



MAJELIS PENDIDIKAN TINGGI MUHAMMADIYAH
UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SUMATERA UTARA
FAKULTAS EKONOMI DAN BISNIS

Jl. Kapten Mukhtar Basri No. 3 (061) 6624567 Medan 20238



PENGESAHAN UJIAN TUGAS AKHIR

Panitia Ujian Strata-I Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, dalam sidang yang diselenggarakan pada hari Jum'at, tanggal 17 April 2026, pukul 08.30 WIB sampai dengan selesai, setelah mendengar, melihat, memperhatikan, dan seterusnya.

MEMUTUSKAN

Nama : JULIA SYAHPUTRI
NPM : 2205160140
Program Studi : MANAGEMENT
Konsentrasi : MARKETING MANAGEMENT
Judul Tugas Akhir : THE ROLE OF PRODUCT REVIEWS IN MEDIATING THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS ON SHOPE A CASE STUDY OF FEB UMSU STUDENTS)

Dinyatakan : (A) *Lulus Yudisium dan telah memenuhi persyaratan untuk memperoleh Gelar Sarjana pada Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara*

TIM PENGUJI

Penguji I

Penguji II

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lila Bismala, S.T., M.Si

Asrizal Efendy Nasution, S.E., M.Si

Pembimbing

Hazamanan Khair, S.E., M.B.A., Ph.D

PANITIA UJIAN

Ketua

Sekretaris

Dr. Radiman, S.E., M.Si

Dr. Hasrudy Tanjung, S.E., M.Si





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UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SUMATERA UTARA
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS
Jl. Kapten Mukhtar Basri No. 3. Medan, Telp. 061-6624567, Kode Pos 20238**

APPROVAL OF FINAL ASSIGNMENT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, hereby declares that:

Student Name : JULIA SYAHPUTRI
NPM : 2205160140
Study Program : MANAGEMENT
Concentration : MARKETING MANAGEMENT
**Research Title : THE ROLE OF PRODUCT REVIEWS IN MEDIATING THE
INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS ON
SHOPEE (A CASE STUDY OF FEB UMSU STUDENTS)**

Has been approved and has fulfilled the requirements to take the final final examination (Meja Hijau) in order to defend the final assignment prepared by the above mentioned student.

Medan, April 2026

Supervisor's Approval

HAZMANAN KHAIR, S.E., M.B.A., PH.D

Acknowledged/Approved By:

**Director of Management Study Program
Faculty of Economics and Business UMSU**

AGUS SANI, S.E., M, SC

**Dean
Faculty of Economics and Business UMSU**

DR. RADIMAN, S.E., M.SI



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UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SUMATERA UTARA
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS
Jl. Kapten Mukhtar Basri No. 3. Medan, Telp. 061-6624567, Kode Pos 20238**

FINAL ASSIGNMENT GUIDANCE REPORT

Student Name : Julia Syahputri
 NPM : 2205160140
 Supervisor : Hazmanan Khair, S.E., M.B.A., Ph.D
 Study Program : Management
 Concentration : Marketing Management
 Research Title : The Role Of Product Reviews In Mediating The Influence Of Brand Image On Purchasing Decisions On Shopee (A Case Study Of FEB Umsu Students)

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References	Use mendeley	03/04/26	<i>[Signature]</i>
Approval for Final Examination	ACC Siday Saipin	04/04/26	<i>[Signature]</i>

Know by:
 Director of Study Program

(Agus Sani, S.E., M.Sc.)

Medan, April 2026

Approved by:
 Supervisor

(Hazmanan Khair, S.E., M.B.A., Ph.D)



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<https://umsu.ac.id/> rektor@umsu.ac.id umsumedan umsumedan umsumedan umsumedan

SURAT PERNYATAAN

Bismillahirrahmanirrohim

Yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini :

Nama : Julia Syahputri
Tempat/tgl lahir : Medan, 10 Juli 2004
No. KTP (NIK) : 1271145007040004
NPM : 2205160140
Fakultas : Ekonomi dan Bisnis UMSU
Program Studi : Manajemen

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Medan, Maret 2026

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Julia Syahputri

**THE ROLE OF PRODUCT REVIEWS IN MEDIATING THE
INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASING
DECISIONS ON SHOPEE (A CASE STUDY
OF FEB UMSU STUDENTS)**

THESIS

*Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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By:

Name : Julia Syahputri
NPM : 2205160140
Study Program : Management
Concentration : Marketing

**FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF MUHAMMADIYAH SUMATERA UTARA
MEDAN
2026**

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF PRODUCT REVIEWS IN MEDIATING THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS ON SHOPEE (A CASE STUDY OF FEB UMSU STUDENTS)

Julia Syahputri

Management Study Program

Email: juliasyahputri03@gmail.com

This study aims to analyze the effect of *brand image* and *product reviews* on *purchase decisions* in the Shopee marketplace, with *product reviews* as a mediating variable, using a quantitative approach with data collected through questionnaires distributed to students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (FEB UMSU), and analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that *brand image* has a positive but moderate effect on *purchase decisions* (0.291), a very strong effect on *product reviews* (0.953), while *product reviews* have a strong and more dominant effect on *purchase decisions* (0.683). Additionally, *product reviews* significantly mediate the relationship between *brand image* and *purchase decisions* with an indirect effect of 0.651. These findings indicate that purchase decisions are influenced not only by brand image but also strongly by the quality and credibility of product reviews; therefore, sellers and marketplace platforms are advised to maintain a positive brand image and enhance the transparency, informativeness, and reliability of review systems to increase consumer trust and purchasing decisions.

Keywords: *Brand Image, Product Reviews, Purchase Decision, Marketplace, Shopee*

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It is hoped that this proposal will provide a meaningful contribution in enriching insights and knowledge, particularly for fellow students, academics, and readers who have an interest in the field of study discussed. May this modest work serve as a useful reference and open opportunities for further research development in the future.

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Medan, January 2026
The Author,

JULIA SYAHPUTRI
NPM : 2205160140

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The development of information and communication technology has had a significant impact on changes in consumer consumption patterns. Digital transformation in the trade sector has encouraged a shift in consumer preferences from conventional transactions to online-based transactions through e-commerce platforms (Khair et al., 2022). Easy access to information, transaction efficiency, and the availability of a wide range of product choices have made online shopping an integral part of the modern lifestyle. In this context, purchasing decisions have become an important aspect for consumers in determining products that suit their needs and preferences (Alwadhiah et al., 2025).

Purchasing decisions represent a process in which consumers select a product after passing through several stages, including need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and the final decision to purchase. Purchasing decisions are influenced not only by internal factors such as needs, motivation, and perception, but also by external factors such as brand image and consumer reviews circulating across digital platforms (Aman et al., 2025).

Purchasing decisions constitute the final stage of the consumer behavior process, in which individuals decide whether to purchase a product after undergoing information search, alternative evaluation, and assessment of the benefits offered (Khair et al., 2023). This decision is influenced by consumer beliefs toward a product or brand, as well as experiences and information obtained prior to purchase.

In the context of e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, purchasing decisions become increasingly complex, as consumers rely heavily on digital information, including brand reputation and reviews from other users, as a basis for trust evaluation (Ardiyanti et al., 2025).

Research by Boangmanalu and Lubis (2025) indicates that purchasing decisions on the Shopee platform are influenced by consumer perceptions formed through interactions with product information and responses from other users, where reviews and ratings serve as important considerations in determining purchasing decisions. Furthermore, Bukran et al. (2024) found that purchasing decisions are not formed instantaneously, but rather through a consideration process that evaluates perceived benefits, functional value, and trust in product quality within a digital retail environment. These findings emphasize that purchasing decisions are a fundamental element in the success of digital marketing strategies and represent a relevant focus of research in the development of online transaction activities, particularly on the Shopee platform.

One of the factors influencing purchasing decisions is brand image. Brand image refers to consumer perceptions of a brand based on past experiences, received information, and associations formed in the consumer's mind (Agustina & Purba, 2025).

Brand image represents the set of associations and beliefs held by consumers toward a brand that distinguishes it from competing brands. A strong brand image is capable of increasing consumer trust in product quality, influencing risk perception, and enhancing purchase intention as well as purchasing decisions (Kusuma & Murniyati, 2025). A positive brand image can significantly affect

buying interest and purchasing decisions, indicating that the stronger the brand image built by a company, the greater the likelihood that consumers will make a purchase (Amini & Auliya, 2025).

Brand image is a comprehensive consumer perception of a brand formed through experiences, information, and continuous interactions between consumers and the brand. In a highly competitive digital era, brand image serves as a strategic asset that builds trust, credibility, and differentiation amid market competition (Fadini et al., 2025). Brand image represents the total perception formed from information and experiences related to a brand, where a more positive brand image leads to higher levels of consumer confidence in the products offered (Khair et al., 2024). This is reinforced by the findings of Kholifah and Nugraha (2025), who emphasize that brand image plays a crucial role in building trust and emotional value that influence how consumers evaluate a product, making positive brand perception a fundamental basis for determining consumer preferences. In addition, Maharani and Achmad (2024) state that brand image is not merely a symbolic identity such as a name, logo, or design, but reflects the reputation and credibility of a brand formed in the minds of consumers through a continuous evaluative process. Therefore, it is evident that brand image is a key factor in determining how a brand is perceived and considered by consumers in the modern digital-based market.

Product reviews are one of the main factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions on e-commerce platforms, as reviews written by previous users serve as a reliable source of information that helps consumers objectively assess product quality before making a purchase decision. A study by Catur et al.

(2023) found that online consumer reviews have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, with a coefficient value of 0.269 and a T-statistic of 3.113 (T-statistic > 1.96). This indicates that the better the reviews received by a product, the higher the likelihood that consumers will decide to purchase it. The study also emphasizes that reviews function as social proof, capable of reducing consumer risk and uncertainty in online transactions, as consumers rely heavily on authentic experiences shared by other users to ensure product safety and quality prior to purchase. Furthermore, their findings show that credible and informative reviews can enhance consumer trust and confidence in making purchasing decisions, highlighting the crucial role of digital reviews in the competitive landscape of modern marketplaces such as Shopee.

Product reviews represent evaluations, opinions, and real experiences provided by consumers after using a product and constitute one of the most influential sources of information in the context of online purchasing. In the digital era, product reviews do not merely function as a medium for expressing opinions, but also serve as indicators of a product's credibility and quality, helping consumers reduce transactional risk. Research conducted by Jumawan et al. (2024) states that product reviews play a strategic role in shaping consumer perceptions of product value and reliability, where clear, informative, and positive reviews can increase consumer trust and confidence in a brand. They further emphasize that online reviews function as social proof that assists consumers in conducting objective evaluations of product quality, as such information is perceived to be more credible than seller-provided information or company promotions. Consequently, product reviews become a key variable in understanding consumer behavior patterns on e-

commerce platforms such as Shopee, which rely heavily on reputation, information transparency, and digital interaction as the foundation for purchasing decision formation.

Product reviews play a vital role in reducing uncertainty and purchase risk in online transactions, particularly when consumers are unable to physically inspect or try products prior to purchase. Product reviews essentially act as social proof that can strengthen or even correct consumer perceptions of brand image, thereby influencing consumer attitudes and trust levels toward a product. In practice, the relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions is not always linear. Products with a strong brand image but negative reviews may experience decreased consumer trust, potentially leading to purchase cancellation. Conversely, products with a relatively weak brand image but supported by positive reviews and high ratings may increase consumer confidence and ultimately encourage purchasing decisions. This condition reflects a dynamic relationship among brand image, product reviews, and purchasing decisions, indicating that product reviews function not only as supplementary information but also as a determining factor in the purchasing decision-making process. In line with the mediation concept proposed by Nurmala et al. (2025), a mediating variable explains how and why the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable occurs. In this study, product reviews act as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions, meaning that the effect of brand image occurs not only directly but also indirectly through reviews, which serve as concrete evidence of product quality, performance, and credibility in the eyes of consumers.

This phenomenon is highly relevant to the Shopee e-commerce platform. Shopee is currently the largest and most widely used marketplace in Indonesia. Based on a YouGov report (2023), Shopee ranked first as the Best Global Brand in Indonesia with a composite score of 69.6 and became the most frequently downloaded online shopping application. Shopee Update data (2023) indicate that Shopee successfully recorded more than one billion MSME products sold and achieved an increase in export transactions of over 50 percent compared to the previous year. Shopee's success is closely related to its ability to build a strong brand image and provide a comprehensive product review system, including star ratings, written comments, photos, and product trial videos. These review features play an essential role in assisting consumers in evaluating products before making purchasing decisions.



Figure 1.1

Top E-Commerce Applications in Indonesia in April 2025

The figure shows that Shopee is the most visited marketplace in Indonesia, with a total of 167 million visits, significantly outperforming its closest competitors such as Tokopedia with 107.2 million visits and Lazada with 74.5 million visits. Meanwhile, Bilibli and Bukalapak rank lower, with 27.1 million and 15.6 million

visits, respectively. Shopee's substantial dominance reflects a high level of consumer interest and trust in the platform, making it a relevant object of study in the context of consumer behavior. Given the high intensity of visits and intense competition in the e-commerce market, it is important to analyze the factors influencing purchasing decisions on Shopee, particularly through strategic variables such as brand image and product reviews, which serve as primary considerations for consumers in making purchasing decisions on digital platforms.

However, in practice, consumer purchasing decisions on the Shopee marketplace are not always directly influenced by the brand image of a product or seller. Although a product may possess a strong and well-known brand image, this does not necessarily encourage consumers—particularly students of FEB UMSU—to immediately make a purchase. Students, as digital consumers, tend to be more selective and cautious in making purchasing decisions due to the wide variety of products, intense competition among sellers, and the risk of discrepancies between the received product and initial expectations. This condition indicates a mismatch between brand image perception and actual consumer purchasing behavior.

In the context of a marketplace such as Shopee, product reviews serve as an important source of information used as a basis for consideration prior to making a purchase. Nevertheless, available product reviews are often perceived as less reliable because they tend to be brief, subjective, and in some cases indicated as inauthentic, making it difficult for consumers to obtain valid information for evaluation. On the other hand, there are indications that some products offered on the Shopee platform are perceived to have weak and inconsistent brand images,

which ultimately raises doubts regarding product credibility and quality among FEB UMSU students as active users of the platform.

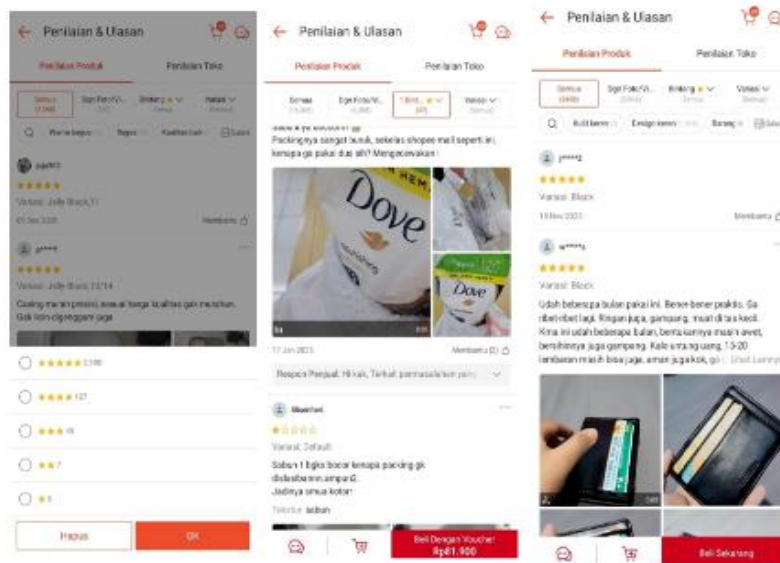


Figure 1.2

Examples of Consumer Product Reviews on the Shopee Platform

Based on the illustration in Figure 1.2, which displays the appearance of product reviews on the Shopee platform, there is a noticeable variation in ratings and reviews provided by consumers for a particular product. The reviews reflect differing usage experiences, ranging from positive feedback emphasizing satisfaction with product quality to negative reviews highlighting issues such as packaging quality, product condition upon arrival, and discrepancies between the received product and initial expectations. In addition, some reviews are presented in a brief and subjective manner, focusing solely on star ratings without detailed explanations. This condition indicates that the information obtained by consumers from product reviews is not entirely uniform or objective, which may lead to differing perceptions in assessing product quality. This phenomenon reinforces the notion that product reviews play an important role in shaping consumer evaluations

and can influence purchasing decisions, either by strengthening or weakening the effect of a product's brand image within the Shopee marketplace.

Such conditions may potentially encourage less rational or impulsive purchasing decisions, where consumers are more influenced by emotional factors and promotional strategies such as price discounts rather than objective evaluations based on brand image and the quality of product reviews. It is not uncommon to find cases in which products with strong brand images receive negative reviews that hinder purchasing decisions, or conversely, products with relatively weak brand images gain consumer trust through positive reviews. This phenomenon indicates that product reviews not only have a direct influence on purchasing decisions but also function as a mediating variable that explains how the influence of brand image may be transmitted or weakened in the purchasing decision-making process. Therefore, this study is necessary to examine the role of product reviews in mediating the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions among FEB UMSU students who use the Shopee platform.

Based on the background of the phenomena and issues described above, a comprehensive analysis is required to examine the influence of brand image and product quality on purchasing decisions. Accordingly, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled **“The Role of Product Reviews in Mediating the Influence of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions on Shopee (A Case Study of FEB UMSU Students).”**

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the background that has been described, the identification of problems in this study is as follows:

1. Purchasing decisions are still frequently impulsive, driven by emotional factors and price discounts, without adequate evaluation of product reviews and brand reputation.
2. Many product reviews are considered unreliable because they are brief, subjective, and potentially manipulated, making it difficult for students to obtain accurate information and reducing their level of trust.
3. There are still complaints regarding the brand image of products on Shopee, which is perceived as weak and inconsistent by FEB UMSU students, thereby creating doubts about product credibility and quality.

1.3 Research Limitations

This research is limited to analyzing the effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision with Product Review as a mediating variable among FEB UMSU students who use Shopee as an online shopping platform. The focus of this study only covers these three variables and does not include other factors outside the research model, such as price, promotion, or service quality. The data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to respondents who met the research criteria; therefore, the results of this study are limited to the context of FEB UMSU students and cannot be generalized to all Shopee users.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the research limitations that have been described, the research questions in this study are as follows:

1. Does Brand Image have an effect on Purchase Decision on the Shopee platform (Case Study of FEB UMSU students)?

2. Does Brand Image have an effect on Product Review on the Shopee platform (Case Study of FEB UMSU students)?
3. Does Product Review have an effect on Purchase Decision on the Shopee platform (Case Study of FEB UMSU students)?
4. Does Product Review mediate the effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision on the Shopee platform (Case Study of FEB UMSU students)?

1.5 Research Objectives

In accordance with the research questions above, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine and analyze the effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision on the Shopee platform (Case Study of FEB UMSU students).
2. To determine and analyze the effect of Brand Image on Product Review on the Shopee platform (Case Study of FEB UMSU students).
3. To determine and analyze the effect of Product Review on Purchase Decision on the Shopee platform (Case Study of FEB UMSU students).
4. To determine and analyze the role of Product Review in mediating the effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision on the Shopee platform (Case Study of FEB UMSU students).

1.6 Research Benefits

The benefits of this research are as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefits

This study is expected to enrich the literature and contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of marketing management, particularly regarding the influence of Brand Image and Product Review on

Purchase Decision using a mediating variable approach. The results of this study are also expected to serve as a reference and foundation for future research that examines consumer behavior in the e-commerce context.

2. Practical Benefits

- a. For consumers, the results of this study are expected to help improve understanding of the importance of evaluating Brand Image and Product Review before making purchasing decisions, in order to avoid impulsive and suboptimal decisions.
- b. For business actors and sellers on Shopee, this research can provide input for improving marketing strategies through strengthening Brand Image and presenting transparent and credible reviews to increase consumer trust and purchasing decisions.
- c. For Shopee as a platform, the results of this study can be used as consideration in improving the review verification system to create reviews that are more accurate, informative, and trustworthy.

3. Benefits for Future Researchers

- a. As reference material and guidance for further studies that examine similar variables or aim to develop research on different objects or variables.
- b. As a basic understanding for other researchers in expanding discussions on consumer behavior on e-commerce platforms using a mediating variable approach.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Purchase Decision

2.1.1.1 Definition of Purchase Decision

A purchase decision is a comprehensive evaluation process undertaken by consumers prior to determining their final choice of a product. According to Putri et al. (2025), a purchase decision constitutes a cognitive process in which individuals assess various alternatives through stages of need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. In the context of e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, this process becomes increasingly complex, as consumers rely heavily on digital information, including ratings, product reviews, and seller credibility, as the basis for their decision-making (Rahmawati et al., 2025). This is consistent with the findings of Putri and Marlien (2022), who argue that purchase decisions are not solely determined by rational considerations, but are also influenced by consumers' digital experiences, ease of access to information, and the level of trust in the marketplace platform. Therefore, purchase decisions in e-commerce environments represent an integration of cognitive evaluation, perceived product quality, and the reliability of digital information available to consumers.

Within the e-commerce context, purchase decisions have shifted from physical interactions to digital interactions, leading consumers to increasingly

depend on online information such as product reviews, digital promotions, and marketing content prior to making their final decisions. Safwati et al. (2022) highlight that on platforms such as Shopee, purchase decisions are no longer determined solely by product characteristics, but also by factors such as the quality of visual content, the completeness of product descriptions, the timing of content presentation, and the responsiveness of sellers to customer inquiries. Information provided by other users in the form of reviews plays a critical role in reducing uncertainty, strengthening consumer perceptions, and validating the brand image communicated by sellers. In line with this, Saputra et al. (2025) state that purchase decisions are part of a broader consumer evaluation process, encompassing need recognition, information search, alternative assessment, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation. This underscores that purchase decisions do not occur instantaneously but involve a complex and multidimensional process incorporating both rational and emotional considerations.

Furthermore, according to Asrizal Efendy Nasution (2024), a purchase decision is the outcome of a consumer's evaluative process involving various factors that influence the level of trust and confidence in selecting a product. The study indicates that purchase decisions do not occur directly; rather, they are shaped through stages of evaluation involving perceptions of information received, such as electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and price, which subsequently influence consumer trust. This trust then becomes a crucial determinant that drives consumers to finalize their purchase decisions. Thus, purchase decisions are influenced by a combination of informational factors and the level of trust established prior to the transaction.

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that a purchase decision represents a consumer action derived from both cognitive and emotional processes in selecting a product or service, influenced by internal and external factors, and involving the evaluation of available alternatives to optimally satisfy consumer needs. In this study, purchase decision is conceptualized as the final consumer response following the evaluation of brand image reinforced through product reviews, wherein product reviews function as a mediating variable that facilitates more objective purchasing decisions.

2.1.1.2 Purchase Decision Process

Research by (Firmansyah, 2019) emphasizes that the more abundant and positive the information obtained, the higher the likelihood that consumers will make a purchase decision:

1. Evaluation of Alternatives

Consumers begin comparing various product alternatives based on attributes considered important, such as price, quality, brand, testimonials, and the emotional value offered.

2. Purchase Decision

After evaluating the alternatives, consumers make a final decision. However, this decision may be influenced by situational factors such as sudden promotions, limited-time discounts, or social influences such as recommendations from friends.

According to (Hakim & Munawaroh, 2024), a strong brand image can reinforce this final decision. Post-Purchase Behavior This final stage relates to the level of consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the purchased product.

Satisfied consumers tend to make repeat purchases or recommend the product to others, whereas dissatisfaction may lead to product returns or negative reviews.

2.1.1.3 Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

According to Firmansyah (2019), purchase decisions are influenced by various interrelated factors. However, in the context of this study, the focus is directed toward factors that are most relevant to consumer behavior in e-commerce, particularly brand image and online customer reviews.

1. Price

Price is one of the important factors in consumer decision-making, as consumers tend to compare prices before making a purchase. However, in this study, price is not the primary variable examined.

2. Online Customer Reviews

Online customer reviews function as Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), which significantly influences consumer trust and perception. Positive reviews can strengthen consumer confidence in a product. In this study, online customer reviews are positioned as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of brand image on purchase decisions.

3. Digital Marketing and Influencers

Digital marketing strategies, including influencer involvement, can affect consumer purchasing behavior. However, this factor is not the main focus of this research.

4. Content Marketing

Content marketing that is informative and engaging can influence consumer interest and emotional responses. Nevertheless, this variable is not examined in depth in this study.

5. Brand Image and Brand Experience

Brand image is a key factor influencing purchase decisions, as it reflects consumers' perceptions, trust, and overall evaluation of a product. A positive brand image can create a strong impression and increase consumer confidence in making purchasing decisions. In this study, brand image is positioned as the independent variable that directly influences purchase decisions and also indirectly influences them through online customer reviews as a mediating variable.

2.1.1.4 Stages in the Online Consumer Decision-Making Process

The purchase decision-making process is a series of cognitive stages that consumers go through before and after making a purchase. According to (Muthalib, 2025), purchase decisions on the Shopee marketplace occur through several interconnected stages, in which consumers actively evaluate their needs, available information, and alternatives before ultimately making a purchase. In line with (Nurchayati et al., 2025), the online consumer purchase decision process consists of five main stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior.

The first stage is problem recognition, which occurs when consumers become aware of a need or problem triggered by internal or external stimuli. In the context of Shopee, this need may arise from personal desires, digital environmental

influences, social media trends, or exposure to online promotions and advertisements (Sitepu et al., 2022). This awareness becomes the starting point of the purchasing process.

The second stage is the information search, where consumers begin gathering information about products or services that can meet their needs. According to (Toji & Sukati, 2024), on the Shopee marketplace, information search is facilitated through features such as search tools, price filters, ratings, product reviews, and seller information. The information obtained may come from personal experience, seller advertisements, other consumers' reviews, or direct experience while accessing the platform.

The next stage is the evaluation of alternatives, which involves assessing various product options based on the information obtained. At this stage, consumers compare product attributes such as price, quality, brand, reviews, seller responsiveness, and delivery reliability. The rating and review features on Shopee play a crucial role in helping consumers evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative before making a final choice (Widyawulansari et al., 2025).

The fourth stage is the purchase decision, where consumers decide whether or not to buy a product. This decision includes selecting the product, brand, seller, price, timing of purchase, and payment method. (Alwadhiah et al., 2025) state that purchase decisions on Shopee are often influenced by promotions, transaction convenience, and consumer trust in both the seller and the platform.

The final stage is post-purchase behavior, which refers to the consumer's evaluation after receiving and using the product. At this stage, consumers assess their level of satisfaction with both the product and the shopping experience.

Satisfaction may encourage repeat purchases and positive reviews, while dissatisfaction may lead to complaints or negative reviews that affect the seller's image. Therefore, the post-purchase stage is crucial in building customer loyalty and ensuring business sustainability on the Shopee marketplace (Aman et al., 2025).

2.1.1.5 Purchase Decision Indicators

According to (Nugraha, 2021), purchase decision is a gradual process that can be measured through several key indicators as follows:

1. Recognition of Needs and Desires

This stage is the initial phase in the purchase decision process, where consumers realize a gap between their current condition and the ideal condition they expect. The awareness of needs can be triggered by internal factors, such as functional needs, emotional drives, or lifestyle considerations, as well as external factors such as advertising influence, recommendations from social environments, and trends circulating on social media. At this stage, needs are not only rational but may also be emotional and social, which then encourage consumers to seek solutions to fulfill those needs.

2. Information Search

After recognizing the need, consumers conduct a search for information related to products or services that can satisfy their needs. This information search may originate from internal sources, such as prior experience or memory of previous products, and from external sources such as the internet, customer reviews, social media, influencers, friends, and information provided by sellers. In the marketplace context, information

search becomes broader and more intensive due to easy access to various product alternatives and supporting information that is available quickly and comprehensively.

3. Evaluation of Alternatives

At this stage, consumers begin comparing various product alternatives that have been previously identified. The evaluation is carried out based on several criteria, such as price, quality, brand, product benefits, packaging, availability, and reviews or testimonials from other consumers. The evaluation process is strongly influenced by each consumer's perceptions and priorities, where product reviews play a significant role as social proof that helps consumers assess the feasibility and credibility of a product before making a purchase.

4. Purchase Decision

The purchase decision stage is the phase in which consumers determine their final choice to buy a particular product. This decision is the result of the overall previous evaluation process but may still be influenced by situational factors such as financial condition, promotions or discounts, last-minute recommendations from close contacts, and transaction convenience offered by the platform. At this stage, purchase intention is converted into actual action, although in some cases the decision may still be canceled if doubts or obstacles arise at the final moment.

5. Post-Purchase Behavior

After the purchase is made, consumers evaluate their experience using the product to determine whether it meets their expectations. This evaluation

determines the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which subsequently influences repurchase intention, the provision of reviews or ratings, recommendations to others (word of mouth), and the possibility of complaints or product returns. This stage is crucial because it determines long-term consumer loyalty, thus marketplaces and brand owners need to respond to consumer feedback actively and continuously.

These five indicators provide a comprehensive overview of the processes and considerations experienced by consumers before, during, and after making a purchase decision, particularly in the context of online transactions through marketplace platforms.

2.1.2 Product Review

2.1.2.1 Definition of Product Review

Product reviews constitute a crucial element in digital marketing, particularly within the context of e-commerce platforms such as Shopee. A product review represents a form of communication from consumers who have previously used a product to potential buyers through digital platforms. These reviews typically include evaluations related to user experience, product quality, conformity with product descriptions, delivery performance, and seller service. Product reviews may be presented in various forms, including written text, star ratings, and visual documentation such as photos or videos (Sari et al., 2022).

According to Agustina and Purba (2025), a product review is a marketplace feature that describes the strengths and weaknesses of a product based on the actual experiences of previous buyers. This view is supported by Alwadiyah et al. (2025), who define Online Customer Reviews (OCRs) as a form of electronic word-of-

mouth (e-WOM) that plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions of a product. Furthermore, Junawan et al. (2024) describe product reviews as feedback provided by customers based on their direct consumption experiences, encompassing both visual aspects such as color and design, as well as functional performance during usage. In addition, Nurmala et al. (2025) state that consumer reviews represent opinions derived from actual interactions with a product or service, which are subsequently shared through online media. Therefore, product reviews function not only as a source of information but also as a form of social influence that can affect consumer purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, Asrizal Efendy Nasution (2024) asserts that online customer reviews have a significant influence on consumer purchase decisions. The findings of the study indicate that reviews provided by previous consumers are capable of shaping perceptions and enhancing the level of trust among potential buyers toward a product. The study further explains that product reviews function as a relevant and relatively objective source of information, as they are derived from real user experiences, thereby assisting consumers in evaluating product quality prior to making a purchase. Consequently, the presence of product reviews becomes a critical factor that can influence and strengthen purchase decisions, particularly in the context of transactions on e-commerce platforms.

In line with this, Sari et al. (2022) emphasize that product reviews serve as an important medium through which consumers obtain information and evaluate products, and they have a direct role in shaping purchase decisions. Moreover, product reviews can also be understood as a form of evaluation or summary derived

from multiple user perspectives, aimed at assessing the quality, strengths, and weaknesses of a product.

2.1.2.2 The Role of Product Reviews in Purchase Decisions

Product reviews play a significant role in the consumer purchase decision process on marketplace platforms. Before making a purchase, consumers generally read product reviews as an initial form of evaluation of the offered product. This serves as a strategy to reduce purchase risk, especially since consumers cannot physically examine or try the product beforehand.

According to (Wardhana, 2024), product reviews are one of the factors that significantly influence purchase decisions on Shopee. The study found that reviews from previous consumers can increase new buyers' confidence in product quality, ultimately encouraging purchase decisions.

A study conducted by (Agustina & Purba, 2025) at Universitas Maarif Hasyim Latif also concluded that product reviews have a significant influence on purchase decisions on Shopee. Reviews displayed on the marketplace create perceptions regarding product quality and seller credibility, which strongly affect consumers' interest and confidence in making a purchase.

Overall, product reviews function as an essential evaluation tool, particularly in the online shopping ecosystem where buyers cannot directly inspect products. Consistently positive reviews help build trust and customer loyalty, whereas negative reviews may damage product reputation and hinder sales.

2.1.2.3 Factors Influencing Product Reviews

Product reviews represent one of the forms of information available to consumers in the purchase decision-making process on marketplace platforms. Product reviews contain experiences, evaluations, and opinions from previous consumers regarding products sold online. In the context of the Shopee marketplace, product reviews play an important role as a consideration tool because they provide an overview of product quality before a purchase is made. According to (Wardhana, 2024), product reviews have a significant influence on consumer purchase decisions. The factors of product reviews that influence purchase decisions are as follows:

1. Awareness of Product Reviews.

Consumer awareness of the existence of the product review feature is an initial factor in utilizing reviews as a source of information. Consumers who are aware of product reviews are more likely to read and consider feedback from previous buyers before making a purchase decision. According to (Wardhana, 2024), this awareness encourages consumers to use reviews as a basis for evaluating products offered on Shopee.

2. Frequency of Using Product Reviews.

The frequency of using product reviews indicates how often consumers read and utilize reviews in the decision-making process. Consumers who frequently read product reviews tend to be more cautious and rational in determining their choices. (Wardhana, 2024) explains that the more often consumers use product reviews as a reference, the greater their influence on purchase decisions.

3. Comparison of Product Reviews.

Product reviews allow consumers to compare other buyers' experiences with the same or similar products. Through this comparison process, consumers can assess the advantages and disadvantages of a product before making a purchase. According to (Wardhana, 2024), product reviews are used by consumers as a comparison tool to select products that best match their needs and expectations.

4. The Influence of Product Reviews on Purchase Decisions.

Product reviews have a direct influence on consumer purchase decisions. Positive reviews can increase consumer confidence and trust in a product, while negative reviews can reduce purchase intention. According to (Wardhana, 2024), product reviews function as a source of information that shapes consumer perceptions and play an important role in determining purchase decisions on the Shopee marketplace.

2.1.2.4 Implications of Product Reviews in the Shopee Marketplace

Marketplaces such as Shopee provide a review feature as a form of transparency and an open product evaluation tool by users. This feature enables two-way interaction between consumers and sellers while providing essential information for prospective buyers. The better the reviews a product receives, the higher its potential to be selected by consumers.

According to (Wardhana, 2024), sellers must maintain product quality and service performance to consistently obtain positive reviews from buyers. Negative reviews not only affect perceptions of the product but may also lower the product's

ranking within Shopee's search algorithm, ultimately reducing product visibility to potential buyers.

Furthermore, (Nugraha, 2021) suggests that producers should encourage buyers to leave reviews after completing transactions. This increases the number of reviews and enriches the information available to prospective customers. Sellers should also respond promptly to negative reviews as a demonstration of commitment to quality and service.

According to (Aman et al., 2025), product reviews on Shopee influence not only individual perceptions but also shape the collective image of a brand or seller within the marketplace. Consistency in delivering quality products and good service enhances seller ratings and strengthens public trust.

Thus, product reviews have broad implications, affecting not only individual purchasing decisions but also overall business performance. In today's highly competitive digital era, consumer reviews function as strategic assets that shape product image and market trust. Products with positive, detailed, and credible reviews have a greater chance of being sold and widely recommended, both through built-in marketplace features and through social media and digital word-of-mouth.

2.1.2.5 Product Review Indicators

Product review indicators are conceptual measures used to assess the extent to which consumer reviews influence other consumers' perceptions, confidence, and purchase decisions within a marketplace. Product reviews serve as experience-based information sources that help reduce consumer uncertainty before making a purchase. The stronger the perceived review indicators, the greater the likelihood of a purchase decision.

Based on research by (Wardhana, 2024) in the Journal of Education and Entrepreneurship, the indicators of product reviews in marketplace research consist of several main aspects:

1. Awareness

Awareness refers to the extent to which consumers recognize and understand the existence of the review feature in a marketplace as an information source prior to making a purchase. Consumers with high awareness tend to consider reviews as an initial basis for evaluating products.

2. Frequency

Frequency refers to how often consumers read or use product reviews as references in the purchase decision-making process. The more frequently consumers access reviews, the greater their role in shaping consumer perceptions of a product.

3. Comparison

Comparison reflects consumers' ability to use product reviews to compare the quality, strengths, and weaknesses of one product with another. Through reviewing comparisons, consumers can determine which alternative best suits their needs and preferences.

4. Influence

Influence represents the extent to which product reviews affect the consumer's final decision, either by strengthening purchase intention or by canceling a purchase decision. Positive and convincing reviews tend to increase consumer trust and encourage purchase decisions.

These indicators are used to measure the product review variable because they are considered capable of representing consumer behavior in utilizing online reviews as a basis for consideration before making purchases in a marketplace.

2.1.3 Brand Image

2.1.3.1 Definition of Brand Image

Brand image is one of the most important elements for any company, as it reflects consumers' perceptions of the products or services offered. The stronger and more positive a brand is perceived, the more recognizable it becomes among consumers, which can ultimately generate positive impacts and greater profitability for the company. Brand image represents the overall perception formed in consumers' minds regarding a brand as a result of accumulated experiences, information, and interactions received over time. It plays a strategic role for companies, as it reflects how a brand is understood, evaluated, and remembered by consumers. The more positive the brand image, the greater the likelihood that the brand will be trusted and chosen by consumers in the purchase decision-making process. In the context of modern marketing, a brand is no longer viewed merely as an identity or a distinguishing tool, but as a valuable intangible asset that provides a competitive advantage to a company (Satia & Budiarta, 2025).

Furthermore, Setyorini et al. (2023) explain that brand image is a representation of all consumer perceptions toward a brand, developed through product usage experiences and previously received information. These perceptions include evaluations of product quality, reliability, and brand reputation in the eyes of consumers. In this sense, brand image is formed through a combination of elements such as product quality, design, symbols, brand name, and perceived

value. Therefore, brand image is not merely a visual representation, but a psychological construct that influences consumer attitudes, trust, and tendencies in determining purchase decisions.

In line with this, Asrizal Efendy Nasution (2024) states that brand image reflects the perception formed in consumers' minds through various sources of information, including digital marketing and social media interactions. A positive brand image is able to create a strong impression and enhance consumer trust in a product, which ultimately influences their purchase decisions. This indicates that brand image not only functions as a differentiating factor among competing products but also as a determinant that strengthens consumer confidence in making purchasing decisions.

2.1.3.2 Benefits of Brand Image

A positively established brand image provides various strategic benefits for companies in carrying out marketing activities and maintaining business sustainability. Brand image functions as a representation of consumer perceptions regarding the quality, credibility, and reputation of a brand, which are formed through consumer experiences, information, and interactions with the brand. A strong brand image becomes an intangible asset that can influence consumer attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies in the purchase decision-making process (Firmansyah, 2019). The benefits of a positive brand image for a company include the following:

1. Increasing consumer trust and confidence in the brand, leading to a higher tendency for consumers to choose products with a strong brand image.

2. Strengthening the brand's position and competitiveness in the market, as a strong brand image creates clear differentiation and embeds brand superiority in consumers' minds.
3. Enhancing the effectiveness of marketing strategies, since brands with a positive image are easier to communicate, accepted more readily, and remembered more easily by consumers.
4. Encouraging the development of customer loyalty, reflected in repeat purchases and the establishment of long-term relationships between the company and its customers.

In addition to benefiting companies, brand image also provides significant advantages for consumers. A positive brand image helps consumers simplify the purchase decision-making process, especially when faced with numerous product alternatives in a marketplace. A strong brand image reduces perceived risk, increases a sense of security, and strengthens consumer confidence in the quality and credibility of the product to be purchased, enabling consumers to make decisions more rationally and confidently (Nugraha, 2021).

2.1.3.3 Factors Influencing Brand Image

The formation of brand image in consumers' minds is a long-term process influenced by various interconnected strategic factors. Brand image is not formed instantly, but rather through the accumulation of experiences, information, and consumer interactions with the brand. Several recent studies state that consumer perceptions of a brand are strongly influenced by cognitive, affective, and symbolic elements attached to both the product and the company (Firmansyah, 2019).

Based on a synthesis of various journals from the 2020–2025 period, the main factors influencing brand image can be explained as follows:

1. Brand Association

Brand association refers to a collection of impressions, meanings, and images that appear in consumers' minds when they recall a brand. These associations can be formed through product attributes such as quality, price, design, and packaging, as well as through perceived benefits, including functional, emotional, and symbolic benefits. Research by Nugraha (2021) shows that strong and consistent brand associations are able to create positive perceptions and strengthen the brand's position in the market. The more relevant the associations are to consumers' needs and lifestyles, the more positive the resulting brand image will be.

2. Strength, Favorability, and Uniqueness

Brand strength reflects how deeply and strongly the brand image is embedded in consumers' memory, which is generally formed through consistent marketing communication and repeated usage experiences. Favorability refers to the level of consumer preference and positive evaluation of the brand, while uniqueness indicates the extent to which the brand is perceived as different and not easily substituted by competing brands. Nugraha (2021) emphasizes that brands with clear uniqueness whether in terms of value, innovation, or visual identity are more capable of building a strong and sustainable image amid intense market competition.

3. Product Quality and Innovation

Product quality is a fundamental factor in shaping brand image, as good quality strengthens consumer trust in the brand. In addition, product innovation plays an important role in maintaining brand relevance amid changes in market needs and preferences. Nugraha (2021) states that consumers tend to develop a positive image toward brands that consistently deliver high-quality and innovative products. A company's failure to maintain quality and innovation can directly result in a decline in brand image in the eyes of consumers.

4. Brand Trust

Brand trust is a psychological factor formed through positive consumer experiences, transparency of information, and consistency in brand performance. Brand trust serves as the main foundation in building a strong brand image. According to Firmansyah (2019), brands that are trusted by consumers can more easily establish a positive image because consumers feel secure and confident in using the product. A high level of trust also reduces perceived risk and strengthens consumers' emotional attachment to the brand.

5. Consumer Experience and Marketing Communication

Positive consumer experiences, both before and after purchase, influence overall brand perception. Interactions through customer service, social media, online reviews, and company responses to consumer complaints dynamically shape brand image. Nugraha (2021) asserts that effective

marketing communication and satisfying consumer experiences can strengthen brand image and enhance brand credibility in the public's view.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that brand image is influenced by a combination of rational and emotional factors, including brand associations, brand strength and uniqueness, product quality and innovation, consumer trust, and overall consumer experience. Consistent management of these factors is the key for companies to build and maintain a positive and competitive brand image.

2.1.3.4 Brand Image Indicators

According to Firmansyah (2019), brand image refers to the ideas that lead to consumers' evaluations of a product brand, which may take the form of either positive or negative judgments toward a particular brand. Brand image is closely related to product quality; the better the product quality, the stronger the brand image in the eyes of consumers. Based on the integration of theories from Biel, Keller, and Pujadi, the indicators used to measure brand image include:

1. Corporate Image

This component refers to consumers' views and evaluations of the company or manufacturer that produces the brand. A strong corporate image provides a foundation of trust for consumers before they specifically evaluate the product.

2. User Image

This indicator relates to the image or profile of consumers who use the product. Consumers often associate a brand with their own identity or with a particular social group that represents the brand's users.

3. Product Image

This stage represents consumers' evaluations of the physical attributes, functionality, and benefits directly attached to the product itself. Product image is one of the main determinants of perceived quality in the eyes of customers.

4. Uniqueness

A brand must possess distinct characteristics that differentiate it from competing products. This uniqueness becomes a strong reason for consumers to remember and choose the brand over other alternatives.

5. Modern Impression

Based on Pujadi's theory cited in Nugraha (2021), this indicator reflects the extent to which a brand is perceived as keeping up with current trends, being innovative, and meeting contemporary lifestyle needs. A modern impression is crucial for attracting a broader market segment and maintaining brand relevance in a competitive market.

These five indicators provide a comprehensive overview of the perceptions and associations formed in consumers' minds toward a brand, which ultimately influence the final decision in the purchasing process.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of a study illustrates the relationship between the concepts or variables examined, based on theoretical foundations and previous research findings. According to Setiadi (2022), a conceptual framework functions to systematically explain the interrelationships among research variables as a basis for formulating hypotheses and determining the direction of the study. In this

research, the conceptual framework represents the theoretical relationship between the independent variable, the dependent variable, and the mediating variable, describing the researcher's line of reasoning regarding both direct and indirect effects among the variables.

This study focuses on analyzing the effect of brand image on purchase decisions, with product reviews acting as a mediating variable on the Shopee platform. Brand image is positioned as the independent variable that reflects consumers' perceptions and evaluations of a brand, which is believed to influence purchase decisions. However, this influence does not occur solely in a direct manner; it also operates indirectly through product reviews, which function as social proof for consumers particularly students of FEB UMSU in strengthening their purchase decisions. This is consistent with Nugraha (2021), who states that brand image can exert an indirect effect on purchase decisions through an intervening variable. By applying this mediation approach, the conceptual framework is expected to explain the mechanism through which brand image influences purchase decisions through the role of product reviews.

2.2.1 The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions

Brand image represents the mental representation formed in consumers' minds regarding the overall offerings associated with a particular brand. In the perspective of modern marketing, brand image acts as an initial trigger that shapes consumer expectations before a transaction takes place. A positive image not only reflects product identity but also serves as a signal of quality that can reduce the perceived risk consumers experience when shopping on digital platforms such as Shopee.

Within a mediation research framework, brand image is positioned as an independent variable that has the capacity to influence an intervening variable (mediator), such as product reviews, before ultimately leading to a purchase decision. According to Agustina and Purba (2025), brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, indicating that the better a brand's reputation is perceived by students, the higher their tendency to select it as their primary choice.

Furthermore, Amini and Auliya (2025) as well as Ardiyanti et al. (2025) emphasize that a strong brand image creates an appeal that goes beyond mere product functionality. In the context of FEB UMSU students, a favorable brand image on Shopee encourages the formation of positive initial perceptions. These perceptions are then validated through product reviews left by other users. This mediating relationship explains that brand image does not operate independently in driving final decisions; rather, it establishes a chain of confidence reinforced by third-party information in the form of reviews.

Findings from Boangmanalu and Lubis (2025) in the *Iqtishaduna* journal further support this argument by stating that a strong brand image can generate broader impacts on purchase intention and buying decisions when supported by additional reinforcing factors. Thus, brand image acts as a primary foundation underlying purchase intention, where its influence on purchase decisions among FEB UMSU students is predicted to become stronger when mediated by credible and informative product reviews on the Shopee platform.



Figure 2.1

The Relationship Between Brand Image and Purchase Decision

2.2.2 The Influence of Product Reviews on Purchase Decisions

In modern digital marketing practices, product reviews have evolved into a powerful instrument of social influence in shaping consumer confidence. Reviews are a form of consumer feedback based on their experience using a product, typically conveyed through text, images, or videos. The presence of reviews provides real references from previous users, thereby reducing perceived purchase risk. Prospective consumers tend to rely on these opinions as a secondary source of information to assess the reliability, quality, and benefits of a product. Research conducted by (Jumawan et al., 2024) and (Nurmala et al., 2025) confirms that product reviews have a significant impact on purchase decisions. Credible, detailed, and relevant reviews have been proven to increase consumer trust and encourage higher purchase conversion rates.



Figure 2.2

The Relationship Between Product Reviews and Purchase Decisions

2.2.3 The Influence of Product Reviews as a Mediating Variable Between Brand Image and Purchase Decisions

This conceptual framework is constructed to provide a systematic illustration of the relationship mechanism among brand image, product reviews, and

purchase decisions of FEB UMSU students who use Shopee. According to (Putri et al., 2025), brand image represents the overall perception or evaluation of a brand formed in the minds of consumers, serving as the foundation of trust in conducting transactions. A strong brand image acts as an initial stimulus that triggers consumer interest; however, within the digital ecosystem, this image requires external validation to be converted into actual purchasing behavior.

Product reviews function as a mediating variable that bridges this relationship. According to (Rahmawati et al., 2025), product reviews or customer feedback on the Shopee marketplace significantly influence prospective buyers, where informative and honest reviews serve as social proof that strengthens the existing brand image. This is consistent with the findings of (Safwati et al., 2022) in the MEA journal, which revealed that brand image can exert an indirect influence on purchase decisions through intermediary variables that reinforce consumer confidence.

In this context, purchase decisions are positioned as the dependent variable influenced by how effectively brand image generates positive reviews from other users. Referring to the study by (Saputra et al., 2025), this mediation pathway explains that a positive brand image encourages higher perceived quality, which is then reflected in favorable product reviews, ultimately increasing the probability of purchase decisions significantly. Based on the synthesis of theories and previous research, the conceptual framework establishes that brand image has a positive effect on purchase decisions through product reviews as a mediating variable. This relationship can be illustrated as follows:

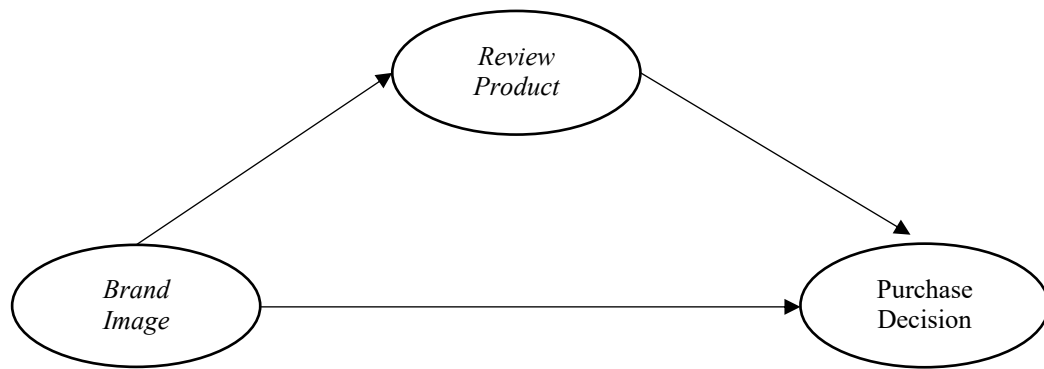


Figure 2.1
Research Conceptual Framework

2.3 Hypotheses

Hypotheses are provisional answers to the research questions, which have been formulated in the form of interrogative statements. The research hypotheses in this study are as follows:

1. Brand Image has an effect on Purchase Decision on the Shopee platform (Case Study: FEB UMSU Students).
2. Brand Image has an effect on Product Review on the Shopee platform (Case Study: FEB UMSU Students).
3. Product Review has an effect on Purchase Decision on the Shopee platform (Case Study: FEB UMSU Students).
4. Product Review mediates the effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision on the Shopee platform (Case Study: FEB UMSU Students).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Type of Research

The research conducted consists of four variables: brand image (X) as the independent variable, purchase decision (Y) as the dependent variable, and product review (Z) as the intervening variable. The approach used in this study is an associative approach. According to Juliandi et al. (2015), an associative approach is a research approach in which the researcher aims to analyze problems by examining the relationship between one variable and other variables. This study uses a quantitative approach and path analysis, which describes and summarizes various conditions, situations, and variables, while path analysis is often referred to as a second-generation analysis of multivariate analysis. The data analysis is quantitative/statistical in nature with the aim of testing the established hypotheses.

3.2 Operational Definition of Variables

The operational definition is an effort made to detect variables through concepts related to the research problem and to facilitate understanding in the research. The variables used in this study are as follows:

Table 3.1
Operational Definition of Variables

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicator	Statement Items
Purchase Decision (Y)	Purchase decision is a step-by-step process carried out by consumers, starting from recognizing a need to post-purchase behavior after completing a transaction.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognition of Needs and Desires 2. Information Search 3. Evaluation of Alternatives 4. Purchase Decision 5. Post-Purchase Behavior (Nugraha, 2021)	1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10
Review Product (Z)	Product reviews are a form of personal communication in the form of reviews, ratings, or experiences shared by previous buyers on the Shopee platform regarding the quality and performance of a product.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Credibility 2. Information Quality 3. Review Volume 4. Relevance (Wardhana, 2024)	1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8
Brand Image (X1)	Brand image is the overall impression held by consumers about a brand, which plays an important role in building loyalty and differentiating the brand from competitors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corporate Image 2. User Image 3. Product Image 4. Uniqueness 5. Modern Impression (Firmansyah, 2019)	1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10

3.3 Place and Time of Research

3.3.1 Research Location

The research location or site of this study was the students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (FEB UMSU), located at Jl. Kapten Mukhtar Basri No. 3, Medan 20238, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Telephone: +62 61 6619056, +62 61 6622400 Ext. 106 & 108; Fax: +62 61 6625474. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that FEB UMSU students are active users of the Shopee marketplace platform, which is relevant to the research variables, namely Brand Image and Product Reviews.

3.3.2 Time of Research

This research was conducted from October 2025 to March 2026. Further details of the research activities can be seen in the table below:

Table 3.2
Research Timeline Details

No	Type of Activity	October 2025				November 2025				December 2025				January 2026				February 2026				March 2026			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1	Title Submission	■																							
2	Preliminary Research		■	■	■																				
3	Proposal Writing					■	■	■	■																
4	Proposal Supervision									■	■	■	■												
5	Proposal Seminar														■										
6	Proposal Revision															■	■								
7	Thesis Writing																			■	■				
8	Thesis Supervision																					■	■		
9	Final Thesis Defense																								■

3.4 Population and Sample

3.4.1 Population

Population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and from which conclusions are drawn (Sugiyono, 2018). The population and objects of observation in this study are active students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (FEB UMSU) in 2024 who are users of the Shopee application, with details as follows:

Table 3.2
Research Population

No	Study Program	Degree Level	Cohort (Year of Entry)
			2024
1	Management	S1	620
2	Accounting	S1	250
3	Development Economics	S1	40
4	Tax Management	D3	44
Total per Faculty			954

3.4.2 Sample

A sample is a part of the number and characteristics possessed by a population. What is studied from the sample can be generalized to the population. The determination of the sample size in this study uses the Lemeshow formula because the population size is not known with certainty. According to Lemeshow et al. (1990), the Lemeshow formula can be used to determine sample size in populations that are unknown or not precisely defined, so that the resulting sample remains representative.

The Lemeshow formula used in this study is as follows:

$$n = (Z^2 \times p \times q) / d^2$$

Description:

n = sample size

Z = standard normal value at a 95% confidence level (1.96)

p = estimated proportion (0.5)

q = 1 – p

d = margin of error (0.1)

Based on the calculation using the Lemeshow formula, the minimum required sample size obtained is 96 respondents. To simplify data processing and improve the accuracy of the study, the sample size in this research was rounded up to 100 respondents.

The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling approach. According to Sugiyono (2019), non-probability sampling is a sampling technique that does not provide equal opportunities for every member of the population to be selected as a sample, while purposive sampling is a sampling technique based on specific considerations or criteria that are in accordance with the objectives of the study.

In this study, the criteria for respondents selected as the sample are students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (FEB UMSU) who have made purchases on the Shopee platform and have read product reviews before making a purchase.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

1. Documentation

The documentation technique involves collecting data and information through archives and documents. To obtain the supporting data needed from reliable sources, documentation techniques are used.

2. Questionnaire (Survey)

In this study, data were collected by distributing questionnaires to respondents. Researchers typically use closed-ended questionnaires. The scale used is the Likert scale, which is designed to measure the level of respondents' agreement with a statement or question. The level of

agreement generally ranges from very positive to very negative and is divided into five rating scores: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). Respondents are asked to circle the selected multiple-choice number or place a check mark in the provided table for their responses.

Table 3.4
Likert Scale Instrument

Description	Score
Strongly Agree (SA)	5
Agree (A)	4
Somewhat Disagree (SD)	3
Disagree (D)	2
Strongly Disagree (SD)	1

Sumber : (Juliandi et al., 2015)

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

3.6.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The analysis technique used in this study is quantitative data analysis, which employs statistical methods to assist in calculating numerical data, analyzing the obtained data, and drawing conclusions from the tests conducted.

3.6.2 Path Analysis

Path analysis is used to examine the effect of intervening variables. Path analysis is an extension of multiple linear regression analysis, or the use of regression analysis to estimate causal relationships among variables (causal models) that have been previously established based on theory (Juliandi, 2018).

3.6.3 Data Analysis Using Partial Least Squares (PLS)

The data in this study are analyzed using a quantitative approach with statistical analysis, namely Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which aims to perform path analysis with latent variables. This analysis is often referred to as the second generation of multivariate analysis (Juliandi, 2018). Variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) simultaneously tests both the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model is used to test validity and reliability, while the structural model is used to test causality (hypothesis testing with predictive models).

The purpose of using Partial Least Squares (PLS) is prediction, particularly to predict relationships among constructs and to obtain latent variable scores for predictive purposes. Latent variables are linear aggregates of their indicators. The weight estimates used to create latent variable component scores are obtained based on how the inner model (the structural model linking latent variables) and the outer model (the measurement model linking indicators to their constructs) are specified. The result is the minimization of residual variance in the dependent variables (both latent variables and indicators).

PLS is a powerful analysis method because it is not based on strict assumptions, and the data do not need to follow a multivariate normal distribution. Indicators measured on categorical, ordinal, interval, and ratio scales can be used in the same model. Structural model testing in PLS is conducted using SmartPLS version 3 for Windows.

There are two main stages in SEM-PLS analysis: analysis of the measurement model (outer model), which includes (1) construct reliability and

validity and (2) discriminant validity; and analysis of the structural model (inner model), which includes (1) coefficient of determination (R-square), (2) F-square (effect size), and (3) hypothesis testing, namely (a) direct effects, (b) indirect effects, and (c) total effects (Juliandi, 2018).

3.6.4 Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)

Measurement model analysis (outer model) is conducted to ensure that the measurements used are appropriate (valid and reliable). This analysis specifies the relationship between latent variables and their indicators. The outer model is evaluated using discriminant validity tests (Juliandi, 2018).

3.6.4.1 Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct reliability and validity tests are conducted to measure the reliability of a construct. The reliability of construct scores must be sufficiently high. The criterion for construct reliability and validity, based on composite reliability, is > 0.60 (Juliandi, 2018).

3.6.4.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs (i.e., each construct is unique). The best and most recent measurement criterion is the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). If the HTMT value is < 0.90 , the construct has good discriminant validity (Juliandi, 2018).

3.6.5 Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

Structural model analysis (inner model), also referred to as inner relations, the structural model, or substantive theory, describes the relationships among latent variables based on substantive theory. Structural model analysis includes three tests:

(1) R-square, (2) F-square, and (3) hypothesis testing, namely (a) direct effects, (b) indirect effects, and (c) total effects (Juliandi, 2018).

3.6.5.1 R-Square

R-square is a measure of the proportion of variance in the endogenous (dependent) variable that can be explained by the exogenous (independent) variables. It is useful for predicting whether a model is good or poor. The criteria for R-square are: (1) adjusted $R^2 = 0.75$ indicates a substantial (strong) model; (2) adjusted $R^2 = 0.50$ indicates a moderate model; and (3) adjusted $R^2 = 0.25$ indicates a weak model (Juliandi, 2018).

3.6.5.2 F-Square

F-square (effect size) is a measure used to assess the relative impact of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable. It reflects the change in R-square when a specific exogenous variable is removed from the model and is used to evaluate whether the omitted variable has a substantive impact on the endogenous construct (Juliandi, 2018).

The criteria for F-square according to Juliandi (2015) are: (1) 0.02 indicates a small effect; (2) 0.15 indicates a moderate effect; and (3) 0.35 indicates a large effect.

3.6.5.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing consists of two sub-analyses: (a) direct effects and (b) indirect effects.

1. Direct Effects

The purpose of direct effect analysis is to test the hypothesis of the direct influence of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable (Juliandi, 2018). The criteria for testing direct effects include:

First, the path coefficient: (a) if the path coefficient is positive, the influence between variables is in the same direction; an increase in one variable leads to an increase in the other; (b) if the path coefficient is negative, the influence is in the opposite direction; an increase in one variable leads to a decrease in the other.

Second, the probability/significance value (p-value): (1) if p-values < 0.05 , the effect is significant; (2) if p-values > 0.05 , the effect is not significant (Juliandi, 2018).

2. Indirect Effects

The purpose of indirect effect analysis is to test the hypothesis of the indirect influence of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable mediated by an intervening (mediator) variable (Juliandi, 2018).

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Results

4.1.1 Data Description

In this study, the researcher processed data in the form of a questionnaire consisting of statements for each research variable, namely Brand Image (X), Product Review (Z), and Purchase Decision (Y).

The number of statements was developed based on the indicators explained in Chapter III. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 respondents, who are students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (FEB UMSU), as the research sample.

The respondents' answers were measured using a Likert scale with five categories: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Slightly Disagree (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). The data obtained were then processed and analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the assistance of SmartPLS 4 software.

Table 4.1 Likert Scale

Response Options	Response Scale
Strongly Agree (SA)	5
Agree (A)	4
Somewhat Disagree (SWD)	3
Disagree (D)	2
Strongly Disagree (STD)	1

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

The above provisions apply to the calculation of the Brand Image (X), Product Review (Z), and Purchase Decision (Y) variables. All statements in the

questionnaire were developed based on the indicators of each variable as explained in Chapter III. Each respondent's answer was assigned a score according to the Likert scale used, and then processed to obtain the values of each research variable. The collected data were subsequently analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method to determine the effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision, both directly and indirectly through the Product Review variable as an intervening variable.

4.1.1.1 Respondent Characteristics

The following are the characteristics of the respondents in this study, namely students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (FEB UMSU), who served as the research respondents.

1. Respondent Data Based on Gender

The characteristics of respondents based on gender can be seen in the following table:

Table 4.2 Respondent Characteristics Based on Gender

No	Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Male	42	42%
2	Female	58	52%
Total		100	100%

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

Based on Table 4.2, it is known that the majority of respondents in this study are female, totaling 58 people (58%), while male respondents amount to 42 people (42%). This indicates that female respondents are more dominant than male respondents in this study.

The dominance of female respondents in this study can be explained by the tendency of women to be more active in purchasing products online, particularly

accessories such as Cilupbah phone cases, which are the object of this research. Phone cases not only function as protection but also serve as a form of style and self-expression, making them more appealing to female consumers. Therefore, the higher number of female respondents in this study is considered relevant and capable of representing the characteristics of consumers who are active in purchasing such products through the Shopee platform.

2. Respondent Data Based on Study Program

Table 4.3 Respondent Characteristics Based on Study Program

No	Study Program	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Management	54	54%
2	Accounting	11	11%
3	Management Taxation	20	20%
4	Development Economics	15	15%
Total		100	100%

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

Based on the respondent data, it is known that the majority of respondents come from the Management Study Program, totaling 54 people (54%), followed by Tax Management with 20 people (20%), Development Economics with 15 people (15%), and Accounting with 11 people (11%). This indicates that the respondents in this study are predominantly students from the Management Study Program.

The dominance of respondents from the Management Study Program in this study can be explained by the relatively larger number of Management students within FEB UMSU compared to other study programs. In addition, the researcher, who is from the Management Study Program, had broader access in distributing the questionnaires, resulting in a higher participation rate from students of that program. Therefore, this condition is considered reasonable and does not reduce the quality

of the data, as it still reflects the characteristics of FEB UMSU students as users of the Shopee platform in purchasing Cilupbah phone case products.

4.1.1.2 Analysis of Research Variables

1. Brand Image (X)

The following is the frequency distribution of the Brand Image variable, as summarized in the table below:

Table 4.5 Recapitulation of Scores and Distribution of Respondents' Responses for the Brand Image Variable

No	Indicator	Response Distribution					F	%
		SWA	A	SD	D	STD		
1	I consider the brands sold on Shopee to have a good company reputation.	8	13	15	30	34	100	100%
2	I believe that the brands I purchase on Shopee come from trustworthy companies.	10	9	16	20	45	100	100%
3	Users of the brands I purchase on Shopee have a positive image.	9	11	16	14	50	100	100%
4	I feel that the brands I purchase on Shopee reflect the character of their users.	9	10	19	18	44	100	100%
5	Products from the brands I purchase on Shopee have good quality.	5	14	9	26	46	100	100%
6	Products from the brands I purchase on Shopee meet my expectations.	4	17	10	21	48	100	100%
7	The brands I purchase on Shopee have uniqueness compared to other brands.	7	15	16	14	48	100	100%
8	Brand uniqueness is a consideration for me when purchasing products on Shopee.	7	16	12	18	47	100	100%
9	The brands I purchase on Shopee have a modern impression.	5	16	13	19	47	100	100%

10	I consider that the brands I purchase on Shopee keep up with current trends.	8	13	8	21	20	100	100%
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Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

Based on Table 4.6, which presents the recapitulation of scores and the distribution of respondents' responses for the Brand Image variable, it can be seen that the tendency of respondents' answers falls within the "agree" and "strongly agree" categories. This is reflected in the dominance of responses in the agree (A) and strongly agree (SA) columns, which are higher compared to other categories. This condition indicates that the majority of respondents, particularly students of FEB UMSU, have a positive perception of Shopee's brand image.

More specifically, the dominance of positive responses shows that Shopee's brand image has been able to create a strong impression in terms of trust, reputation, and attractiveness in the eyes of consumers. A strong brand image not only functions as an identity but also represents quality that can influence consumer confidence in making transactions. This is particularly important in the context of a marketplace, where consumers cannot physically inspect products and therefore rely heavily on their perception of the brand.

However, there are still some respondents who provided neutral to disagree responses. This indicates the presence of varying perceptions, which may be influenced by individual experiences, such as dissatisfaction with services or previous transaction experiences. Nevertheless, overall, these results show that Shopee's brand image is perceived positively and plays a significant role in shaping consumer trust and attitudes toward the platform.

2. Riview Product (Z)

The following is the frequency distribution of the Product Review variable, as summarized in the table below:

Table 4.6 Recapitulation of Scores and Distribution of Respondents' Responses for the Product Review Variable

No	Indicator	Response Distribution					F	%
		SWA	A	SD	D	STD		
1	I believe that product reviews on Shopee are provided by honest buyers.	9	12	19	24	36	100	100%
2	Reviews from buyers on Shopee can be trusted as a consideration before making a purchase.	6	19	8	25	42	100	100%
3	Product reviews on Shopee provide clear information about product quality.	8	14	11	19	48	100	100%
4	Product reviews on Shopee help me understand the advantages and disadvantages of a product.	9	15	7	25	44	100	100%
5	The more reviews a product has on Shopee, the more confident I am to purchase it.	11	15	5	17	52	100	100%
6	The number of product reviews influences my confidence in choosing products on Shopee.	12	12	6	15	55	100	100%
7	Product reviews on Shopee match my experience after purchasing the product.	12	10	9	20	49	100	100%
8	I feel that product reviews on Shopee are relevant to the actual condition of the product.	9	9	15	19	48	100	100%

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

Based on Table 4.7, it can be seen that respondents' responses toward the Product Review variable tend to fall within the "disagree" and "strongly disagree" categories for most indicators. This is reflected in the dominance of responses in

the disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) columns compared to agree (A) and strongly agree (SA). This condition indicates that the majority of respondents perceive that product reviews on Shopee are not yet fully trustworthy, not sufficiently informative, and not capable of providing strong confidence in supporting the purchase decision-making process.

However, some respondents provided “agree” and “strongly agree” responses, indicating that there are still consumers who consider product reviews to play an important role as a source of information before making a purchase. These differences in perception may be influenced by individual experiences, such as encountering reviews that do not match the actual condition of the product or a lack of trust in the honesty of the reviews provided. Therefore, it can be concluded that product reviews in this study have not yet fully become a dominant factor in building consumer confidence, and thus need to be improved in terms of credibility and quality of information.

3. Purchase Decision (Y)

The following is the frequency distribution of the Purchase Decision variable, as summarized in the table below:

Table 4.7 Recapitulation of Scores and Distribution of Respondents’ Responses for the Purchase Decision Variable

No	Indicator	Response Distribution					F	%
		SWA	A	SD	D	STD		
1	I recognize the need for a product before deciding to purchase it on Shopee.	16	8	8	32	36	100	100%
2	I purchase products on Shopee due to a specific need or desire.	14	10	6	20	50	100	100%
3	Before buying a product on Shopee, I first seek	16	9	7	18	50	100	100%

	information about the product.							
4	I look for product information through descriptions, photos, and buyer reviews on Shopee.	17	8	6	18	51	100	100%
5	I compare several similar products on Shopee before making a choice.	11	12	8	19	50	100	100%
6	I consider the price and quality of the product before purchasing it on Shopee.	16	9	8	17	50	100	100%
7	I decide to purchase a product on Shopee after being confident in my choice.	15	7	7	15	56	100	100%
8	I feel that my decision to purchase a product on Shopee is the right decision.	12	8	14	15	51	100	100%
9	I feel satisfied after purchasing a product on Shopee.	5	14	17	20	44	100	100%
10	I am willing to repurchase products on Shopee if I am satisfied with my previous purchase.	12	11	10	16	51	100	100%

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

Based on Table 4.8, which presents the recapitulation of scores and the distribution of respondents' responses for the Purchase Decision variable, it can be seen that respondents' answers tend to fall within the "agree" and "strongly agree" categories. This is reflected in the dominance of responses in the agree (A) and strongly agree (SA) columns for most indicators.

This condition indicates that the majority of respondents have a high tendency to make purchase decisions on Shopee, as reflected in activities such as information seeking, alternative evaluation, and confidence in making choices. Although there are still a small number of respondents who are neutral or disagree,

overall, the Purchase Decision in this study falls into a high category and indicates that Shopee is a sufficiently trusted platform for meeting consumer needs.

4.2 Data Analysis

Based on the questionnaire data presented, the qualitative data were converted into quantitative data according to previously established criteria. This quantitative data serves as the raw data for each research variable, which will then be analyzed.

There are two stages in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) analysis: the measurement model analysis (outer model) and the structural model analysis (inner model). The outer model analysis aims to test the validity and reliability of the constructs, including convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability.

Subsequently, the inner model analysis is used to examine the relationships between variables, which includes the determination coefficient (R-square) and hypothesis testing in the form of direct effects between independent and dependent variables.

In the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, the analysis technique follows these stages to obtain valid and reliable research results (Juliandi, 2018).

4.2.1 Measurement Model Analysis

The measurement model (outer model) is a part of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) analysis that explains the relationship between indicators and the latent variables being measured. The outer model is used to ensure that each indicator can accurately represent the construct being studied.

Testing the measurement model aims to assess the validity and reliability of the research instruments. According to Cooper and Schindler, as cited in Abdillah and Jogiyanto (2015:32), validity testing is used to determine the extent to which a research instrument can measure what it is intended to measure, while reliability testing is used to evaluate the consistency of the measurement tool in measuring a concept, including the consistency of respondents in answering questionnaire items.

The measurement model analysis in this study was conducted through two stages of testing: construct reliability and validity, and discriminant validity. Through these tests, it can be determined whether the indicators used meet the criteria as valid and reliable measurement tools in explaining the Brand Image, Product Review, and Purchase Decision variables.

4.2.1.1 Outer Model Analysis

Data processing in this study uses the Structural Equation Modeling method based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which consists of two main stages in assessing the feasibility of the research model, namely the outer model and the inner model. One of the stages carried out is the outer model analysis.

Outer model analysis is used to test the feasibility of research instruments in measuring latent variables, so it can be determined whether the indicators used meet the criteria as valid and reliable measurement tools. According to Imam Ghozali, outer model analysis focuses on testing the relationship between indicators and the constructs being measured.

Testing in the outer model includes several criteria, namely convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability. Through these tests, it can

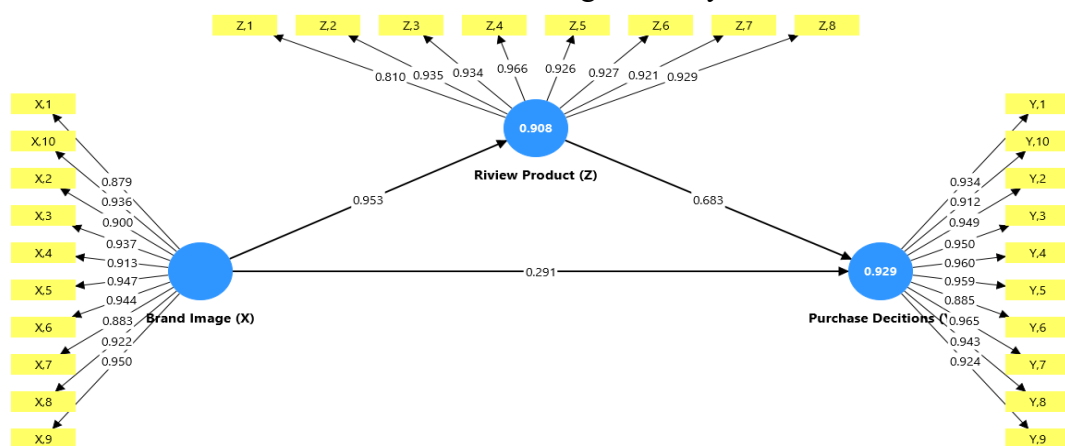
be determined whether the indicators in the variables of brand image, product review, and purchase decision are able to properly represent the research constructs.

4.2.1.2 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is evaluated based on the loading factor values between indicators and constructs obtained through data processing using SmartPLS 4.0. An indicator is considered to meet the convergent validity criteria if it has a loading factor value above 0.5, which indicates the indicator's ability to adequately represent the latent variable.

The test results show that all indicators in the variables of brand image, product review, and purchase decision have loading factor values above the established minimum threshold. This indicates that each indicator has a strong level of correlation with its construct, thereby being able to explain the research variables accurately and consistently.

Thus, all indicators in this study are declared valid and do not require elimination, meaning that the measurement model has met the convergent validity criteria and is suitable for use in the next stage of analysis.



Source: Processed by the author, 2026

Figure 4.1 Structural Research Framework of SEM-PLS

Based on the results of data processing using SmartPLS 4.0 as shown in Figure 4.1, it indicates that the outer loading values between indicators and constructs have met the convergent validity criteria. This is demonstrated by all indicators in the variables of brand image, product review, and purchase decision having loading factor values above 0.6.

The high correlation values between each indicator and its construct indicate that the indicators are able to optimally represent the latent variables. Therefore, all indicators in this research model are declared valid and no indicators need to be eliminated.

These results confirm that the measurement model (outer model) used has met the convergent validity criteria and is thus suitable for use in further analysis.

Table 4.8 Outer Loadings

	Brand Image (X)	Purchase Decition (Y)	Riview Product (Z)
X,1	0.879		
X,10	0.936		
X,2	0.900		
X,3	0.937		
X,4	0.913		
X,5	0.947		
X,6	0.944		
X,7	0.883		
X,8	0.922		
X,9	0.950		
Y,1		0.934	
Y,10		0.912	
Y,2		0.949	
Y,3		0.950	
Y,4		0.960	
Y,5		0.959	
Y,6		0.885	
Y,7		0.965	
Y,8		0.943	

Y,9		0.924	
Z,1			0.810
Z,2			0.935
Z,3			0.934
Z,4			0.966
Z,5			0.926
Z,6			0.927
Z,7			0.921
Z,8			0.929

Source: Processed by the author, 2026

Based on the results of the calculation and validity testing of outer loading on 100 respondents, it was found that all statement items have loading factor values above 0.6. This indicates that each indicator has met the convergent validity criteria and is able to properly represent the measured construct.

The high outer loading values for each indicator indicate a strong relationship between the indicators and their latent variables, meaning that the research instrument can be declared valid. Therefore, all statement items in this study can be used in the next stage of analysis without the need for elimination.

4.2.1.3 Construct Reliability and Validity

The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) is conducted through testing construct reliability and validity to ensure the accuracy and internal consistency of all indicators forming the latent constructs. High construct score reliability is a fundamental prerequisite to ensure that the research instrument is capable of producing stable and scientifically accountable data. In line with Abdillah & Jogiyanto (2015), this reliability test is carried out to determine the extent to which the questionnaire items demonstrate consistency when repeated measurements are performed.

The credibility of construct reliability in this study is estimated using Cronbach's Alpha, with an ideal threshold above 0.70 to ensure a satisfactory level of reliability. Based on the results of data processing using SmartPLS 4.0, the Cronbach's Alpha values are presented as follows:

Table 4.9 Cronbach's Alpha Results

	Cronbach's alpha
Brand Image (X)	0.980
Purchase Decition (Y)	0.985
Riview Product (Z)	0.973

Source: Processed by the author, 2026

Based on the data presented in Table 4.9 above, it is empirically shown that the Cronbach's Alpha values for all research variables Brand Image (X), Purchase Decision (Y), and Product Review (Z) have exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.70. In detail, the Brand Image variable has a value of 0.980, Purchase Decision 0.985, and Product Review 0.973.

These values indicate that each construct has a very high level of internal consistency in measuring its respective indicators. This suggests that the research instrument is capable of producing stable and reliable data.

Therefore, all variables in this study are declared to have met the criteria for excellent construct reliability and are suitable for use in the next stage of analysis.

Table 4.10 Composite Reliability Results

	Composite reliability (rho a)	Composite reliability (rho c)
Brand Image (X)	0.981	0.982
Prurchase Desitions (Y)	0.985	0.987
Riview Product (Z)	0.975	0.978

Source: Research Results (2026)

Based on the table above, it shows that the construct reliability in Composite Reliability has met the criteria with values above 0.7. From this, it can be concluded

that all constructs have good reliability, and the variables Brand Image, Purchase Decision, and Product Review meet the assumptions for reliability testing.

Table 4.11 Composite Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Image (X)	0.849
Purchase Decitions (Y)	0.881
Riview Product (Z)	0.845

Source: Research Results (2026)

Based on the data processing results, all variables in this study Brand Image (X), Product Review (Z), and Purchase Decision (Y) have been proven to meet the criteria for Construct Reliability and Validity at a very high quality. This is demonstrated by the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (ρ_c) values for all variables, which are well above the 0.70 threshold, with the highest value achieved by the Purchase Decision variable at 0.949. This is further supported by ρ_a values also exceeding 0.70, indicating that the internal consistency of the research instrument is very strong and reliable.

Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test shows values above 0.50 for all variables, with the highest achievement in the Product Review variable at 0.748. This confirms that the model has excellent convergent validity, as it can explain more than 50% of the variance of its constituent indicators, making all data ready to proceed to the next stage of structural model analysis.

4.2.1.4 Discriminant Validity

At the measurement model evaluation stage, this study used the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach to test discriminant validity. The HTMT method was chosen because it is considered to have higher sensitivity and accuracy in detecting discriminant validity issues compared to conventional criteria, such as cross-loading or the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which tend to be less sensitive in

certain empirical research conditions. Therefore, the use of HTMT is expected to provide more reliable and comprehensive test results. The HTMT test results in this study are presented in the following Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) table.

Tabel 4.12 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Results

	Brand Image (X)	Prurchase Desitions (Y)	Riview Product (Z)
Brand Image (X)			
Prurchase Desitions (Y)	0.957		
Riview Product (Z)	0.975	0.980	

Source: Research Results (2026)

Technically, the results of discriminant validity testing using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach show that the inter-construct relationship values in this study exceed the conservative threshold of 0.90: 0.957 for the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Decision, 0.975 for Brand Image and Product Review, and 0.980 for Product Review and Purchase Decision. Nevertheless, these findings do not necessarily indicate a failure of discriminant validity in the research model.

Referring to Franke & Sarstedt (2019) in *Internet Research*, the use of HTMT as the sole evaluation criterion should be approached cautiously, especially in models involving constructs with high conceptual relatedness. In such cases, high HTMT values may reflect a strong and relevant empirical relationship among the variables rather than a validity problem.

Furthermore, Benitez et al. (2020) in *Information & Management* explain that in the context of information systems and consumer behavior research, high correlations between constructs can indicate real conceptual synergy, not merely a

discriminant validity issue. This is relevant to the characteristics of the variables in this study, which are closely related in the consumer decision-making process.

Additionally, Richter et al. (2023) state that HTMT values exceeding the conservative threshold can still be acceptable if supported by a strong theoretical foundation. In this study, the variables Brand Image, Product Review, and Purchase Decision are part of a unified consumer purchase decision process on digital platforms like Shopee. These three variables are closely related because they functionally influence each other in shaping perceptions and purchase decisions.

Therefore, even though the HTMT values indicate a high degree of closeness among constructs, the research model can still be considered to have acceptable discriminant validity, particularly in the context of predictive analysis. This is because each construct theoretically maintains a distinct role, even though empirically they are integrated in explaining consumer behavior.

4.2.2 Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

Structural model analysis (inner model) aims to examine the relationships between latent variables in the study and to test the hypotheses that have been formulated. The evaluation of the inner model in this research is conducted by examining the R-Squared (R^2) values, F-Squared (f^2), and hypothesis testing through path coefficients, which include direct effects, indirect effects, and total effects.

4.2.2.1 R-Square (R^2)

The criteria for R-Squared are:

1. If the (adjusted) value = 0.75 → the model is substantial (strong).
2. If the (adjusted) value = 0.50 → the model is moderate (medium).

3. If the (adjusted) value = 0.25 → the model is weak (low).

Tabel 4.13 R-Square Test Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Prurchase Desitions (Y)	0.929	0.928
Riview Product (Z)	0.908	0.907

Source: Research Results (2026)

Based on the data processing results using SmartPLS, the R^2 value for the Purchase Decision (Y) variable is 0.929. This indicates that the Brand Image (X) and Product Review (Z) variables are able to explain 92.9% of the variance in Purchase Decision, while the remaining 7.1% is explained by other factors outside the research model.

Furthermore, the R^2 value for the Product Review (Z) variable is 0.908. This shows that the Brand Image (X) variable is able to explain 90.8% of the variance in Product Review, with the remaining 9.2% influenced by factors outside the research model.

Based on these values, it can be concluded that this research model has a very strong explanatory power, as all R^2 values are well above the 0.75 threshold.

4.2.2.2 F-Square

F-Square, or effect size, is a measure used to assess the relative impact of an influencing (exogenous) variable on a dependent (endogenous) variable. F-Square measurement, also referred to as the effect of change, evaluates how the removal of a certain exogenous variable from the model affects the endogenous construct. This can be used to determine whether the removed variable has a substantive impact on the endogenous construct (Juliandi, Manurung, & Sastriawan, 2016).

The F-Square criteria are as follows:

1. If the value = 0.02 → Low effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable.
2. If the value = 0.15 → Medium effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable.
3. If the value = 0.35 → High effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable.

Table 4.14 F-Square Test Results

	Brand Image (X)	Prurchase Desitions (Y)	Riview Product (Z)
Brand Image (X)		0.110	9.832
Prurchase Desitions (Y)			
Riview Product (Z)		0.608	

Source: Research Results (2026)

Based on the F-Square test results shown in the figure above, it can be seen that the Brand Image variable has an effect on Purchase Decision with a value of 0.110, which falls into the category of a small effect. However, Brand Image shows a very large effect on Product Review, with a value of 9.832.

Furthermore, the Product Review variable has an effect on Purchase Decision with a value of 0.608, which is classified as a large effect. This indicates that Product Review plays a strong role in influencing consumers' purchase decisions.

Thus, it can be concluded that although the direct effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision is relatively small, through Product Review, this effect becomes much stronger. This suggests that Product Review plays an important role in strengthening the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Decision.

4.2.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is conducted to determine the influence and significance level of the relationships between variables in the structural model using the SEM-PLS method through the bootstrapping process, with the criteria of T-Statistics > 1.96 and P-Values < 0.05 . This testing includes direct effects, indirect effects, and total effects to provide a comprehensive overview of the relationships between Brand Image, Product Review, and Purchase Decision in the research model.

4.2.3.1 Pengaruh Langsung (Direct Effect)

Direct effect analysis aims to examine the direct influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables in the research model (Juliandi, 2018). This analysis is conducted by looking at the path coefficient values to determine the direction of the relationship between variables, whether it is positive (in the same direction) or negative (in the opposite direction).

If the path coefficient value is positive, the relationship between variables is in the same direction, whereas a negative value indicates an inverse relationship. Additionally, the significance level of the relationship is determined based on the P-Values, where a relationship is considered significant if the P-Value < 0.05 , and not significant if the P-Value > 0.05 (Juliandi et al., 2014).

Table 4.15 Path Coefficients Test Results (Direct Effect)

	Path coefficients
Brand Image (X) -> Prurchase Desitions (Y)	0.291
Brand Image (X) -> Riview Product (Z)	0.953
Riview Product (Z) -> Prurchase Desitions (Y)	0.683

Source: Research Results (2026)

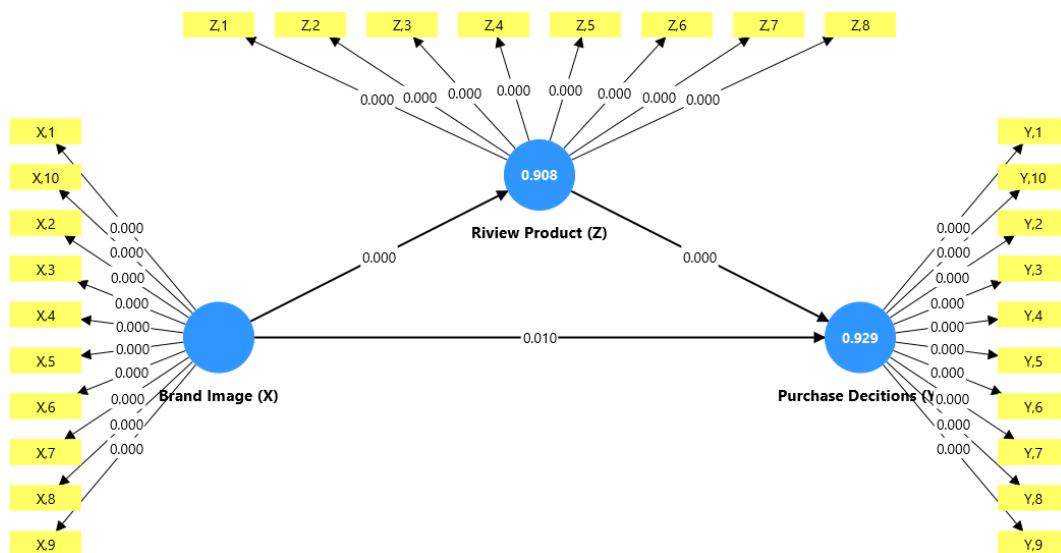
Based on the results of the path coefficients test presented in the table above, it can be seen that the Brand Image variable has a direct effect on Purchase Decision

with a coefficient value of 0.291. This indicates that Brand Image positively contributes to influencing purchase decisions, although its effect is relatively smaller compared to other paths.

Furthermore, the Brand Image variable has a very strong effect on Product Review with a coefficient value of 0.953. This suggests that the better the brand image, the more it enhances consumers' perception of product reviews.

Meanwhile, the Product Review variable also has a positive effect on Purchase Decision with a coefficient value of 0.683. This shows that product reviews play a significant role in encouraging consumers to make purchase decisions.

Thus, it can be concluded that all relationships between variables in this study are positive, with Product Review acting as a factor that strengthens the effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision.



Source: Processed SmartPLS Results, 2026

Figure 4.2. Path Analysis Results

4.2.3.2 Indirect Effect

Indirect effect analysis aims to examine the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables through an intervening or mediating variable in the research model (Juliandi, 2018). In this study, the Product Review (Z) variable serves as a mediating variable that links the effect of Brand Image (X) on Purchase Decision (Y).

The test is conducted by examining the P-Values to determine the significance level of the indirect relationship. If the P-Value < 0.05 , the indirect effect is considered significant, indicating that the Product Review variable is able to mediate the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Decision. Conversely, if the P-Value > 0.05 , the indirect effect is considered not significant, meaning that the mediating variable does not play a role in the relationship.

Table 4.16 Path Coefficients Test Results (Indirect Effect)

	Specific indirect effects
Brand Image (X) → Riview Product (Z) → Prurchase Desitions (Y)	0.651

Source: Research Results (2026)

The figure shows a specific indirect effect value of 0.651 for the path Brand Image (X) → Product Review (Z) → Purchase Decision (Y). This value indicates a fairly strong indirect effect, where Brand Image influences Purchase Decision through Product Review as a mediating variable.

These findings confirm that a positive brand image can encourage the formation of favorable product reviews, which in turn strengthens consumers' purchase decisions. Thus, Product Review plays an important role in reinforcing the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Decision.

4.2.3.3 Total Effect

Total effect represents the overall influence resulting from the relationships between variables in the research model, encompassing both direct effects and indirect effects through mediating variables (Juliandi, 2018). This analysis is used to assess the total contribution of an exogenous variable to an endogenous variable.

Thus, the total effect value provides a more comprehensive view of the strength of relationships between variables, which can be used to strengthen the interpretation of research results, particularly in explaining the roles of Brand Image, Product Review, and Purchase Decision within the constructed model.

Table 4.17 Total Effects Test Results

	Brand Image (X)	Pruchase Desitions (Y)	Riview Product (Z)
Brand Image (X)		0.941	0.953
Pruchase Desitions (Y)			
Riview Product (Z)		0.683	

Source: Research Results (2026)

Based on the Total Effects matrix, all relationships between variables show positive and strong influences, indicating that the overall model is mutually supportive. Brand Image (X) has a very strong effect on Purchase Decision (Y) with a value of 0.941, confirming that the better the brand image, the higher the likelihood that consumers will make a purchase.

In addition, Brand Image (X) also has the strongest effect on Product Review (Z) with a value of 0.953, meaning that a positive perception of the brand directly encourages the formation of favorable product reviews. Meanwhile, Product Review (Z) also has a strong effect on Purchase Decision (Y) with a value of 0.683, indicating that product reviews are an important factor in strengthening purchase decisions.

Thus, it can be concluded that Brand Image serves as a key factor that not only directly influences Purchase Decision but also indirectly enhances this effect through Product Review, further reinforcing its impact.

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1. Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision

The research results indicate that brand image has a positive influence on purchase decisions, as shown by the path coefficient value of 0.291. This value suggests that the better the brand image, the higher the tendency of consumers to make purchasing decisions. Thus, the hypothesis stating that brand image influences purchase decisions can be accepted. The coefficient value of 0.291 indicates that the influence of brand image on purchase decisions is at a moderate level, meaning that brand image plays a role in shaping purchase decisions but is not the most dominant factor. Conceptually, brand image functions as an initial perception that forms consumer trust and confidence in a product. In the context of marketplaces such as Shopee, a positive brand image can reduce consumer uncertainty in transactions, thereby encouraging purchase decisions.

The results of this study are consistent with research conducted by Agustina and Purba (2025), Amini and Auliya (2025), and Ardiyanti et al. (2025), which state that brand image has a positive effect on purchase decisions. However, in the context of this study, the influence of brand image on purchase decisions has not yet shown a dominant role. This is reflected in the relatively lower coefficient value compared to other variables in the research model. This condition indicates that although brand image can shape initial consumer perceptions, in practice, purchase decisions are also influenced by other considerations that are deemed more relevant

by respondents. This finding is in line with the descriptive results of the study, which show variations in respondents' perceptions, indicating that brand image alone has not fully become the main determining factor in driving purchase decisions.

Based on the brand image indicators in this study, such as brand reputation, trust, product quality, uniqueness, and modern impression, Shopee is advised to continuously maintain and improve its brand image consistently. Efforts that can be made include ensuring product quality meets consumer expectations, increasing information transparency, and strengthening the brand's character and uniqueness amid marketplace competition. If these aspects are not managed properly, it may reduce consumer trust and impact the decline in purchase decisions. The implication is that the stronger and more positive the brand image, the higher the consumer confidence in making purchases, which is reflected in more decisive purchase decisions, increased satisfaction, and a greater tendency to make repeat purchases and recommend the product to others.

4.4.2 The Effect of Brand Image on Product Reviews

The research results indicate that brand image has a positive effect on product reviews, as shown by the path coefficient value of 0.953. This value indicates that the better the brand image, the higher the quality and consumer perception of product reviews. Thus, the hypothesis stating that brand image influences product reviews can be accepted. The magnitude of this coefficient shows that the influence of brand image on product reviews falls into a very strong category, meaning that brand image is a dominant factor in shaping consumer evaluations of products.

Conceptually, brand image plays a role as a foundation in forming consumer expectations before and after using a product. Consumers who have a positive perception of a brand tend to provide better evaluations because their experiences align with previously formed expectations. This indicates that product reviews are influenced not only by the product quality itself but also by the initial perception of the brand used.

The results of this study are consistent with research conducted by Amini and Auliya (2025) and Ardiyanti et al. (2025), which state that brand image plays a role in shaping consumer perceptions and experiences that are reflected in product evaluations. In addition, Agustina and Purba (2025) also emphasize that a good brand image can increase consumer confidence in providing more positive evaluations. However, in the context of this study, the very strong influence also indicates that product reviews may be influenced by consumers' initial perceptions of the brand. Therefore, in some cases, the reviews provided may not fully reflect objective experiences but are influenced by previously formed expectations.

Based on brand image indicators such as brand reputation, trust, quality, uniqueness, and modern impression, Shopee is advised to maintain consistency in its brand image to remain positive in the eyes of consumers. Efforts that can be made include improving product and service quality, maintaining information transparency, and strengthening a unique and trustworthy brand identity. If brand image is not managed properly, it will not only affect consumer perceptions but may also reduce the quality of reviews provided, thereby affecting other consumers' trust.

The implication is that the stronger and more positive the brand image, the greater the tendency for consumers to provide positive, informative, and convincing reviews, which in turn can strengthen other consumers' perceptions of the products offered.

4.4.3 The Effect of Product Reviews on Purchase Decisions

The research results indicate that product reviews have a positive effect on purchase decisions, as shown by the path coefficient value of 0.683. This value indicates that the better the quality of product reviews, the higher the tendency of consumers to make purchase decisions. Thus, the hypothesis stating that product reviews influence purchase decisions can be accepted. The magnitude of this coefficient shows that the influence of product reviews is in the strong category and has a more dominant contribution compared to the direct effect of brand image on purchase decisions.

Conceptually, product reviews are a form of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) that functions as an external source of information for consumers. Reviews provided by previous users, whether in the form of text, images, or videos, can give a more realistic picture of product quality, benefits, and suitability with expectations. The more credible, informative, and relevant the available reviews are, the higher the level of consumer trust in making purchase decisions.

The results of this study are consistent with research conducted by Jumawan et al. (2024) and Nurmala et al. (2025), which state that product reviews have a significant effect on purchase decisions. However, in the context of this study, there are still variations in respondents' perceptions of review quality, indicating that not all reviews are considered fully trustworthy. This suggests that the effectiveness of

product reviews in driving purchase decisions largely depends on the credibility and clarity of the information provided by users.

Based on product review indicators such as information quality, credibility, usefulness, and information adoption level, Shopee is advised to improve its review management system to be more transparent and reliable. Efforts that can be made include verifying the authenticity of reviews, encouraging consumers to provide honest and informative feedback, and displaying relevant and easy-to-understand reviews. If review quality is not maintained, it may reduce consumer trust and lead to a decline in purchase decisions.

The implication is that the higher the quality and credibility of product reviews, the greater the consumer confidence in making purchases, which is reflected in faster purchase decisions, increased satisfaction, and a higher tendency to make repeat purchases and recommend products to others.

4.4.4 The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions through Product Reviews as a Mediating Variable

The research results indicate that product reviews are able to mediate the effect of brand image on purchase decisions. This is proven by the indirect effect value of 0.651, obtained from multiplying the path coefficient of brand image on product reviews (0.953) with the path coefficient of product reviews on purchase decisions (0.683). This value shows that the resulting indirect effect is quite large, thereby strengthening the relationship between brand image and purchase decisions. Thus, the hypothesis stating the presence of a mediating effect can be accepted.

When compared to the direct effect of brand image on purchase decisions, which is only 0.291, it can be seen that the indirect effect through product reviews

is much greater. This indicates that product reviews act as a strong mediating variable and even become the main pathway in influencing purchase decisions. Overall, the total effect value of 0.942 shows that brand image has a very large contribution to purchase decisions when supported by product reviews as an intermediary variable.

Conceptually, brand image functions as an initial stimulus that shapes consumer perceptions and expectations, while product reviews act as a form of external validation (social proof) that strengthens confidence before purchase decisions are made. Consumers do not rely solely on brand image but also need real evidence from other users' experiences. Therefore, even if the brand image is positive, purchase decisions will become stronger when supported by credible, informative, and relevant product reviews.

The results of this study are consistent with research by Putri et al. (2025), Rahmawati et al. (2025), Safwati et al. (2022), and Saputra et al. (2025), which state that the influence of brand image on purchase decisions becomes stronger when mediated by variables that enhance consumer trust, such as product reviews. This finding reinforces that in the context of marketplaces, the combination of brand perception and user experience is the main factor in shaping purchase decisions. Based on the indicators of brand image and product reviews in this study, Shopee is advised not only to build a positive brand image but also to ensure the quality of product reviews is maintained. Efforts can include increasing brand trust, maintaining product quality, and managing the review system to be more transparent and credible. If these two aspects are not balanced, their influence on purchase decisions will not be optimal.

The implication is that the better the brand image supported by high-quality product reviews, the higher the consumer confidence in making purchases, which is reflected in more decisive decisions, increased satisfaction, and a greater tendency to make repeat purchases and provide recommendations to other consumers.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion regarding the effect of brand image and product reviews on purchase decisions in the Shopee marketplace (study on FEB UMSU students), the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Brand image has a positive effect on purchase decisions with a coefficient value of 0.291, indicating that brand image can increase consumers' tendency to make purchase decisions, although its influence is moderate and not yet dominant.
2. Brand image has a positive and very strong effect on product reviews with a coefficient value of 0.953, indicating that brand image plays a dominant role in shaping consumer perceptions and evaluations of products.
3. Product reviews have a positive and strong effect on purchase decisions with a coefficient value of 0.683, indicating that product reviews are an important and more dominant factor than brand image in influencing consumer purchase decisions.
4. Product reviews are able to mediate the effect of brand image on purchase decisions with an indirect effect value of 0.651, which is greater than the direct effect. This shows that the mediating role of product reviews is highly significant in strengthening the relationship between brand image and purchase decisions. Thus, the combination of a positive brand image and

high-quality product reviews will provide a more optimal impact on purchase decisions.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the research results, the author provides the following recommendations:

1. For Companies/Sellers on Shopee

It is recommended to continuously maintain and improve brand image consistently, as it has been proven to shape consumer perceptions and trust. Efforts can include maintaining brand reputation, improving product quality, and ensuring transparency of information provided to consumers. In addition, sellers should optimally manage product reviews by encouraging consumers to provide honest, informative, and relevant feedback. This is important because product reviews have proven to be a more dominant factor in influencing purchase decisions, so high-quality reviews will directly increase consumer trust and purchasing decisions.

2. For Consumers

Consumers are expected to be more selective and wise in using product reviews as a source of information before making purchases. This can be done by considering the credibility, clarity, and relevance of available reviews so that purchase decisions are more rational and aligned with their needs.

3. For Future Researchers

It is recommended to develop this research further by adding other variables that may influence purchase decisions, such as price, promotion, and trust, as well as expanding the research object to different populations. Thus, the

results are expected to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of consumer behavior in the marketplace context.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello fellow students

I am Julia Syahputri, a student of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Muhammadiyah University of North Sumatra (UMSU). I would like to request your willingness to fill out the questionnaire provided. The information provided is initial observation data for the preparation of a thesis in the Bachelor of Economics program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Muhammadiyah University of North Sumatra with the title "**The Role of Product Reviews in Mediating the Influence of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions on Shopee (A Case Study of FEB UMSU Students)**".

This questionnaire is anonymous and confidential. All data you provide will be used solely for academic purposes and will not be misused. Please answer each question honestly and according to your circumstances.

A. Filling Instructions

1. Answer this question according to your opinion.
2. Choose the answer from the list of questions by ticking (√) the answer that is most appropriate according to you.

Information:

(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Less Agree, (2) Disagree, (1) Strongly Don't agree

B. Respondent's Identity

Respondent's Nama..... (Filled in by researcher)

Gender : Man Woman

Age : 18-20 21-23 24-26

Study Program : Management Accounting Management Taxation

Development Economics

Thank you for Participation and assistance.

Purchase Decision (Y)

No	Indicator	Response Distribution					F	%
		SWA	A	SD	D	STD		
1	I recognize the need for a product before deciding to purchase it on Shopee.	16	8	8	32	36	100	100%
2	I purchase products on Shopee due to a specific need or desire.	14	10	6	20	50	100	100%
3	Before buying a product on Shopee, I first seek information about the product.	16	9	7	18	50	100	100%
4	I look for product information through descriptions, photos, and buyer reviews on Shopee.	17	8	6	18	51	100	100%
5	I compare several similar products on Shopee before making a choice.	11	12	8	19	50	100	100%
6	I consider the price and quality of the product before purchasing it on Shopee.	16	9	8	17	50	100	100%
7	I decide to purchase a product on Shopee after being confident in my choice.	15	7	7	15	56	100	100%
8	I feel that my decision to purchase a product on Shopee is the right decision.	12	8	14	15	51	100	100%
9	I feel satisfied after purchasing a product on Shopee.	5	14	17	20	44	100	100%
10	I am willing to repurchase products on Shopee if I am satisfied with my previous purchase.	12	11	10	16	51	100	100%

Riview Product (Z)

No	Indicator	Response Distribution					F	%
		SWA	A	SD	D	STD		
1	I believe that product reviews on Shopee are provided by honest buyers.	9	12	19	24	36	100	100%
2	Reviews from buyers on Shopee can be trusted as a consideration before making a purchase.	6	19	8	25	42	100	100%
3	Product reviews on Shopee provide clear information about product quality.	8	14	11	19	48	100	100%
4	Product reviews on Shopee help me understand the advantages and disadvantages of a product.	9	15	7	25	44	100	100%
5	The more reviews a product has on Shopee, the more confident I am to purchase it.	11	15	5	17	52	100	100%
6	The number of product reviews influences my confidence in choosing products on Shopee.	12	12	6	15	55	100	100%
7	Product reviews on Shopee match my experience after purchasing the product.	12	10	9	20	49	100	100%
8	I feel that product reviews on Shopee are relevant to the actual condition of the product.	9	9	15	19	48	100	100%

Brand Image (X)

No	Indicator	Response Distribution					F	%
		SWA	A	SD	D	STD		
1	I consider the brands sold on Shopee to have a good company reputation.	8	13	15	30	34	100	100%
2	I believe that the brands I purchase on Shopee come from trustworthy companies.	10	9	16	20	45	100	100%

4	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	3	3	43
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30
5	5	5	5	3	5	1	5	5	4	43
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2	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	3	3	30
4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	47
2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	22

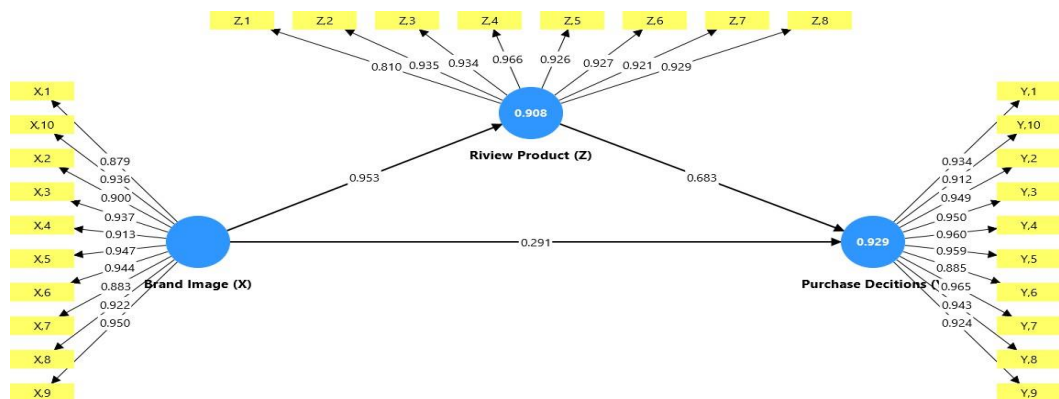
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5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40
5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	37
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40

Brand Image (X)

X,1	X,2	X,3	X,4	X,5	X,6	X,7	X,8	X,9	X,10	Total
4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	48
4	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	36
2	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	25
4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	47
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5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	50
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5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	50
2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	24
5	3	5	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	39
5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	49
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	40
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3	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	35
2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	15
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4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	49
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4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	40
4	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	47

OUTER MODEL Outer Loadings Figure



Outer Loadings Table

	Brand Image (X)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Riview Product (Z)
X,1	0.879		
X,10	0.936		
X,2	0.900		
X,3	0.937		
X,4	0.913		
X,5	0.947		
X,6	0.944		
X,7	0.883		
X,8	0.922		
X,9	0.950		
Y,1		0.934	
Y,10		0.912	
Y,2		0.949	
Y,3		0.950	
Y,4		0.960	
Y,5		0.959	
Y,6		0.885	
Y,7		0.965	
Y,8		0.943	
Y,9		0.924	
Z,1			0.810
Z,2			0.935
Z,3			0.934
Z,4			0.966
Z,5			0.926
Z,6			0.927

Z,7			0.921
Z,8			0.929

Cronbach's Alpha Results

	Cronbach's alpha
Brand Image (X)	0.980
Purchase Decition (Y)	0.985
Riview Product (Z)	0.973

Composite Reliability Results

	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Brand Image (X)	0.981	0.982
Pruchase Desitions (Y)	0.985	0.987
Riview Product (Z)	0.975	0.978

Composite Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Image (X)	0.849
Purchase Decitions (Y)	0.881
Riview Product (Z)	0.845

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Results

	Brand Image (X)	Pruchase Desitions (Y)	Riview Product (Z)
Brand Image (X)			
Pruchase Desitions (Y)	0.957		
Riview Product (Z)	0.975	0.980	

R-Square Test Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Pruchase Desitions (Y)	0.929	0.928
Riview Product (Z)	0.908	0.907

F-Square Test Results

	Brand Image (X)	Prurchase Desitions (Y)	Riview Product (Z)
Brand Image (X)		0.110	9.832
Prurchase Desitions (Y)			
Riview Product (Z)		0.608	

Path Coefficients Test Results (Direct Effect)

	Path coefficients
Brand Image (X) -> Prurchase Desitions (Y)	0.291
Brand Image (X) -> Riview Product (Z)	0.953
Riview Product (Z) -> Prurchase Desitions (Y)	0.683

Total Effects Test Results

	Brand Image (X)	Prurchase Desitions (Y)	Riview Product (Z)
Brand Image (X)		0.941	0.953
Prurchase Desitions (Y)			
Riview Product (Z)		0.683	

PERMOHONAN JUDUL PENELITIAN

No. Agenda: 5399/JDL/SKR/MAN/FEB/UMSU/4/7/2025

Kepada Yth.
Ketua Program Studi Manajemen
Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis
Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara
di Medan

Medan, 4/7/2025

Dengan hormat.

Saya yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini,

Nama : Julia Syahputri
NPM : 2205160140
Program Studi : Manajemen
Konsentrasi : Pemasaran

Dalam rangka proses penyusunan skripsi, saya bermohon untuk mengajukan judul penelitian berikut ini:

- Identifikasi Masalah : 1. Although Shopee is widely recognized and has a strong positioning in the minds of digital consumers, there is no empirical evidence indicating that the platform's Brand Image directly influences purchasing decisions among students, particularly those from the Faculty of Economics and Business at UMSU. Product Reviews, as a form of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), are often used as a reference in online purchasing decisions; however, their effectiveness is questionable due to their subjective and sometimes manipulative nature. Previous studies have predominantly focused on general populations or students from other institutions, resulting in a lack of data regarding the influence of brand image and product reviews on purchasing decisions among FEB UMSU students an academic entity with unique characteristics and consumption behavior. Furthermore, there has been no study that simultaneously examines the relationship between Brand Image and Product Reviews on Purchasing Decisions within an integrated analytical model in the UMSU campus environment.
2. Although Shopee actively promotes products through social media, the effectiveness of these promotions on customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions among teenagers remains unclear. Product reviews from Shopee users are considered capable of influencing purchasing decisions; however, it is necessary to investigate whether these reviews also impact customer satisfaction. The role of customer satisfaction as an intervening variable in the relationship between promotions and reviews with purchasing decisions has rarely been studied comprehensively, particularly among teenagers in the city of Medan.

- Rencana Judul :
1. The Influence of Brand Image and Product Reviews on the Shopee Marketplace on Purchasing Decisions (Case Study on Students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara).
 2. The Influence of Social Media Promotion and Product Reviews on the Shopee Marketplace on Purchasing Decisions with Customer Satisfaction as an Intervening Variable (Study on Teenagers in Medan City).

Objek/Lokasi Penelitian : UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SUMATERA UTARA FAKULTAS EKONOMI DAN BISNIS

Demikianlah permohonan ini saya sampaikan. Atas perhatiannya saya ucapkan terimakasih.

Hormat Saya
Pemohon



(Julia Syahputri)

PERSETUJUAN JUDUL PENELITIAN

Nomor Agenda: 5399/JDL/SKR/MAN/FEB/UMSU/4/7/2025

Nama Mahasiswa : Julia Syahputri

NPM : 2205160140

Program Studi : Manajemen

Konsentrasi : Pemasaran

Tanggal Pengajuan Judul : 4/7/2025

Nama Dosen Pembimbing*)

Hazmanan Khair, SE, MBA, Ph.D

Judul Disetujui**)

*The Role of Product Reviews in Mediating the Influence
of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions on Shopee
(A Case Study of Students of the Faculty of Economics
and Business UMSU)*

Disahkan oleh:
Ketua Program Studi Manajemen

(Jasman Sarifuddin Hasibuan, SE., M.Si.)

Medan, 17 July 2025

Dosen Pembimbing

(HAZMANAN KHAIR, SE, MBA, Ph.D)

Keterangan:

*) Diisi oleh Pimpinan Program Studi

***) Diisi oleh Dosen Pembimbing

Setelah disahkan oleh Prodi dan Dosen pembimbing, scan/foto dan uploadlah lembaran ke-2 ini pada form online "Upload Pengesahan Judul Skripsi"



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UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SUMATERA UTARA
FAKULTAS EKONOMI DAN BISNIS

UMSU Terakreditasi Unggul Berdasarkan Keputusan Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi No. 174/SK/BAN-PT/Ak.Ppj/PT/III/2024

Pusat Administrasi: Jalan Mukhtar Basri No. 3 Medan 20238 Telp. (061) 6622400 - 66224567 Fax. (061) 6625474 - 6631003

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[umsumedan](https://www.tiktok.com/umsumedan)

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Nomor : 81/II.3.AU/UMSU-05/F/2026
Lampiran : -
Perihal : **IZIN RISET PENDAHULUAN**

Medan, 20 Rajab 1447 H
10 Januari 2026 M

Kepada Yth.

Bapak / Ibu Pimpinan

Wakil Rektor I UMSU

Jl. Kapten Muchtar Basri No.3, Glugur Darat II, Kec. Medan Timur

Di tempat

Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Dengan hormat, sehubungan mahasiswa kami akan menyelesaikan studi, untuk itu kami memohon kesediaan Bapak / Ibu sudi kiranya untuk memberikan kesempatan pada mahasiswa kami melakukan riset di **Perusahaan / Instansi** yang Bapak / Ibu pimpin, guna untuk penyusunan Tugas Akhir yang merupakan salah satu persyaratan dalam menyelesaikan Program **Studi Strata Satu (S-1)**

Adapun mahasiswa/i di Fakultas Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara tersebut adalah:

Nama : Julia Syahputri
Npm : 2205160140
Jurusan : Manajemen
Semester : VII (Tujuh)
Judul : PERAN REVIEW PRODUCT DALAM MEMEDIASI PENGARUH BRAND IMAGE TERHADAP KEPUTUSAN PEMBELIAN PADA SHOPEE (STUDI KASUS MAHASISWA FEB UMSU)

Demikianlah surat kami ini, atas perhatian dan kerjasama yang Bapak / Ibu berikan kami ucapkan terima kasih.

Wassalamu 'alaikum Wr.Wb



Dekan

Dr. Radiman, S.E., M.Si

N I D N : 0107087801

Tembusan :

1. Pertinggal





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FAKULTAS EKONOMI DAN BISNIS

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**PENETAPAN DOSEN PEMBIMBING
TUGAS AKHIR MAHASISWA**

NOMOR : 81/TGS/IL3.AU/UMSU-05/F/2026

Assalamu 'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Dekan Fakultas Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, berdasarkan Persetujuan permohonan judul penelitian Tugas Akhir / Jurnal dari Ketua / Sekretaris :

Program Studi : Manajemen

Pada Tanggal :

Dengan ini menetapkan Dosen Pembimbing Tugas Akhir/ Jurnal Mahasiswa :

Nama : Julia Syahputri

N P M : 2205160140

Semester : VII (Tujuh)

Program Studi : Manajemen

Judul Proposal / Skripsi : PERAN REVIEW PRODUCT DALAM MEMEDIASI PENGARUH BRAND IMAGE TERHADAP KEPUTUSAN PEMBELIAN PADA SHOPEE (STUDI KASUS MAHASISWA FEB UMSU)

Dosen Pembimbing : Hazmanan Khair, S.E., M.B.A., Ph.D

Dengan demikian di izinkan menulis Tugas Akhir / Jurnal dengan ketentuan :

1. Penulisan berpedoman pada buku panduan penulisan Tugas Akhir/ Jurnal Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis UMSU.
2. Pelaksanaan Sidang Tugas Akhir / Jurnal harus berjarak 3 bulan setelah dikeluarkannya Surat Penetapan Dosen Pembimbing Tugas Akhir
3. **Tugas Akhir** dinyatakan " **BATAL** " bila tidak selesai sebelum Masa Daluarsa tanggal 10 Januari 2027 Revisi Judul.....

Wassalamu 'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.



Ditetapkan di : Medan
Pada Tanggal : 20 Rajab 1447 H
10 Januari 2026 M



Dekan

Dr. Radiman, S.E., M.Si

N I D N : 0107087801

Tembusan :

1. Pertinggal.





Unggul | Cerdas | Terpercaya
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MAJELIS PENDIDIKAN TINGGI PENELITIAN & PENGEMBANGAN PIMPINAN PUSAT MUHAMMADIYAH
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Nomor : 257/I.3-AU/UMSU/F/2026
Lamp. : -
Hal : Izin Riset

29 Rajab 1447 H
17 Januari 2026 M

Kepada Yth :
Dekan Fakultas Ekonomi Dan Bisnis
Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara
di-
Medan.

Assalamu 'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

Dengan hormat, teriring salam dan do'a semoga Saudara dan jajaran selalu berada dalam naungan Allah SWT. Dan dimudahkan dalam melaksanakan aktivitas sehari-hari. Amin.


Dengan hormat, menindaklanjuti surat dari Dekan Fakultas Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara Nomor: 81/II.3-AU/UMSU-05/F/2026 tanggal 10 Januari 2026 Prihal Izin Riset, maka bersama ini kami memberikan persetujuan/izin riset di Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (UMSU) sebagai berikut:

Nama : Julia Syahputri
NPM : 2205160140
Program Studi : Manajemen
Semester : VII (Tujuh)
Judul : **Peran Review Product Dalam Memediasi Pengaruh Brand Image Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Pada Shopee (Studi Kasus Mahasiswa FEB UMSU)**

Demikian hal ini kami disampaikan, atas perhatian dan kerjasama yang baik diucapkan terima kasih.

Wassalamu 'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh



Wakil Rektor I

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Arifin, S.H., M.Hum
NIP: 195701131987031002

Tembusan:

1. Bapak Rektor UMSU sebagai laporan;
2. Yang bersangkutan
3. Peringgal.



**MUHAMMADIYAH HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL,
 MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF NORTH
 SUMATRA
 FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS
 Jl. Kapten Mukhtar Basri No. 3, Medan, Tel. 061-6624567, Postal Code 20238**

PROPOSAL GUIDANCE MINUTES

Student Name : Julia Syahputri
 NPM : 2205160140
 Supervisor : Hazmanan Khair, SE, MBA, Ph.D.
 Study program : Management
 Concentration : Management Marketing
 Research Title : The Role Of Product Reviews in Mediating The Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions on Shopee (Case Study of FEB UMSU Students).

Item	Evaluation Results	Date	Lecturer's Initials
Chapter 1	The background section needs to be expanded and presented clearly.	29/12/25	
Chapter 2	Sub heading should not be written in Bold except for main subheadings	02/01/26	
Chapter 3	Reference list must follow Mendeley style. The research timeline must be shaded, in accordance with research plan	10/01/26	
Bibliography	Mendeley, use lecturer names from FEB UMSU.	11/01/26	
Research Data Collection Instrument			
Proposal Seminar Approval	Acc	15/01/26	

Known by:
 head of the study program

Agus Sani, SE, M.Sc.

Medan, January 2026

Approved by:
 Supervisor

Hazmanan Khair, SE, MBA, Ph.D.

BERITA ACARA SEMINAR PROPOSAL PROGRAM STUDI MANAJEMEN

Pada hari ini Selasa 03 Februari 2026 telah diselenggarakan seminar Proposal Program Studi Manajemen menerangkan bahwa :

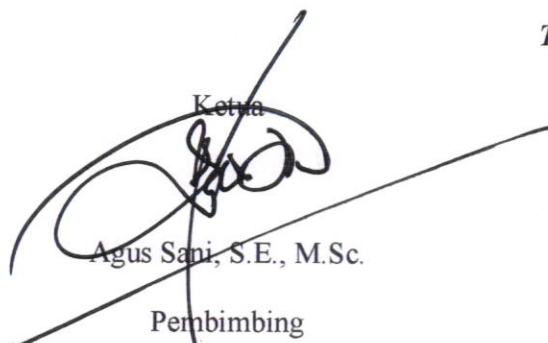
Nama : Julia Syahputri
 Konsentrasi : Man. Pemasaran
 N.P.M. : 2205160140
 Tempat / Tgl.Lahir : Medan, 10 Juli 2004
 Alamat Rumah : Jl. Letda sujono Gg. Abd Rahman No.2
 Judul Proposal : The Role of Product Reviews in Mediating the Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions on Shopee (A Case Study of FEB UMSU Students)

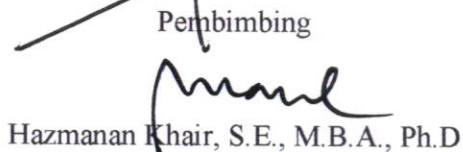
(Disetujui / tidak disetujui *)

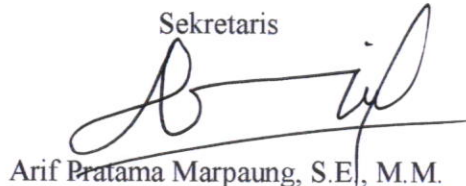
Item	Komentar
Judul	Ok
Bab I	Tunjukkan bukti dan/problem tjs shopee & ICBM
Bab II	Jgn at subjudul yg Referensinya hanya 1, min. 2,
Bab III	gunakan kuesioner, non probability
Lainnya	Referensi use mendeleby style
Kesimpulan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lulus <input type="checkbox"/> Tidak Lulus

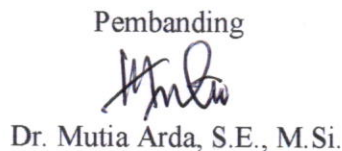
Medan, Selasa 03 Februari 2026

TIM SEMINAR

Ketua

 Agus Sani, S.E., M.Sc.

Pembimbing

 Hazmanan Khair, S.E., M.B.A., Ph.D

Sekretaris

 Arif Pratama Marpaung, S.E., M.M.

Pemanding

 Dr. Mutia Arda, S.E., M.Si.



PENGESAHAN PROPOSAL

Berdasarkan hasil seminar Proposal Program Studi Manajemen yang diselenggarakan pada hari *Selasa 03 Februari 2026* menerangkan bahwa:

Nama : Julia Syahputri
Konsentrasi : Man. Pemasaran
N.P.M. : 2205160140
Tempat / Tgl.Lahir : Medan, 10 Juli 2004
Alamat Rumah : Jl. Letda sujono Gg. Abd Rahman No.2
JudulProposal : The Role of Product Reviews in Mediating the Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions on Shopee (A Case Study of FEB UMSU Students).

Proposal dinyatakan syah dan memenuhi Syarat untuk menulis Tugas Akhir dengan pembimbing:
Hazmanan Khair, S.E., M.B.A., Ph.D

Medan, Selasa 03 Februari 2026

TIM SEMINAR

Ketua

Agus Sani, S.E., M.Sc.

Pembimbing

Hazmanan Khair, S.E., M.B.A., Ph.D

Sekretaris

Arif Pratama Marpaung, S.E., M.M.

Pemanding

Dr. Mutia Arda, S.E., M.Si.

Diketahui / Disetujui
a.n. Dekan
Wakil Dekan - I

06/02/2026
1/4
Assoc.Prof. Dr. Hasrudy Tanjung, S.E., M.Si.
NIDN. 0118127401