

## The effect of social media engagement and product quality on purchase decisions with brand trust as an intervening variable

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### ABSTRACT

The energy industry, particularly the fuel sector, plays a vital role in supporting Indonesia's economy. Factors such as social media engagement, product quality, and brand trust influence consumers' purchasing decisions. This study aimed to analyze the direct and indirect effects of social media engagement variables and product quality on purchasing decisions, with brand trust as an intervening variable for PT Shell Indonesia products. The analysis method in this study uses quantitative primary data, and the test stages carried out are the convergent validity, discriminant validity, reliability, R-square, goodness of fit, and path coefficient tests. The data used in this study were collected using a questionnaire instrument, and the valid data collected were from 120 respondents. The sampling method in this study was non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique. The testing tool used was Smart PLS. The results showed that Social Media Engagement and Product Quality variables had a direct and indirect effect on Brand Trust and Purchase Decision variables. However, Brand Trust had no direct effect on the Purchasing Decision variable.

**Keywords:** Brand Trust, Product Quality, Purchase Decision, Social Media Engagement

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The energy sector, particularly the fuel oil (BBM) industry, plays an important role in Indonesia's economic structure. Owing to its large population and strong reliance on transportation, this industry is essential for the everyday mobility of millions of people. The two primary rivals in this market are Pertamina and Shell Indonesia, both of which aim to offer premium products at reasonable costs. Sales performance is increasingly influenced by factors other than price competition, such as product quality, consumer trust in brands, and social media engagement (Lela et al., 2023).

Social media is now a vital tool for businesses and customers to communicate. Customer loyalty can be increased by facilitating faster and more transparent interactions on digital platforms. Strong social media engagement not only increases brand trust but also motivates customers to make purchases because they feel more connected to and familiar with the brand (Rembet et al., 2024). This dynamic is demonstrated by Shell Indonesia's use of social media sites such as YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter to establish meaningful two-way communication with its audience.

Simultaneously, product quality remains a central element in the fuel oil (BBM) industry. The "mixed Pertamina" incident involving Pertamina led to a decline in public trust in its fuel quality. In contrast, Shell maintains its reputation by upholding strict quality standards through products such as Shell V-Power, which is recognized for its superior efficiency compared with its competitors. Many consumers perceive Shell's relatively higher prices as justified by the consistent quality, safety, and performance. This indicates that perceived product quality often outweighs price considerations when influencing purchasing behaviors (Mahira, 2021).

Brand trust has become a vital element for companies seeking to thrive in increasingly competitive markets. Studies indicate that positive consumer experiences, such as courteous service, accessible gas stations, and seamless payment processes, play a significant role in strengthening customer loyalty toward Shell (Chandra et al., 2023). Trust that emerges from consistent product quality encourages customers to make repeat purchases and share positive recommendations directly and through social media platforms (Chandra et al., 2023). Consequently, a company's commitment to maintaining integrity and quality has a measurable influence on its overall sales performance (Khasanah, 2021).

In a broader sense, the rise of social media has reshaped the marketing landscape of the energy sector. However, for an industry as strategic as fuel, maintaining product quality remains the cornerstone of consumer trust. Shell Indonesia exemplifies how a company can successfully integrate digital engagement strategies with continuous product innovation and quality assurance to achieve its goals. This combination has strengthened customer loyalty and reinforced Shell's competitive position in the global market. Accordingly, exploring the interconnections between social media engagement, product quality, and purchasing behavior is crucial to understanding the evolving dynamics of competition in Indonesia's fuel industry (Fadillah et al., 2025).

Social media engagement serves as an important indicator for assessing how deeply audiences interact with a company's online activities (Syahiti, 2024). According to Khusniah and Astuti (2024), social media engagement has a significant and positive influence on brand trust. Through social media, companies can communicate with broader audiences, foster stronger relationships, and enhance consumer interactions more effectively. PT Shell Indonesia actively utilizes several digital platforms, including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, to share information about its products, promote its commitment to environmental sustainability, and highlight innovation within the energy sector. Based on this framework, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Social Media Engagement has a direct effect on Brand Trust in Shell Indonesia products.

Product quality refers to the expertise, completeness of specifications, and inherent characteristics that enable a product to meet consumer needs and deliver satisfaction in accordance with company expectations (Harjadi & Arraniri, 2021). Yulita (2021) found that product quality has a significant positive effect on brand trust. Shell's fuel products are developed not only with an emphasis on efficiency but also

with attention to engine performance and environmental sustainability. The company's consistent delivery of high-quality products strengthens consumer confidence that Shell fuels will meet their expectations, thereby reinforcing brand trust. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: Product Quality directly influences Brand Trust in Shell Indonesia products.

A purchasing decision can be defined as an individual's action to resolve a need or achieve a goal efficiently and effectively (Arianty and Andira, 2021). Purba et al. (2025) indicated that social media engagement significantly affects consumers' purchasing decisions. Through meaningful interactions on digital platforms, PT Shell Indonesia can enhance consumer confidence and willingness to purchase. When consumers actively engage in discussions about Shell's products, they not only obtain useful information but also develop a sense of belonging to the brand. This emotional connection often leads to repeat purchases as consumers perceive Shell as a brand that values and understands them. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3: Social Media Engagement directly influences Purchase Decisions for Shell Indonesia products.

Aprelyani et al. (2024) found that product quality exerts a positive and significant influence on consumers' purchasing decisions. High-quality products foster a sense of trust among consumers, which is essential for establishing long-term brand loyalty. In today's market, consumers are increasingly discerning and tend to prioritize functional values, such as fuel efficiency and the overall impact of fuel on vehicle performance. Based on this rationale, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H4: Product Quality directly influences Purchase Decisions for Shell Indonesia products.

Brand trust reflects the sense of assurance that develops after consumers interact with a particular brand (Asy'ari, 2021). Asy'ari (2021) demonstrated that brand trust significantly and positively affects purchasing decisions. Consistent product quality and reliable service are fundamental to nurturing and maintaining trust. When consumers develop a strong belief in a brand's credibility and integrity, they are more inclined to choose and repurchase its products, even in a highly competitive market. Accordingly, the next hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Brand Trust directly influences Product Purchase Decisions for Shell Indonesia.

According to Khusniah and Astuti (2024), brand trust serves as a mediating factor that links social media engagement to consumers' purchasing decisions. Through promotional campaigns, educational content, and active responses to customer feedback, PT Shell Indonesia has cultivated more personal and meaningful relationships with its audience. The more transparent and consistent a company's communication on social media, the stronger the trust consumers develop in the brand. Based on these findings, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H6: Social Media Engagement indirectly influences Purchase Decisions for Shell Indonesia products.

Similarly, Yulita (2021) found that product quality positively and significantly affects purchasing decisions through the mediating role of brand trust. The reliability and consistency of Shell's product quality not only attract consumers but also strengthen their confidence in the brand, an essential component influencing their buying behavior. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H7: Product Quality indirectly influences Purchase Decisions for Shell Indonesia products (see Figure 1)

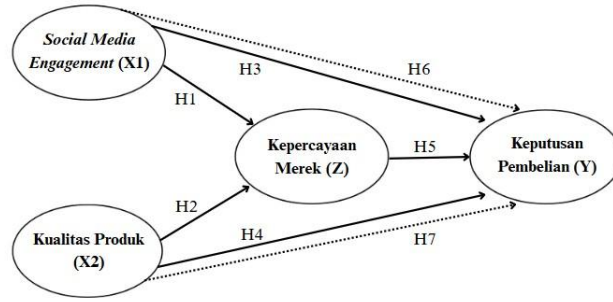


Figure 1. Research Model

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach that used primary data. Several analytical stages were conducted, including the convergent validity, discriminant validity, reliability, R-square, goodness-of-fit, and path coefficient tests. Data were collected using a questionnaire, yielding 120 valid responses. The sampling process applied a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique to ensure that the respondents met specific criteria relevant to the study objectives. Data analysis was performed using SmartPLS software to test the measurement and structural models (Table 1).

Table 1. Operational Definition of Variables

| Variable                       | Definition  | Indicators   |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Social Media Engagement</b> | Social Media Engagement is an indicator used to measure the extent to which the audience is involved in interactive social media activities carried out by online businesses.                     | 1. Content from Reliable Sources<br>2. Self-Reflective Content<br>3. Content Providing the Latest Information<br>4. Responses from Others<br>5. Responses from Ourselves<br>6. Benefits or Incentives<br>(Rembet, Mandey, & Loindag, 2024) |
| <b>Product Quality</b>         | Product quality includes expertise, completeness of specifications, and the characteristics inherent in the product that meet customer needs and provide satisfaction as expected by the company. | 1. Performance<br>2. Features<br>3. Reliability<br>4. Conformance to Specifications<br>5. Durability<br>6. Serviceability<br>7. Aesthetic<br>8. Perceived Quality<br>(Tjiptono in Aghitsni, 2022)  |
| <b>Purchase Decision</b>       | Purchase decision is an action taken to resolve a faced problem that must be immediately addressed, or the steps taken to achieve a goal in a quick and cost-efficient manner.                    | 1. Product Purchase<br>2. Brand Purchase<br>3. Channel Selection<br>4. Timing of Purchase<br>5. Purchase Quantity<br>(Arianty in Arianty & Andira, 2021)   |
| <b>Brand Trust</b>             | Brand trust is a sense of security that arises in consumers after interacting with a brand.   | 1. Trust<br>2. Reliability   |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | 3. Honesty<br>4. Safety<br>(Delgado in Asy'ari, 2021) |
|--|--|---|

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Result

A loading factor value can be considered valid if the indicator correlates with the construct being measured at  $> 0.7$ . The results of the outer loading output are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Outer Loading Test**

| Variable                | Indicator | Outer Loading | Explanation |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| Social Media Engagement | X1.1      | 0.900         | Valid       |
|                         | X1.2      | 0.915         | Valid       |
|                         | X1.3      | 0.889         | Valid       |
|                         | X1.4      | 0.905         | Valid       |
|                         | X1.5      | 0.907         | Valid       |
|                         | X1.6      | 0.901         | Valid       |
| Product Quality         | X2.1      | 0.868         | Valid       |
|                         | X2.2      | 0.912         | Valid       |
|                         | X2.3      | 0.892         | Valid       |
|                         | X2.4      | 0.897         | Valid       |
|                         | X2.5      | 0.920         | Valid       |
|                         | X2.6      | 0.858         | Valid       |
|                         | X2.7      | 0.898         | Valid       |
|                         | X2.8      | 0.881         | Valid       |
| Brand Trust             | Z.1       | 0.879         | Valid       |
|                         | Z.2       | 0.897         | Valid       |
|                         | Z.3       | 0.914         | Valid       |
|                         | Z.4       | 0.910         | Valid       |
|                         | Z.5       | 0.926         | Valid       |
| Purchase Decision       | Y.1       | 0.883         | Valid       |
|                         | Y.2       | 0.877         | Valid       |
|                         | Y.3       | 0.920         | Valid       |
|                         | Y.4       | 0.903         | Valid       |
|                         | Y.5       | <b>0.882</b>  | Valid       |

#### 3.1.1 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is measured by comparing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value  $> 0.5$ . The cross-loading results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Cross Loading Value**

| Variable | Social Media Engagement (X1) | Product Quality (X2) | Brand Trust (Z) | Purchase Decision (Y) |
|----------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| X1.1     | 0.873                        | 0.898                | 0.869           | <b>0.876</b>          |
| X1.2     | 0.945                        | 0.911                | 0.915           | <b>0.916</b>          |

|      |              |              |              |              |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| X1.3 | 0.890        | 0.855        | 0.848        | <b>0.841</b> |
| X1.4 | 0.862        | 0.815        | 0.830        | <b>0.843</b> |
| X1.5 | 0.872        | 0.827        | 0.849        | <b>0.824</b> |
| X1.6 | 0.870        | 0.851        | 0.841        | <b>0.856</b> |
| X2.1 | 0.815        | 0.875        | 0.833        | <b>0.848</b> |
| X2.2 | 0.889        | 0.923        | 0.911        | <b>0.893</b> |
| X2.3 | 0.863        | 0.857        | 0.870        | <b>0.852</b> |
| X2.4 | 0.869        | 0.860        | 0.874        | <b>0.856</b> |
| X2.5 | 0.865        | 0.885        | 0.875        | <b>0.870</b> |
| X2.6 | 0.788        | 0.833        | 0.781        | <b>0.810</b> |
| X2.7 | 0.869        | 0.894        | 0.864        | <b>0.882</b> |
| X2.8 | 0.779        | 0.815        | 0.790        | <b>0.803</b> |
| Z.1  | 0.811        | 0.865        | 0.846        | <b>0.841</b> |
| Z.2  | 0.909        | 0.914        | 0.927        | <b>0.907</b> |
| Z.3  | 0.884        | 0.872        | 0.903        | <b>0.867</b> |
| Z.4  | 0.849        | 0.835        | 0.884        | <b>0.831</b> |
| Z.5  | 0.877        | 0.890        | 0.906        | <b>0.902</b> |
| Y.1  | 0.832        | 0.853        | 0.824        | <b>0.862</b> |
| Y.2  | 0.892        | 0.891        | 0.871        | <b>0.902</b> |
| Y.3  | 0.874        | 0.865        | 0.860        | <b>0.883</b> |
| Y.4  | 0.844        | 0.863        | 0.878        | <b>0.876</b> |
| Y.5  | <b>0.791</b> | <b>0.809</b> | <b>0.815</b> | <b>0.839</b> |

The discriminant validity of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5 can be seen in the AVE results in Table 4.

**Table 4. AVE Value**

| Variable                       | Average variance extracted (AVE) | Explanation |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Social Media Engagement</i> | 0.785                            | Valid       |
| Product Quality                | 0.754                            | Valid       |
| Brand Trust                    | 0.798                            | Valid       |
| Purchase Decision              | <b>0.761</b>                     | Valid       |

### 3.1.2 Reliability

A construct is considered reliable if its composite reliability value above 0.70 and Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.70. The results of the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Composite Reliability Value**

| Variabel                       | Composite Reability | Explanation |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| <i>Social Media Engagement</i> | 0.956               | Reliabel    |
| Product Quality                | 0.961               | Reliabel    |

|                          |              |                 |
|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| <b>Brand Trust</b>       | 0.952        | <b>Reliabel</b> |
| <b>Purchase Decision</b> | <b>0.941</b> | <b>Reliabel</b> |

### 3.1.3 R-Square

The inner model using the PLS method begins by examining the R-squared value of each dependent latent variable. The R-squared values are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. R-square value**

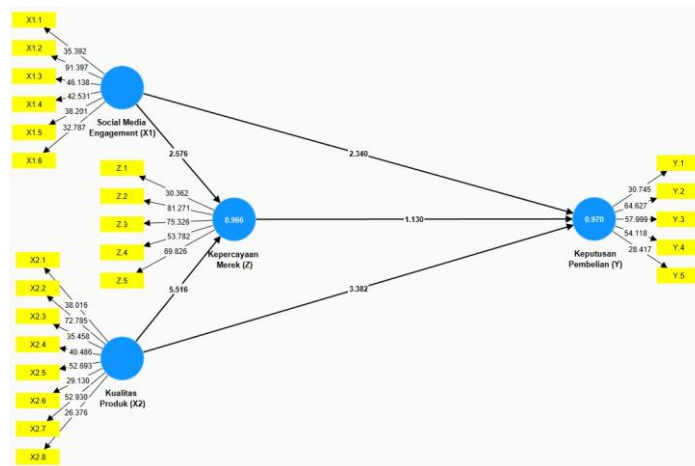
| Variable                 | Rsquare      | R Square Adjusted |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <b>Purchase Decision</b> | <b>0.970</b> | <b>0.970</b>      |

### 3.1.4 Model Fit

A Model Fit Test was applied to assess how well the proposed model aligned with the observed data. A model is considered acceptable when the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value is below 0.10, while an SRMR value below 0.08 indicates an excellent fit. The Normal Fit Index (NFI) ranges from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 signifying a better model fit. The detailed results of the model fit evaluation are presented in Table 7 and Figure 2.

**Table 7. Model Fit Test**

| GoF         | Value        | Explanation       |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <b>SRMR</b> | <b>0.055</b> | <i>Acceptable</i> |



**Figure 2. Structural Model**

## 3.2 Hypothesis

Hypothesis testing was conducted by examining the coefficients in the SmartPLS 4.0 calculations to determine the influence of the variables. The following structural model is shown in the figure below:

### 3.2.1 Direct Effect

The hypothesis in the study can be accepted if the T-statistic is greater than 1.96 (5% significance level) or the P-value is <0.05. The following Path Coefficient results are presented in Tables 8 and 9.

**Tabel 8. Direct Effect**

| Variable   | <i>Original Sample</i> | T-Statistic | P-Value | Explanation |
|--|------------------------|-------------|---------|-------------|
| Product Quality (X2) -> Purchase Decision (Y)                            | 0.559                  | 3.382       | 0.000   | Accepted    |
| Brand Trust (Z) -> Purchase Decision (Y)                                 | 0.185                  | 1.130       | 0.129   | Rejected    |
| Social Media Engagement (X1) -> Brand Trust (Z) -> Purchase Decision (Y) | 0,359                  | 3,756       | 0.004   | Accepted    |
| Product Quality (X2) -> Brand Trust (Z) -> Purchase Decision (Y)         | 0,431                  | 2.850       | 0.002   | Accepted    |

**Tabel 9. Specific Indirect Effect**

| Variable  | <i>Original Sample</i> | T-Statistic | P-Value | Keterangan |
|---|------------------------|-------------|---------|------------|
| Social Media Engagement (X1) -> Brand Trust (Z)       | 0.318                  | 2.576       | 0.005   | Accepted   |
| Product Quality (X2) -> Brand Trust (Z)               | 0.671                  | 5.516       | 0.000   | Accepted   |
| Social Media Engagement (X1) -> Purchase Decision (Y) | 0.249                  | 2.340       | 0.010   | Accepted   |

### 3.3 Discussion

#### 3.3.1 The Effect of Social Media Engagement on Brand Trust

The path coefficient results revealed that social media engagement significantly influenced brand trust. This variable reflects how audiences interact with online business activities through several dimensions, including credible content, self-relevant messages, up-to-date information, feedback from others, personal responses and perceived benefits or incentives. The findings indicate that social media engagement meaningfully impacts consumer trust in PT Shell Indonesia products. Most respondents

strongly agreed that authentic reviews and reliable content shared on social media enhanced their confidence in Shell's products, such as fuel, lubricants, and spare parts. These results support the conclusions of [Khusniah and Astuti \(2024\)](#), who confirmed that social media engagement has a positive and significant effect on brand trust.

### **3.3.2 The Effect of Product Quality on Brand Trust**

The analysis also shows that product quality significantly affects brand trust. Product quality encompasses aspects such as performance, features, reliability, conformance to standards, durability, serviceability, aesthetics, and the overall perceived value. The evidence suggests that superior product quality strengthens consumer trust in PT Shell Indonesia's offerings. Respondents acknowledged that Shell's consistent commitment to quality fuelled their confidence in the brand. This outcome aligns with [Yulita \(2021\)](#), who demonstrated that product quality positively and significantly affects brand trust.

### **3.3.3 The Influence of Social Media Engagement on Purchasing Decisions**

The path coefficient analysis results show that social media engagement significantly impacts consumers' purchasing decisions. Active consumer participation on digital platforms enhances brand visibility and fosters favorable perceptions of a company's quality and credibility. Through social media, Shell Indonesia can deliver product information, promotional content, and educational messages in a fast and interactive manner, which plays an essential role in encouraging consumer purchase intentions. These findings are consistent with those of [Purba et al. \(2025\)](#), who demonstrated that social media engagement positively influences consumer purchase behavior.

### **3.3.4 The Influence of Product Quality on Purchasing Decisions**

The analysis further indicates that product quality significantly affects the purchasing decisions. Product quality is one of the most decisive factors shaping consumer preferences for PT Shell Indonesia's products. When consumers believe that a product offers strong performance, long-lasting durability, and tangible benefits that align with their expectations, they are more inclined to purchase it. This study reinforces the findings of [Aprelyani et al. \(2024\)](#), who reported that product quality has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.

### **3.3.5 The Influence of Brand Trust on Purchasing Decisions**

The path coefficient analysis revealed that brand trust did not have a direct effect on purchasing decisions. Although consumers generally exhibit a high degree of trust in PT Shell Indonesia, this trust alone does not automatically translate into purchasing behavior. Brand trust in this context reflects consumers' confidence that Shell's products are reliable, safe to use, marketed honestly, and consistently high in quality. These findings differ from those of [Khusniah and Astuti \(2024\)](#), who found that brand trust positively and significantly affects purchasing decisions.

### **3.3.6 The Influence of Social Media Engagement on Purchasing Decisions Through Brand Trust**

The analysis also shows that social media engagement indirectly influences purchasing decisions through the mediating role of brand trust. Social media engagement is a vital factor shaping consumer behavior toward PT Shell Indonesia's products. When consumers interact with the company's official accounts by liking, commenting, sharing, or participating in digital campaigns, they not only increase product visibility but also develop emotional attachment and favorable perceptions of the brand. Consistent and meaningful engagement on these platforms creates a sense of connection and transparency,

fostering the belief that Shell is a trustworthy brand capable of meeting consumer expectations and maintaining accountability to its customers.

### **3.3.7 The Influence of Product Quality on Purchasing Decisions Through Brand Trust**

The path coefficient analysis results demonstrate that product quality affects purchasing decisions through the mediating role of brand trust. When consumers believe that Shell's products, such as fuel, lubricants, and other automotive components, offer superior quality, they develop greater confidence in the company's reliability and commitment to customer satisfaction. This perception is further strengthened by the belief that Shell operates honestly and provides products that are safe and consistent in performance. The sense of trust that emerges from this experience becomes an essential foundation for consumers when deciding to buy. In essence, product quality not only has a direct impact on purchasing behavior but also exerts an indirect influence by enhancing brand trust. The higher the perceived quality of the product, the stronger the trust established, which ultimately motivates consumers to prefer Shell products to competing brands.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings and analysis, it can be concluded that social media engagement has a partial yet significant influence on brand trust in Shell Indonesia products. This shows that active consumer participation on social media platforms plays an essential role in shaping brand trust. In addition, product quality partially affects brand trust, indicating that favorable consumer perceptions of product performance and reliability can further strengthen confidence in the company.

The results also revealed that social media engagement directly influences purchasing decisions, highlighting that interactive communication and engagement on digital platforms can stimulate consumer interest and encourage them to make purchases. Likewise, product quality exerts a significant effect on purchasing decisions, emphasizing that consumers place high importance on product excellence and reliability when deciding to buy products. However, brand trust does not directly affect purchasing decisions, suggesting that even though consumers believe in the credibility and integrity of the brand, their final decisions are still shaped by other elements, such as digital engagement experiences and perceived product quality. Furthermore, the study confirms that social media engagement influences purchasing decisions indirectly through brand trust as a mediating variable, underscoring that trust acts as a bridge connecting digital interactions with buying behavior. Similarly, product quality affects purchasing decisions through brand trust, reaffirming that strong perceptions of quality enhance consumer trust, which in turn drives purchasing intention and action.

Based on these conclusions, several recommendations can be made. Companies, particularly PT Shell Indonesia, should continue to optimize their social media strategies and maintain consistent product quality, as these two aspects have proven crucial in building brand trust and stimulating consumer purchasing behavior. Strengthening consumer trust requires transparency, accountability, and genuine demonstrations of product safety and reliability. Communicating these values through an honest and human-centered narrative will help foster stronger emotional connections with consumers. Moreover, integrating interactive digital content with messages about product excellence and company values can effectively enhance trust, which, in turn, indirectly boosts purchase decisions through brand trust as an intermediary factor.

For future research, it is recommended to broaden the study's scope by including other companies in the same industry to enable comparative and generalizable insights. Researchers should also consider incorporating additional variables, such as price perception, brand loyalty, or customer satisfaction, to enrich the model and capture a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior. In addition, employing a mixed-methods approach is highly suggested to complement quantitative findings with

qualitative insights, providing a deeper understanding of how brand trust is formed and how it shapes purchasing decision-making processes in the digital era.

### **Ethical Approval**

Ethical approval was not required for this study

### **Informed Consent Statement**

Not Applicable

### **Authors' Contributions**

MAK contributed to conceptualization, research design, data analysis, and manuscript writing. CDW contributed to instrument development, supervision during data collection, and the review of the theoretical framework. PS contributed to the statistical analysis, interpretation of the findings, and technical validation. TD contributed to literature review, data management, and proofreading of the final manuscript.

All authors discussed the results collaboratively and approved the final version for publication.

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### **Data Availability Statement**

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author due to privacy reasons.

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