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The Effect of Price Discount and Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention with Brand Image as a Mediator (A Case Study of Generation Z Coffee Consumers in Surabaya)

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Abstract. The rapid growth of social media and digital platforms has transformed consumer behavior, particularly among Generation Z, who increasingly rely on online information and promotional offers when making purchasing decisions. In Indonesia, TikTok has emerged as a key marketing channel, with local brands like Kopi Kenangan leveraging discounts and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) to engage young consumers. However, the interplay between price incentives, digital recommendations, and brand perception remains underexplored in the context of coffee consumption. The purpose of this research is to determine the effect of price discounts and e-WOM on buying interest through the mediating role of brand image. The data source for this study is primary data. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with a total of 400 Generation Z respondents in the city of Surabaya. Data collection was conducted through the distribution of questionnaires. This study employs the SEM-PLS analysis method using the SmartPLS version 4.0 data processing tool. The results indicate that price discounts and e-WOM have a significant effect on brand image. In addition, price discounts, e-WOM, and brand image have also been proven to significantly influence buying interest. The findings further reveal that brand image mediates the influence of price discounts and e-WOM on buying interest.

Keywords: Price Discount, e-WOM, Buying Interest, Brand Image

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of global consumption trends, particularly in the coffee industry, has significantly reshaped consumer behavior over the past decade. The global coffee market continues to grow, with its value projected to reach approximately US$495.70 billion by 2026 and average per capita spending recorded at US$13.65 (Statista, 2026). This indicates that coffee consumption has become a routine activity in modern society. According to Norazami et al. (2025), young consumers are increasingly attracted to coffee not only for functional benefits such as improving concentration but also due to habitual and social factors. A similar phenomenon occurs in Indonesia, where the rapid growth of coffee shops aligns with changing consumer preferences, positioning coffee consumption as part of identity formation.

Among the many coffee shop brands in Indonesia, Kopi Kenangan has experienced significant growth. Based on a GoodStats survey (2025), Kopi Kenangan ranks as the most preferred coffee brand among Indonesian consumers, outperforming competitors such as Fore Coffee and Starbucks. This increase in consumer purchasing is not only driven by business expansion, with over 1,324 outlets and revenue growth reaching 45% to US$184 million (Priambodo & Monica, 2026), but also supported by digital marketing strategies through social media platforms such as TikTok, which has a large user base in Indonesia.

One of the most effective strategies implemented by Kopi Kenangan is price discount. In addition to content-based promotions and discount vouchers on TikTok, Kopi Kenangan consistently offers price reductions through its official application, including bundling promotions, discounts of up to 50% for new users, and cashback programs through payment

partners. These strategies indicate that consumers receive price discounts from multiple channels rather than a single promotional platform.

Throughout 2025, Kopi Kenangan successfully added approximately 4.47 million new customers through its digital ecosystem, with monthly active users reaching 1.5 million in December 2025, representing a growth of 116% (Priambodo & Monica, 2026). This increase reflects a high level of consumer purchase intention toward Kopi Kenangan products. In this study, purchase intention is positioned as the dependent variable, while price discount and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) are treated as independent variables, with brand image acting as a mediating variable. Previous studies suggest that price discount can enhance perceived value (Solihin & Azka, 2024; Kiptiyah et al., 2025), although inconsistent findings remain (Aldoreno & Chairy, 2021; Marlius, 2025).

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), which spreads through social media, consumer reviews, influencer recommendations, and online ratings, plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and trust before making purchase decisions (Winarno & Indrawati, 2022). However, prior studies also indicate inconsistent results regarding its effect on purchase intention (Pandelaki et al., 2023), suggesting the need for further investigation.

Previous research on purchase intention toward Kopi Kenangan has been widely conducted. However, studies that specifically examine brand image as a mediating variable in the relationship between price discount and e-WOM remain limited, particularly among Generation Z consumers in Surabaya. Junifanto et al. (2024) argue that consumer decisions are not solely influenced by price discounts or online reviews but also by brand perception formed through consumption experience, product quality, and brand reputation.

This relationship is consistent with the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) theory, which explains that external stimuli such as price discounts and e-WOM (stimulus) influence internal consumer processes, particularly the formation of brand image (organism), which ultimately affects behavioral responses in the form of purchase intention (response). However, this study has methodological limitations due to the use of self-reported questionnaire data, which relies on respondents' recollection of past purchasing experiences and may introduce retrospective and memory bias. As noted by Baati and Akrout (2024), such an approach may lead to inaccuracies in recalling when purchase intentions were formed.

Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to examine the effect of price discount and electronic word of mouth on purchase intention among Generation Z consumers of Kopi Kenangan in Surabaya, with brand image as a mediating variable. This study contributes theoretically by addressing the research gap related to the mediating role of brand image in the context of local coffee brands, and practically by providing strategic recommendations for optimizing price discount and e-WOM management to enhance brand image and purchase intention.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal research design. The purpose is to examine the causal relationships between the independent variables (price discount and electronic word of mouth), the mediating variable (brand image), and the dependent variable (purchase intention) (Jasin, 2022). The study uses a survey method through questionnaires to

collect primary data from respondents. Data analysis is conducted using Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to test the proposed hypotheses.

Sampling and Data Collection

The population in this study consists of Generation Z individuals living in the Surabaya area. Based on BPS data, the number of Surabaya City residents categorized as Generation Z in 2024 was approximately 954,213 people. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling (Statistik, 2025). The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula, resulting in a total of 400 respondents. The data used in this study are primary data, collected through online questionnaires distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire consists of two parts: the first part contains respondent identity information, and the second includes statement items related to the research variables.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach with the assistance of SmartPLS software version 4. The analysis process involves two main stages: the outer model and the inner model. The first stage involves testing the reliability and validity of the constructs. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values, while convergent validity was evaluated through the outer loading and average variance extracted (AVE) values. Discriminant validity was tested using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) criterion. The second stage involves analyzing the structural model to test the relationships between latent variables in the hypothesized framework. This analysis includes examining the values of R^2, Q^2, effect size (f^2), and path coefficients.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Through the questionnaire distributed to respondents, identity data was obtained which included age, gender, occupation, last education, and intensity of purchase of Kopi Kenangan, which is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Respondent Identities	Description	Percentage
Age	13 – 18 years old	18%
	19 – 23 years old	47%
	24 – 28 years old	35%
Gender	Male	42%
	Women	58%
Final Education	Junior High School	4%
	High School/Vocational School	38%
	Diploma	18%
	Bachelor	40%
Jobs	Student/Student	48%
	Private Employees	32%
	Entrepreneurship	12%
	Not Working	8%
Product Consumption Intensity	1 – 2 times per week	30%
	3 – 5 times per week	44%
	>5 times per week	26%

Source: Data processed, 2025

Based on the identity of the respondents obtained from the research questionnaire, the majority of respondents were in the age range of 19-23 years, where female respondents were more dominant than men. In terms of education, most of the respondents are Bachelor's graduates, while based on employment, respondents are dominated by students or college students. In addition, most respondents have an intensity of consumption of Kopi Kenangan products as much as 3-5 times per week.

Evaluation of Measurement Models (*Outer Model*)

A construct is declared to have good reliability, namely if the value *cronbach's alpha* new > 0.70 (Shiva et al., 2020), and the value of *composite reliability* (CR) > 0.70 (Hair, 2019). The following are the results of the reliability test using the *cronbach's alpha* and *composite reliability*.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variabel	*Cronbach's alpha*	*Composite reliability*
Price Discount	0.886	0.916
e-WOM	0.825	0.896
Brand Image	0.849	0.909
Buying Interest	0.889	0.923

Source: Data processing results, 2025

Based on table 3, all research variables show *Cronbach's alpha* and *composite reliability* values > 0.70, so that all research variables can be declared reliable. After the reliability test is met, the next step is to conduct a validity test seen from convergent and discriminant validity. The convergent validity is considered to be fulfilled when, *the average variance extracted* (AVE) value > 0.50, and the *outer loading value* > 0.50 (Hair *et al.,* 2019). The following are the results of the convergent validity test.

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test Results

| Variable	Item	Loading	AVE
Price Discount	PD1	0.860	0.687
	PD2	0.844	
	PD3	0.825	
	PD4	0.787	
	PD5	0.827	
Electronic Word of Mouth	EW1	0.876	0.741
	EW2	0.871	
	EW3	0.834	
Brand Image	BI1	0.901	0.769
	BI2	0.888	
	BI3	0.840	
Buying Interest	MB1	0.870	0.750
	MB2	0.870	
	MB3	0.885	
	MB4	0.838	

Source: Data processing results, 2025

Based on the results of the convergent validity test, all *outer loading* values in each item of the research statement are greater than 0.50. In addition, the *average variance extracted* (AVE) value for each variable also shows a value greater than 0.50. Then the validity of the discriminator in this study was measured using HTMT. According to Gold *et al.* (Boon et al., 2020), that a good HTMT value is < 0.90. The following are the results of the discriminatory validity test.

Table 4. Results of the Discriminant Validity Test

Variable	Brand Image	Buying Interest	Price Discount	e-WOM
Brand Image				
Buying Interest	0.882			
Price Discount	0.760	0.809		
e-WOM	0.835	0.723	0.446	

Source: Data processing results, 2025

Based on the test results in table 5, all HTMT values between *brand image,* buying interest*, price discount*, and e-WOM variables are below the limit of 0.90, so that the construct in this study meets the criteria of discriminant validity. Furthermore, structural model testing (*inner model*) was carried out to see the relationship between latent variables in the research. Based on Figure 3 below, the structural model contains the outer loading value of each indicator, the value of the path coefficient between constructs, and the value of the determination coefficient (R-square) on the endogenous variable.
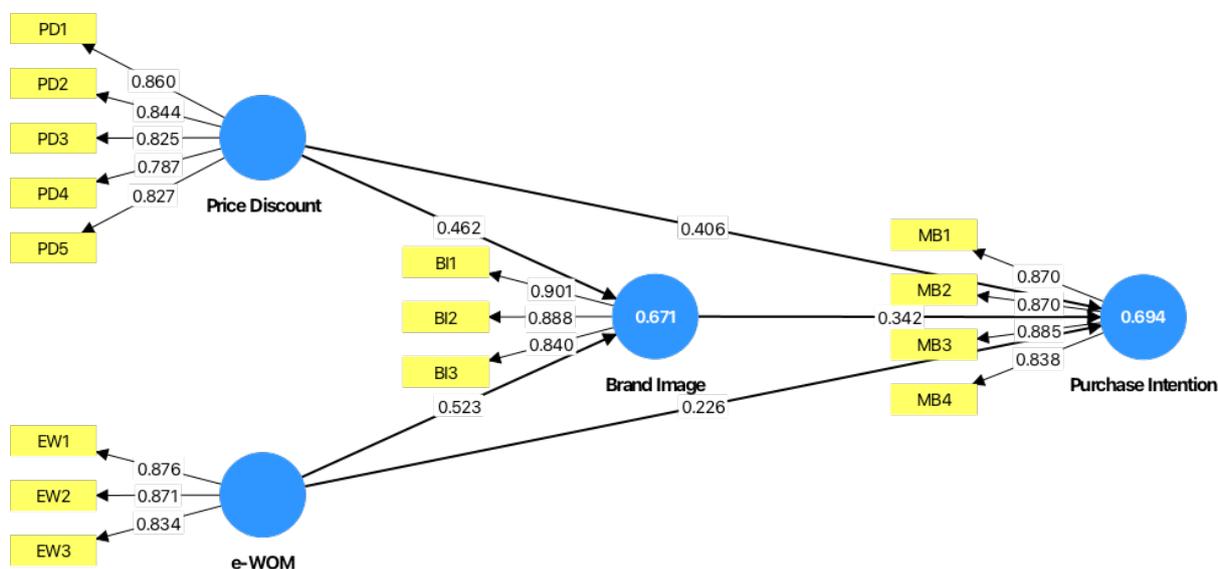
Figure 1. Results of the Analysis Test
Source: Data processing results, 2025

Inner Model
Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

The inner model in this study is also seen from the values of the determination coefficient, F-square and Q-square. According to (Haryono, 2016), the determination coefficient (R-square) is basically used to show how much strength the relationship between exogenous variables and

endogenous variables is. Based on the results of data processing, here is the value of the determination coefficient.

Table 5. R-Square Value

	R-square
Brand Image	0.671
Buying Interest	0.694

Source: Data processing results, 2025

In the *brand image variable, an* adjusted R-square value of 0.671 or 67% was obtained. These results show that *the price discount* and e-WOM variables affect brand *image* by 67%, while the remaining 33% are influenced by other variables outside this research model. Meanwhile, the value of the determination coefficient on the purchase interest variable of 0.694 or 69% showed that *the price discount*, e-WOM, and *brand image* variables had an effect on buying interest by 69%, while the remaining 31% was influenced by other variables outside the research model.

F-*Square*

According to Hair *et al.* (2019), F-*square* used to describe how strong an exogenous variable is to an endogenous variable in a research model. F- value*square* It can be classified into several levels, namely:

1) An F-square value of 0.02 or close to this value indicates a small influence, so the relationship between independent and dependent variables is relatively weak.
2) The value of F-square, which is in the range of 0.15 – 0.35, reflects a moderate influence, which means that the relationship between variables is already visible but not yet relatively strong.
3) An F-square value of 0.35 or more indicates a large influence, so the relationship between independent and dependent variables can be categorized as strong.

Table 6. F-Square Value

	Brand Image	Buying Interest
Brand Image		0.126
Price Discount	0.554	0.296
e-WOM	0.712	0.083

Source: Data processing results, 2025

Based on table 7, *the price discount* and e-WOM variables have contributed to the *brand image* variables and buying interest with different levels of effect. The effect of *price discount* on *brand image* shows an F-square value of 0.554, while the effect of e-WOM on *brand image* is 0.712, both of which fall into the category of large effects. Furthermore, the influence of *brand image* on buying interest has an F-square value of 0.126, which is included in the category of small effects. The effect of *price discount* on buying interest shows an F-square value of 0.296, which is classified as a medium effect. Meanwhile, the influence of e-WOM on buying interest has an F-square value of 0.083, which is included in the category of

small effects.

Q-*Square*

The magnitude of the Q-square value indicates the level of accuracy of the model's predictions. A Q-square value of 0 indicates low predictive ability. Then, a Q-square value of 0.25 indicates predictive ability at a moderate level, and a Q-square value of 0.50 or more indicates high predictive ability (Hair e*t al.,* 2019). Based on the results of data processing, the Q-square value was obtained as follows.

Table 7. Q-Square Value

Item	Q2predict
BI1	0.543
BI2	0.556
BI3	0.436
MB1	0.479
MB2	0.500
MB3	0.543
MB4	0.431

Source: Data processing results, 2025

From the table above, the *brand image* with indicators BI1 and BI2 having a value of Q-*square* are 0.543 and 0.556, respectively, meaning it has a high level of predictive ability, while the BI3 indicator has a Q- value*square* 0.436 which shows predictive ability in the moderate category. Meanwhile, in the buying interest variable, the MB1 and MB4 indicators have a value of Q-*square* respectively of 0.479 and 0.431 which means that the indicator has predictive ability at a moderate level, while the indicators MB2 and MB3 have a value of Q-*square* 0.500 and 0.543, respectively, and show high predictive ability.

Hypothesis Testing
Direct Influence

Table 8. Direct Influence

Hypothesis	Relationship	Original Sample	Std Error	t-value	p-value	Results
H1	*Price Discount* → *Brand Image*	0.462	0.029	15.690	0.000	Accepted
H2	e-WOM → *Brand Image*	0.523	0.031	16.781	0.000	Accepted
H3	*Brand Image* → Buying Interest	0.342	0.052	6.532	0.000	Accepted
H4	*Price Discount* → Minat Beli	0.406	0.039	10.312	0.000	Accepted
H5	e-WOM → Minat Beli	0.226	0.043	5.261	0.000	Accepted

Source: Data processing results, 2025

According to Hair *et al.* (2019), in the PLS-SEM structural model, the *original sample value* shows the direction (positive/negative) and the strength of the relationship between indicators. Then, a relationship is declared significant at a significance level of 5% if the t-value

is > 1.96 and the p-value is < 0.05. Based on table 6 above, the results of direct influence are obtained as follows.

1) In H1, the *original sample value* was obtained at 0.462, this means that *the price discount* has a positive effect on *the brand image*. Then the t-value value is 15,690 (> 1.96) and the p-value is 0.000 (< 0.05) which means that the *price discount* variable has a significant influence on *the brand image*. It can therefore be concluded that H1 is acceptable.

2) In H2, the *original sample* value was 0.523, which means that e-WOM has a positive influence on *brand image*. Then the t-value is 16,781 (> 1.96) and the p-value is 0.000 (< 0.05), meaning that the e-WOM variable has a significant influence on *the brand image*. It can therefore be concluded that H2 is acceptable.

3) On H3, the *original sample value* was obtained of 0.342, this means that the *brand image* has a positive influence on buying interest. Then the t-value value is 6,532 (> 1.96) and the p-value is 0.000 (< 0.05), meaning that the *brand image* variable has a significant influence on buying interest. It can therefore be concluded that H3 is acceptable.

4) On H4, the *original sample value* was obtained of 0.406, this means that *the price discount* has a positive influence on buying interest. Then the t-value is 10,312 (> 1.96) and the p-value is 0.000 (< 0.05), meaning that the *price discount* variable has a significant influence on buying interest. It can therefore be concluded that H4 is acceptable.

5) On H5, the *original sample value* was obtained of 0.226, this means that e-WOM has a positive influence on buying interest. Then the t-value is 5,261 (> 1.96) and the p-value is 0.000 (< 0.05) which means that the e-WOM variable has a significant influence on buying interest. It can therefore be concluded that H5 is acceptable.

Indirect Influence

Table 9. Indirect Influence

Hipotesis	Jalur	Original Sample	Std Error	t-value	p-value	Results
H6	*Price Discount* → *Brand Image* → Minat Beli	0.158	0.030	6.038	0.000	Accepted
H7	e-WOM → *Brand Image* → Buying Interest	0.179	0.027	5.924	0.000	Accepted

Source: Data processing results, 2025

Based on table 7 above, the results of indirect influence are obtained as follows.

1) On H6, the *original sample value* was obtained of 0.158, this means that *the price discount* has a positive indirect effect on buying interest through *brand image.* Then the t-value of 6,038 (> 1.96) and the p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05) showed that the *brand image variable* was able to mediate the influence between *price discount* and buying interest. Therefore, it can be concluded that H6 is acceptable.

2) On H7, the *original sample* value was obtained of 0.179, this means that e-WOM has a positive indirect influence on buying interest through *brand image*. Then the t-value

of 5,924 (> 1.96) and the p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05) showed that the *brand image variable* was able to mediate the influence between e-WOM and buying interest. Therefore, it can be concluded that H7 is acceptable.

The Effect of Price Discount on Brand Image

Based on the hypothesis test, the results show that price discount has a positive and significant effect on brand image. These findings are consistent with the research of Fadilah et al. (2023) and (Sudaryanto. et al., 2025), which state that price discount significantly influences brand image. The presence of discounts makes consumers feel they gain more value because they can purchase products at lower prices without sacrificing quality. This condition creates a positive perception that the brand provides benefits to consumers. Such perceptions subsequently strengthen the brand image in the eyes of consumers.

The Influence of e-WOM on Brand Image

Based on the hypothesis test, the results indicate that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on brand image. These findings align with the research of (Lestari & Gunawan, 2021) and (D. Putri et al., 2021; S. A. A. Putri et al., 2024), which found that e-WOM significantly affects brand image. A large number of positive comments and reviews from other users on digital media can shape a favorable perception of a brand. When these positive opinions continue to appear and circulate widely, the brand is perceived as having good quality and reputation, thereby strengthening its brand image.

The Influence of Brand Image on Buying Interest

Based on the hypothesis test, the results show that brand image has a positive and significant effect on buying interest. These results are in line with the research of (Purwati & Cahyanti, 2022) and (Parhusip et al., 2025), which state that brand image significantly influences buying interest. A brand with a strong and positive reputation is generally viewed more favorably by consumers. Brand image may be formed through product quality, impressions, and information attached to the brand. This positive perception encourages consumers to try and purchase products because the brand is already associated with trust and quality.

The Effect of Price Discount on Buying Interest

Based on the hypothesis test, the results show that price discount has a positive and significant effect on buying interest. These findings are consistent with the research of (Ernawati et al., 2025) (Petrecia & Hakimah, 2025) and Marlius (2025), who stated that price discount significantly influences buying interest. Discounts offered by sellers can increase consumers' desire to make purchases, as they perceive that they spend less than the usual price. This perception of getting a better deal motivates consumers to buy because they associate the discount with economic benefits.

The Influence of e-WOM on Buying Interest

Based on the hypothesis test, the results indicate that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on buying interest. These results are consistent with the research of (Yunikartika & Harti, 2022) and Solikhah et al. (2025), which found that e-WOM significantly affects buying interest. Positive e-WOM in the form of reviews, comments, or consumer opinions about a brand can create a favorable impression of the product in potential consumers' minds. When individuals encounter positive feedback from other consumers, it stimulates

interest and desire to try and purchase the product.

The Effect of Price Discount on Buying Interest Mediated by Brand Image

Based on the hypothesis test, the results show that brand image strengthens the relationship between price discount and buying interest. These findings are consistent with the research of (Fadilah et al., 2023) and Sudaryanto et al. (2025), which confirm that brand image mediates the effect of price discount on buying interest. Discounts can enhance brand image because consumers perceive that the brand delivers more value than the price paid (Rahmansyah, 2020). This stronger brand image influences how consumers view the product, increasing their confidence in the brand and consequently their willingness to purchase.

The Influence of e-WOM on Buying Interest Mediated by Brand Image

Based on the hypothesis test, the results show that brand image strengthens the relationship between e-WOM and buying interest. These findings are consistent with the research of (Achmad et al., 2021) and (Pangestu et al., 2025), which found that brand image mediates the relationship between e-WOM and buying interest. Electronic word of mouth, in the form of consumer reviews and opinions shared via digital media, can shape a brand's image. When such reviews portray a product positively, the brand is perceived more favorably by other consumers. This strengthened brand image enhances consumer confidence, which in turn increases buying interest.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the variables price discount and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) have a positive and significant effect on brand image. In addition, the variables price discount, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), and brand image also have a positive and significant influence on purchase interest in Kopi Kenangan products. As a mediating variable, brand image has been proven to mediate the relationship between price discount and e-WOM on buying interest in Kopi Kenangan products. For future research, it is recommended to include additional variables that may influence purchase interest, such as product quality, brand ambassadors, and viral marketing. Researchers are also encouraged to consider using control variables such as age and gender. Furthermore, subsequent studies can expand the scope of respondents by widening the research area and increasing the sample size.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the use of self-reported questionnaire data relies on respondents' recollection of past purchasing experiences, which may introduce retrospective bias. Respondents were required to recall their previous purchase intentions toward Kopi Kenangan, which may not fully reflect their current intentions or actual behavior.

Second, this approach may also lead to memory bias, as respondents may experience difficulty in accurately recalling the timing and formation of their purchase intentions. As highlighted by Baati and Akrout (2024), retrospective evaluations based on memory are subject to potential inaccuracies, which may affect the reliability of the measured variables.

Third, this study focuses specifically on Generation Z consumers in Surabaya, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other demographic groups or geographic areas.

Future research is recommended to include a more diverse sample and consider additional variables that may influence purchase intention, such as product quality, brand ambassadors, or viral marketing strategies.

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