The Role of Purchase Intention as a Mediating Variable in the Relationship Between Promotion and Purchase Decisions

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of promotions on purchasing decisions with purchase interest as a mediating variable on Wuling brand car consumers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). The research approach used is quantitative with an explanatory design. The sampling process uses accidental sampling, namely a sample determination technique based on respondents who are accidentally met by researchers and meet the criteria as research respondents with a sample size of 297 respondents and analyzed using covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the help of LISREL 8.8 software. The analysis includes testing the measurement model (validity and reliability) and the structural model to test the direct effect of promotions on purchase interest and the mediating effect of purchase interest on the influence of promotions on purchasing decisions.The method used was an explanatory quantitative approach. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1–5. The analysis results showed that promotion had a direct, positive and significant effect on purchase intention, promotion also had a direct effect on purchase decisions, and purchase intention mediated the effect of promotion on purchase decisions.

Keywords: *Promotion, Buying Interest, Purchase Decision*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The development of the Indonesian automotive industry demonstrates increasingly intense competition, particularly in the four-wheeled vehicle segment. The presence of manufacturers like Wuling strengthens market dynamics through aggressive promotional strategies, such as price incentives, easy financing, and the use of digital media. In this context, promotions play a crucial role in influencing consumer

perceptions and behavior in the purchasing decision-making process.

Theoretically, promotion is part of the marketing mix that serves to communicate product value and influence consumer response (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Research shows that promotion influences purchase intention and purchasing decisions, both directly and indirectly (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021). However, in many cases, this influence is mediated by consumer psychological factors, one of which is purchase intention.

Further empirical findings indicate that promotions have a substantially stronger direct influence on purchasing decisions than their indirect influence through purchase intentions. This indicates a structural shift in consumer decision-making behavior in the automotive sector. Consumers are increasingly influenced by immediate promotional incentives, rather than engaging in lengthy cognitive evaluation processes.

Furthermore, this phenomenon reflects a disruption to the traditional Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, where the "organism" stage (purchase intention) becomes less dominant. Instead, promotional stimuli act as direct triggers for behavioral responses, particularly in price-sensitive and highly competitive markets.

Purchase intention reflects an individual's tendency to make a purchase after going through an evaluation process (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). Research shows that purchase intention acts as a significant mediator between marketing stimuli and purchasing decisions (Shankar et al., 2020). Furthermore, in the context of digital marketing, interactions through social media and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) have also been shown to strengthen consumer purchase intention (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Empirical data in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) Province shows a consistent upward trend in vehicle ownership over the past few years. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of motorized vehicles in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) was recorded at approximately 3.9 million units in 2020, then increased to approximately 4.1 million units in 2021, and then increased again in 2022–2023 to over 4.3 million units. This increase reflects a growing need for mobility and increased public purchasing power for private vehicles.

Furthermore, Yogyakarta is known as a region with high digital penetration, particularly among students and the younger generation. The high use of social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok has made digital promotion an increasingly dominant strategy in influencing consumer perceptions and purchasing intentions. The characteristics of DIY consumers, who tend to be rational yet responsive to social

trends, make the purchasing decision-making process, particularly for automotive products, increasingly complex.

In this context, effective promotion serves not only as a communication tool but also as a means to build purchasing interest, ultimately driving purchase decisions. This is particularly relevant for manufacturers like Wuling, which are pursuing market penetration through intensive promotional strategies.

However, previous research still shows inconsistencies. Some studies found that promotions directly influence purchasing decisions, while others showed that this influence was insignificant without mediating variables such as purchase intention (Sharma et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2021). This discrepancy suggests that the role of purchase intention as a mediating variable requires further study, particularly in the context of high-involvement products such as vehicles.

Furthermore, most previous research has focused on the e-commerce and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sectors, while studies on the automotive sector are relatively limited. Furthermore, research specifically examining the consumer behavior of Wuling car users in the Yogyakarta Special Region (DIY) is also very limited, despite the region's unique consumer characteristics and the continued growth in vehicle ownership.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Promotion

Promotion is a crucial element of the marketing mix, serving as a communication tool to convey product value and influence consumer behavior. In the modern marketing context, promotion encompasses not only traditional advertising but also digital strategies such as social media marketing and influencer marketing. Research by (Yogesh K. Dwivedi et al. 2021) shows that digital promotional activities significantly influence consumer behavior, particularly in shaping perceptions and interest in products. Furthermore, a study by (Venkatesh Shankar et al. 2020) confirms that promotional effectiveness depends on a company's ability to create relevant and engaging communications for consumers.

Furthermore, promotions do not always directly influence purchasing decisions, but often operate through psychological variables such as purchase intention (Sharma et al., 2021). This suggests that promotions play a strategic role as an initial stimulus in

the consumer decision-making process.

Interested in Buying

Purchase intention is a key construct in consumer behavior, reflecting an individual's tendency to purchase a product. According to research (Philip J. Kitchen et al. 2020), purchase intention is formed through consumers' evaluation of information received, both from promotions and previous experiences.

Other research shows that purchase intention has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions (Paul & Bhakar, 2018). Furthermore, a study by Piyush Sharma et al. (2021) showed that purchase intention acts as an intervening variable linking marketing stimuli to actual purchasing behavior.

In the digital era, purchasing intention is also influenced by external factors such as electronic word of mouth (eWOM), online reviews, and social media interactions. Dwivedi et al. (2021) found that digital interactions have a significant impact on the formation of purchasing intention, especially among young consumers who are active on digital platforms.

Purchase Decision

The purchase decision is the final stage in the consumer decision-making process, where an individual decides to purchase a product after considering various factors. This decision is influenced by internal factors such as motivation and perception, as well as external factors such as promotions and the social environment.

Research by (Kotler et al., 2019) shows that purchasing decisions are the result of a complex evaluation process involving various marketing variables. Furthermore, research by (Sharma et al., 2021) shows that purchasing decisions are influenced not only by direct promotions but also through mediating variables such as purchase intention.

In a digital context, purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by social factors such as customer reviews and social media interactions, which can strengthen or weaken consumers' purchase intentions (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

The Role of Purchase Intention as a Mediating Variable

In consumer behavior models, purchase intention is often positioned as a mediating variable that bridges the relationship between promotions and purchase decisions. This role is crucial because not all promotional activities can directly drive purchase decisions.

Research by Sharma et al. (2021) shows that purchase intention acts as a

significant mediator in the relationship between marketing activities and purchasing decisions. Furthermore, a study by Shankar et al. (2020) also found that purchase intention can act as either a partial or full mediator, depending on the context and product type.

However, several studies have shown conflicting results, with the mediating role of purchase intention not always significant across all industry contexts (Paul & Bhakar, 2018). This suggests a variation in research findings, opening up opportunities for further research.

The Relationship between Promotions, Buying Interest, and Purchase Decisions

The relationship between promotions, purchase intention, and purchase decisions can be explained using the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model, where promotions act as the stimulus, purchase intention as the internal response (organism), and purchase decisions as the final response (response). This model is widely used in consumer behavior research to explain how marketing stimuli influence consumer behavior.

Research by Dwivedi et al. (2021) shows that promotions significantly influence purchase intention, which in turn impacts purchase decisions. Furthermore, Sharma et al. (2021) confirms that the relationship between promotions and purchase decisions is stronger when mediated by purchase intention.

However, the inconsistency of research results suggests that this relationship requires further testing, particularly in the context of high-involvement products such as automotive products. Therefore, this research is crucial for reexamining the role of purchase intention as a mediating variable in the relationship between promotions and purchase decisions.

III. METHODS

This study uses a quantitative explanatory approach with a cross-sectional survey design to empirically test the effect of promotions on purchase intention and the effect of promotions on purchase decisions with purchase intention as a mediating variable on Wuling car users in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for objective testing of theory-based hypotheses through statistical analysis, while the cross-sectional design is used to capture the conditions and perceptions of respondents over a specific time period. The population

in this study is the number of consumers who purchased Wuling brand car products in 2024 for the Special Region of Yogyakarta, amounting to 1149 consumers. The sample is calculated using the Slovin formula as follows:

n : Number of samples required.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

N : Population size

and : Sampling error rate, usually 5%

$$n = \frac{1149}{1 + 1149\ (0{,}05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1149}{1 + 2{,}8725}$$

$$n = \frac{1149}{3{,}8725}$$

n : 296.70 (rounded to 297)

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was distributed both in person and online. Secondary data were obtained from official publications from the Yogyakarta Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and relevant journals and scientific reports. Data analysis was conducted using*Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) which is based on the type of data collected and its relevance to the research objectives.

IV. RESULTS

Validity Test

Table 1

Promotion Validity Test Results (X)

Variables	Statement Items	Standard Loading Factors	Rule of Thums	Information
Promotion	P1	0.60	0.5	Valid
	P2	0.64	0.5	Valid
	P3	0.67	0.5	Valid
	P4	0.61	0.5	Valid
	P5	0.64	0.5	Valid
	P6	0.70	0.5	Valid

Variables	Statement Items	Standard Loading Factors	Rule of Thums	Information
	P7	0.66	0.5	Valid
	P8	0.71	0.5	Valid
	P9	0.72	0.5	Valid
	P10	0.67	0.5	Valid
	P11	0.72	0.5	Valid
	P12	0.81	0.5	Valid
	P13	0.71	0.5	Valid
	P14	0.79	0.5	Valid
	P15	0.79	0.5	Valid
	P16	0.75	0.5	Valid
	P17	0.74	0.5	Valid
	P18	0.58	0.5	Valid
	P19	0.78	0.5	Valid
	P20	0.78	0.5	Valid
	P21	0.80	0.5	Valid
	P22	0.77	0.5	Valid
	P23	0.73	0.5	Valid

Source: processed by researchers (2025)

Based on Table 1, the test results show that all indicators in the Promotion variable have a value*standardized loading factor* The values ranged from 0.58 to 0.81. The lowest value was found in indicator P18 at 0.58 and the highest value was found in indicator P12 at 0.81. All values*loading factor*is above the minimum limit of 0.50, so it can be concluded that all Promotion variable indicators are declared valid and suitable for use in further analysis.

Table 2
Purchase Interest Validity Test Results (Z)

Variables	Statement Items	Standard Loading Factors	Rule of Thums	Information
Interested in Buying	MB1	0.64	0.5	Valid
	MB2	0.62	0.5	Valid
	MB3	0.70	0.5	Valid
	MB4	0.71	0.5	Valid
	MB5	0.81	0.5	Valid
	MB6	0.77	0.5	Valid
	MB7	0.74	0.5	Valid
	MB8	0.70	0.5	Valid
	MB9	0.54	0.5	Valid
	MB10	0.76	0.5	Valid
	MB11	0.68	0.5	Valid

Source: processed by researchers (2025)

Based on table 2, the test results show the value*standardized loading factor*The Purchase Interest variable ranges from 0.54 to 0.81. Indicator MB9 has the lowest value at 0.54, while indicator MB5 has the highest at 0.81. Since all indicators have values above 0.50, it can be concluded that all indicators for the Purchase Interest variable are valid.

Table 3
Results of the Validity Test of Purchase Decisions (Y)

Variables	Statement Items	Standard Loading Factors	Rule of Thums	Information
Purchase Decision	KPN1	0.75	0.5	Valid
	KPN2	0.77	0.5	Valid
	KPN3	0.70	0.5	Valid
	KPN4	0.80	0.5	Valid
	KPN5	0.71	0.5	Valid
	KPN6	0.71	0.5	Valid
	KPN7	0.71	0.5	Valid
	KPN8	0.70	0.5	Valid

Source: processed by researchers (2025)

Based on table 3, the results of the validity test show that the value*standardized loading factor*The Purchasing Decision variable ranges from 0.70 to 0.80. These values all exceed the minimum limit of 0.50, so all indicators of the Purchasing Decision variable are declared valid

Table 4
Reliability Test Results

Variables	Number of items	CR	CR criteria ≥ 0.70	AVE	AVE criteria ≥ 0.50	Conclusion
Promotion	23	0,960	Fulfil	0,511	Fulfil	Reliable & Valid
Interested in Buying	11	0.913	Fulfil	0.500	Fulfil	Reliable & Valid
Purchase Decision	8	0,902	Fulfil	0,536	Fulfil	Reliable & Valid

Source: processed by researchers (2025)

The results of construct reliability testing show that all research variables have a value*Construct Reliability*(CR) above 0.70, ranging from 0.902 to 0.963. This indicates that all constructs have excellent internal consistency.

Table 5

Multivariate Normality Test Results

Test Components	Value	Z-Score	P-Value	Criteria
Skewness	1,510	103,518	0,051	Normal
Kurtosis	6,660	27,644	0,052	Normal
Skewness & Kurtosis (Chi-Square)	11480,052	–	0,062	Normal

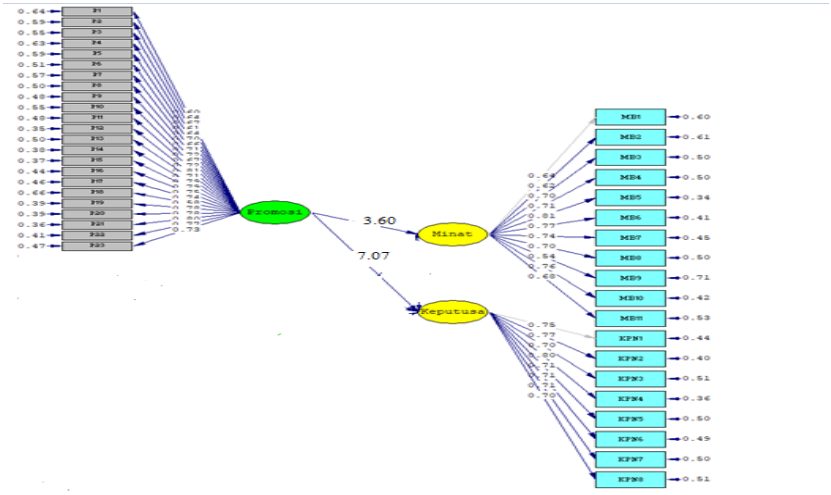
Source: PRELIS output, processed by researchers (2025)

Data normality testing was performed using PRELIS through multivariate normality testing. Based on the test results, a skewness value of 1.510 (Z = 103.518; p = 0.051) and a kurtosis value of 6.660 (Z = 27.644; p = 0.052) were obtained. In addition, the combined skewness and kurtosis test produced a Chi-square value of 11480.052 with a p-value of 0.062. These results indicate that the data statistically meets the assumption of multivariate normality.

Structural Model Analysis (*Structural Model*)

Direct Influence

Testing in this study was carried out using an approach*Structural Equation Modeling*(SEM) based on covariance with the help of LISREL software. The hypothesis testing criteria are based on the value of*t-value*≥ 1.96 at a significance level of 5%.



Source: processed by researchers (2025)

Figure 1
Testing *Structural Equation Modeling*(SEM)

Table 6

Table of causal relationships between variables

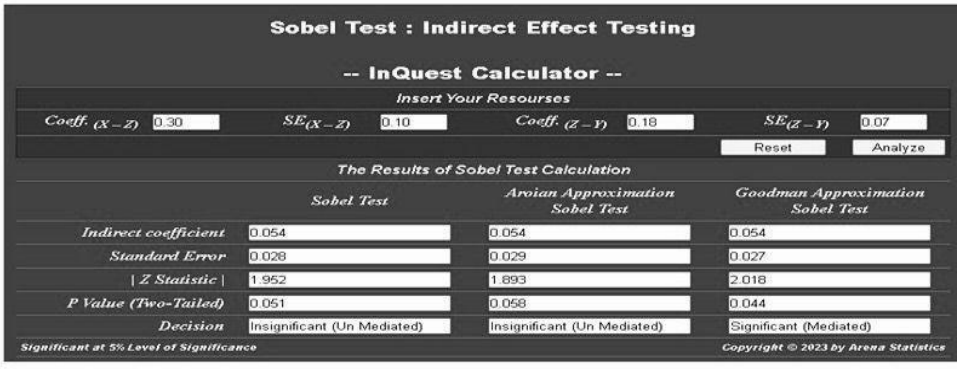
Path	*Estimate*	*Standard Error*	*t-Value*
Promotion - Buying Interest	0.30	0.10	3.60
Promotion – Purchase Decision	0.60	0.08	7.07

Based on table 6, the model estimation through*Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)*By using LISREL, it was found that the promotion variable had a direct influence on purchasing interest with a path coefficient of 0.30; with t_{count}greater than t_{table} = 1,96 (t_{count}= 3.60 > 1.96) then this shows that promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing interest. Promotion also has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions with the result of t_{count}greater than t_{table} = 1,96 (t_{count} = 7.07 > 1,96)

Indirect Influence (Mediation)

Table 7

Sobel Test Table



Based on the results of the Sobel test, it is known that the t-statistic value in the Sobel test = 1.952, Aroian test = 1.893, and Goodman test = 2.018. In the Goodman test value, the value is greater than 1.96 (if alpha, but in the Sobel test and Aroian test it is smaller than 1.96 but greater than 1.65 (if alpha 10%). In addition, the p-value of the three tests also shows the results (Sobel = 0.051; Aroian = 0.058; Goodman = 0.044), so that if using 90% confidence, there is an indirect influence of promotion on purchasing decisions through purchasing interest which is stated to be significant.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing interest for Wuling brand cars in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). This indicates that the better and more intensive Wuling's promotional activities in the DIY region, the higher the public's interest in purchasing Wuling cars. A positive effect indicates that promotion and purchasing interest move in the same direction, while a significant effect indicates that the effect is statistically proven and not due to chance.

Promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Wuling brand cars in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). This means that the more effective Wuling's promotions are, the more likely consumers in the DIY region are to actually make a purchase decision. A positive effect indicates a directional relationship, meaning that increased promotional intensity and quality will be followed by increased purchasing decisions. A significant effect indicates that the effect is statistically proven and not a random occurrence.

Purchase intention mediates the influence of promotions on purchasing decisions. Wuling brand cars in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) This means that promotions not only directly influence purchasing decisions, but also influence purchasing decisions by increasing consumer purchasing intention. In other words, promotions carried out by Wuling such as advertisements, discounts, cashback, credit programs, exhibitions, test drives, and digital promotions first form consumer interest and desire to own a Wuling car. Once the purchase intention is formed and strengthened, consumers become more encouraged to proceed to the next stage, namely seeking more detailed information, comparing alternatives, and finally making a purchase decision.

Suggestion

Companies need to position promotions as a primary strategy in driving purchasing decisions because promotions have been proven to have the most dominant influence compared to product quality and product innovation. Therefore, Wuling is advised to strengthen the intensity of integrated promotions through digital and offline media, such as consistent social media campaigns, location-based advertising (geo-

targeted ads) for the DIY region, automotive exhibitions, test drive programs, and sales promotions in the form of cashback, discounts, or easy credit packages. Promotional strategies must also be designed not only to attract attention, but are able to build consumer confidence through messages that highlight real benefits, superior features, and economic values that are relevant to the characteristics of the DIY community.

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