SMARTPHONE PURCHASING DECISIONS AMONG TEENAGERS IN TERMS OF LIFESTYLE, BRAND IMAGE AND WOM COMMUNICATION

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Abstract:

Background: The research was conducted because there are empirical phenomena as well as previous research phenomena, the empirical phenomenon of smartphone use among teenagers with use limited to ordinary activities, not to support productivity.

Purpose: This research aims to analyze and discuss the influence of lifestyle and brand image on purchasing decisions, both directly and through word-of-mouth communication. Apart from that, to measure the influence of word-of-mouth communication on purchasing decisions.

Design/methodology/approach: The method used is quantitative, which aims to analyze the relationship between variables and determine the influence of a variable on other aspects. The research methodology used in this research is the use of a survey, where the researcher provides a questionnaire as a data collection tool.

Findings/Results: Brand image has no influence on purchasing decisions. Brand image influences word-of-mouth communication. Word-of-mouth communication influences purchasing decisions. Lifestyle influences purchasing decisions. Lifestyle influences word-of-mouth communication. And brand image influences purchasing decisions that are mediated by word-of-mouth communication. Lifestyle influences purchasing decisions, which are mediated by word-of-mouth communication.

Conclusion: Lifestyle and word-of-mouth communication influence purchasing decisions. Brand image has no effect on purchasing decisions. The influence of brand image on purchasing decisions when mediated by word-of-mouth communication.

Originality/value (state of the art): This study is a previous research that yielded different results. The findings indicate that brand image does not have a direct effect on purchasing decisions. However, when word-of-mouth communication is used as an intervening variable, both lifestyle and brand image influence purchasing decisions.

Keywords: brand image, lifestyle, purchasing decisions, word of mouth communication

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INTRODUCTION

The rate of technological progress in Indonesia continues to increase, especially in the field of communications. Communication technology has undergone significant changes; this can be seen from the changes seen in people's daily activities. This can be seen from the proliferation of several sophisticated communication technology gadgets that make all tasks easier. One example of this technology is smartphones, which are currently widely used because of their practicality in helping people carry out their work and daily activities (Jannah et al. 2023). At this time, smartphones have experienced many developments, both in terms of features and increasingly sophisticated designs. With advances in smartphone features and designs offered by manufacturers, many consumers want to own one. However, the proliferation of smartphone brands in the market is increasingly increasing competition between technology businesses in their efforts to attract users. This has changed consumers' views and thoughts in purchasing decisions regarding smartphones.

From this competition, it has various smartphone brands (Laraswati, 2022). There are several brands of smartphones, such as iPhone, Samsung, Xiaomi, Oppo, Vivo, and others. From various brands. This smartphone already uses touchscreen technology. An important advance in smartphone technology is the use of touch sensors, which can detect finger and stylus input, thereby improving the functionality and physical design of the device. Apple holds the top position in the market with a market share of 22% in the fourth quarter of 2021. Apple's sales decreased by 1% compared to the same period in 2020, which saw a decline of 23%. Apple is trying to maintain its dominant position in the smartphone sector by outperforming its competitors, despite experiencing a decline in performance. Currently they are in second place in global smartphone sales with a market share of 16%. This is a decrease of 9% compared to the third quarter of 2022. Meanwhile, in 2023. According to Databoks 2023, a study conducted by research firm Counterpoint Research found that global smartphone sales in the third quarter of 2023 experienced an 8% decrease compared to the same period the previous year (year-on-year/yoy). This reduction continues to occur among smartphone suppliers.

Smartphones such as the iPhone are widely used by people throughout the world, with particular prevalence in Indonesia. The iPhone remains in line with developments in consumer lifestyles and smartphone trends. Indonesian people view iPhone ownership as a symbol of a prosperous life because of its popularity among the upper middle class, especially among young people (Febrianty et al. 2024). For many people, using smartphones every day has become important. Apart from functioning as a communication tool, cellphones are multi-purpose gadgets that can be used to access social media, the internet, entertainment, and much more. So, apart from technical requirements, psychological and social factors such as brand image, lifestyle, and word-of-mouth communication also play a role in influencing the choice to buy smartphones.

Lifestyle factors can have an impact on consumer purchasing choices for a particular product or service (Mahanani, 2018). Brand image is a cognitive representation of a brand that is constructed by individuals through retrieving associations stored in their memory. Brand image refers to the way a brand is perceived by individuals, which is reflected in the relationship they form with the brand and its memories. Understanding images is easy to understand, although articulating them systematically has proven difficult due to their abstract nature (Prabowo et al. 2020). Word of mouth (WOM) communication is often considered the main source of information during the purchasing process because of its significant impact on customer decision-making (Pohan, 2022). In the context of purchasing a cellphone, WOM communication can influence a person's purchasing decision. Positive opinions and experiences from friends, family, or co-workers about the iPhone can influence a person's perception and interest in buying the cellphone, credibility, and trtrustworthiness. rd of Mouth Marketing focuses on how information circulates through personal conversations between people. A person's lifestyle, including consumer preferences and habits, can have a significant impact on the selection of goods or services they endorse to others.

Somantri et al. (2020) state that purchasing decisions are influenced by personal factors such as age, life cycle stage, occupation, economic conditions, lifestyle, and the personality and views of individual buyers. The use of smartphones has become a daily necessity for many people. Mobile phones not only function as a communication tool but also as a multifunctional device used to access the internet, social media, entertainment, and more. So that cellphone purchasing

decisions are not only based on functional needs but are also influenced by psychological and social factors, such as lifestyle, brand image, and word-of-mouth communication that mediate purchasing decisions. Lifestyle is closely related to real responses to purchasing decisions made by consumers (Wulansari and Setiawan, 2023). Lifestyle is closely related to real responses to purchasing decisions made by consumers (Alsabiyah, 2019). The purchasing process has several stages, starting with the customer's introduction to a problem, continuing with searching for information about a particular product or brand, and ending with an assessment of the ability of each available option to overcome that problem. These procedures then guide customers towards the choice to make a purchase (Tjiptono, 2014).

Brand image is a concept that is easy to understand but difficult to explain systematically because it is abstract (Kotler and Keller, 2020). Brand image can be formed through various channels, such as advertising, product quality, design, and previous user experience. In this case, iPhone has successfully built an image as an exclusive, innovative, and luxurious brand. Consumers who want this positive image may tend to choose the iPhone as their choice in buying a cellphone. In addition, a strong brand image can also affect the perceived quality and value of the product, which in turn affects the purchase decision. Brand image refers to the perceptions and emotional responses that consumers experience when they encounter a brand through auditory or visual means. So it can be understood that the brand is an important element in the success of a product; without a brand identity, the product can only depend on luck alone (Illahi and Andarini, 2023).

Word of mouth (WOM) communication is considered one of the main sources of information at the time of purchase because WOM has an important influence on decisions made by consumers (Pohan, 2022). In the context of purchasing a cellphone, WOM communication can influence a person's purchasing decision. Positive opinions and experiences from friends, family, or coworkers about iPhones can influence a person's perception and interest in buying the cellphone. Credibility and trust in the WOM source also play an important role in influencing purchasing decisions. According to Kotler (2016), word of mouth (WoM) is a marketing strategy that involves consumer discussions, either verbally, in writing, or

through technology, regarding their experiences in obtaining services or using products. Word of mouth has a big impact in determining customer purchasing behavior. Testimonials from credible acquaintances, colleagues, and other customers are often more reliable than information from commercial sources, such as advertising and sales staff. Word of mouth usually occurs naturally, when people spontaneously share their experiences with a company with others. Spontaneous word-of-mouth communication occurs naturally and cannot be manipulated by businesses or marketers. This occurs as a result of outstanding product or service quality, which is appreciated by customers.

There are seven objectives in this research. The first aim is to analyze and discuss the influence of lifestyle on word-of-mouth communication. The second objective is to analyze and discuss the influence of brand image on word-of-mouth communication. The third test is to analyze and discuss the influence of lifestyle on purchasing decisions. The fourth objective is to analyze and discuss the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions. The fifth objective is to analyze and discuss the influence of word-of-mouth communication on purchasing decisions. The sixth objective is to analyze and discuss the influence of lifestyle on purchasing decisions through word-of-mouth communication as an intervening variable, and the seventh objective is to analyze and discuss the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions through word-of-mouth communication as an intervening variable.

METHODS

This research uses quantitative research methods with explanatory research, namely research that aims to analyze the relationship between one variable and another or how one variable influences another variable. The method applied in this research is a survey, where researchers distribute questionnaires as a data collection tool. In this study, the population determined was students in the city of Semarang. The sample used in this research used a nonprobability sampling technique, namely a technique that does not provide equal opportunities for each member of the population selected as a sample (Sugiyono, 2018). Based on the respondent criteria, to determine the number of samples selected from the population that is truly proportional.

With Based on calculations with the Lemeshow formula, the sample size was 96 respondents. In this study using primary data sources, which were obtained through questionnaire answers given indirectly, namely through googleform distributed to respondents. The results of the data distribution were then analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method with the help of SmartPLS software version 3.2.9.

In this study the authors used a purposive sampling approach, which is a sampling technique based on certain characteristics and has a close relationship to the required population (Margono, 2004). The reason the author uses purposive sampling is because there are specific criteria, not every individual can be taken as a sample in this study. The criteria for respondents used for sample selection have been determined, namely; Ever and currently using an Iphone smartphone. This research focuses on UPGRIS Semarang students as the subject, chosen by the Based on previous research, the research framework (Figure 1) developed and the research hypotheses are as follows:

Lifestyle and Word Of Mouth

Research development is based on previous research studies. Research develops the position of word of mouth in strengthening purchasing decisions in terms of lifestyle and brand image. Research on the influence of lifestyle on word of mouth has been carried out by Anggara (2023) stating that lifestyle has an influence on word of mouth. Likewise, according to Zahiroh and Muzdalifah (2022) who concluded that a lifestyle which is described as a pattern in which people live using their money and time and influences all aspects of a person's consumption behavior is able to shape a person to do word of mouth with the image of someone talking about, promoting, recommending and selling. others. From the results of this research, the first hypothesis for this research can be developed as follows;

H_1: Lifestyle influences word of mouth.

Brand Image and Word Of Mouth

According to Hasyim et al. (2017) a strong brand image will make it easier for marketing communications to be accepted by buyers. This means that the positive impression created in marketing communications about a brand will result in people being able to accept new claims about product performance and they will accept it so that it is easier to be influenced and buy the product. Research related to word of mouth and factors that influence brand image has been conducted by Romadhon and Nuzil (2022). This research states that a good brand image will increase good word of mouth. Likewise, according to Septiani (2022), a positive brand image is able to form positive word of mouth by telling positive stories about the brand you like. Based on the description above, the second hypothesis is developed as follows;

H_2: Brand Image influences word of mouth

Word of Mouth and Purchase Decisions

Paputungan et al. (2018) revealed that word of mouth marketing influences consumer decisions in choosing to purchase products because consumers pay attention to information and advice through family, relatives, the community/environment and co-workers about the products being marketed. Meanwhile, according to Marlius and Mutiara (2022), other people's conversations about a product are part of consumers' considerations when choosing a product. Consumers evaluate alternatives when making purchasing decisions using the most attractive word of mouth. Consumers tend to trust word of mouth communication more in evaluating a product than advertising. Based on these findings, the third hypothesis for this research is as follows;

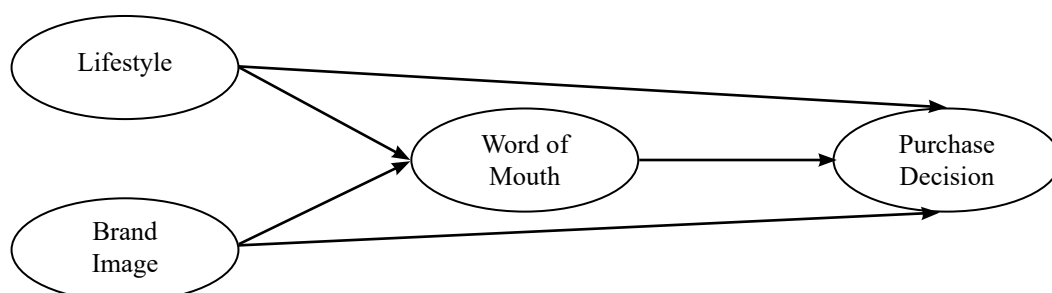H_3: Word of Mouth influences purchasing decisions

Figure 1. Research framework

Lifestyle, Word of Mouth and Purchasing Decisions

The results of research by Zahiroh and Muzdalifah (2022) reveal that word of mouth can strengthen lifestyle in purchasing decisions. In this research, it was revealed that lifestyles that are currently trending in the current social environment lead to purchasing decisions that are dominated by the desire to buy the product. A person's urge to buy a particular product is due to the lifestyle of the community they belong to. Anggara's research results (2023) also show that lifestyle influences purchasing decisions through word of mouth. Based on this research, the fourth hypothesis is as follows:

H_4: Lifestyle influences Word of Mouth which has an impact on Purchasing Decisions

Brand Image, Word of Mouth and Purchase Decisions

Hasyim et al. (2017) revealed that the brand image of a company's product is more positive and stronger, which will make someone more confident in making purchasing decisions for that product. A strong brand purchasing decision lies in what customers can see, read, hear, learn, think and feel about the brand all the time, so as to increase satisfaction with the brand. According to Riyanto et al. (2019), based on research results, it was found that as a result of this research, word of mouth, which is a parameter of brand image, indirectly influences word of mouth purchasing decisions, but it has a functional effect on cellphone purchasing decisions. Based on this research, the fifth hypothesis is as follows:

H_5: Brand Image influences Word of Mouth which has an impact on Purchasing Decisions

RESULTS

From the data that has been collected, data analysis is then carried out using PLS-SEM (Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Model). The analysis results are as shown in Figure 2. From the model developed, the indicators used for lifestyle variables are activity and interest. In brand image, the indicators developed are product attributes and brand personality. Next, for the word of mouth variable, the indicators developed are topics, equipment and tracking. Meanwhile, for purchase sessions, the indicators developed include searching for information, deciding to make a purchase and behavior after purchase. Based on the analysis that has been carried out and the results of the analysis, the analysis results are then interpreted as follows:

Validity Test

Based on the test results (Table 1), the outer loading value for each indicator is more than 0.70, so it can be concluded that all indicators pass the validity test.
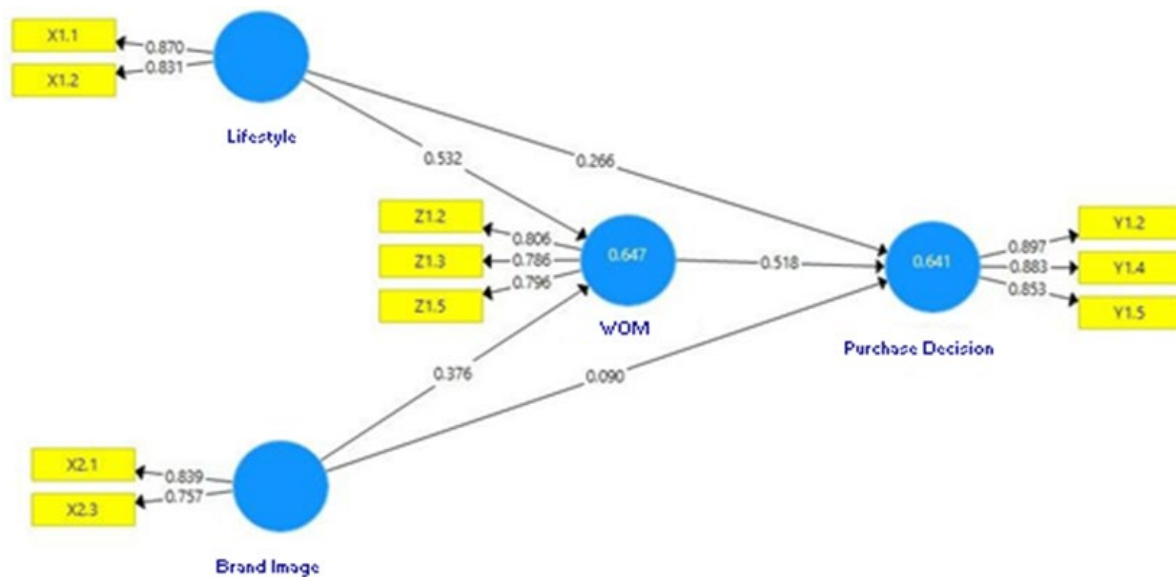

Figure 2. Analysis With SmartPLS 3.2.9

Reliability Test

Based on Table 2, it can be concluded that each variable has a composite reliability value greater than 0.7, thus the variables in this study are declared reliable.

Path Coefficients

From Table 3 it can be seen the magnitude of the influence of the independent variables and intervening variables on the dependent variable. The magnitude of the influence of the brand image variable line on the purchasing decision variable is 0.090, the effect of WOM communication on purchasing decisions is 0.518, and lifestyle on purchasing decisions is 0.266. Then for the effect of brand image on WOM communication of 0.376, while lifestyle on WOM communication is 0.532. Therefore, it can be concluded that the scattered influence of the dependent variable on the independent variable is on the WOM communication variable, while the smallest influence is the brand image variable. Then for the influence of the dependent variable on the intervening variable, the largest value is the lifestyle variable with a value of 0.266. Meanwhile, the lowest value is the brand image variable with a value of 0.090.

R-square Test

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that the effect of Lifestyle and Brand image together with Word of Mouth Communication on purchasing decisions is 0.641 or 64.1%. Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of the independent and mediating variables on the dependent variable has a fairly strong influence. Then the effect of Lifestyle and Brand image on Word of Mouth Communication is 0.647 or 64.7% so that this research model has a fairly strong influence between the independent variable and the mediating variable.

Table 1. Loading factor value evaluation result

Indicator	Brand Image	Purchase Decisions	WOM Communications	Lifestyle
X1.1				0.870
X1.2				0.831
X2.1	0.839			
X2.3	0.757			
Y1.2		0.897		
Y1.4		0.883		
Y1.5		0.853		
Z1.2			0.806	
Z1.3			0.786	
Z1.5			0.796	

Table 2. Composite reliability test results

Variable	Composite Reliability
Lifestyle	0.840
Brand Image	0.779
Purchasing Decisions	0.910
Word of Mouth Communication	0.838

Table 3. Path Coefficients

Variable	Brand Image	Purchase Decisions	WOM Communications	Lifestyle
Brand Image		0.090	0.376	
Purchase Decisions				
WOM Communications		0.518		
Lifestyle		0.266	0.532	

F-square Test

F-square is a test to see whether or not there is a significant relationship by categorizing an f square value of 0.02 as small, 0.15 as medium, and a value of 0.35 as large. Values less than 0.02 can be ignored or considered to have no effect (Sarstedt et al. 2017). Table 5 shows that the WOM communication variable on purchasing decisions has an F-square value of (0.264), which means the value is close to strong. The lifestyle variable on purchasing decisions has an F-square value of (0.087), which means it has a moderate influence. The brand image variable on purchasing decisions has an F-square value (0.012), which means it has no effect on purchasing decisions.

Direct Effect Test

Based on the results of the direct effect test (Table 6), it is found that the brand image on purchasing decisions has a path coefficient value of 0.090 and has a p-value of 0.364 and a t-statistic value of 0.908. Based on this, the t-statistic value> t-table (1.661) so that hypothesis H1 is not accepted. Furthermore, the brand image on Word of Mouth Communication (WOM) path coefficient value is 0.376 and has a p-value of 0.000 and a t-statistic value of 4.157. Based on this, the t-statistic value> t-table (1.661) so that hypothesis H2 is accepted. Then Word of Mouth (WOM) communication on purchasing decisions has a path coefficient value of 0.518 and has a p-value of 0.000 and a t-statistic value of 4.128. Based on this, the t-statistic value> t-table (1.661) so that hypothesis H3 is accepted. next lifestyle on purchasing decisions the path coefficient value is 0.266 and has a p-value of 0.000 and a t-statistic value of 2.613. Based on this, the

t-statistic value> t-table (1.661) so that hypothesis H4 is accepted. And lifestyle on Word of Mouth (WOM) Communication, the path coefficient value is 0.532 and has a p-value of 0.000 and a t-statistic value of 6.663. Based on this, the t-statistic value> t-table (1.661) so that hypothesis H5 is accepted.

Lifestyle influences Word of Mouth Communication among iPhone cellphone consumers among undergraduate students at PGRI University Semarang. The research results show a P-value of 0.000 < 0.05 and a statistical t value of 6.663 > 1.61, which means hypothesis 1 in this study is accepted. Thus it can be concluded that there is an influence of Lifestyle on Word of Mouth Communication. Lifestyle can influence Word of Mouth communication because Lifestyle is an identification of groups that tend to communicate with people who have similar lifestyles. They feel more comfortable and connected with people who share their interests and values. People tend to recommend products or services that suit their needs and preferences, which are often related to their lifestyle. When recommendations come from people who have a similar lifestyle, they are considered more credible because they are thought to have relevant experience. Additionally, people with similar lifestyles tend to have similar social networks, so information and recommendations spread more easily among them. So it can be concluded that lifestyle has an influence on word of mouth communication. The results of this research are in line with research by Anggara (2023) which shows that lifestyle influences word of mouth. Research by Zahiroh and Muzdalifah (2022) shows that there is also an influence of lifestyle on word of mouth.

Table 4. R-square test result

Variable	R Square
Purchase Decisions	0.641
WOM Communications	0.647

Table 5. F-Square Test Result

Variable	Brand Image	Purchase Decisions	WOM Commnications	Lifestyle
Brand Image		0.012	0.276	
WOM Commnunications		0.264		
Lifestyle		0.087	0.555	

Table 6. Direct effect test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistics	P Values
Brand Image → Purchasing Decisions	0.090	0.107	0.099	0.908	0.364
Brand Image → Word of Mouth Communication	0.376	0.377	0.090	4.157	0.000
Word of Mouth Communication → Purchasing Decisions	0.518	0.519	0.126	4.128	0.000
Lifestyle → Purchasing Decisions	0.266	0.253	0.102	2.613	0.009
Lifestyle → Word of Mouth Communication	0.532	0.536	0.080	6.663	0.000

Brand Image has a direct influence on Word of Mouth communication. This is shown by the P value 0.000<0.05 and t statistic 4.157>1.61. In other words, the Brand Image of the iPhone smartphone is able to support potential iPhone users and users, especially undergraduate students at PGRI University Semarang, to consider further about the product. Consumers' positive perception of a brand can be generated by a positive brand image. The importance of a good image lies in efforts to build positive relationships with consumers. If the marketer and his product have succeeded in occupying a good place in the hearts of consumers, the marketing process will become smoother. The results of this research are in line with research by Romadhon and Nuzil (2022) which shows that brand image has an influence on word of mouth. Likewise, according to Septiani et al. (2022) who show that brand image influences word of mouth.

In addition, a strong and favorable brand image will increase brand legitimacy in consumer perception. Consumers tend to have more trust in established businesses, and as a result, they tend to feel compelled to share their positive experiences with others. Consumers may find a distinctive or attractive brand image to be an interesting topic for discussion. Individuals have a tendency to communicate about their encounters with brands that leave a long-lasting impact or offer unique products or services compared to other brands. iPhone actively acknowledges and responds to consumer questions and feedback, while continuously assessing its performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the findings of this research confirm previous research which suggested the impact of brand image on consumer purchasing choices.

Lifestyle influences purchasing decisions, this is based on the results of research analysis, it is known that the p value is 0.009 and the t statistic is 2.613. This happens because style dimensions such as activity which refers to the expression of activities carried out

by consumers, including purchasing or using products, as well as activities carried out to fill free time can influence purchasing decisions. Apart from that, other dimensions such as interest which includes expressions of interests, preferences, hobbies and priorities in a consumer's life influence the purchasing decision process of undergraduate students at PGRI University Semarang in purchasing an iPhone brand smartphone. The results of this research support previous research by Dahmiri et al. (2020) which shows that lifestyle influences purchasing decisions. Likewise, research by Kurniawan and Susanti (2019) shows that lifestyle influences purchasing decisions.

Brand image has no effect on purchasing decisions, this is in accordance with the results of the path coefficient test analysis which shows that the p value is 0.364 or above 0.05 and has a statistical t value of 0.908 (less than 1.61). Brand image can have a significant impact on purchasing decisions, but the impact may not be immediate or always directly measurable in every purchasing transaction. Brand image regarding purchasing decisions does not make someone buy an iPhone smartphone for daily needs, or when making a purchase, look for information about the iPhone according to their needs, there is no need to look for other information to decide to buy without any evaluation to make the purchase and does not influence the decision. newly purchased products. In addition, each consumer has different preferences and priorities in the purchasing process. While brand image may influence some consumers, not all consumers will be affected by it in the same way. External factors such as promotions, recommendations from friends or family, or independent first-hand evaluation of the product can influence purchasing decisions more than brand image in some cases. The findings of this study are in direct conflict with other research findings that challenge previous evaluations that suggest that brand image impacts product choice. Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that the findings of this

research contradict the previous research hypothesis which states that brand image has an impact on purchasing decisions. These results show similarities with research Putra and Abiyoga (2023) which shows that brand image has no influence on purchasing decisions. So do I agree Yudistira (2022) which shows that brand image has no influence on purchasing decisions.

Word of Mouth influences purchasing decisions, this is based on the results of the analysis which shows a p value of 0.000 and a t statistic of 4.128. These results are in line with research by Prasetyo and Wahyuati (2016) who concluded that word of mouth influences purchasing decisions. In addition, the results of research by Rumondor et al. (2017) show that word of mouth influences purchasing decisions. This is supported by the role of talkers, topics, communication channels used by iPhone smartphone users which are able to increase product purchasing decisions. Apart from that, part taking and tracking are carried out by the manufacturer The iPhone is able to understand consumers' wants and needs so that this can improve purchasing decisions. The discussion regarding the influence of Word of Mouth communication can be motivated by social behavior. WOM communication can influence a person's social perception. If a product or brand is frequently discussed positively by people in a person's social circle, then the individual may feel compelled to try the product in order to stay up to date or to gain social approval. By using social communication, you can effectively convince consumers to make purchases. By engaging in regular discussions about the iOS system and highlighting the iPhone's excellent camera, iPhone also offers product samples at retail displays, facilitating consumer interaction about the product. The results of this discussion result in the conclusion that the findings of this research confirm the previous research hypothesis which confirms the importance of Word of Mouth communication in purchasing decisions.

Indirect Effect Test

There are research results (Table 7), brand image on purchasing decisions through word of mouth communication, the path coefficient value is 0.195 and has a p-value of 0.003 and the value of the t-statistic is 2.994. Based on this, the t-statistic value> t-table (1.661) so that hypothesis H6 is accepted. This is the same as ifestyle on purchasing decisions through word of mouth communication, the path coefficient value is

0.276 and has a p-value of 0.001 and a t-statistic value of 3.321. Based on this, the t-statistic value> t-table (1.661) so that hypothesis H7 is accepted.

Lifestyle influences word of mouth which has an impact on purchasing decisions, this is indicated by a p value of 0.001. Additionally, the t statistic is 3.321, greater than 1.61. Therefore, we can conclude that the hypothesis is accepted. This shows that word of mouth communication functions as an intermediary factor between the lifestyle of undergraduate students at PGRI University Semarang and their purchasing choice to get an iPhone smartphone. WOM communication can shape long-term perceptions about brands or products that suit a person's lifestyle. If someone consistently receives positive reviews about a product or brand from people they trust and identify with their lifestyle, this can strengthen the brand's ties in their mind, which in turn can influence long-term purchasing decisions. Additionally, in organized social environments, such as hobby groups or online communities, effective WOM (Word-of-Mouth) communications can have a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions. When a person is affiliated with these groups and hears endorsements or positive evaluations of a product or brand, they are more likely to consider purchasing that item. The findings of this research firmly confirm previous research which states that lifestyle has an impact on purchasing decisions through word of mouth communication which acts as an intermediary variable.

Brand image influences purchasing decisions through word of mouth, this is shown by a p value of 0.003. Apart from that, the statistical t value of 2.994 is greater than the critical value of 1.61. Therefore, we can conclude that the hypothesis is acceptable. This shows that word of mouth communication can function as an intermediary factor between the iPhone brand image and the decision of undergraduate students at PGRI University Semarang to buy an iPhone smartphone. Word of mouth (WOM) communication plays an important role as a mediating variable between brand image and purchasing decisions due to the mechanism of information transfer between individuals that influences consumer perceptions and actions. WOM communications allow individuals to share their information, experiences, and judgments about brands with others. This allows the organic spread of the brand image among potential consumers, which can influence their perception of the brand and ultimately their purchasing decisions. Not only that,

WOM communication can function as validation or legitimacy of the brand image. When individuals receive good feedback about a brand from multiple sources, this can increases the positive perception of the brand in their minds, thereby increasing the likelihood of considering the brand during the purchasing process. The findings of this research firmly strengthen previous research statements which stated that brand image influences purchasing decisions through word of mouth communication as an intervening variable.

Managerial Implications

This research provides suggestions for iPhone manufacturers to take advantage of the lifestyle of Gen Z who currently use smartphones. A description of the lifestyle carried out by documenting all activities. The more documentation there is via iPhone, the more testimonials there are about the products used to document it. Manufacturers build a positive image of their brand, this can increase positive news that iPhone users convey to other people. Manufacturers can also increase word of mouth communication by providing space to provide testimonials from consumers to share positive experiences while using the iPhone. This is important considering that the brand image that has been built by the iPhone cannot directly influence someone to buy an iPhone, but there needs to be a reference for a positive experience with the iPhone.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study tries to ascertain the impact of lifestyle and brand image through word-of-mouth communication on consumer purchasing decisions for iPhone brand cellphones among undergraduate students of PGRI Semarang University. Based on the results of PLS analysis using Smart PLS 3.2.9 and the discussion described in the previous chapter, it shows that most of the hypotheses are accepted or there is a significant influence between the variables. The following hypotheses are stated to be accepted, among others: lifestyle affects word-of-mouth communication in iPhone brand cellphone consumers, brand image affects word-of-mouth communication in iPhone brand cellphone consumers, and lifestyle affects purchasing decisions for iPhone brand cellphone consumers. Then word-of-mouth communication affects purchasing decisions for iPhone brand cellphone consumers; lifestyle affects purchasing decisions through word-of-mouth communication for iPhone brand cellphone consumers, and brand image affects purchasing decisions through word-of-mouth communication for iPhone brand cellphone consumers. There is only one hypothesis that is not accepted, namely the hypothesis stating that brand image affects purchasing decisions.

Recommendations

To expand the scope of the study, additional observations are believed to include or develop other factors not considered in this study. Such as price, service, usability, or benefits. Apart from the factors that can be added, it can also expand the population by entering segments beyond teenagers, such as the worker segment and certain professional segments. For the iPhone, it can improve the brand image, such as giving the iPhone an impression of a cellphone that is useful for consumers and increasing the brand image so that consumers can tell other people about the advantages of the iPhone. Apart from that, the iPhone can take advantage of the lifestyle that exists among Indonesian people, which makes smartphones part of the lifestyle.

Tabel 7. Indirect effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
Brand Image → Word of Mouth Communication → Purchasing Decisions	0.195	0.195	0.065	2.994	0.003
Lifestyle → Word of Mouth Communication → Purchasing Decisions	0.276	0.279	0.083	3.321	0.001

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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