

THE PURCHASE DECISION OF LABUBU BLIND BOX IS INFLUENCED BY E-WOM AND FOMO THROUGH BRAND IMAGE

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Abstract: *The growing popularity of blind box products such as Labubu among Gen Z has become an intriguing phenomenon in modern marketing. This study aims to examine the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on Purchase Decision through Brand Image as a mediating variable. The research focuses on Gen Z consumers in Denpasar City who actively engage in digital and social media based shopping activities. The study employs a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) to analyze the relationships among variables. The findings reveal that E-WOM and FOMO have a positive and significant effect on both Brand Image and Purchase Decision. However, Brand Image does not significantly mediate the relationship between E-WOM and FOMO toward Purchase Decision. Overall, the results indicate that Gen Z's purchasing decisions are more strongly driven by digital social interactions and emotional impulses than by brand perception alone. These findings suggest that companies should strengthen authentic digital communication strategies and enhance brand engagement to improve purchasing decisions.*

Keywords: *E-WOM, FOMO, Brand Image, Purchase Decision, Gen Z.*

Abstrak: Meningkatnya popularitas produk blind box seperti Labubu di kalangan Gen Z telah menjadi fenomena menarik dalam pemasaran modern. Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti pengaruh Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) dan Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) terhadap Keputusan Pembelian melalui Citra Merek sebagai variabel mediasi. Penelitian ini berfokus pada konsumen Gen Z di Kota Denpasar yang aktif terlibat dalam aktivitas belanja berbasis media digital dan sosial. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) untuk menganalisis hubungan antar variabel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa E-WOM dan FOMO memiliki pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Citra Merek dan Keputusan Pembelian. Namun, Citra Merek tidak secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara E-WOM dan FOMO terhadap Keputusan Pembelian. Secara keseluruhan, hasil menunjukkan bahwa keputusan pembelian Gen Z lebih kuat dipengaruhi oleh interaksi sosial digital dan impuls emosional daripada hanya persepsi merek saja. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa perusahaan harus memperkuat strategi komunikasi digital yang autentik dan meningkatkan keterlibatan merek untuk meningkatkan keputusan pembelian.

Kata Kunci: E-WOM, FOMO, Citra Merek, Keputusan Pembelian, Generasi Z.

INTRODUCTION

The shifting of shopping behavior in Indonesia has shifted significantly toward entertainment and collectible products. The rise of digital platforms has made it easier for consumers to access various items, including designer toys and collectible figures, that represent lifestyle and personal expression (Altje et al., 2024). In recent years, Indonesian consumers have shown a growing interest in products that not only provide aesthetic value but also serve as decorative elements in their daily lives (Pamulartiningrum & Putri, 2025). This phenomenon reflects a change in consumption patterns, where emotional satisfaction and identity presentation have become key motivators in purchasing behavior.

One of the most striking examples of this trend is the viral popularity of Labubu, a furry elf character created by Hong Kong artist Kasing Lung. Its fame surged when Lisa from BLACKPINK posted a photo of herself holding a Labubu doll on Instagram, sparking massive attention and driving a surge in demand across Asia (Aisyah & Matas, 2024). The viral post created a wave of *Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)* and *Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)* that amplified consumer curiosity and encouraged impulsive purchases.

Labubu's success demonstrates how emotional and social drivers can transform a niche collectible into a global sensation. Pop Mart, the Chinese toy company holding Labubu's licensing rights, adopted a *blind box* sales strategy where buyers do not know which figure they will receive until unboxing creating anticipation and scarcity that fuel repeated purchases (Ramadian & Nugroho, 2024). In the first half of 2025 alone, Labubu generated 4.81 billion yuan in sales, contributing 34.7% of Pop Mart's total revenue, and boosting the company's net profit by nearly 400% compared to the previous year.

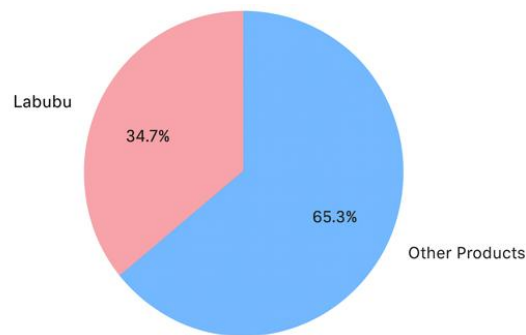


Figure 1. Labubu Sales Contribution to Pop Mart's Total Revenue (H1 2025)

Source: Processed Data, 2025

However, despite its popularity, previous studies have revealed inconsistent findings regarding the factors influencing consumers' purchase decisions. Some research has shown that FOMO significantly increases consumers' intention to buy trending products, as individuals fear missing out on popular experiences (Yani & Rojuaniah, 2023). In contrast, other studies have found that FOMO has no significant effect on purchase decisions (Dwisuardinata & Darma, 2022). Similarly, E-WOM, which refers to online recommendations and reviews, has been proven in several studies to have a positive impact on purchase behavior (Pentury et al., 2025), while others indicate that E-WOM does not significantly influence consumer decisions (Tanjung & Keni, 2023). Moreover, brand image the overall perception of a brand formed by consumer experience has shown varied outcomes across different studies; some suggest it strengthens purchase intention, while others reveal an insignificant relationship (Purwanto & Sahetapy, 2022).

These inconsistencies indicate a research gap regarding how FOMO, E-WOM, and brand image jointly influence purchase decisions in the context of viral collectible products. The psychological mechanism behind impulsive buying triggered by social influence and digital exposure remains underexplored, particularly for global collectible phenomena such as Labubu.

Based on this gap, the present study aims to analyze the influence of FOMO and E-WOM on purchase decisions through brand image as a mediating variable. By addressing these inconsistencies, this research seeks to contribute to the advancement of consumer behavior studies in the digital era, offering deeper insights into how social dynamics and brand perception shape purchase behavior within online communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Literatur Review

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1985), explains that behavioral intention is determined by three key components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These elements predict how likely an individual is to perform a certain behavior. This theory is relevant for understanding consumer purchase decisions, particularly in digital environments. In the context of Labubu blind box products, TPB helps explain how psychological and social factors such as *Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)* and *Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)* shape consumers' intentions and final purchase behavior.

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) refers to online communication among consumers through platforms like social media, websites, and reviews, where product-related opinions are shared. E-WOM acts as a persuasive form of digital communication that influences potential buyers.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

FOMO is described as the fear and anxiety of missing valuable experiences or opportunities that others are having (Nada, 2024). It motivates individuals to stay connected and participate in trends or social activities.

Brand Image

Brand Image represents the set of perceptions and associations that consumers form toward a brand based on experiences and information (Miati, 2020). A positive brand image builds trust, emotional connection, and long-term loyalty.

Purchase Decision

Purchase Decision refers to the process by which consumers choose and finalize the acquisition of a product that meets their needs (Barreto et al., 2020). **Hypothesis**

Development

The Effect of E-WOM on Purchase Decision

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) refers to information shared by consumers through online platforms such as reviews, testimonials, and social media discussions (Siregar, 2024). E-WOM acts as a credible information source that influences consumer trust and reduces uncertainty before purchasing. Positive online reviews increase consumers' confidence and desire to buy a product. In the case of the Labubu blind box, discussions and product reviews on digital platforms help shape consumer perceptions and purchasing tendencies.

H1: E-WOM has a positive effect on Purchase Decision for Labubu blind box products.

The Effect of FOMO on Purchase Decision

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) describes the anxiety individuals feel when they believe others are enjoying exclusive experiences or opportunities without them (Puspitasari et al., 2025). In consumer behavior, FOMO drives quick purchasing decisions to avoid missing out, especially for limited-edition or trending items. For Labubu products, which are sold as collectible blind boxes, this psychological pressure intensifies consumer urgency to purchase immediately.

H2: FOMO has a positive effect on Purchase Decision for Labubu blind box products.

The Effect of E-WOM on Brand Image

E-WOM also shapes **Brand Image**, as online discussions and shared experiences influence public perception of a product's quality and exclusivity (Tatasari et al., 2025). Positive digital interactions strengthen brand reputation and create a favorable image in consumers' minds. For Labubu, social media buzz and user-generated content enhance its perception as a trendy and collectible brand.

H3: E-WOM has a positive effect on Brand Image for Labubu blind box products.

The Effect of FOMO on Brand Image

FOMO contributes to brand perception when products become viral or widely discussed online (Hikam, 2024). Consumers associate popular and exclusive items with prestige and desirability, strengthening the brand's emotional appeal. In the context of

Labubu, FOMO-driven hype positions the brand as unique and valuable among collectors.

H4: FOMO has a positive effect on Brand Image for Labubu blind box products.

The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision

Brand Image represents consumers' perceptions and associations with a brand based on their experiences and expectations (Maulidiyah & Handoko, 2024). A strong and positive brand image increases consumer trust and purchasing confidence. For Labubu, a distinctive and exclusive brand image encourages consumers to buy as part of lifestyle expression and collection.

H5: Brand Image has a positive effect on Purchase Decision for Labubu blind box products.

The Mediating Role of Brand Image between E-WOM and Purchase Decision

E-WOM not only affects purchase decisions directly but also shapes consumers' perceptions of brand image (Febrianti & Ahmadi, 2024). Positive brand image builds consumer confidence and transforms online recommendations into real purchasing actions. In Labubu's case, consumers exposed to favorable reviews are more likely to buy when they already perceive the brand as unique and trustworthy.

H6: Brand Image mediates the positive relationship between E-WOM and Purchase Decision for Labubu blind box products.

The Mediating Role of Brand Image between FOMO and Purchase Decision

FOMO encourages consumers to follow trends, but its impact becomes stronger when supported by a positive brand image (Rahmawati & Sijabat, 2022). Brand image provides emotional reassurance, transforming the fear of missing out into confident purchasing behavior. For Labubu, consumers with a positive brand perception respond more strongly to FOMO cues and are quicker to purchase.

H7: Brand Image mediates the positive relationship between FOMO and Purchase Decision for Labubu blind box products.

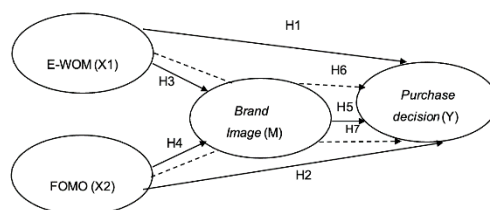


Figure 2. Research Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted in Denpasar City, Bali, focusing on Gen Z consumers of the Labubu blind box. Denpasar was chosen as the research location because it is an urban center with a large population of young and digitally active individuals. The high engagement of Gen Z with online shopping and collectible trends makes the city suitable for studying purchasing behavior toward Labubu blind box products.

Before distributing the questionnaire, a manipulation check was conducted with 30 respondents to ensure that the instrument was understandable and all statements could be interpreted consistently. The feedback obtained was used to refine the questionnaire's wording and layout to improve readability and clarity before collecting the full data set. The population in this study includes potential consumers of Labubu blind box in Denpasar City, particularly those belonging to Generation Z (aged 18–27 years). Since the exact number of consumers is unknown, the sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with specific criteria: (1) respondents have purchased Labubu blind box at least once through online or offline platforms, (2) belong to the Gen Z age group, and (3) reside in Denpasar City. Based on the guideline by Hair et al. (2019), the minimum sample size is ten times the number of indicators used. With 13 indicators in this study, a total of 132 respondents were determined as the sample size. Data collection was conducted both online and offline through a structured questionnaire.

The data type used in this research is quantitative, as it involves numerical analysis to measure the relationships between variables. The primary data were collected directly from respondents through questionnaires, while secondary data were obtained from previous studies, journals, and online articles to support the research context and theoretical foundation.

The measurement instruments in this study consist of four main variables: E-WOM, FOMO, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision. E-WOM was measured using indicators developed by Pamunggar (2023), including (a) E-WOM quality, (b) E-WOM quantity, and (c) sender expertise. FOMO was measured based on Putri et al. (2019), with indicators of (a) fear, (b) worry, and (c) anxiety. Brand Image was measured using Romney et al. (2016), which includes (a) brand strength, (b) brand uniqueness, and (c) brand favorable. Purchase Decision was measured according to Miati (2020), with indicators of (a) determination in choosing, (b) decision to buy, (c) purchase based on need and willingness, and (d) purchase based on others' recommendations.

All indicators were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test both the measurement and structural models. The measurement model was evaluated through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, while the structural model was tested using R-square, Q-square, and hypothesis testing with path coefficients and bootstrapping procedures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 132 respondents from Denpasar City, focusing on Generation Z consumers of Labubu blind box collectibles. The characteristics of respondents based on gender, age, occupation, and domicile are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

No.	Category	Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	24	18%
		Female	108	82%
2	Age	18–20 years	11	8.3%
		21–23 years	18	13.6%
		24–27 years	103	78%
3	Occupation	Civil Servant (PNS)	13	9.8%
		Private Employee	79	59.8%
		Student	22	16.7%
		Entrepreneur	18	13.6%
4	Domicile (Districts in Denpasar City)	North Denpasar	33	25%
		South Denpasar	33	25%
		West Denpasar	33	25%
		East Denpasar	33	25%

Source : Processed Data (2025)

Most respondents were female (82%), indicating that Labubu collectibles are more appealing to women, especially due to their artistic and aesthetic value. In terms of age, 78% were 24–27 years old, showing that the main consumers are young adults with strong purchasing power and trend awareness. Based on occupation, private employees (59.8%) dominated, followed by students and entrepreneurs. The domicile distribution across Denpasar’s four districts was relatively even, showing broad product appeal across regions.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity testing was conducted to determine the extent to which each indicator consistently represents its corresponding latent construct.

Outer Loading

The convergent validity can be evaluated using the loading factor, where an indicator is considered valid if its loading value exceeds 0.7 (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 2. Outer Loading

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Rule of Thumb	Conclusion
Brand Image (M)	M.1	0.836	0.700	Valid
	M.2	0.890	0.700	Valid
	M.3	0.776	0.700	Valid
E-WOM (X1)	X1.1	0.869	0.700	Valid
	X1.2	0.736	0.700	Valid
	X1.3	0.926	0.700	Valid
FOMO (X2)	X2.1	0.858	0.700	Valid
	X2.2	0.799	0.700	Valid
	X2.3	0.770	0.700	Valid
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y.1	0.867	0.700	Valid
	Y.2	0.846	0.700	Valid
	Y.3	0.863	0.700	Valid
	Y.4	0.747	0.700	Valid

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on Table 2 , all indicators have loading factor values greater than 0.70, indicating that every indicator meets the requirement for convergent validity.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Image (M)	0.698
E-WOM (X1)	0.718
FOMO (X2)	0.656
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.692

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is used to assess the convergent validity of each latent construct. A construct is considered to meet the convergent validity criteria if its AVE value is greater than 0.50 (Ghozali, 2021). Based on Table 3, all variables show AVE values above 0.50.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity ensures that each construct in the model is distinct from other constructs. Good discriminant validity indicates that a construct uniquely explains its indicators and does not overlap with other constructs (Ghozali, 2021).

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

(HTMT) approach was used to assess discriminant validity. According to Ghozali (2021), a model achieves adequate discriminant validity when the HTMT value is below 0.90 (or below 0.85 for a stricter standard). All HTMT values between constructs are below 0.90, confirming that each construct is clearly distinct from the others. Therefore, the research model meets the criteria for good discriminant validity.

Table 4. HTMT

Construct	Brand Image (M)	E-WOM (X1)	FOMO (X2)	Purchase Decision (Y)
Brand Image (M)				
E-WOM (X1)	0.714			
FOMO (X2)	0.299	0.536		
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.788	0.628	0.364	

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Reliability

Reliability testing was conducted to ensure that each indicator consistently produces stable results when measured repeatedly. Reliability demonstrates the internal consistency of the instrument in measuring the same construct. This study used two reliability indicators: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. A construct is considered reliable if both values exceed 0.7, indicating acceptable internal consistency (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 5. Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Rule of Thumb	Conclusion
Brand Image (M)	0.782	0.784	0.700	Reliable
E-WOM (X1)	0.802	0.842	0.700	Reliable
FOMO (X2)	0.737	0.740	0.700	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.850	0.850	0.700	Reliable

Source: Processed Data (2025)

All constructs have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.7, indicating that all variables meet the reliability criteria. The highest reliability was found in the Purchase Decision (Y) variable, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.850 and a Composite Reliability of 0.850, demonstrating strong measurement consistency. Therefore, all constructs in this study are reliable and suitable for further analysis in the inner model evaluation stage.

R-Square

The R-Square value assesses the explanatory power of exogenous variables on endogenous constructs. According to Ghozali (2021), R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 indicate strong, moderate, and weak models, respectively.

Table 6. R-Square

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Brand Image (M)	0.478	0.467
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.603	0.590

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The R^2 for Brand Image (M) is 0.478, and for Purchase Decision (Y) is 0.603, suggesting moderate to strong predictive power. The total coefficient of determination (R^2_m) was calculated using the error value (Pe):

$$R_m^2 = 1 - (0.722^2 \times 0.630^2) = 0.793$$

The R^2_m value of 0.793 indicates that the model explains approximately 79.3% of the total variance among endogenous variables classified as strong, meaning the structural model has excellent explanatory capability.

Q-Square

The Q-Square (Q^2) value evaluates the predictive relevance of the model. A Q^2 value greater than zero indicates good predictive capability (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 7. Q-Square

Variable	Q^2 Predict
Brand Image (M)	0.440
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.559

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The Brand Image (M) variable has a Q^2 value of 0.440, indicating moderate predictive relevance, while Purchase Decision (Y) has a Q^2 value of 0.559, reflecting high predictive relevance. Thus, the model demonstrates strong predictive validity and the ability to represent the observed data accurately.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing in this study aims to determine the significant influence between the exogenous variables E-WOM and FOMO on the endogenous variable Purchase Decision, both directly and indirectly through the mediating variable Brand Image. The analysis was conducted using the bootstrapping method in SEM-PLS, producing t-statistic and p-value values as the basis for hypothesis decisions. According to Ghozali (2021), a hypothesis is accepted if t-statistic > 1.978 (for 132 respondents at a

5% significance level) and p-value < 0.05. Conversely, if t-statistic ≤ 1.978 or p-value > 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected.

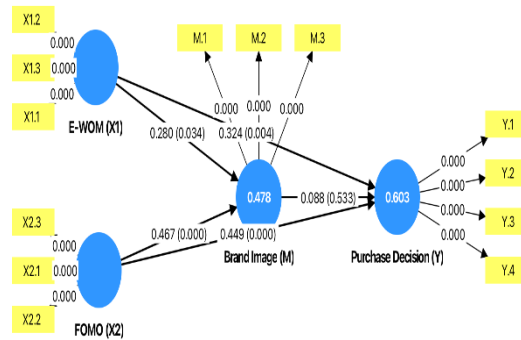


Figure 3. Bootstrapping Results

Source: Processed Data (2025)

After presenting the overall hypothesis testing results, the next step is to examine the direct effects of E-WOM and FOMO on Purchase Decision, as well as their indirect effects through the mediating variable Brand Image. This analysis aims to provide a clearer understanding of how each variable contributes to consumers’ purchasing behavior.

Direct Effect Testing

Table 8. Direct Effect Testing Results

Relationship Between Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T-Statistic	P-Value
E-WOM → Purchase Decision	0.324	0.311	0.113	2.875	0.004
FOMO → Purchase Decision	0.449	0.466	0.102	4.413	0.000
E-WOM → Brand Image	0.280	0.265	0.132	2.126	0.034
FOMO → Brand Image	0.467	0.486	0.121	3.857	0.000
Brand Image → Purchase Decision	0.088	0.090	0.141	0.623	0.533

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The first hypothesis testing shows that E-WOM has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Decision ($t = 2.875$; $p = 0.004$). This means that stronger and more positive electronic word-of-mouth communication increases consumers' purchasing decisions toward the Labubu blind box product. Thus, H1 is accepted.

The second hypothesis indicates that FOMO positively and significantly affects Purchase Decision ($t = 4.413$; $p = 0.000$). This implies that higher levels of fear of missing out among consumers lead to stronger purchase intentions. Hence, H2 is accepted.

The third hypothesis testing shows that E-WOM significantly influences Brand Image ($t = 2.126$; $p = 0.034$), meaning that positive online reviews and recommendations improve the perceived brand image of Labubu. Therefore, H3 is accepted.

The fourth hypothesis shows that FOMO positively and significantly affects Brand Image ($t = 3.857$; $p = 0.000$). This indicates that FOMO strengthens consumers' perception of the brand, making H4 accepted.

Meanwhile, the fifth hypothesis demonstrates that Brand Image does not significantly influence Purchase Decision ($t = 0.623$; $p = 0.533$). This shows that although consumers may perceive the brand positively, it does not necessarily lead to a purchase decision. Thus, H5 is rejected.

Indirect Effect Testing

Table 9. Indirect Effect Testing Results

Relationship Between Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T- Statistic	P- Value
E-WOM (X1) → Brand Image (M) → Purchase Decision (Y)	0.025	0.030	0.046	0.530	0.596
FOMO (X2) → Brand Image (M) → Purchase Decision (Y)	0.041	0.040	0.069	0.592	0.554

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The sixth hypothesis testing shows that E-WOM → Brand Image → Purchase Decision produces a *t-statistic* of 0.530 and *p-value* of 0.596, indicating an insignificant relationship. Therefore, Brand Image does not mediate the effect of E-WOM on Purchase Decision, and H6 is rejected.

Similarly, the seventh hypothesis shows that FOMO → Brand Image → Purchase Decision is also not significant ($t = 0.592$; $p = 0.554$). This indicates that Brand Image fails to mediate the influence of FOMO on Purchase Decision. Hence, H7 is rejected.

Discussion

The results indicate that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision. This finding shows that the more frequent and positive online reviews or recommendations consumers receive, the higher their likelihood to make a purchase. Consumers tend to rely on authentic online communication rather than direct company advertising. This finding aligns with Fauzan and Sari (2022) as well as Pratiwi and Rahardjo (2023), who stated that E-WOM plays a vital role in shaping consumer decisions by providing trustworthy peer opinions. However, this study differs from Della et al. (2020), who emphasized that E-WOM primarily affects purchasing decisions through brand trust. In this research, E-WOM directly influences purchase decisions without requiring brand perception as an intermediary. Most respondents were female, aged 24–27, and highly active on social media, which amplifies the impact of E-WOM exposure. These characteristics suggest that digital communication channels are the dominant factor in shaping purchasing behavior among young consumers.

The analysis reveals that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) significantly and positively influences Purchase Decision. This means that the stronger the feeling of urgency or anxiety about missing trends or limited opportunities, the greater the consumers' intention to purchase. FOMO creates emotional pressure that leads to impulsive buying behavior, particularly for collectible or limited-edition products like Labubu blind boxes. This finding is consistent with Park (2022), who demonstrated that FOMO increases purchase intention through emotional and social triggers. However, the result differs from Platon (2024), who suggested that FOMO only affects purchase decisions indirectly through

social belongingness. In this study, FOMO exerts a direct motivational force. Considering respondent characteristics, most participants belong to Gen Z consumers who are digitally connected and highly responsive to trends on TikTok. This supports the notion that social media-driven scarcity cues strongly influence their buying motivation.

The results show that E-WOM has a positive and significant impact on Brand Image. Positive online reviews and discussions help build a strong brand image by shaping perceptions of product quality and consumer satisfaction. These findings are in line with those of Lariba (2023), who found that online discussions and user-generated content increase brand awareness and strengthen perceived brand credibility. Similarly, Brown (2024) emphasized that consistent digital conversations promote emotional connections between consumers and brands. Given that the respondents are young and active social media users, their brand perception tends to be highly influenced by peer-generated content. Therefore, maintaining consistent positive exposure through E-WOM is crucial for sustaining Labubu's brand reputation.

The findings indicate that FOMO has a significant and positive effect on Brand Image. The desire not to miss out on trending or exclusive items enhances consumers' perception of the brand's prestige and desirability. This is supported by the research of Verma (2025), who found that FOMO contributes to brand prestige and creates emotional attachment among consumers. Similar results were reported by Habib & Almamy (2025), stating that FOMO reinforces the perceived value of a brand by associating it with social inclusion. The demographic composition of the respondents predominantly Gen Z with a high interest in online trends reflects that emotional and social influence factors are essential in shaping brand perception. Labubu's popularity benefits from this social contagion effect, where FOMO-driven enthusiasm reinforces its image as a trendy collectible.

The analysis indicates that Brand Image has no significant effect on Purchase Decision. This result suggests that a positive perception of the Labubu brand does not necessarily translate into an actual purchase decision. While consumers may view the brand favorably, other emotional or situational factors such as scarcity and peer influence play a stronger role in driving purchases. This finding contrasts with previous studies by

Siregar (2024), who found that a strong brand image usually enhances purchase intention. However, in the context of blind box products, impulsive motivations and external influences appear more dominant than brand-based considerations. Most respondents in this study make purchase decisions based on social influence and limited-time offers rather than brand familiarity, suggesting that their behavior aligns more with emotional triggers than cognitive evaluations.

The results show that the mediating effect of Brand Image on the relationship between E-WOM and Purchase Decision is insignificant. This indicates that while E-WOM improves brand perception, such improvement does not significantly drive consumers to purchase. This finding differs from studies by Oetama (2022), who reported that Brand Image acts as a strong mediator between online communication and purchasing behavior. In this study, the absence of mediation suggests that consumer decisions are more directly influenced by peer recommendations than by brand perception itself. Given that respondents are active social media users, their decisions are likely impulsive, reflecting real-time reactions to viral trends rather than deliberate brand evaluation.

The mediating effect of Brand Image on the relationship between FOMO and Purchase Decision is also found to be insignificant. This suggests that although FOMO strengthens brand perception, it does not significantly translate into a stronger purchase decision through that channel. This finding contradicts the results of Laili et al. (2025), who found that Brand Image can mediate the effect of emotional triggers like FOMO on consumer purchasing behavior. In contrast, this study implies that FOMO directly stimulates purchasing impulses without relying on brand perception as a mediator. Considering that most respondents are highly engaged in online communities, their behavior reflects an emotional rather than brand-driven purchase pattern, emphasizing the immediacy of social and trend-based motivation.

Implications

The findings of this study provide several important contributions to consumer behavior theory, particularly in understanding the digital era purchasing process among young consumers. First, the significant influence of E-WOM and FOMO on Purchase

Decision confirms that emotional and social stimuli dominate over cognitive evaluation such as Brand Image. This strengthens the theoretical view that social influence and online peer interaction are central determinants in shaping digital consumer actions (Rachmad, 2024).

Second, the insignificant effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision challenges the conventional assumption that a strong brand image always leads to purchase intention. This suggests that in trend-based or collectible product markets, decisions are more impulsive and situational rather than brand-driven. Such findings extend existing models of online consumer decision-making by emphasizing emotional immediacy as a critical factor. Lastly, the absence of mediation from Brand Image between E-WOM and FOMO toward Purchase Decision implies that communication and emotional stimuli directly drive behavior without necessarily shaping brand perception first. This finding contributes to refining theoretical frameworks like the Technology Acceptance and Social Influence models by highlighting the reduced mediating role of brand constructs in fast-moving digital environments.

Implications From a managerial perspective, the results emphasize the importance of optimizing digital engagement strategies to capitalize on the influence of E-WOM and FOMO. Companies should encourage user-generated content, reviews, and social interactions that can amplify online word-of-mouth effects. Building digital communities and using limited-edition or time-sensitive campaigns can effectively trigger consumers' FOMO and drive immediate purchases.

While maintaining a positive Brand Image remains essential, this study suggests that marketers should focus more on emotional and interactive campaigns rather than relying solely on traditional branding efforts. Social media marketing especially through TikTok and Instagram should highlight exclusivity, scarcity, and community participation to create stronger psychological engagement. In addition, understanding consumer demographics is critical. The majority of respondents in this study were female (82%), aged 24–27 (78%), private employees (59.8%), and residing across all Denpasar districts. These characteristics indicate that young working consumers are both socially connected and financially capable, making them highly responsive to online social influence and

digital peer communication. Therefore, future marketing efforts should continue targeting this segment with emotionally charged, trend-driven, and socially interactive strategies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of this study demonstrate that both Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) play a significant role in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions for collectible products such as the Labubu blind box. The findings indicate that positive online communication and social exposure can directly encourage consumers to make purchase decisions without the need for extensive brand evaluation. In contrast, Brand Image, although positively related, does not have a significant direct effect on purchasing decisions. This suggests that in digital consumption patterns driven by trends and emotional impulses, social influence and immediacy outweigh traditional brand perception. Furthermore, the study found that Brand Image does not mediate the relationship between E-WOM or FOMO and Purchase Decision, meaning that consumers' purchase intentions are more strongly affected by emotional triggers and social interactions than by brand associations.

This research contributes to the development of consumer behavior theory by highlighting the growing dominance of emotional and social factors in online purchasing contexts. It provides new insight into how impulsive buying behavior in digital markets is driven not only by product appeal but also by psychological dynamics such as FOMO and peer influence.

These findings expand existing theoretical frameworks by emphasizing that, within trend-based consumption, the speed and emotional intensity of social interactions can surpass brand-driven motivations. From a managerial standpoint, the results suggest that companies like Pop Mart should focus on strengthening digital engagement and social interaction strategies. Encouraging authentic E-WOM through credible influencers, collectors, and satisfied customers can significantly enhance consumer trust and excitement. Leveraging FOMO through limited-edition releases or time-bound campaigns can also stimulate purchase urgency while maintaining ethical marketing practices. Strengthening brand distinctiveness through innovative product design, packaging, and superior customer service will further reinforce consumer loyalty in the

long term. Finally, considering that most respondents in this study were young female professionals aged 24–27, future marketing efforts should prioritize digital platforms like Instagram and TikTok that align with this demographic's online habits and emotional engagement patterns. Future research may also include other variables such as brand trust, customer engagement, or perceived value to enrich the understanding of digital consumer decision-making in the collectible product industry.

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