

# THE IDENTIFICATION OF PURCHASE INTENTION AMONG IPHONE CUSTOMERS IN DEPOK VIEWED FROM EWOM, BRAND IMAGE, BRAND TRUST, PERCEIVED VALUE, AND BRAND PREFERENCE

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## ABSTRACT

Communication has become a kind of activities performed by human beings everyday, either directly or indirectly. Handphone as one among the communication means, was then developed into smartphone. Due to many smartphones released every year, customers are then faced with so many choices. One among the global reputable smartphone brands is Apple. Therefore, Apple sellers must be able to attract the customers' attention and increase their purchase intention toward iPhone products, so that these products can compete with others and survive in the market. This research aimed to test the effects of EWOM, brand image, brand trust, perceived value, and brand preference on purchase intention among iPhone customers in Depok, West Java, Indonesia. This descriptive research was conducted to depict the characteristics or functions of a population. By using questionnaire distributed online and among 355 respondents filling-out, there were only 349 respondents from which the data can be processed further by using the SmartPLS-SEM software. The result of this research supported that brand image, brand trust, perceived value, and brand preference have positive and significant effects on purchase intention among iPhone customers in Depok, while EWOM does not have significant effect on purchase intention.

**Keywords:** *smartphone, purchase intention, brand trust, brand image, perceived quality, EWOM*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication constitutes a kind of activities performed by human beings everyday, either directly or indirectly. When performing indirect communication, human beings use the communication device that can deliver the message to receiver. One among the popular telecommunication devices is telephone. This device can help its users to communicate using the voice with the intermediary of cables. Besides telephone, there is also handphone atau cellular phone that can be easily carried when travelling. The advantage of handphone is its capability to deliver messages in forms of voice and text. Handphone was then developed into smartphone. One thing that differentiates *smartphone* from *handphone* is from the view of usefulness. *Smartphone* is not only used as a communication mean, but can also be used to edit photos and videos, to download applications, and etc.

The purchase intention toward a product, especially in the smartphone category, becomes an important phenomenon to be reviewed. A lot of researches have been conducted to review the importance of purchase intention (Yohanna and Ruslim, 2021), (Setiadi and Ruslim, 2020) and its effect on the purchase of such product (Ruslim et al., 2022).

As many smartphones are released ever year, customers face many choices. Among the globally-reputable smartphone brands, there is Apple. In this case, Apple must be able to attract

the customers' attention and increase their purchase intention towards the iPhone products, so that this brand can compete with other brands and survive in the market.

One of the predictors of purchase intention is Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM). With the existence of internet, customers have many ways in collecting information coming from the reviews written by other customers toward a product (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Positive reviews and recommendations provided by other customers can increase people's intention to purchase the iPhone products.

Brand image is a set of what perceived by customers toward certain brand (Fan, 2019). iPhone is known by people as an expensive and luxurious smartphone brand. iPhone does not perform massive marketing activities on its products, thus providing exclusive impression. This perception can attract people toward the iPhone products.

Trust is also a predictor of consumer behavior toward a brand. Trust is a consumers' will to rely a brand based on the expectation that such brand will give positive results as promised (Khan et al., 2020). Apple must be able to build people's trust toward the iPhone products that have been marketed to its customers. By trust, customers will feel confident thus the purchase intention toward iPhone products can grow.

Perceived value plays a role in consumers' decision to buy a product. Perceived value is consumers' perception toward the benefits received based on the sacrifice that has been done toward a product. (Chu and Lu, 2007). If a customer perceives that the iPhone price targeted to upper-middle class buyers is equal to the quality provided by the products, then the customers' purchase intention will increase.

DAM (2020) also researched the effect of brand preference on purchase intention. Due to special image possessed by community toward the Apple products, then Apple must be able to attract customers who have tendency to purchase exclusive or expensive products. Due to the existence of brand preference, customers will prioritize the products issued by Apple compared to those issued by other brands.

Because the purchase intention, along with its other predictors, is influential to generate purchase toward a product, this research aimed to test the effects of EWOM, brand image, brand trust, perceived value, and brand preference on purchase intention among iPhone customers in Depok, West Java, Indonesia.

Based on the explanation above, the problems in this research could be formulated as follows:

- a. Does EWOM affect purchase intention among iPhone customers in Depok?
- b. Does Brand Image affect Purchase Intention among iPhone customers in Depok?
- c. Does Brand Trust affect Purchase Intention among iPhone customers in Depok?
- d. Does Perceived Value affect Purchase Intention among iPhone customers in Depok?
- e. Does Brand Preference affect Purchase Intention among iPhone customers in Depok?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) consists of two determinants toward intention, which are consumer attitude and the perception possessed by people in the surrounding toward a brand. These determinants affect the intention of a consumer to purchase a product. (Fishbein

and Ajzen, 1975 in Abedi et al., 2020). TRA affected by attitude creates the tendency toward an object that appears after a consumer has conducted an evaluation. This theory is used in brand preference to find out the effect of the tendency that has been possessed by consumer toward purchase intention. The Information Adoption Model (IAM) is used to reveal the stimuli of intention of a consumer based on the information from idea, behavior, or technology that has been acquired by the consumer (Filieri and McLeay, 2013).

This theory is used in EWOM variable. Based on the research from (Dichter, 1966 in Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), consumers write a review due to the motives of: 1) Product involvement, which means that consumers have a strong feeling toward a brand, thus generate an intention to perform something related to the brand; 2) Self-involvement, which comes from consumers' passion or emotion; 3) Other involvement, which means that consumers need to provide a review to others; 4) Message involvement, which is the consumers' will to discuss with others. The Associative Network Memory (ANM) stated that consumers' memory consists of several interconnected nodes (Keller, 1993 in Ali et al., 2020). The node possessed by consumers on brand information can trigger other nodes to keep active. In this research, Authors would like to reveal whether the information on positive brand image possessed by a consumer can activate another node such as consumers' trust toward the brand, which finally can trigger the purchase intention.

Brand image is one of the dimensions in Customer-Based Brand Equity, along with brand awareness. Brand image is used by consumers to differentiate a brand from others that have already existed in the market (Keller, 1993 in Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012). Meanwhile, according to (McKnight et al., 2002 in Javed et al., 2018), there are three basic principles of brand trust, which are; 1) Integrity, which means that a brand follows the applied moral and ethics; 2) Benevolence, which means that a brand shows good intention toward a consumer; and 3) Ability, which means that a brand can fulfil the consumers' needs. This research focused on the aspects of ability based on the Value-Based Adoption Model (VAM). Consumers evaluate the value of a product and compare between the benefits and sacrifices when buying such product (Kim et al., 2007). This theory is used in perceived value. According to Lim et al. (2014), perceived value is divided into: 1) Perceived benefits, which consists of quality and image; and 2) Perceived Cost, which consists of the price and time that have to be sacrificed by consumers. This theory is used to reveal whether the values possessed by iPhone in customer's mind can trigger the purchase intention.

### **The Definition of EWOM and Its Relationship with Purchase Intention**

According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), EWOM is defined as a statement, either positive or negative, toward a product or a company written by a consumer in the internet. Meanwhile, Lee et al. (2020) expressed EWOM as a voluntary action done by consumers by writing their opinion toward a produk or brand online. Therefore, EWOM is a statement or opinion, either positive or negative, shared by consumers toward a produk or brand voluntarily in the internet (online). In addition, Alrwashdeh et al. (2019); Jalilvand and Samiei (2012); Prasad et al. (2018); Kudeshia and Kumar (2016) researched about the effects of EWOM on purchase intention, which concluded that EWOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** EWOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

## **The Definition of Brand Image and Its Relationship with Purchase Intention**

Wu and Jang (2013) defined brand image as an overall description or information of a product. Farzin and Fattahi (2018) defined brand image as an attribute and benefit of a brand, which makes it different from other brands. Meanwhile, the definition of brand image from Faircloth (2005) is an overall image from a brand possessed by consumers, which differentiate it from others. In addition, Ruslim et al. (2022) defined brand image as the perception of consumers who have reasons toward the brand that exposes the brand in the consumers' mind. Based on several definitions, it can be concluded that brand image is consumers perception toward a brand which differentiate it from other brands, and such perception is used by the consumers as a source of information to assess or evaluate the quality of a product. Moreover, Nuseir (2019); Farzin and Fattahi (2018) researched about the effect of brand image on purchase intention, and the conclusion revealed that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

## **The Definition of Brand Trust and Its Relationship with Purchase Intention**

Brand trust according to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2002) is a willingness from consumers depending on the brand in providing what has been stated by the brand regarding the usefulness of the product. Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka (2018) defined brand trust as the expectation possessed by consumers that such brand will always deliver what has been promised. Chen-Yu et al. (2016) expressed that consumers avoid the product from the brand that has not been reputable so that the consumers will not experience disappointment. Therefore, consumers usually choose the product from reputable brand, thus will increase the purchase intention of the brand. Based on the definitions above, brand trust is the trust or expectation possessed by consumers toward the brand, that it will always shows the quality, fulfil the consumers' needs, and do not create disappointment. Moreover, Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013); Yohanna and Ruslim (2021); Javed et al. (2018) researched about the effect of brand trust on purchase intention, which concluded that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

## **The Definition of Perceived Value and its Relationship with Purchase Intention**

According to Wang et al. (2018), perceived value is based on consumers' evaluation on the benefit and sacrifice that affect the consumers' purchase intention. Meanwhile, Lim et al. (2014) stated that perceived value is consumers' perception on the benefit acquired from a product, such as quality and image, as well as the cost perception such as price and time that must be sacrificed to acquire such product. Besides, Wang (2010) mentioned that perceived value results from a cognitive comparison between the benefit acquired and the sacrifice done to acquire such product. So, it can be concluded that perceived value is a consumers' evaluation and perception toward the benefit versus the sacrifice to acquire the product. In addition, DAM (2020); Yuan et al. (2020); Chu and Lu (2007) researched about the effect of perceived value on purchase intention, and the result showed that perceived value has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Perceived value has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

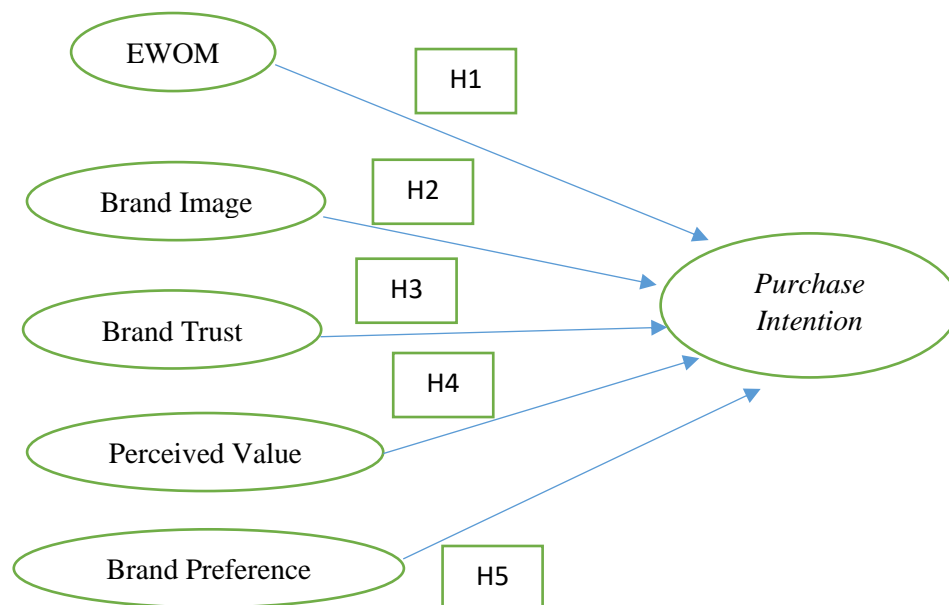
## The Definition of Brand Preference and Its Relationship with Purchase Intention

Based on the definition from Chang and Liu (2009), brand preference can be meant as a bias possessed by consumers toward a certain brand. Meanwhile, Ebrahim et al. (2016) defined brand preference as a tendency to show consumers' attitude toward a brand. According to Jamal and Al-Marri (2007), brand preference reflects cognitive evaluation and positive affection stored in consumers' mind. Thus, it can be concluded that brand preference is a tendency of attitude or positive bias possessed by consumers toward a brand in form of positive affection, thus can affect consumers' attitude toward the brand. In addition, Wu and Jang (2013); Wang (2010), DAM (2020) researched about the effect of brand preference on purchase intention, which resulted that brand preference has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. **H<sub>5</sub>**: Brand preference has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

## The Definition of Purchase Intention

Purchase intention according to Beccara and Badrinarayanan (2013) is a consumers' tendency to purchase a product from certain brand. Meanwhile, Liu et al. (2019) expressed that purchase intention is a reflection that shows the result of consumer behavior. Chang and Liu (2009) defined purchase intention as a plan possessed by consumer to buy a product from specific brand. So, purchase intention can be concluded as a tendency or plan coming from consumers' mind as a reflection of their behavior to purchase a product from certain brand.

Based on the relationships among the variables that have been explained in the previous section, the research model can be formulated as follows:



**Figure 1.** Research Model

Based on the research model above, there are five hypotheses as follows:

H<sub>1</sub> : EWOM has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention.

H<sub>2</sub> : Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention.

H<sub>3</sub> : Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention.

- H4 : Perceived Value has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention.  
 H5 : Brand Preference has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is categorized as conclusive research design. Conclusive research consists of descriptive and causal design. This research used descriptive design to depict the characteristics or functions of a population, while the data collection used quantitative approach (Sarwono, 2013).

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) defined population as a set of people or object or interest to be researched. The population in this research is the customers (or buyers) of iPhone products who domiciled in Depok, West Java, Indonesia. This research used non-probability sampling technique with judgemental sampling. According to Roscoe (1975) in Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the amount of sample required for research is between 30 and 500 samples.

As many as 355 respondents were selected, then the questionnaire was distributed through Google Form, of which the assessment used Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (from Totally Disagree to Totally Agree). The operationalization of variables in this research are as follows:

**Table 1.** Variable Operationalization: EWOM

Indicator	Code	Source
To ensure that I buy the right brand, I read the brand reviews on the internet.	EWOM1	Alrwashdeh et al. (2019); Jalilvand and Samiei (2012)
Online reviews from other customers makes me feel confident to buy the brand.	EWOM2	
I read online reviews to find out the brand that can generate positive impression to other customers.	EWOM3	
I often collect the online information before buying a brand.	EWOM4	

**Table 2.** Variable Operationalization: *Brand Image*

Indicator	Code	Source
This brand has good quality.	BI1	Alrwashdeh et al. (2019)
This brand has better benefits compared to those from other brands.	BI2	
This brand has special characteristics compared to other brands.	BI3	
This brand does not disappoint its customers.	BI4	
This brand is one of the best brands in this sector.	BI5	
This brand is sustainable in the market.	BI6	

**Table 3.** Variable Operationalization: *Brand Trust*

Indicator	Code	Source
I can trust this smartphone brand.	BT1	DAM (2020)
I think that I can trust this smartphone brand completely.	BT2	
I can depend on this smartphone brand.	BT3	

I feel safe when buying this smartphone brand.	BT4	
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**Table 4.** Variable Operationalization: *Perceived Value*

Indicator	Code	Source
This smartphone brand has good value compared to its price.	PV1	DAM (2020)
The price of this smartphone brand is acceptable.	PV2	
This smartphone brand is the result of good financial agreement.	PV3	
The price of this smartphone brand is competitive.	PV4	

**Table 5.** Variable Operationalization: *Brand Preference*

Indicator	Code	Source
This smartphone brand attracts my attention.	BP1	DAM (2020)
I choose this smartphone brand over other brands.	BP2	
I choose this smartphone brand although other brands have the same quality.	BP3	
Overally, I choose this smartphone brand.	BP4	

**Table 6.** Variable Operationalization: *Purchase Intention*

Indicator	Code	Source
I choose to buy this product / brand compared to other brands.	PI1	Alrwashdeh et al. (2019)
I want to recommend to other people to buy this product / brand.	PI2	
I plan to buy this product / brand in the future.	PI3	
I choose to buy the product / brand introduced by my friend in social networks compared to other available brands.	PI4	
I want to recommend the product / brand introduced by my friend in social networks to other people.	PI5	
I want to buy the product / brand introduced by my friend in social networks.	PI6	

Data analysis was performed by using Partial Least Squares (PLS), with the assistance of Smart PLS software version 3.2.9. PLS analysis consists of outer model and inner model. Outer model is used to assess the validity and reliability of a model. Validity test is used to test an instrument developed to measure a concept. Validity analysis in this research is divided into convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent Validity is measured by using factor loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The criteria used in measuring the factor loading is greater than 0.7 (Ghozali and Latan, 2015). Meanwhile, the criteria used in measuring Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.50, which means that the latent variable can explain more than a half of indicator variance, thus the result is considered good, because it has shown sufficient convergent validity (Hair et al., 2011).

After performing the convergent validity test, all indicators passed and are considered valid. Discriminant validity was measured by using Fornell-Larcker and cross-loading. The result of Fornell-Larcker is considered good if the AVE of each construct is greater than the quadratic

correlation of other constructs. Meanwhile, in measuring the cross-loading, the result is considered good if the construct loading-indicator is greater than those of other constructs. (Hair et al., 2011). After performing the Fornell-Larcker test, the indicators of BI2, BI3, BI4, PV2, BP2, PI3, and PI4 did not meet the criteria. After eliminating those indicators, the result of Fornell-Larcker has met the required criteria, because the result of AVE of each construct is greater than the quadratic correlation of other constructs. The result of cross-loading in this research shows better result, because the indicator of each variable tested shows higher value than those of other constructs. Thus, it can be concluded that the result of cross-loading has already met the criteria.

Reliability analysis is used to find out how reliable an instrument is used to measure a construct. Reliability analysis can be performed by using the composite reliability. The value of composite reliability is considered good whenever the result is greater than 0.7 (Ghozali and Latan, 2015). In this research, the result of reliability test is good, because the composite reliability of each variable is greater than 0.7.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this research, the questionnaire was distributed to 355 online respondents through the application such as Whatsapp and LINE. Next, the screening process was conducted to select the respondents who domiciled in Depok and were using iPhone. As a result, 6 respondents, who did not meet the criteria, was eliminated from data set. Data that can be used in this research came from 349 respondents only. The descriptive statistics of 349 respondents who had fulfilling the questionnaire can be seen as follows:

**Table 7.** The Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Based on Gender

No.	Gender	Frequency
1	Male	60
2	Female	289

(Source: Data Processed by Authors)

**Table 8.** The Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Based on Age

No.	Age	Frequency
1	< 18 years-old	12
2	18 - 25 years-old	228
3	26 - 35 years-old	102
4	36 - 45 years-old	5
5	> 45 years-old	2

(Source: Data Processed by Authors)

The R-Square is used to explain the effect of exogenous variable on endogenous variable. The coefficient of R-Square is divided into three categories, which are 0.25 (weak), 0.50 (moderate), and 0.75 (strong) (Hair et al., 2011). The coefficient of R-Square ( $R^2$ ) in this research is 0.770 which means that as much as 77% of variation in purchase intention variable



can be explained by the variables of EWOM, brand image, brand trust, perceived value, and brand preference. Meanwhile, the remaining 23% of variation in purchase intention variable is explained by other variables that are not in the scope of this research.

In addition, Q-Square is required to be greater than zero to prove the accuracy of structural model prediction in a construct. The result of Q-Square is divided into three categories, which are 0 (low predictive relevance), 0.25 (moderate predictive relevance), and 0.5 (high predictive relevance) (Hair et al., 2019). In this research, the coefficient of Q-Square ( $Q^2$ ) is 0.513, thus meets the criteria, because it is greater than zero and shows high predictive relevance. Hence, the result of Q-Square ( $Q^2$ ) test in this research is considered good.

**Path Coefficients**

	Original Sample (C)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Brand Image -> Purchase intention	0.192	0.188	0.057	3.366	0.001
Brand preference -> Purchase intention	0.205	0.206	0.053	3.850	0.000
Brand trust -> Purchase intention	0.197	0.194	0.066	3.002	0.003
EWOM -> Purchase intention	0.034	0.039	0.041	0.823	0.411
Perceived value -> Purchase intention	0.323	0.325	0.058	5.555	0.000

**Figure 2.** Path Coefficients  
 (Source: Data Processed by Using SmartPLS Version 3.2.9)

Hypothesis test is used to test the significance by using bootstrapping. The result of p-value must be lower than 0.05 in order to have significant effect (Hair et al., 2019). The first hypothesis test generated the p-value of 0.411, with the value of original sample of 0.034. This result shows that the first hypothesis was not supported. In other word, EWOM does not have significant effect on purchase intention among iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok. The result of this research is in the opposite with the previous research conducted by Alrwashdeh et al., (2019) about the effect of EWOM on purchase intention of smartphone products in North Cyprus. This phenomenon might happen because the reviews were written by unknown people on the internet, thus the customers felt doubtful toward such reviews. This reason was also supported by the results of questionnaire regarding purchase intention, in which the respondents want to purchase and recommend the products introduced by friends that were reviewed on the internet. Therefore, the sources of reviews also affect the purchase intention of the respondents.

The second hypothesis has p-value of 0.001, with the original sample of 0.192. This result shows that the second hypothesis was supported. Thus, brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok. This result is in line with the research conducted by Jalilvand dan Samiei (2012) about the effect of brand image on purchase intention of automobiles in Iran. Brand image can either be positive or negative. In this research, brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok.

The third hypothesis has p-value of 0.003, with the original sample of 0.197. This result shows that the third hypothesis was supported. Therefore, brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok. This result is in line with the previous research conducted by Javed et al., (2018) about the effect of brand

trust on purchase intention in China. Thus, the feeling of trust possessed by customers of a brand can affect their purchase intention.

The fourth hypothesis has p-value of 0.000, with the original sample of 0.323. This result shows that the fourth hypothesis was supported. So, perceived value has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok. This result is in line with the research conducted by Yuan et al., (2020) about the effect of perceived value on purchase intention in China. The perceived value from customers toward a product or brand can affect their purchase intention, especially when such value is in reasonable compared to the price.

The fifth hypothesis has p-value of 0.000, with the original sample of 0.205. This result shows that the fifth hypothesis was supported. Hence, brand preference has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok. This result is in line with the research conducted by DAM (2020) about the effect of *brand preference* on *purchase intention* in Vietnam. So, due to the brand preference, customers will prioritize the products released by Apple compared to other products released by other brands in the market.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The conclusions in this research can be summarized as follows:

- The first hypothesis was not supported. EWOM does not have significant effect on purchase intention. The iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok might read and collect the reviews written by other customers on the internet, but such reviews did not affect the purchase intention of iPhone customers significantly.
- The second hypothesis was supported. brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok. So, Apple is suggested to enhance its positive brand image in order to be a sustainable brand in the market, until those customers express that iPhone is the best brand in smartphone sector. Besides, Apple needs to enhance its product quality, in order to build a positive image in the customers' mind.
- The third hypothesis was supported. Brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok. Thus, it is suggested to Apple to maintain and increase the trust from its customers toward iPhone products. Due to the trust in mind, the iPhone customers can feel safe when purchasing iPhone, and in the smartphone category, they can completely rely on iPhone.
- The fourth hypothesis was supported. Perceived value has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok. Thus, it is suggested to Apple to set competitive prices in the market, so that customers may feel that purchasing the iPhone products is the right financial decision to them. Besides, iPhone must ensure that iPhone products have good value compared to the selling price.
- The fifth hypothesis was supported. Brand preference has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among iPhone customers who domiciled in Depok. Therefore, it is suggested to Apple to ensure that the customers will choose iPhone products, although other brands have similar quality compared to iPhone. In this way, customers will purchase

iPhone products in order to appear more attractively, compared to purchasing other smartphones that are available in the market.

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