World Journal of Business, Project and Digital Management
Volume 06 Number 02 April 2026

ISSN : 2963-1645
(Online - Elektronik)

The Mediating Role of Brand Image in the Relationship between Price, Social Media Promotion, and iPhone Purchase Decisions at N.Applestuff Surabaya

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Citations: Verlita, Ananda Feidya., & Alimudin, Arasy., (2026). The Mediating Role of Brand Image in the Relationship between Price, Social Media Promotion, and iPhone Purchase Decisions at N.Applestuff Surabaya. *World Journal of Business, Project and Digital Management (WJBPDM)*, 06(02), 63-75.

Academic Editor:

Received: 22 March 2026 Accepted: 31 March 2026 Published: 30 April 2026

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effect of price and social media promotion on iPhone purchase decisions through brand image as an intervening variable at N.Applestuff Surabaya. The increasingly fierce competition in the premium smartphone business encourages business actors to implement appropriate pricing strategies and utilize social media promotion to build brand image and increase consumer purchase decisions. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 80 respondents who had seen N.Applestuff Surabaya's promotions on social media, using a random sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Square (SmartPLS 3.0). The results show that price has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions and brand image; social media promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions but not on brand image; brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions; and brand image is proven to mediate the effect of price on purchase decisions, but does not mediate the effect of social media promotion on purchase decisions. The findings suggest that N.Applestuff should prioritize value-based pricing and strengthen social media engagement strategies rather than relying solely on brand perception formation.

Keywords: Brand Image; Price; Purchase Decision; SmartPLS; Social Media Promotion

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1. Introduction

The rapid development of information and communication technology has driven significant changes in consumer behavior worldwide, including in Indonesia. One product that has become an inseparable part of modern life is the smartphone. According to Statista (2023), the number of smartphone users in Indonesia is projected to exceed 190 million by 2025, making Indonesia one of the largest smartphone markets in Southeast Asia. This condition creates intense competition among smartphone brands competing for market share.

Among the various smartphone brands competing in the global market, the iPhone produced by Apple Inc. is one of the most desirable products with a high level of consumer loyalty. Keller et al. (2013) state that strong brand equity is a valuable corporate asset because it creates sustainable consumer preference and loyalty. According to Interbrand (2023), Apple once again ranked as the world's most valuable brand with a brand valuation reaching USD 502,680 million, far surpassing other technology brands.

In Indonesia, consumer interest in the iPhone continues to show a positive trend despite Apple products being relatively more expensive than their competitors. Kotler & Keller (2016) argue that consumer purchase decisions are influenced by various factors, including price, promotion, and brand perception.

Apple's pricing strategy of positioning the iPhone as a premium product has instead become a distinct appeal for certain consumer segments that associate high prices with quality and social status (Tjiptono, 2015).

Price is one element of the marketing mix that plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchase decisions. Kotler & Armstrong (2018) define price as the amount of money charged for a product or service, or the amount of value exchanged by consumers for the benefits of owning or using the product. For premium products such as the iPhone, a high price does not always have a negative impact on purchase decisions; research by Wijaya & Nurcahyo (2021) concluded that price has a significant effect on consumer purchase decisions for premium electronic products, as highly involved consumers tend to regard price as an indicator of product quality.

In addition to price, promotion through social media has become one of the most effective marketing strategies in the digital era. According to Hootsuite (2023), social media users in Indonesia reached 167 million people, or about 60.4% of the total population, with an average social media usage time of 3 hours and 18 minutes per day. Gunelius (2011) states that social media marketing allows brands to build more personal and authentic relationships with consumers, thereby increasing brand awareness and purchase decisions more effectively than conventional media.

Brand image is a variable that plays an important role as a bridge between marketing strategy and consumer purchase decisions. Kotler & Keller (2016) define brand image as the perceptions and beliefs held by consumers, as reflected in the associations stored in consumer memory regarding a brand. Aaker (1991) shows that a strong brand image can create consumer loyalty, enable premium pricing, and provide a sustainable competitive advantage for the company.

N.Applestuff Surabaya is one of the stores engaged in selling Apple products, including the iPhone, in the city of Surabaya, East Java. As one of Indonesia's largest cities with a population of more than 3 million people, Surabaya is a highly potential market for premium technology products. N.Applestuff Surabaya actively promotes its products through various social media platforms to reach its target consumers, who are predominantly millennials and Generation Z, but also faces increasingly intense competition from rival stores and increasingly selective consumer behavior in purchase decision-making.

Several previous studies have examined the effect of price and promotion on purchase decisions with brand image as a mediating variable. Kurniawan & Santoso (2020), studying smartphone consumers in Semarang, found that price has a positive and significant effect on iPhone brand image. Pratiwi & Haryono (2021) revealed that social media promotion has a significant effect on brand image and purchase decisions for technology products. However, research that specifically examines the effect of price and social media promotion on iPhone purchase decisions while considering the role of brand image as an intervening variable in the context of a retail store in Surabaya remains very limited. This research gap underlies the present study.

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze: (1) the effect of price on purchase decisions; (2) the effect of price on brand image; (3) the effect of social media promotion on purchase decisions; (4) the effect of social media promotion on brand image; (5) the effect of brand image on purchase decisions; (6) the effect of price on purchase decisions through brand image; and (7) the effect of social media promotion on purchase decisions through brand image, among iPhone consumers at N.Applestuff Surabaya.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Price

Price is one of the crucial elements of the marketing mix that is directly related to a company's revenue and profitability. Unlike other marketing mix elements such as product, place, and promotion, which generally incur costs, price is the only element that generates revenue for the company (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Kotler & Keller (2016) define price as the amount of money charged for a product or service, or the sum of the values consumers exchange for the benefits of owning or using the product. Tjiptono (2015) adds that price is a monetary unit exchanged to obtain the right of ownership or use of a good or service, and simultaneously serves as a statement of the value of the product offered.

In the context of the iPhone, a high price is often perceived by consumers as an indicator of premium quality and exclusivity. Zeithaml (1988) in Kotler & Keller (2016) distinguishes three price concepts related to consumer perception, namely objective price (actual market price), perceived price, and perceived value. The measurement of the price variable in this study refers to the indicators of Kotler & Armstrong (2018) and Stanton in Swastha and Irawan (2014), which include: (1) price affordability; (2) price conformity with product quality; (3) price competitiveness; (4) price conformity with the benefits obtained; and (5) price as a driver of purchase decisions.

ISSN : 2963-1645
(Online - Elektronik)

2.2. Social Media Promotion

Social media promotion is the process by which an organization introduces or promotes products or services through online media, without direct face-to-face contact between consumers and sellers (Ma'ruf in Dede, 2021). Effendy & Sunarsi (2020) identify five main types of digital marketing, namely marketplace sites, service-oriented relationship-building sites, brand-building sites, online media sites, and social networking or community sites. Promotion through social media offers advantages such as wide reach, relatively low cost, the ability to maintain relationships with consumers, instant feedback, and 24-hour service flexibility (Dede, 2021).

The indicators of social media promotion in this study refer to Kotler and Keller in Britani (2022), namely: (1) promotion frequency; (2) promotion quality; (3) promotion quantity; (4) promotion timing; and (5) promotion target efficiency. In the context of this study, social media promotion is limited to N.Applestuff Surabaya's promotional activities on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.

2.3. Brand Image

Brand image is the perceptions and beliefs held by consumers, reflected in the associations stored in consumer memory regarding a brand (Kotler & Keller, 2016). According to Keller in Ferrinadewi (2009), brand image is formed by several factors, namely quality, trustworthiness/reliability, usefulness/benefits, service, risk, price, and the image of the brand itself (Wijiyanty et al., 2016). Biels (1992) divides the components of brand image into three, namely corporate image, user image, and product image.

The indicators of brand image in this study refer to Kotler & Keller (2012) as operationalized by Auliya Dewi (2022), namely: (1) trusted as a well-known brand; (2) attracts buyer interest; (3) offers a variety of appealing product variants; (4) is a quality brand; and (5) offers competitive pricing.

2.4. Purchase Decision

A purchase decision is an individual's intention to take action in buying or selecting a product to fulfill a need. According to Kotler & Keller (2016), a purchase decision is the behavior displayed by consumers, which consists of consumer trust in product quality and the price offered by business actors. Shobur et al. (2023) explain that purchase decisions are part of the behavioral component of consumption attitudes, namely the stage at which consumers form preferences among several alternatives before finally making a purchase.

The indicators of purchase decisions in this study refer to Priansa (2017) in Hidayat (2022), namely: (1) product choice; (2) brand choice; (3) seller/place-of-purchase choice; and (4) payment method/purchase timing (Rahayu et al., 2023).

2.5. Previous Research

Several previous studies relevant to this research are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Research

Researcher (Year)	Variables	Research Results
Digdowiseiso et al. (2022)	Price Perception, Promotion, Brand Image, Purchase Decision	Brand image has an insignificant effect on purchase decisions; price perception has an insignificant effect; promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.
Putri et al. (2024)	Brand Image, Price, Promotion, Purchase Decision	Brand image, price, and promotion have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, both partially and simultaneously.
Latief (2018)	Product, Price, Location, Promotion, Purchase Decision	Product, price, promotion, and location have a positive effect on consumer purchase decisions.
Romadon et al. (2023)	Social Media Promotion, Brand Ambassador, Purchase Decision	Social media promotion and brand ambassador have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.
Sanny et al. (2020)	Social Media Marketing, Brand Image, Brand Trust	Social media marketing has a significant effect on brand image and brand trust.

Rahmawati & Putri (2023)	Price, Brand Image, Purchase Decision		Price has no significant effect on purchase decisions when brand image has not been strongly established.
Pratama & Santoso (2021)	Price, Brand Image, Purchase Decision		Price has a positive effect on purchase decisions through brand image as an intervening variable.
Wijiyanty et al. (2016)	Brand Image, Purchase Decision	iPhone	Brand image has a positive effect on students' iPhone purchase decisions.

2.6. Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical review and previous research, the conceptual framework of this study positions Price (X1) and Social Media Promotion (X2) as independent variables that affect Purchase Decision (Y) both directly and indirectly through Brand Image (Z) as an intervening variable. The relationships between the variables are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Research Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables	Intervening Variable	Dependent Variable
Price (X1) Social Media Promotion (X2)	Brand Image (Z)	Purchase Decision (Y)

Note: solid lines indicate direct effects (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5); lines through Brand Image indicate indirect/mediating effects (H6, H7).

2.7. Hypothesis Development

2.7.1. Effect of Price on Purchase Decision

Price is one of the main factors influencing consumer purchase decisions. The more the offered price aligns with consumer perception, the more purchase decisions will increase. Sadiani et al. (2017), studying De Kaori Kantine consumers, found that price has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. Schiffman & Kanuk (2014) explain that for high-involvement products such as premium smartphones, a high price can actually increase purchase decisions because it is perceived as a guarantee of quality and social prestige. Based on the above description, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H1: Price has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

2.7.2. Effect of Price on Brand Image

Price is viewed not merely as the exchange value of a product, but also as a signal of quality that directly affects brand image in the minds of consumers. Schiffman & Kanuk (2014) explain that price functions as an extrinsic cue of quality, whereby consumers use price information to make inferences about product quality when intrinsic attributes are difficult to evaluate before purchase—conditions relevant to premium technology products such as the iPhone. Consumers tend to associate high prices with premium quality, exclusivity, and prestige, which are key components of a positive brand image. Based on the above description, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H2: Price has a positive and significant effect on brand image.

2.7.3. Effect of Social Media Promotion on Purchase Decision

According to Kotler & Keller in Indika & Jovita (2017), social media is a marketing communication activity that uses electronic media to attract consumers, increase awareness, corporate image, and sales. Promotion carried out through social media is considered capable of influencing consumer perceptions and interest in a product, which ultimately drives purchase decisions. Research at Kedai Ladanya in Cianjur proved that promotion through social media (Facebook and Instagram) affects consumer purchase decisions (Rifka Alkhilyatul Ma'rifat et al., 2024). Based on the above description, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H3: Social media promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

2.7.4. Effect of Social Media Promotion on Brand Image

Promotion through social media plays a strategic role in shaping brand image in the minds of consumers. Dede Solihin (2022) explains that advances in information technology encourage consumers to

seek information about a brand before making a purchase, making social media a strategic platform for marketers in shaping consumer perceptions. Sanny et al. (2020), studying men's skincare product consumers, proved that social media marketing has a significant impact on brand image. However, Arifin (2023) found that social media marketing has a positive but insignificant direct effect on brand image unless mediated by customer engagement. Based on the above description, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H4: Social media promotion has a positive and significant effect on brand image.

2.7.5. Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision

Brand image is a consumer's perception of a brand as a reflection of the associations stored in their memory, formed through the consumer's experience and interaction with the product (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The more positive a brand's image, the greater the consumer's tendency to purchase that brand. Wibowo et al. (2024) show that positive brand perception contributes to increased consumer purchase decisions. Based on the above description, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H5: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

2.7.6. Effect of Price on Purchase Decision through Brand Image

Price functions not only as an economic exchange tool but also as a quality signal that shapes consumer perceptions of a brand (Kotler & Keller, 2016). A price perceived as fair and competitive can strengthen brand image as a high-quality, high-value product, which subsequently increases consumer purchase decisions (Aaker, 2014). Pratama & Santoso (2021) show that price has a positive effect on purchase decisions through brand image as an intervening variable. Based on the above description, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H6: Price has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions through brand image.

2.7.7. Effect of Social Media Promotion on Purchase Decision through Brand Image

Brand image can function as a bridge connecting social media promotional activities with the formation of consumer purchase decisions. Dede Solihin (2022) proved that brand image can act as a mediator between social media activities and purchase decisions. Andarista et al. (2022), studying the Erigo brand, found that promotion affects purchase decisions through brand image as an intervening variable. Based on the above description, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H7: Social media promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions through brand image.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Approach

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to obtain answers to the research questions through hypothesis testing. According to Sugiyono (2017), quantitative research is a research method used for specific populations and samples, employing research instruments and statistical data analysis, with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of all people who have seen advertisements or promotions of N.Applestuff Surabaya on social media, totaling 105 people. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% error level, as follows:

$$n = N / (1 + N.e^2)$$

Based on this calculation, a minimum sample size of 84 respondents was obtained, which was then set at 80 respondents for the study. The sampling technique used was random sampling, in which every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected as a sample. Data collection was carried out over approximately three (3) months.

3.3. Research Variables and Operational Definitions

This study involves three types of variables, namely independent variables (Price/X1 and Social Media Promotion/X2), an intervening variable (Brand Image/Z), and a dependent variable (Purchase Decision/Y). The operational definitions and indicators of each variable are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Operational Definitions and Variable Indicators

Variable	Definition	Indicators
Price (X1)	The price of iPhone products at N.Applestuff Surabaya.	Price affordability; price conformity with quality; price competitiveness; price conformity with benefits; price as a driver of purchase decisions.
Social Media Promotion (X2)	Promotion of iPhone products at N.Applestuff Surabaya through Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.	Promotion frequency; promotion quality; promotion quantity; promotion timing; promotion target efficiency.
Brand Image (Z)	The brand image of the iPhone at N.Applestuff Surabaya in the eyes of consumers.	Trusted as a well-known brand; attracts buyer interest; offers appealing variants; quality brand; competitive price.
Purchase Decision (Y)	The purchase decision for iPhones at N.Applestuff Surabaya.	Product choice; brand choice; seller/place-of-purchase choice; payment method/purchase timing.

3.4. Data Collection Technique and Measurement Scale

Primary data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire distributed online to respondents, while secondary data were obtained from a literature review of books, articles, and scientific journals (Sugiyono, 2019). The research instrument was measured using a 1–5 Likert Scale, with categories Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5).

3.5. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis in this study consists of descriptive statistical analysis and inferential analysis using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS version 3 software. The PLS method was chosen due to its high flexibility and because it does not require strict data normality assumptions, making it suitable for research models with relatively limited sample sizes (Hair et al., 2014).

Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) was conducted through convergent validity testing (outer loading value > 0.7), discriminant validity testing using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.5) testing, and reliability testing through Cronbach's Alpha, rho-A, and Composite Reliability (> 0.6) (Ghozali, 2021; Hair Jr et al., 2021). Evaluation of the structural model (inner model) was conducted through the coefficient of determination (R^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2), with R^2 criteria of 0.75 being classified as strong, 0.50 as moderate, and 0.25 as weak (Hair et al., 2014). Hypothesis testing was carried out using the bootstrapping procedure, whereby a hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic value is greater than 1.96 ($\alpha = 5\%$) and the p-value is less than 0.05 (Ghozali, 2012).

4. Results

4.1. Overview of the Research Object

N.Applestuff Surabaya is a business engaged in selling Apple products, including new and second-hand iPhones, located on Jl. Wonorejo Asri XI, Wisma Indah Blok K-22A Housing Complex, Rungkut District, Surabaya, East Java. This business actively utilizes social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook as promotional tools to reach its target consumers, who are predominantly millennials and Generation Z.

4.2. Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 80 respondents who had seen N.Applestuff Surabaya's advertisements on social media. Respondent characteristics based on gender, age, and advertisement exposure are presented in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6.

ISSN : 2963-1645
(Online - Elektronik)

Table 4. Respondent Characteristics by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	29	36.7%
Female	51	63.3%
Total	80	100%

Table 5. Respondent Characteristics by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
17–21 Years	10	12.5%
22–25 Years	63	78.8%
26–29 Years	5	6.3%
≥ 31 Years	2	2.4%
Total	80	100%

Table 6. Respondent Who Had Seen N.Applestuff Advertisements

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	72	90%
No	8	10%
Total	80	100%

Based on Tables 4 to 6, the majority of respondents were female (63.3%), aged 22–25 years (78.8%), and the majority (90%) had seen N.Applestuff Surabaya's promotions on social media, so the respondents were considered representative for answering the research questionnaire.

4.3. Measurement Model (Outer Model) Testing Results

4.3.1. Convergent Validity Test

The initial stage of outer model testing was conducted through a convergent validity test, with the criterion that the outer loading value must be greater than 0.7. The initial test results showed that several indicators (X1.5, X2.1, Z.2, and Z.5) had outer loading values below 0.7 and were therefore eliminated from the model. The test results after elimination are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Convergent Validity Test Results after Elimination

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Standard	Result
Price (X1)	X1.1	0.778	0.700	Valid
	X1.2	0.844	0.700	Valid
	X1.3	0.805	0.700	Valid
	X1.4	0.818	0.700	Valid
Social Media Promotion (X2)	X2.2	0.735	0.700	Valid
	X2.3	0.821	0.700	Valid
	X2.4	0.819	0.700	Valid
	X2.5	0.804	0.700	Valid
Brand Image (Z)	Z.1	0.802	0.700	Valid
	Z.3	0.875	0.700	Valid
	Z.4	0.780	0.700	Valid
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y.1	0.700	0.700	Valid
	Y.2	0.850	0.700	Valid
	Y.3	0.848	0.700	Valid
	Y.4	0.830	0.700	Valid

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2026

ISSN : 2963-1645
(Online - Elektronik)

4.3.2. Discriminant Validity Test

The discriminant validity test uses the Fornell-Larcker Criterion approach, examining whether the square root of AVE on the diagonal is greater than the correlation values between variables (Hair Jr et al., 2021). The test results are presented in Table 7.

Table 8. Discriminant Validity Test Results (Fornell-Larcker)

Variable	Brand Image (Z)	Price (X1)	Social Media Promotion (X2)	Purchase Decision (Y)
Brand Image (Z)	-			
Price (X1)	0.831	-		
Social Media Promotion (X2)	0.965	0.883	-	
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.787	0.864	0.965	-

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2026. The square root of AVE on the diagonal is greater than the correlations between variables, so all constructs are declared discriminantly valid.

4.3.2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Test

An indicator is declared valid if the AVE value is greater than 0.5. The AVE test results are presented in Table 8, which shows that all variables have met the convergent validity requirement at the construct level.

Table 9. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Test Results

Variable	AVE	Result
Price (X1)	0.658	Valid
Social Media Promotion (X2)	0.655	Valid
Brand Image (Z)	0.672	Valid
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.633	Valid

4.3.3. Reliability Test

Data are declared reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha, rho-A, and Composite Reliability values are each greater than 0.6. The reliability test results are presented in Table 9, which shows that all variables are declared reliable.

Table 10. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho-A	Composite Reliability	Description
Price (X1)	0.828	0.834	0.885	Reliable
Social Media Promotion (X2)	0.807	0.815	0.873	Reliable
Brand Image (Z)	0.755	0.766	0.860	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.822	0.829	0.883	Reliable

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2026

4.4. Structural Model (Inner Model) Testing Results

4.4.1. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The R^2 value is used to measure the predictive strength of the research model, with the criteria substantial/strong (0.75), moderate (0.50), and weak (0.25) (Hair et al., 2014). The test results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) Test Results

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Criteria
Brand Image (Z)	0.486	0.473	Moderate
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.702	0.690	Moderate–Strong

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2026. The R^2 value for Brand Image of 0.486 indicates that 48.6% of the variation in brand image is explained by price and social media promotion, while the R^2 value for Purchase Decision of 0.702 indicates that 70.2% of the variation in purchase decisions is explained jointly by price, social media promotion, and brand image.

4.4.2. Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

A model is said to have predictive relevance if the Q^2 value is greater than 0 (Ghozali, 2015). The Q^2 test results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Predictive Relevance (Q^2) Test Results

Variable	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Price (X1)	320.000	320.000	0.000
Social Media Promotion (X2)	320.000	320.000	0.000
Purchase Decision (Y)	320.000	177.717	0.445
Brand Image (Z)	240.000	165.420	0.311

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2026. The Q^2 values for the Purchase Decision (0.445) and Brand Image (0.311) constructs are greater than zero, so the research model is declared to have good predictive relevance.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was carried out through the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 3.0. A hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic value is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05. The hypothesis testing results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	t-statistic	p-values	Result
H1. Price → Purchase Decision	2.485	0.013	Accepted
H2. Price → Brand Image	3.216	0.001	Accepted
H3. Social Media Promotion → Purchase Decision	2.223	0.026	Accepted
H4. Social Media Promotion → Brand Image	1.741	0.082	Rejected
H5. Brand Image → Purchase Decision	4.698	0.000	Accepted
H6. Price → Purchase Decision through Brand Image	2.200	0.028	Accepted
H7. Social Media Promotion → Purchase Decision through Brand Image	1.881	0.060	Rejected

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2026

5. Discussion

5.1. Effect of Price on Purchase Decision

The test results show that price has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions (t-statistic 2.485 > 1.96; p-value 0.013 < 0.05), so H1 is accepted. This finding indicates that pricing that matches product quality, is competitive, and is affordable for the target market can increase N.Applestuff Surabaya consumers' confidence in choosing iPhone products. This result is consistent with the findings of Latief (2018), which showed that price has a positive effect on consumer purchase decisions.

5.2. Effect of Price on Brand Image

Price is proven to have a positive and significant effect on brand image (t-statistic 3.216 > 1.96; p-value 0.001 < 0.05), so H2 is accepted. Prices considered appropriate for the quality and condition of the iPhone at N.Applestuff Surabaya can increase consumer trust while simultaneously shaping a good brand image. This finding is consistent with the research of Digdowiseiso et al. (2022) which showed a positive relationship between price perception and brand image.

5.3. Effect of Social Media Promotion on Purchase Decision

Social media promotion is proven to have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions (t-statistic 2.223 > 1.96; p-value 0.026 < 0.05), so H3 is accepted. Promotions through Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook that convey information about product specifications, prices, and stock availability in an appealing

way have been shown to help N.Applestuff Surabaya consumers consider and make purchase decisions. This result is consistent with the research of Gagas et al. (2022) and Romadon et al. (2023).

5.4. Effect of Social Media Promotion on Brand Image

Contrary to the proposed hypothesis, the test results show that social media promotion does not have a significant effect on brand image (t-statistic 1.741 < 1.96; p-value 0.082 > 0.05), so H4 is rejected. This condition indicates that although N.Applestuff Surabaya is active in promoting on social media, this activity is not yet strong enough to directly shape brand image, possibly because the iPhone's brand image as a global brand is already very strongly established, independent of the promotional efforts of a particular retail store. This finding is consistent with Arifin (2023), who found that social media marketing has a positive but insignificant direct effect on brand image, and only becomes significant when mediated by other variables such as customer engagement.

5.5. Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision

Brand image is proven to have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions (t-statistic 4.698 > 1.96; p-value 0.000 < 0.05), so H5 is accepted, representing the strongest effect among all the hypotheses tested. The iPhone's brand image, perceived as a trustworthy, high-quality, and prestigious product, is proven to be the main driver of consumer purchase decisions at N.Applestuff Surabaya. This result is consistent with the research of Pratama & Santoso (2022) and Wijiyanty et al. (2016), which emphasized the important role of brand image in iPhone purchase decisions.

5.6. Effect of Price on Purchase Decision through Brand Image

The test results show that price has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions through brand image (t-statistic 2.200 > 1.96; p-value 0.028 < 0.05), so H6 is accepted. Thus, brand image is proven to act as a partial mediating variable in the relationship between price and purchase decisions: a price that matches product quality shapes a positive brand image, which in turn strengthens consumers' confidence to make a purchase. This finding is consistent with the research of Romadon et al. (2023) and Pratama & Santoso (2021).

5.7. Effect of Social Media Promotion on Purchase Decision through Brand Image

The test results show that social media promotion does not have a significant effect on purchase decisions through brand image (t-statistic 1.881 < 1.96; p-value 0.060 > 0.05), so H7 is rejected. This finding is consistent with the rejection of H4, as brand image cannot function as an effective mediator if the direct effect of social media promotion on brand image itself is not significant. Nevertheless, social media promotion continues to contribute directly to purchase decisions (H3). This result is consistent with the findings of Digdowiseiso et al. (2022), who also found a limited mediating role of brand image in the relationship between promotion and purchase decisions.

Overall, the results of this study show that price plays an important dual role, both directly on purchase decisions and indirectly through brand image, while social media promotion is more effective in directly influencing purchase decisions than in shaping brand image. Brand image itself is proven to be the variable with the strongest effect on purchase decisions, thereby emphasizing the importance of N.Applestuff Surabaya continuing to maintain consistent product quality and consumer experience in order to strengthen its brand image.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Conclusions

1. Price has a positive and significant effect on iPhone purchase decisions at N.Applestuff Surabaya (H1 accepted).
2. Price has a positive and significant effect on brand image (H2 accepted).
3. Social media promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions (H3 accepted).
4. Social media promotion does not have a significant effect on brand image (H4 rejected).
5. Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, and represents the strongest effect in the research model (H5 accepted).
6. Price has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions through brand image, proving that brand image mediates this relationship (H6 accepted).

7. Social media promotion does not have a significant effect on purchase decisions through brand image (H7 rejected).

5.2. Suggestions

For N.Applestuff Surabaya, it is recommended to continue maintaining and improving a competitive pricing strategy that is aligned with the quality of the products offered, as price has been proven to be one of the key factors shaping both purchase decisions and brand image. In addition, since social media promotion has not been proven to significantly shape brand image, N.Applestuff Surabaya needs to evaluate and improve the quality of its promotional content—for example, by strengthening brand storytelling, visual consistency, and interaction with followers on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook—so that promotion not only drives direct purchases but also contributes to strengthening brand image in the long term.

For future researchers, it is recommended to expand the research object to other electronic retail stores or smartphone distributors so that the research results can be better generalized, and to add other variables that potentially influence purchase decisions, such as product quality, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), customer trust, service quality, or online customer reviews, in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors influencing purchase decisions for premium technology products.

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