

Influence of Brand Ambassador and Brand Image on Shopee Purchases with Brand Trust Mediation

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of brand ambassadors and brand image on purchase decisions in the Shopee application, with brand trust as an intervening variable. A quantitative approach was used, involving 100 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected via an online questionnaire using a Likert scale of 1-5 and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results show that brand ambassadors have a significant positive effect on brand trust but do not significantly influence purchase decisions. Meanwhile, brand image has a significant positive effect on both brand trust and purchase decisions. However, brand trust does not significantly influence purchase decisions. Additionally, brand trust does not significantly mediate the relationship between brand ambassadors and purchase decisions, nor between brand image and purchase decisions. These findings highlight the importance of brand image in driving consumer trust and purchase behavior, while the role of brand ambassadors appears to be more indirect. This research provides valuable insights for e-commerce platforms and businesses in optimizing their marketing strategies by focusing on brand image development and strategic brand ambassador selection.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, Brand Trust, Purchase Decision.

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INTRODUCTION

In the current digital era, e-commerce has experienced rapid development, significantly influencing consumer behavior in making purchasing decisions. Shopee, as one of the leading e-commerce platforms in Southeast Asia, continuously implements various marketing strategies, including the use of brand ambassadors and brand image, to enhance consumer trust and drive purchase decisions. Brand ambassadors play a crucial role in representing a brand and influencing consumer perceptions, while brand image serves as a reflection of the brand's reputation and credibility (Firdaus & Budiman, 2021). However, the extent to which these factors influence consumer purchasing decisions, especially with brand trust as an intervening variable, remains a relevant topic for further research.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between brand trust and consumer behavior in e-commerce. For example, Setiani et al. (2024) found that customer

trust significantly mediates the relationship between promotional programs and repurchase intention in the IM3 Salatiga Outlet. Similarly, Firdaus & Firdaus (2024) analyzed the impact of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on repurchase intention in Lazada users and found trust to be a significant mediating variable. In the context of Shopee, Najiyah & Firdaus (2024) emphasized that consumer satisfaction serves as an intervening factor between service quality and consumer loyalty. These findings indicate that trust is a vital component influencing purchasing behavior in e-commerce platforms.

Despite these insights, there is still a need to explore how brand ambassadors and brand image contribute to building brand trust and ultimately influencing purchase decisions. Prasetyo et al. (2024) highlighted that brand trust and brand image significantly impact purchasing decisions, but the role of buying interest as an intervening variable remains debatable. Meanwhile, Azizah & Firdaus (2024) examined the influence of E-WOM on reuse intentions, showing that user trust is a critical factor in consumer decision-making processes. Furthermore, Putri, Nurhayati, & Firdaus (2024) found that social media marketing and brand awareness affect purchase decisions, with brand image acting as a mediating variable.

Based on the existing literature, this study aims to analyze the impact of brand ambassadors and brand image on purchase decisions in the Shopee application, with brand trust as an intervening variable. A quantitative approach was employed using a Likert scale of 1-5 to measure consumer perceptions. The data were collected from 100 respondents through purposive sampling and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). By examining these relationships, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into how e-commerce platforms can optimize their marketing strategies to enhance consumer trust and purchasing decisions. The novelty of this research lies in integrating brand ambassador, brand image, and brand trust variables in the Shopee context, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in e-commerce.

THEORITICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Brand Ambassador. Brand ambassadors play a crucial role in marketing by enhancing brand awareness and influencing consumer perceptions (Kirana et al., 2020). According to Kotler and Keller (2022), a brand ambassador serves as the face of a brand, representing its values and image to consumers. The VisCAP model—Visibility, Credibility, Attraction, and Power—defines the effectiveness of brand ambassadors in marketing strategies (Digdowiseiso et al., 2021). High visibility increases brand recognition, credibility fosters consumer trust, attraction enhances consumer engagement, and power drives purchase intention (Firdaus et al., 2023).

Brand Image. Brand image is the perception held by consumers based on their experiences and interactions with a brand (Aaker, 2021). A strong brand image leads to positive consumer attitudes and enhances trust, influencing purchase decisions (Putri, Nurhayati, & Firdaus, 2024). Research suggests that brand image significantly impacts consumer behavior, particularly in digital marketplaces (Najiyah & Firdaus, 2024). According to Keller (2022), brands with a positive image gain competitive advantages, fostering customer loyalty and engagement.

Brand Trust. Brand trust refers to consumer confidence in a brand's reliability and integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 2021). Trust is built through consistent product quality, transparent communication, and positive consumer experiences (Setiani et al., 2024). Previous studies indicate that brand trust mediates the relationship between brand image and purchase decisions (Azizah & Firdaus, 2024). Trust is essential in e-commerce transactions, where direct product evaluation is limited (Prasetyo et al., 2024).

Purchase Decision The purchase decision process involves recognizing a need, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, making a purchase, and post-purchase behavior

(Solomon, 2021). Factors such as brand image, brand trust, and brand ambassador influence this process (Firdaus, 2019). Studies have shown that consumers are more likely to purchase from brands with a strong image and high trust levels (Firdaus & Budiman, 2021).

The Impact of Brand Ambassador on Brand Trust Research indicates that brand ambassadors enhance consumer trust by providing credible and relatable endorsements (Firdaus & Firdaus, 2024). A study on Lazada users found a positive correlation between brand ambassador credibility and trust (Digdowiseiso et al., 2021).

H1: Brand ambassador has a positive impact on brand trust.

The Impact of Brand Image on Brand Trust A strong brand image fosters consumer trust by reinforcing positive associations and reducing perceived risks (Keller, 2022). Studies confirm that brand image significantly affects consumer trust in online shopping platforms (Prasetyo et al., 2024).

H2: Brand image has a positive impact on brand trust.

The Impact of Brand Trust on Purchase Decision Brand trust plays a pivotal role in purchase decisions, especially in e-commerce (Azizah & Firdaus, 2024). Consumers prefer brands they trust, leading to higher purchase intention and repeat purchases (Setiani et al., 2024).

H3: Brand trust has a positive impact on purchase decision.

The Impact of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision Brand ambassadors influence purchase decisions by enhancing brand attractiveness and credibility (Digdowiseiso et al., 2021). A study on Tokopedia users found a significant relationship between brand ambassador presence and purchase decisions (Putri et al., 2024).

H4: Brand ambassador has a positive impact on purchase decision.

The Impact of Brand Image on Purchase Decision Brand image directly influences consumer purchase decisions by shaping perceptions of quality and reliability (Aaker, 2021). Studies indicate that a positive brand image increases consumer willingness to buy (Najiyah & Firdaus, 2024).

H5: Brand image has a positive impact on purchase decision.

The Mediating Role of Brand Trust Brand trust mediates the relationship between brand-related factors and purchase decisions (Azizah & Firdaus, 2024). It strengthens the impact of brand ambassadors and brand image on consumer choices (Setiani et al., 2024).

H6: Brand trust mediates the relationship between brand ambassador and purchase decision.

H7: Brand trust mediates the relationship between brand image and purchase decision.

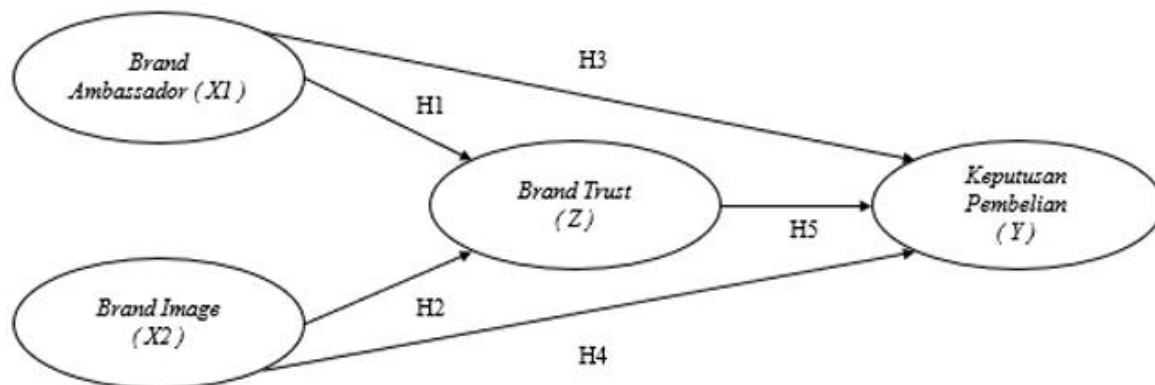


Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODS

This study follows a structured research methodology to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The research design is quantitative with a survey-based approach. The research procedure involves identifying the problem, formulating hypotheses, designing the questionnaire, collecting data, and analyzing the results.

-Research Design

This research adopts a quantitative approach using a survey method. The study aims to examine the relationship between brand ambassador, brand image, brand trust, and purchase decisions.

-Population and Respondents

The population in this study consists of Shopee users in Indonesia who have made at least one purchase in the past three months. According to previous studies, consumer behavior in e-commerce platforms is influenced by brand trust and marketing strategies (Azizah & Firdaus, 2024; Firdaus et al., 2023). A total of 100 respondents were selected using a non-probability purposive sampling method, which ensures that participants meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Najiyah & Firdaus, 2024). The selection of respondents considers factors such as age, gender, and occupation to ensure diversity and representativeness (Firdaus & Budiman, 2021).

-Measurement

The research variables are measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire consists of multiple sections addressing brand ambassador, brand image, brand trust, and purchase decisions.

-Data Collection

Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through social media and direct messages to respondents who met the sampling criteria.

-Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the SmartPLS software. The SEM approach was employed to evaluate the direct and indirect effects among variables, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of the mediating role of brand trust. The validity and reliability of the constructs were tested using factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) before hypothesis testing.

Table 1: Demographic Participants

Age Group	Male	Female	Private Employee	Student	Professional
17-25	18	22	10	25	5
26-35	15	20	18	10	7
>35	12	13	15	5	5
Total	45	55	43	40	17

Source: Processed Data

This methodology ensures a rigorous approach to analyzing the impact of brand ambassador and brand image on purchase decisions with brand trust as a mediating variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings and provides an in-depth discussion of the results. The discussion includes the interpretation of findings, linking them to previous studies, and drawing conclusions based on the analysis conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS.

Demographic Analysis

The demographic characteristics of respondents are detailed in Table 1. The majority of respondents belong to the 17-25 age group (40%), followed by 26-35 (35%) and those above 35 years (25%). A total of 55% of respondents were female, while 45% were male. The respondents' occupations varied, with private employees constituting 43%, students 40%, and professionals 17%.

Table 1: Demographic Participants

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Source: Processed Data

Validity and Reliability Testing

Before hypothesis testing, the constructs were evaluated for validity and reliability. Table 2 presents the **convergent validity**, **discriminant validity**, and **composite reliability (CR)** results.

Table 2: Validity and Reliability Test

Construct	Factor Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability (CR)
Brand Ambassador	0.870	0.656	0.791
Brand Image	0.794	0.575	0.778
Brand Trust	0.875	0.751	0.870
Purchase Decision	0.873	0.852	0.750

Source: SmartPLS Output

All constructs have factor loadings > 0.70, an AVE greater than 0.50, and CR exceeding 0.70, confirming the validity and reliability of the measurement model (Azizah & Firdaus, 2024).

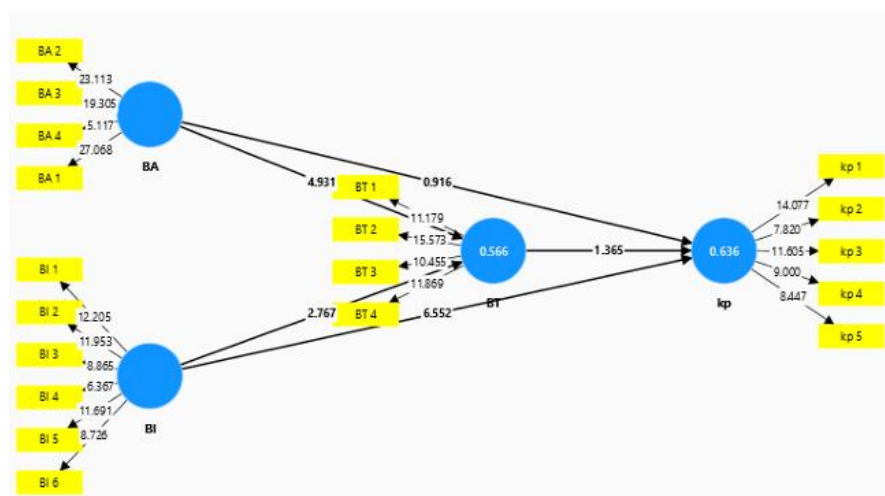


Figure 2 Output Smart-PLS (Model Structural)

Hypothesis Testing and Structural Model Evaluation

Hypothesis testing was conducted using **path coefficient analysis** and **t-statistics**. Table 3 presents the results of the hypothesis testing.

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-Statistic	p-Value	Result
H1: Brand Ambassador → Brand Trust	0.431	4.931	0.000	Supported
H2: Brand Ambassador → Purchase Decision	0.083	0.916	0.360	Not Supported
H3: Brand Image → Brand Trust	0.317	2.767	0.006	Supported
H4: Brand Image → Purchase Decision	0.552	6.552	0.000	Supported
H5: Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	0.112	1.365	0.172	Not Supported
H6: Brand Ambassador → Purchase Decision (mediated by Brand Trust)	0.098	1.375	0.169	Not Supported
H7: Brand Image → Purchase Decision (mediated by Brand Trust)	0.072	1.088	0.277	Not Supported

Source: SmartPLS Output

Discussion

Effect of Brand Ambassador on Brand Trust and Purchase Decision

The study finds that brand ambassadors positively and significantly influence brand trust, supporting previous research on the role of endorsements in building credibility (Firdaus et al., 2023). This suggests that consumers perceive endorsed brands as more reliable and trustworthy. However, the direct impact of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions is insignificant. This finding indicates that while brand ambassadors enhance trust, they do not necessarily drive purchase decisions. Consumers may rely on other factors such as price, product reviews, and promotions when making purchases on Shopee (Najiyah & Firdaus, 2024).

Effect of Brand Image on Brand Trust and Purchase Decision

Brand image has a significant positive effect on both brand trust and purchase decisions. This aligns with studies emphasizing that a strong brand image enhances consumer confidence and purchase intention (Firdaus & Budiman, 2021). A well-established brand image reassures consumers about product quality, leading to higher trust and purchase likelihood.

Mediating Role of Brand Trust

Brand trust does not significantly mediate the relationship between brand ambassador and purchase decision, nor between brand image and purchase decision. This suggests that while trust plays an important role in consumer behavior, other variables, such as product quality, price competitiveness, and promotions, may have a more direct influence on purchase decisions (Azizah & Firdaus, 2024). This highlights the need for businesses to consider multiple factors beyond just brand trust when strategizing to enhance purchase decisions.

The findings highlight the importance of brand ambassadors and brand image in influencing brand trust. However, brand trust does not directly drive purchase decisions, suggesting that Shopee must strengthen other consumer engagement strategies. Future research could explore additional factors such as customer experience and price perception to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the impact of brand ambassadors and brand image on purchase decisions in Shopee, with brand trust as a mediating variable. The findings reveal that while brand ambassadors significantly enhance brand trust, their direct influence on purchase decisions is not significant. On the other hand, brand image plays a crucial role in strengthening brand trust and directly influencing purchase decisions. The mediating role of brand trust is not supported, suggesting that consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by multiple factors beyond trust, such as product quality, pricing strategies, and promotional efforts.

The implications of this research highlight the importance of building a strong brand image to foster consumer trust and encourage purchase behavior. Companies should focus on maintaining a consistent and appealing brand identity while leveraging brand ambassadors strategically to enhance credibility. However, relying solely on brand ambassadors without reinforcing other key factors may not drive significant purchase decisions.

This study has certain limitations, including a focus on Shopee users within a specific demographic, which may limit generalizability. Future research could explore additional variables, such as customer satisfaction and perceived value, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in e-commerce platforms. Further studies could also compare different e-commerce marketplaces to assess whether these findings hold across different contexts.

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