

ANALYSIS OF PURCHASE DECISIONS AND BRAND TRUST AT PT PENERBIT ERLANGGA MAHAMARU



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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between purchasing decisions and brand trust at PT Publisher Erlangga Mahamaru, located in the South Jakarta area. The primary objective of this research is to investigate the direct and indirect effects of promotion, product knowledge, and price fairness on purchasing decisions, with brand trust serving as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was employed, and data were collected from a sample of 229 customers of PT Publisher Erlangga Mahamaru. The data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS SEM), which is appropriate for testing complex relationships among multiple variables. The findings indicate that promotion, product knowledge, and price fairness each have a significant direct impact on purchasing decisions. Additionally, both promotion and product knowledge are found to have a significant positive effect on brand trust, whereas price fairness does not significantly affect brand trust. Furthermore, the study reveals indirect effects through the mediating role of brand trust: promotion and product knowledge influence purchasing decisions through brand trust, confirming its mediating effect for these two variables. In contrast, price fairness does not exhibit a significant indirect effect on purchasing decisions via brand trust. These results highlight the critical roles of promotion and product knowledge in fostering brand trust and ultimately enhancing purchasing decisions. In contrast, while price fairness contributes directly to purchasing decisions, it does not strengthen brand trust. Therefore, managers should prioritize strategies that improve promotional activities and increase customers' product knowledge to build brand trust, which in turn can drive stronger purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Purchase Decisions, Promotions, Product Knowledge, Brand Trust, Price Fairness

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is a social and managerial process in which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through the creation and exchange of products and value with others (Kotler & Armstrong in Sholikhah et al., 2021). Marketing can also be defined as the process of planning and implementing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that meet the goals of individuals and organizations (Sunarto in Sholikhah et al., 2021). In addition, another meaning of marketing is the entirety of business activities aimed at planning, determining prices, promoting, and distributing goods and services that can satisfy the needs of both existing buyers and potential buyers (Stanton, 1994, in Sholikhah et al., 2021; Buana & ZA, 2025). From these various definitions, it can be concluded that marketing involves the process of planning, implementing, and managing activities aimed at meeting the needs and wants of consumers through the exchange of products and value with others.

Marketing activities include various aspects such as satisfying customer needs and wants, creating and delivering value, and managing customer relationships in a way that is profitable for the organization and its stakeholders. Kotler and Keller emphasize that the essence of marketing is to satisfy customer needs and wants, with the goal of delivering customer value to generate profits. This involves market segmentation, targeting, product positioning, product features, pricing, promotion, and distribution (Sholikhah et al., 2021). The role of marketers is to seek response, attention, purchases, support, and contributions from prospects. Both buyers and sellers are involved in marketing activities, and this situation represents interactive marketing (Sholikhah et al., 2021). In other words, marketing activities are a series of strategies aimed at satisfying customer needs, creating value, and managing customer relationships with the goal of encouraging customers to make purchase decisions that are beneficial to the organization and its stakeholders. The existence of a need for a product is one of the measures in making a purchase decision (Rijadi & Hidayat, 2019).

A purchase decision involves the process in which consumers recognize a problem, seek solutions, evaluate alternatives, and choose among available purchase options. The stages of the purchase decision include factors such as the influence of others' opinions and situational factors, and post-purchase behavior is influenced by consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Sholikhah et al., 2021). The figure below illustrates the purchase decisions made by customers regarding publisher (book) products.

Figure 1.
Sales Chart



Source: Internal Data of PT Penerbit Erlangga Mahameru (Processed, 2024)

Based on Figure 1 above, it can be seen the potential sales volume and the actual sales volume. It appears that the actual sales volume is still far below the expected sales volume. Furthermore, it can also be seen that the actual sales volume based on the table above tends to fluctuate, where sales in 2023 have not yet matched the sales volume in 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic. This indicates a problem with the purchase decisions of customers of the publishing company PT Penerbit Erlangga Mahameru. Consumers' purchase decisions regarding a particular product or service can be influenced by various factors. One factor that can influence purchase decisions is brand trust. Brand trust is the belief or positive perception of consumers toward a particular brand or product, which is based on previous experience or interaction with the brand. Brand trust includes consumers' belief in the quality, reliability, integrity, and ability of the brand to meet their needs and wants (Pandiangan et al., 2021). The table below shows an illustration of brand trust based on the TOP BRAND AWARD survey.

Table 2.
Top Brand Award Chart

Brand Name	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Erlangga	60.90	61.10	58.90	59.80	58.40
Ganesha	8.80	8.70	6.00	7.10	6.30
Gramedia	—	5.00	17.20	15.20	17.90
Tiga Serangkai	5.40	5.20	3.10	3.90	3.10
Yudhistira	8.40	8.30	6.20	7.30	6.00

Source: Top Brand, 2024

Based on Table 1 above, it can be seen that Erlangga publisher is in the first position of the TOP BRAND AWARD in the book publishing category. However, it can also be seen that the Top Brand index has tended to decline year by year. This indicates that although consumer trust in PT Penerbit Erlangga Mahameru is higher compared to other publishers, the trust in the Erlangga brand itself has decreased from year to year. The data above makes brand trust something that needs special attention from company management so that consumer trust in the brand can increase, thereby increasing purchase decisions as well. In the long run, this can help the company ensure that sales volume targets are achieved. This is in line with a study stating that brand trust can influence purchase decisions (Hardiyanti & Nefianto, n.d.). Brand trust can influence consumer purchase decisions. Consumers who have high trust in a brand tend to prefer that brand when making purchases. This is because high brand trust can provide a sense of security and confidence to consumers that the products or services offered by the brand can meet their needs and provide satisfaction (Kasman et al., 2021).

Promotion can influence consumers' purchase decisions. Effective promotion can create awareness, share information, and influence buyers either directly or indirectly toward the products or services offered. Through promotion, companies can communicate the benefits, advantages, and value of the product to consumers, thereby influencing their decision to purchase (Yudhistira Adwimurti, 2023). Product knowledge can influence sales. Consumers tend to be more interested in buying products when they have good knowledge about the product. Clear and comprehensive information about the product can help consumers understand the benefits, advantages, and value of the product, thereby influencing their purchase decisions. In addition, good product knowledge can also help consumers compare products with others, thus influencing their purchase decisions. Therefore, good product knowledge can have a positive impact on product sales (Yusuf Bagus P, 2021).

Although price can influence consumer purchase decisions, there are several studies showing that price is not always the main factor in purchase decisions. There are other factors such as product quality, brand, and consumer preferences that have more influence on purchase decisions. For example, a study by Srinivasan et al. (2024) found that price is not always the main factor in purchase decisions. There are other factors such as product quality, brand, and consumer preferences that have more influence on purchase decisions. Nevertheless, in general, price is still considered an important factor in consumer purchase decisions (Sumarhadi, 2023). Price can influence brand trust. Consumers often associate price with quality. A higher price is often considered an indication of better quality, while a lower price may be perceived as lower quality. Therefore, the price set for a brand can influence consumers' perceptions of the brand's quality and reliability. If the price set is in accordance with the quality provided, this can strengthen consumers' trust in the brand. However, it is important to note that brand trust is also influenced by other factors such as consumer experience, brand image, and overall brand performance (Anang Firmansyah, 2002).

Promotion can influence brand trust. Through effective promotional activities, companies can build a strong brand image and increase consumer awareness of the brand. Well executed promotion can give a positive impression to consumers about the quality, reliability, and value of the brand. In addition, consistent and attractive promotion can also

strengthen the brand image in the eyes of consumers. Thus, good promotion can contribute to building consumer trust in the brand (Yudhistira Adwimurti, 2023).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Marketing Management

Marketing is a comprehensive and planned activity carried out by an organization to meet market needs by creating valuable products, setting prices, communicating, and exchanging offerings that are valuable for consumers, clients, partners, and society (Meithiana & Indrasari, 2019; Solomon, 2020a; Kotler et al., 2020). Marketing management refers to the science and art of navigating the social and managerial process where individuals or organizations obtain what they need by creating, offering, and exchanging products to build strong customer relationships and gain value from them (Yusnaeni, 2019a). It involves planning, implementing, and monitoring activities effectively and efficiently to attract, retain, and grow target customers by delivering and communicating product advantages. Marketing management thus focuses on creating, offering, and communicating products to build relationships with customers, achieve profits, and satisfy market needs.

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior studies how individuals or organizations select, use, and dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants (Kotler & Keller, 2022a; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010; Solomon, 2020b). It includes not only the purchase process but also pre- and post-decision activities, involving consumption and emotional experiences during the process (Peter & Olson, 2010a; Wicaksana et al., 2022). Consumer behavior is influenced by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors, such as local values, family and peer influence, demographics and lifestyle, as well as perceptions, motivations, and attitudes (Kotler & Keller, 2022b). In essence, consumer behavior is the process where individuals or groups engage in choosing, purchasing, using, or selling products, services, or ideas to meet their needs.

Marketing Strategy

A marketing strategy is crucial for introducing products to consumers and increasing company profits (Abdi & Supriono, 2019). It serves as a way to sell goods or services tailored to company conditions and target market preferences, helping identify untapped markets and increasing sales to both current and potential customers (Yusnaeni, 2019b). It is defined as a key instrument formulated to achieve company goals by developing sustainable competitive advantages through product design, advertising, cost control, and market knowledge (Tjiptono, 2019; Kotler & Armstrong, 2022). The strategy aims to deliver benefits to customers and build mutually beneficial relationships while adapting to market changes and customer expectations. Ultimately, it is a planned marketing effort aligned with company goals to attract customers and achieve objectives.

Purchase Decision

The purchase decision process is a critical series of steps consumers take when buying a product, including recognizing needs, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, making the purchase, and post-purchase behavior (Engel, 2000; Firmansyah, 2019; Kotler et al., 2020). It involves choosing products, brands, channels, timing, quantity, and payment methods (Indrasari, 2019; Gunawan et al., 2016a). Consumers evaluate alternatives based on beliefs and attitudes, decide where and when to buy, and how much to purchase, while

marketers must address satisfaction post-purchase. In short, purchase decisions involve selecting and buying products or services after considering alternatives, with key indicators being product choice, brand choice, channel choice, purchase timing, quantity, and payment method.

Brand Trust

Trust is defined as the willingness to depend on a partner relationship based on confidence, making brand trust crucial as it reflects a good relationship between consumers and companies (Gunawan et al., 2016b; Suryani & Rosalina, 2019). From the consumer's perspective, brand trust is a psychological factor involving credibility, integrity, and benevolence attached to a brand, providing a sense of security and reliability (Ferinnadewi, 2008; Pandean & Budiono, 2021; Tong & Subagio, 2020). Brand trust greatly influences a brand's sustainability—without it, a product struggles in the market, but with it, the brand can grow and thrive (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). Indicators of brand trust include believing in the brand (widely recognized and known), brand safety (difficult to imitate and legally protected), and brand honesty (product quality and safety).

RESEARCH METHOD

Operational Definition and Measurement of Variables

The operational definition explains variables by providing functional indicators necessary for measurement. In this study, five variables are investigated: Promotion (X1), Product Knowledge (X2), and Price Fairness (X3) as independent variables, while Brand Trust (Y1) and Purchase Decision (Y2) are dependent variables. Purchase decision refers to the consumer's process of selecting and buying products or services from available alternatives based on evaluation. Its indicators include product choice, brand choice, channel choice, purchase timing, quantity, and payment method, measured on a Likert scale. Brand trust is defined as the consumer's willingness to rely on the organization and its brand, with indicators including trust in the brand, brand safety, and brand honesty. Promotion refers to activities carried out to introduce, communicate, and publicize products to the public, with indicators of promotional message, media, and timing. Product knowledge represents the consumer's information about the product, such as concrete and abstract attributes, functional and psychosocial benefits, symbolic value, and satisfaction. Price fairness is the consumer's judgment of whether the price offered is fair and justified, with dimensions of cognitive attribution (locus of causality, controllability, and temporal stability) and price comparison (internal and external reference prices). All variables are measured using a Likert scale as detailed in the provided table.

Population and Sample

The population refers to the entire group to which generalizations will apply. In this study, the population comprises direct sales customers of PT. Penerbit Erlangga Mahamaru located in South Jakarta, specifically 355 educational business units (schools) (Sugiyono, 2022). The sample represents a subset of the population that retains its characteristics. Conclusions drawn from the sample are generalized to the population. This study employs a probability sampling technique, ensuring every population member has an equal chance of being selected. Specifically, it uses proportional random sampling, which allocates sample size proportionally across the population units.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process is carried out after collecting data from all respondents. The purpose of data analysis is to classify the data based on variables and respondent types, create tabulations for each variable, present the data for each variable, and perform calculations to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2022b). Once all data are gathered, they are processed using predetermined analytical techniques, including descriptive analysis, inferential analysis, and hypothesis testing with the help of the SmartPLS 4.0 software. These analytical steps ensure that the collected data are systematically organized, summarized, and interpreted to derive meaningful insights aligned with the research objectives. The use of SmartPLS enables researchers to perform structural equation modeling (SEM) and evaluate both measurement and structural models effectively.

Descriptive Analysis Technique

Descriptive statistical analysis is a method designed to analyze data by describing or summarizing it without aiming to draw generalized conclusions applicable to the entire population (Sugiyono, 2022b). This technique helps to depict the characteristics of the collected data in a clear and straightforward manner. It is particularly useful when the goal is to provide a snapshot of the data distribution, trends, and patterns, rather than making inferences about the broader population. Descriptive analysis includes measures such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to illustrate the responses to each variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

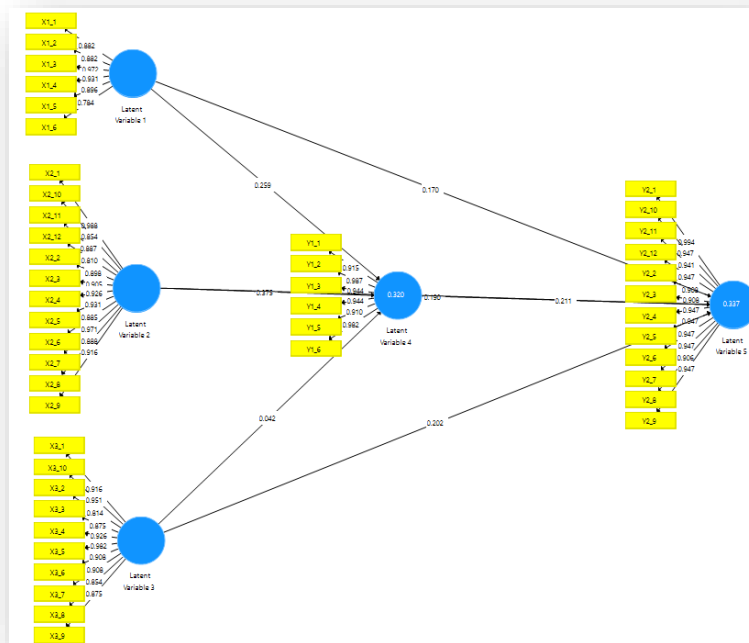
Inferential Analysis

The data analysis techniques used in this study include validity testing, reliability testing, and hypothesis testing using the SmartPLS software version 3.0. The PLS-SEM method, which is part of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, consists of two models: the outer model (measurement model) and the inner model (structural model). The measurement model tests validity through convergent and discriminant validity. In addition to validity, the outer model also assesses data reliability using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. The structural model (inner model) is evaluated through the Q-Square, R-Square, and T-statistics (t-tests) (Ghozali, 2021).

Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Validity testing was conducted by developing a path diagram using SmartPLS to meet convergent validity, where the loading factors of each item in the constructs of promotion, product knowledge, price fairness, brand trust, and purchasing decisions are examined. The path diagram is presented below:

Figure 2.
Outer Model



Source: PLS Output

The figure above shows that all indicators in the constructs of purchasing decisions, brand trust, promotion, product knowledge, and price fairness meet the criteria for validity, as all loading factors are greater than 0.7. Therefore, further analysis can proceed.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity shows the correlation between indicators and their latent construct. An indicator is considered to have high individual reflectivity if its correlation with the construct is > 0.70. However, a value between 0.50 and 0.60 is still acceptable (Ghozali, 2014). Another way to assess convergent validity is through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which should exceed 0.5 (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 2.
Convergent Validity Results

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE	Remark
Purchasing Decision	Y2.1	0.994	0.886	Valid
	Y2.2	0.908		Valid
Brand Trust	Y1.1	0.915	0.898	Valid
Promotion	X1.1	0.882	0.798	Valid
Product Knowledge	X2.1	0.988	0.821	Valid
Price Fairness	X3.1	0.916	0.814	Valid

Source: Processed Data

All indicators have loading factors > 0.7 and AVE > 0.5, confirming the validity of each variable.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, comparing the square root of AVE with the inter-construct correlations, and through cross-loading values, which should exceed 0.7 within the same construct.

Table 3.
Fornell-Larcker Criterion Results

	Brand Trust	Purchasing Decision	Product Knowledge	Price Fairness	Promotion
Brand Trust	0.947				
Purchasing Decision	0.445	0.941			
Product Knowledge	0.511	0.460	0.906		
Price Fairness	0.301	0.412	0.420	0.902	
Promotion	0.446	0.430	0.456	0.393	0.893

Source: PLS Output

The results show that each construct’s AVE square root is higher than its correlation with other constructs, confirming discriminant validity.

Table 4.
Cross Loading Results

Indicator	Brand Trust	Purchasing Decision	Product Knowledge	Price Fairness	Promotion
X1_1	0.251	0.238	0.251	0.224	0.613

Source: PLS Output

Indicators load more strongly on their respective constructs than on others, confirming discriminant validity.

Reliability Test

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability. Variables are considered reliable if these values exceed 0.6 (Ghozali, 2014). Composite reliability provides a better estimate of internal consistency (Abdillah & Jogiyanto, 2015).

Table 5.
Reliability Test Results

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach’s Alpha	Remark
Brand Trust	0.981	0.977	Reliable
Purchasing Decision	0.989	0.988	Reliable
Product Knowledge	0.982	0.980	Reliable
Price Fairness	0.978	0.974	Reliable
Promotion	0.959	0.948	Reliable

Source: PLS Output

All variables meet the reliability criteria.

Structural Model (Inner Model)

The inner model predicts causal relationships among latent variables. It is evaluated using R-Square to assess how much variance in endogenous variables is explained by exogenous variables, and path coefficients (t-values) to test hypotheses.

R-Square (R²)

R² measures how much of the dependent variable’s variance is explained by the model. Values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 6.
R-Square Results

Variable	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Criteria
Brand Trust	0.311		Moderate
Purchasing Decision	0.326		Moderate

Source: PLS Output

The R² value for brand trust (0.311) indicates that promotion, product knowledge, and price fairness explain 31.1% of its variance. For purchasing decisions (0.326), the four predictors explain 32.6% of the variance.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the statistical validity of the proposed statements and to conclude whether the hypotheses are accepted or rejected. The purpose of hypothesis testing is to provide an empirical basis for determining whether the hypotheses are supported by the data. The basis for hypothesis testing in this study is the *path coefficients* output. The *original sample (O)* value indicates the direction of the relationship between the latent variables, and the *t-statistic* value indicates the significance level of the hypothesis test. A hypothesis is accepted if the *t-statistic* > 1.96 for a two-tailed test. The critical *t-table* value at a 0.05 significance level with degrees of freedom (df = sample size – number of variables) was calculated as follows: df = 229 – 5 = 224, resulting in a *t-table* value of 1.971.

Table 7.
Path Coefficients Results

Hipotesis	Original Sample (O)	T Statistic (O/STEDV)	P-Values	Conclusion
Promotion → Purchasing Decision	0,170	2,532	0,012	Influential
Product Knowledge → Purchasing Decision	0,190	2,617	0,009	Influential
Price Fairness → Purchasing Decision	0,202	3,104	0,002	Influential
Promotion → Brand Trust	0,259	3,743	0,000	Influential

Hipotesis	Original Sample (O)	T Statistic (O/STEDV)	P-Values	Conclusion
Product Knowledge → Brand Trust	0,375	5,114	0,000	Influential
Price Fairness → Brand Trust	0,042	0,609	0,543	Influential
Promotion → Brand Trust → Purchasing Decision	0,055	2,350	0,019	Influential
Product Knowledge → Brand Trust → Purchasing Decision	0,079	2,576	0,010	Influential
Price Fairness → Brand Trust → Purchasing Decision	0,009	0,569	0,569	Influential

Source: PLS Output

Based on the table above, the influence of each variable can be explained as follows:

1. Promotion → Purchasing Decision: The original sample value is 0.170 (positive), with $t\text{-statistic} = 2.532 > 1.971$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.012$. Thus, promotion has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions. H1 is accepted.
2. Product Knowledge → Purchasing Decision: The original sample value is 0.190 (positive), with $t\text{-statistic} = 2.617 > 1.971$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.009$. Thus, product knowledge has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions. H2 is accepted.
3. Price Fairness → Purchasing Decision: The original sample value is 0.202 (positive), with $t\text{-statistic} = 3.104 > 1.971$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.002$. Thus, price fairness has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions. H3 is accepted.
4. Promotion → Brand Trust: The original sample value is 0.259 (positive), with $t\text{-statistic} = 3.743 > 1.971$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.000$. Thus, promotion has a significant positive effect on brand trust. H4 is accepted.
5. Product Knowledge → Brand Trust: The original sample value is 0.375 (positive), with $t\text{-statistic} = 5.114 > 1.971$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.000$. Thus, product knowledge has a significant positive effect on brand trust. H5 is accepted.
6. Price Fairness → Brand Trust: The original sample value is 0.042 (positive), with $t\text{-statistic} = 0.609 < 1.971$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.543$. Thus, price fairness does not have a significant effect on brand trust. H6 is rejected.
7. Promotion → Brand Trust → Purchasing Decision: The original sample value is 0.055 (positive), with $t\text{-statistic} = 2.350 > 1.971$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.019$. Thus, promotion has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions through brand trust. H7 is accepted.
8. Product Knowledge → Brand Trust → Purchasing Decision: The original sample value is 0.079 (positive), with $t\text{-statistic} = 2.578 > 1.971$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.010$. Thus, product

knowledge has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions through brand trust. H8 is accepted.

9. Price Fairness → Brand Trust → Purchasing Decision: The original sample value is 0.009 (positive), with $t\text{-statistic} = 0.569 < 1.971$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.569$. Thus, price fairness does not have a significant effect on purchasing decisions through brand trust. H9 is rejected.

Discussion

Based on the calculations performed using the SEM-PLS method with SmartPLS 3.0, using a sample representing the population of 229 customers of PT. Penerbit Erlangga, the researcher analyzed the data obtained to support the results of this study. The discussion is as follows:

The Effect of Promotion on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the results of the calculations and hypothesis testing analysis, it shows that promotion has a positive relationship with purchasing decisions. This can be seen from the *original sample* value of 0.170; moreover, the $t\text{-statistic}$ value is $2.532 > t\text{-table}$ of 1.971 and the $p\text{-value}$ is $0.012 < 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that promotion has an effect on purchasing decisions. The results of this study indicate a positive relationship, meaning that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga increases its promotions, then purchasing decisions will also increase. Based on the descriptive analysis results of the promotion variable, the highest average score was for the statement: “*Penerbit Erlangga posts special promotions such as new school year promotions during marketing staff visits to schools and on social media accounts*” with a score of 4.428. This shows that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga offers special promotions, it will increase purchasing decisions, because customers feel that the promotions provide benefits for them.

Furthermore, the lowest average score on the promotion variable was found in three statements with a score of 4.341. Although this score still falls into the “strongly agree” category, PT. Penerbit Erlangga is expected to further improve or carry out more attractive promotions with the aim of increasing purchasing decisions. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Samuel Tenang Ukur et al. (2022), which stated that promotion has an effect on purchasing decisions.

The Effect of Product Knowledge on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the results of the calculations and hypothesis testing analysis, it shows that product knowledge has a positive relationship with purchasing decisions. This can be seen from the *original sample* value of 0.190; moreover, the $t\text{-statistic}$ value is $2.617 > t\text{-table}$ of 1.971 and the $p\text{-value}$ is $0.009 < 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that product knowledge has an effect on purchasing decisions. The results of this study indicate a positive relationship, meaning that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga increases customer knowledge about its products, then purchasing decisions will also increase. Based on the descriptive analysis results of the product knowledge variable, the highest average score was for the statement: “*Erlangga’s published books have an attractive design*” with a score of 4.472. This shows that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga can create attractive designs, ensure that the published books meet the government curriculum standards, are always updated, and offer effective solutions for book users, these factors can enhance purchasing decisions, as they become key selling points for the customers.

The Effect of Product Knowledge on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the results of the calculations and hypothesis testing analysis, it shows that product knowledge has a positive relationship with purchasing decisions. This can be seen from the *original sample* value of 0.190; moreover, the *t-statistic* value is $2.617 > t\text{-table}$ of 1.971 and the *p-value* is $0.009 < 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that product knowledge has an effect on purchasing decisions. The results of this study indicate a positive relationship, meaning that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga increases customer knowledge about its products, then purchasing decisions will also increase. Based on the descriptive analysis results of the product knowledge variable, the highest average score was for the statement: *“Erlangga’s published books have an attractive design”* with a score of 4.472. This shows that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga is able to create attractive designs, publish books that meet the government curriculum standards which are always updated, and also provide solutions that are effective for the users of PT. Penerbit Erlangga’s books, these aspects are what can increase purchasing decisions, because those are the factors that become the strength for customers in making purchasing decisions.

Next, the lowest average value of the product knowledge variable was in the statement: *“Erlangga’s published books are easy to obtain”* with a score of 4.328. Even though this score still falls in the very agreeable category, it is expected that PT. Penerbit Erlangga can improve the accessibility of its books so that they are easier to find in various places, especially in areas far from urban centers. This is expected to further enhance purchasing decisions. The results of this study are consistent with research conducted by Tjoa et al. (2021), which stated that product knowledge has an effect on purchasing decisions.

The Effect of Price Fairness on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the results of the calculations and hypothesis testing analysis, it shows that price fairness has a positive relationship with purchasing decisions. This can be seen from the *original sample* value of 0.202; moreover, the *t-statistic* value is $3.104 > t\text{-table}$ of 1.971 and the *p-value* is $0.002 < 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that price fairness has an effect on purchasing decisions. The results of this study indicate a positive relationship, meaning that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga can set a fair price, then purchasing decisions will also increase. Based on the descriptive analysis results of the price fairness variable, the highest average score was in the statement: *“The price of Erlangga’s books is in accordance with the quality”* with a score of 4.428. This shows that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga can maintain the quality of its books that is balanced with the price offered, customers feel satisfied and the purchasing decisions increase because they feel the books are worth the price paid.

Next, the lowest average value of the price fairness variable was in the statement: *“The price of Erlangga’s books is competitive with other publishers”* with a score of 4.324. Even though this score still falls in the very agreeable category, it is expected that PT. Penerbit Erlangga can continue to adjust the prices so that they remain competitive with other publishers in the market, in order to further enhance purchasing decisions. The results of this study are consistent with research conducted by Yulianthini and Agustini (2021), which stated that price fairness has an effect on purchasing decisions.

The Effect of Promotion on Brand Trust

Based on the results of the calculations and hypothesis testing analysis, it shows that promotion has a positive relationship with brand trust. This can be seen from the *original sample* value of 0.259; moreover, the *t-statistic* value is $3.743 > t\text{-table}$ of 1.971 and the *p-*

value is $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that promotion has an effect on brand trust. The results of this study indicate a positive relationship, meaning that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga increases its promotions, then customers' trust in the brand will also increase. Based on the descriptive analysis results of the promotion variable, the highest average score was in the statement: "*Penerbit Erlangga posts special promotions such as new school year promotions during marketing staff visits to schools and on social media accounts*" with a score of 4.428. This shows that customers feel that the promotions offered by PT. Penerbit Erlangga increase their confidence and trust in the brand, because customers feel that the publisher provides various promotions that are beneficial to them.

Next, the lowest average value of the promotion variable was in three statements with a score of 4.341. Even though this score still falls in the very agreeable category, it is expected that PT. Penerbit Erlangga can improve these aspects or offer more attractive promotions in order to further enhance customer trust in the brand. The results of this study are consistent with research conducted by Rosalina et al. (2022), which stated that promotion has an effect on brand trust.

The Effect of Product Knowledge on Brand Trust

Based on the results of the calculations and hypothesis testing analysis, it shows that product knowledge has a positive relationship with brand trust. This can be seen from the *original sample* value of 0.375; moreover, the *t-statistic* value is $5.114 > t\text{-table}$ of 1.971 and the *p-value* is $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that product knowledge has an effect on brand trust. The results of this study indicate a positive relationship, meaning that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga increases customers' knowledge of its products, then customers' trust in the brand will also increase. Based on the descriptive analysis results of the product knowledge variable, the highest average score was in the statement: "*Erlangga's published books have an attractive design*" with a score of 4.472. This shows that if PT. Penerbit Erlangga is able to provide books that meet customer expectations in terms of design, quality, curriculum conformity, and usability, this will foster greater trust from customers in the brand.

Next, the lowest average value of the product knowledge variable was in the statement: "*Erlangga's published books are easy to obtain*" with a score of 4.328. Even though this score still falls in the very agreeable category, PT. Penerbit Erlangga is expected to improve the accessibility of its books so that they are easier to find and purchase in various locations, in order to further strengthen customer trust in the brand. The results of this study are consistent with research conducted by Nugraha et al. (2022), which stated that product knowledge has an effect on brand trust.

The Effect of Price Fairness on Brand Trust

Based on the results of the calculations and hypothesis testing analysis, it shows that price fairness has a positive but not significant relationship with brand trust. This can be seen from the *original sample* value of 0.042; moreover, the *t-statistic* value is $0.609 < t\text{-table}$ of 1.971 and the *p-value* is $0.543 > 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that price fairness does not have a significant effect on brand trust. Even though the descriptive analysis shows that the highest average score of the price fairness variable was in the statement: "*The price of Erlangga's books is in accordance with the quality*" with a score of 4.428, and the lowest average score was in the statement: "*The price of Erlangga's books is competitive with other publishers*" with a score of 4.324, this does not translate into a significant effect on brand

trust statistically. The results of this study are not in line with research conducted by Nugraha et al. (2022), which stated that price fairness has an effect on brand trust.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of promotion, product knowledge, and price fairness on brand trust and their subsequent impact on purchase decisions at PT. Penerbit Erlangga. The sample consisted of 229 customers of PT. Penerbit Erlangga in South Jakarta. Based on the collected data and hypothesis testing, the results show that promotion, product knowledge, and price fairness each have a positive influence on purchase decisions. Effective promotions make customers feel they benefit from the offers, while updated and attractive book designs aligned with the curriculum enhance product knowledge, increasing purchase decisions. Price fairness also positively affects purchase decisions as customers value the price stability compared to competitors. Furthermore, promotion and product knowledge both positively influence brand trust, but price fairness does not significantly affect brand trust because customers already perceive PT. Penerbit Erlangga as reliable regardless of price changes.

Additionally, the study found that promotion and product knowledge, through the mediation of brand trust, positively impact purchase decisions. Customers who trust the brand are more likely to respond to promotions and appreciate product knowledge, leading to stronger purchase intentions. On the other hand, price fairness through brand trust does not influence purchase decisions, indicating that customers prioritize promotional benefits and product knowledge over price when making decisions. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of maintaining effective promotions and transparent product knowledge to build brand trust and enhance purchase decisions, while price fairness plays a lesser role in shaping brand trust and decisions.

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