
The Effect of Promotions, Customer Reviews, and Consumer Trust on Online Purchasing Decisions on Shopee Among Generation Z

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doi.org/10.51505/IJEBMR.2025.91001 URL: <https://doi.org/10.51505/IJEBMR.2025.91001>

Received: Sep 12, 2025

Accepted: Sep 23, 2025

Online Published: Oct 03, 2025

Abstract

Generation Z refers to individuals born between 1997 and the early 2000s, often referred to as the i-Gen due to their upbringing in a digital era closely intertwined with technological advancements. Their behavior differs significantly from previous generations, particularly in terms of online shopping preferences. As public interest in online shopping continues to grow, various platforms such as online stores, social media, e-commerce websites, and marketplaces have rapidly developed, one of the most prominent being Shopee. This study aims to examine the influence of promotions, customer reviews, and consumer trust on online purchasing decisions on Shopee among Generation Z. The research involved 120 Gen Z respondents residing in West Jakarta, selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the assistance of the Partial Least Squares (PLS) program. The findings reveal that all three variables, promotions, customer reviews, and consumer trust have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Attractive and informative promotional content increases consumer purchase interest. Positive customer reviews and high product ratings also enhance trust and encourage consumer engagement. Furthermore, trust in the platform, especially regarding transaction security and seller reliability is a key factor in convincing consumers to complete purchases via Shopee.

Keywords: promotions, customer reviews, consumer trust, purchasing decisions

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the Problem

Generation Z is the generation born around 1997 to the 2000s. Generation Z is a young generation that has never known life without technology, so they are sometimes referred to as the i-Gen. Not only in terms of technology, but also in terms of behavior, Gen Z is different from previous generations. First, Generation Z in Indonesia is very addicted to the internet. On

average, this generation spends more than seven hours a day on the internet within a certain age range. Second, the loyalty of the millennial generation is relatively low. When a better product comes along, this generation will easily switch. Third, the majority prefer to make non-cash transactions, with a share of 59%. The fourth behavior is that millennials can work faster and smarter because they are supported by technology. Technological developments also encourage this generation to have multi-tasking abilities. (source: www.kompas.com).

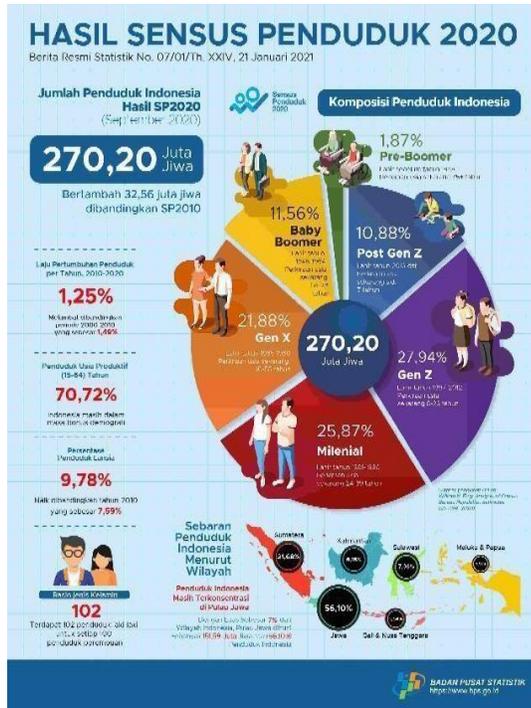


Figure 1. Results of the 2020 population census (source: www.demakkab.bps.go.id)

According to the 2020 population census results presented in official statistics news No. 07/01/TH. XXIV, January 21, 2021, Generation Z will dominate the population in Indonesia with a share of around 27.94%, followed by 25.87% Millennials and 21.88% Generation X. This has enormous potential for technological development, particularly in the business world. (source: www.demakkab.bps.go.id). With the development of information and technology, there is also an increase in the availability of networks, making it easier for people to communicate, which opens up opportunities for business people to take advantage of. The existence of internet technology can increase convenience for business people in buying and selling transactions. One of the ways this convenience can be implemented is through online buying and selling sites, which provide benefits in minimizing business costs while also having an impact and increasing consumer interest in online sales.

Therefore, with the increasing interest of the public in switching to online shopping, there are also many *online* shopping platforms that are increasingly increasing, such as *online shops*,

social media, e-commerce, and marketplaces. The *e-commerce* business has been established and has experienced rapid growth in Indonesia. The growth of the *e-commerce* business has reached around 8.8% annually. There are many positive impacts that can be felt in online transactions, namely shopping has become more practical, you can search for and determine the appropriate price, save energy and time to find the items you need, and other positive impacts. (source: www.kumparan.com).



Figure 2. E-commerce data in Southeast Asia in 2023

Source: www.momentum.asia

The phenomenon occurring in the Indonesian *e-commerce* industry shows Shopee's dominance as the marketplace with the highest revenue in 2022, amounting to 36%. This dominance is inseparable from Shopee's aggressive strategy in providing promotions, which according to an Ipsos survey titled *Understanding the Potentiality in E-Commerce Seller*, places Shopee as the marketplace with the most promotions (62%). In addition, the Free Shipping feature (71%) is the main reason consumers shop on Shopee, followed by COD payment methods (37%), attractive programs (36%), and the excitement of *livestreaming* with sellers (16%) (Momentum Asia, 2022). This fact underscores that Shopee's appeal lies not only in its competitive prices but also in the combination of promotional strategies, service features, and interactions that create a more engaging shopping experience.

1.2 Explore Problems

However, there is an important *gap* that needs to be further explored. Previous studies have predominantly highlighted promotional factors as determinants of purchasing decisions. For example, studies by Sari et al. (2022), Widiyawati & Siswahyudianto (2022), and Arfianto (2020) all conclude that promotions have a significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions in the marketplace. However, the reality in the field shows that Shopee consumers are not only influenced by promotions, but also by customer reviews and trust levels. Livia & Budi (2021) and Agesti et al. (2021) found that customer reviews are an important consideration before

consumers make a purchase. Meanwhile, research by & Widiyawati & Siswahyudianto (2022), Arfianto (2020), and Ilmiyah & Krishernawan (2020) underlines the crucial role of trust in purchasing decisions. This means that there is a research gap, where most studies still emphasize these variables partially, not simultaneously, even though the real phenomenon shows that consumers tend to consider these three factors simultaneously in the decision-making process.

From these phenomena and gaps, there is a need for conceptual and practical solutions. The conceptual solution is to integrate the variables of promotion, customer reviews, and trust into a single research model to comprehensively test their influence on purchasing decisions. With this approach, the research can provide a more complete understanding of consumer behavior in the Shopee marketplace. Meanwhile, the expected practical solution is the emergence of more balanced marketing strategy recommendations, where businesses do not only focus on aggressive promotions, but also actively encourage the formation of positive customer reviews and build consumer trust through product information transparency, consistent service, and transaction security. This research not only addresses an academic gap (*research gap*) but also makes a tangible contribution to the development of sustainable marketing strategies in the digital era. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the influence of promotions, customer reviews, and consumer trust on online purchasing decisions on Shopee among Generation Z.

According to Kotler, Keller, and Chernev (2022), promotion is part of marketing communication that aims to disseminate information, persuade, influence, and remind consumers about the products or services offered by a company. This marketing communication aims to ensure that target consumers receive, purchase, and become loyal to the promoted products. As explained by Armstrong and Kotler (2021), promotion can also be understood as a form of communication between sellers and potential buyers or other parties in the distribution channel that aims to influence consumer attitudes and behavior. According to Kotler, Keller, and Chernev (2022), the objectives of promotion include several things that are very important in building relationships between companies and consumers. In addition, according to Shafa and Hariyanto (2020), online customer reviews are opinions that arise from consumers' experiences with a business's services or products, which are then conveyed through online means.

Furthermore, according to Pasi & Sudaryanto (2021), customer reviews are used by consumers to obtain information as material for decision-making, which is referred to as a decision-making tool. In addition, they also function as a mechanism for providing feedback from consumers and recommendations to other online shopping platforms. Prospective consumers can use the number of reviews as a benchmark for the popularity or value of a product, which will certainly influence consumer decisions. However, the number of reviews cannot guarantee that consumers will buy the product, as there are many other factors involved. From the above theories, it can be concluded that customer reviews are an activity of gathering information about a product that will be purchased. In addition, online Customer Reviews are also an assessment or feedback on a product through features found in an online application.

Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2021) argue that trust is the belief of one party in another in a transactional relationship, where the trusting party is confident that the other party will fulfill their expectations or promises. In the context of marketing, trust in sellers, products, and companies is a key element in building and maintaining long-term relationships with consumers. This trust includes consumers' belief that sellers, brands, and companies will meet their expectations and provide a consistent experience in line with consumers' knowledge of the products or services offered. Furthermore, according to Morgan and Hunt (2021), trust in business relationships plays an important role in creating loyalty and repeat transactions between companies and customers. This trust occurs when consumers feel that the company and the products offered are reliable and have high integrity in meeting their needs and expectations

1.3 State Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

According to Wardani (2018), promotion refers to the communication of information from sellers to potential buyers or other parties within the distribution channel, with the goal of influencing their attitudes and behaviors. In essence, promotion is a communication strategy aimed at encouraging consumer behavior that leads to positive purchasing decisions in favor of the company. Empirical studies support this claim. Research by Dessy Rahmawati (2022) revealed that promotion significantly influences coffee purchasing decisions at Mahkota Java Coffee Garut. Similarly, Hidayat (2020) found that promotional activities had a substantial impact on customer purchasing decisions at Koki Jody Restaurant in Magelang. In line with these findings and the objectives of the current study, the following hypothesis is proposed: H1: Promotion has an effect on purchasing decisions

According to Pasi & Sudaryanto (2021), customer reviews serve as a reference for consumers seeking information to support their purchasing decisions. These reviews function not only as decision-making tools but also as a means for consumers to provide feedback and recommendations on various online platforms. The volume of reviews can act as an indicator of a product's popularity or perceived value, potentially influencing purchasing decisions. However, a high number of reviews does not automatically guarantee a purchase, as other factors may also play a role. Furthermore, Pasi & Sudaryanto (2021) assert that customer reviews can be leveraged as promotional tools in digital marketing communication. One specific form of review is the rating system, which reflects consumer opinions on a numerical scale such as star ratings on e-commerce platforms like Shopee. The higher the number of stars, the better the seller's reputation. Ratings serve as an aggregated expression of buyer evaluations regarding the features or services offered by sellers. Based on this, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows: H2: Customer reviews have an influence on purchasing decisions

Kanitra (2018) defines trust as the belief that one party has in another during a transaction, based on the expectation that the trusted party will act according to what has been promised or expected. Trust in sellers, products, and companies plays a crucial role in building and maintaining long-term relationships with consumers. It encompasses the overall belief that consumers have in sellers, brands, and companies to deliver on their value propositions.

According to Qatrunnada (2019), trust involves all the knowledge and judgments consumers form about products, attributes, and benefits. In the context of online transactions, trust between buyers and sellers becomes a foundational element. Empirical evidence also supports the role of trust in influencing purchasing decisions, especially on platforms like Instagram. Therefore the third hypothesis is as follows:

H3: Trust has an effect on purchasing decisions

Based on the above hypothesis, the following is a research model (Figure 3)

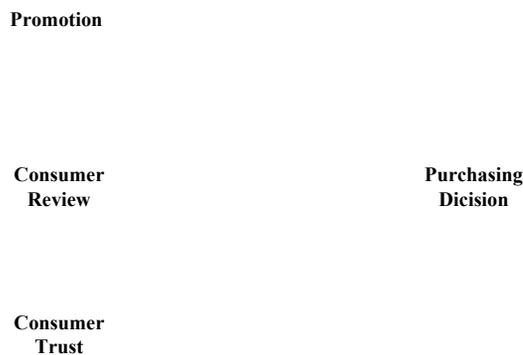


Figure 3. Model of research

2. Method

The research method is quantitative, with this research design using an associative problem formulation with a causal relationship. An associative problem formulation is a research question that aims to determine the relationship between two or more variables. According to Creswell (2014), associative research involves testing the relationship between variables to determine whether a variable is associated with or influences other variables. Meanwhile, Neuman (2014) states that a causal relationship is a cause-and-effect relationship, where one variable (independent) influences another variable (dependent).

2.1 Population & Sample

In this study, the population consists of all individuals from Generation Z who live in West Jakarta, have installed and use the Shopee marketplace application, and have shopped on Shopee at least three times in the last month. This population was chosen because it is considered relevant to answering the research objectives regarding consumer behavior in the use of application-based marketplaces. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a sample is a portion of the population that is carefully selected to represent the characteristics of that population. When the population is too large to study in its entirety, the use of samples becomes important so that the research remains efficient in terms of time, cost, and energy.

This study uses a non-probability sampling method because the total population size is unknown. Therefore, the sampling technique chosen is purposive sampling. According to Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim (2016), purposive sampling is a technique for determining samples based on certain considerations or criteria relevant to the research objectives. This technique is used because not all members of the population have characteristics that match the focus of the study. Because the population size is unknown (infinite), this study uses the formula by Hair et al. (1998) for determining the sample size, which is the number of indicators multiplied by 5 to 10. This researcher has 24 indicators, resulting in an estimated sample size of 120 to 240 samples. From the above calculation, it was decided that the sample taken in the study would be 120 respondents.

2.2 Data Collection Techniques

In this study, the type of data used is primary data, which is data obtained directly from the first source. According to Creswell (2014), primary data is data collected directly by researchers through methods such as surveys, interviews, or observations to answer research questions. The data collection technique in this study uses a questionnaire, which is a data collection method that involves providing a set of written questions to respondents who meet the research criteria. According to Neuman (2014), questionnaires are an effective data collection tool for obtaining large amounts of information from geographically dispersed respondents, especially in quantitative research. The questionnaires were distributed using Google Forms through a one-by-one approach, WhatsApp, and other social media. In addition, secondary data in the form of theories and previous research results obtained from books, scientific journals, and other academic sources were collected as a conceptual basis and support for analysis in this study.

2.3 Research Analysis Method

This study uses the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach. PLS is a component or variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) model. PLS is used to test the three hypotheses proposed in this study. Each of these hypotheses will be analyzed using Smart PLS 3.0 software. PLS is a variance-based SEM statistic for solving multiple regression when specific problems occur in the data, such as small research sample sizes, missing data, and multicollinearity (Ghozali, 2021). Wold in Ghozali (2021) states that Partial Least Square is a powerful analysis method and is often referred to as soft modeling because it eliminates the assumptions of OLS (Ordinary Least Squares) regression, such as the data must be distributed normally in a multivariate manner and there is no multicollinearity problem between variables. PLS is intended to test weak theories and weak data, such as small samples or data normality issues (Ghozali, 2021).

3. Results

3.1 Respondent Profile

There were 120 respondents with the following profile:

Table 1. Respondent profile

Category	Description	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Gender	Male	52	43.3	43.3
	Female	68	56.7	100.0
Age	12–16 years	2	1.7	1.7
	17–21 years	57	47.5	49.2
	22–27 years	61	50.8	100.0
Occupation	Employee	39	32.5	32.5
	Student / University Student	54	45.0	77.5
	Entrepreneur	27	22.5	100.0
Monthly Income	< Rp 2,000,000	36	30.0	30.0
	IDR 2,000,000 – IDR 3,000,000	36	30.0	60.0
	IDR 3,000,000 – IDR 4,000,000	19	15.8	75.8
	> IDR 4,000,000	29	24.2	100.0
Total		120	100.0	100.0

Based on Table 1 above, it shows that out of 120 respondents, 68 respondents or 56.7% were female. The remaining 52 respondents or 43.3% were male. Thus, the majority of respondents in this study were female, with 68 respondents or 56.7%. Of the 120 respondents, 2 respondents or 1.7% were aged 12-16 years, 57 respondents or 47.5% were aged 17-21 years, and 61 respondents or 50.8% were aged 22-27 years. This means that most of the respondents in this study were aged 22–27 years, with 61 respondents or 50.8%. The majority of respondents in this study were students, with 54 respondents or 45.0%. The rest were employees (32.5%) and entrepreneurs (22.5%). The largest income bracket was between Rp2,000,000 and Rp3,000,000, because the majority of respondents were students, so this amount represents their pocket money.

3.2 Instrument Test Results

The instrument test included indicator validity testing, variable validity testing, and reliability testing, as follows:

3.2.1 Indicator Validity Test Results

Table 2. Indicator validity test result (the convergent validity test)

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loadings	Information
Promotion	P1/Messages provide clear information	0.902	Valid
	P2/Messages deliver attractive information	0.920	Valid
	P3/Promotion is carried out through social media	0.869	Valid
	P4/Promotion is carried out through applications and websites.	0.862	Valid
	P5/The timing of promotion delivery is efficient	0.905	Valid
	P6/Promotions are carried out frequently within a certain period.	0.910	Valid
Consumer Review	UP1/Trust in the review feature	0.814	Valid
	UP2/Perception that the reviewer has direct experience with the product/service	0.807	Valid
	UP3/Trust in other consumers' reviews	0.820	Valid
	UP4/Reviews include reasons supporting opinions or evaluations	0.865	Valid
	UP5/The tone of the review is explicitly positive or negative	0.829	Valid
	UP6/The level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction expressed in the review	0.798	Valid
Consumer Trust	K1/Providing satisfaction guarantees	0.876	Valid
	K2/Security in transactions	0.901	Valid
	K3/Seller's honesty	0.878	Valid
	K4/Consumer confidence in the product	0.899	Valid
	K5/Good behavior towards consumers	0.885	Valid
	K6/Providing trust to consumers	0.877	Valid
Purchasing Decision	KP1/Consideration of quality based on reviews	0.817	Valid
	KP2/Consideration of product advantages based on reviews	0.881	Valid
	KP3/Consideration of the preferred brand	0.843	Valid
	KP4/Consideration of product popularity	0.856	Valid
	KP5/Consideration of purchase timing after reading reviews and knowing the country of origin	0.884	Valid
	KP6/Consideration of purchase timing after obtaining complete product information	0.820	Valid

Source: SEM, PLS

The results of the convergent validity test in Table 2 above show that all indicators are valid in forming variables, because all factor loadings are above 0.70.

3.2.2 Discriminant Validity Test Results (Cross Loading)

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Test Results (Cross Loading)

Variable	Promotion	Customer Reviews	Consumer Trust	Purchasing Decision
P1	0.902	0.529	0.718	0.725
P2	0.920	0.542	0.745	0.718
P3	0.869	0.428	0.646	0.633
P4	0.862	0.478	0.648	0.604
P5	0.905	0.516	0.741	0.717
P6	0.910	0.541	0.731	0.686
UP1	0.418	0.814	0.301	0.438
UP2	0.318	0.807	0.207	0.383
UP3	0.367	0.820	0.281	0.368
UP4	0.438	0.865	0.345	0.508
UP5	0.590	0.829	0.504	0.537
UP6	0.584	0.798	0.441	0.535
K1	0.649	0.340	0.876	0.641
K2	0.665	0.393	0.901	0.666
K3	0.737	0.412	0.878	0.644
K4	0.726	0.389	0.899	0.683
K5	0.710	0.400	0.885	0.638
K6	0.710	0.391	0.877	0.730
KP1	0.661	0.475	0.644	0.817
KP2	0.667	0.463	0.659	0.881
KP3	0.598	0.466	0.633	0.843
KP4	0.649	0.536	0.620	0.856
KP5	0.687	0.490	0.674	0.884
KP6	0.630	0.495	0.620	0.820

Source: SEM, PLS Test Results

Based on the results in The Table 2 above, it can be seen that the loading values for each construct are greater than the loading values for other constructs. It can be concluded that all indicators are valid and there are no problems with discriminant validity.

3.2.3 Variable Validity Test

The results of the variable validity test are shown in the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as follows:

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted Test Results

Variable	Average Variance Extracted	Information
Promotion	0.801	Valid
Consumer Reviews	0.676	Valid
Consumer Trust	0.785	Valid
Purchasing Decision	0.724	Valid

Source: PLS processing results

The table above shows that the validity of all variables meets the standard, because the AVE of all variables is above 0.5.

3.2.4 Reliability Test Results

Table 4. Realibility Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Information
Promotion	0.950	0.960	Reliable
Customer Reviews	0.905	0.926	Reliable
Consumer Trust	0.945	0.956	Reliable
Purchasing Decision	0.923	0.940	Reliable

Source: PLS Test Results

Based on Table 4, it shows that the reliability of all variables meets the standard because the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha of all variables are more than 0.7.

3.2.5 Square Test Results

Table 5. R Square Test Results

Variable	R Square
Purchasing Decision	0.675

Source: PLS test results

Table 5 shows an R-Square value of 67.5%, meaning that 67.5% of the variability in purchasing decisions can be explained by the three independent variables in the model, namely promotion, customer reviews, and consumer trust, while the remaining 32.5% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study.

3.2.6 Square Test Results (GOF)

Table 6. Q-Square Test Results (GOF)

Variable	Q Square
Purchasing Decision	0.480

Source: SEM PLS Test Results

Based on the table above, the Q-Square value of 0.480; means that it has predictive relevance and is in the strong category.

3.3 Hypothesis Test Results (Bootstrapping)

Table 7. Hypothesis Test Results (*Bootstrapping*)

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Information
Promotion → Purchasing Decision	0.319	0.315	0.118	2.712	0.00	Positive and Significant
Customer Reviews → Purchasing Decision	0.213	0.218	0.071	2.988	0.03	Positive and Significant
Consumer Trust → Purchasing Decision	0.409	0.411	0.108	3.782	0.00	Positive and Significant

Source: SEM, PLS Test Results

Based on Table 7 above, promotion has an original sample of 0.319, a t-statistic of 2.712 > 1.96, and a p-value of 0.007 < 0.05, so H1 is accepted, meaning that promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, with an effect of 3.19% on purchasing decisions. Customer Reviews has an original sample of 0.213, a t-statistic of 2.988 > 1.96, and a p-value of 0.003 < 0.05, so H2 is accepted, meaning that customer reviews has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, with an influence of 21.3% on purchasing decisions. Consumer Trust has an original sample of 0.409, a t-statistic of 3.782 > 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05, so H3 is accepted, meaning that consumer trust has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, with an influence of 40.9% on purchasing decisions. Thus, the consumer confidence variable has the greatest influence compared to other variables.

4. Discussion of Research Results

In today's fast-paced digital world, promotions have become an essential element in attracting the attention of young consumers, particularly Generation Z. This study shows that Shopee needs to implement promotions because, from the perspective of Generation Z consumers who participated in the survey, promotions influence purchasing decisions. Shopee needs to implement attractive, timely, and informative promotions. Generation Z is known as a generation that is responsive to added value and exclusive offers. The results of this study reinforce previous findings that also state that promotions influence purchasing decisions, including those by Wirdaini (2018), Arianto (2020), and Nur Pratiwi (2020).

Generation Z, who grew up in a digital environment and are accustomed to seeking opinions from fellow users, consider reviews to be the main reference before purchase a product (Pustap & Wulandari, 2020). This study shows that customer reviews have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. Thus, people's experiences are as convincing as promotions and trust in the product. Positive reviews can convince them that a product is worth buying, while negative reviews encourage caution or even cancellation of purchase intentions. The results of this study are in line with the results of previous studies (Nobel, 2022; Sihab, and Budiarti, 2021; Al Aradatin, Muslih, Meilina, 2021; Hanifah & Wulandari, 2021; Pustap & Wulandari, 2020).

In online shopping, there is no physical interaction between the seller and the buyer, so trust is the main foundation. The results of this study indicate that consumer trust in Shopee plays a major role in driving purchasing decisions, especially among Generation Z. This trust is built on various elements: transaction security, transparency of information provided by Shopee, honesty of sellers on the Shopee marketplace, and product quality assurance. When the Shopee platform is able to provide a safe, consistent, and satisfying shopping experience, consumers will not only make purchases but also return and recommend it to others, supported by research findings that the percentage of consumer trust influencing purchasing decisions is greater than other variables. These research findings align with previous studies, including those by Arianto (2020), Ilmiyah and Krishernawan (2020). For the digitally savvy younger generation who are highly critical of brand credibility, trust is not something that can be built instantly. It is formed from the accumulation of positive experiences and quick responses to complaints. Therefore, maintaining trust is not only a matter of selling good products, but also of ensuring that every point of interaction remains transparent, friendly, and responsible.

5. Conclusion

The conclusions of this study are as follows. Promotions have a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's online purchasing decisions on Shopee, which means that promotions have been proven to influence purchasing decisions, and that promotional activities have been proven effective in increasing consumer interest. Attractive promotional content, testimonials, and information about programs that consumers can benefit from can influence consumer perceptions and encourage them to try or buy products through Shopee. Customer reviews have a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's online purchasing decisions on Shopee, which means

that customer reviews have been proven to influence purchasing decisions. The higher or better the rating and reviews of a product, the more interested consumers are in buying it. Consumer trust has a positive and significant influence on online purchasing decisions on Shopee among Generation Z. This proves that the factor of consumer trust has a direct influence on purchasing decisions, because if consumers already have trust in a platform and find it easy to use, they will be interested in purchasing products through that platform. Based on research results, promotions, customer reviews, and consumer trust have a positive effect on Generation Z's online purchasing decisions on Shopee. Therefore, companies are advised to continue optimizing their digital marketing strategies, including creating creative promotional content that is in line with Gen Z trends, where promotions are carried out at the right time and are informative and interesting. In addition, certain incentives should be given to customers who have provided reviews, especially positive ones. Furthermore, consumer trust needs to be continuously improved through clear product information, price transparency, transaction security, and responsive customer service.

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