The phenomenon being examined in this study is factors affecting customers' decision to purchase a racket brand.

This study collected data from 212 badminton racket customers in Jakarta, but only data from 198 respondents which can be analyzed for this study. The sample size is in accordance with Roscoe (1975) who stated that the sample size should be between 30 and 500 respondents. The data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, by using a 5-point likert scale and the data were analyzed by using Smart PLS 4.0 software.

The indicators of brand ambassador are adapted from Primananda and Susanti (2021) and Dewi, Edyanto, and Siagan (2020). The indicators of product quality, including the dimensions of performance, reliability, conformance, durability, and aesthetics, are adapted from Johari and Keni (2022), Sambo et al. (2022), Primananda and Susanti (2021), Kurniadi and Keni (2022), Wijaya and Erdiansyah (2022), and Hoe and Mansori (2018). Additionally, the indicators of brand trust are adapted from Wijaya and Keni (2022), Febrian and Fadly (2021), and Salhab et al. (2023). Lastly, the indicators of purchase decision are adapted from Primananda and Susanti (2021) and Salem (2018). The indicators are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicators of Each Variable

Variable/ Dimension	Measurements	Code
Brand Ambassador	The brand ambassador promoting this product represents the product.	BA1
	I believe that the profession of the brand ambassador has an influence on this product.	BA2
	I believe that the brand ambassador promoting this product has knowledge about the product.	BA3
	I believe that the brand ambassador promoting this product has a good reputation.	BA4
	When I see the brand ambassador, I feel an urge to follow the ambassador's behavior.	BA5
Product Quality – Performance	The product has excellent characteristics.	P1
	The product has a perfect design.	P2
	The product demonstrates great durability.	P3
	The quality of the product is better compared to alternatives.	P4
Product Quality – Reliability	The product does not experience damage when used for short periods.	R1
	The product can be used over a long period.	R2
	The product reliably meets user needs.	R3
	The product is consistently dependable compared to others.	R4
	The product operates consistently and delivers the same results for users.	R5
Product Quality – Conformance	The product complies established quality standards.	C1
	The product quality is perceived to be better than competitors.	C2
	The company uses appropriate materials and specifications in production.	C3
	I feel comfortable using the product.	C4
Product Quality – Durability	The product has excellent durability.	D1
	The product is made of high-quality materials.	D2
	The product resists damage and technical problems.	D3
	The product does not break easily.	D4
	This product is suitable for use in various conditions.	D5
Product Quality – Aesthetics	The product's design always follows the latest trends.	A1
	The product's design is comfortable to use.	A2
	The product offers a variety of color options.	A3
	The product is visually appealing.	A4
	The product's design supports its functionality.	A5
Brand Trust	I trust this brand.	BT1
	This brand is trustworthy.	BT2
	This brand always fulfills its commitments.	BT3
	This brand never disappoints me.	BT4
	This brand offers high-quality products.	BT5
Purchase Decision	I buy this product because of its attractiveness.	PD1
	I buy this product because it is already well-known.	PD2
	The color of this product influences my purchase decision.	PD3
	The size of this product influences my purchase decision.	PD4
	The ease of use of this product influences my purchase decision.	PD5

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study analyzed the data by using SmartPLS 4 software and employed the Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. This method is utilized to assess the relationships between variables (Malhotra, Nunan, & Birks, 2020). The process involves analyzing the outer model, which includes validity and reliability tests, as well as the inner model analysis. The analysis begins with outer model analysis to ensure that all indicators are valid and reliable for measuring variables. The validity analysis includes convergent validity and discriminant validity.

Convergent validity is assessed based on the loading factor, which is considered acceptable if it meets the minimum threshold of 0.50 and is ideally greater than 0.70 (>0.70) (Hair et al., 2022). It is also evaluated by using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) which must be at least 0.50 or higher (≥0.50) to be considered as valid (Hair et al., 2022). The results of both analysis are shown in Table 2 and 3.

Table 2. Result of Loading Factor Analysis

Indicators	Brand Ambassador	Product Quality	Brand Trust	Purchase Decision
BA1	0.840			
BA2	0.754			
BA3	0.744			
BA4	0.829			
A1		0.851		
A2		0.867		
A3		0.854		
C1		0.902		
C2		0.827		
C3		0.781		
D1		0.770		
D2		0.810		
D3		0.817		
D4		0.844		
P1		0.866		
P2		0.834		
P3		0.869		
R1		0.829		
R2		0.851		
R3		0.844		
R4		0.796		
BT1			0.776	
BT2			0.829	
BT3			0.800	
BT4			0.792	
PD1				0.732
PD2				0.773
PD3				0.772
PD4				0.798

Table 3. Result of Average Variance Extracted Analysis

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Ambassador	0.628
Product Quality	0.538
Brand Trust	0.639
Purchase Decision	0.592

Table 2 shows that every indicator has loading factor value higher than 0.7, while Table 3 shows that every variable has AVE value higher than 0.5, thereby all the data fulfilled the criteria of convergent validity.

Moreover, discriminant validity analysis was conducted by using cross-loadings and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT ratio). Cross-loading analysis is considered as good if the cross-loading value of each construct is higher than the values of other constructs (Hair et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the HTMT value should ideally be less than 1 (<1) for the data to be considered valid (Hamid, Sami, & Sidek, 2017).

Table 4. Result of Cross Loading Analysis

Indicator	BA	BT	PD	A	C	D	P	R
BA1	0.840	0.655	0.409	0.548	0.575	0.444	0.551	0.557
BA2	0.754	0.553	0.362	0.469	0.479	0.326	0.442	0.531
BA3	0.744	0.571	0.368	0.462	0.494	0.429	0.456	0.492
BA4	0.829	0.575	0.417	0.517	0.499	0.393	0.554	0.561
A1	0.561	0.776	0.428	0.413	0.521	0.338	0.478	0.489
A2	0.673	0.829	0.536	0.531	0.582	0.534	0.624	0.613
A3	0.558	0.800	0.451	0.496	0.507	0.400	0.499	0.573
C1	0.567	0.792	0.452	0.411	0.483	0.367	0.545	0.530
C2	0.359	0.457	0.732	0.390	0.411	0.407	0.538	0.491
C3	0.457	0.449	0.773	0.459	0.531	0.457	0.563	0.512
D1	0.296	0.413	0.772	0.354	0.381	0.399	0.519	0.386
D2	0.388	0.482	0.798	0.504	0.548	0.542	0.555	0.617
D3	0.535	0.509	0.503	0.851	0.589	0.503	0.559	0.584
D4	0.521	0.448	0.444	0.867	0.615	0.520	0.500	0.573
P1	0.566	0.538	0.496	0.854	0.648	0.574	0.566	0.647
P2	0.606	0.603	0.569	0.680	0.902	0.662	0.682	0.689
P3	0.499	0.577	0.512	0.554	0.827	0.651	0.677	0.675
R1	0.522	0.463	0.488	0.576	0.781	0.546	0.503	0.585
R2	0.446	0.455	0.446	0.478	0.620	0.770	0.480	0.609
R3	0.455	0.460	0.566	0.559	0.615	0.810	0.605	0.623
R4	0.344	0.315	0.433	0.480	0.558	0.817	0.539	0.542
BT1	0.386	0.448	0.471	0.497	0.609	0.844	0.558	0.573
BT2	0.540	0.608	0.640	0.505	0.674	0.587	0.866	0.640
BT3	0.517	0.569	0.590	0.572	0.630	0.566	0.834	0.663
BT4	0.574	0.558	0.588	0.547	0.612	0.581	0.869	0.634
PD1	0.529	0.505	0.570	0.549	0.573	0.596	0.598	0.829
PD2	0.579	0.594	0.550	0.571	0.671	0.620	0.628	0.851
PD3	0.590	0.582	0.560	0.610	0.690	0.639	0.623	0.844
PD4	0.542	0.616	0.519	0.603	0.641	0.550	0.654	0.796

Table 5. Result of Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Analysis

Variable	Brand Ambassador	Brand Trust	Purchase Decision	Product Quality
Brand Ambassador				
Brand Trust	0.911			
Purchase Decision	0.619	0.734		
Product Quality	0.805	0.804	0.832	

Based on the results of discriminant validity analysis presented in Table 4 and 5, it can be concluded that all variables in this study are valid because the cross loadings value and HTMT value fulfilled the criteria. Moreover, reliability analysis was conducted by using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Cronbach's alpha has to be higher than 0.6, while composite reliability has to be higher than 0.7 for the data to be considered as reliable (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 6. Results of Reliability Analysis

Variable/ Dimension	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Aesthetic	0.893	0.820
Conformance	0.876	0.787
Durability	0.885	0.826
Brand Ambassador	0.871	0.802
Brand Trust	0.876	0.812
Purchase Decision	0.853	0.771
Performance	0.892	0.818
Reliability	0.899	0.849

Table 6 showed that every variable has composite reliability higher than 0.7 and Cronbach's alpha higher than 0.6. Hence, all of the variables can be considered as reliable and the data analysis process can be proceeded with inner model analysis.

Inner model analysis is evaluated by using R-Square (R^2) analysis, effect size (f^2) analysis, Goodness of Fit (GoF) analysis, path coefficient analysis, and hypothesis testing. The result of R^2 analysis is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Result of R-Square (R^2) Analysis

Variable	R-Square
Brand Trust	0.624
Purchase Decision	0.537

Based on Table 7, the R^2 value of brand trust is 0.624, indicating that brand ambassadors and product quality can explain 62.4% of brand trust's variance, while the remaining 37.6% are influenced by other variables. Meanwhile, the R^2 value of purchase decision is 0.537, meaning that brand ambassadors, product quality, and brand trust can explain 53.7% of purchase decision's variance, with the remaining 46.3% are influenced by other variables. Both R^2 values fall into the moderate category, as they are greater than 0.25, but less than 0.75 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 8. Result of Effect Size (f^2) Analysis

Variable	f^2	Result
Brand Ambassador → Brand Trust	0.291	Moderate effect
Brand Ambassador → Purchase Decision	0.015	No effect
Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	0.034	Small effect
Product Quality → Brand Trust	0.201	Moderate effect
Product Quality → Purchase Decision	0.406	Big effect

Based on Table 8, there is a moderate effect of brand ambassadors and product quality on brand trust, with f^2 values of 0.291 and 0.201 respectively. These values fall into the moderate category, as they are greater than 0.15, but less than 0.35 (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, brand ambassadors have no effect on purchase decision, as the f^2 value is less than 0.02. Additionally, brand trust has a small effect on purchase decision, with an f^2 value greater than 0.02, but less than 0.15. Product quality has a large effect on purchase decision, as the f^2 value exceeds 0.35 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 9. Result of Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) Analysis

Variable	AVE	R^2	GoF
Brand Ambassador	0.628		
Product Quality	0.538		0.589
Brand Trust	0.639	0.624	

Purchase Decision	0.592	0.537
Average	**0.599**	**0.580**

$$\text{GoF} = \sqrt{\overline{\text{AVE}} \times \overline{\text{R}^2}}$$
$$= \sqrt{0.599 \times 0.58}$$
$$= 0.589$$

Based on Table 9, the GoF value is 0.589, which falls into the large category as it exceeds 0.36 (Hair et al., 2022). This value indicates that the dependent variables have a good level of fit for predicting the research model.

Table 10. Result of Path Coefficient Analysis

Variable	Path Coefficient	Results
Brand Ambassador → Brand Trust	0.467	Positive
Brand Ambassador → Purchase Decision	-0.136	Negative
Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	0.206	Positive
Product Quality → Brand Trust	0.388	Positive
Product Quality → Purchase Decision	0.671	Positive
Brand Ambassador → Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	0.096	Positive
Product Quality → Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	0.080	Positive

Based on Table 10, brand ambassadors and product quality have a positive effect on brand trust, with path coefficient values of 0.467 and 0.388, respectively. Additionally, brand trust and product quality positively influence purchase decisions, with path coefficient values of 0.206 and 0.671, respectively. Meanwhile, the brand ambassador variable has a negative effect on purchase decisions, with a path coefficient value of -0.136. Furthermore, brand trust can positively mediate the influence of brand ambassador and product quality on purchase decision, with the path coefficient values being 0.096 and 0.080.

Table 11. Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	t-statistic	p-value	Results
H1: Brand Ambassador → Brand Trust	6.062	0.000	Supported
H2: Brand Ambassador → Purchase Decision	1.752	0.080	Not Supported
H3: Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	2.852	0.004	Supported
H4: Product Quality → Brand Trust	5.146	0.000	Supported
H5: Product Quality → Purchase Decision	10.374	0.000	Supported
H6: Brand Ambassador → Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	2.613	0.009	Supported
H7: Product Quality → Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	2.351	0.019	Supported

This study's confidence level of 95%, thereby a hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019). The summary of the hypothesis testing results is presented in Table 11.

Based on Table 11, first hypothesis (H1) is supported, meaning that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on brand trust. These findings align with Digdowiseiso, Lestari, and An'nisa (2021), Primananda and Susanti (2021), who demonstrated that brand ambassadors positively and significantly influence brand trust.

The presence of well-known and trusted figures promoting a product can enhance consumer's confidence in its quality. In this context, a brand ambassador who is a professional athlete can create the perception that the product meets high standards and is trustworthy. This perception

is strengthened by the ambassador's willingness to personally use and recommend the product through advertisements.

Moreover, the second hypothesis (H2) is not supported, indicating that brand ambassadors do not have a significant influence on purchase decisions. This result is consistent with the study of Wardani and Santoso (2020) who concluded that brand ambassadors do not significantly impact purchase decisions.

Consumers of high-performance rackets tend to make decisions based on technical specifications, performance, and product quality, making external factors such as brand ambassadors less relevant. The result can be relevant with the common strategy of racket brands to include the role of brand ambassadors, thereby the similarity of information received from them don't affect customers' purchase decision.

Furthermore, the third hypothesis (H3) is supported, indicating that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. This finding aligns with studies of Primananda and Susanti (2021), and Ayu and Ketut (2021) which concluded that brand trust positively and significantly influences purchase decisions.

Consumers' trust toward a racket brand, which was built through consumer experiences, brand reputation, and product quality, can create the perception that the product meets their expectations in terms of performance, durability, and quality. This trust can reduce consumers' hesitation and increase their likelihood to purchase the product because they are convinced that the brand is the best alternative.

Meanwhile, the fourth hypothesis (H4) is supported, indicating that product quality has a positive and significant effect on brand trust. This finding aligns with studies of Ayu and Ketut (2021) and Dewi and Yasa (2019) who concluded that product quality positively and significantly influences brand trust.

When consumers perceive that a racket is durable, comfortable to use, and capable of enhancing their performance, they will see the brand as reliable. These positive experiences can strengthen consumers' perceptions toward the brand as consistently offering high-quality products, which will ultimately increase their trust toward the brand as they feel that the product will always come with the quality that they expect.

Next, the fifth hypothesis (H5) is supported, indicating that product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. This finding aligns with studies of Nguyen et al. (2019) and Ayu and Ketut (2021) who concluded that product quality positively and significantly influences purchase decisions.

Consumers tend to choose rackets with quality that they believe will enhance their playing experience, such as durable and lightweight rackets that provide good control. Therefore, consumers are more likely to purchase a racket if they are confident that the product's quality will deliver such experience. Meanwhile, consumers who play badminton as a leisure activity may focus on the racket's durability as they will choose the racket that can be used in a long-term.

Next, the sixth hypothesis (H6) is supported, indicating that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions through brand trust. This finding aligns with

Agustin and Then (2024) and Primananda and Susanti (2021) who demonstrated that brand trust significantly mediates the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions.

When a widely recognized brand ambassador, such as a professional badminton player, promotes a racket, consumers are more likely to trust the brand, believing that the product meets the expected standards and provides value that aligns with their needs. This trust, in turn, can increase consumers' tendency to purchase the racket, as they perceive it as the best option used by professional athletes who require high-quality equipment for optimal performance.

Meanwhile, the seventh hypothesis (H7) is supported, indicating that product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions through brand trust. This finding aligns with Ayu and Ketut (2021), Rachmad et al. (2023), and Primananda and Susanti (2021), who concluded that brand trust significantly mediates the effect of product quality on purchase decisions.

Various qualities of the racket, such as durability and reliability, can strengthen consumers' confidence that the product is the best choice. This confidence can motivate consumers to purchase the racket, as they are already familiar with its specifications and quality. The mediating role can even be immediate, whereas consumers may directly choose a specific brand just because they believe in the brand's product quality.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on brand trust toward badminton rackets in Jakarta. However, they don't significantly influence purchase decision. On the other hand, brand trust has a positive and significant impact on purchase decision. Product quality also plays an essential role by positively and significantly influencing brand trust and purchase decisions. Moreover, brand trust significantly mediates the relationship between brand ambassadors and purchase decisions, as well as product quality and purchase decisions.

Meanwhile, this study encountered several limitations. The variables analyzed in this study were limited to brand ambassadors, product quality, brand trust, and purchase decisions, which may not fully capture the complexity of consumer's behavior. Moreover, the sample size, consisting of 198 respondents, limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, this study didn't examine the impact of product quality's dimension on purchase decisions

Based on these conclusions and limitations, several recommendations are proposed for future studies and racket companies. Future studies are encouraged to explore additional variables, such as price perception, customer experience (Setiawan & Keni, 2023), word-of-mouth, or product innovation, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of purchase decisions. Moreover, future studies should expand the sample size and include respondents from various regions or countries to improve the representativeness of the findings. Furthermore, future studies should investigate the influence of specific product quality's dimensions on purchase decisions to provide deeper insights regarding which aspects of product quality drive consumer's behavior higher.

Moreover, racket companies are advised to optimize the role of brand ambassadors to build stronger consumer's trust. This can be achieved by evaluating promotional strategies to ensure

that they resonate with the target audience or increasing the ambassadors' involvement in creating emotional connections with consumers. Furthermore, regular market research should be conducted to identify evolving consumer's needs and preferences, such as product features, design preferences, or specific attributes like balance and control. Additionally, maintaining high-quality standards by using premium materials and designing products that meet customer's expectations will help foster trust and enhance purchase decisions.

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