

THE MEDIATION ROLE OF BRAND IMAGE ON THE EFFECT OF SALES PROMOTION ON SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (SME) PRODUCT PURCHASE DECISIONS

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ABSTRACT

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises are the government's priority in developing the community's economy in Indonesia. This study examines how the brand image functions as a mediator of the impact of sales promotion on consumer choices to buy SME goods. This type of research uses a cross-sectional survey methodology. This type of research is a survey with a cross-sectional approach. The population of the research of SME consumers in Palembang City. Simple random sampling was used to select 110 respondents as the sample. The research instrument used a closed questionnaire. Data analysis used Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS). Research findings indicate that Brand image has a positive and significant effect on Product Purchase Decisions, and Sales Promotion has a positive and significant effect on brand image. There is no positive and significant influence of Sales Promotion on Product Purchase Decisions. The brand image mediates the influence of sales promotion and consumer decisions to buy SME goods in Palembang.

Keywords: Brand Image, Sales Promotion, Product Purchase Decisions

INTRODUCTION

The government has prioritized the development of MSMEs in Indonesia, showing how much the government cares about the growth of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector. It is logical considering the significant economic impact of MSMEs on the nation, and many Indonesians have benefited financially from this sector (Setiyaningrum & Ramawati, 2020). The ability of the community to understand the possibilities and opportunities of natural resources that exist in a place is essential to create a business (Elpanso & Helmi, 2022). The main challenge for SMEs today is the lack of consumer interest in their goods. It is due to the general public's belief that locally produced goods are of low quality (Sukendar et al., 2021). In this regard, it is necessary to support the growth of MSMEs through various tactics, including training, mentoring, and human resource development.

Before purchasing an MSME product, consumers make a series of choices. So to understand consumer purchasing decisions, MSME actors need to understand the consumption and product use process in consumer perceptions (Hendri et al., 2018). In addition, when buying products unconsciously, consumers will go through several steps in purchasing decisions, purchasing and post-purchase evaluation (Nurhandayani et al., 2019). The first step is introducing a problem where consumers can distinguish between needs and wants websites, packaging labels, displays, or by repetition. The third step is the evaluation of alternatives, in which

consumers will establish criteria consisting of characteristics that are important to them. The fourth step is where the customer purchase decision decides to buy the product after evaluating alternatives. The last step is the post-purchase decision, where the consumer decides to keep buying the product if he is satisfied or stops buying the product if he is not satisfied. Publications, salespeople, websites, packaging labels, and displays, or with a third iteration (Asyhari & Yuwalliatin, 2021). For this reason, MSME actors must improve brand image, maintain product quality, and carry out marketing; MSME goods can be sold in the community.

When consumers are involved in buying decision-making, they will remember details about a brand. The tendency of consumers to buy a product is strongly influenced by their perception of the quality or image of the product (Rahmawati & Nilowardono, 2018). Customer opinion about the overall quality or superiority of goods or services about their intended use (Chen, 2016). A brand is closely related to how good consumers perceive a product. Perception of a brand, also known as a brand association in consumer memory, is known as "brand image" (Cahayani & Sutar, 2020). Because of its impact on consumer interest and choice to buy goods or services, brand image is still the focus of many practitioners and academics in marketing science (Alhaddad, 2015). Various academic studies have shown that brand image can be developed and strengthened using various strategies, including high-quality marketing, advertising, and services (Farizan et al., 2019). According to research by Panda et al. (2019), brand image is one element that encourages customers to use an item or service repeatedly. In an empirical study, brand image was said to affect sales significantly. Brand image can be seen in the context of purchasing decisions as an element influencing attitudes, leading to behavioral intentions. Some marketing academics rarely use the some marketing academics still use the idea of planned behavior to explain how brand image affects consumer buying behavior.

When the brand image has been built, the most important thing to do next is to increase product promotion. According to Santini et al. (2015), promotion is an activity carried out by companies to communicate to consumers a product that can affect consumer buying interest in the company's products. Activities communicate the product's benefits and persuade target customers to buy it. Sales Promotion is needed to inform the public about the brand image and brand quality of MSME products (Begum, 2015). The primary purpose of promotion is to attract consumers' attention, inform them about the company's goods or services, and persuade them to purchase. In addition, it ensures that MSME goods have a place in people's hearts (Wulansari, 2017). Another component of marketing communication is sales promotion, which tries to spread the brand message to customers and entice them to buy goods and services. Marketers usually use advertising, sales force, and packaging to stimulate need or want recognition (Ajagbe et al., 2014). Advertising can also be used as one of the media used to make the brand image of a product known by the wider community. Using a brand image will give a good impression that a company wants to give to the public or its audience to generate a favorable public opinion. A supporting role is used to support the delivery of advertisements (Aji et al., 2019). However, the problem in the field is that MSME products are not widely known in the community. Consumers still often doubt the quality of a product. As a result, SMEs in Indonesia are still unable to develop rapidly. Thus, the stronger the value of the built brand image, the higher the consumer's intention to buy the product because of the high-quality

offering. Therefore, by maximizing sales promotion mediated by brand image, it is expected to help MSMEs make their products purchased by consumers.

Based on the previous description, this study will create a fit economic model based on empirical facts related to the mediating role of brand image on the influence of sales promotion on the decision to buy MSME products. This study will also examine how brand image acts as a mediator in the influence of sales promotions on purchasing decisions for MSME products.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Image

Brand image is what people know about a brand and what they imagine, see, or feel when they hear or see it (Pratiwi et al., 2021). Brands may improve users' and owners' views of themselves in the eyes of others. It might be regarded as customer impressions and beliefs mirrored in or ingrained in their thoughts and memories (Farizan et al., 2019). Consumer brand knowledge or prior experiences may help create this image. These symbolic linkages establish brand pictures in customers' online memories that are crucial for influencing their purchasing decisions.

As expressed in brand associations, the consumer's view of brand memory is referred to as a brand image. One crucial intangible asset influencing how consumers perceive a brand is its image. Companies grow their brands in a way that can indirectly increase the number of brands in their portfolio. Companies may gain solid brand identity and recognition by extending the brand portfolio to new items (Nurhandayani et al., 2019). Additionally, it helps raise awareness of their brand image among potential clients. Demonstrated how retailers with strong brand recognition might influence customers' decision to purchase their products. Recent empirical research has revealed that customers' purchase decisions are positively impacted by brand image. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that the brand image created by commercials and promotions influences customers' purchase choices.

Sales Promotion

Advertisers use promotion to improve productivity, opportunities, and consumer's capacity to process communications in a promotion. Furthermore, the primary purpose of a promotional strategy is to encourage the purchase of a product or service. Sales promotions are incredibly adaptable, allowing them to respond quickly to competitors' activities and proactively integrate other promotional communication efforts (Santini et al., 2015). Sales promotion is viewed positively and great if it is advanced, creative, one-of-a-kind, and convincing. Furthermore, promotion should be meaningful, related, and supportive of the brand image. Consumers must understand and visualize themselves as a result of sales promotion.

Advertising is a company's strategy to persuade potential customers to purchase its product or service by emphasizing its advantages and capacity to meet demands. Spending on advertising enables businesses to keep clients over the long run and prevents them from transferring to other companies. The study of the brand image reveals that advertising messages affect consumers' views of brands and serve as drivers of purchase intention, according to previous

literature (Maghribi, 2022). Advertising spending is said to have a significant impact on influencing consumer choice. Additionally, Rahmawati & Nilowardono (2018) assert that advertising is a powerful marketing tactic for enhancing brand and customer perceptions of product quality. According to research, advertising positively impacts brand perception and customer purchase decisions.

Product Purchase Decisions

Consumer purchase decisions are phases or procedures where customers select various accessible alternatives before deciding whether to utilize them based on specific criteria (Maddinsyah, 2020). A person purchases services or products to appease a requirement or passion, not only mechanically, but also in terms of the benefits derived from the purchases. As a result, marketers must always be innovative, lively, and wide-ranging in trying to offer and deliver high-quality products. Marketers who do not listen to the quality of their goods will face consumer disloyalty, causing their product sales to fall. If a product is created with quality dimensions, even if the price is attractive, it will influence consumer purchasing intentions (Park & Sihombing, 2020). Deciding to buy anything is based on knowledge about the already known product. After weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each option, it is time to come to a conclusion that will satisfy them. Selecting one course of action over another in a procurement decision involves integrating knowledge from several sources.

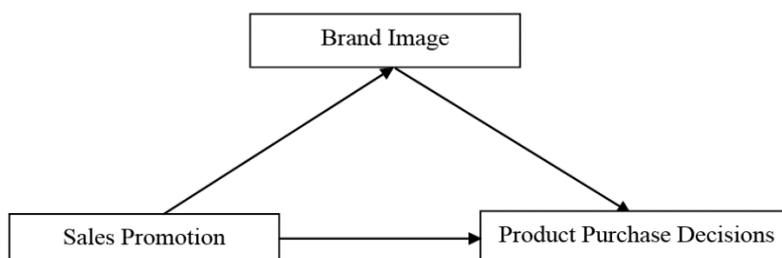
Making decisions on purchases involves considering several options to produce the desired results. As stated by Suryani & Syafarudin (2021), there are four steps in the customer purchasing process: Problem Identification When a buyer detects a case or necessity, the purchasing process starts. Both internal and environmental events might induce needs. Information Seeking Consumers are motivated to seek additional information because they feel forced. Additionally, it may be broken down into two levels of stimulation: a. Reinforced attention People are more aware of product information at this stage. b. Commence actively seeking information and searching for books to read, making calls to pals, and going to the shop to inspect a particular item (Desideria & Wardana, 2020). Review other methods of how consumers get information about rival brands and form an opinion. Every customer uses a different straightforward evaluation approach depending on the purchase circumstances. Consumer judgment is frequently seen in recent decisions and instances as a cognitively oriented process. In other words, this example assumes that buyers build product assessments somewhat deliberately and reasonably. Purchase Choices Consumers develop their brand preferences in a line of options while making assessments. Additionally, customers might develop an intention to purchase their favorite brand. Consumers can choose five options when executing their buy intention: brand, dealer, quantity, time, and payment method.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

The definitions given by several international organizations for Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) vary from one country to the next. Based on the characteristics of MSMEs, such as business scale, the technology used, organization and management, and market orientation, MSMEs are defined based on criteria and characteristics, which can be in

the form of the number of workers used, the amount of capital and turnover from the activities produced (Fadilah et al., 2021). MSMEs are defined as 1. Productive firms owned by people or individual business entities that satisfy micro-enterprises requirements are known as micro-enterprises. 2. A small business is an economically successful enterprise that operates independently, is run by people or organizations that are not subsidiaries or branches of larger or more established corporations, and is not owned, controlled, or integrated directly or into them. 3. A medium-sized firm is an economically successful enterprise that operates independently, is run by people or organizations that are not subsidiaries or branches of larger or smaller businesses, and has a total net worth or yearly sales results that comply with legal requirements (Pujiono, 2016). A theoretical framework that defines the factors relating to product quality on brand image and its influence on purchasing decisions may be created based on the above description; the framework provided in this study is described in the figure below.

Figure 1: Research Framework



Based on the above model, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

- H1: Brand Image Has a Positive and Significant Effect on Product Purchase Decisions
- H2: Sales Promotion Has a Positive and Significant Effect on Brand Image
- H3: Sales Promotion Has a Positive and Significant Effect on Product Purchase Decisions
- H4: Brand Image is a significant full mediator of the influence of sales promotion on Product Purchase Decisions

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is empirical survey research. A cross-sectional survey study was used in this study. A survey study in which information is collected from a sample and collected quickly and quickly without taking a long time (Creswell, 2012). The research was conducted in the city of Palembang. The research was conducted from April to do. Until June 2022 for three months. All of Palembang's UMKM customers are the research population. There are 11 indicators in this study's three variables or constructs. One hundred ten respondents make up the sample size (Hair et al., 2009). Simple Random Sampling is used for probability-based sample selection. The type of questionnaire used in this study is a questionnaire paired with the type of scale used, namely the Likert scale (1-5) (Setyadi & Helmi, 2022). The grid of each variable is described in the following table.

Table 1: Grid of each Variable

Variable	Indicator	Item Code
Sales Promotion	Discounts	X1
	Sample	X2
	Special Price	X3
	Support award	X4
Brand Image	Attributes	Y1
	Benefit value	Y2
	Overall evaluation	Y3
Product purchase decision	Purchase Priority For Certain Products	Z1
	Searching for information	Z2
	Evaluate the product	Z3
	Recommend to others after making a purchase	Z4

The data analysis technique used structural equation modeling (SEM) with the help of Smart PLS 3 software. SEM was determined using the covariance matrix and analysis of variance. Multilevel models that cannot be solved simultaneously using linear regression equations are solved using SEM. The stages of the PLS-SEM analysis in this study consist of model specification, estimation of model parameters, structural model testing, and proof of research hypotheses. The specification model in PLS-SEM is done by making a path diagram that describes the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables (structural model/inner model) and the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables on their respective indicators (measurement model/router model). Evaluation of the measurement model in PLS-SEM builds a non-parametric evaluation criterion and uses bootstrapping and blindfolding procedures (Wang et al., 2022). Focus evaluation measurement model evaluating validity reliability measurement construct indicator.

In the reflective measurement model in this study, the measurement model was evaluated using internal consistency (composite reliability), reliability indicators, and convergent validity (average variance extracted). The higher the value of outer loading on a construct indicates that the indicators in the construct have many similarities. These characteristics are referred to as indicators of reliability. The value of the outer loading on all indicators must be statistically significant, with the provision that the minimum value is 0.708 (Osman et al., 2020). When the outer loading value obtained is in the 0.4-0.7 interval, it must be considered excluded from the model. With a note, removing or removing these indicators from the model can increase the value of composite reliability and the value of average variance extracted (AVE). In general, convergent validity can be measured using the AVE value, provided that the AVE value must be greater than 0.5. That is, when the AVE value is more significant than 0.5, the construct explains more than half (50%) of the variance of each indicator.

On the other hand, if the AVE value is less than 0.5, there are more errors than the variance explained by the construct (Jabbar & Hussin, 2019). The evaluation of the structural model (inner model) is carried out in several stages, namely collinearity testing, testing the significance of the relationship on the structural model, and measuring the T Value. Allowable Critical Value must be greater than 1.96 (Li et al., 2019).

RESULTS

Variable Description

In this section, the findings of this study will be described. For more details, consider the following results.

Table 2: Variable Description

Variable	N	mean	Std. Deviation	Category
Brand Image	1 10	28.86	5.894	good
Product Purchase Decision	1 10	24.41	4.625	good
Sales Promotion	1 10	21.07	5,231	good

Based on table 2 above, it is known that all variables are in a suitable category. It indicates that the respondents have given a good description of the Brand Image, Sales Promotion, and Product Purchase Decision. In addition, this indicates that the respondent carefully provides information about each item.

Data Validity and Reliability Test

The validity of the questionnaire items was tested using the Average Variance Extract (AVE), and the reliability of the questionnaire was tested in a composite manner, that is, directly on the construct. This reliability test employs the Construct Reliability price, which is based on the price of the regression coefficient (loading factor). The following table shows the cost of each construct's validity and reliability index.

Table 3: AVE and CR Evaluation Value

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Category
Brand Image	0.863	0.917	0.786	Valid & Reliable
Product Purchase Decision	0.904	0.933	0.777	Valid & Reliable
Sales Promotion	0.836	0.890	0.670	Valid & Reliable

According to Table 3, all variables have an AVE value greater than 0.50, indicating that the indicators represent the developed variables and are declared valid. If the Construct Reliability (CR) value is more significant than 0.80, then all constructs in this study can be used in the model. Furthermore, it is known that Cronbach's Alpha value is more significant than 0.7, indicating that the instrument used is precise and consistent in measuring each variable.

The goodness of the Fit Model Test

To test the hypotheses described earlier, a structural equation model was formed and tested in SmartPLS. The results of the structural model are described as follows.

Table 4: The goodness of fit test

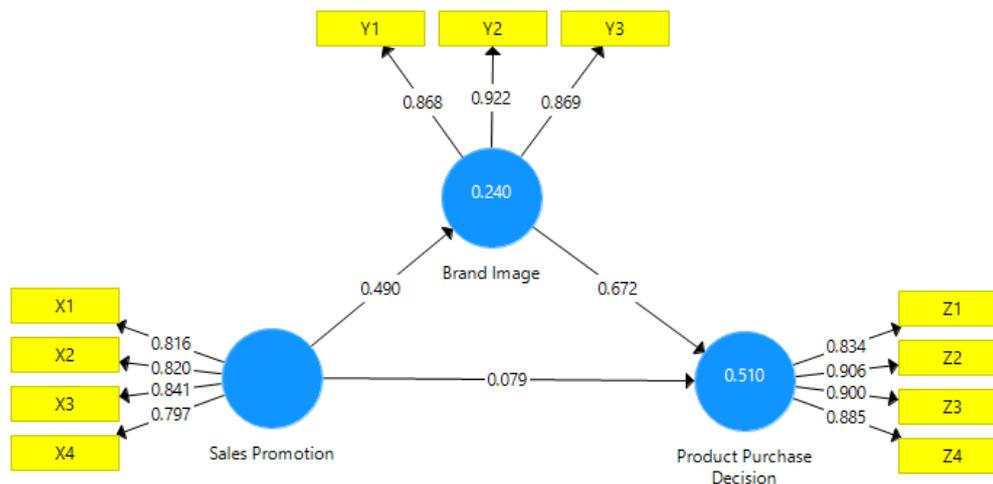
Parameter	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Description
SOME	0.055	0.055	Fit
d_ULS	0.202	0.202	Fit
d_G	0.124	0.124	Fit
Chi-Square	168,783	168,783	Fit
NFI	0.887	0.887	Fit

The illustration depicts a structural model that already fits the fit requirements. The indicator falls into the category of good fit in the overall construct (Chi-square, SRMR, d_ULS, d_G, and NFI). According to Schijns, (2021) the model must have at least three to four indexes in the excellent fit group to be considered practicable or sufficient. The complete research design has more than three indexes in the excellent fit area, according to the goodness of fit test findings. Table 3 shows the SEM findings of the excellent fit model test.

The results of the Estimated Model value in the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) model fit test assess the average difference between the observed and expected correlations. The value of the test results listed in the table above is 0.055, less than 0.08, which means this model is a goodness of fit measure for PLS-SEM, which can be used to avoid model misspecifications. d_ULS (The Squared Euclidean Distance) and d_G (The Geodesic Distance) that a good research model must have a value greater than 0.05 (because it uses a 95% confidence interval). It means that with the d_ULS value of 0.202 and d_G 0.124, the model in this study has a low residual distribution. A good Chi-Square value shows $2 \text{ Statistics} < 2 \text{ Table}$, meaning that the number of manifest variables in the PLS path model and the number of independent variables in the covariance matrix model is sufficient. The fit model results for the chi-square in this study amounted to 168,783, meaning that the two tables were smaller at 0.552 with a significance P-value of 0.05. It means that the number of manifest variables in the PLS path model and the number of independent variables in the covariance matrix model is fulfilled. However, this study's Normal Fit Index (NFI) value was 0.887, still below 0.9. Overall, it can be concluded that this structural model is good.

The results of the model test using SMART PLS, which includes the construction of each variable, can be seen to see the structural model of internal marketing, job satisfaction, and service quality and test the hypotheses described previously. The structural model's results are described below.

Figure 2: Model Fit Estimate



Testing the Hypotheses: Structural Equation Models

Decisions based on the results of the descriptive analysis are certainly not convincing enough, but generally, they can provide an overview. It is necessary to test the data following the hypothesis proposed in this study. Hypothesis testing in SEM analysis is also known as structural model testing. Overall, hypothesis testing for one variable's direct effect on another can be seen in the following table.

Table 5: Summary of Hypothesis Tests on Relationships

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values	Result
H1	0.672	0.665	0.079	8,516	0.000	Significance
H2	0.490	0.494	0.073	6,720	0.000	Significance
H3	0.079	0.088	0.079	1.008	0.314	Not Significant

Note: *significant at critical ratio > 1.96.

Based on the results of the analysis from table 5, it is known that:

- Brand image has a positive and significant effect on Product Purchase Decisions, with a t-value of 8,516 > 1.96
- Sales Promotion has a positive and significant effect on the brand image with a t-value of 6720 < 1.96.
- There is no positive and significant influence of Sales Promotion on Product Purchase Decisions; the t-value is 1.008 < 1.96.

Testing mediation effects

One of the objectives of this research is to examine the mediating role of brand image value on the effect of sales promotion on Product Purchase Decisions. It is a complex mediating effect

that includes many pathways for estimating. Indirect and total effects can be calculated from T Statistics or P Values. The results of the analysis can be seen in the table below.

Table 6: Mediation Effect

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Result
H4	0.329	0.326	0.050	6.522	0.000	Full Mediation

Note: *significant at critical ratio > 1.96 . Table 6 shows an indirect effect of Sales Promotion on Product Purchase Decisions mediated by the brand image with a value of $6,522 > 1.96$. So that the results of the mediation test can be concluded that the brand image has a full mediating effect so that Sales Promotion can make Product Purchase Decisions better. Because the brand image variable and sales promotion can determine Product Purchase Decisions will increase significantly. This study was supported by Helmi et al. (2022) that sales promotion was found to have a significant effect on brand image and customer purchasing decisions, and brand image was also found to have a positive and significant effect on customer purchasing decisions.

DISCUSSION

Based on results data analysis, some the resulting findings in study this is First, the brand image is influential positive and significant to product purchase decisions. Study this find that in context MSME products, success business very determined by the brand image. In other words, the brand image becomes marketing dimensions that play a role important to success MSME business. Finding this support study (Putri & Pasharibu, 2022; Wibowo & Juhara, 2021) who found that influential brand image positive to Product Purchase Decisions seen from aspect success in Thing maintain loyalty customer . Brand image refers to the efforts of MSME companies to create, build, and maintain relationships with customers by paying attention to what the customer needs and wants. Second, this study found that sales promotion has a positive and significant effect on brand image. Sales promotion affects the success of MSME business in building a brand. Efforts to pay more attention to customers are a key factor that needs to be considered by MSME actors because it greatly determines business success and failure (L. Suryani & Yacob, 2021). A smaller number of customers requires MSME companies to be able to serve customers well because if customers are not served well then customers can easily switch to competitors who offer better services. In addition, the company's ability to create value for customers is the next key factor that determines the success and failure of small businesses (I. Suryani & Syafarudin, 2021). MSME companies are required to have the ability to create value for customers, for example by offering new, creative, and unique things that have not been done by competitors to encourage business success. Without this value creation, MSME companies will not be able to compete.

Third, related to the finding that sales promotion is not proven to have an effect on product purchase decisions. On the other hand, the findings of this study contradict previous research conducted (Shetty et al., 2021; Yasri et al., 2020), which found that sales promotion was proven to increase k product purchase decisions. Related to the finding that sales promotion is not

proven to have an effect on business success. This study shows that in the context of MSME companies, business success is not determined by how strong the sales promotion is, but must be supported by the quality of the product or the image of the product offered. It also requires the ability to be proactive in environmental changes, focus on exploiting existing opportunities, be oriented to innovation, and improve service quality.

Fourth, related to the role of brand image, this study proves that brand image is found to moderate the influence of sales promotion on product purchase decisions. In the context of the ability of MSMEs to create, build, and maintain customer relationships, the greater the impact on business success, the longer MSMEs operate. MSMEs can achieve much greater business success if they have a better ability to present quality products accompanied by extensive promotions, interact and establish good relationships with customers. This finding supports the findings of T. Suryani et al., (2021) which proves that there are differences in the application of entrepreneurial marketing in companies that have just operated with companies that have been operating for a long time in terms of creating value for customers.

CONCLUSION

Theoretically and empirically, this study confirms the significant role of brand quality and brand image as a mediator of the influence of promotion in increasing consumer purchasing decisions for MSME products. Brand quality and brand image, and sales promotion are antecedents that can change and influence an individual's attitude to show certain behaviors, such as decisions in purchasing a product. In an organizational context, this study can serve as a basis and reference for marketing managers and business institutions to develop and design an effective strategy for building and strengthening the brand image and improving consumer purchasing decisions for the products or services they offer.

This study has several limitations where this study in explaining the role of brand image and sales promotion on purchasing decisions only uses one essential theoretical perspective. It is hoped that further relevant studies can explain the influence of these constructs through different essential theoretical perspectives and are not limited to one fundamental theoretical perspective. In addition, this study only positions brand quality and brand image as connecting variables between the influences of promotion on purchasing decisions. It is hoped that further relevant studies can position a brand image in different roles to get a new research model. This study only focuses on the MSME consumer analysis unit, and it is hoped that in the following study, the unit of analysis can be addressed in the context of a different platform, and this step may produce different findings.

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