

The Influence of Promotion Strategy and Scarlett Whitening Product Quality on Students' Purchasing Decisions

Abstract

Sitti Hermina¹, Djoko Lesmana Radji², & Ramlan Amir Isa³ *

^{1,2,3} Faculty of Economics, State University of Gorontalo, Indonesia, Email:

mhina.smansanap@gmail.com¹,
djoko@ung.ac.id²,
ramlanisa@ung.ac.id³.

*Corresponding Author Email:
ramlanisa@ung.ac.id

Received: October 13, 2025

Revised: October 20, 2025

Accepted: October 27, 2025

Keyword: Promotion Strategy, Product Quality, Purchasing Decision, Scarlett Whitening, Students.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the marketing and promotion of beauty products has increased and is widely found on various online and offline sales platforms (Ma & Kwon, 2021; Zhang et al., 2019). There has been a significant social and cultural change with the presence of these beauty products. While previously beauty products had a market and consumers that were predominantly women, currently the presence of several beauty products is also starting to be noticed and used by men (Duarte et al., 2025). This has driven an increase in demand for skincare products and grown the beauty industry market to become more diverse (Arliandhini & Resawati, 2023; Silitonga & Soelasih, 2025). Some beauty industries have begun to focus on new product innovations with the aim of maintaining the appearance and health of the skin, where this is also influenced by trends and framing carried out by beauty bloggers through their social media. While previously the demand for beauty products only focused on makeup equipment and body slimming drugs, currently changes in beauty products have begun to develop and one example can be found beauty products specifically in skin care including toners, cleansers, serums, sunscreens and masks. One of the development products of serum type beauty products can be found in Scarlett Whitening, where this product is one of the local cosmetic brands founded by Felicya Angelista in 2017 and focuses on skin and body care products that aim to brighten and nourish the skin. Scarlett Whitening currently ranks second among 9 other local brand beauty product categories in Indonesia (Nadia et al., 2023) with sales that continue to experience significant increases (see figure 1). In addition, this product is safe to use because some of the products produced have passed BPOM tests and are Halal certified. Facial care products consist of facial wash, facial serum, day cream and night cream. Body care products consist of shower scrub, body lotion, and body scrub, while for hair care products consisting of sea salt shampoo and conditioner.

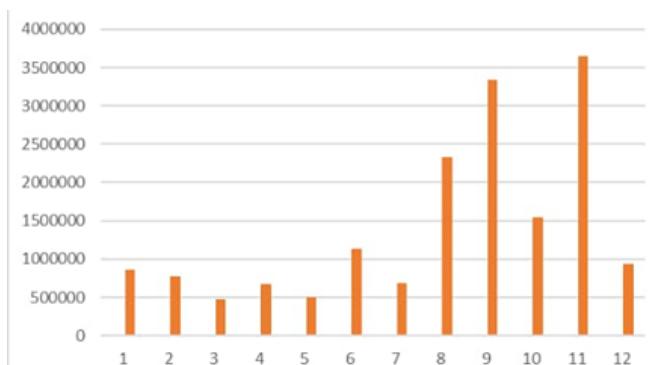


Figure 1. Scarlett Whitening Sales Data in 2023 (January – December)



Generation Z is the largest contributor to the number of consumers of beauty products today (Karisadini et al., 2021) and this is greatly influenced by their emotional and psychological factors, where teenagers tend to want to explore their identity, maintain and shape themselves, and help to stay connected with their community in the digital world (Tbilisi State Medical University et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important for companies to encourage the improvement of the products or services they offer by considering the quality, price and brand of the product (Abigail et al., 2024; Arliandhini & Resawati, 2023). The purchasing decision of potential customers becomes a reference for companies to know how the best promotional strategy should be chosen, in this case Scarlett Whitening uses various social media platforms (for example: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.) as the main promotion in introducing the various products they have and the advantages of these products. Another advantage of this product is the testimonials from loyal customers who continue to provide good reviews of this product so that they are able to maintain communication through word of mouth and become one of the promotional strategies that are quite effective in supporting the marketing of their products.

The next factor that can influence purchasing decisions is product quality, as it is seen as a product's ability to perform its function (Sethi, 2000; Wells et al., 2011), including overall durability, reliability, accuracy, ease of operation and repair, and other product attributes (Wells et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2004). Product quality is considered crucial for organizations because it enhances a company's reputation. Companies that produce quality products or services will be considered organizations that prioritize quality (Gupta et al., 2018). Product quality is an action taken by a company to win market competition by establishing a set of meaningful differences in the products or services offered to differentiate the company's products from those of its competitors, so that consumers can perceive or perceive that these quality products have the added value expected by consumers (Naini et al., 2022). To achieve the desired product quality, quality standardization is required. This aims to ensure that the products produced meet established standards so that consumers will not lose confidence in the product in question.

2. The Art of Research

A. Promotion Strategy

Promotion is one of the variables in the marketing mix that is very important for companies to implement in marketing service products (Darmawan & Grenier, 2021). Promotional activities not only function as a communication tool between companies and consumers, but also as a tool to influence consumer decisions according to their desires and needs (Thalib et al., 2025). Promotional strategy relates to the planning, implementation, and control of persuasive communication to customers. The main goal is to inform, influence, persuade, and remind target customers about the company and the marketing mix (Mensah & Amenuvor, 2022; Rainatto et al., 2024). This study uses five promotional strategy indicator measures according to Czinkota et al., (2021) and Kurniawan & Suhermin, (2023), including: personal selling, advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing.

B. Product Quality

A product can be defined as anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a want or need (Naini et al., 2022), including physical goods, services, experiences, events, people, places, properties, organizations, information, and ideas (Darmawan & Grenier, 2021). In conducting business in the form of products or services, companies need to have good quality based on the costs offered in order to survive against the most important competition in competition related to the quality of the goods produced (Naini et al., 2022). If a product is in accordance with its function, the product can be said to be of good quality (Gomes et al., 2023; Ihzaturnurahma & Kusumawati, 2021). Increasing the quality of the products or services sold is very necessary for companies, because if customers are satisfied it will lead to repeat purchases (Juliawan, 2023). This study uses product quality measures according to De Giovanni, (2024) and Solin & Curry, (2023), including: performance, durability, conformity to specifications, features, reliability, aesthetics, perceived quality.

C. Buying decision

Azizah et al., (2022) mention purchasing decisions as the activity of selecting from two or more alternative purchasing decision choices, meaning that a person can make a decision must have several alternatives to choose from. The decision to purchase can lead to how the decision-making process is carried out (Mandiri et al., 2024; Widodo & Pakaja, 2025). Consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by consumer behavior (Mustapha et al., 2022; Susipta et al., 2025). Consumer behavior patterns are closely related to each other, especially in aspects such as quality, price and decision-making (Marc et al., 2022). This study uses a measure of purchasing decisions according to Han, (2021 and Ismail et al., (2024), including: problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchasing decisions and post-purchase behavior.

D. Hypothesis Design

This hypothesis is based on the assumption that an intensive and planned promotional strategy—through advertising, sales promotions, and publicity carried out by the management team (Czinkota et al., 2021b) especially Scarlett Whitening will create high awareness and interest in potential buyers (Nadia et al., 2023) especially among students who are part of the gen z generation. Meanwhile, superior product quality demonstrated through durability, features, and reliability often triggers the emergence of purchasing interest from the gen Z generation (Brand et al., 2022), where product quality can serve as a foundation that ensures that the interest arising from the promotion can be translated into confidence to buy (Arliandhini &

Resawati, 2023). Thus, the combination of outreach promotions and convincing product quality is expected to synergistically encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions. Therefore, this study argues that:

H1: Promotional strategies have a positive and significant influence on students' purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products.

H2: Product quality has a positive and significant influence on students' purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products. Effective promotional strategies such as creative advertising, compelling sales promotions, and positive publicity act as a driving force by creating brand awareness, attracting attention, and arousing consumer interest (Czinkota et al., 2021a). However, the attractiveness of these promotions must be supported by tangible and superior product quality, which serves as the foundation for consumer justification for making a purchase (Arliandhini & Resawati, 2023). This product quality is what meets the expectations generated by the promotion, builds trust, and ultimately convinces consumers to move from purchase intention to actual purchase decision (Sulistyo & Simanjuntak, 2025; Wasik et al., 2023). Thus, the combination of broad-reaching promotions and reliable product quality is thought to collectively drive consumers to make more effective purchasing decisions than relying on either factor alone. Therefore, this study argues that:

H3: Promotion strategy and product quality together have a positive and significant influence on students' purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products.

3. Method

This study employed a quantitative approach to a specific population and sample, with data collection techniques utilizing a survey method and a research instrument as a measuring tool. Data analysis in this study was quantitative statistical in nature, with the aim of testing the established hypotheses. The sample used in this study was 92 students from the Faculty of Economics, Department of Management, intakes 2021-2024 at Gorontalo State University. Research data were collected through questionnaires distributed online via links shared with several members of student groups (WhatsApp groups) for each intake. The measurement scale used a Likert scale from 1 to 5, and data analysis in this study used multiple regression tests. The research variables consisted of Promotion Strategy (X1), Product Quality (X2), and purchasing decisions (Y1).

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Respondents

Information	Count	Percentage (%)
Gender		
• Woman	64	69.6
• Man	28	30.4
Year of Entry		
• 2021	21	22.8
• 2022	21	22.8
• 2023	22	23.9
• 2024	28	30.4

4. Result

A. Respondent Characteristics.

Respondent characteristics were used to determine the diversity of respondents based on gender and student class. Based on the data presented in Table 1, the majority of respondents were female (64 students, or 69.6%), and the remainder were male (28 students, or 30.4%). This slightly indicates that male students are currently starting to pay attention to several beauty and skincare products, although the majority are still female students. Furthermore, the largest number of respondents in this study came from the Class of 2024 (28 students, or 30.4%), and the Class of 2023 (22 students, or 23.9%).

B. Quality Testing of Research Instruments

To test the initial quality of this research instrument, initial data was taken from 30 respondents to test the validity and reliability with the aim of ensuring that the measuring instrument used was truly accurate, consistent, and reliable in collecting data.

1. Validity Test

This validity test is used to measure the validity of the questionnaire using the product moment formula with a significance value of 5% (Govindasamy et al., 2024). The value indicated by the Person Correlation can be said to be valid if the calculated r value is greater than the table r value (0.361). The results shown in Table 2 for all 35 research indicators are declared valid because all calculated r values for all question items have values greater than the table r value and pass the validity test.

Table 2. Research Validity Test (t-table 0.361 – 28 Initial Respondents)

Indicator Q.	r-count	Status	Indicator Q.	r-count	Status
X1.1	0.403	Valid	X2.1	0,676	Valid
X1.2	0.626	Valid	X2.2	0,665	Valid
X1.3	0.663	Valid	X2.3	0,423	Valid
X1.4	0.571	Valid	X2.4	0,676	Valid
X1.5	0.371	Valid	X2.5	0,462	Valid
X1.6	0.383	Valid	X2.6	0,610	Valid
X1.7	0.504	Valid	X2.7	0,545	Valid
X1.8	0.622	Valid	X2.8	0,698	Valid
X1.9	0.610	Valid	X2.9	0,599	Valid
X1.10	0.661	Valid	X2.10	0,790	valid
X1.11	0,491	Valid	Y1.6	0,459	Valid
X1.12	0,536	Valid	Y1.7	0,681	Valid
X1.13	0,673	Valid	Y1.8	0,552	Valid
Y1.1	0,599	Valid	Y1.9	0,585	Valid
Y1.2	0,619	Valid	Y1.10	0,642	Valid
Y1.3	0,581	Valid	Y1.11	0,767	Valid
Y1.4	0,674	Valid	Y1.12	0,690	Valid
Y1.5	0,433	Valid			Valid

2. Research Reliability Test

A reliability test is a test conducted to measure a questionnaire that is an indicator of a variable. In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha formula was used >0.60 (Govindasamy et al., 2024; Mohamad et al., 2015). The results presented in Table 3 show that all variables in this study had values above the reliability requirements and were declared to have passed the reliability test.

Table 3. Results of Reliability Test of Research Variables

Variable	Reliability Coefficient	Information
X1 (Promotion Strategy)	0.807	Reliable
X2 (Product Quality)	0.20	Reliable
Y1 (Buying Decision)	0.845	Reliable

C. Classical Assumption Test

1. Normality Test

The normality test is a data test conducted to test whether the data used in this study is normally distributed or not and the normality test used in this study uses the Kolmogorov Smirnov method (Thalib et al., 2025). The data shown in table 4 for the results of the Kolmogorov Smirnov test obtained an asymp.sig. (2-tailed) value or probability of 0.121 which is above 0.05 and meets the normality requirements.

Table 4. Results of the Kolmogorov Smirnov Normality Test

Unstandardized Residual		
N		92
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	0E-7
	Std. Deviation	4.57950325
	Absolute	.123
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.077
	Negative	-.123
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.184
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.121

2. Multicollinearity Test

In the multicollinearity test for this study, we looked at the provisions of the VIF value and tolerance value with the provisions of the VIF value obtained being below 10 and the tolerance value below 1 (Thalib et al., 2025; Widodo & Pakaja, 2025). The results shown in Table 5 show that the VIF value for each research variable has a value <10 and the same thing is also found for the tolerance value with a value <1 and all research variables can be declared to pass the multicollinearity test.

Table 5. Results of Multicollinearity Test of Research Variables

Collinearity Statistics		
Model	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
Promotional Strategy (X1)	.996	1.004
Product Quality (X2)	.996	1.004

3. Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test is a test that aims to test whether there is a difference in variance in the residual data in a regression. This study looks at the scatterplot image to determine the symptoms of heteroscedasticity (Wiedermann et al., 2017) with the provisions that the image in the scatterplot does not draw a clear pattern, and the points are evenly spread and are above and below the number 0 on the Y axis. The results shown in Figure 2 show that the points spread above and below the number 0 on the Y axis and do not form a certain pattern and there is no clear pattern. So if seen from the image there are no symptoms of heteroscedasticity.

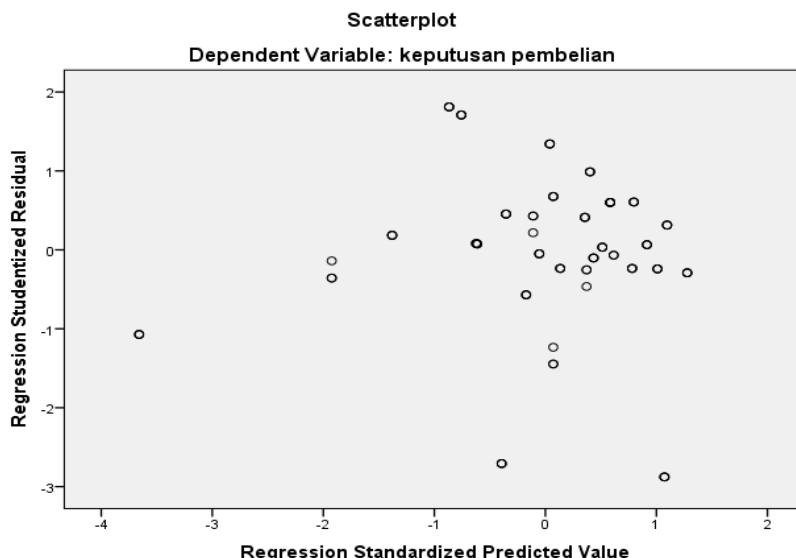


Figure 2. Results of Heteroscedasticity Test

D. Regression Analysis

1. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to examine the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable to model the results of the multiple regression. Based on the data presented in Table 6, the results of the multiple linear regression model analysis yield the following research equation:

$$Y=8.617 + 0.103 + 0.779 + e$$

Based on the regression equation model, the following can be interpreted:

1. The constant value of 8.617 indicates an average value of the Purchase Decision variable of 8.617, provided that the Promotion Strategy and Product Quality variables remain constant, or *ceteris paribus*.
2. The Linear Regression Coefficient for Variable X1 (Promotion Strategy) is 0.103, or 10.3%, indicating that every 1 percent change in the Promotion Strategy variable will increase the Purchase Decision by 10.3%.
3. The regression coefficient value of variable X2 (Product Quality) is 0.779 or 77.9%, indicating that every 1 percent change in the Product Quality variable will increase the purchasing decision by 77.9%.



Table 6. Results of Multiple Linear Analysis of Research Variables

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	8.617	4.099	2.102	.038
	Promotion Strategy	.103	.086	.094	.234
	Product Quality	.779	.093	.658	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Buying decision

2. Partial Test Results (t-test)

The t-test is useful for testing each independent variable against the dependent variable. After it is known that overall the independent variables in the model influence consumer purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products. By using a significance level of 5% at a df value of $n-k-1 = 92-2-1 = 89$, the t-table value is 1.986 and by looking at the data shown in table 6 where the t-count value for the promotional strategy variable is $1.197 < t$ -table value (1.986) with a significance value of $0.234 > 0.05$, it can be concluded that partially the promotional strategy does not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products and rejects the hypothesis (**H1**). On the other hand, for the product quality variable, the t-count value is $8.348 > t$ -table value (1.986) with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.005$, so it can be concluded that partially product quality has a significant influence on the decision to purchase Scarlett Whitening products and supports the hypothesis (**H2**).

Table 7. Results of simultaneous test (f-test)

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1768.637	2	884.318	36.433
	Residual	2160.276	89	24.273	
	Total	3928.913	91		

a. Dependent Variable: Buying decision

b. Predictors: (Constant), Product Quality, Promotion Strategy

3. Simultaneous Test (f-test)

The f-test aims to simultaneously or jointly test the influence of the independent research variables on the dependent variable and in this study the simultaneous test refers to the ANOVA table with a significance value of 5%. The results shown in table 7 for the ANOVA test results obtained an f-count value of 36.433 and a significance of 0.000 where this value is much smaller than the alpha probability (0.05) from the results of this test, it can be concluded that all independent variables (promotional strategy and product quality) in this study have a joint influence on consumer purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products and support the research hypothesis (H3).

Table 8. Results of the Determination Coefficient

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.671 ^a	.450	.438	4.92674

a. Predictors: (Constant), Product Quality, Promotion Strategy

4. Determinant Coefficient Test

To determine the magnitude of the influence of all independent variables (promotional strategy and product quality) in the model on the dependent variable (purchase decision), the coefficient of determination analysis was used and the results shown in table 8 obtained an R Square (R²) value of 0.450, and an Adjusted R Square value of 0.438. This is 45.0% of the variable purchasing decision for Scarlett Whitening products can be explained through all independent variables, or in other words, that the consumer purchasing decision to buy Scarlett Whitening products, 45.0% because it is influenced by promotional strategies and product quality. The remaining 55.0% of the consumer purchasing decision to buy Scarlett Whitening may be influenced by other factors (variables) that are not explained in this study.

5. Discussion

Based on the results of this study, it was found that the promotional strategy had a positive but insignificant effect on the purchasing decision of Scarlett Whitening products for students majoring in Management, Faculty of Economics, State University of Gorontalo. This was proven based on the t test with the results of the calculated t value > t table of 1.197 < 1.968 with a significance of 0.032 > 0.05, then H₁ was rejected and H₀ was accepted. then the promotional strategy variable did not affect the purchasing decision of Scarlett Whitening products. so the hypothesis that has been formulated is in accordance with the results of the study so that H₁ can be rejected and H₀ is accepted or in other words, partially the promotional strategy has a positive but insignificant effect on the purchasing decision of Scarlett Whitening products for Management Students, Faculty of Economics, State University of Gorontalo. Respondents' perceptions of promotional strategies on the indicators contained in the questionnaire showed that the promotions carried out were very good at attracting respondents to make purchasing decisions. However, the delivery of promotions in various media such as social media and other types of information is not able to make respondents interested in making purchasing decisions for products offered by the company. This is because promotions are not always one of the main factors that influence purchasing decisions. There are other factors that can influence a purchasing decision, namely consumer behavior where consumers often consider product quality, price, brand image and other external factors before purchasing a product. This is in line with the theory put forward by Khegay & Aubakirov, (2021) where "Consumer behavior is the real actions of individuals or groups of individuals, for example an organization that is influenced by external and internal aspects that direct them to choose and consume the desired goods or services."

Another finding in this study is that product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products among students majoring in Management, Faculty of Economics, State University of Gorontalo. The test results can be seen from the t-count value > t-table of 8.834 > 1.986 while for a significance value of 0.00 < 0.05 then H₂ is accepted and H₀ is rejected. The positive coefficient in the results of this study means that the better the product quality, the more it increases consumers' purchasing decisions. Thus, the research hypothesis stating that product quality influences purchasing decisions is accepted. The correlation coefficient is 0.779 or 77.9%, meaning that the product quality variable influences purchasing decisions by 77.9%. One of the biggest contributors to the influence of product quality is the dimension of conformity to specifications and the dimension of benefits. Liu et al., (2023) state that product quality is the expected level of quality and the control of diversity in achieving that quality to meet consumer needs. With good product quality, consumers will certainly feel satisfied in using a product, this satisfaction will certainly create consumer interest in making repeat purchases. Scarlett Whitening maintains the quality of its products, from offering a wide variety of quality products to tailoring its packaging to protect the product from the distribution chain to the consumer. In terms of materials, Scarlett Whitening typically uses a variety of materials, from plastic to glass, so this can be a consideration for consumers when deciding to purchase its products.

Based on the results of testing and analysis conducted by researchers in this case shows that the purchasing decision variables felt by each consumer are statistically influenced simultaneously or together by two variables in this study, namely promotional strategies and product quality have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. This result can be proven by the Adjusted R Square value obtained based on the output above of 0.438. This is 43.8%, meaning that as much as 43.8% of the variation of the independent variables contributes to the purchasing decision variable or has a significant effect. If the product quality is guaranteed and good promotions are carried out, consumers will be interested in buying so that the sales level increases, so the purchase decision for Scarlett Whitening products is high. But conversely, if the product quality is not guaranteed and does not carry out good promotional activities, the level of purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products will tend to be low or less. This happens because product quality is one of the factors that influence consumers to decide to purchase. In the (Imam, 2024) study, it states that high product quality alone cannot guarantee smooth sales and increase sales volume. Therefore, it must be based on the fact that promotion is an important factor in realizing a company's sales goals because with promotion people will know about the advantages of the products being offered.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that partially promotional strategies have a positive but insignificant effect on purchasing decisions. A different thing is found in the product quality variable which partially has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. Together, promotional strategies and product quality are able to provide a significant influence on purchasing decisions. The Adjusted R Square value in this study is 43.8%, which means that the promotional strategy and product quality



variables have a significant influence on purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products among students of the Faculty of Economics, UNG. The findings in this study also provide an illustration that the promotional strategy and product quality offered are considered good by respondents, but to increase purchasing decisions to a higher category, a more comprehensive approach is needed by considering additional factors.

The limitations of this study primarily lie in the sample size and generalizability of the results. Because this study was conducted only within the Faculty of Economics, Gorontalo State University, the findings cannot necessarily be generalized to a broader population, such as other faculties at the same university, private universities, or the consumer community in the Gorontalo region as a whole. The relatively homogeneous characteristics of the respondents (students of the Faculty of Economics) in terms of age, educational background, and consumption patterns may shape specific perceptions of promotional strategies and product quality, which may not represent the behavior of more diverse demographic or geographic groups. Therefore, the interpretation and application of the findings of this study should be done with caution and limited to similar academic contexts. The practical implications of this research, particularly for businesses targeting the student segment, include the need to develop an integrated marketing strategy that balances intensive promotion with guaranteed product quality. The findings demonstrate that promotion is effective in creating initial brand awareness, but product quality is the key determinant in converting interest into concrete and repeat purchase decisions. Therefore, it is recommended to allocate a budget not only for promotional activities (such as discounts or engaging social media content) but also for product quality control and consistency. Furthermore, as a suggestion for further research, it is necessary to expand the sample size, for example by involving several faculties or even other universities in Gorontalo, to test the generalizability of these findings. Furthermore, further research could also explore other mediating or moderating variables, such as brand image or peer group influence, which might strengthen the model of the relationship between promotion, product quality, and purchase decisions in a broader context.

Acknowledgments

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