
**THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND AMBASSADORS AND BRAND IMAGE ON
DECISIONS PURCHASES ON E-COMMERCE TOKOPEDIA**

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Abstract

E-commerce has become an essential requirement for every trading company. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of Brand Ambassador and Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions in Tokopedia e-commerce. The population of this study is Generation Z who shop at Tokopedia e-commerce and live in Sidoarjo City. This research uses quantitative methods involving 84 respondents. The method used is non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique. Data was collected through a questionnaire which was compiled based on indicators of each variable and analyzed with SmartPLS. The results of this study indicate that Brand Ambassador has no significant effect on Purchasing Decisions, but Brand Image has a significant effect on Purchasing Decisions.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, Purchase Decision

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly advanced and modern era, technology will become increasingly important for all individuals, regardless of age. The internet is one of the technologies that has become a basic need for the community. It is used for work, education, entertainment, and so on. The utilization of the internet has resulted in the growth of a new economy known as the digital economy, which then led to the birth of online business as a new phenomenon.

E-commerce has become an essential need for every trading company. E-commerce provides consumers with access to purchase goods through the Internet. This e-commerce technology provides benefits for both parties, both for consumers in business to consumers and for business people in business to business. The use of this technology by companies or entrepreneurs can have both positive and negative impacts (Atun Mumtahana et al., 2017).

Along with economic growth and the development of information technology, this younger generation shows a tendency to turn to online purchasing as a top preference. With the increasing consumptive drive among the public, driven not only by needs but also by desires, e-commerce is becoming an increasingly desirable solution to fulfill their shopping needs efficiently and practically. Tokopedia is one of the leading platforms that is the top choice for Generation Z and other productive age groups. According to data released by Tokopedia, most of its users are young people who are active online.

Tokopedia's existence as one of the largest e-commerce platforms in Indonesia has contributed significantly to the growth of the e-commerce industry in the country. With a variety of features and conveniences offered, Tokopedia is able to attract the interest of the younger generation to make purchases online.

To increase the economies of scale of its business, Tokopedia implements a large marketing and branding strategy that is in line with market trends. Currently, the trend of Korean culture, especially Korean Drama and Korean Pop (K-Pop), is rampant in various parts of the world. Recognizing this huge potential, Tokopedia took a smart step by collaborating with one of the most popular girl bands from South Korea, Blackpink. With the presence of Blackpink as part of the marketing strategy, Tokopedia managed to attract the attention of a wide audience, especially K-pop fans in Indonesia.

The presence of brand ambassadors can create the perception that consumers become more selective in choosing products and increase social status by owning goods used by the brand ambassador. This is also one of the factors considered by consumers to trust the messages conveyed by advertisers. Brand ambassadors are individuals who have an interest and love for a brand, and have the ability to influence consumers to buy or use the products offered by the brand (Suparwi & Fitriyani, 2020).

The compatibility between a brand ambassador and the brand is also an important factor in supporting brand communication which in turn can form a positive brand image. The suitability of the brand ambassador's character with the brand image will create a harmonious relationship and produce an attachment between the brand ambassador and the brand image. Thus, when the brand ambassador mentions the represented product, consumers will automatically think of it. Brand ambassadors will help strengthen the emotional connection between the brand or company and consumers, which in turn will influence purchasing decisions and product usage (Kolinug et al., 2022).

The brand image includes the perceptions that consumers have of a brand. If the brand image is positive, then consumers will trust the brand more and be more likely to choose its products. The brand image helps consumers make purchasing decisions more easily. For example, consumers who have a positive view of a brand will be more likely to choose products from that brand without much consideration. Therefore, having a good brand image is very important to influence consumers' purchasing decisions and to keep the brand relevant in their minds (Rejeki et al., 2023).

At the purchase decision stage, consumers take concrete action to buy the product they have chosen. This process is a crucial moment in making purchasing decisions, where consumers consider various factors before they make a purchase. As previously explained, one of the factors that can influence purchasing decisions is brand image, which is the perception that consumers have about a brand. A strong and positive brand image can make consumers more confident to choose products from that brand. In addition, the presence of brand ambassadors who are following the brand image can also strengthen the brand image and influence consumer purchasing decisions.

The presence of brand ambassadors that match Tokopedia's brand image can strengthen the brand image and influence Generation Z's purchasing decisions on the platform. Thus, in the e-commerce ecosystem, purchasing decisions are not only influenced by product quality but also by brand image and the presence of brand ambassadors that are relevant to market segments, especially Generation Z.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Brand Ambassador

Brand ambassadors are cultural or identity symbols that serve as marketing representatives of a product. Brand ambassadors are individuals who strengthen the image of a brand through various well-known figures in society (Andrew, 2018). Some indicators of brand ambassadors according to G. Lea (2012) are transference, suitability, credibility, attractiveness, and power.

Brand Image

Brand image is a perception that is in the minds of consumers when remembering one of the brands of a product (Firmansyah, 2019). Brand image has several indicators, namely as follows: 1) Corporate Image; 2) User Image; 3) Product Image.

Purchase Decision

Purchasing decisions are steps in the buying process starting from consumer awareness of the problem, searching for information about a relevant product or brand, evaluating alternative products or brands to determine the best solution to the problem, and finally deciding to make a purchase (Tjiptono, 2014). Purchasing decisions have several indicators, namely as follows (Kotler, 2008): 1) Steadiness to buy after knowing product information; 2) Decided to buy because of the most preferred brand; 3) Buying because it suits your wants and needs; 4) Buying because they get recommendations from other people.

RESEARCH METHOD

Operational Definition

An operational definition is a definition aimed at a variable by providing an operational meaning that can be needed to measure the variable. Variables consist of an

independent variable or X and a dependent variable or Y. Based on the problem formulation and hypothesis explained above, the variables to be studied are as follows.

Dependent Variable (Y)

Purchasing decisions are the steps in the purchasing process starting from the consumer's awareness of the problem, searching for relevant information about a product or brand, evaluating alternative products or brands to determine the best solution to the problem, and finally deciding to make a purchase. Kotler and Armstrong (2008:181) explain that purchasing decisions consist of 4 indicators, namely as follows:

1. Confidence in purchasing after knowing product information. (Y1)
2. Deciding to buy because of the brand you like best. (Y2)
3. Buy because it suits your wants and needs. (Y3)
4. Buy because you get recommendations from other people. (Y4)

Independent Variables (X)

1. Brand Ambassador (X1)

Brand ambassadors are a means used by companies to direct and connect with the public about their products to increase sales of these products. This research uses several indicators of brand ambassadors according to G. Lea (2012), namely transference, conformity, credibility, attraction, and power.

2. Brand Image (X2)

Brand image is the essence of a product that is implanted in consumers' minds. According to Biel (1992), brand image has several indicators, namely corporate image, user image, and product image.

Population and Sample

The respondents selected were following the research criteria, namely Generation Z who shopped at Tokopedia e-commerce and lived in Sidoarjo City. The technique for calculating the number of samples in this research follows the sample measurement guidelines from Ghozali (2011), namely 5-10 times the number of indicators. In this research, there are 12 indicators, so the minimum sample size used is 7 times 12 indicators or 84 respondents.

This research uses a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique. This technique means that researchers select samples based on certain predetermined criteria, not randomly.

Data Collection Technique

This research uses quantitative methods with data collected through questionnaires distributed using Google Forms. Data analysis was carried out using the SmartPLS application. This analysis method is suitable for all types of data scales and does not require many assumptions or large samples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistical Data Analysis

Table 1
Respondent Demographics

Demographics	Total	Percentage
Gender		
Man	38	45%
Woman	46	55%
Age		
17 - 20	15	17,86%
21 - 23	69	82,14%
Jobs		
Student	55	65%
Entrepreneurship	4	5%
Others	25	30%
Total	84	100

Table 1 describes the characteristics of respondents based on gender, age, and occupation. Data was obtained from 84 respondents who filled out the questionnaire, 55% were female, and the remaining 45% were male. Meanwhile, based on age, 82.14% were in the age range of 21-23 years, then as many as 17.86% were in the age range of 17-20 years. Meanwhile, based on their occupation, 65% are students, 5% are entrepreneurs, and the remaining 30% are others.

Outlier Test Evaluation

Table 2
Residual Statistics^a

	N	Minimum	Maximum
Mahal. Distance	84	2.125	45.255

Table 2 shows the Mahal value, which results in a Maximum Distance of respondent data of 45.255, which is smaller than the Maximum Distance of outliers determined to be 50.82525, which means that the data has no outliers. The data has good quality and can be continued for further processing.

PLS Model Analysis

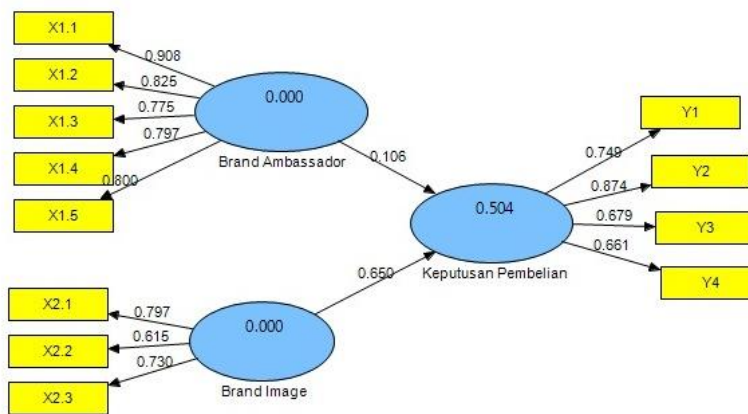


Figure 1
Outer Model with Factor Loading, Path Coefficient, and R-Square
Source: Data processing, SmartPLS output

From the PLS output image above, it can be seen the magnitude of the factor loading value for each indicator which is located above the arrow between the variable and the indicator, it can also be seen the magnitude of the path coefficients above the arrow line between the exogenous variables and the endogenous variables. In addition, it can also be seen the magnitude of the R-Square which is right inside the endogenous variable circle (Purchase Decision).

Indicator Validity Measurement

Table 3
Cross Loading

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor Value
Brand Ambassador (X1)	X1.1	0.908004
	X1.2	0.825050
	X1.3	0.774703
	X1.4	0.797244
	X1.5	0.800231
Brand Image (X2)	X2.1	0.796651
	X2.2	0.615134
	X2.3	0.730350
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y.1	0.749089
	Y.2	0.874097
	Y.3	0.678799
	Y.4	0.660834

In Table 3 above, if the loading factor value of each indicator in each variable is greater than the loading factor of each indicator in other variables, the loading factor is said to be valid, but if the loading factor value is smaller than the indicators of other variables, it is said to be invalid. The results of the cross-loading analysis show that all loading factor values on the Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision variable indicators are greater than those of other variables. This means that all indicators in this study meet good validity.

Latent Variabel Corelations

Table 4
Latent Variabel Correlations

	Brand Ambassador (X1)	Brand Image (X2)
Brand Image (X2)	0.509984	
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.436999	0.703748

In PLS, variables or constructs can be correlated, either between exogenous and endogenous variables or between exogenous variables. The maximum correlation value is 1, with a value closer to 1 indicating a better correlation, as shown in the table above.

In the table above, the correlation between variables shows an average correlation value above 0.5. The highest correlation is between the Purchase Decision (Y) and Brand Image (X2) variables of 0.703748. This means that the relationship between Purchasing Decision (Y) and Brand Image (X2) is stronger than the relationship between the other variables in this research model, indicating that Brand Image (X2) has the greatest influence on Purchasing Decision (Y).

Structural Model Tests

**Table 5
 R-Square**

	R-Square
Brand Ambassador (X1)	
Brand Image (X2)	
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.503505

To evaluate the structural model, we use the R-squared value to see how well the model fits the data. When we review the inner model, attention is drawn to the R-square values in the equations that connect the latent variables. R2 explains how much influence the independent variables in the model have in explaining the variation in the dependent variable.

In the table above, the R2 value is 0.503505. This means that the model can explain most of the variation in purchasing decisions, which is 50.35%, which is influenced by variables such as Brand Ambassadors. However, about 49.65% of the variation in purchasing decisions can be explained by other variables that are not included in this study or that are different from Brand Ambassador and Brand Image.

Hypothesis Testing

**Table 6
 Path Coefficients**

	Path Coefficients (O)	T Statistics (O/STERR)
Brand Ambassador (X1) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0.105551	1.126007
Brand Image (X2) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0.649919	8.147842

Brand Ambassador has a positive impact on Purchasing Decisions cannot be accepted because the path coefficients of 0.105551 and the T-statistic value of 1.126007,

which is smaller than the Z value $\alpha = 0.05$ (5%) = 1.96, so the results are not positively significant.

Brand Image has a positive impact on Purchasing Decisions can be accepted because the path coefficients are 0.649919, and the T-statistic value is 8.147842, which is greater than the Z value $\alpha = 0.05$ (5%), so the results are positively significant.

The Effect of Brand Ambassadors on Purchasing Decisions

Based on data analysis, it shows that the presence of Brand Ambassadors (X1), such as Blackpink, does not significantly affect Purchasing Decisions in Tokopedia e-commerce. Even though Blackpink is popular, her use as a brand ambassador is not enough to support Tokopedia e-commerce in increasing Purchasing Decisions among Generation Z. This shows that other factors have a role in influencing consumer purchases on Tokopedia because the popularity of brand ambassadors is not enough to increase sales on the e-commerce platform.

This research is in line with the research of Hertika Rahmawati et al, (2022) which shows that brand ambassadors have no significant effect on purchasing decisions. Statistical data reveals that most Generation Z consumers prefer to buy products based on the recommendations of others rather than brand ambassadors. This indicates that broader social and economic factors, such as trends, economic conditions, and consumer preferences, may have a greater role in purchasing decisions. In addition, although Tokopedia's brand ambassadors are popular among Gen Z, such popularity does not necessarily increase sales. Generation Z tends to enjoy entertainment content without necessarily converting it into an act of purchase. Therefore, this study confirms that brand ambassadors are not the main factor in Generation Z's purchasing decision-making in Tokopedia e-commerce.

The Effect of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions

The results showed that brand image has a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions on Tokopedia. This means that the more positive Tokopedia's brand image is, the higher the likelihood of consumers making purchases on the platform. A good brand image is a crucial factor in making purchasing decisions, especially due to Tokopedia's strong reputation as a trusted and innovative e-commerce platform in Indonesia. Tokopedia has successfully built this positive image through creative marketing campaigns,

collaboration with well-known brand ambassadors, as well as a focus on superior customer service and buyer protection policies.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Kolinug M. et al (2022), which states that brand image influences purchasing decisions in Tokopedia e-commerce. A positive brand image can encourage consumers to prefer shopping on Tokopedia and choose products on the platform. This shows how important brand image is in e-commerce, where competition is fierce and consumer choices are many. Thus, it can be concluded that brand image greatly influences consumer purchasing decisions. The better Tokopedia's brand image, the more likely consumers will choose to shop on the platform.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research shows that the Ambassador brand does not have a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions on Tokopedia e-commerce. Blackpink's popularity as a Tokopedia brand ambassador is less effective in increasing purchasing decisions among Gen Z in Sidoarjo City. On the other hand, brand image has a big influence on purchasing decisions on Tokopedia. This means that the better the image of a brand, the more consumers will buy from Tokopedia. A positive brand image makes consumers trust and tend to shop on this platform.

The suggestion from this research is to take advantage of the popularity of the Ambassador brand to optimize promotional strategies to be more targeted so that the use of the Ambassador brand can be more effective in increasing purchasing decisions. In addition, to maintain a good brand image in society, Tokopedia is advised to continue to improve and maintain its positive image to maintain consumer loyalty and support long-term business growth.

The focus of this study is on the variables of Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision. Therefore, it is recommended that further research include brand loyalty factors in purchasing decision analysis to provide additional perspectives regarding the use of Tokopedia e-commerce.

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