

# **Emotional Branding and Service Excellence: A Study of the Influence of Word of Mouth and Brand Image on the Purchase Decisions of MSME Putra Ponorogo Consumers**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the influence of service quality, word of mouth, and brand image on consumer purchase decisions in Putra Ponorogo MSMEs. The method used was quantitative research with the distribution of questionnaires to 75 respondents, as well as data analysis using multiple linear regression. The results of the study show that the three variables of service quality, word of mouth, and brand image have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. These findings affirm the importance of improving service quality, strengthening recommendations between consumers, and building brand image to encourage purchase decisions for Putra Ponorogo MSMEs

**Keywords: Service Quality, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, Purchase Decision, MSMEs**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Business competition in today's digital era is getting tighter, so every business actor is required to be able to understand consumer needs and create an effective marketing strategy (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Rainanto et al., 2021; Kotler & Armstrong, 2008; Hasan in Rainanto et al., 2021). In this context, consumer behavior is one of the important factors that determine the success of a business (Amirullah, 2002; Cahya et al., 2016; Susan, 2019; Shimp, 2003). Consumer purchasing decisions not only depend on the functional needs of the product, but are also influenced by psychological, social, and previous customer experiences (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Tjiptono, 2017; Liana Chayani Gunawan, 2020; Thompson & Peteraf, 2016). Therefore, understanding the purchase decision process is relevant, especially for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that currently play a strategic role in the Indonesian economy (Sugiyono, 2018; Ministry of Cooperatives & UKM RI, 2023; BPS, 2023; Suciningtyas et al., 2012

Service quality is one of the main aspects that influence consumer decisions in choosing a product or service (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Kasmir, 2017). Good service is able to create a sense of comfort and trust for customers, thereby encouraging them to return to make transactions (Fitzsimmons in Mukarom & Muhibudin, 2015; Novita Djafar et al., 2023). In service-based and production-based businesses such as convection, embroidery, and screen printing, the quality of service is not only about the speed and accuracy of work, but also how business actors respond to consumer needs, provide information, and maintain effective communication (Arianto, 2018; Kasmir, 2017). When services do not meet expectations, consumers tend to switch to other service providers (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Novita Djafar et al., 2023).

*Word of mouth* (word-of-mouth communication) also has a huge influence on purchasing decisions, especially in the current social media era (Suryani in Tampinongkol & Mandagie, 2018; Cahya et al., 2016). Consumers tend to trust the recommendations of those closest to them or other customer reviews more than the promotions carried out by the company (Nugraha et al., 2015; Keller & Swaminathan, 2020). Positive *word of mouth* can be an efficient and highly engaging marketing tool, while negative reviews can significantly reduce buying interest (Priansa, 2017; Doni Marlius & Mutiara, 2022). Thus, consumer satisfaction and positive experience are important capital for business people to expand their customer network (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Suryani, 2019).

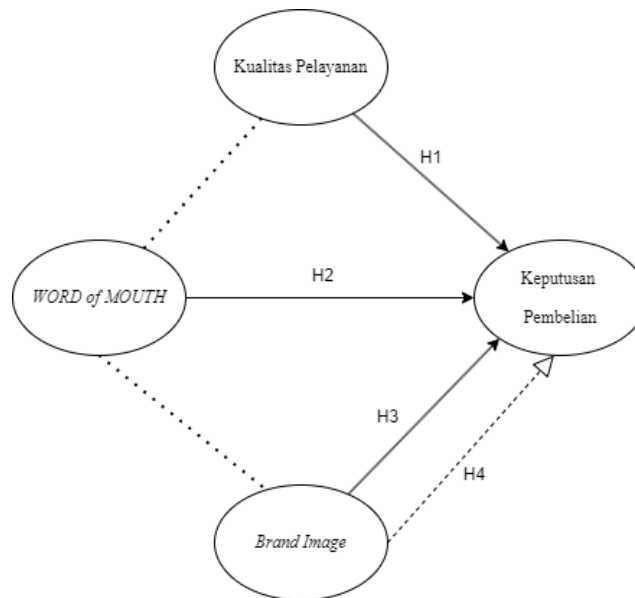
Putra Ponorogo MSMEs are one of the local business actors engaged in convection, traditional clothing manufacturing, computer embroidery, and screen printing (Putra Ponorogo MSME Data, 2025; Wulandari & Hakim, 2023). Despite having been operating for more than a decade, these MSMEs face challenges in sustaining customer purchasing decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Djafar et al., 2023). Based on sales data, there are fluctuations in the number of consumers which shows indications of problems related to service quality, the dissemination of information from consumers, and the perception of brands (Putra Ponorogo MSME Data, 2025; Nugraha et al., 2015). For example, the number of buyers of services and products has decreased in a certain period, which indicates the need to

strengthen marketing strategies and improve service quality (Putra Ponorogo MSME Data, 2025; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Seeing this phenomenon, research on the influence of service quality, word of mouth, and brand image on purchasing decisions in Putra Ponorogo MSMEs is important. The results of this study are expected to contribute in the form of an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence consumer decisions, as well as provide strategic recommendations for MSMEs in increasing customer loyalty and business competitiveness in the midst of increasingly competitive market dynamics.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a quantitative approach with the aim of analyzing the influence of service quality, word of mouth, and brand image on purchase decisions in Putra Ponorogo MSME consumers. The research sample amounted to 75 respondents who were selected using a sample determination technique based on the number of indicators, according to the formula proposed by Hair et al. Data collection was carried out through the distribution of questionnaires on the Likert scale. Primary data was obtained directly from respondents, while secondary data came from the literature and supporting documents. The research instrument is tested through validity and reliability tests to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the measuring instrument. Data analysis was carried out by multiple linear regression using the help of SPSS software, and was equipped with t-test, F test, and determination coefficient to determine the partial and simultaneous influence between research variables.



**Image 1. Research Framework**

**Results and discussion**

**1. Demographics**

Demographic information is data that describes the characteristics of a population based on variables such as age, gender, education, occupation, income, and marital status, which is used to understand the composition and behavior of community groups or respondents in a study (Sugiyono, 2019).

**Table 1. Demographic Information**

	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male – Male	38	50,7
	Women	37	49,3
Education	DIPLOMA	13	17,3
	BACHELOR	8	10,7
	SD	2	2,7
	High School	39	52,0
	Junior High School	13	17,3

Based on respondent demographic data, it is known that the majority of respondents in this study are male as many as 38 people or 50.7%, while female

respondents are 37 people or 49.3%. This shows that respondent participation between men and women is relatively balanced. Judging from the level of education, respondents with a high school education background dominated with 39 people or 52.0%, followed by Diploma graduates as many as 13 people or 17.3%, and junior high school graduates as many as 13 people or 17.3%. Meanwhile, respondents with bachelor's education amounted to 8 people or 10.7%, and elementary school graduates as many as 2 people or 2.7%. This composition illustrates that most of the consumers of Putra Ponorogo MSMEs have a secondary level of education, so their preferences and purchasing decisions are most likely influenced by the factors of direct experience and practical needs in the consumption of these MSME products and services.

## 2. Validity Test

**Table 1. Validity Test Results**

Variable	Indicator	r Count	r Table	Remarks
Quality of Service (X1)	X1.1	0,819	0,2272	Valid.
	X1.2	0,882	0,2272	Valid.
	X1.3	0,899	0,2272	Valid.
	X1.4	0,822	0,2272	Valid.
Word Of Mouth (X2)	X2.1	0,874	0,2272	Valid.
	X2.2	0,883	0,2272	Valid.
	X2.3	0,869	0,2272	Valid.
	X2.4	0,871	0,2272	Valid.
Brand Image (X3)	X3.1	0,880	0,2272	Valid.
	X3.2	0,885	0,2272	Valid.
	X3.3	0,926	0,2272	Valid.
	X3.4	0,877	0,2272	Valid.
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y1.1	0,841	0,2272	Valid.
	Y1.2	0,888	0,2272	Valid.
	Y1.3	0,863	0,2272	Valid.

	Y1.4	0,869	0,2272	Valid.
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*Source : Data processed by researchers, 2025.*

Based on the results of the validity test, all indicators of the research variables showed a greater r value than the table r value of 0.2272. In the Service Quality variable (X1), the four indicators have a calculated r-value between 0.819 and 0.899, so that all of them are declared valid. The Word of Mouth (X2) variable also shows similar results, with the calculated r-value ranging from 0.869 to 0.883, which means that all indicators are valid. Furthermore, the Brand Image variable (X3) has a calculated r-value between 0.877 to 0.926, which also meets the validity criteria. Meanwhile, in the Purchase Decision variable (Y), the four indicators obtained a calculated r value between 0.841 and 0.888, exceeding the table r value. Thus, it can be concluded that all statement items in this research instrument are valid and suitable for use as a research variable measurement tool.

### 3. Reliability Test

**Table 2. Reliability Test Results**

<b>Variable</b>	<b><i>Cronbach's Alpha</i></b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Quality of Service (X1)	0,877	0,60	<i>Reliable</i>
Word Of Mouth (X2)	0,896	0,60	<i>Reliable</i>
Brand Image (X3)	0,914	0,60	<i>Reliable</i>
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,887	0,60	<i>Reliable</i>

*Source : Data processed by researchers, 2025*

Based on the results of the reliability test displayed on all research variables, Cronbach's Alpha has a value of above 0.60, so it is declared reliable according to the reliability test criteria. The Service Quality variable (X1) obtained a value of 0.877, the Word of Mouth (X2) variable of 0.896, the Brand Image

(X3) variable of 0.914, and the Purchase Decision variable (Y) of 0.887. These values show that each research instrument has good internal consistency in measuring each variable. Thus, all statement items on the questionnaire can be trusted and are suitable for use for this research.

#### 4. Coefficient Determination Analysis

**Table 3. Coefficient Analysis Results Terminated**

Model Summary				
Models	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.936a	.876	.870	.952

Based on the results of the determination coefficient analysis, an R value of 0.936 was obtained, which shows that the relationship between the variables of service quality, word of mouth, and brand image on purchase decisions has a very strong relationship. The R Square value of 0.876 indicates that 87.6% of the variation in changes in purchasing decisions can be explained by these three independent variables, namely service quality, word of mouth, and brand image. Meanwhile, the remaining 12.4% was influenced by other factors not studied in this study. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.870 strengthens this result because this number has been adjusted for the number of variables and samples, thus showing that the regression model used has a high level of feasibility in explaining dependent variables. The Std. Error of the Estimate of 0.952 indicates a relatively small rate of model prediction error, so the model can be said to be quite accurate in predicting consumer purchasing decisions.

## 5. T Test

**Table 4. T Test Results**

Models	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	1 (Constant)	,198	,340		
X1	,391	,100	,360	3,892	,000
X2	,361	,099	,352	3,646	,001
X3	,252	,101	,266	2,485	,015

Based on the results of the t-test in Table 4.12, it can be seen that the service quality variable (X1) has a calculated t-value of 3.892 with a significance level of 0.000. This value is greater than t table and significant is less than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the quality of service has a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision. Furthermore, the word of mouth variable (X2) showed a calculated t-value of 3.646 with a significance level of 0.001, which is also smaller than 0.05. This shows that word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. In addition, the brand image variable (X3) has a calculated t-value of 2.485 with a significance level of 0.015, which means that brand image also has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. Thus, it can be concluded that the three independent variables—service quality, word of mouth, and brand image—partially have a significant effect on purchasing decisions in Putra Ponorogo MSMEs.

## 6. Test F

**Table 5. F Test Results**

NEW ERA					
Models	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	452,377	3	150,792	166,532	,000b
Residual	64,290	71	,905		
Total	516,667	74			

Based on the results of the F test, the F value was calculated at 166.532 with a significance level of 0.000. The significance value is less than 0.05, which means that the regression model used in this study is feasible or fit. Thus, it can be concluded that the variables of service quality, word of mouth, and brand image simultaneously have a significant effect on consumer purchase decisions in Putra Ponorogo MSMEs. These results show that the three independent variables together make a significant contribution in explaining the variation in changes in the purchase decision variable.

## **RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the study show that the quality of service, word of mouth, and brand image have a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase decisions in Putra Ponorogo MSMEs. These findings provide several strategic implications for MSME actors, especially the convection and creative services sectors.

First, improving the quality of service needs to be the main focus in marketing strategies. MSME actors must ensure that every interaction with consumers takes place professionally, responsively, and according to customer expectations. This includes the speed of service, the accuracy of production results, and the ability to establish effective communication with consumers.

MSMEs need to take advantage of the potential of word of mouth by optimizing the consumer experience to create positive recommendations. The digital era provides opportunities for MSMEs to expand exposure through customer reviews on social media as well as testimonials from local communities. Digital reputation management is important to maintain consumer trust.

Third, strengthening the brand image must be done through consistency of product quality, attractive visual identity, and creative promotion. A strong brand image can increase value perception and build customer loyalty in the long term. MSMEs need to develop a more systematic branding strategy to be able to compete in an increasingly competitive market.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that service quality, word of mouth, and brand image have a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase decisions in Putra Ponorogo MSMEs, with a contribution of 87.6% to the variable purchase decision. These findings confirm that improving service quality, strengthening recommendations between consumers, and building a consistent brand image are important strategies for MSMEs in attracting and retaining customers. Thus, MSME actors need to focus more on service professionalism, social media optimization as a means of word of mouth, and the development of a strong and relevant brand identity. The next research is suggested to add other variables such as price, product quality, or customer trust and expand the research object to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the purchase decisions of MSME consumers.

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