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The Influence of Word of Mouth and Taste on Purchasing Decisions at Mie Balap AMI

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of Word of Mouth (WOM) and taste on consumer purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami, a culinary business located in Pasar Metal, Medan. The background of this study is based on the fluctuations in income that occurred throughout 2024, where the highest income was recorded in April and the lowest in September. The decline is thought to be influenced by weak WOM and inconsistency in product taste. This study uses a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression analysis techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires from 100 respondents selected using non-probability sampling techniques. Validity and reliability tests were carried out to ensure the reliability of the instrument, as well as classical assumption tests to ensure the feasibility of the model. The results of the study show that: (1) Word of Mouth has a significant effect on purchasing decisions; (2) Taste has a significant effect on purchasing decisions; and (3) Word of Mouth and taste simultaneously have a significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami. These findings indicate that the strength of WOM and consistency of taste are key factors in maintaining and increasing consumer loyalty in the culinary industry.

Keywords: Word of Mouth, Taste, Purchasing Decision, Culinary, Mie Balap Ami.

INTRODUCTION

Street food is one of the rapidly growing economic sectors in Indonesia. This business has its own appeal because the capital required is relatively small and the flexibility in determining the location of the business. These advantages allow business actors to easily reach consumers from various levels of society. The types of culinary offered are also diverse, ranging from snacks to heavy meals, which are the main attraction for consumers. According to the general view, the ease of starting and managing a street food business makes it an attractive choice for many people who want to enter the food business world.

However, the increase in the number of business actors has also given rise to increasingly tight competition. Each trader competes to attract the attention of consumers through menu innovation, unique presentation methods, and creative marketing strategies. In this condition, it is important for every business actor to have an advantage that distinguishes them from their

competitors in order to survive and grow. Innovation is an important key in maintaining the existence of a business amidst the dense competition in this industry.

One of the crucial aspects in determining the success of a street food business is the taste of the product served. A delicious and consistent taste greatly influences the level of consumer satisfaction, which ultimately forms customer loyalty. In line with that, Word of Mouth (WOM) or word of mouth promotion is also an important factor in expanding market reach. When consumers are satisfied with the food they buy, they tend to recommend the product to others. This strengthens Sahir's opinion (2022) which states that WOM is an effective strategy in building influence and expanding the market. Therefore, maintaining the quality of taste and utilizing WOM optimally are strategic steps that must be considered by business actors in order to compete sustainably.

Mie Balap Ami is one example of a street food business that has succeeded in taking advantage of opportunities amidst market competition. This business was pioneered by Mrs. Ami in 2020 and is located at Metal Market, Jl. Metal II, Tanjung Mulia, Medan Deli District, Medan City. Mie Balap Ami is known for its mainstay menu, namely Mie Balap, as well as several other menu variations such as Kwetiau Goreng Seafood and Ifumie Goreng Telur. The success of Mie Balap Ami shows the importance of a combination of superior taste and a strong informal marketing strategy to build customer loyalty and maintain business existence amidst the tight competition of street food.

According to Manik (2018), purchasing decisions are consumer actions triggered by certain drives or motives to fulfill needs. In the context of Mie Balap Ami, purchasing decisions can be seen from sales data that reflect consumer interest and satisfaction with the products offered.

Throughout 2024, Mie Balap Ami sales data showed fluctuations in income. The highest income was recorded in April 2024, which was IDR 17,232,300. This spike was most likely due to the increasing demand for two popular menus, namely Kwetiau Goreng Seafood and Ifumie Goreng Telur. Meanwhile, the lowest income occurred in September 2024, with a value of IDR 12,552,215. The decline was thought to be due to the decline in sales of main products such as Mie Balap as well as the possibility of a decline in taste quality and a lack of positive word of mouth (WOM).

Lely Indah Wati et al. (2023) stated that purchasing decisions are greatly influenced by several important factors, including word of mouth and taste. Firmansyah (2020) defines WOM as a form of communication between individuals regarding products or services, which takes place outside the direct control of the company, and is therefore considered more trustworthy by consumers.

To assess how well WOM works in the case of Mie Balap Ami, researchers conducted interviews with 80 consumers. They were asked whether they had ever recommended Mie Balap Ami products to people close to them such as family or friends. The results of these responses were processed to see how strong the influence of WOM is on consumer purchasing decisions, as well as being an indicator of the quality of public perception of Mie Balap Ami.

Thus, fluctuations in Mie Balap Ami sales not only reflect market trends, but also directly reflect how consistently the taste is maintained and how effectively WOM is spread among consumers.

Table 1. Customer Willingness to Recommend Mie Balap Ami

Description	Amount of Consumers	Percentage(%)
Ever Recommend	23	40 %
Never Recommend	57	60 %
Total	80	100 %

Source: Interview, 2024

Based on data from Table 1, only 23 out of 80 consumers or 40% have ever recommended Mie Balap Ami to others, while 57 consumers or 60% have never given recommendations. This reflects the low effectiveness of word of mouth (WOM) in the business. The dominance of consumers who do not give recommendations shows that WOM towards Mie Balap Ami is still weak. According to the analysis, this is caused by several factors, such as unfulfilled consumer expectations regarding taste, quality, and service. In addition, the lack of promotion on social media and the lack of uniqueness or special features of the product compared to competitors make consumers less motivated to share their positive experiences.

Taste is also an important factor in influencing purchasing decisions. Zulfa et al. (2022) stated that taste is the main element that influences product acceptance by consumers, because it involves sensory perception when food is consumed. In the culinary industry, consistent taste and according to expectations can encourage repeat purchases.

However, the results of interviews with Mie Balap Ami consumers showed that taste consistency is still a problem. Some consumers complained that the noodles sometimes tasted underseasoned, while others thought the noodles were too salty. One consumer said that this inconsistency made the dining experience less enjoyable, even though they had previously tasted good. This instability indicates that quality control over taste is not optimal and can affect customer loyalty and purchasing decisions.

As a comparison, consumers who have also purchased at Mie Balap Acu assessed that the products there have a more stable taste and meet expectations. One customer stated that every time they buy at Mie Balap Acu, the taste is always the same, not too salty and not underseasoned, so it provides a satisfying dining experience and makes them more likely to buy again. This comparison shows that consistency of taste can be an important differentiator in retaining customers and strengthening WOM among consumers.

Based on the background above, this study aims to: (1) To determine the effect of word of mouth on purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami. (2) To determine the effect of taste on purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami. (3) To determine the effect of word of mouth and taste on purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami.

Conceptual Framework

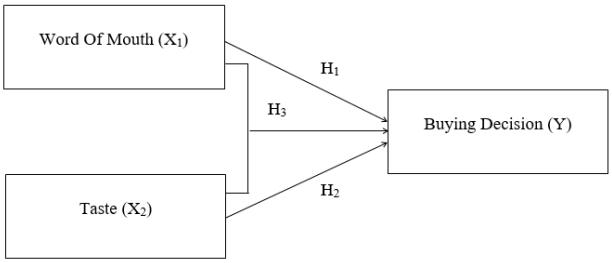


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

H_1: There is an influence of Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions at Mie Balap Ami.
H_2: There is an influence of taste on purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami.
H_3: There is an influence of Word of Mouth and Taste on Purchasing Decisions at Mie Balap Ami.

METHODS

This research was conducted at Mie Balap Ami, located at Pasar Metal, Jl. Metal II, Tanjung Mulia, Medan Deli District, Medan City, North Sumatra, from February to April 2025.

This study uses a quantitative approach with numerical data such as income and consumption levels. Sri Rezeki and Ihdina Gustina (2021) stated that quantitative data is numerical, while according to Sahir (2022), quantitative research aims to test the relationship between variables using statistical techniques.

Data was obtained from two main sources. The primary source is in the form of direct data from respondents through questionnaires, while secondary sources come from books and articles, as explained by Sugiyono (2019).

The population is not known for sure, so sampling uses the Hair et al. (2018) formula, which is five to ten times the number of indicators. Because there are 10 indicators, the maximum sample size is 100 respondents. The variables in this study consist of a dependent variable, namely purchasing decisions (Y), and two independent variables, namely word of mouth (X1) and taste (X2), as stated by Sinaga (2023).

Data collection techniques include questionnaires, observations, interviews, documentation studies, and literature studies. According to Sugiyono (2019), a questionnaire is a data collection technique through written questions, observation is direct observation, interviews are verbal exchanges of information, documentation is data collection from documents, and literature studies are theoretical studies of scientific references.

Respondents rate statements using a five-point Likert scale, from "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree" (1), as explained by Sugiyono (2019).

Validity and reliability tests are carried out first. Ghozali (2018) stated that the validity test determines whether the questionnaire actually measures the intended variables, using the Pearson Correlation method. The reliability test measures consistency, and a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.60 indicates good reliability.

Before the regression analysis, classical assumption tests were carried out: normality test (using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test), multicollinearity test (with a tolerance value > 0.1 and VIF < 10), and heteroscedasticity test (with a scatterplot without a specific pattern). Ghozali (2018) explained that these three tests ensure the feasibility of the regression model.

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to determine the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. Ghozali (2018) explained that the relationship is measured by the equation $Y = a + b1X1 + b2X2 + e$, where Y is the purchasing decision, X1 is word of mouth, X2 is taste, and e is error.

The t test is used to determine the effect of each independent variable partially on purchasing decisions. According to Sahir (2022), a significant effect occurs if t count> t table or significance <0.05. The F test is used to determine the simultaneous effect of all independent variables on purchasing decisions, significant if F count> F table or significance <0.05.

Finally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) test is used to see how much influence the independent variables have together on the dependent variable. The closer the value is to 1, the greater the influence (Sahir, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of respondents based on gender are seen in the data, the majority of respondents are female, with a total of 52 people (52%), while only 48 men (48%). This shows that women tend to be more interested in culinary than men.

Respondent Characteristics Based on Age seen in the data, the majority of respondents are in the 21-30 age group, with a total of 37 people (37%), followed by the age group over 40 years as many as 26 people (26%). The age group under 21 years old was recorded at 20 people (20%), while the age group 31-40 years consisted of 17 people (17%). This shows that the most dominant respondents are aged 21-30 years, which may indicate that this age group has a greater interest in culinary than other age groups.

Respondent characteristics based on purchasing frequency are known that the majority of respondents, namely 31 people (31%), made purchases more than 6 times. Meanwhile, 24 people (24%) of respondents made purchases between 2-4 times, and 24 other people (24%) made purchases between 4-6 times. Meanwhile, 21 people (21%) of respondents made purchases less than 2 times. Thus, the group that most often makes purchases is respondents who buy more than 6 times, which indicates a fairly high interest in the product among the majority of respondents.

Validity and Reliability Test

Validity Test

Table 2. Results of the Validity Test of the Word Of Mouth Variable (X_1)

Statement	r_{count}	r_{table}	Information
I often hear other people talking about Mie Balap Ami.	0,896	0,361	Valid
People around me recommend Mie Balap Ami through live chat.	0,941	0,361	Valid
Mie Balap Ami is one of the menu choices for breakfast.	0,892	0,361	Valid
I am interested in trying Mie Balap Ami because many people discuss the advantages of its taste.	0,391	0,361	Valid
I get recommendations about Mie Balap Ami through colleagues or friends.	0,905	0,361	Valid
Testimonials about Mie Balap Ami are obtained from people who have consumed it.	0,917	0,361	Valid
I feel happy to share my experience about Mie Balap Ami with others.	0,896	0,361	Valid
I often recommend Mie Balap Ami to friends and family.	0,923	0,361	Valid

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Based on Table 2, it is obtained that the results of the validity test of the Word Of Mouth variable (X_1) have a calculated $r_{value} > r_{table}$ 0.361. Thus, it can be concluded that all statement instruments from the Word Of Mouth variable (X_1) used are valid and can be used in research. The results of the validity test of the Taste variable (X_2) can be explained as follows:

Table 3. Results of the Validity Test of the Taste Variable (X_2)

Statement	r_{count}	r_{table}	Information
The aroma of Mie Balap Ami makes me more interested in trying it.	0,702	0,361	Valid
I am satisfied with the distinctive aroma of Mie Balap Ami.	0,802	0,361	Valid
The appearance of Mie Balap Ami looks attractive and appetizing.	0,808	0,361	Valid
Mie Balap Ami has a neat presentation and attracts my attention.	0,903	0,361	Valid
I am satisfied with the taste produced by Mie Balap Ami.	0,776	0,361	Valid
Mie Balap Ami provides a pleasant dining experience for me.	0,911	0,361	Valid

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Based on Table 3, it is obtained that the results of the validity test of the Taste variable (X_2) have a calculated $r_{value} > r_{table}$ 0.361. Thus, it can be concluded that all statement instruments of the Taste variable (X_2) used are valid and can be used in research.

The results of the validity test of the Purchase Decision variable (Y) can be explained as follows:

Table 4. Results of the Validity Test of the Purchase Decision Variable (Y)

Statement	r_{count}	r_{table}	Information
I feel confident to buy Mie Balap Ami compared to other similar products.	0,800	0,361	Valid
I am confident that Mie Balap Ami is the best choice for me.	0,843	0,361	Valid
I often buy Mie Balap Ami because it has become my habit.	0,932	0,361	Valid
I tend to buy Mie Balap Ami whenever I crave for similar foods.	0,925	0,361	Valid
I decided to buy Mie Balap Ami without thinking too much.	0,817	0,361	Valid
I did not hesitate to buy Mie Balap Ami as soon as I saw or heard about it.	0,841	0,361	Valid

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Based on Table 4. it is obtained that the results of the validity test of the Purchase Decision variable (Y) have a calculated r value> r table 0.361. Thus it can be concluded that all statement instruments of the Purchase Decision variable (Y) used are valid and can be used in research.

Reliability Test

Table 5. Reliability Test Results

Variables	Nilai Cronbach Alpha	Amount of Question	Information
Word Of Mouth (X1)	0,935	8	Reliable
Taste (X2)	0,897	6	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,924	6	Reliable

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Based on Table 5 shows the Cronbach's Alpha value of each variable Word Of Mouth, Taste and Purchase Decision is greater than 0.60 with the conclusion that each variable is declared reliable so that it can be continued to further research.

Classical Assumption Test

Normality Test

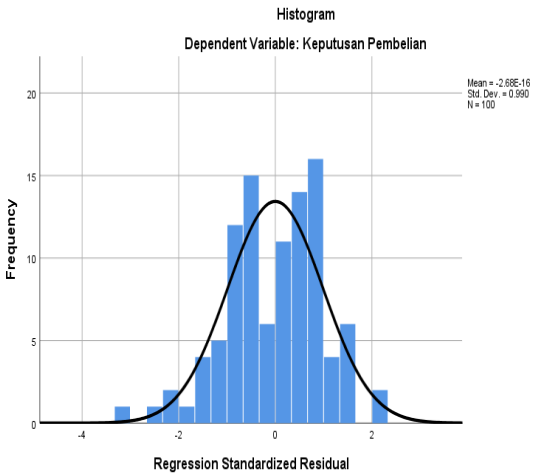


Figure 1. Histogram Graph

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

From Figure 1 Histogram Graph above, it can be seen that the data is spread around the diagonal line and follows the direction of the diagonal line or the histogram graph shows a normal distribution pattern where the image is bell-shaped and does not deviate to the left or right, then the regression is considered to meet the assumption of normality.

Furthermore, the statistical test used is the One Sample Kolmogorov Smirnov (K-S) Test. The criteria used are:

- Accept H_0 if significant K-S≥0.05 (then the distribution is normal)
- Reject H_0 if significant K-S ≤0.05 (then the distribution is not normal)

The results of the statistical test can be seen in the table below:

Table 6. Results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		100
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	3.35681191
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.079
	Positive	.062
	Negative	-.079
Test Statistic		.079
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.130[c]

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

In Table 6 above, it can be seen that the results of the Kolmogorov Smirnov normality test prove that the resulting significance level value is greater than 0.05, which is 0.130, so it can be concluded that the normality statistical test is classified as normally distributed.

In addition, to see normally distributed data, it can also be seen by looking at the normal probability plot graph shown in the following figure:

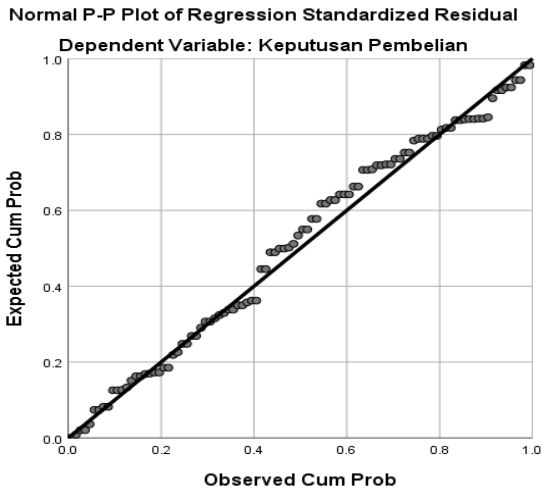


Figure 2. Normal P-P Plot Graph

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

In Figure 2 Normal P-P Plot above, it can be seen that the points approach the diagonal line. This shows that the data is normally distributed and meets the assumptions of the normality test.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 7. Multicollinearity Test Results

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Word Of Mouth	.759	1.318
	Taste	.759	1.318

a. Dependent Variable: Buying decision

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Table 7 above shows that each word of mouth and taste variable used in this study has a tolerance value greater than 0.1 and has a VIF value of less than 10. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity problem in other variables.

Heteroscedasticity Test

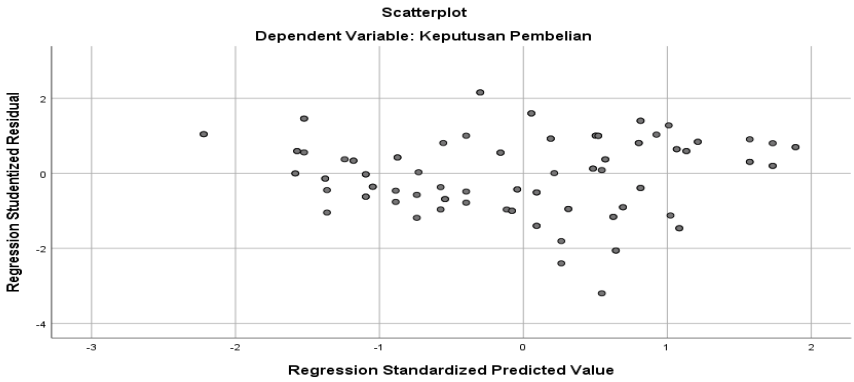


Figure 3. Scatterplot Graph

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

From the scatterplot graph above, it can be seen that the points are spread randomly with no clear pattern and are spread both above and below the number 0 on the Y axis. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity problem. In addition to the Scatterplot Graph, the heteroscedasticity test can be seen from the Glejser test, the following are the results:

Table 8. Glejser Test Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.900	1.051		.856	.394
	Word Of Mouth	.047	.038	.143	1.251	.214
	Taste	.019	.035	.060	.527	.600

a. Dependent Variable: ABS

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

From Table 8, the results of the Glejser test where the significant value of each variable is > 0.05, it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity symptom in this study.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 9. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	13.356	1.860		7.180	.000
	Word Of Mouth	.176	.067	.255	2.619	.010

	Taste	.243	.063	.378	3.881	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Buying decision

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Table 9 above shows that in Unstandardized Coefficients section B, the multiple linear regression equation is obtained with the following formula:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$$

Purchase Decision = 13.356 + 0.176 Word Of Mouth + 0.243 Taste + e

The interpretation is:

1. Constant (a) = 13.356, indicating that the constant value where if the word of mouth and taste variables are equal to 0 or have a fixed value, then the purchase decision is worth 13.356.
2. Word of Mouth Coefficient (b1) = 0.176, indicating that for every one unit increase in the Word of Mouth variable, the purchase decision will increase by 0.176.
3. Taste Coefficient (b2) = 0.243, indicating that every one unit increase in the Taste variable, the purchasing decision will increase by 0.243.

Hypothesis Testing

t-Test (Partially)

Table 10. t-Test Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	13.356	1.860		7.180	.000
	Word Of Mouth	.176	.067	.255	2.619	.010
	Taste	.243	.063	.378	3.881	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Buying decision

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Based on the partial t-test above, it can be seen that:

1. The value of the word of mouth variable t is 2.619, which has an effect and is significant by 0.010, which means it is less than 0.05. The hypothesis is accepted because $t_{count} > t_{table}$ (2.619> 1.98472), which means that word of mouth has a significant effect on purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami.
2. The value of the taste variable t count is 3.881, which has an effect and is significant by 0.000, which means it is less than 0.05. The hypothesis is accepted because $t_{count} > t_{table}$ (3.3881> 1.98472), which means that taste has a significant effect on purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami.

F Test (Simultaneous)

Table 11. F Test Results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	483.440	2	241.720	21.018	.000[b]
	Residual	1115.550	97	11.501		
	Total	1598.990	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Buying decision

b. Predictors: (Constant), Cita Rasa, Word Of Mouth

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Based on Table 11. That the F_{count} value> F_{table} (21.018> 3.09) with a significant value of 0.000 is smaller than 0.05, the results of this study state that the Hypothesis is accepted,

which means that simultaneously word of mouth and taste have a significant effect on purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami.

Determination Coefficient Test (R2)

Table 12. Determination Coefficient Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.550[a]	.302	.288	3.39124

a. Predictors: (Constant), Taste, Word Of Mouth
b. Dependent Variable: Buying Decision

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Therefore, in this study, the coefficient of determination value uses the Adjusted R Square value, because more than one independent variable is used. Based on table 12, the Adjusted R Square value can be seen = 0.194. Thus, the influence of word of mouth and taste on purchasing decisions is 28.8% while the remaining 71.2% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study such as price, brand image, promotion and others.

Contribution of Variables

Table 13. Results of the Dominant Role of Independent Variables

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Taste	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
2	Word Of Mouth	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).

a. Dependent Variable: Buying Decision

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

From the test results, it is known that the taste variable has a more dominant influence on purchasing decisions because its position is at the top after the word of mouth variable.

Discussion

The Influence of Word Of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions at Mie Balap Ami

The results of partial hypothesis calculations show that word of mouth has a significant influence on purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami. When someone hears a positive experience from someone else, especially those who have closeness or trust, this can foster a sense of confidence and trust in the product or service offered. Conversely, negative WOM can prevent someone from making a purchase. Therefore, WOM is an important factor in shaping consumer perceptions and ultimately influencing the purchasing decisions they make.

These results are in line with research conducted by Maknunah et al., (2023), where word of mouth has a significant influence on customer decision-making in relation to purchases.

The Influence of Taste on Purchasing Decisions at Mie Balap Ami

The results of partial hypothesis calculations show that taste has a significant influence on purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami. Taste plays a very important role, consumers to fulfill their food needs definitely prioritize the taste of the food, so entrepreneurs compete to create a distinctive taste in each food so that it is known by consumers which then increases business success. When the taste of a product matches or even exceeds consumer expectations, this can strengthen the decision to buy the product in the future.

These results are in line with research conducted by Soebiantoro (2022) where taste and price perception have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions at Mie Ayam Yamin Gubeng Kertajaya Surabaya.

The Influence of Word Of Mouth and Taste on Purchasing Decisions at Mie Balap Ami

The results of simultaneous hypothesis calculations show that word of mouth and taste have a significant effect on purchasing decisions at Mie Balap Ami. WOM plays an important role in creating awareness and building consumer trust through recommendations from others, while good taste is the main attraction that encourages consumers to buy the product. The combination of the positive influence of WOM and satisfying taste further strengthens consumer purchasing decisions, making these two factors mutually supportive in increasing sales and customer loyalty at Mie Balap Ami.

These results are in line with research conducted by Badrus Sholeh & Any Urwatul Wusko (2023), where word of mouth and taste have a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Word of Mouth has a significant effect on Purchasing Decisions at Mie Balap Ami.
2. Taste has a significant effect on Purchasing Decisions at Mie Balap Ami.
3. Word of Mouth and Taste have an effect on Purchasing Decisions at Mie Balap Ami..

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