

The Influence Of Promotion And Word Of Mouth On The Decision To Choose An International Kaniva Job Training Institution Through Brand Image As A Mediation Variable

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand how promotion and word of mouth affect consumer perceptions of Kaniva International's brand image, as well as how these perceptions influence consumer decisions in choosing this training institution. The study used a quantitative approach with an associative research design and involved 72 respondents as samples. Data collection techniques include questionnaires, interviews, observations, and literature studies. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Square (PLS), a variant-based structural equation model. The results showed that promotion and word of mouth have a positive influence on the decision to choose LPK Kaniva International and also on its brand image. Brand image also has a positive effect on the decision to choose Kaniva International. In addition, promotion and word of mouth influence the decision to choose Kaniva International through brand image mediation, suggesting that effective promotion strategies and word of mouth recommendations can improve brand image perceptions and influence consumer decisions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing strategies are needed in all types or fields of company, including the education and training sector. In an increasingly competitive and dynamic business environment, training institutions need to understand their target market, communicate effectively, and differentiate themselves from competitors to attract

potential training participants [1]. One of the job training institutions in Bali Province is the Kaniva International Training Institute which offers various quality and accredited job training programs in accordance with the Letter of Assignment from the Job Training Institution Accreditation Institute Number: 541/LA-LPK/XII/2021. LPK Kaniva International is located at Jl. I Gusti Ngurah

Rai No.38, Mengwi, Badung Regency. Based on the results of preliminary observations carried out by researchers, LPK Kaniva International's marketing activities are carried out regularly, especially in holding promotions before the start of the new academic year, namely October to May. This activity aims to meet the target of achieving the number of participants who decide to choose LPK Kaniva International as their job training institution. Apart from promotions which are carried out regularly towards the start of the new academic year, LPK Kaniva International also involves itself in various other marketing activities.

The use of social media is an integral part of LPK Kaniva International's marketing strategy with the aim of increasing its visibility or presence on various popular social media platforms to interact with potential training participants. Informative content, testimonials from graduates, and up-to-date information about training programs are frequently shared to provide a comprehensive picture to potential participants. The implementation of sustainable and diverse marketing strategies is carried out so that LPK Kaniva International can ensure that information about its training programs can reach the target audience effectively. The data on the number of training participants at LPK Kaniva International for the 2019-2022 period is as follows.

Table 1. Number of Training Participants at LPK Kaniva International for the 2019-2022 Period

No.	Year	Number of Training Participants (People)
1.	2019	255
2.	2020	130
3.	2021	180
4.	2022	220

Source: LPK Kaniva International (2023)

The highest number of training participants was obtained in 2019 with 255 people, but this decreased by 49% to 130 participants in 2020. Observation results indicate that this decrease could be caused by the global impact of the Covid-19 pandemic,

in which many sectors experienced a decline activities and significant changes in work habits that influence participants' interest in participating in the training program.

The number of training participants who experience changes or are inconsistent from year to year reflects that LPK Kaniva International is still faced with the challenge of always adapting to changes that may occur in the business environment, especially the education and training sector. Continuous evaluation of market needs, development of innovative programs, and strengthening communication with prospective training participants can be important steps to maintain the success and growth of institutions operating in the job training sector in the future [2]. Therefore, a successful marketing strategy is needed to increase participants' decisions in choosing LPK Kaniva International as their job training institution.

An effective marketing strategy is needed in an effort to increase participants' decisions to choose LPK Kaniva International as their job training institution. In a marketing context, the choice decision is related to the concept of purchasing decisions as a cognitive process and actions taken by consumers when selecting and purchasing a product or service. The purchasing decision process includes a complex series of steps and is influenced by various factors that can vary from one individual to another. By understanding the complexity of purchasing decisions, companies can direct marketing strategies to more effectively meet consumer needs, build sustainable relationships, and remain relevant in an ever-changing market [3].

Several previous studies have explored how promotion, word of mouth, and brand image influence purchasing decisions, either directly or through mediation. Research by [2], [4]–[6], indicate that the positive effect of promotion on purchasing decisions, while Ramadani (2019) found that promotion is not significant. Research by [1], [7]–[9] found a significant positive effect of word of mouth, while [10] found a negative effect of word of mouth on purchasing decisions.

This study aims to understand how promotion and word of mouth affect consumers' perceptions of Kaniva International's brand image, and how these perceptions then influence consumers' decision to choose this training institution. It is hoped that through this understanding, this research can provide valuable insights for relevant parties in improving promotional strategies, managing word of mouth, and strengthening brand image, so as to increase the number of people choosing Kaniva International as a vocational training institution.

2. METHODS

This research utilised a quantitative approach with an associative data design. The samples in this study totaled 72 respondents. Data collection technique involves questionnaires, observations, and literature

studies. Data analysis was conducted with Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique which is an equation model in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a variant or component-based approach.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Respondent Demographics

After distributing and collecting questionnaires, the data has been summarized and mapped to meet criteria that allow further analysis. From the results of data processing, researchers were able to determine the demographic specifications of the responses, where the majority of respondents were men (52.8%) and women (47.2%), while the majority were aged 18-20 years (68.1%), who took college programs and majors at D1-F&B Service (38.9%)

Table 2. Respondent Demographics

No	Criteria	Classification	Number of people	Percentage (%)
1.	Age	18-20 Years	49	68.1%
		21-23 Years	16	22.2%
		24-26 Years	7	9.7%
Amount			72	100%
2.	Gender	Man	38	52.8%
		Woman	34	47.2%
Amount			72	100%
3.	College Programs and Majors	D1-Accounting	4	5.6%
		D1-Butler	6	8.3%
		D1-Culinary	12	16.7%
		D1-F&B Service	28	38.9%
		D1-Housekeeping	10	13.9%
		D2-F&B Division	12	16.7%
Amount			72	100%

Source: Processed data (2024)

3.2 Convergent validity

Indicators will be declared reliable if the value of the correlation is better than 0.50 [11]. The convergent validity results in Table 3 indicate that all of the outer loading indicator values for all variables have a value > 0.50, so it can

conclude that all of them meet the convergent validity criteria and are valid. Table 4 states that the consistency reliability check results for the choice decision variable (Y), brand image (Z), promotion (X1), and Word of Mouth (X2) demonstrate a composite reliability value and Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.70

Table 3. Results Convergent Validity

No.	Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
1.	Voting Decision (Y)	Personal Needs and Desires	0.822
		Confidence in the Product or Brand	0.799
		Psychological Factors	0.878
		Providing Recommendations to Others	0.882
2.	Brand Image (Z)	Quality	0.790
		Positive Reputation	0.866
		Price	0.881
		High Service Efficiency	0.859
		Brand Benefits and Competence	0.877
3.	Promotion (X1)	Advertising(Advertising)	0.878
		Personal Selling(Personal Selling)	0.873
		Sales Promotion(Sales promotion)	0.864
		Promotion Quality(Promotion Quality)	0.876
		Direct Marketing(Direct Marketing)	0.861
4.	Word of Mouth (X2)	Source Attribute(Source Attribute)	0.779
		Activity Rate(Activity Level)	0.878
		Personal Relevance(Personal Relevance)	0.880
		Polarity(Polarity)	0.850

Source: Processed data (2024)

Table 4. Results Reliability

Construct	CR	CA
Choosing Decision (Y)	0.909	0.867
Brand Image(Z)	0.931	0.908
Promotion (X1)	0.940	0.920
Word of Mouth(X2)	0.911	0.869

Source: Processed data (2024)

3.3 Hypothesis Testing Between Variables (Inner Models)

The analysis results in Table 5 show that the R-Square value for the Choice Decision variable is 0.794, while the R-Square value for the Brand Image variable is 0.754. These values illustrate the extent to which the variability of the Choice Decision and Brand Image variables can be explained by the regression model, with R-Square considering the complexity of the model.

Table 5. Coefficient

Construct	R-Square
Choosing Decision (Y)	0.794
Brand Image(Z)	0.754

Source: Processed data (2024)

The results of the R-Square analysis in Table 5 for the modified path model show that the R-Square value is 0.794 (strong category) for the Choice Decision variable, and 0.754 (strong category) for the Brand Image variable. The remaining portion, namely 20.6 per cent and 24.6 per cent of the variation, is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

Table 6. Results Direct Effect

Construct Model	Original Sample(O)	Sample Mean(M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
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Promotion (X1)→ Choosing Decision (Y)	0.467	0.466	0.094	4,977	0,000
Word of Mouth(X2)→ Choosing Decision (Y)	0.262	0.269	0.091	2,865	0.004
Promotion (X1)→ Brand Image(Z)	0.581	0.580	0.102	5,714	0,000
Word of Mouth(X2)→ Brand Image(Z)	0.320	0.321	0.100	3,213	0.001
Brand Image(Z)→ Choosing Decision (Y)	0.210	0.205	0.085	2,456	0.014

Source: Processed data (2024)

Bootstrap simulation is used to assess the significance between variables. The hypothesis is accepted if the bootstrapping value is within the range of ±1.96. Conversely, if the t-statistic is less

than or equal to 1.96, the hypothesis will be rejected. Table 6 shows that all path coefficients have t-statistic values of more than 1.96, signalling that the results are significant

Table 7. Results Indirect Effect

Types of Influence	Construct Model	Original Sample(O)	Sample Mean(Z)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Indirect Influence	Promotion (X1)→ Choosing Decision (Y)	0.122	0.121	0.061	1,998	0.046
	Word of Mouth(X2)→ Choosing Decision (Y)	0.067	0.063	0.029	2,342	0.020
	Promotion (X1)→ Brand Image(Z)	-	-	-	-	-
	Word of Mouth(X2)→ Brand Image(Z)	-	-	-	-	-
	Brand Image(Z)→ Choosing Decision (Y)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Influence	Promotion (X1)→ Choosing Decision (Y)	0.589	0.587	0.09	6,529	0,000
	Word of Mouth(X2)→ Choosing Decision (Y)	0.329	0.332	0.093	3,547	0,000
	Promotion (X1)→ Brand Image(Z)	0.581	0.580	0.102	5,714	0,000
	Word of Mouth(X2)→ Brand Image(Z)	0.320	0.321	0.100	3,213	0.001
	Brand Image(Z)→ Choosing Decision (Y)	0.210	0.205	0.085	2,456	0.014

Source: Processed data (2024)

All hypotheses proposed by the author are accepted because the t-statistic value is more than 1.96.

3.4 Discussion

a. Promotional Influence on Voting Decisions

Testing the direct effect of the promotion variable (X1) on the decision to choose (Y) results in a t-statistic value of 4.977, which is greater than 1.96 (4.977 > 1.96),

indicating a significant influence with a positive relationship direction. The results of this hypothesis test indicate that H1 is accepted, so that promotion has a positive influence on the decision to choose the Kaniva International Job Training Institute. An indication of these results is that the better the promotional strategy carried out, the higher the participants' decision to choose LPK Kaniva International as their job

training institution. Vice versa, the worse the promotion strategy carried out, the lower the participants' decision to choose LPK Kaniva International as their job training institution.

The results of this research strengthen a number of previous studies, namely [2], [4]–[6] which proves that promotions have a positive and significant effect on the decision to choose a product or service. The results support the indications in research by [12] which explains that the concept in marketing strategy generally states that customers tend to choose products or services that are better known and well understood. Through appropriate promotions, companies can communicate the value and benefits of their products or services to potential customers, thereby increasing the likelihood of customers choosing the product or service. Likewise, indications in research by [13] are that effective promotions can create urgency which will encourage customers to immediately make purchasing or voting decisions. Promotions can also increase wider public awareness of certain products or brands. Promotional campaigns can create long-term memories that make customers more likely to choose the product or service when they are at the decision-making stage.

b. Word of Mouth on Voting Decisions

Testing the direct effect of the Word of Mouth variable (X2) on the decision to choose (Y) results in a t-statistic value of 2.865, which is greater than 1.96 ($2.865 > 1.96$), indicating a significant effect with a positive relationship direction. The results of this hypothesis test mean that H2 is accepted, so that Word of Mouth has a positive influence on the decision to choose the Kaniva International Job Training Institute.

The indication of this result is that the better the Word of Mouth received, the higher the participant's decision to choose LPK Kaniva International as their job training institution. Conversely, the worse the Word of Mouth received, the lower the participant's decision to choose LPK Kaniva International.

The results of this study strengthen a number of previous studies, such as [1], [7]–[9], which prove that Word of Mouth has a positive and significant influence on the decision to choose a product or service. The results support the indications in [14] research which explains that individuals as humans naturally tend to follow behavior that is considered acceptable by their social group, so that recommendations from individuals around them can be a strong determining factor in the decision-making process. Therefore, information received through Word of Mouth is considered more convincing and can influence customer perceptions of a product or service. Positive testimonials or satisfying experiences from other people can create strong trust and confidence in them to make choosing or purchasing decisions. Likewise, indications in [15] research are that Word of Mouth not only prioritizes aspects of trust, but can also form positive public perceptions. Recommendations from other people who have had direct experience with a product or service can provide more in-depth and realistic insight, thus encouraging decisions to choose, buy, or use that product or service.

c. Promotion on Brand Image

Testing the direct effect of the promotion variable (X1) on brand image (Z) produces a t-statistic value of 5.714, which is greater than 1.96 ($5.714 > 1.96$), indicating a significant

effect with a positive relationship direction. The results of this hypothesis test mean that H3 is accepted, so that promotion has a positive influence on the brand image of the Kaniva International Job Training Institute. The indication of this result is that the better the promotional strategy carried out, the better the perception of the brand image of LPK Kaniva International. Conversely, the worse the promotional strategy carried out, the worse the perception of the brand image of LPK Kaniva International.

The results of this research strengthen a number of previous studies, namely [1], [7]–[9] which prove that promotion has a positive and significant effect on brand image. The results support the indications in research by [16] which explains that through various promotional strategies, companies can strengthen and shape consumer and potential consumer perceptions of their brand. One of the main influences of promotion on brand image is its ability to increase brand visibility and awareness. Brand prominence in various communication channels makes consumers and potential consumers more familiar with the products or services offered. Likewise, indications in [4] research are that promotions can provide an added value dimension to brand image. Discounts or special offers create the perception that customers are getting more value for money, thereby enhancing the brand's reputation as a profitable choice. A well-planned promotional strategy can provide messages that are consistent with brand values and identity, forming positive perceptions in the minds of customers, which in turn improves brand image.

d. Word of Mouth on Brand Image

Testing the direct effect of the Word of Mouth variable (X2) on brand image (Z) results in a t-statistic value of 3.213, which is greater than 1.96 ($3.213 > 1.96$), indicating a significant effect with a positive relationship direction. The results of this hypothesis test indicate that H4 is accepted, so that Word of Mouth has a positive influence on the brand image of the Kaniva International Job Training Institute. The indication of this result is that the better the Word of Mouth received, the better the perception of the brand image of LPK Kaniva International. Conversely, the worse the Word of Mouth received, the worse the perception of the brand image of LPK Kaniva International.

The results of this study strengthen a number of previous studies, such as [14], [17]–[19] which prove that Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on brand image. These results also support the findings in the research of [20], which explains that trust built through personal experience, direct conversation, testimonials, or reviews can greatly influence customer perceptions of a brand, which is an important dimension in brand image. When customers hear positive reviews or recommendations through Word of Mouth from close people or individuals who are considered trustworthy, the level of perception of the brand image will increase positively. Similarly, in [14] it is stated that Word of Mouth can shape brand image through personal emotional interactions. A positive experience or success story that someone shares about a brand, product, or service can create an emotional connection between the individual and the brand. The brand image formed from Word of Mouth tends to be more authentic and can reflect the true quality of the product or service

because the information comes from the real experiences of consumers.

e. Brand Image on Voting Decisions

Testing the direct effect of the brand image variable (Z) on the decision to choose (Y) results in a t-statistic value of 2.456, which is greater than 1.96 ($2.456 > 1.96$), indicating a significant effect with a positive relationship direction. The results of this hypothesis test mean that H5 is accepted, so that brand image has a positive influence on the decision to choose the Kaniva International Job Training Institute. The indication of this result is that the better the brand image owned, the higher the participant's decision to choose LPK Kaniva International as their job training institution. Conversely, the worse the brand image, the lower the participants' decision to choose LPK Kaniva International.

The results of this research strengthen a number of previous studies, namely [18], [21]–[23] which prove that brand image has a positive and significant effect on voting decisions. The results support the indications in [22] research which explains that the role of brand image includes perceptions, values, and reputation associated with a product or service. Customers tend to choose products or services from brands that have a positive brand image and are consistent with their values and preferences. Brand image provides a signal to customers regarding the quality, reliability and satisfaction expected from the product or service, so that this can create a decision to buy or use it. Likewise, the indications in [24] research are: The influence of brand image on choosing decisions is reflected in the trust that is built. Brands with a good image tend to create a sense of trust in the minds of the public or society, thereby

making them feel confident and comfortable in making purchasing decisions. Apart from that, a positive brand image also plays an important role in creating differentiation in a competitive market because currently customers are more likely to choose brands that can be identified with values that suit their lifestyle or aspirations.

f. Promotion on Choosing Decisions Through Brand Image

Testing the indirect effect of the promotion variable (X1) on the decision to choose (Y) through brand image mediation (Z) results in a t-statistic value of 1.998, which is greater than 1.96 ($1.998 > 1.96$), indicating a significant mediation effect with a positive relationship direction. The results of this hypothesis test indicate that H6 is accepted, so that promotion affects the decision to choose Kaniva International Vocational Training Institute through brand image mediation. The indication of this result is that an effective promotion strategy can increase positive perceptions of brand image, which in turn encourages participants' decisions to choose LPK Kaniva International as their vocational training institution.

The results of this research strengthen a number of previous studies, namely [16], [25], [26] who prove that promotions influence voting decisions through brand image as a mediating variable. The results support the indications in [16] research which explains that An effective promotional strategy or campaign creates an immediate desire to purchase while forming a positive perception of the brand. Promotion that is right on target and directed can increase the value and relevance of a brand in the minds of consumers. Brand image can function

as a mediator in the relationship between promotion and voting decisions. Through promotions, customers can directly experience or receive information about products or services which then forms a brand image, and ultimately encourages purchases. Likewise, the indications in [26] research are: Promotions that provide added value or provide a positive experience can increase the perception of product quality and value which strengthens the brand image. When the brand image is perceived positively, customers tend to feel more confident and confident in making purchasing decisions. Therefore, promotion functions as a trigger to improve brand image, which then becomes a determining factor in influencing the decision to choose the brand, product or service.

g. Word of Mouth on Choosing Decisions Through Brand Image

Testing the indirect influence of the Word of Mouth variable (X2) on the decision to choose (Y) through the mediation of brand image (Z) obtained a t-statistic value of 2.342 which was greater than 1.96 ($2.342 > 1.96$) indicating that there was a significant mediating influence with a positive relationship direction. The results of the hypothesis test mean that H7 is accepted, so Word of Mouth influences the decision to choose the Kaniva International Job Training Institute through the mediation of brand image. An indication of these results is that the good Word of Mouth that training participants receive from other people is able to increase perceptions of their brand image positively, which ultimately increases participants' decisions to choose LPK Kaniva International as their job training institution. The results are in accordance with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by [27] which views that a person's

behavior is influenced by attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the relationship between Word of Mouth and the decision to choose, consumers' attitudes towards a brand are influenced by information obtained through WOM. If the Word of Mouth recommendation is positive, consumer attitudes towards the brand also tend to be positive. Subjective norms also play a role in the views of other people conveyed through WOM which can shape individual perceptions about social norms related to the brand. Through the mediation of brand image, Word of Mouth recommendations can influence consumer perceptions about brands, so that WOM can be considered an important factor in forming brand image which ultimately influences the decision to choose a product or service.

The results of this research strengthen a number of previous studies, namely [17]–[19], [28] who prove that Word of Mouth influences voting decisions through brand image as a mediating variable. The results support the indications in [16] research which explains that brand image can act as an intermediary in the relationship between Word of Mouth with the decision to choose because customers who receive positive recommendations from other people tend to view the brand positively and be remembered as a trusted product or service. Authentic information from Word of Mouth can provide emotional factors in brand image, thereby influencing voting decisions. Likewise, the indications in the research of [29] viz brand image which is formed through interaction from WOM, becomes a consideration that helps customers in making purchasing decisions. Recommendations conveyed through personal conversations are able to

shape the brand image as a desirable choice and in line with customer values. Therefore, customers tend to decide to choose products or services that have a strong brand image after receiving positive recommendations from WOM.

4. CONCLUSION

Concluded that promotion and Word of Mouth have a positive influence on the decision to choose the Kaniva International Job Training Institute, and have a positive effect on the Kaniva

International brand image. Brand image also has a positive influence on the decision to choose Kaniva International. In addition, promotion and Word of Mouth also influence the decision to choose Kaniva International through the mediation of brand image, which indicates that effective promotion strategies and word of mouth recommendations can improve perceptions of brand image and influence participants' decisions to choose Kaniva International as their vocational training institution.

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