

**THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND AMBASSADOR AND CONTENT MARKETING
ON DECISIONS TO PURCHASE ULTRA MILK PRODUCTS (CASE STUDY OF
INSTAGRAM USERS IN SURABAYA)**

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine and understand how Brand Ambassadors and content marketing affect consumer purchasing decisions to buy Ultra Milk milk. In the current era, many companies use K-pop Brand Ambassadors and content marketing to promote their products on social media platforms, one of which is Instagram. It is hoped that this research will be useful as a reference in future research. The method used in this study uses SEM techniques with a quantitative approach and purposive sampling method using a Likert scale. The results showed that the Brand Ambassador variable did not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. In contrast to the content marketing variable which has a significant influence. The implication of the results of this study is the importance of companies in optimising the role of Brand Ambassadors in marketing Ultra Milk milk products and maintaining and developing Content Marketing strategies.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Content Marketing, Purchase Decisions

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalisation, marketing in the beverage industry has become highly competitive. Many companies operate in the dairy industry, which leads to fierce business competition and the emergence of many milk brands in society. In order to retain consumers, companies must choose the right brand ambassador and content marketing to market and fit the market, not just focus on the product.

PT Ultrajaya Milk Industry & Trading Company Tbk is the earliest company in Indonesia to start producing liquid milk drinks in ready-to-drink packages. The company has a well-known milk brand, Ultra Milk. Consumers consider Ultra Milk as the best UHT milk brand in Indonesia. However, from 2022-2023 it decreased by 4.3%, and from 2023-2024 it decreased from 31.70% to 21.20%. In addition, ULTJ's gross profit fell from 35.4% in the third quarter of 2021 to 32.73% in the third quarter of 2022, then fell again to 32.49% in the third quarter of 2023. This was due to an increase in ULTJ's cost of sales to 4.13 trillion in the third quarter of 2023 from 3.81 trillion in the third quarter of 2022 and 3.1 trillion in the third quarter of 2021.

Ultra Milk has implemented various strategies to increase its sales, including conducting promotions with K-Pop Idols and providing merchandise when purchasing Ultra Milk milk. These strategies are expected to attract the target market and influence their buyer decisions. According to Yanthi et al. (2020), purchasing decisions are the stages carried out by consumers in choosing the brand that best suits their needs from a number of available options.

Brand ambassadors are artists used by organisations to promote product or service brands nationally or internationally to individuals or groups (Kok et al., 2021). The collaboration between Ultra Milk and K-pop boy group Stray Kids in the #iamULTRAordinary campaign aims to invite everyone to show their extraordinary side. With Stray Kids as the official Brand Ambassador, it is expected to influence consumer purchasing decisions due to different perceptions. K-poppers are expected to react positively to the collaboration between Ultra Milk and Stray Kids.

The existence of a Brand Ambassador must be supported by an efficient marketing strategy so that it can achieve the desired goals in addition to increasing product success. The

use of social media is currently considered an effective means of marketing products to meet the needs and desires of consumers, so that products can continue to exist and compete in the market. In the digital era, content marketing has a very vital role and has a significant impact on business continuity (Rohali, 2022). Through the content presented, it is expected to influence consumer purchasing decisions. The content created and disseminated must be relevant to the brand in question so that it can help consumers understand the products being promoted. Content marketing must be able to capture the buyer's view when viewing, considering, and finally making a purchase of the product offered (Huda et. al., 2021).

With the presence of Brand Ambassadors and content marketing, consumers become interested and make purchasing decisions, especially Stray Kids fans who are very enthusiastic about the campaign held by Ultra Milk. This is an important aspect for consumers when making purchasing decisions through content marketing and Brand Ambassadors. It has been proven in research (Dinny, 2022) that brand ambassadors have a significant and positive influence on purchasing decisions. In contrast to research (Hakiki et. al., 2022) which states that brand ambassadors do not have a significant and negative influence on purchasing decisions. According to research (Rohali, 2022) states that content marketing has a significant and positive influence on purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, research (Huda et. al., 2021) states that content marketing has no significant or negative effect on purchasing decisions. This research was conducted to determine the effect of Brand Ambassador and content marketing on purchasing decisions for Ultra Milk.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Brand Ambassador Towards Purchase Decision

Brand Ambassadors are celebrities whose job is to promote a particular product or company, and represent the company in providing information related to the product or company in a way that can influence purchasing decisions for the product (Dinny et. al., 2022). In addition, Brand Ambassadors are also responsible for explaining to consumers how to use the product, the benefits, and the reasons why consumers should choose the product (Siregar et. al., 2023). Indicators of the success of a Brand Ambassador according to (Haque et. al., 2023) include popularity, credibility, attraction, and power.

According to research (Diny & Purwanto, 2022), Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Other research conducted by (Haque et al., 2023) also confirms that Brand Ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Thus, the higher the visibility, credibility, attractions and power, the decision to purchase a product by consumers will increase.

Content Marketing Towards Purchase Decision

According to Ramadhan et al (2023), Content Marketing is a notification contained in media or content. Content can be photos, videos, text, and audio. By creating engaging content, you can expand your audience reach and even tailor it to specific audience specifications. One way is to provide attractive visual content to influence purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, according to Rohali et al (2022), content marketing involves content that is useful and suitable for the target audience as a marketing strategy. Indicators of content marketing (Raquel & Milhinhos, 2015) in (Rohali & Nurlinda, 2022) relevance, accuracy, value, easy to understand, easy to find, and consistent.

According to the results of research conducted (Rohali & Nurlinda, 2022), content marketing makes a significant positive contribution to consumer purchasing decisions. According to the results of research (Puspayani et. al., 2021) said that content marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. This means that the more interesting marketing content is designed and distributed, the more purchasing decisions will increase.

Purchasing Decision

A purchase decision is a step that a person chooses to make a purchase of a product or not. According to Kotler (2015) in Hendrawan et al. (2022), purchasing decisions involve analysing needs, wants, and actions after purchase. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2008) in Siregar et al. (2023), indicators of purchasing decisions include purchasing stability after receiving product information, choosing the most preferred / most preferred brand, buying according to needs and desires, and buying based on recommendations.

Conceptual Framework

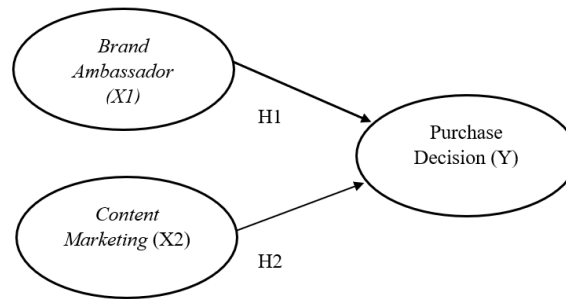


Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

Population and Sample

Population is a generalisation area that includes objects and subjects that have certain characteristics or characteristics that have been chosen by researchers to conduct research and draw conclusions. The population in this study were Ultra Milk milk consumers in Surabaya.

The sampling method used in this study is a non-probability sampling method, which means that this technique does not provide equal opportunities for each population when sampled. Purposive sampling was chosen as a sampling technique based on specific objectives. After detailing the number of samples, 112 samples were obtained.

In this research, there are 2 aspects of data collection, namely questionnaires and literature studies. The questionnaire was conducted by distributing questions online through google form to respondents who are Ultra Milk milk consumers and have seen Ultra Milk milk content on Instagram. While the literature study was conducted by taking and collecting existing sources from journals, articles, websites and previous research.

Data analysis in this study used the SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) method based on components using the PLS (Partial Least Square) analysis tool. PLS is a multivariate statistical method used when matching dependent and independent variables. The PLS approach is suitable for use in prediction purposes. PLS supports researchers in predicting the value of latent variables. PLS does not require multiple estimations because the data may

not be multivariate normally distributed and the sample size does not have to be large, recommending samples between 30-100. PLS SEM can be used on data with small samples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Outer Model

Convergent Validity

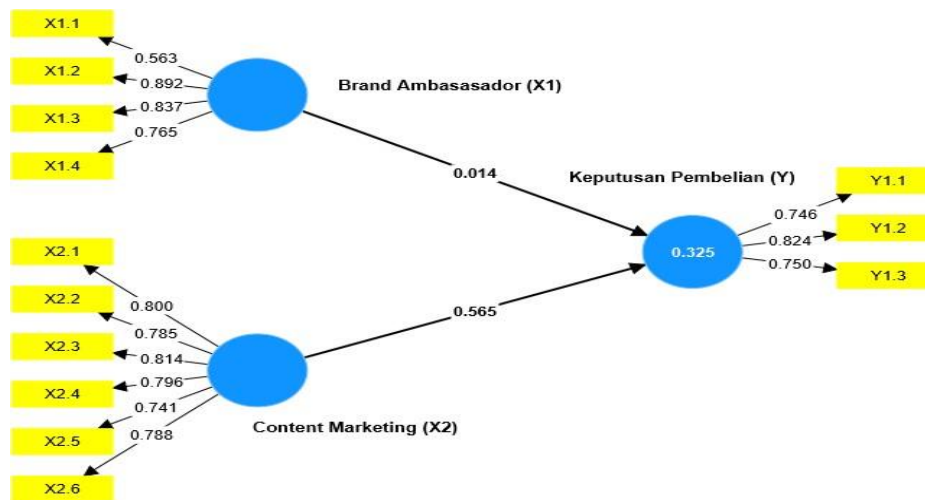


Figure 1
Outer Model

Judging from the PLS output image above, it can be seen that the large loading factor value for each indicator is above the arrow between the variable and the indicator, as well as the large path coefficient value above the arrow between the independent variable and the dependent variable. On the other hand, the R-Square value is clearly visible, which is in the middle of the dependent variable circle (Purchase Decision). Based on this output, all reflective indicators on Brand Ambassador (X1) and content marketing and purchasing decisions (Y) state that the loading factor is greater than 0.50 or significant (the T-Statistic value is greater than the value of $Z_{\alpha} = 0.05 (5\%) = 1.96$). Therefore, the estimation results of all convergent validity indicators have been met and Good.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity can be measured using the Fornell Larcker Criterion measurement model by comparing the AVE root value with the latent variable relationship. If the AVE root is greater than the latent variable correlation, discriminant validity is met.

Tabel 1
Discriminant Validity-Fornell Larcker Criterion

	Brand Ambassador (X1)	Content Marketing (X2)	Keputusan Pembelian (Y)
Brand Ambassador (X1)	0,774		
Content Marketing (X2)	0,411	0,788	
Keputusan Pembelian (Y)	0,246	0,570	0,774

If the Brand Ambassador variable (X1) with 4 indicators (X1.1 to X1.4) has an AVE root of 0.774 which is greater than the correlation value with other variables of 0.411; 0.246 as well as other variables, so the Brand Ambassador variable fulfils discriminant validity.

Average Variance Extracted and Composite Reliability

Average Variance Extracted (AVE), states how much the indicator variance value is contained in the latent variable. The convergent AVE value is greater than 0.5, so the level of validity is said to be good for latent variables.

Tabel 1
Average Variance Extracted dan Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Ambassador (X1)	0,804	0,911	0,854	0,600
Content Marketing (X2)	0,878	0,882	0,907	0,621
Keputusan Pembelian (Y)	0,765	0,768	0,817	0,599

The test results state that if the AVE value for the Brand Ambassador, Content Marketing and Purchase Decision constructs is greater than 0.5, it is considered valid. In addition, construct reliability is tested using the composite reliability value which states that the construct is reliable because the value is greater than 0.7.

Inner Model (Structural Test Results)

Goodness Fit Model

Tabel 2
R-Square

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Keputusan Pembelian (Y)	0,325	0,313

The R2 value of 0.325 states that 32.50% describes the problem in Purchasing Decisions, while 67.50% describes other variables (outside of Brand Ambassadors and Content Marketing) that are not included in the model and are errors. This means that Brand Ambassador and Content Marketing have an influence on Purchasing Decisions by 32.50%, and 67.50% is influenced by variables other than Brand Ambassador and Content Marketing such as Brand Image and Consumptive Behaviour.

Hypothesis test

Tabel 3
Path Coefficients (Mean, STDEV, T-Statistics, P-Value)

	Original sample (O)	Sampel mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Brand Ambassador (X1) -> Keputusan Pembelian (Y)	0,014	0,041	0,096	0,143	0,886
Content Marketing (X2) -> Keputusan Pembelian (Y)	0,565	0,567	0,082	6,885	0,000

Based on the results of the path coefficient and T-statistics in the inner model table above, conclusions can be drawn:

1. Brand Ambassador has no influence on Purchasing Decisions because the t-statistic value is smaller than 1.96, namely 0.143 and the p-value = 0.886 is greater than the value of $\alpha = 0.05$ (5%), so H0 is accepted and Ha is rejected.
2. Content Marketing has a significant positive effect on Purchasing Decisions because the t value is smaller than 1.96, namely 6.885, where the p-value = 0.000 is smaller than the value $\alpha = 0.05$ (5%), so H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted.

The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the results of research conducted by researchers, brand ambassadors do not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions, so the hypothesis regarding the influence of brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions for Ultra Milk milk cannot be accepted or rejected. This shows that the Stray Kids brand ambassador is right but has not played its role well.

Ultra Milk does not optimise the trust and strength of the Stray Kids brand ambassador in people's perceptions so that the marketing carried out is not as desired. Ultra Milk does not necessarily do its marketing well by providing rewards for every purchase of 3 Ultra Milk products in 200ml/250ml sizes with the aim of increasing purchases of Ultra Milk milk products. So it is necessary to pay attention to the important role of a brand ambassador as a tool used by brands to promote their products to customers. This resulted in a lack of contribution from Stray Kids as brand ambassadors despite the popularity of Stray Kids. Even though Stray Kids brand ambassadors have no influence on purchasing decisions, consumers still buy because they already know about Ultra Milk milk products.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by (Hakiki et. al., 2022) which states that the brand ambassador variable has no significant effect on purchasing decisions and is not in line with research conducted by (Diny & Purwanto, 2022) which states that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. So that the more incompetent and the decreasing attractiveness of the brand ambassador who represents the product greatly influences consumers in making purchasing decisions. This is evidenced by marketing that is not optimal, causing consumers to feel disappointed when making purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Content Marketing on Purchasing Decisions

When viewed from the results of the research conducted, content marketing has an influence on purchasing decisions for Ultra Milk milk. Thus, the hypothesis regarding the effect of content marketing on product purchasing decisions, namely Ultra Milk milk, can be accepted. The results state that the greater the content marketing promoted by the company, the more purchasing decisions will increase.

Based on descriptive analysis, the content marketing variable shows that consistency has the largest percentage. Ultra Milk shows consistency in doing content marketing by holding giveaways, attractive promotions in several supermarkets, and collaborating with kpop idol fanbases in events shared through the @ultra_mym Instagram account which has an effect on increasing consumer decisions to buy products.

The results of this study are in accordance with research from other people who have similar research, namely from Rohali & Nurlinda (2022), that content marketing contributes

significantly to purchasing decisions. And in line with research (Puspayani et. al., 2021), content marketing contributes significantly and positively to purchasing decisions. Therefore, the consistency and attractiveness of content shared through the @ultra_mym Instagram account can influence consumers to make purchasing decisions for Ultra Milk milk. This fact is supported by the variety of content shared by Ultra Milk through their Instagram account.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research using PLS to test the influence of Brand Ambassador and Content Marketing variables on purchasing decisions, conclusions can be drawn: 1) Brand Ambassadors do not contribute to purchasing decisions for Ultra Milk milk products. This shows that the Stray Kids brand ambassador is right but has not played its role well, which is because Ultra Milk does not optimise the trust and strength of the Stray Kids brand ambassador in people's perceptions so that the marketing carried out is not as desired; 2) Content Marketing contributes to purchasing decisions for Ultra Milk milk products. This shows that the higher the content marketing promoted, the consistency of the content and the attractiveness of the content shared by Ultra Milk to consumers, the more purchasing decisions will increase.

Based on the result above, there are several suggestions that can be used as a reference for further research, namely: 1) To attract and retain purchases from consumers, the company is advised to further optimize the role of brand ambassadors through marketing activities by optimizing the giving of gifts in the form of photocards evenly to the invited media partners, namely Alfamart, Indomaret, and Lawson, so that the marketing activities campaigned are well realized and meet the perception of the public or consumers; 2) Content Marketing shared by Ultra Milk through the Ultra Milk Instagram account is @ultra_mym already attractive to the view, and the content shared is useful and easy for consumers to understand, so it only needs to maintain and maintain consistency in sharing content on the Instagram account. In addition, it is also necessary to develop it to be even better; 3) Is hoped that in the next research, the results of this study can be used as a reference, and it is hoped that in the next research can add other variables such as brand image and consumptive behavior.

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