

The Role of Mediating Variable of Brand Trust Between Brand Image and Word of Mouth on Decision to Purchase

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of brand image and word of mouth on iPhone purchasing decisions with brand trust as a mediating variable. This study uses a quantitative, explanatory design. The research population consists of consumers who have purchased an iPhone from Reza Cell Store, using a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected via a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling method. The study's results indicate that brand image and word of mouth have a significant effect on brand trust. Brand trust has been shown to have a significant effect on purchasing decisions, whereas brand image does not. Word of mouth has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. The results of the mediation test indicate that brand trust mediates the relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions, but does not mediate the relationship between word of mouth and purchasing decisions. This research provides theoretical contributions by strengthening the role of brand trust as a connecting mechanism between brand perception and purchasing behavior, as well as practical implications for business actors, including increased consumer trust and the encouragement of purchasing decisions through effective marketing strategies.

Keywords: Brand Image; Word of Mouth; Brand Trust; Purchasing Decision



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INTRODUCTION

Increasingly fierce business competition requires companies and entrepreneurs to implement various strategies to ensure their products are recognized by all levels of society, from the upper middle class to the lower middle class. One strategy currently widely used is promotional activities through social media, which are considered effective in introducing and marketing goods and services to the wider public. Marketing is defined as the process of organizing institutions and activities to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for customers, clients, and society at large (Kotler, 2022). According to data from *MarketSmartphone in Indonesia*, the iPhone is the top choice for Indonesians, perhaps because its technology and features are well-suited to the needs of the general public, such as a good camera, ample storage, and a unique design. Another advantage

of this brand is its *service center*, which is easy to find and available everywhere, with each component frame priced very low and of good quality, or the same as the original. According to Aaker (2010), brand image is how consumers and others view a brand, shaped by both positive and negative perceptions and assessments. Kotler (2016) states that brands can influence consumer intentions when choosing preferred products, with consumers often choosing brands perceived as having the best quality. Research by Solikhul Khadi (2023) found that brand image has a positive effect on purchasing decisions, in line with Frisca Prisilia's (2022) findings, which showed that brand image has a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions. Thus, brand image can be understood as a consumer's perspective on a product which is one of the main keys in making purchasing decisions. In addition to brand image, brand trust is also a crucial factor in increasing sales. Consumers who purchase iPhones at Reza Cell generally have prior experience using iPhone products, fostering confidence that the brand is the best choice. Brand trust is defined as a brand's ability to build trust, stemming from consumers' belief that the product delivers the promised value and demonstrates good faith in prioritizing consumer interests (Delgado in Rizan, 2012). Research by Yan Khanafi (2021) indicates that brand trust plays a significant role in influencing purchasing decisions for Instinct products in Samarinda City. Research by Retno Hartanti (2022) also found that brand trust influences purchasing decisions for Scarlet Whitening products. This suggests that trust plays a role in building consumer loyalty, encouraging repeat purchases, and is influenced by consumers' past experiences.

Another factor contributing to the increase in purchase decisions is word of mouth, which is consumer-to-consumer promotion or employee recommendations. Word of mouth is an effective, low-cost marketing method because it leverages consumer experience to convey information to others. However, the success of this strategy depends heavily on product quality and service, thus building long-term bonds between sellers and consumers. Silviana (2021) states that word of mouth is a marketing activity that encourages consumers to discuss, promote, and recommend a product to other consumers. Kotler (2022) explains that word of mouth encompasses oral, written, and electronic communication among individuals who share experiences with a product. Research on the influence of word of mouth yields inconsistent results. Yan Khanafi (2021) found that word of mouth had no significant effect on purchasing decisions for Instinct products in Samarinda City, while Wahyu Anggar Saputra (2020) stated that word of mouth had a significant effect on purchasing decisions for Samsung cellphones. Although numerous studies have examined the influence of brand image, brand trust, and word of mouth on purchasing decisions, most previous studies were conducted separately and within different product and regional contexts. Furthermore, previous research has shown inconsistent findings, particularly regarding word of mouth, which in some studies has not shown a significant influence on purchasing decisions. Therefore, this study has novelty by simultaneously examining the influence of brand image, brand trust, and word of mouth on purchasing decisions. This study also strengthens theoretical contributions by critically positioning these variables within the marketing literature framework and provides stronger academic justification through observations of empirical phenomena occurring in the field. Thus, this study is expected to fill existing research gaps and make new contributions to the development of marketing research, particularly in the context of consumer behavior toward technology products. Based on differences in previous research findings regarding the influence of brand image, brand trust, and word of mouth on purchasing decisions, an empirical gap remains that warrants further study. This inconsistency in findings suggests that the influence of these three variables can vary across research contexts, product types, and consumer characteristics.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a development of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) introduced by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975. Ajzen noted that TPB has been widely accepted as a tool for analyzing the differences between attitudes and intentions, as well as between intentions and

behavior. In this context, applying TPB to explain whistleblowing can help address some of the limitations of previous research and provide a framework for understanding the widely identified gap between attitudes and behavior. (2009). Theory of Planned Behavior. The TPB is highly relevant to explaining intentions to detect fraud, given that this action is based on complex psychological processes (Gundlach, 2003). The TPB states that a person's behavioral intentions are determined by three main factors: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Brand Image

Rangkuti (2021) states that brand image refers to the perception of a brand, as reflected in associations embedded in consumers' memories. Some marketing tools that can be used to shape a brand image include the product itself, packaging or label, brand name, logo, color, sales promotion, retailer, advertising, and all other types of promotions, price, brand owner, country of origin, as well as target market and product usage. Keller (2012:G) defines brand image as the perceptions and beliefs of consumers reflected in the associations stored in their memories. This can be interpreted as views and beliefs held in consumers' minds and memories, formed from previous information or experiences with the brand. Kotler (2012:10) states that all companies strive to build a brand image with strong, positive, and unique associations. From this statement, it can be concluded that every company strives to create a strong, unique brand image to achieve optimal benefits. Dobni (1990), as quoted in Erna (2022:166), states that brand image is a concept formed by consumers based on subjective reasons and personal emotions.

Brand Trust

Delgado (2020) states that expectations regarding a brand's reliability and goodwill are referred to as brand trust. Brand trust includes two main components: brand reliability and brand intention. Brand reliability is the consumer's belief that a product is capable of fulfilling promised value or fulfilling desires and providing satisfaction. This reliability is very important for building trust in a brand because brand capabilities can increase promised value, thereby providing customers with confidence in similar satisfaction. Meanwhile, brand intention is based on customer confidence that a brand will prioritize customer interests when unexpected product consumption problems arise. Ferrinadewi (2021) states that brand trust is the ability of a brand to be trusted (brand reliability), which is based on consumer confidence that the product can deliver the promised value. Brand intention is based on consumer confidence that the brand can prioritize consumer interests. Kertajaya (2021) states that, from a company's perspective, brand trust is the ability to create memorable, long-term experiences for consumers, grounded in the brand's integrity, honesty, and decency.

Word of Mouth

Word of mouth is positive word-of-mouth communication that can reduce marketing promotion costs because this promotional method is relatively cheaper than advertising (Riva'i, 2009). Susilawati. (2021) states that word of mouth is like free and powerful advertising to communicate products or services to consumers. Sumardy (2021) states that Word of mouth is a marketing strategy in which consumers are encouraged to talk, promote, recommend, and even sell products to other consumers. Keller (2012) states that word of mouth marketing is oral, written, and electronic communication between people about the advantages or experiences of buying or using a product or service.

Purchase Decision

Tjiptono (2022) states that a purchasing decision is a process in which consumers view and search for problems. Information about a particular product or brand, and the proper evaluation of each of these options. Solving problems, which leads to a purchasing decision. Arfah (2022) states that a purchasing decision is a crucial stage in the purchasing process, in which consumers must choose among available options before committing to a particular product. A purchasing decision is the final stage of the buying and selling process, carried out by sellers and buyers after they have obtained information about the products or services being sold or offered.

Hypothesis

Sugiyono (2020) states that a hypothesis is a temporary response to a problem formulation. Because it is still preliminary, it must be supported by empirical data. The hypothesis in this study is:

- H1: Brand image has a significant effect on brand trust
- H2: Brand image has a significant effect on purchase decision
- H3: Brand trust has a significant effect on purchase decision
- H4: Word of mouth has a significant effect on brand trust
- H5: Word of mouth has a significant effect on purchase decision
- H6: Brand image has a significant effect on purchase decision through brand trust
- H7: Word of mouth has a significant effect on purchase decision through brand trust

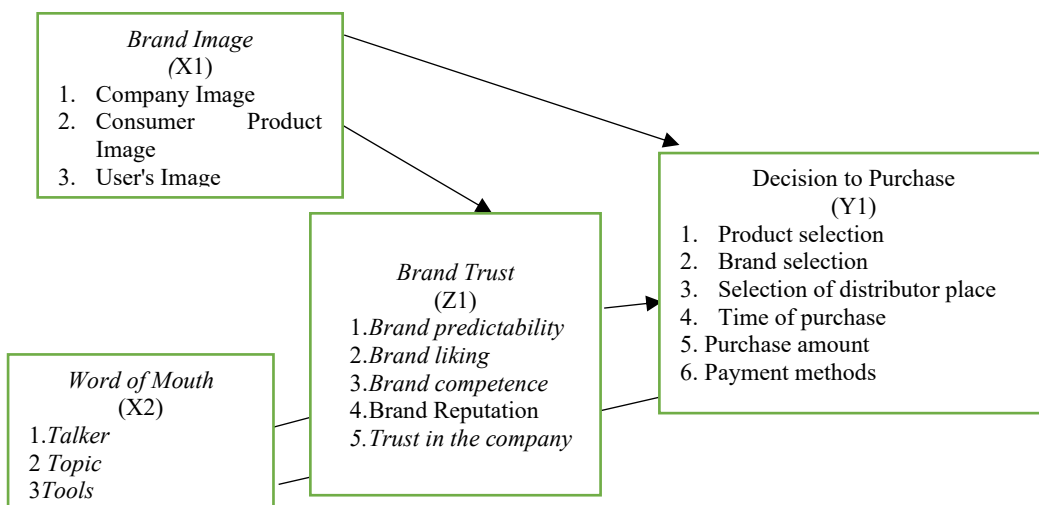


Figure 1. Conceptual Model
 Source: Developed by the author, 2025

METHODS

Based on the objectives of this research, the design is a causal one. According to Sanusi (2014:14), a causal research design is one that examines the possibility of a causal relationship between variables. This design is generally related to the cause-and-effect relationships that researchers have classified into independent variables, causes, intervening variables, and dependent variables. The approach used in this study, namely the quantitative approach, begins with the preparation of a theoretical model and analysis as the basis for submitting a tentative statement (hypothesis), followed by the operationalization of the concept, and finally the conclusion as a research finding. The population in this study consisted of iPhone buyers at the Reza Cell store in Lumajang. The exact population size is unknown. The sample in this study was taken from a portion of the population studied, and thus is considered representative of the entire population. The sample size was determined using the Hair *et al.* (2013) method. The use of the Hair formula is due to the size of the research population not being known with certainty. Hair *et al.* (2013) recommend a sample size of 100-200 respondents and suggest adjusting it to the number of indicators in the questionnaire, assuming 5-10 times that number. In this study, 17 indicators were used. Therefore, this study used the Hair *et al.* (2013).

$$5 \times 17 \text{ to } 10 \times 17 \text{ samples} \quad 5 \times 17 = 85 \text{ to } 10 \times 17 = 170 \text{ samples}$$

Based on the calculation above, the minimum sample size is 85, with a maximum of 170, so researchers can adjust to the research conditions by using the assumption of 10 times the number of indicators or up to 170 respondents. The sampling technique used in this study was simple random

sampling. According to Sugiyono (2017), Simple random sampling *is* the taking of sample members from a population, which is done randomly without paying attention to the strata in that population.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this research is intended to provide relevant, accurate material or data for the study. Therefore, it is necessary to use an appropriate data collection method. This research method used a questionnaire. Researchers conducted online sampling using Google Forms and distributed questionnaires via WhatsApp. The questionnaires were structured using a Likert scale and then distributed to respondents. The measurement scale used in this study was the Likert scale. The Likert scale is the easiest to use. The Likert scale uses several questions to measure individual behavior, with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The validity test is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Validity Testing

Variabel	Indikator	Outer Loading	Keterangan
<i>Brand Image</i>	BM 1	0,870	Valid
	BM 2	0,832	Valid
	BM 3	0,934	Valid
	BM 4	0,941	Valid
	BM 5	0,629	Valid
	BM 6	0,945	Valid
<i>Word of Mouth</i>	WOM 1	0,737	Valid
	WOM 2	0,936	Valid
	WOM 3	0,741	Valid
	WOM 4	0,967	Valid
	WOM 5	0,935	Valid
	WOM 6	0,932	Valid
<i>Brand Trust</i>	BT 1	0,940	Valid
	BT 2	0,905	Valid
	BT 3	0,951	Valid
	BT 4	0,958	Valid
	BT 5	0,935	Valid
	BT 6	0,975	Valid
	BT 7	0,629	Valid
	BT 8	0,869	Valid
	BT 9	0,634	Valid
	BT 10	0,863	Valid
Keputusan Pembelian	KP 1	0,983	Valid
	KP 2	0,902	Valid
	KP 3	0,979	Valid
	KP 4	0,920	Valid
	KP 5	0,959	Valid
	KP 6	0,673	Valid
	KP 7	0,981	Valid
	KP 8	0,972	Valid
	KP 9	0,978	Valid
	KP 10	0,919	Valid
	KP 11	0,964	Valid
	KP 12	0,656	Valid

Source: primary data analysis, 2025

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the overall measurement model is to analyze the validity and fit of the three latent variables simultaneously. If the overall measurement of this model can meet the requirements of convergent validity and model fit, then the model can be continued to the next stage of the structural model. The results of the overall measurement model are as follows:

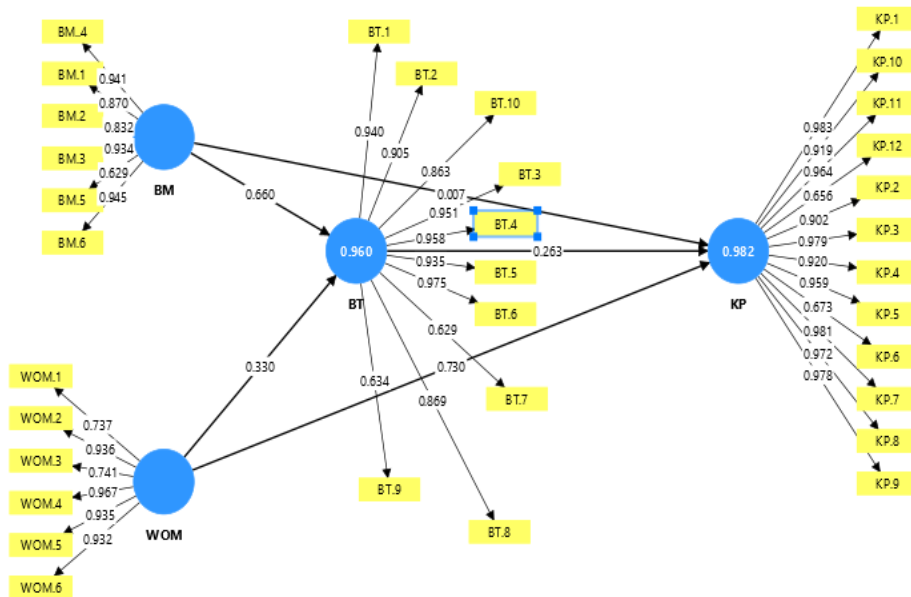


Figure 2. Output Smartpls
Source: Developed by the author, 2025

Table 2. Reliability Testing

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
BM	0,929	0,946
BT.	0,963	0,972
KP	0,981	0,985
WOM.	0,940	0,959

Source: primary data analysis, 2025

Information obtained from the construct reliability and validity in the reliability test results table using Cronbach's alpha values (Table 2): these four variables have a reliability value greater than 0.70 using Cronbach's alpha and a composite reliability value of > 0.7. Therefore, the variables of brand image, brand trust, word of mouth, and purchase decision are deemed reliable, allowing all research variables to be used in further analysis.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variables	BM	BT.	KP	WOM.
BM	0,783			
BT.	-0,168	0,750		
KP	-0,040	0,768	0,826	
WOM.	-0,083	0,814	0,758	0,844

Source: primary data analysis, 2025

R Square

The coefficient determinant (R^2) is used to assess how the independent variable affects the dependent variable. Table 4 shows the extent of the independent variable's influence on the dependent variable. Brand Trust has an R-square value of 0.673, meaning that 67.3% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the brand awareness variable, and the purchasing decision variable has an R-square value of 0.647, indicating that 64.7% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the purchasing decision.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination (R-Square) Results

Construct	R-square	AVE
Brand Image		0,612
Word of Mouth		0,563
Brand Trust	0,673	0,683
Purchase Decision	0,647	0,712

Source: primary data analysis, 2025

Goodness of Fit Index

Based on the AVE value table 4, it can be seen that all variables have AVE values above 0.5. This indicates that all variables have fairly high variable discrimination, as they exceed the AVE limit. Overall, the variables have Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values that exceed the recommended or minimum thresholds. This means that the four variables in this study are valid and all indicators have met the construct validity criteria. Overall, the variables have a value. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeds the recommended or minimum threshold. This means that the four variables in this study are valid, and all indicators have met the construct validity criteria. This study also used the Fornell-Larcker Criterion to test validity. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion states that the square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE of a construct, shown in the diagonal of the table) must be greater than the correlation between the construct and other constructs (values outside the diagonal). If this criterion is met, the discriminant validity is good.

Hypothesis Testing

By looking at the significant values, t-statistics, and p-values from bootstrapping, a hypothesis can be accepted or rejected. The research model for this study is outlined in the following table.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results (Path Coefficients, t-Statistics, and p-Values)

	Original Sample	T statistic	P values	
BM -> BT	0.660	5.078	0.000	Accepted
BM -> KP	0.007	0.099	0.921	Rejected
BT -> PD	0.263	2.634	0.008	Accepted
WOM -> BT	0.330	2.551	0.012	Accepted
WOM -> PD	0.730	8.610	0.000	Accepted
BM -> BT -> PD	0.173	2.415	0.016	Accepted
WOM -> BT -> PD	0.087	1.516	0.130	Rejected

Source: primary data analysis, 2025

Brand Image to Brand Trust

The results of this study's data analysis show that Brand Image has a significant impact on Brand Trust. Based on the results of the hypothesis testing that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted, which states that brand image influences brand trust in iPhone purchases, because the strong, positive, and widely recognized iPhone brand image is able to build consumer trust in the quality, reliability, and consistency of the product performance offered. Acceptance of this hypothesis indicates that the better consumer perception of the iPhone brand image, as reflected in brand reputation, product quality, design, and technological innovation,

the higher the level of brand trust consumers feel, even though purchases are made through local reseller stores. The results of this study align with Sallam's (2021) findings, which showed that a positive brand image significantly influences brand trust by building consumer confidence in the brand's credibility and commitment to fulfilling its quality promises. This finding is also supported by Dwivedi et al.'s (2021) study, which shows that a strong brand image plays an important role in reducing risk perception and increasing consumer trust, especially for technology products with high involvement, such as smartphones. In addition, research in Indonesia conducted by Putri and Yasa (2022) and Hidayat, Suryani, and Nurhadi (2023) showed that brand image has a positive and significant effect on brand trust in electronic products, where consumers tend to trust brands that have a good reputation and are more widely known in the market.

Brand Image on the Purchase Decision

The study's results show that Brand Image does not have a significant effect on Purchasing Decisions. H2 is Rejected. This finding shows that even though consumers have a positive perception of brand image, this does not necessarily encourage them to make a purchase. Theoretically, Brand Image is the consumer's perception of a brand based on associations stored in their memory, such as logos, quality, and reputation (Keller, 1993). Meanwhile, the Purchase Decision is the final stage in the consumer process, marked by the actual purchase of a product or service (Kotler & Keller, 2016). However, in the context of this study, the absence of a significant influence can be caused by several factors, including: Consumers are more rational than emotional. This finding is in line with several previous studies, which show that brand image does not always have a direct influence on purchasing decisions. Several studies that support this include: Gunawan and Octavia (2020) stated that brand image does not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions, while price is a more dominant factor. Tjiptono (2015) stated that in markets with high commodity levels, such as electronics and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), brand image is not the only main consideration in purchasing decisions but is also influenced by availability and added value. Zameer et al. (2012) found that brand image did not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions, but rather brand loyalty and brand awareness played a greater role. Hidayat and Kusumawati (2017) also found that brand image does not have a direct effect, but only has an indirect effect through customer satisfaction.

Brand Trust on the Purchase Decision

The results of this study show that Brand Trust has a significant influence on Purchasing Decisions. H3 Accepted. This finding supports the hypothesis that the higher a consumer's trust in a brand, the more likely they are to purchase products from that brand. Theoretically, Brand Trust is the consumer's belief that a brand will consistently fulfill their promises and expectations (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003). Brand trust is built from consumer experience with product quality, service reliability, and consistency of brand communication. When consumers trust a brand, they feel safe and confident making purchases. The influence of brand trust on purchasing decisions can be explained through the following factors: Reducing Perceived Risk. Consumers often face uncertainty when choosing a product. Brand trust helps reduce the perception of risk, so consumers feel more confident and make purchasing decisions more quickly (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Building Loyalty and Positive Reputation. High trust in a brand encourages consumers to make repeat purchases and even recommend it to others, which, in turn, increases the purchase intention of new consumers. Psychological and Emotional Influences Brand trust creates an emotional bond between consumers and brands. Consumers feel comfortable and appreciated, so purchasing decisions are easier when brands are known or their integrity is in doubt. This research is in line with research conducted by Yan Khanafi (2021), which found that the variable Brand Trust has a positive and significant influence on the purchasing decision of Instinct products in Samarinda city, and this research is also in line with research conducted by Retno Hartanti (2022) which found that the variable Brand Trust has a positive and significant influence on the decision to purchase Scarlet products whitening. Brand Trust is consumer trust in a product or company that makes the product, deliberately created through brand image or other factors that concern consumer trust in the product being sold or offered.

Word of Mouth Regarding Brand Trust

The results of this study show that word of mouth (WOM) has a significant influence on brand trust. H4 Accepted. This finding strengthens the notion that opinions and recommendations from others both directly and through digital media play an important role in shaping consumer perceptions of brands, especially regarding trust. Word of mouth is a form of communication between consumers regarding experiences, opinions, or information about a particular product or service (Westbrook, 1987). WOM can be positive or negative and is often considered more credible than formal advertising because it comes from the real experiences of others. Meanwhile, Brand Trust is the consumer's belief that a brand is reliable, honest, and able to fulfill the promises communicated (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003). These results are consistent with previous studies, which also found that WOM has a significant influence on Brand Trust. Sweeney, Soutar & Mazzarol (2008) stated that WOM greatly influences brand trust because of its interpersonal nature and that it builds higher levels of trust than advertising. Ladhari & Michaud (2015) found that trust in WOM information is an important factor that shapes consumer trust in hotel brands. Pradana, M., & Suharto, R. (2020), concluded that e-WOM has a direct and significant effect on brand trust. Wijaya, H., & Astuti, R. (2021) stated that consumers who frequently hear or read others' positive experiences with a brand tend to build trust more quickly in that brand, especially in the service and e-commerce industries.

Word of Mouth Against Purchase Decisions

Based on the data analysis in this study, it was found that Word of Mouth (WOM) significantly influences Purchasing Decisions. H5 is Accepted. This finding shows that communication between individuals about a product or brand either directly (offline) or through digital media (online) can influence consumer intentions and actions in making purchases. WOM is an informal communication process in which consumers share experiences, opinions, or recommendations about a product or service (Kotler & Keller, 2016). WOM is often considered more credible because it comes from people without direct commercial interests. This finding aligns with previous studies that found Word of Mouth plays an important role in influencing purchasing decisions. Arndt (1967), in his classic study, stated that WOM is one of the most effective forms of marketing communication for influencing consumer behavior because it is interpersonal and highly credible. Cheung & Thadani (2012), show that e-WOM significantly influences consumer perceptions, intentions, and purchasing decisions. Lis, B. (2013), confirms that WOM, especially that which is considered credible, has a major influence on consumer confidence and decisions in purchasing products online. Wulandari & Rahayu (2020) found that e-WOM has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions, especially among the millennial generation. Saputra & Hidayat (2021) concluded that WOM not only influences consumers' initial perceptions of a brand but also directly drives the final decision to purchase the product.

The mediating role of brand trust

Based on the results of testing the sixth hypothesis (H6), it can be concluded that Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Decision, so that H6 is declared accepted, which indicates that a positive iPhone brand image not only has a direct influence on purchase decisions, but also has an indirect influence through the formation of consumer trust in the brand. Acceptance of H6 indicates that Brand Image. The strong iPhone, which is reflected in its brand reputation, product quality, premium design, and technological innovation, first builds brand trust. This trust then drives consumers to make purchasing decisions at Reza Cell Pasar Senggol Lumajang. This finding aligns with research by Sallam (2021) and Dwivedi et al. (2021), which indicates that brand trust acts as an intervening variable that strengthens its influence. Brand Image on consumer behavior, particularly in the context of technology products and global brands. Furthermore, research in Indonesia conducted by Putri and Yasa (2022) and Hidayat et al. (2023) also found that Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Brand Image and Purchasing Decisions, because consumers tend not to make purchasing decisions directly based on brand image alone, but rather through a process of building trust in the quality and reliability of the brand.

Based on the results of testing the seventh hypothesis (H7), it can be concluded that Brand Trust does not significantly mediate the relationship between Word of Mouth and Purchasing Decisions, so that H7 is declared rejected, which shows that the influence of the iPhone purchasing decision at Reza Cell Pasar Senggol Lumajang does not involve building brand trust. This finding indicates that information, recommendations, and experiences shared by others regarding the iPhone are more direct in influencing consumer purchasing decisions, without having to first build in-depth brand trust. In the context of Reza Cell Pasar Senggol Lumajang, consumers tend to make Word of Mouth as a practical and fast source of information, especially regarding price, product condition, and user experience, so that purchasing decisions can be made spontaneously without a lengthy brand trust evaluation process. The results of this study are in line with the research of Ismagilova et al. (2020) and Cheung et al. (2021) which states that Word of Mouth, especially those of a personal and contextual nature, have a direct influence on purchasing decisions and are not always mediated by Brand Trust, especially for products that already have strong brand awareness and reputation, such as the iPhone. Thus, the mediating role of Brand Trust in the relationship between Word of Mouth and Purchase Decisions show that iPhone consumers rely more on the power of direct social recommendations than the process of forming brand trust, so the rejection of H7 implies that Word of Mouth functions as an independent factor that directly influences purchase decisions at Reza Cell Pasar Senggol Lumajang.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the role of brand image and word of mouth in influencing purchasing decisions, with brand trust as a mediating variable in the context of iPhone purchases at Reza Cell Store, Pasar Senggol Lumajang. Based on the results of descriptive and inferential analyses, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, descriptively, brand image, word of mouth, brand trust, and purchasing decisions are generally categorized as good. This indicates that consumers have positive perceptions of the iPhone brand, actively engage in word-of-mouth communication, and possess a high level of trust, which collectively supports favorable purchasing decisions. Second, the hypothesis testing results reveal that brand image has a significant positive effect on brand trust. This finding confirms that a strong and reputable brand image is capable of enhancing consumer confidence in product quality and reliability. However, brand image does not have a direct significant effect on purchasing decisions. This suggests that consumers tend to consider more rational factors such as price, product features, and real user experiences rather than relying solely on brand perception.

Third, brand trust is proven to have a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions. This implies that consumer confidence in the product plays a crucial role in determining final purchase behavior. In addition, word of mouth significantly influences both brand trust and purchasing decisions. The findings highlight that information obtained from social interactions, including electronic word of mouth, is perceived as credible and effective in shaping consumer behavior. Fourth, mediation analysis shows that brand trust significantly mediates the relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions. This indicates that brand image indirectly influences purchasing decisions through the formation of trust. However, brand trust does not significantly mediate the relationship between word of mouth and purchasing decisions, suggesting that word of mouth has a more direct and immediate impact on consumer decision-making without requiring an intermediate trust-building process. Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research is limited to a single location, namely Reza Cell Store in Pasar Senggol Lumajang, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts or different market segments. Second, this study focuses only on three main variables (brand image, word of mouth, and brand trust), while other potential factors such as price perception, product quality, promotional strategies, and consumer lifestyle were not included in the model. Third, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to capture changes in consumer behavior over time. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope of study locations, incorporate additional variables, and apply

longitudinal approaches to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of consumer purchasing behavior in the digital era.

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