

Research Article

The Role of Brand Image Mediates the Effect of TikTok Content Marketing on Purchase Decisions

¹I Wayan Wahyu Putra Pramerta, ²Gede Suparna

^{1,2}Faculty of Economics and Business, Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia.

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Abstract: The development of the social media platform TikTok has encouraged many companies, including marketplace companies, to utilize it as a means of product marketing. The intense competition among marketplace companies and the wide range of choices available to consumers results in changes in consumer preferences when selecting a marketplace that better meets their needs. Using TikTok content marketing as a conduit, this study will look at how consumers' perceptions of brands affect their purchasing decisions in the Bukalapak marketplace. Participating TikTok users who have shopped at Denpasar City's Bukalapak marketplace are the focus of the research. Using a combination of a non-probability selection method and a purposive sampling technique, 120 participants were selected for this research. In accordance with examining the data, the SmartPLS software was used in conjunction with the PLS (Partial Least Square) method. The results of the analysis show that TikTok content marketing and Bukalapak's image have a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions. TikTok content marketing can also have the same effect on Bukalapak's image so that brand image can mediate the effect of TikTok content marketing on purchasing decisions in the Bukalapak marketplace. This study implies that Bukalapak's management needs to pay more attention to their TikTok content marketing in the hope of influencing consumer purchase decisions. Additionally, effective TikTok content marketing can also enhance Bukalapak's brand image, which in turn will impact consumer purchase decisions.

Keywords: Brand Image, TikTok Content Marketing, Purchase Decisions.

I. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of social media has shifted and transformed from conventional marketing methods, giving rise to digital marketing (Idrawati et al., 2022). One of the implementations of digital marketing is social media, which has now become an essential part of human life, allowing everyone to easily engage in social interactions and expand their social networks without spatial and temporal limitations. Several social media platforms that are currently popular worldwide include YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and others. The growth in the number of TikTok users from 2020 to 2023 has made TikTok the most popular social media platform today (Dewi et al., 2023). In Indonesia, the popularity of TikTok is notably high; Indonesia has 99.79 million users, making it the second-most populous nation in the world for TikTok (Data Indonesia, 2023).

The development of the social media platform TikTok has led many companies to utilize TikTok as a means to market their products, including marketplace companies (Praditasetyo & Saputri, 2021). In Indonesia, numerous marketplace companies operate, including Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, Blibli.com, and Bukalapak. Bukalapak is one of the marketplace platforms in Indonesia, owned and operated by PT. Bukalapak. In the era of globalization, Bukalapak faces significant challenges due to intense competition and the wide range of consumer choices. This situation makes it easy for buyers to change their preferences and choose the marketplace they believe best meets their needs. Data from TikTok (2024) indicates that Shopee is the marketplace with the highest number of followers on the platform, followed by Tokopedia, Lazada, and Blibli.com, while Bukalapak ranks fifth. This implies that interest in the Bukalapak marketplace is lower compared to the other four marketplaces above it. This statement is supported by data on the website visit trends of Bukalapak from Daily Social and Databoks (2019 - 2023). The website of Bukalapak visitors has been consistently declining from the first quarter of 2019 to the third quarter of 2023, with the number of site visitors dropping from an initial 115 million to 12 million.

Customers often use TikTok, a social media platform, to learn more about things before buying them. In the decision-making process of a buyer, the option to acquire a product is called a buying decision (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). One way to affect purchase decisions is by utilizing TikTok for online product promotion through content marketing. The utilization of content marketing involves packaging marketing concepts into engaging and clear content, such as videos and written materials, that effectively communicate to consumers (Zahra et al., 2022).



The study by Mahardini et al. (2023) has proven that content marketing is effective in influencing purchase decisions by distributing engaging content to consumers. However, Bukalapak faces a discrepancy between creating content marketing on TikTok and actual purchase decisions. Based on a preliminary survey of 30 respondents to determine the level of purchase decisions after viewing promotional videos by Bukalapak on TikTok, 97% of respondents frequently use TikTok to seek product information, yet only 63% have seen Bukalapak's promotional videos on TikTok, and only 43% were interested in the content. The low interest of respondents in these promotional videos affects the level of purchase decisions, with only 30% of respondents deciding to purchase products on the Bukalapak marketplace.

Previous studies on this topic have shown that marketing content through social media will have an impact in helping to improve consumer purchasing decisions. (Triwardhani, 2020; Zainurossalamia et al., 2021; Shadrina & Sulistyanto, 2022; Dewi et al., 2023; Mahardini et al., 2019). Contrarily, the study by Abdjul et al. (2022) and Huda et al. (2021) displays the exact opposite. Their findings suggest that content marketing has no meaningful impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. Their studies have yielded contradictory findings, demonstrating the requirement for a mediating variable. As a mediating variable, brand image was selected due to its significant influence on consumers purchasing decisions. A company's marketing campaigns may be more successful if consumers have a favourable impression of the brand.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The TAM was based on Davis's 1989. Two main qualities that TAM employs to explain why people embrace IT are perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. These two things are interconnected in using technology because they aim at the extent to which people believe that technology can improve performance. Both factors affect how people feel about the technology and whether or not they plan to use it.

B) E-Marketing

E-marketing, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), is the subset of e-commerce that encompasses online product and service promotion, sales, and communication. E-marketing encompasses the processes of creating, distributing, promoting, and pricing goods and services that are offered online or via digital media (Sasono & Rahayu, 2022). Customers may get in touch with companies, make purchases, promote products, and learn more about products via e-marketing.

C) Consumer Behavior

According to Khafidin (2020), consumer behavior is defined as how a person or group makes a decision, obtains, uses, and discards items, services, ideas, and experiences in accordance to satisfy their wants and needs. Consumer behaviour encompasses the actions and decisions made by individuals before, during, and after purchasing a product or service, as well as their utilization of it. Understanding consumer behavior is crucial for companies to market their products effectively. Although consumer behavior varies, there are also many commonalities that marketers need to consider.

D) Purchase Decision

Maryati & Khoiri (2022) define a purchase decision as the process by which consumers consider various factors before using a good or service. These factors include considerations about the product or service to be purchased, its quality, the quantity needed, and the method of purchase. Ernawati et al. (2021) found that customers engage in a purchase choice by selecting their favourite brand. Nevertheless, there may exist a disparity between their purpose and the concrete choice they ultimately make.

In this study, four indicators are used to measure the purchase decision variable. These indicators are adapted from previous studies by Katu & Suparna (2022), Panggabean et al. (2023), and Lensun et al. (2023), namely: 1) Stability of a product; 2) Recommendations from others; 3) Having benefits; 4) Repeat purchase.

E) Content Marketing

According to Wibowo and Dharmayanti (2019), content marketing is the use of marketing technology to distribute unique, informative content that contains functional or emotional values, encouraging customers to take actions beneficial to the company. According to Purwanto and Sahetapy (2022), content marketing is a business activity that involves creating high-quality content aimed at targeted consumers so they understand the intended message and purpose being communicated.

In this study, six indicators are used to measure the content marketing variable. These indicators are adapted from a previous study by Dewi et al. (2023) and Adelia & Cahya (2023), namely: 1) Relevance, 2) Accuracy, 3) Value, 4) Ease of understanding, 5) Ease of finding, 6) Consistency.

F) Brand Image

According to Tijow et al. (2022), An individual's opinion of a brand is formed by their previous encounters and interactions with it. The term used to describe this concept is known as a brand's image. The exposure and consumer-centric activities of a brand's corporation have a great impact on people's perception of the brand (Aryanti & Andira, 2021). The level of trust that customers have in a company's goods is closely correlated with its brand image.

Four indicators are used in testing this variable. These indicators are adapted from previous studies by Sutrisno & Hastuti (2022) and Widyasari & Suparna (2022), namely: 1) Recognition, 2) Reputation, 3) Affinity, and 4) Domain.

G) Research Model

The TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) theory emphasizes that useful and easily understood content affects users' perceptions of the usefulness of TikTok. With TikTok as an e-marketing tool, consumers can easily obtain product information and conduct online transactions, enhancing efficient interactions between consumers and sellers. Consumer behavior, which is part of the purchase decision process, including preferences, attitudes, and previous experiences, also affects purchase decisions.

Based on previous research, effective content marketing on TikTok can enhance purchase decisions and brand image. This indicates that content marketing can make a good contribution to purchase decisions and brand image. Therefore, the conceptual framework is illustrated as follows.

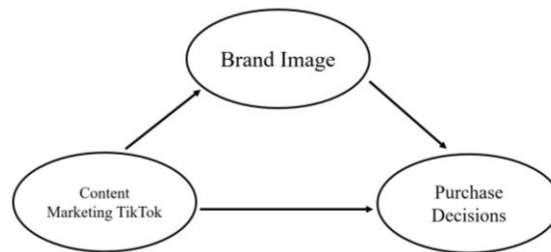


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

An application of the study framework outlined above is the formulation of the following study hypotheses:

H1: TikTok Content Marketing has a significant and positive effect on Purchase Decisions.

H2: TikTok Content Marketing has a significant and positive effect on Brand Image.

H3: Brand Image has a significant and positive effect on Purchase Decisions.

H4: Brand Image mediates the effect of TikTok Content Marketing on Purchase Decisions.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study was a quantitative study aimed at understanding the impact of the TikTok content marketing variable (X) on purchase decisions (Y2) with the mediation of brand image (Y1). The study was carried out in Denpasar City, as it is the center of government, trade, and education and has much better internet access compared to other regencies in Bali. The study population comprised TikTok users who had purchased products on the Bukalapak marketplace in Denpasar City. The sample size was 120 respondents, determined purposively due to the unknown population size.

The way to collect research data is through a survey method by distributing questionnaires online to prospective respondents. Before filling out the questionnaire, prospective respondents were screened to ensure they resided in Denpasar, had an active TikTok account, had a minimum education level of high school (SMA/SMK), and had shopped at Bukalapak within the last six months. Respondents who met the criteria then filled out the questionnaire, which included questions about their profile and three variables used in this study. The researchers used a Likert scale to assess the replies to the study questionnaire. The data was examined using SEM-PLS.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A) Respondent Characteristics Results

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics Results

No	Characteristic	Classification	Total (people)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	59	49,2
		Female	61	50,8
		Total	120	100
2	Age	18 – 20	14	11,7

		21 – 25	44	36,7
		26 – 30	37	30,8
		> 30	25	20,8
		Total	120	100
3	Last Education	High School (SMA/SMK)	57	47,5
		Diploma	10	8,3
		Bachelor	53	44,2
		Total	120	100
4	Occupation	Student	33	27,5
		Civil servant	22	18,3
		Military/Police	6	5,0
		Private Employee	40	33,3
		Entrepreneur	19	15,8
		Total	120	100
5	Monthly Income	< Rp.3.000.000	45	37,5
		≥Rp.3.000.000 to Rp.6.000.000	51	42,5
		>Rp.6.000.000 to Rp.9.000.000	18	15,0
		>Rp.9.000.000 to Rp.12.000.000	4	3,3
		> Rp.12.000.000	2	1,7
		Total	120	100

Source: Processed Data, 2024.

The consumer segment for Bukalapak predominantly consists of young females aged 21-25, indicating that young females make more purchases on the Bukalapak marketplace compared to young males. Based on the last level of education, Bukalapak's consumer base is dominated by high school (SMA/SMK) graduates or equivalents, indicating that high school graduates can be a significant market segment for Bukalapak. Additionally, the majority of our clientele consists of individuals employed in the private sector, with wages ranging from 3,000,000 to 6,000,000 indicates that Bukalapak attracts individuals with sufficient purchasing power to buy mid-to-high value products. This implies that Bukalapak not only serves as a shopping platform for younger consumer segments but also attracts the attention of consumers with more stable income levels.

B) Results of the Outer Model

a. Convergent Validity

Table 2. Convergent Validity

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Recognition <- Brand Image (Y1)	0.778	14.812	0.000
Reputation <- Brand Image (Y1)	0.838	24.894	0.000
Affinity <- Brand Image (Y1)	0.787	20.082	0.000
Domain <- Brand Image (Y1)	0.774	16.676	0.000
Stability of a product <- Purchase Decisions (Y2)	0.878	41.808	0.000
Recommendations from others <- Purchase Decisions (Y2)	0.761	14.391	0.000
Having benefits <- Purchase Decisions (Y2)	0.843	19.892	0.000
Repeat purchase <- Purchase Decisions (Y2)	0.847	23.789	0.000
Relevance <- TikTok Content Marketing (X)	0.865	41.158	0.000
Accuracy <- TikTok Content Marketing (X)	0.768	15.590	0.000
Value <- TikTok Content Marketing (X)	0.816	18.743	0.000
Ease of understanding <- TikTok Content Marketing (X)	0.784	19.448	0.000
Ease of finding <- TikTok Content Marketing (X)	0.782	16.196	0.000
Consistency <- TikTok Content Marketing (X)	0.829	27.280	0.000

Source: Processed Data, 2024.

The correlation outcomes between indicators show that the output meets convergent validity as the loading factors are above 0.70.

b. Discriminant Validity

Table 3. Cross Loading

	Brand Image	TikTok Content Marketing	Purchase Decisions
Relevance	0.604	0.865	0.611
Accuracy	0.560	0.768	0.503
Value	0.574	0.816	0.460
Ease of understanding	0.523	0.784	0.488
Ease of finding	0.528	0.782	0.495
Consistency	0.578	0.829	0.529
Recognition	0.778	0.553	0.494
Reputation	0.838	0.599	0.501
Affinity	0.787	0.559	0.549
Domain	0.774	0.495	0.510
Stability of a product	0.583	0.561	0.878
Recommendations from others	0.510	0.525	0.761
Having benefits	0.541	0.515	0.843
Repeat purchase	0.516	0.526	0.847

Source: Processed Data, 2024.

The authenticity of all indicators for that variable is confirmed as its cross-loading value exceeds 0.60, surpassing that of all other variables.

Table 4. Average Variance Extracted Value

Variable	AVE Value
Brand Image (Y1)	0.631
TikTok Content Marketing (X)	0.653
Purchase Decisions (Y2)	0.694

Source: Processed Data, 2024.

AVE values for the variables Brand Image, TikTok Content Marketing, and Purchase Decisions exceed the threshold of 0.50, demonstrating the accuracy of the model.

c. Composite Reliability

Table 5. Instrument Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Brand Image (Y1)	0.805	0.873
TikTok Content Marketing (X)	0.893	0.918
Purchase Decisions (Y2)	0.852	0.901

Source: Processed Data, 2024.

Based on the reliability instrument table shows that all variables are above 0.70, thus confirming that the variables possess good reliability.

C) Results of the Inner Model

a. R-Square Value

Table 6. R-square Value

Variable	R-square
Brand Image (Y1)	0.484
Purchase Decisions (Y2)	0.487

Source: Processed Data, 2024.

The R-squared value of 0.484 in Table 6 indicates that 48% of the variation in the brand image construct can be ascribed to TikTok content marketing. The remaining 52% may be attributed to extraneous variables. Furthermore, the R-squared value of 0.487 for the purchase decisions variable indicates that external influences account for 52% of the variability in the construct, whereas TikTok content marketing and brand image contribute to 48%.

b. Predictive-Relevance (Q²)

When Q-square has a value above zero, it means that the model is considered to have predictive significance. Conversely, when the Q-square value is below zero, the model is considered irrelevant. The formula for calculating the Q-

squared value is:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R^2_1)(1 - R^2_2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0,484)(1 - 0,487)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (0,516)(0,513)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - 0,264$$

$$Q^2 = 0,736$$

A more accurate model is indicated by a Q^2 result that is closer to 1, within the range of 0 to 1. The model's derived Q^2 value of 0.736 indicates that it has a strong predictive significance. Hence, it is justifiable to infer that the elements associated with TikTok content marketing and brand image, which are components of the model, account for 73.6% of the variation in the purchase choices variable. In addition to the model itself, there are additional variables that also affect the residual variance. It may be inferred that this model has significant predictive value.

D) Hypothesis Outcomes

Table 7. Hypothesis Outcomes

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Information
Path Coefficients				
Brand Image (Y1) -> Purchase Decisions (Y2)	0.392	3.238	0.001	Significant
TikTok Content Marketing (X) -> Brand Image (Y1)	0.695	11.942	0.000	Significant
TikTok Content Marketing (X) -> Purchase Decisions (Y2)	0.367	3.424	0.001	Significant
Specific Indirect Effects				
TikTok Content Marketing (X) -> Brand Image (Y1) -> Purchase Decisions (Y2)	0.272	3.184	0.002	Significant

Source: Processed Data, 2024.

The mediation effect demonstrates the connection between the independent and dependent variables via the use of an intermediary or mediating variable. Within this particular context, the phrase “mediating variable” denotes an autonomous variable that experiences a modification prior to exerting an influence on the dependent variable. As stated by Hair et al. (2021:150), the VAF may be computed using the following equation:

$$VAF = \frac{\text{indirect effect}}{\text{direct effect} + \text{indirect effect}}$$

Y1 is considered to be actively engaged in the mediation process if their VAF rating exceeds 80%. The partial mediator Y1 necessitates a VAF value ranging from 20% to 80%. On the other hand, if the VAF value is about 20%, it might be said that the mediation impact is negligible at most.

The mediation effect of brand image on the effect of TikTok content marketing on purchase decisions is as follows:

$$VAF = \frac{\text{indirect effect}}{\text{direct effect} + \text{indirect effect}} = \frac{0.272}{0.367 + 0.272} = 0.4256 (42.56\%)$$

Based on the VAF test, the determined result (42.56%) falls within the range of 20% to 80%. Consequently, it might be classified as partial mediation. In the Bukalapak market, customers' views of the brand lessen the impact of TikTok content marketing on their ultimate purchase choices. This means that TikTok content marketing can affect consumer purchase decisions in the Bukalapak marketplace with or without the mediation of brand image.

E) Discussion

The first hypothesis test (H1) of this study shows that TikTok content marketing on purchasing decisions in the Bukalapak marketplace has a significant and positive effect. This implies that TikTok content marketing has a considerable influence on purchase choices in the Bukalapak marketplace. Consequently, this demonstrates the efficacy of TikTok as a content marketing platform for enticing clients and motivating them to make purchases. To attract consumer interest in making purchases, Bukalapak has presented marketing content with relevance, such as showcasing the latest products or promotional offers that align with current trends or needs. Additionally, Bukalapak provides content with benefits, such as tips and tricks, tutorials, and product reviews. By presenting this content, Bukalapak uses references or facts to provide trust and assurance to consumers, thereby building confidence in making purchase decisions. Our findings align with other studies by Shadrina & Sulistyanto (2022), indicating that content marketing significantly and positively influences the purchasing choices of Magelang locals who use Instagram or TikTok. Triwardhani (2020) and Zainurossalamia et al. (2021) found comparable

outcomes in their studies regarding the substantial and favourable influence of content marketing on consumer purchase decisions.

The second hypothesis test (H2) of this study shows that TikTok content marketing on brand image in the Bukalapak marketplace has a significant and positive effect. Utilizing TikTok as a content promotion platform may be advantageous for enhancing Bukalapak's brand image. To build a good brand image, Bukalapak has presented content that is not only visually appealing but also adds value, conveying that the Bukalapak brand cares about the needs and preferences of its consumers. Additionally, the increasing presence of Bukalapak content on TikTok, along with a good understanding of this content by consumers, has the potential to enhance brand interest and awareness among the general public. This can create greater appeal compared to competitors in the marketplace. These outcomes are consistent with a previous study carried out by Muthohar & Hartono (2023), which found that better marketing content leads to an improved brand image for Scarlett Whitening. This finding is also supported by a study from Mumpuni & Cahyani (2021), as well as Pangestu & Tranggono (2022), who stated that TikTok content marketing exerts a beneficial and substantial impact on brand image.

The third hypothesis test (H3) of this study shows that brand image on purchase decisions in the Bukalapak marketplace has a significant and positive effect. Customers take into account the level of prestige associated with a brand when making a purchasing decision. Consumers trust Bukalapak because of its great reputation and extensive brand recognition. This trust is the basis for their choice to purchase at Bukalapak. In addition, Bukalapak's comprehensive range of products has the capacity to fulfil customers' desires, resulting in a satisfying shopping experience that enhances the probability of their repeat visits. These outcomes are consistent with a previous study carried out by Devita & Agustini (2019), which found that purchase decisions for Etude House are markedly and substantially affected by brand image. Similar findings are supported by studies carried out by Rahmawati (2020), Sari & Darajat (2021), Rihayana et al. (2021), Angeline et al. (2023), and Nugraheni & Suparna (2024), all of whom stated that there is a positive and significant connection between brand image and purchase decisions.

The fourth hypothesis test (H4) of this study shows that brand image can be a mediating variable in influencing the relationship between Tiktok content marketing and purchase decisions in the Bukalapak marketplace. Positive brand image is the main driver of increased sales, and the effectiveness of TikTok content marketing directly influences this. The impact of TikTok content marketing on brand image demonstrates the importance of developing a positive reputation for a corporation. There is a favourable correlation between the impact of Bukalapak's TikTok content marketing and customers' brand perceptions. A good brand image then becomes key in shaping consumer purchase decisions. Bukalapak has actively interacted with TikTok users through comments, direct messages, and responses to content. These positive interactions build trust and a strong connection between the brand and consumers, which can strengthen Bukalapak's brand image as a caring and responsive brand to consumer needs.

Additionally, Bukalapak has demonstrated creativity in presenting engaging and unique TikTok content. Creative and high-quality content makes the brand more appealing to consumers, contributing to an enhanced brand image and ultimately influencing purchase decisions. These outcomes indicate that consumers not only consider the information conveyed by Bukalapak through their TikTok content marketing but also how the Bukalapak brand is positioned and interpreted in their minds. A positive brand image can serve as a strong guide for consumers in evaluating products and ultimately affecting their purchase decisions. A previous study by Taan et al. (2021) Posits that content marketing is a manifestation of social media marketing. In a study carried out by Narayana and Rahanatha (2020), it was shown that customers' favourable perception of a company has a substantial impact on their purchasing choices when social media marketing is used. Wardaningtri and Gunaningrat (2024) discovered that Scarlett Whitening's brand image and content marketing significantly and positively influenced consumers' purchase decisions.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The influence of Bukalapak's TikTok content marketing on customers' purchase decisions inside the Bukalapak marketplace is directly related to its effectiveness in influencing consumer behaviour. Moreover, using TikTok for marketing purposes significantly enhances Bukalapak's image in the marketplace, perhaps leading to a beneficial impact on customers' perceptions of the brand. Enhancing consumers' positive perceptions of brands in the Bukalapak marketplace may have a significant influence on their purchasing decisions. By improving these perceptions, it is possible to boost customers' trust and willingness to make purchases from these companies. TikTok content marketing has a favorable influence on purchase decisions in the Bukalapak marketplace by means of brand image. Therefore, by using TikTok content marketing, Bukalapak can increase its exposure and ultimately improve bukalapak's image as a marketplace, thus exerting a greater influence on customers purchasing decisions.

The study outcomes on TikTok content marketing highlight the need to improve the relevance, consistency, and accessibility of content. Bukalapak management is advised to focus on content that is relevant to their target audience through in-depth market research. Additionally, consistency in style, messaging, and content upload schedules should be enhanced to strengthen brand identity on TikTok. Optimizing keywords, hashtags, and features such as trending topics can help make their content more easily discoverable, thereby increasing the effectiveness of their content marketing on the platform.

The study outcomes on brand image emphasize the importance of building a strong reputation and brand appeal. Bukalapak needs to focus on providing quality service, being responsive to consumer feedback, and maintaining transparency in interactions with customers. Additionally, creative and innovative marketing campaigns, along with highlighting unique brand values, can enhance the brand's appeal in the market.

The study outcomes on purchase decisions highlight the importance of recommendations from others. Bukalapak is advised to strengthen its marketing strategy through customer recommendations and testimonials. Encouraging users to share positive experiences, whether through social media, reviews, or referral programs, can be an effective approach. High-quality service and products will also increase the probability of customers recommending Bukalapak to others, thereby strengthening the impact of recommendations on purchase decisions and expanding customer networks and loyalty. For future research, it is recommended to focus on different social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, etc., to explore new findings related to the impact of this variable. Future researchers can also expand the scope of the study to include a broader range of respondent criteria from Bukalapak.

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