

# IMPROVING PURCHASE DECISIONS BY OPTIMIZING MARKETING MIX BY MEDIATION BY CONSUMER TRUST: A STUDY ON SUKABUMI RETAIL CONSUMERS

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## ABSTRACT

*The development of retail businesses in Sukabumi City reflects increasingly intense competition, driven by consumers' growing preferences for ease, convenience, and trust in the purchasing process. This competitive environment highlights the need for effective marketing strategies to both attract and retain customers. In this regard, the marketing mix and consumer trust serve as crucial factors influencing purchasing decisions. This study aims to examine the impact of the marketing mix (comprising product, price, place, and promotion) on purchase decisions, with trust acting as a mediating variable. Employing a quantitative approach, the study surveyed 100 active consumers using purposive sampling. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS software. The results revealed that product did not significantly affect trust ( $T = 0.023$ ;  $P = 0.982$ ) or purchase decisions ( $T = 0.824$ ;  $P = 0.410$ ). Price showed a significant influence on both trust ( $T = 1.985$ ;  $P = 0.047$ ) and purchase decisions ( $T = 4.526$ ;  $P = 0.000$ ). Place did not significantly impact trust ( $T = 0.399$ ;  $P = 0.690$ ) but did affect purchase decisions ( $T = 2.485$ ;  $P = 0.013$ ). Promotion had a significant effect on trust ( $T = 3.729$ ;  $P = 0.000$ ) but not on purchase decisions ( $T = 1.720$ ;  $P = 0.086$ ). Additionally, trust significantly influenced purchase decisions ( $T = 2.626$ ;  $P = 0.009$ ). These findings emphasize that appropriate strategies in pricing, placement, and promotion can foster consumer trust and positively influence purchasing behavior*

**Keywords: Product; Price; Place; Promotion; Trust; Purchase Decision**

## INTRODUCTION

The changing modern marketing landscape is fueled by the rapid growth of information technology, causing a major shift in consumer behavior. Digitalization and ease of internet access strengthen consumers' purchasing power and expand their preferences for a wide selection of products and services. Amid this tide of change, the local retail industry faces a major challenge to remain relevant and competitive (Kotler & Keller, 2020). In Indonesia, the retail sector is still the main driver of the regional economy, including in Sukabumi. However, significant challenges arise when local consumers begin to prefer to make purchases through digital platforms such as Shopee and Tokopedia. Local retail, which has relied on social connections and emotional closeness, is required to integrate digital approaches into their business strategies (Kotler et al., 2018; Kwok et al., 2020).

In this context, the marketing mix is one of the strategic elements that must be strengthened. The 4P approach, namely products, prices, places, promotions, people are believed to be able to help businesses in building a complete customer

experience (Tjiptono, 2017). However, simply applying this element without paying attention to consumer trust will not be enough. Trust is a key factor in the purchasing decision-making process, especially on digital platforms that are vulnerable to misinformation, delivery delays, and product mismatches (Rachman & Oktavianti, 2021). Trust is a bridge between expectations and perceptions, and has a great influence on purchase intentions and realization (Dick & Basu, 1994; Haryeni & Lestari, 2017).

There are several phenomena that indicate that there is a gap between the marketing strategies implemented by local retailers and the results of consumer purchase decisions. First, although many retail businesses have adopted digital channels for promotion and sales, the conversion rate from visitors to buyers is still low. This shows that the existence of digital promotions has not been fully effective in influencing purchasing decisions. Second, many business actors have partially implemented the digital marketing mix, but have not touched all aspects of the 4P optimally. Strategies that focus too much on promotion and price often ignore the aspects of service (people

and process) as well as physical evidence, even though these aspects are very important in building consumer trust, especially in the context of e-commerce. Third, even though many consumers are used to online transactions, there are still doubts in making purchases, especially regarding product authenticity, service quality, and return guarantees. This indicates that consumer trust has not been fully built, and this has the potential to reduce loyalty and purchase frequency.

This research is important and urgent to be carried out given the significant shift in consumer behavior in the digital era, especially in the local retail sector. Modern consumers no longer only consider prices and promotions, but also pay great attention to aspects of the overall shopping experience, including customer service, ease of transaction process, and security assurance. In a region like Sukabumi, local retail is in a crucial position to maintain its existence amid the pressure of large e-commerce that offers efficiency and trust in one package. Therefore, strengthening a comprehensive marketing strategy through a marketing mix (4P) approach is an important key in responding to dynamic market needs. This research is present as a form of scientific and practical contribution in designing marketing strategies that are able to improve purchasing decisions by considering important psychological variables, namely consumer trust. Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to support local retailers in strengthening their competitiveness and contributing to regional economic growth.

Various previous studies have indeed discussed a lot about the influence of the marketing mix on consumer purchasing decisions. However, most of the research has only emphasized the direct relationship between elements of the marketing mix and purchasing decisions, without including the role of consumer trust as a crucial mediating variable. In addition, much of the previous research focus has been more directed at large companies or fully digitized entities, while the context of local retail with limited resources and social proximity to customers has not been explored extensively. In the context of Sukabumi, which is an area with a fairly high growth potential for retail MSMEs, there have not been many empirical studies that discuss in depth how the 4P elements and consumer trust can work together to improve purchasing decisions. This creates a knowledge gap that is important to bridge so that marketing strategies can be tailored to the local social and cultural context.

The main novelty of this study lies in the integration of the 4P marketing mix model with the mediating role of consumer trust in influencing

purchasing decisions in the local retail sector. In contrast to previous studies that focused more on one or two aspects of the marketing mix, this study examined the influence of seven marketing elements simultaneously and comprehensively, in both digital and physical contexts. In addition, the mediation approach by consumer trust provides a new perspective in understanding how consumers shape perceptions and make informed and loyal purchasing decisions. This research also brings novelty in the geographical and social context, namely focusing on retail consumers in Sukabumi, who are characteristically different from consumers in big cities. That way, the results of this study can be a relevant empirical and practical reference for local and community-based marketing strategies.

This study aims to analyze the influence of marketing mix on retail consumer purchasing decisions in Sukabumi by considering consumer trust as a mediating variable. More specifically, this study aims to identify which elements of the marketing mix are most significant in forming trust and influencing purchasing decisions, as well as formulate appropriate and contextual marketing strategies for local retailers. This research is also expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of marketing literature and consumer behavior, as well as produce applicative recommendations for retailers and MSMEs in increasing marketing effectiveness in the midst of the challenges of the digital era.

## FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

Based on the problem formulation that has been explained in the background, the research questions are as follows:

1. Does the product significantly influence customer trust?
2. Does the product significantly influence customer purchasing decisions?
3. Does price significantly influence customer trust?
4. Does price significantly influence customer purchasing decisions?
5. Does place (distribution/location) significantly influence customer trust?
6. Does place (distribution/location) significantly influence customer purchasing decisions?
7. Does promotion significantly influence customer trust?
8. Does promotion significantly influence customer purchasing decisions?
9. Does customer trust significantly influence purchasing decisions?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The approach used in this study is descriptive quantitative with the explanatory survey method. This study aims to explain and test the relationship between marketing mix variables (4P), consumer confidence, and purchasing decisions quantitatively. This approach was chosen to describe empirical phenomena through statistical measurement and testing of hypotheses. The type of research used is associative quantitative, because this study seeks to explain the influence between independent variables on variables bound with or without mediating variables.

### Population and Sample

The population in this study is Sukabumi retail customers, because the population number is not known for sure, the sampling technique uses a non-probability sampling approach with the purposive sampling method. The number of respondents in this study was determined to be 100 respondents. The determination of the number of samples is based on considerations of time effectiveness, resources, as well as to meet the minimum requirements in the testing of the Partial Least Square- Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) model. According to Hair et al. (2017), the minimum number of samples recommended in PLS-SEM. In this study, the number of samples of 100 respondents was considered adequate to obtain representative and statistically analyzable results.

### Data Collection Techniques

The data collection technique was carried out through the distribution of questionnaires to Sukabumi retail consumers who met the sample criteria. The questionnaire was compiled in the form of a closed statement using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire was distributed offline (directly in store) and online (Google Form) to reach respondents who were not physically present.

### Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique used in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the help of SmartPLS software version 4.0. The PLS method was chosen because it is able to handle complex research models, test relationships between latent variables simultaneously, and remain optimal even if the sample size is relatively small or the data is not normally distributed. The

analysis process is carried out through two main stages, namely the testing of the measurement model (outer model) and the testing of the structural model (inner model).

## DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Overview of Research Objects

The object of research in this study is retail stores operating in the Sukabumi City area, West Java. The selection of this location is based on the significant growth of the retail sector in the region, as well as the trend of changing consumer behavior in making purchases, both offline and online. The stores used as samples are small and medium-scale retail business actors who sell various types of products, such as daily necessities, fashion, cosmetics, and household appliances. Most of these stores have leveraged digital channels such as social media to expand their marketing reach. They also implement various marketing mix strategies to attract and retain customers, ranging from varied and quality product offerings, competitive pricing, intensive promotions through various media, and the selection of strategic business locations that are easily accessible to consumers.

Consumers from these retail stores generally come from the community in Sukabumi City, who have access to technology and information. In this context, consumers' trust in stores greatly influences their decision to make a purchase, especially when transacting online. Thus, retail stores in Sukabumi City are the right context to examine how the marketing mix (products, prices, promotions, and places) affects purchasing decisions, both directly and through consumer trust as a mediating variable.

### Respondent Identities

To get a clearer picture of the characteristics of consumers who are the object of this study, the researcher presented respondent identity data based on demographics, namely gender, age, monthly income, and frequency of shopping at retail stores. This information is important to understand the background of respondents, which can influence consumer behavior patterns in purchasing decision-making as well as the level of trust in retail stores. Here is the distribution of respondent identities in the form of a table.

**Table 1. Respondent Identities**

No	Information	Sum	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>			
a.	Man	40	40%
b.	Woman	60	60%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Respondent Age</b>			
a.	< 20 year	10	10%
b.	21 – 30 year	45	45%
c.	31 – 40 year	30	30%
d.	> 40 year	15	15%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Revenue Per Month</b>			
a.	< Rp1.000.000	12	12%
b.	Rp1.000.000 – Rp2.999.999	38	38%
c.	Rp3.000.000 – Rp4.999.999	30	30%
d.	≥ Rp5.000.000	20	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Retail Store Shopping Frequency per Month</b>			
a.	1 time	20	20%
b.	2–3 times	50	50%
c.	> 3 times	30	30%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on data obtained from the distribution of questionnaires to retail store consumers in Sukabumi City, it is known that most of the respondents in this study are women with a percentage of 60%, while men amount to 40%. This shows that women have a dominant role in shopping activities, especially in making decisions about household purchases and personal needs, so they can be the main target in retail store marketing strategies.

In terms of age, the majority of respondents were in the age range of 21-30 years, which was 45%, followed by 31-40 years old as much as 30%. This age is classified as a productive age group that tends to be active in consumption activities and easily receives promotional information and

new products. Meanwhile, respondents over 40 years old were 15%, and under 20 years old only 10%. This data shows that the young to early adult segment is a major potential market for retail stores.

Judging from the aspect of monthly income, most respondents have an income between IDR 1,000,000-IDR 2,999,999, which is 38%, followed by the income group of IDR 3,000,000-IDR 4,999,999 at 30%. Meanwhile, respondents with an income of ≥ of IDR 5,000,000 amounted to 20%, and those with an income of < IDR 1,000,000 were only 12%. This illustrates that the majority of retail store customers are in the lower middle group, so a competitive pricing strategy and products that have

high economic value are important factors in attracting and retaining customers.

In terms of shopping frequency, it is known that most respondents (50%) shop at retail stores 2-3 times a month, followed by those who shop more than 3 times for 30%, and the remaining 20% only shop 1 time a month. This data shows that the level of consumer visits to retail stores is relatively high, so the opportunity to form customer loyalty

through good service, promotional programs, and trust in stores is quite large.

### Outer Model

The outer model test aims to determine the validity and reliability of indicators against latent constructs or variables. This test was carried out by paying attention to the value of the loading factor, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR).

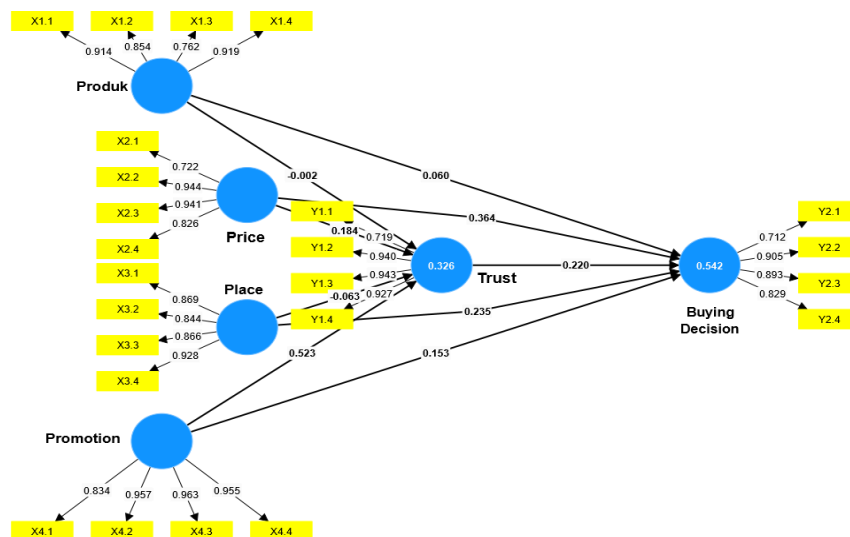


Figure 1. Full Model Algorithm

### Uji Outer Loading

Each latent variable must be able to explain the variant of their respective indicators by at least 50%. Therefore, the absolute correlation between the latent variable and its indicator must be  $> 0.7$ , the absolute value of the outer standard loadings or

called outer loadings (Ghozali, 2016:68). Based on the outer loading value of all indicators in each research variable  $> 0.70$ . The results of this estimation prove that the indicator indicators used in this study variable have met convergent validity.

**Table 2. Outer Loadings Test**

	Buying Decision	Place	Price	Produk	Promotion	Trust
X1.1				0,914		
X1.2				0,854		
X1.3				0,762		
X1.4				0,919		
X2.1			0,722			
X2.2			0,944			
X2.3			0,941			
X2.4			0,826			
X3.1		0,869				
X3.2		0,844				
X3.3		0,866				
X3.4		0,928				
X4.1					0,834	
X4.2					0,957	
X4.3					0,963	
X4.4					0,955	
Y1.1						0,719
Y1.2						0,940
Y1.3						0,943
Y1.4						0,927
Y2.1	0,712					
Y2.2	0,905					
Y2.3	0,893					
Y2.4	0,829					

**Discriminant Validity**

Discriminant validity testing aims to ensure that each construct (latent variable) in the model actually measures things differently from the other constructs. One of the methods used is the *Fornell-*

*Larcker Criterion*, which is to compare the square root of the AVE value (shown on the diagonal of the table) against the correlation between the constructs (Ghozali, 2021:68).

**Table 3. Cross Loadings Test**

	Buying Decision	Place	Price	Produk	Promotion	Trust
Buying Decision	0,838					
Place	0,530	0,877				
Price	0,593	0,394	0,863			
Produk	0,285	0,225	0,355	0,865		
Promotion	0,507	0,508	0,297	0,119	0,929	
Trust	0,489	0,275	0,314	0,111	0,545	0,887

Based on the results of the discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, it is known that the square root value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct is greater than the correlation value between other constructs in the model. This shows that each construct in this study has good discriminant validity. For example, the root value of AVE for

the Buying Decision variable is 0.838, which is higher than its correlation with other constructs such as Place (0.530), Price (0.593), Product (0.285), Promotion (0.507), and Trust (0.489). Likewise with other constructs such as Place (0.877), Price (0.863), Product (0.865), Promotion (0.929), and Trust (0.887) all of which show higher root values of AVE than the correlation between

constructs. Thus, it can be concluded that the constructs in this model have a high degree of distinctiveness and there is no problem of multicollinearity between constructs. This signifies that each latent variable actually measures different aspects and can be empirically distinguished, making the research model feasible to proceed to further testing.

#### **Construct Reliability**

The reliability test in this study used Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values, while the construct validity test used the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. A construct is declared reliable if Cronbach's Alpha and CR values are above 0.70, and is said to be convergently valid if the AVE value is more than 0.50.

**Table 4. Construct Reliability**

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Buying Decision	0,855	0,854	0,703
Place	0,900	0,902	0,770
Price	0,881	0,883	0,745
Produk	0,891	0,964	0,747
Promotion	0,946	0,945	0,863
Trust	0,908	0,941	0,788

The following is the elaboration of the results of the reliability and construct validity test based on the values of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) on each variable in this research model, the Buying Decision variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.855, Composite Reliability of 0.854, and AVE of 0.703. These values indicate that the purchase decision construct is reliable and valid, as all values exceed the recommended minimum limits, which are 0.7 for alpha and CR, and 0.5 for AVE. Second, the Place variable shows excellent results, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.900, Composite Reliability of 0.902, and AVE of 0.770. This indicates that the indicators on the place variable are able to consistently measure the construct, and have a high explainability of the variable. Third, the Price variable also shows strong reliability and validity. This can be seen from Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.881, Composite Reliability of 0.883, and AVE of 0.745. These values confirm that price indicators can consistently and validly represent their constructs. Fourth, the Product variable obtained Cronbach's Alpha of 0.891, Very High Composite

Reliability of 0.964, and AVE of 0.747. That is, the product construct is very strong internally and has good convergent validity. Fifth, the Promotion variable recorded the highest value compared to other variables, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.946, Composite Reliability of 0.945, and AVE of 0.863. This shows that promotion is a very reliable and valid variable in this study, and very representative of the indicators. The Trust variable (consumer confidence) also showed excellent results, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.908, Composite Reliability of 0.941, and AVE of 0.788. This signifies that the consumer confidence variable is reliable and valid in the research model. In conclusion, all variables in this study have met the requirements for reliability and validity, so it is feasible to continue at the next stage of structural analysis.

#### **Model Fit**

In order for the model to meet the fit model criteria, based on the explanation from the SMARTPLS website, the limitations or criteria for the fit model include: SRMR Value <0.08 and NFI Value > 0.9. The following are the results of the fit model assessment in this study:

**Table 5. Model Fit**

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0,072	0,072
d_ULS	0,794	0,794
d_G	1,125	1,125
Chi-square	379,179	379,179
NFI	0,742	0,742

In accordance with table 6, the NFI value of  $0.742 < 0.9$  does not meet the fit model criteria in NFI. However, based on the SRMR or Standardized Root Mean Square value, the value is  $0.072 < 0.08$ , then the model fits. Hu & Bentler (1999) stated that "even if one or two indices do

not meet the criteria, the model can be considered fit if one of the other indices shows good results", in conclusion this model remains fit Based on SRMR that meets the criteria.

#### Inner Model (Structural Model)

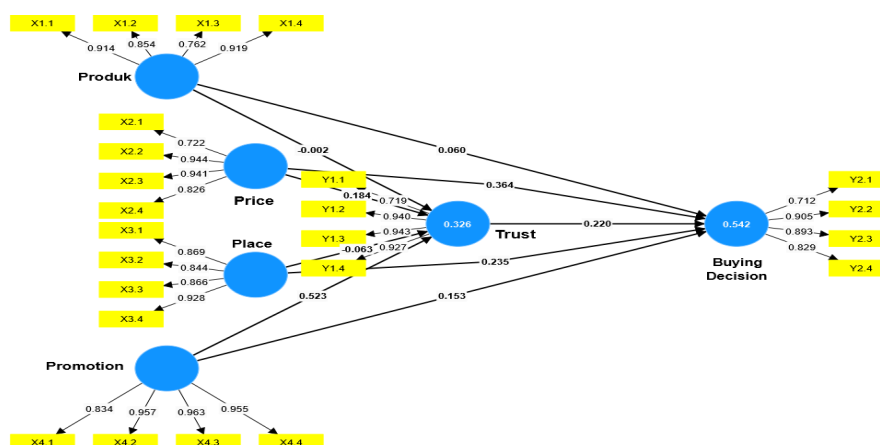


Figure 2. Full Model Bootstrapping

Meanwhile, in the Trust variable, an R-Square value of 0.326 was obtained, which indicates that 32.6% variation in consumer trust can be explained

by the variables Place, Price, Product, and Promotion. The remaining 67.4% is influenced by other factors that are not included in this model.

Table 7. R Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Buying Decision	0,542	0,518
Trust	0,326	0,297

#### Indirect Effect

According to Haryono (2016), indirect effect aims to analyze how strong the influence of a variable is with other variables, both exogenous and endogenous. The same is true for the direct

effect criterion,  $> t$ -table (1.96) and  $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ . This means that both variables X (independent) affect employee performance through organizational commitment as an intervening.

Table 8. Indirect Effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
Place -> Trust -> Buying_Decision	-0,014	-0,010	0,034	0,402	0,687
Price -> Trust -> Buying_Decision	0,041	0,039	0,026	1,581	0,114
Produk -> Trust -> Buying_Decision	-0,001	-0,001	0,023	0,022	0,982
Promotion -> Trust -> Buying_Decision	0,115	0,109	0,058	1,992	0,046

The interpretation of the results is based on the T-Statistics and P-Values values, where the effect is said to be significant if the T-Statistics value is  $> 1.96$  and the P-Value  $< 0.05$ .

1. The Place → Trust → Buying Decision line results in a T-Statistics value = 0.402 and a P-Value = 0.687. This value shows that the indirect influence of Place on the Buying Decision through the Trust is not significant, so the influence of mediation is not proven.
2. The Price → Trust → Buying Decision line has a T-Statistics = 1.581 and a P-Value =

0.114. Since the T-Statistics value has not reached 1.96 and the P-Value  $> 0.05$ , this indirect influence is not significant, meaning that the Trust does not significantly mediate the relationship between Price and Buying Decision.

3. The Product Line → Trust → Buying Decision shows T-Statistics = 0.022 and P-Value = 0.982, which means that these indirect influences are very small and insignificant. Thus, the Trust variable is not capable of being a mediator in the relationship



between the Product and the purchase decision.

The Promotion → Trust → Buying Decision path gives T-Statistics = 1.992 and P-Value = 0.046. This value shows that the indirect influence of the Promotion on the Buying Decision through the Trust is significant, as it meets the statistical criteria. Thus, the Trust mediates significantly the influence of the Promotion on the purchase decision.

## DISCUSSION

### Influence of Products on Trust

The results showed that the product had no significant effect on trust, with T-statistics = 0.023 and P-value = 0.982, so H1 was rejected. This finding is not in line with the research of Wibowo and Wahyudi (2020) which states that product quality has a positive influence on consumer trust in the Shopee marketplace. This shows that in the context of this study, the product dimension is not enough to build customer trust.

### The Influence of Products on Buying Decisions

The product also had no significant effect on the purchase decision, as evidenced by T-statistics = 0.824 and P-value = 0.410, so H2 was rejected. This result is in contrast to the study of Pratiwi and Setiawan (2019) which found that product quality contributes significantly to driving purchase decisions, showing that consumer context and characteristics can influence the influence of products on their decisions.

### The Influence of Price on Trust

Price was proven to have a significant effect on trust, with T-statistics = 1.985 and P-value = 0.047, so H3 was accepted. This is in line with the findings of Permatasari (2020) which states that appropriate and transparent price perception can increase consumer confidence in retail stores.

### The Influence of Price on Buying Decision

Price also has a significant effect on the purchase decision, with T-statistics = 4.526 and P-value = 0.000, so H4 is accepted. These findings are supported by Nugroho, Riyanto, and Dewi (2021), who affirm that price is an important element that influences consumer decisions in making purchases, especially in price-sensitive economic situations.

### The Influence of Place on Trust

Place had no significant effect on trust, with T-statistics = 0.399 and P-value = 0.690, so H5 was rejected. This result is different from the research of Hidayat and Rochman (2021), which stated that strategic locations and ease of access can increase consumer trust in service providers.

### The Influence of Place on Buying Decision

Place has a significant effect on the purchase decision, with T-statistics = 2.485 and P-value = 0.013, so H6 is accepted. This is reinforced by research by Fitriani and Nugraheni (2020), who found that a strategic and convenient location influences consumers in choosing a place to shop.

### The Influence of Promotion on Trust

Promotion has a significant effect on trust, with T-statistics = 3.729 and P-value = 0.000, so H7 is accepted. These results are in line with Rahmawati and Fauziah (2022), who stated that consistent and informative digital promotion can increase customer trust in a brand or service.

### The Influence of Promotion on Buying Decision

Promotion had no significant effect on buying decisions, as evidenced by T-statistics = 1.720 and P-value = 0.086, so H8 was rejected. These results are different from the research of Kartika and Hartono (2020) which states that promotions have an important role in driving purchase decisions, especially in the form of discounts or vouchers.

### The Influence of Trust on Buying Decision

Trust has a significant effect on buying decisions, with T-statistics = 2.626 and P-value = 0.009, so H9 is accepted. This is in line with the findings of Amelia and Sunarti (2021) which show that consumer trust has an important role in encouraging them to make purchases on online and offline platforms.

## CONCLUSION, SUGGESTION, AND LIMITATION

### Conclusion

Based on the results of the research analysis that has been carried out, both direct effect and indirect effect tests, it can be concluded as follows:

1. The product has no significant effect on the Trust or on the Buying Decision, so the H1 and H2 hypotheses are rejected. This shows that customer perception of the products offered has not been able to build trust or drive purchasing decisions directly.
2. Price is proven to have a significant influence on Trust (H3 accepted) and also on Buying Decision (H4 accepted). This shows that competitive pricing and matching customer expectations can build trust while driving purchasing decisions.
3. Place has no significant influence on the Trust (H5 is rejected), but it has a significant effect on the Buying Decision (H6 accepted). This means that strategic locations or distribution channels play a greater role in driving direct purchasing decisions than in building trust.
4. Promotion has a significant effect on the Trust (H7 accepted), but has no direct effect on the

Buying Decision (H8 rejected). This suggests that the promotions carried out can build customer trust, but not enough to directly influence purchasing decisions.

5. Trust has been proven to have a significant influence on Buying Decision (H9 accepted), so trust is an important factor in encouraging customers to make purchase decisions.
6. Based on the indirect effect test, only the Promotion → Trust → Buying Decision path showed a significant mediation effect with T-statistics = 1.992 and P-value = 0.046. This indicates that trust significantly mediates the influence of promotions on purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, other mediation channels (Price, Place, Product via Trust) did not show a significant indirect influence on the purchase decision.

### Suggestions

Based on the results and limitations of the research that has been conducted, there are several suggestions for further research. First, it is suggested that future research can expand the variables used, not only limited to the marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) and trust, but also add other variables such as customer experience, brand image, or perceived value. These variables have the potential to make an important contribution to a deeper understanding of the factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions as a whole. Second, the use of broader and more varied data collection techniques is also highly recommended. In this study, respondents are still limited to certain groups, so further research is recommended to expand the scope of the sample from the demographic side, such as age, income level, and educational background, as well as geographically, in order to increase the generalization of research results to the wider population. Third, the research approach can also be improved through the use of qualitative or mixed methods. This approach allows researchers to delve deeper into consumer perceptions, motivations, and preferences that may not be fully revealed through a quantitative approach alone. Thus, the results of the study are not only numerical, but also provide a deeper context to understand consumer behavior more holistically.

### Limitation

This study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the research was conducted within a limited geographic scope, namely retail consumers in Sukabumi City, West Java. This localized focus may reduce the generalizability of the results to other regions with different economic, social, and cultural characteristics. Future studies are

encouraged to replicate this research in other areas to strengthen external validity. Second, the sample size of 100 respondents, although considered sufficient for PLS-SEM analysis, may not fully capture the diversity of consumer behavior across the broader population. Expanding the sample size and including more demographic variations such as education level, occupation, and urban-rural distinctions could yield deeper insights into consumer purchasing decisions. Third, the variables analyzed were limited to the 4Ps of the marketing mix and consumer trust. While these are central constructs in marketing theory, other influential factors such as brand image, customer satisfaction, perceived value, and online reviews were not included in this model. Including such variables in future models could enhance the understanding of the decision-making process. Lastly, this study employed a cross-sectional design using self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to common method bias and does not allow for analysis of behavioral changes over time. Longitudinal studies or the integration of qualitative methods could offer richer, more dynamic perspectives on the development of consumer trust and loyalty in the retail sector.

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