
Analysis of Factors Affecting Selection Decisions of Private Universities in Bali Through Brand Image Mediation Variables

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Abstract

The increasing number of universities has caused intense competition to attract prospective students. The level of competition in looking for students is getting higher every day. Various ways have been done, such as showing off the potential and advantages of higher education. Purchasing decisions are very important things to consider because purchasing decisions are things that are used by companies to create marketing strategies that will be carried out. Purchasing decisions in the context of education, especially universities, are the same as decisions of new students in choosing universities. Therefore, this aspect is important to note. This study aims to determine the factors that affecting the selection decision consisting of promotion, academic culture, cost, and brand image. This research is an associative study with data collection techniques using a survey method which is analyzed by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Respondents in this study were 200 new students from STIKOM Bali, STIKI, STMIK Primakara, STD Bali, STMIK Badung Bali, and STMIK Denpasar. The research results show that promotion, academic culture, and costs have a significant effect on brand image. Promotion and brand image have a significant effect on selection decisions, but costs and academic culture do not have a significant effect on selection decisions. Promotion and academic culture have a significant effect on selection decisions through brand image, but costs do not have a significant effect on selection decisions through brand image.

Keywords: Promotion; Academic Culture; Cost; Brand Image; Selection Decision.

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1. Introduction

The increasing number of universities has caused intense competition to attract prospective students. The level of competition in looking for students is getting higher every day. Various ways have been done, such as showing off the potential and advantages of the universities. Purchasing decisions are very important things to consider because purchasing decisions are things that are used by companies to create marketing strategies that will be carried out. One of the things that companies need to pay attention to in marketing products to be sold is understanding consumer needs, knowing consumer wants and tastes of consumers. A deep understanding of consumers will allow marketers to influence the consumer's decision process, so that they want to buy what marketers offer [1]. The purchase decision itself is a consumer action to form references among brands in the choice group and buy the most preferred product. The stages of a purchase are problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decisions, and post-purchase behavior [2]. Some of the factors that can increase the purchase decision, one of which is cultural factors. This is consistent with the results of research by [3] which state that cultural factors have a positive effect on purchasing decisions. But on the other hand, [4,5] stated that cultural factors have a positive relationship but do not have a significant effect on purchasing decisions. Culture in this research is academic culture. Academic culture is a way of life for a pluralistic, multicultural scientific community that is housed in an institution that bases itself on the values of scientific truth and objectivity [6]. In the character education, the academic culture contains the implementation of values such as moral values, morals, character, truth, honesty, so as to build an atmosphere and academic actors who are moral, have good character, have good character, have the value of honesty, truth in thoughts and actions. The character of the academic culture is an effort to build values and norms that display an academic atmosphere, namely an atmosphere that displays behavior according to scientific values and principles in an effort to acquire and develop knowledge and seek the truth. This atmosphere is absolutely necessary, maintained, and fostered in higher education, so that it is called the character education of academic culture in universities. These character values include: Honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, care, citizenship, tolerance, toughness, self-dignity, religious and intelligent [7]. Then another factor that also affects purchasing decisions is promotion. In line with the research of [8] which states that promotion has a significant weak effect on purchasing decisions. Then the research results of [9] state that promotion has a positive influence on purchasing decisions, so that if promotion is increased it will result in high purchasing decisions. Promotion is a one-way flow of information or persuasion designed to direct a person or organization to actions that create exchange in marketing [10]. Promotion indicators are advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations [11]. Cost factors also influence purchasing decisions, as reported by [12], which states that brand prices (fair prices and fixed prices) simultaneously have a partial and positive effect on purchasing decisions. Reference [13] add that how insignificant an element is, has gained significance in purchasing decisions over the last decade and that customers always follow the company's activities related to prices and that they will continue to follow them. Therefore, companies must always remember that it is consumers who must be the center of their attention and who must always remember their wants, needs and preferences, but also their possibilities. Cost is a sacrifice of economic resources measured in units of money that have occurred or are likely to occur for a specific [14]. In theory and practice of education financing, both at macro and micro levels, education costs are grouped into three, namely direct costs, indirect costs, and social costs [15]. Apart from the

three factors above, brand image is an important aspect in improving purchasing decisions. Brand image is the public's perception of the company or its products [2]. The indicators of brand image are physical attributes, functional implication, and psychosocial implication [16]. Research by [17], brand image has a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions, so the higher the brand image in the minds of consumers, the higher the consumer purchasing decisions. Reference [18] also shows the same thing, where brand image has a positive effect on purchasing decisions between buyers and prospective buyers. Cultural, promotional, and cost factors also have an influence on brand image. As the research results of [19,20] which states that promotion has an effect on brand image. Reference [21,22] state that costs affect brand image. Then the research of [23,24] concluded that culture has an effect on brand image. From several studies that have been described previously, brand image can act as a mediating variable of the influence of culture, promotion, and costs on purchasing decisions, because these three factors have a significant effect on purchasing decisions and brand image. Reference [25] research concluded that there is an effect of promotion on purchasing decisions through brand image. Then the research by [26] also states that brand image has a role as an intervening variable between promotion and price on purchasing decisions. Purchasing decisions in the context of education, especially universities, are the same as decisions of new students in choosing universities. Based on this description, research will be carried out which aims to measure the effect of promotion, costs, and academic culture on the decisions of new students in choosing private universities in Bali province with brand image as the mediating variable.

2. Materials and methods

The type of research used is associative quantitative research (the relationship between two or more variables) with a descriptive approach. The data analysis technique in this research is using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis with the help of IBM Amos software. The study population was all new private university students in Bali province using proportional stratified random sampling technique. The number of samples required in the study refers to [27] who suggest a good sample size for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) between 100 until 200 respondents. To achieve optimal results, this study uses a sample of 200 respondents from STIKOM Bali, STIKI, STMIK Primakara, STD Bali, STMIK Badung Bali, and STMIK Denpasar. The data collection technique used a survey method through distributing questionnaires about promotion, academic culture, costs, brand image, and selection decisions. Figure 1 shows the research conceptual model. This model is structured based on the partial influence of promotion variables, academic culture, costs, and brand image on the selection decision.

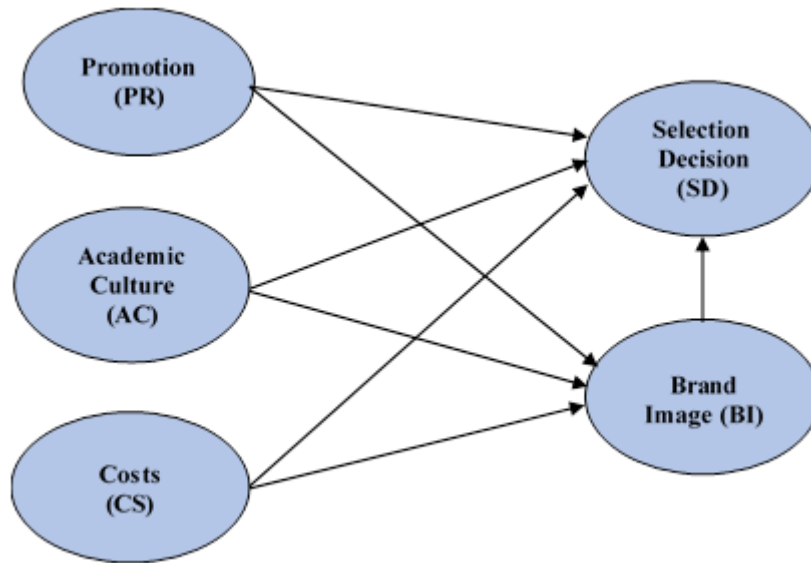


Figure 1: research conceptual model

Based on the conceptual model above (Figure 1), the research hypothesis can be structured as follows:

- H1 : Promotion has effect on brand image
- H2 : Cost affects brand image
- H3 : Academic culture has effect on brand image
- H4 : Promotion affects the selection decision
- H5 : Cost affects the selection decision
- H6 : Academic culture influences selection decisions
- H7 : Brand image affects the selection decision
- H8 : Promotion affects the selection decision through brand image
- H9 : Cost affects the selection decision through brand image
- H10 : Academic culture influences selection decisions through brand image

3. Results

3.1. Respondent profile

Respondents in this study consisted of 200 new students from private universities in Bali province who were described by gender, name of private university, school of origin, major, and regional origin (Regency / City). Characteristics of respondents based on gender, there are 58% male respondents and the remaining 42% are female. Based on private universities in the field of ICT studied, the number of respondents was STIKOM Bali as much as 50%, STD Bali as much as 10%, STIKI and STMIK Primakara each as much as 15% and STIMIK Bandung Bali and STIMIK Denpasar as many as 5% each. The profile of respondents based on school origin is in accordance with Figure 5.3. It is known that there are more students from SMA / SMU than students who are SMK graduates. It is recorded that the number of high school / high school graduate students is 68%, while the SMK graduates are 32%. Meanwhile, the profile of respondents based on the majors taken is that students

majoring in Information Systems are more numerous than other majors. 45% of new students majoring in Information Systems, 17.5% of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, 6.5% of Social Sciences, Information Technology and Computer Systems respectively 6%. Other majors are Information Management, Software Engineering, Information Engineering, Computer and Network Technology with 3% each, Digital Business and Accounting Information Systems at 1% each. The rest are new students majoring in Electrical, Communication, Science / Social Sciences / Languages, Multimedia, and Mechanical Engineering each with 0.5%. The majority of respondents were new students of private universities in the ICT sector who came from Denpasar as much as 21.5% and Badung as much as 20.5%. The next respondents were new students of private universities in Bali province from Tabanan as much as 12.5%, Buleleng as much as 10%, Karangasem as much as 7.5%, Gianyar as much as 5.5%, Bangli as much as 5%, Singaraja as much as 3.5%, Jembrana as much as 2%. Then 1% of new private university students from outside the province of Bali come from Jember. The rest are new students from Bajawa, Banggai (Central Sulawesi), Banyuwangi, Ciamis, Depok, Jombang, Kedewetan, Kintamani, Klaten, Atambua City (NTT), Bogor City, Ngada, and Sidemen each as much as 0.5%.

3.2. Structure equation modeling analysis

This analysis is used to examine the effect of promotion, academic culture, and costs on the decision to choose a private university in Bali province through brand awareness. Prior to further analysis, an evaluation of the measurement model will first be carried out by testing the validity of each measuring indicator for the variable of academic culture, promotion, cost, brand image, and decision making to determine whether these indicators are valid in measuring the constructs it is measuring. An indicator is said to be valid if the loading factor value is > 0.5. The indicators that make up the variables of promotion, academic culture, cost, brand image, and selection decisions have a loading factor value of > 0.5 which means that all indicators are valid in measuring the variables they are measuring. These results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Evaluation results of the measurement model

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor Value	Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor Value
Promotion (PR)	PR1	0.587	Academic Culture (AC)	AC10	0.636
	PR2	0.597		AC11	0.610
	PR3	0.979		CS1	0.780
	PR4	0.548	Costs (BIY)	CS2	0.805
Academic Culture (AC)	AC1	0.558		CS3	0.936
	AC2	0.603	Brand Image (BI)	BI1	0.708
	AC3	0.617		BI2	0.876
	AC4	0.681		BI3	0.706
	AC5	0.611	Selection Decision (SD)	SD1	0.581
AC6	0.691	SD2		0.608	
AC7	0.662	SD3		0.685	
AC8	0.671	SD4		0.783	
AC9	0.588	SD5		0.789	

Furthermore, a structural model evaluation is carried out which aims to determine the effect of promotion, academic culture, costs, brand image, and selection decisions. Before testing the hypothesis, first check the goodness of fit of the model. If the goodness of fit criteria are met, then the model is fit and can proceed to hypothesis testing. The structural model that is formed shows that there is still a goodness of fit index that is not

in accordance with the required cut-off value so it is necessary to modify the structural model at a later stage. The comparison of the results of checking the goodness of fit index before and after modification is presented in Table 2. From the table it is known that of the 7 criteria for goodness of fit, there are 2 criteria that do not meet the cut-off value but approach the cut-off value (marginal fit). Then for the probability value, because the sample size is very large (n = 200), this probability is not taken [28]. Therefore, it can be concluded that the structural model formed is fit and can be analyzed further. As stated by [29:49], the use of 4 to 5 criteria of goodness of fit is considered sufficient to assess the feasibility of a model.

Table 2: Comparison of goodness of fit before and after modifications

Goodness of Fit Index (GoF)	Cut-off Value	Before Model Modifications		After Model Modifications	
		GoF Value	Information	GoF Value	Information
Probability	≥ 0.05	0.000	Bad	0.000	Bad
Cmin/df	≤ 2.00	1.928	Good	1.353	Good
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.811	Marginal	0.876	Marginal
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.770	Bad	0.841	Marginal
TLI	$\geq 0,95$	0.858	Marginal	0.946	Good
CFI	$\geq 0,95$	0.874	Marginal	0.955	Good
Rmse	≤ 0.08	0.068	Good	0.042	Good

Note: GFI = goodness-of-fit indices, AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit indices, TLI = tucker-lewis index, CFI = comparative fit index, Rmse = root mean square error of approximation.

The overall model is fit, so it can be continued in hypothesis testing. The research hypothesis consists of ten influences, of which seven are direct influence pathways and the other three are indirect influence pathways. The condition for accepting the direct effect hypothesis is that if the probability (p-value) value is ≤ 0.05 , then there is a significant effect on the path of influence.

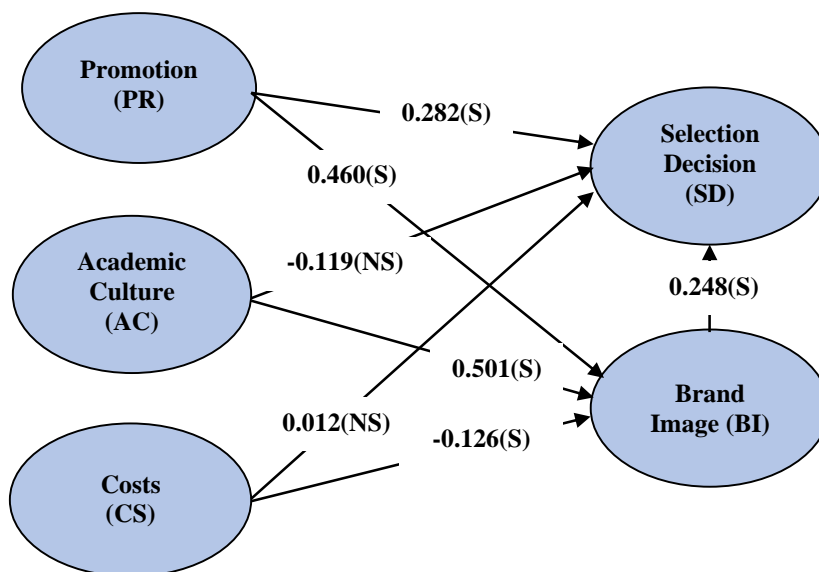


Figure 2: result of structural model evaluation

Figure 2 shows that promotion, academic culture, and costs have a significant effect (S) on brand image with p-values of 0.000, 0.000, and 0.039 < 0.05, respectively, then promotion and brand image have a significant effect (S) on the selection decision with p-value respectively 0.018 and 0.014 < 0.05. However, cost and academic culture did not have a significant effect (NS) on the selection decision with p-values of 0.828 and 0.252 > 0.05, respectively. Then to test the indirect hypothesis obtained through the Sobel test provided that if the probability (p-value) value is ≤ 0.05 , then there is a significant influence on the path of the indirect effect. The results of the indirect effect are presented in Table 3 which shows that promotion and academic culture have a significant effect on the selection decision through brand image with p-values of 0.039 and 0.032 < 0.05, respectively, but costs do not have a significant effect on the selection decision through brand image. p-value of 0.114 > 0.05. These results are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Indirect effect test results

Path Effect	Path Coefficient	p-value	Information
Promotion --> Brand Image --> Selection Decision	0.114	0.039	Significant
Costs --> Brand Image --> Selection Decision	0.031	0.114	Not Significant
Academic Culture --> Brand Image --> Selection Decision	0.124	0.032	Significant

4. Discussion

4.1. Impact of promotion on the brand image of private universities in Bali Province

Promotion has a significant influence on brand image. The better promotions carried out by private universities in Bali province can improve the brand image of these private universities for the better. The promotion of this university is the spearhead of private universities in building the brand image of these private universities. This promotion can be done through electronic and print media to provide information on private universities so that prospective new students are better known. This promotion is an important medium in marketing universities, because through this promotion, prospective students become more aware of what a college is like. From this promotion, the image of the university will be formed. The results of this study are in line with the results of research by [20, 22, 19, 21]. As [20] research states that sales promotion (SP) is an unavoidable tool in the communication mix. marketing, especially in the FMCG market, due to pressures such as increasing retailer demand and increasing competition. This has proven to be a problem for many companies, especially those with premium brand positioning and those who are concerned about the impact that SP may have on the company's long-term image. [22] added that the intensity of promotion affects brand image. Brand promotion positively affects the perception of the brand image of a company [19, 21].

4.2. Impact of costs on the brand image of private universities in Bali Province

Cost has a significant effect on brand image. Reasonable costs incurred by private university students in Bali province can improve the brand image of the private university for the better. The costs incurred by students while studying at private universities vary widely, ranging from transportation costs, boarding fees, snack fees, tuition fees per semester, and initial entry fees. The amount of this fee can build the brand image of private universities, because this amount of fees makes private universities more well known to the public. There are people who think that private universities are prestigious universities because they are expensive, so only people with middle to upper economics are accepted or enrolled there. The results of this study are in line with the results of research by [22, 21, 12]. Reference [22] states that competitive prices affect brand image. Likewise, [21] also mention that price affects brand image. [12] state that brand image and price (fair price and fixed price) simultaneously have a partial and positive influence on purchasing decisions. The results of multiple linear regression analysis show that prices (fixed prices and relative prices) simultaneously have a partial and positive effect on brand image.

4.3. Impact of academic culture on the brand image of private universities in Bali Province

Academic culture has a significant influence on brand image. The better the academic culture applied by private universities in Bali province can improve the brand image of the private universities for the better. Academic culture can build the brand image of private universities, because this culture is always applied from time to time, so that it can become the hallmark of a private university that can support the brand image of the private university. A university has certain values that shape the image of the university. Higher education values are not reflected in the people in it (employees, students) nor are they reflected in the opinions of outsiders (society). The image of the university is closely related to the culture of the university. The culture contained in the university embodies the brand image of the university itself. The results of this study are in line with the results of research by [23, 24]. [23] mentions that the focus of R&D as an organizational image is related to an adhocracy culture. The organization's core values are not identified by company insiders, who are employees, nor can these values be reflected to outsiders. Then according to [24], the relationship between culture, image and identity forms a circular process of interdependence. Organizational identity is embedded as a culture that provides a picture of the organization. The image of the organization is then projected outward and reabsorbed into the system of cultural meaning and used symbolically to infer identity: who we are is reflected in what we do and how others interpret who we are and what we do.

4.4. Impact of promotion on the selection decision of private universities in Bali Province

Promotion has a significant influence on selection decisions. The better the promotion carried out by private universities in Bali province, the better students' decisions in choosing these private universities will be. Promotions carried out by private universities are used as a medium for introducing private universities to prospective new students. Through this promotion, prospective new students will further strengthen their choice of a private university. The results of this study are in line with the results of research by [22, 3, 21, 9]. Reference [22] states that product quality and promotion intensity affect the perceived price band image and purchase decisions. Research by [3] states that the marketing mix has a positive effect on purchasing decisions for embroidered kebaya at Jegeg Ayu Boutique in Kuta. This research is also reinforced by the research of [21]

which results in that promotion has an effect on purchasing decisions. Reference [9] state that product quality, price, and promotion have a positive influence on purchasing decisions, this means that if product quality, price, and promotion are improved, it will result in high purchasing decisions. Promotions carried out by universities have a strong significant influence on purchasing decisions. Universities with good quality, if they do not promote well, they will still be unable to compete with other universities. Therefore, promotion will determine student decisions. The results of this study are not in line with the research of [8] which states that the influence of products on purchasing decisions and the influence of promotions on purchasing decisions has a significant weak influence.

4.5. Impact of costs on the selection decision of private universities in Bali Province

Cost has no significant effect on selection decisions. Whether or not the costs incurred by new students are reasonable does not affect the student's decision in choosing a private university. Costs cannot be used as a benchmark for students in choosing a private university, because whether or not the costs incurred by students are reasonable, it does not reflect whether the private university has good quality or not. Basically, most private universities always provide opportunities for their students to get scholarships. Students who have a lower-middle economy certainly don't mind if the costs they incur are not reasonable (expensive), because scholarship facilities can reduce their burden. The results of this study are in line with the research results of [13] which state that the price element has no significant effect on purchasing decisions during the last decade and customers always follow the company's activities related to price. Therefore, companies must always remember that it is consumers who must be the center of their attention, so they must always keep their wants, needs and preferences in mind. The results of this study are not in line with the research of [21, 17]. Reference [21] mention that price affects purchasing decisions. The research of [17] also mentions that price perception has a positive and significant impact on the decision to buy an Oppo smartphone in the city of Kendari. That is, price perception becomes one of the considerations for consumers in determining the level of purchasing decisions.

4.6. Impact of academic culture on the selection decision of private universities in Bali Province

Academic culture has no significant effect on selection decisions. Whether or not the academic culture of private universities in the province of Bali does not affect students' decisions in choosing these private universities. This academic culture can be known or felt by prospective new students if the student is already a student at a certain private university, so that they really experience what academic culture is like. Most of them may before choosing a private university, they will tend to ask alumni or private university students about academic culture but this does not only directly make new students choose the PTS. The perception of a good academic culture between students is different from one another. For some students, academic culture in certain aspects is said to be good but for other students it is not necessarily so. The results of this study are in line with the results of research by [5, 4]. Reference [5] mentions that there are no important social, cultural, personal, and psychological differences in consumer purchasing power decisions for Tonasa cement products in Manado City. Likewise, with [4] which also states that cultural and social factors have a positive relationship but do not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions for bancassurance. The results of this study are not in line with the results of research by [3] which state that cultural factors have a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

4.7. Impact of brand image on the selection decision of private universities in Bali Province

Brand image has a significant influence on selection decisions. The better brand image of private universities in Bali province will make students' decisions in choosing these private universities better. A student chooses a private university based on the brand image of the private university. Most students prefer universities that have a good image, because it becomes a matter of pride for them. Not a few private universities are competing to build their image in order to attract prospective students to register. A university that has a good image is certainly one of the considerations for students to choose, because it becomes a matter of pride for prospective students to be part of the college. The results of this study are in line with the results of research by [18, 21, 17, 12]. Reference [18] research concludes that brand image has a positive effect on purchasing decisions among buyers and prospective buyers. Then [21,17] also mentions that brand image has an effect on purchasing decisions. Reference [12] state that the image simultaneously has a partial and positive influence on purchasing decisions.

4.8. Impact of promotion on the selection decision of private universities in Bali Province through brand image

Promotion has a significant influence on selection decisions through brand image. The better the promotion carried out by private universities supported by a better brand images, it can make students' decisions in choosing private universities better. In this case, brand image can act as a mediation on the effect of promotion on selection decisions. Brand image is the perception of prospective students towards a university. If the university is able to promote well, where the perception of prospective students on the college's brand image is also good, then prospective students will tend to make their choice at the college. The results of this study are in line with the results of research by [25, 26]. Reference [25] mention that there is an influence of promotion on purchasing decisions through brand image. Then according to [26], promotion has a significant effect on purchasing decisions through brand image. This study proves that brand image has a role as an intervening variable between promotions and purchasing decisions.

4.9. Impact of costs on the selection decision of private universities in Bali Province through brand image

Cost has no significant effect on the selection decision through brand image. Whether or not the costs incurred by students are reasonable cannot influence the student's decision in choosing a college, even though it is supported by the PTS brand image. In this case, brand image cannot act as a mediation on the effect of costs on selection decisions, because the resulting coefficient of influence is low, which means that the effect is very small even though the path of cost influence on brand image and brand image on selection decisions both have a significant influence. The results of this study are in line with the research of [13] which states that the price element has no significant effect on purchasing decisions during the last decade and customers always follow the company's activities related to price. Therefore, companies must always remember that it is consumers who must be the center of their attention, so they must always keep their wants, needs and preferences in mind. This study is not in line with the research of [26] which states that price has a significant effect on purchasing decisions through brand image and consumer attitudes have a significant effect on purchasing decisions through

brand image. This study proves that brand image has a role as an intervening variable between price and purchasing decisions.

4.10. Impact of academic culture on the selection decision of private universities in Bali Province through brand image

Academic culture has a significant influence on selection decisions through brand image. The better the academic culture applied in private universities which is supported by a better brand image, it can make students' decisions in choosing private universities better. In this case, brand image can act as a mediation on the influence of academic culture on selection decisions. The academic culture applied in universities can create the image of universities. If the culture applied in higher education is good, then the image of the university will also be realized well. As [18] research concludes that brand image has a positive effect on purchasing decisions among buyers and prospective buyers. Academic culture that embodies the image of a university can influence the decisions of prospective students in choosing a college. As research by [3] which states that cultural factors have a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

5. Conclusion

In general, in attracting the interest of new students by reviewing their selection decisions, the aspects that need to be considered are promotion, academic culture, costs, and brand image. These aspects can become a form of marketing strategy so that private universities can remain superior when compared to competitors. The importance of this research is to examine whether these aspects can optimize universities marketing strategies. Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it is concluded that promotion, academic culture, and costs have a significant effect on brand image, promotion and brand image have a significant effect on selection decisions, but costs and academic culture do not have a significant effect on selection decisions. Promotion and academic culture have a significant effect on selection decisions through brand image, but costs do not have a significant effect on selection decisions through brand image. Based on these conclusions, this research can be applied to the management of private universities that the promotion carried out by private universities needs to be done optimally, because promotion can affect the brand image of private universities and student decisions in choosing private universities. In addition to promotional efforts, private universities need to implement a good academic culture, because this academic culture can influence the brand image of the private university. The brand image of private universities needs to be improved even better by paying attention to aspects of academic culture and promotion. These two aspects can indirectly influence student decisions in choosing private universities. Constrains or limitations in this research is related to data collection. Researchers cannot meet face-to-face with research respondents, because data collection is online, making it difficult for researchers to dig deeper into research variables. In addition, the respondents in this study were prospective new students, so the answers given were still a little doubtful, because new students did not fully understand the university considering that they had not been in the university for a long time. In further research, it can be reconfirmed on the effect of costs and academic culture on the selection decision for different objects, whether they give the same or different results. There needs to be the addition of other variables that may influence the selection decision in order to be make this research more developed.

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