

THE EFFECT OF BRAND IMAGE, BRAND TRUST, AND ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH ON THE PURCHASE DECISIONS OF FEB STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITAS MALIKUSSALEH ON SHOPEE

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Received: 01/08/2026 | Revised: 10/08/2026 | Accepted: 26/08/2026 | Published: 11/09/2026

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of Brand Image, Brand Trust, and Electronic Word of Mouth on purchase decisions at Shopee among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University. The study employed a quantitative approach using primary data collected through questionnaires from 100 respondents selected by purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Instrument testing showed that all questionnaire items were valid and reliable. The classical assumption tests indicated that the regression model met the requirements of normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity testing used in the study. The findings show that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, and Electronic Word of Mouth also has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. Therefore, strengthening brand image, maintaining brand trust, and encouraging positive electronic word of mouth are relevant to purchase decisions among Shopee users in the studied student population.

Keywords: Brand Image; Brand Trust; Electronic Word of Mouth; Buying decision; Shopee

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has fundamentally changed consumer behavior, with shopping activities increasingly shifting from conventional methods to online platforms. E-commerce is now a primary choice due to its easy access, time savings, and comprehensive product information. This shift is driving the growth of e-commerce in various countries, including Indonesia. One marketplace experiencing rapid growth is Shopee. Shopee attracts consumers through free shipping promotions, discounts, interactive features, and product reviews that help consumers make purchasing decisions. This situation emphasizes Shopee's role in shaping people's shopping habits, including students (Asih, 2024).

With high user growth and transaction intensity, Shopee has become one of the most popular e-commerce platforms in Indonesia. This development demonstrates the strategic role of digital marketplaces in people's online shopping activities and influences various consumer behavior phenomena (Maulidya, 2024). The annual e-commerce platform visit data used in this thesis shows that Shopee had the highest number of visits compared to several other platforms during the 2021–2025 period, although the number of visits fluctuated. This data illustrates the significant role of e-commerce as a means of transaction and digital brand communication.

Shopee consumers rely heavily on digital information before making purchases. Purchasing decisions tend to be shaped by brand reputation, platform trust, and other users' reviews and recommendations. This suggests that purchasing decisions on e-commerce sites are influenced not only by functional needs but also by psychological and informational factors formed through brand image, brand trust, and electronic word of mouth (Sudarso et al., 2024).

Students at the Faculty of Economics and Business at Malikussaleh University are a group of active digital users. These characteristics are relevant for analyzing the influence of brand image, brand trust, and electronic word-of-mouth on purchasing decisions. Students are also among the most dynamic internet users, adopting digital technology for both academic and everyday needs. During the online purchasing process, they have the opportunity to compare alternatives and assess product information before making a decision. Brand image, brand trust, and

electronic word of mouth are important factors in online transactions. A positive brand image can shape initial perceptions and drive consumer interest in a product (Chairunissa et al., 2023). Brand trust determines consumer confidence in the quality and safety of a product or service, especially in online transactions that carry higher risks (Jabeen et al., 2024). Meanwhile, e-WOM serves as a source of information between users that is often considered before purchasing (Savitri et al., 2022).

Several previous studies support the importance of these three variables. Bastian (2023) found that e-WOM, brand image, and brand trust significantly influence purchasing decisions among TikTok Shop users. Dewi and Hasanah (2023) demonstrated that e-WOM, brand image, and brand trust influence purchasing decisions for cosmetic products. Nissa et al. (2024) demonstrated that brand image and brand trust significantly influence purchasing decisions for skincare products, while Angelina et al. (2024) found the influence of brand image and e-WOM on purchasing decisions among college students.

Brand image is a consumer's overall perception of a brand and is related to purchasing decisions for digital products (Pramesti & Sujana, 2023). A positive image helps differentiate a brand from competitors and can increase brand appeal on digital platforms. Brand trust reflects consumers' confidence that a brand can deliver on its promise of quality and provide a consistent experience. This trust is crucial in online transactions because consumers cannot always inspect products in person before making a purchase.

Electronic word of mouth (EWMO) is the exchange of information, recommendations, and consumer reviews about products or brands through digital media. This information is often based on user experience and serves as a reference in product evaluation. In the context of digital consumer behavior, purchasing decisions are the final choice after consumers evaluate information, preferences, and perceived value. Therefore, information and trust formed on digital platforms can play a role in purchasing decisions.

Although previous research has shown a relationship between brand image, brand trust, e-WOM, and purchasing decisions, there are several limitations that underlie this research. Most studies were conducted on different objects, products, and contexts, specifically students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University. Some studies focused on specific products such as cosmetics or electronics, while this study tested all three variables in a single model on Shopee users. These differences in context are the reason for re-examining the relationship between the variables in the selected research population.

Based on the development of digital phenomena, the characteristics of students as internet users, the importance of Brand Image, Brand Trust, and e-WOM in consumer behavior, as well as gaps in previous research, this study aims to analyze the influence of Brand Image, Brand Trust, and Electronic Word of Mouth on purchasing decisions on Shopee among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University. Theoretically, the research is expected to enrich the discussion on branding and digital marketing communications. Practically, the research results are expected to be a reference for e-commerce players in understanding student preferences and consumption patterns.

Table 1. Number of Annual Visits to E-commerce Platforms in Indonesia

E-commerce	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Shopee	1,800	2,300	2,900	3,000	1,800
Tokopedia	1,600	1,640	780	780	788
Lazada	330	360	360	390	433
Blibli	220	230	170	220	224
Bukalapak	350	300	200	150	140

Source: Katadata (2026), as presented in the thesis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is used to explain and predict individual actions based on behavioral intentions. According to Ajzen (1991), a person's intention to perform an action is the primary factor determining whether the action is carried out. Intention is influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and

perceived behavioral control. When individuals have a positive attitude toward an action, receive social support, and feel capable of acting, the likelihood of that action being carried out is greater.

In the context of online purchasing decisions, consumer attitudes can be influenced by perceptions of brand image, service quality, and shopping experience on e-commerce platforms. Subjective norms can also be formed through online reviews, recommendations from other users, and electronic word of mouth. Perceived behavioral control relates to consumers' ability and control in making online purchases. In this study, the TPB is used as a basis for understanding students' purchasing decisions on Shopee, with Brand Image related to attitude formation, Brand Trust to consumer confidence, and e-WOM to social influence or digital information.

Brand Image

Brand image is a collection of consumer perceptions, beliefs, impressions, and associations formed through interactions with a brand, both from personal experiences and external information. Kotler and Keller (2022) define brand image as consumer perceptions reflected in memory through brand associations. Associations can relate to product features, functional and emotional benefits, and symbols attached to the brand. A strong and positive brand image helps consumers recognize and differentiate a brand from competitors and increases the likelihood of consumers choosing that brand.

Haseeb et al. (2024) stated that brand image represents how consumers view a brand, shaped by experiences, marketing communications, and company reputation. In the context of e-commerce, brand image is crucial because consumers cannot always see or try products directly. Perceptions of platform reputation, digital service quality, and user experience can form the basis for image formation. A good reputation on marketplaces like Shopee can increase feelings of security, trust, and preference for online transactions (Zhang, 2023).

Brand Image measurement in this research refers to the indicators used in this thesis, namely brand identity, brand associations, brand personality, brand attitudes, and brand benefits. These indicators describe the elements that make a brand recognizable, the associations that arise in consumers' minds, brand character, consumer assessments, and perceived functional, emotional, or symbolic benefits.

Brand Trust

Brand trust is a concept that describes consumer confidence in a brand's ability to fulfill promises and deliver consistent results. In uncertain purchasing situations, trust in a brand can reduce perceived risk and help build long-term relationships. Nabila and Purwaniningtyas (2024) explain that brand trust is formed through consumers' evaluation of their experiences, information, and perceptions of a brand's ability to deliver performance, integrity, and reliability.

In marketing, high levels of trust can encourage repeat purchases, minimize perceived risk, and strengthen consumer relationships with brands. In e-commerce transactions, trust is crucial because interactions take place through digital platforms, and consumers must assess the credibility of information, the security of services, and the platform's ability to fulfill commitments. Factors such as brand reputation, perceived risk, information quality, reliability, and social influence can all contribute to the formation of trust.

The brand trust indicators in this study refer to Wu and Liu (2022), namely reliability, credibility, integrity, and benevolence. Reliability relates to a brand's ability to consistently fulfill promises. Credibility relates to trust in the information conveyed by the brand. Integrity reflects the brand's honesty and consistency in its values and commitments. Benevolence demonstrates the brand's concern for consumers' interests.

Electronic Word of Mouth

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) is a form of digital marketing communication that involves the exchange of information, reviews, recommendations, and consumer opinions about products or services via the internet. The development of the internet and social media has made e-WOM one of the information sources used by consumers to form perceptions, attitudes, and decisions about brands. E-WOM information originates from user experiences and can be spread through e-commerce applications, forums, review sites, and social media.

Liu et al. (2024) describe e-WOM as interactive digital communication that can take the form of text, images, and videos and functions to shape consumer evaluations of brands. Babić Rosario et al. (2020) emphasize the e-WOM process through the creation, exposure, and evaluation of information. In this study, the e-WOM indicators used in the instrument include opinion valence, number or quantity of reviews, credibility, information quality, and information usefulness. These indicators describe the direction of assessment, information volume, level of trust, clarity of content, and the usefulness of reviews for consumer decisions.

Buying decision

The purchase decision is a key concept in consumer behavior, reflecting the stage of product or brand selection after consumers evaluate information, alternatives, and the influence of the marketing environment. This process involves more than just the act of purchasing, but also encompasses the considerations leading up to the final decision. In the context of e-commerce, consumers can use digital information, prices, reviews, seller reputation, and previous experiences to assess their choices.

The purchasing decision indicators in the research instrument include purchase intention, social influence, economic factors, perceived quality, vendor trust, and ease of use. These indicators were chosen to represent the context of digital purchases, specifically when consumers consider product appearance and information, recommendations, pricing and promotions, user reviews, trust in the seller, and the ease of the search and payment process.

Relationship between variables and hypotheses

A positive brand image not only reflects perceptions of quality but can also foster consumer preference and confidence. Research by Pramesti and Sujana (2023) and Angelina et al. (2024) shows that brand image positively influences purchasing decisions across different product and consumer contexts. Based on this relationship, the study concluded that brand image positively influences purchasing decisions of students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University, on Shopee.

Brand trust reflects consumers' confidence that a brand can fulfill its commitments and provide a reliable experience. Trust becomes crucial when consumers face uncertainty or risk in online transactions. Previous research used in this thesis indicates that brand trust is related to purchasing decisions. Therefore, the second hypothesis states that brand trust has a positive effect on purchasing decisions of students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University, on Shopee.

Electronic Word of Mouth (EWO) encompasses user reviews, comments, ratings, and recommendations through digital media. This information helps consumers form perceptions and evaluate alternatives before purchasing. Research by Dewi and Hasanah (2023) and other studies discussed in this thesis support the influence of e-WOM on purchasing decisions. Based on this relationship, the third hypothesis states that electronic word of mouth has a positive effect on purchasing decisions of students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University, on Shopee.

Previous Research

Previous research used in this thesis shows that brand image, brand trust, and electronic word of mouth have been tested across various objects and contexts. Differences in objects, products, platforms, and variable combinations form the basis for this study to examine all three variables collectively in the context of students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at Malikussaleh University who use Shopee.

Table 2. Summary of Previous Research

Researchers	Research Focus	Key Findings
Bastian (2023)	e-WOM, Brand Image, Brand Trust, discounts; TikTok Shop	All three independent variables significantly influence purchasing decisions; discounts act as a moderating factor.
Dewi & Hasanah (2023)	e-WOM, Brand Image, Brand Trust; Wardah products	e-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust influence purchasing decisions partially and simultaneously.
Nissa et al. (2024)	Brand Image, Product Quality, Brand Trust; Skintific skincare	Brand Image, Product Quality, and Brand Trust have a significant influence on purchasing decisions.
Angelina et al. (2024)	Brand Image and e-WOM; students	Brand Image and e-WOM have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.
Pramesti & Sujana (2023)	Brand Image, Brand Awareness, Brand Trust; Apple smartphones	Brand Image, Brand Awareness, and Brand Trust have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.

Source: summarized from previous research tables in the thesis.

1. H1: Brand Image has a positive influence on the purchasing decisions of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University on Shopee.
2. H2: Brand Trust has a positive influence on the Purchasing Decisions of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University on Shopee.
3. H3: Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has a positive influence on the purchasing decisions of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University on Shopee.

METHOD

The study was conducted at the Bukit Indah Campus, Blang Pulo, Muara Satu District, Lhokseumawe City, Aceh Province. The research subjects were brand image, brand trust, and electronic word of mouth (EWO) on purchasing decisions on Shopee among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University. The study used a quantitative approach with primary data obtained through questionnaire distribution.

The study population was students from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University, who use the Shopee app. The exact number of Shopee users in the population is unknown. The study used non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique. The respondent criteria were students from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University, who use the Shopee app. Based on the sample size guidelines of Hair et al. (2019), the sample size was determined to be five times the number of indicators. With the 20 indicators used in the thesis calculations, 100 respondents were obtained.

Primary data was collected through questionnaires, while secondary data was sourced from books, scientific journals, and relevant previous research. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5) (Sugiyono, 2023). The independent variables of the study consisted of Brand Image (X1), Brand Trust (X2), and Electronic Word of Mouth (X3), while the dependent variable was Purchase Decision (Y).

Instrument testing included validity and reliability tests. Validity testing was conducted using Pearson Correlation by comparing the calculated r-value and the table r-value at a 5% significance level. An item was declared valid if the calculated r-value was greater than the table r-value. Reliability testing used Cronbach's Alpha, with the instrument being considered reliable if the alpha value was greater than 0.60 (Ghozali, 2021).

Classical assumption tests include normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. Normality is evaluated through histograms, Normal PP Plots, and One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov. Multicollinearity is assessed through Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with criteria of Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10. Heteroscedasticity is examined through scatterplots and the Park Test, with a significance value > 0.05 used as an indicator of the absence of heteroscedasticity symptoms.

Data analysis used multiple linear regression with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The coefficient of determination was used to assess the model's ability to explain variations in purchasing decisions. Hypothesis testing was conducted partially using a t-test at a 5% significance level. The hypothesis was accepted if the calculated t-value was greater than the t-table or if the significance value was less than 0.05.

Table 3. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variables	Operational Definition	Indicator
Brand Image (X1)	Students' perceptions of Shopee are formed through brand image and association.	Brand Identity; Brand Associations; Brand Personality; Brand Attitude; Brand Benefits
Brand Trust (X2)	Students' confidence in Shopee's ability to consistently fulfill commitments.	Reliability; Credibility; Integrity; Benevolence
Electronic Word of Mouth (X3)	Students' perceptions of Shopee's online reviews as a source of digital information.	Valence of Opinion; Quantity; Credibility; Quality of Information; Helpfulness
Purchase Decision (Y)	The process of evaluating and selecting Shopee as a purchasing platform after considering relevant factors.	Purchase Intention; Social Influence; Economic Factors; Perceived Quality; Vendor Trust; Ease of Use

Source: compiled from operational definitions and research instruments in the thesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The study involved 100 Shopee users from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University. Based on gender, 38 respondents were male and 62 female. Fifty respondents were aged 18–21, and 50 respondents were aged 22–24. The respondents were from the classes of 2022 to 2025 and from five study programs. The majority of respondents (75%) used Shopee at least three times in the past month.

Table 4. Summary of Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	n	%
Gender	Man	38	38.0
	Woman	62	62.0
Age	18–21 years	50	50.0
	22–24 years	50	50.0
Force	2022	45	45.0
	2023	13	13.0
	2024	28	28.0
	2025	14	14.0
Study program	Management	37	37.0
	Accountancy	29	29.0
	Islamic Economics	17	17.0
	Economic development	11	11.0
	Entrepreneurship	6	6.0
Shopee Frequency/month	1 time	7	7.0
	2 times	18	18.0
	≥ 3 times	75	75.0

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics results show that all variables obtained an average value in the agree category. Brand Image has an overall mean of 3.87. In this variable, item X1.5 obtained the highest mean of 3.90, while X1.4 obtained the lowest mean of 3.84. Brand Trust has an overall mean of 3.81; item X2.3 has a mean of 3.90 and X2.4 has a mean of 3.72. Electronic Word of Mouth has a mean of 3.81; item X3.4 obtained a mean of 3.87 and X3.2 obtained a mean of 3.74. Purchase Decision has a mean of 3.82; item Y.2 obtained the highest mean of 3.93 and Y.4 obtained the lowest mean of 3.77.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variables	Mean	Top Items	Mean	Lowest Item	Mean
Brand Image	3.87	X1.5	3.90	X1.4	3.84
Brand Trust	3.81	X2.3	3.90	X2.4	3.72
Electronic Word of Mouth	3.81	X3.4	3.87	X3.2	3.74
Buying decision	3.82	Y.2	3.93	Y.4	3.77

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test compared the calculated r-value of each item with the r-table of 0.197 at $df = 98$ and a significance level of 5%. All items in Brand Image, Brand Trust, Electronic Word of Mouth, and Purchase Decision had a calculated r-value greater than the r-table, so all items were declared valid. The reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.895 for Brand Image, 0.861 for Brand Trust, 0.904 for Electronic Word of Mouth, and 0.913 for Purchase Decision. Since all values were greater than 0.60, all variables were declared reliable.

Table 6. Summary of Validity and Reliability Tests

Variables	Range of r-count	r-table	Cronbach Alpha	Information
Brand Image	0.823–0.856	0.197	0.895	Valid and reliable
Brand Trust	0.814–0.853	0.197	0.861	Valid and reliable
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.838–0.860	0.197	0.904	Valid and reliable
Buying decision	0.794–0.864	0.197	0.913	Valid and reliable

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Classical Assumption Test

The results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test show an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200. This value is greater than 0.05 so that the residuals of the regression model are declared normally distributed. The results of the histogram graph and Normal PP Plot in the thesis also show a pattern that supports the conclusion of normality.

The results of the multicollinearity test show that the Tolerance value for Brand Image is 0.163 with a VIF of 6.125; Brand Trust is 0.154 with a VIF of 6.494; and Electronic Word of Mouth is 0.131 with a VIF of 7.626. All Tolerance values are greater than 0.10 and all VIFs are less than 10. Based on the criteria used in the study, the model does not show symptoms of multicollinearity.

The heteroscedasticity test using the Park Test yielded significance values of 0.169 for Brand Image, 0.356 for Brand Trust, and 0.279 for Electronic Word of Mouth. All values were greater than 0.05. The scatterplot in the thesis also showed points randomly distributed above and below zero without any particular pattern. Based on these results, the model was declared free of heteroscedasticity.

Table 7. Summary of Classical Assumption Tests

Testing	Key Results	Criteria	Conclusion
KS Normality	Asymp. Sig. = 0.200	> 0.05	Normal residual
BI multicollinearity	Tolerance 0.163; VIF 6.125	Tol. > 0.10 ; VIF < 10	There are no symptoms
BT multicollinearity	Tolerance 0.154; VIF 6.494	Tol. > 0.10 ; VIF < 10	There are no symptoms
Multicollinearity of e-WOM	Tolerance 0.131; VIF 7.626	Tol. > 0.10 ; VIF < 10	There are no symptoms
Test Park BI	Significant 0.169	> 0.05	Not heteroscedastic
BT Park Test	Significant 0.356	> 0.05	Not heteroscedastic
Park e-WOM Test	Significant 0.279	> 0.05	Not heteroscedastic

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Multiple Linear Regression and Hypothesis Testing

The multiple linear regression results show positive coefficients for all three independent variables. Brand Image has a regression coefficient of 0.413, Brand Trust 0.522, and Electronic Word of Mouth 0.280. Positive values indicate that an increase in each variable, with other variables held constant, is associated with an increase in purchasing decisions according to the model used in the study.

Table 8. Results of Multiple Linear Regression and t-Test

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Decision
Constant	1,659	0.951	-	1,745	0.084	-
Brand Image (X1)	0.413	0.117	0.348	3,524	0.001	H1 accepted
Brand Trust (X2)	0.522	0.147	0.360	3,545	0.001	H2 accepted
Electronic Word of Mouth (X3)	0.280	0.125	0.246	2,237	0.028	H3 is accepted

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

The correlation coefficient (R) value is 0.921. The R Square is 0.847 and the Adjusted R Square is 0.843. Based on these results, the regression model that includes Brand Image, Brand Trust, and Electronic Word of Mouth explains most of the variation in purchasing decisions in the research data, while the other parts are outside the variables used in the model.

The Influence of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions

The t-test results show that Brand Image has a regression coefficient of 0.413 with a significance value of 0.001. The significance value is smaller than 0.05 and the calculated t-value of 3.524 is greater than the t-table of 1.985, so Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions. Thus, H1 is accepted.

These results indicate that the better Shopee's brand image is perceived by respondents, the more likely they are to make a purchase decision. A positive brand image can increase consumer confidence in the services offered. This finding aligns with Pramesti and Sujana (2023), who stated that brand image has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Angelina et al. (2024) also demonstrated the influence of brand image on consumer purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Brand Trust on Purchasing Decisions

Brand Trust has a regression coefficient of 0.522 with a significance value of 0.001. The significance value is less than 0.05, and the calculated t-value of 3.545 is greater than the t-table of 1.985. These results indicate that Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions, thus H2 is accepted.

The higher the level of consumer trust in Shopee, the higher their likelihood of making a purchase decision. Trust makes consumers feel more secure in transactions and increases their confidence in purchasing. This finding aligns with Nissa et al. (2024), who stated that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Therefore, efforts to maintain service reliability, information credibility, integrity, and customer care remain relevant in building trust in the platform.

The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions

Electronic Word of Mouth has a regression coefficient of 0.280 with a significance value of 0.028. The significance value is smaller than 0.05 and the t-count of 2.237 is greater than the t-table of 1.985. Thus, e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions and H3 is accepted.

The findings indicate that the more positive information, reviews, and recommendations consumers receive through digital media, the more likely they are to make a purchase. Information from other consumers can help potential buyers evaluate a product and increase their confidence before making a transaction. These research findings align with Dewi and Hasanah (2023), who stated that electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Therefore, the growing number of digital reviews and communication among users is an aspect that platform managers need to pay attention to.

Research Implications

Theoretically, the research results indicate that brand image, brand trust, and electronic word of mouth have a positive influence on purchasing decisions in the context of Shopee users among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University. These results support the use of branding, trust, and digital communication variables in explaining consumer decisions in e-commerce. From a managerial perspective, the research findings are expected to provide implications for Shopee and other e-commerce players in developing marketing strategies by strengthening brand image, maintaining brand trust, and managing electronic word of mouth.

A good service experience, consistent brand communication, platform security and credibility, and a platform for consumer reviews can support the formation of perceptions and beliefs related to purchasing decisions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions among Shopee users at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University. This indicates that the better Shopee's brand image is perceived by consumers, the higher their likelihood of making a purchase decision. Thus, H1 is accepted.

Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions. The higher the level of consumer trust in Shopee, the higher the consumer's likelihood of making a purchase decision. Thus, H2 is accepted. Electronic Word of Mouth also has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions. The more positive information, reviews, and recommendations consumers receive through electronic media, the higher the consumer's likelihood of making a purchase decision. Thus, H3 is accepted.

Based on these conclusions, Shopee is advised to improve positive consumer ratings and experiences through service quality, relevant promotional programs, a safe and easy shopping experience, and consistent brand communication. E-WOM management can be strengthened by encouraging consumers to provide reviews, ratings, and post-purchase user experiences. Future researchers are advised to add other variables such as price, promotions, service quality, lifestyle, and consumer satisfaction, expand the population and sample, and consider qualitative or mixed methods approaches to gain a deeper understanding.

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