



THE EFFECT OF BRAND AMBASSADORS AND BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS

Ansir Launtu¹

¹STIEM Bongaya Makassar, Indonesia
Email: ansir.launtu@stiem-bongaya.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to determine, test and analyze the influence of brand ambassadors and brand image on purchasing decisions (a survey of Instagram users specifically for the Makassar area). Data analysis used multiple regression equations and the classic assumption test, one of the methods used to determine the number of samples was using the Slovin formula, the sample used was 30 Instagram users in the Makassar Region. The research data were obtained from questionnaires, literature studies, and direct interviews with related parties according to the research objectives. The results of this study indicate that the brand ambassador and brand image variables simultaneously and partially have a significant effect on purchasing decisions (a survey of Instagram users specifically for the Makassar area). The coefficient of determination is 0.592 which indicates that the ability of the independent variables to predict the dependent variable is 59%. 41% is influenced by other factors not examined by the author.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Brand Image and Purchase Decision

INTRODUCTION

The current globalization has had an impact on the shift of the world economy towards a more integrated and interdependent economic model. As a consequence, each country is encouraged to have a unique/specific identity in the market and production process. This has an impact on a shift in the world economy which has led to the rapid development of communication technology so that it has an impact on communication systems, namely Smartphones, the birth of Smartphones has greatly influenced the development of Instant messengers. Instant Messenger users are increasing along with the integration of this technology in Smartphones, which means that it opens more opportunities for Instant Messenger companies to expand the market and retain loyal consumers. Along with these conditions, advances in communication technology and the development of Smartphones have driven the Instant Messenger business competition in the world to increase. Instant Messenger service provider companies are required to develop marketing strategies and brand management in order to maintain the company's brand image and products produced globally, in order to be able to attract and increase consumer loyalty. with the internet. By using smart phones people can easily access the internet. The function of mobile phones that were previously only used for texting or calling has now grown so rapidly that communication service providers are competing to provide convenience and comfort for internet users.

The digital era triggers the public's need for excellent data-based services. In Indonesia, there are many internet data providers for smart phones. To be able to compete in the midst of many internet providers, marketers must be able to determine the right marketing strategy. Purchasing decisions are actions or decisions to make purchases of a product from various existing product alternatives. Consumers will evaluate and consider several existing factors to determine a decision in determining the final decision in the form of a purchase. Kotler and Armstrong in their book entitled marketing principles say that purchasing decisions are the

result of consideration or the final action of consumers to buy products. In human life, some decisions are influenced by idols or trendsetters. In the world of marketing, trendsetters are often used to become brand ambassadors. A brand ambassador is someone who has a passion for the brand and can influence or invite consumers to buy or use a product. According to Doucett (2008) in his book says that a brand ambassador is someone who has passion for the brand, wants to introduce it, and even voluntarily provides information about the brand. The use of brand ambassadors is carried out by companies to influence or invite consumers to use products, the use of brand ambassadors usually uses well-known celebrities (Royan, 2004). For a company, the use of brand ambassadors aims to influence consumers in buying products. Companies must be able to know consumer demand so that companies can choose the right brand ambassador for their products. This right brand ambassador functions to influence and become a trendsetter for the products that the company sells. It is hoped that the existence of brand ambassadors can increase consumer purchases with the influence of these brand ambassadors. According to Kotler (2002:625) states that a positive consumer image of a brand allows consumers to make purchases more. A good brand is also the basis for building a positive corporate image.

The benefits of a positive brand image, companies can develop product lines by utilizing the positive image that has been formed on old product brands. The thing that needs to be considered is how to maintain and enhance a positive brand image. Brand image or brand image represents the overall perception of the brand and is formed from information and past experiences with the brand. Brand image is related to attitudes in the form of beliefs and preferences for a brand. Consumers with a positive image of a brand are more likely to make purchases. So if a brand is well known and then in the minds of consumers there is a certain association with a brand, so that the brand can be distinguished from other brands, then in the minds of consumers the brand is perceived as having high quality and succeeds in making consumers satisfied and loyal, then the brand it has a high brand image. Brand image (Brand Image) is one of the company's strategies to get loyal consumers. Managing and developing a brand is very important because a brand means more than just a product. Products only describe physical attributes along with their dimensions so that they are nothing more than commodities that are exchanged, while brands contain values that are tangible, emotional, beliefs and expectations that are loaded with customer perceptions (Rungkuti, 2004: 216). Brands that can meet the demands of market demand will make it easier for a product to take part in the midst of market competition, conversely if a brand cannot meet the demands of market needs it will hinder the product from taking part in the market. Research tends to show that using Brand ambassadors has the most positive effect. Brand ambassadors play a very important role in helping the smooth running of marketing activities both locally and globally (Greenwood, 2012: 78). Brand ambassadors will help create a stronger emotional connection between a brand/company and consumers so that it will indirectly build a product image that has an impact on purchasing decisions and product usage (Royan, 2004: 8). According to Muhammad Iksan Putra's research (2014) entitled *The influence of brand ambassadors on brand image and their impact on purchasing decisions (survey of line users in Asia)*,

Based on the results of the path analysis test, it is known that the Brand Ambassador variable has a significant effect on the Brand Image variable and Purchasing Decisions, while the Anova test results show that there are differences in responses to the Brand Image variable between Malaysia and the Philippines, and Malaysia and Thailand while other variables such as Brand ambassadors and Purchase Decisions in each research destination country has the same response. Adjustment of promotions with a cultural perspective (different Brand Ambassadors in each country) is believed to be able to boost INSTAGRAM's brand image and shape consumer attitudes towards products. The promotion system that is different in each country through the alignment of the consumer experience through branding aims to make the

product being developed get the attention of consumers and the target market. The form of a cultural approach through a marketing system to attract consumers will indirectly form a positive image for consumers to enhance brand image. Based on the concept of purchasing decisions, INSTAGRAM needs to know the process of its target consumers in deciding to buy or use a product, because all processes contain implications for evaluating products, ordering products and allocating costs with buyers. Brand Ambassadors need to be studied for their use in the process of attracting consumer attention and how this process creates consumer liking for products, so as to form the brand image of the INSTAGRAM product itself in the eyes of consumers which will ultimately influence decisions in product selection. The problem in research is whether brand ambassadors and brand image influence both partially and simultaneously on Buyer Decisions on Instagram, especially in the Makassar Region

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Ambassador

Doucett (2008: 54) in his book says that a brand ambassador is someone who has passion for the brand, wants to introduce it, and even voluntarily provides information about the brand. According to Royan (2004: 165), companies use brand ambassadors to influence or invite consumers to use products, using brand ambassadors usually using well-known celebrities. According to Lea-Greenwood (2012: 62) Brand ambassadors are tools used by companies to communicate and relate to the public, with the hope that they can increase sales. According to Royan (2004:168), there are three characteristics needed by brand ambassadors. The three characteristics are attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise.

In choosing brand ambassadors, product marketers need to pay attention to the characteristics that can affect the success of the company's endorsement. Lea-Greenwood (2012:71) states the characteristics of Brand ambassadors include:

- 1) Transference, is when a celebrity endorses a brand related to their profession.
- 2) Congruence, is a key concept in brand ambassadors, namely ensuring that there is a 'fit' (fit) between the brand and the celebrity.
- 3) Credibility, is the degree to which consumers see a source (Ambassador) as having relevant knowledge, expertise or experience and that source (ambassador) can be trusted to provide objective and unusual information.
- 4) Attraction, is an attractive non-physical appearance that can support a product or advertisement.
- 5) Power, is the charisma that is emitted by the speakers to be able to influence consumers so that consumers are influenced to buy or use products.

According to Royan (2004) Brand ambassadors have their own functions and benefits for companies. Brand ambassadors here who are famous people who are used to promote their products can function to:

- 1) Give testimony (testimony)
- 2) Provide encouragement and reinforcement (endorsement)
- 3) Act as an actor in the topic (advertisement) it represents.
- 4) Act as company spokesperson.

The success of a brand ambassador in carrying out its functions according to Shaz Smilansky (2009: 108) can be measured by 4 indicators, namely:

- 1) Attractiveness
- 2) Expertise
- 3) Trust
- 4) Strength

Brand Image

Shimp (2003:109) states that brand image can be considered as a type of association that appears in the minds of consumers when remembering a particular brand. These associations can simply appear in the form of certain thoughts or images that are associated with a brand, just as when we think about other people. These associations can be conceptualized based on: type, support, strength, and uniqueness. According to Kotler (2008:53) brand image is the perception and belief made by consumers, as reflected in the associations that occur in consumer memory. Brand image is generally defined as everything related to the brand that is in the memory of consumers. Suryani (2008: 101) states that brand image represents the overall consumer perception of a brand that is formed due to information and consumer experience of a brand. Meanwhile, according to Simamora (2006:28) said that image is a perception that is relatively consistent in the long term (enduring perception). So it is not easy to form an image, so once it is formed it is difficult to change it.

According to Simamora (2002:23), the brand image component consists of 3 parts:

- 1) The image of the maker (corporate image), which is a set of associations that consumers perceive of companies that make goods or services.
- 2) Image of the user (user image), which is a set of associations that consumers perceive of users who use a product or service.
- 3) Product image, which is a set of associations that consumers perceive of a product or service.

In this study, the dimensions or indicators of the company's brand image variable (brand image) are proxied based on the dimensions of the corporate image proposed by Keller (2003: 113), which are developed into 5 dimensions as follows:

- a) Professionalism which represents the quality approach (quality) of the attributes, benefits and behavior.
- b) Modern which represents an innovative approach from the attributes, benefits and behavior.
- c) Serving all segments of society that represent values and programs of concern for the environment and social responsibility.
- d) Concern for consumers which is an approach from customer orientation (customer orientation).
- e) Safe which is an approach from corporate credibility. The importance of understanding the brand states that consumer perception of a brand is one of the keys to building long-term relationships.

According to Hoeffler and Keller (2003:206) indicators that can be used to measure brand image are:

- 1) Strengthness.

How does information get into consumers' memories and how does that information persist as part of the brand image.

- 2) Uniqueness.

The uniqueness of brand associations can be based on product attributes, product functions or images enjoyed by consumers

- 3) Favorable

The success of a marketing process often depends on the process of creating profitable brand associations, where consumers can believe that the attributes they provide can satisfy consumer needs and wants. As well as competitive advantage which is the reason for consumers to choose a particular brand.

Buying decision

According to Kotler (2008:83), purchasing decisions are actions of consumers to want to buy or not to the product. Of the various factors that influence consumers in purchasing a product or service, consumers usually always consider quality, price and products that are already known by the public. Before consumers decide to buy, consumers usually go through

several stages first, namely, (1) problem recognition, (2) information search. (3) evaluation of alternatives, (4) decision to buy or not, (5) post-purchase behavior. Another understanding of purchasing decisions according to Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) is "the selection of an option from two or alternative choices. Can be interpreted, the purchase decision is a person's decision in which he chooses one of several alternative choices that exist.

According to Kotler (2002: 16) the factors that can influence consumer buying decisions include:

- 1) Cultural Factors. Cultural factors are complex things, which include knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, customs, habits, and the norms that most apply to society. Cultural factors have the most pervasive and profound influence on consumer behavior. We will look at the role played by the buyer's culture, sub-culture and social class.
- 2) Social Factors. Social factors such as reference groups, family, and social roles and status consist of all groups that have a direct or indirect influence on a person's stance or behavior in the place where the person interacts. The position of people in each group can be defined in terms of roles or status in many groups such as families, clubs, and organizations.
- 3) Personal Factors. A buyer's decision is also influenced by personal characteristics, namely the buyer's age and stage of the work life cycle, economic conditions, lifestyle and personality and personal concepts of the buyer.
- 4) Psychological Factors. A person's buying choice is influenced by four main psychological factors, namely motivation, perception, knowledge, belief and conviction.

METHOD

The type of research used in this study uses a type of survey research with a quantitative approach. . research sample as many as 30 people. The types of data used in this study are qualitative data and quantitative data. Sources of data used in this study are primary data and secondary data. Data collection techniques used in this study were observation, questionnaires and literature study. The data analysis method used in this study is multiple linear regression analysis. To obtain the results of the multiple regression analysis, the researcher used the help of the Statistical Program for Social Science (SPSS) and used mathematical calculations. To find it, use the following formula: $Y=a + b1X1 + b2X2 + e$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on data analysis using multiple linear regression calculations with the IMB Statistical for Product and Service Solution (SPSS) version 21 program, the following results are obtained:

Table 1 Regression Estimation Results
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	14.033	3.529		3.977	.000
1 X1	1.429	.261	1.529	5.473	.000
X2	-.726	.242	.838	2.999	.004

Source : SPSS Processed Data For 2022

Based on the results of primary data processing on simple regression results in table 1, the regression equation can be seen as follows:

$$Y = 14.033 + 1.429 - 0.726$$

The interpretation of the regression equation is:

- a. A constant value of 14.033 means that the purchasing decision of Instagram users specifically for the Makassar area if the Brand Ambassador and Brand Image are zero (0), then the increase in purchasing decisions is 14.033.
- b. The regression coefficient value of the brand ambassador variable (X1) is 1.429 with a significant level of 0.000 less than (<0.05). These results prove that an increase in direct purchase decisions will increase by 1,429 if brand ambassadors for Instagram users specifically for the Makassar area increase by 1%, which means that there is a positive and significant relationship between brand ambassadors and Instagram user purchasing decisions in the Makassar region.
- c. The regression coefficient value of the brand image variable (X2) is -0.726 with a significant level of 0.004 less than (<0.05). These results prove that an increase in direct purchasing decisions will decrease by 0.726 if the Brand Image on Instagram users specifically for the Makassar area decreases by 1%, which means that there is no positive relationship but there is a significant level between brand image and the purchase decision of Instagram users in the Makassar Region.

Table 2 Coefficient of Determination
 Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.770 ^a	.592	.579	2.322	1.730

Source : SPSS Processed Data For 2022

The table above shows that the value of the coefficient of determination (R square) used to calculate the independent effect (X on the dependent variable Y is) 0.592 or 59%. This means that purchasing decisions are influenced by brand ambassadors and brand image. Meanwhile, 41% of purchasing decisions are influenced by other factors that were not examined, including Instagram advertising media and perceived quality

Table 3 Simultan F-Test Results
 ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	54.411	3	18.137	28.710	.000 ^a
	Residual	25.901	41	.632		
	Total	80.311	44			

Source : SPSS Processed Data For 2022

The table above shows the results of the F test yielding an Fcount of 28,710. Meanwhile the value in the F value distribution table at a significance level of 0.05 or 5% is 2.76. Because Fcount 28,710 > Ftable 2.76 then H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected, with a significance level of 0.000 (smaller than 0.05) meaning that brand ambassadors and brand image have a positive and significant effect simultaneously on Instagram user buying decisions in the Makassar Region.

The t-test is used to determine the extent of the independent variable's partial influence on the dependent variable. Through the t-test it can also be seen regarding information about how much influence the independent variables have on purchasing decisions. Using a sample of 30 Instagram users in the Makassar Region with $df = N-2$ or $df = 30-2 = 28$, we get ttable (1.670) with a significance level $> (\alpha) 0.05$.

Table 4 Partial t test results

Variabel	t Hitung	Sig.t
Brand Ambassador (X1)	5.473	.000

Brand Image (X2)	-2.999	.004
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Source : SPSS Processed Data For 2022

From table 4 it can be seen that the results of testing the brand ambassador hypothesis show a t-value of 5,473 with a significance level of 0.000. The significance level is less than 0.05, which means that the hypothesis in this study accepts Ha and rejects Ho. Thus it can mean that the H1 hypothesis "Brand Ambassadors have a positive influence on purchasing decisions of Instagram users in the Makassar area" is accepted which means that brand ambassadors have an important role and influence the purchasing decisions of Instagram users in the Makassar area partially. It can also be seen that the results of testing the brand image hypothesis show a t-value of -2,999 with a significance level of 0.004. The significance level of 0.004 is smaller than 0.05, which means that the hypothesis in this study accepts Ha and rejects Ho. Thus it can mean that the H2 hypothesis "brand image has a negative effect on purchasing decisions of Instagram users in the Makassar area" is accepted which means that brand image does not have an important role and partially influences the purchasing decisions of Instagram users in the Makassar area.

Brand Ambassadors, in this study it was found that brand ambassadors have an influence on purchasing decisions as shown by the t-count value that is greater than the t-table value, which proves that credibility, attractiveness, power, especially Instagram users in the Makassar area, have so far contributed to purchasing decisions. . The same thing is found in the results of previous research conducted by Muhammad Iksan Putra (2014), then the reality on the ground also shows that brand ambassadors have an important influence on purchasing decisions of Instagram users in the Makassar Region. Brand Image, in this study it was found that Brand Image had no influence on purchasing decisions as shown by the t-count value which is smaller than the t-table value, which proves that the role of brand image so far has not contributed to increasing the purchasing decisions of Instagram users in the Makassar Region.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that Brand Ambassador and Brand Image simultaneously influence purchase decisions of Instagram users in the Makassar Region. The results of testing the brand ambassador hypothesis show a t-value of 5,473 with a significance level of 0.000. The significance level is less than 0.05, which means that the hypothesis in this study accepts Ha and rejects Ho. Thus it can mean that the H1 hypothesis "Brand Ambassadors have an influence on increasing the purchasing decisions of Instagram users in the Makassar Region. The results of testing the Brand Image hypothesis show that the t value is (2,999) with a significance level of 0.004. The significance level is less than 0.05, which means that the hypothesis in this study accepts Ha and rejects Ho. Thus it can mean that the H2 hypothesis "Brand Image influences the increase in purchasing decisions of Instagram users in the Makassar Region.

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