



The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Purchase Decisions Through Brand Trust Among Shopee Marketplace Users in Kendari

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions, with brand trust as a mediating variable, among Shopee marketplace users in Kendari City. The sample consisted of 100 respondents selected through accidental sampling. This research employed a quantitative approach using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method with the SmartPLS application. The results show that brand ambassadors have a significant effect on brand trust but do not have a significant direct effect on purchase decisions. Furthermore, brand trust is proven to mediate the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions. These findings confirm that the role of brand ambassadors is more effective in building consumer trust before encouraging purchase decisions on e-commerce platforms.

Keywords: Brand Ambassadors, Brand Trust, E-Commerce, Purchase Decisions.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly developing digital era, consumer behavior in making purchase decisions has changed very significantly. At present, purchase decisions are influenced not only by product and price factors, but also by the marketing communication strategies implemented by companies, one of which is the use of brand ambassadors as brand representatives.

Although the use of brand ambassadors has become increasingly common in digital marketing practices, several aspects have not been examined in depth in previous studies. Most prior research has focused on the influence of brand ambassadors on increasing brand awareness and forming brand image, but it has not provided consistent explanations of how brand ambassadors can encourage purchase decisions either directly or indirectly. In addition, the relationship between brand ambassadors and purchase decisions through mediating variables such as brand trust remains limited, particularly in the context of digital marketing on marketplace platforms such as Shopee, which has distinctive consumer characteristics. Consumers in the digital era, especially millennials and Generation Z, demonstrate more critical and rational purchasing behavior and are influenced by digital interactions and recommendations from public figures. This dynamic indicates the need for a more comprehensive study to understand how brand ambassadors contribute to building consumer trust and ultimately influence purchase decisions. Therefore, this discussion emphasizes the importance of further research to fill the empirical gap related to factors that influence purchase decisions in the digital era.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2014), a purchase decision is the stage in the buyer decision-making process at which consumers actually make a purchase after going through a process of consideration. Meanwhile, Kotler and Keller (2016) explain that purchase decisions are the procedures used by consumers to decide on purchasing various products and brands, beginning with recognizing needs, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, making purchases, and evaluating post-purchase decisions.

A high level of consumer purchase decisions reflects a company's success in meeting market needs. This is in line with Rohaeni (2016), who states that the higher the level of consumer purchase decisions, the greater the sales volume and profit obtained by the company. Therefore, companies need to implement appropriate promotional strategies to attract consumer attention and trust toward the products offered.

One marketing communication strategy proven to be effective in attracting consumer interest is the use of brand ambassadors. According to Yusiana (2015), a brand ambassador is someone who has the passion to represent a company or product in promoting a brand and conveying information clearly to the public. The presence of a brand

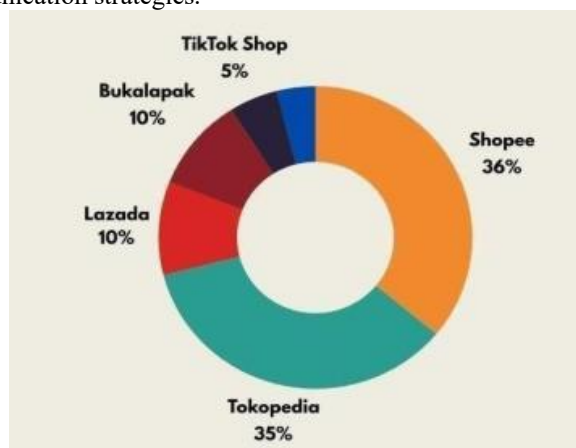
ambassador can increase consumer attraction to a brand because consumers tend to trust public figures whom they like or admire. Research conducted by Wahyuni (2020) shows that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions, meaning that the presence of public figures who match the character of the brand can increase consumer purchase interest.

In addition to brand ambassadors, brand trust also plays an important role in shaping purchase decisions. Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2005) define brand trust as consumers' expectation of a brand's reliability in fulfilling their needs and desires. Trust in a brand creates a sense of security for consumers, reduces perceived risk, and strengthens the emotional relationship between consumers and the brand (Dharmawan & Wardhana, 2021). When consumers have a high level of trust in a brand, they will be more confident in making purchases without hesitation.

This phenomenon is clearly visible in Shopee Indonesia's marketing strategy. In 2023, Shopee Indonesia increasingly strengthened its marketing strategy through collaborations with various brand ambassadors who have strong appeal among young people. One prominent major campaign was the Shopee 11.11 Big Sale 2023, in which Shopee appointed four members of JKT48, namely Freya Jayawardana, Azizi "Zee" Asadel, Shania Gracia, and Angelina Christy, as its main brand ambassadors. They appeared not only in television advertisements and on social media, but also actively participated in Shopee Live, an interactive feature where they interacted directly with users, introduced products, and encouraged real-time sales. This strategy proved effective because it combined entertainment and promotion, creating a more personal and enjoyable shopping experience for consumers.

In addition to JKT48, Shopee also involved several local celebrities and influencers in thematic campaigns throughout 2023. For example, Raffi Ahmad and Nagita Slavina frequently appeared in Shopee Live promotions and major events such as the Shopee 12.12 Birthday Sale 2023. Shopee also collaborated with popular digital creators such as Fadil Jaidi, Keanu Agl, and Awkarin, who are known to have large social media fan bases and the ability to influence the purchase decisions of younger consumers.

At the regional level, Shopee continued its collaboration with the K-pop group Stray Kids as brand ambassadors for Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. Their presence in the Shopee 9.9 Super Shopping Day 2023 and 11.11 Big Sale 2023 campaigns strengthened Shopee's global appeal and reinforced its position as an e-commerce platform that is up to date with Korean pop culture trends. Through these collaborations, Shopee maintained its image as an innovative e-commerce platform that is close to young consumers and relevant to current digital trends. The presence of brand ambassadors such as JKT48, Stray Kids, and other popular influencers in 2023 demonstrates that Shopee continues to adapt to market dynamics and strengthen engagement between the brand and consumers through creative and interactive communication strategies.



Source: https://majoo.id/solusi/detail/data-lanskap-persaingan-e-commerce-2025-di-indonesia-menurut-ipsos?utm_source

Figure 1. E-commerce market share in Indonesia based on GMV (Gross Merchandise Value).

Figure 1 shows the e-commerce market share in Indonesia based on Gross Merchandise Value (GMV). GMV refers to the total value of transactions that occur on an e-commerce platform during a certain period.

Data released by Majoo.id (2025) show that Shopee dominates the e-commerce market share in Indonesia with a transaction value, or Gross Merchandise Value, of 36%, followed by Tokopedia at 35%. This figure indicates the success of Shopee's marketing strategy, including the use of brand ambassadors, in attracting consumer attention and improving purchase decisions. However, a research gap remains regarding how brand ambassadors influence brand trust and how brand trust mediates the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions simultaneously, especially in the context of Indonesia's e-commerce industry, which is dominated by Generation Z and millennials.

Based on the explanation above, this study is important because it analyzes the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions, both directly and indirectly through brand trust as a mediating variable. The findings are expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of digital marketing studies, particularly in understanding the mechanism of brand trust formation through public-figure communication strategies. In addition, this study is expected to provide practical benefits for companies in designing promotional strategies that are more effective, credible, and aligned with the characteristics of young consumers in the digital era. Considering the in-depth analysis of the factors above, the researcher selected the title "The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Purchase Decisions Through Brand Trust Among Shopee Marketplace Users in Kendari."

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Brand Ambassador

A brand ambassador is a cultural icon or identity who acts as a marketing tool that represents individual achievement, human success, and the commodification and commercialization of a product. According to Royan (2019), a brand ambassador is someone who can represent and communicate extensively about the product or company being represented, thereby creating a major impact on product sales. Faradasya and Trianasari (2021) show that the Stray Kids brand ambassador and Shopee's brand image have a significant and simultaneous effect on purchase decisions on Shopee. Wong and Hariandja (2019), using the variables of brand ambassador and brand image, state that the two variables are interrelated and work together to foster consumer purchase decisions. A brand ambassador is a person who supports a brand and may come from various popular public figures (Fasha et al., 2022). A brand ambassador is also referred to as an advertising spokesperson or promotional model. A celebrity representing a brand must not only have an attractive appearance or expertise in the field, but must also have a positive image so that consumers can trust the brand ambassador. According to Prawira (2012), a brand ambassador is someone who represents the best portrait or image of a product, usually from among celebrities or other popular figures.

2.2 Brand Trust

Trust is the strength of belief that a product has certain attributes. Consumer trust concerns the belief that a product possesses various attributes and benefits derived from those attributes (Sumarwan, 2011). Brand trust can help customers feel safer in unexpected situations by convincing them that they can rely on a trusted brand. Tjiptono (2014) states that brand trust refers to customers' willingness to trust or depend on a brand in high-risk situations with the expectation that the brand will deliver favorable results.

According to Delgado-Ballester (2003), brand trust is defined as a "feeling of security held by the consumer in his/her interaction with the brand, that it is based on the perceptions that the brand is reliable and responsible for the interests and welfare of the consumer." In other words, brand trust is the sense of security held by customers as a result of their interaction with a brand, based on the perception that the brand is reliable and responsible for the interests and safety of its customers.

2.3 Purchase Decision

A purchase decision is a stage in the buyer decision-making process in which consumers actually purchase a product. At this stage, consumers recognize their problems, search for information about certain products or brands, and evaluate how well each alternative can solve their problems, which then leads to the purchase decision. Purchase decisions identify all possible choices for solving a problem and assess these options systematically and objectively, including the benefits and drawbacks of each alternative (Gunarsih et al., 2021).

2.4 Research Hypotheses

H1: Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust among Shopee Marketplace users in Kendari.

H2: Brand Ambassador has a positive but not significant effect on Purchase Decisions among Shopee Marketplace users in Kendari.

H3: Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions among Shopee Marketplace users in Kendari.

H4: Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions through Brand Trust as a mediating variable among Shopee Marketplace users in Kendari.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Population refers to an area consisting of objects that have certain characteristics and qualities determined by the researcher for drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2017). The population in this study was the community in Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi, who had previously shopped on the Shopee marketplace, with an unknown exact population size.

The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability sampling, namely a technique that does not provide equal opportunities for every member of the population to be selected as a sample (Sugiyono, 2017). Among the various types of non-probability sampling, this study used purposive sampling. According to Sekaran (2006), purposive sampling is a sampling technique that selects respondents based on certain considerations or criteria relevant to the research objectives.

Sugiyono (2015) explains that purposive sampling is used when researchers have specific reasons for selecting samples considered most appropriate for providing the required information. The use of purposive sampling in this study was based on the consideration that this method is effective for quantitative research that does not aim to generalize to the entire population, but focuses on obtaining an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon (Sugiyono, 2016). The characteristics of the respondents in this study were as follows:

1. Shopee marketplace users aged at least 17 years;
2. Users who had made purchases on the Shopee marketplace at least twice in the last six months;
3. Users who had seen Shopee brand ambassador content in 2023.

Because the number of Shopee users in Kendari is not known with certainty, the sample size was determined based on Hair et al. (2010), who recommend a minimum sample size of five to ten times the number of indicators

used in a study. This study used 10 indicators; therefore, the minimum recommended sample size was $10 \times 10 = 100$ respondents. Accordingly, the sample size used in this study was set at 100 respondents.

According to Djam'an Satori and Aan Komariah (2011), data collection is the most important stage in research. Data collection methods are the means used to obtain the data and information required for the study. Data in this research were collected using a questionnaire, namely a set of questions or statements developed based on indicators, supported by previous research, and adjusted to the condition of the research object. The questionnaire was created in Google Forms and distributed through social media to people in Kendari City who had previously purchased products on the Shopee marketplace.

This study used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), one of the most comprehensive multivariate analysis methods. SEM combines factor analysis and regression analysis simultaneously to test causal relationships among latent constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Considering that this study involved 100 respondents, PLS-SEM was the most appropriate approach. In addition to meeting the minimum sample requirement for PLS-SEM, this method is effective for exploratory research, testing new theories, and handling models with high complexity and both reflective and formative indicators. Therefore, this study used SmartPLS version 4 as the data analysis tool.

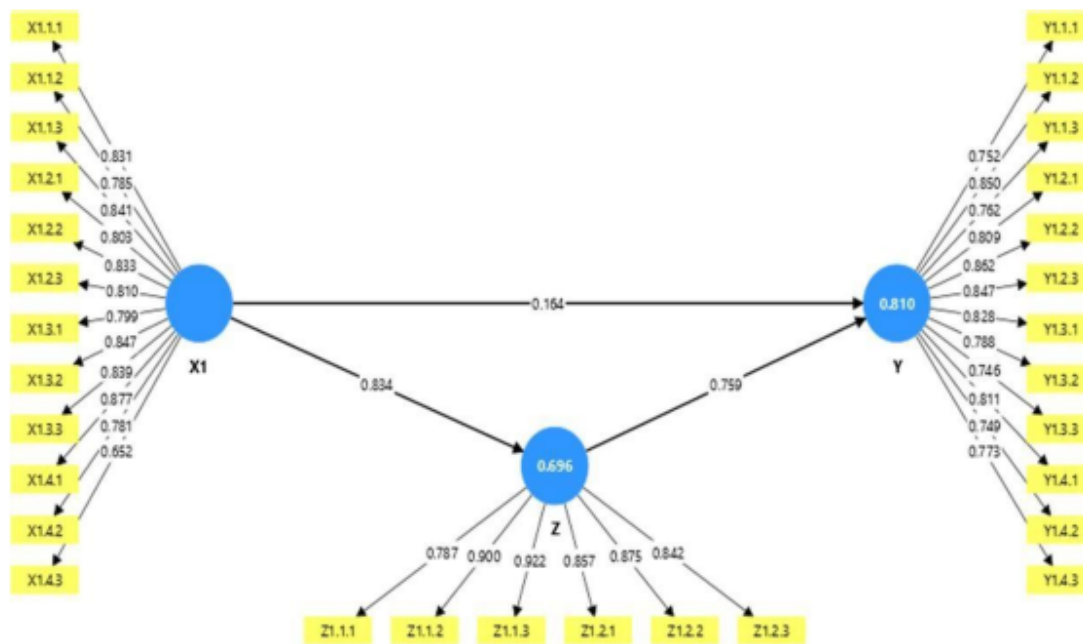
IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Hypothesis Testing

The model of relationships and hypotheses among variables was tested in two stages: testing the path coefficients of direct effects and testing the path coefficients of indirect effects (mediation).

Figure 2. Path Coefficient Diagram



Sumber : Pengolahan data dengan SmartPLS, 2026

Source: Data processing using SmartPLS, 2026

The complete results of the inter-variable testing shown in Figure 2 are presented in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effects Between Variables)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values	Description
Brand Ambassador -> Purchase Decision	0.164	0.160	0.109	1.509	0.131	Hypothesis Not Accepted
Brand Ambassador -> Brand Trust	0.834	0.832	0.043	19.243	0.000	Hypothesis Accepted
Brand Trust -> Purchase Decision	0.759	0.760	0.106	7.163	0.000	Hypothesis Accepted

Source: Data processing using SmartPLS, 2026

Based on the processing results in Table 1, the direct-effect path coefficient and hypothesis testing were used to determine whether the proposed hypotheses were accepted or rejected. The direct-effect testing results can be explained as follows:

H1: The Effect of Brand Ambassador on Brand Trust

The analysis shows an original sample value of 0.834, a T-statistic of 19.243, and a p-value of 0.000. Because the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1), which states that Brand Ambassador has a positive effect on Brand Trust, is accepted.

H2: The Effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision

The analysis shows an original sample value of 0.164, a T-statistic of 1.509, and a p-value of 0.131. Because the p-value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that Brand Ambassador does not have a significant direct effect on Purchase Decision. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2), which states that Brand Ambassador affects Purchase Decision, is rejected.

H3: The Effect of Brand Trust on Purchase Decision

The analysis shows an original sample value of 0.759, a T-statistic of 7.163, and a p-value of 0.000. Because the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H3), which states that Brand Trust has a positive effect on Purchase Decision, is accepted.

Table 2. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing (Indirect Effects Between Variables)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Description
Brand Ambassador -> Brand Trust -> Purchase Decision	0.6333	0.6333	0.103	6.137	0.000	Hypothesis Accepted

Source: Data processing using SmartPLS, 2026

The indirect-effect results show that Brand Ambassador plays an important role in increasing Purchase Decision through Brand Trust. The indirect-effect coefficient of 0.6333, with a T-statistic of 6.137 and a p-value of 0.000, indicates that the relationship is significant. This result proves that Brand Ambassador does not significantly affect Purchase Decision directly, but can influence Purchase Decision after first increasing consumer trust in the brand. In this case, Brand Trust serves as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision.

H4: The Effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision Through Brand Trust

The indirect-effect analysis shows that Brand Ambassador has a significant effect on Purchase Decision through Brand Trust. The indirect-effect coefficient of 0.6333, with a T-statistic of 6.137 and a p-value of 0.000, indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. This finding explains that although Brand Ambassador does not have a significant direct effect on Purchase Decision, Brand Ambassador can improve Purchase Decision after first strengthening consumer trust in Shopee. Positive perceptions of the Brand Ambassador encourage the formation of Brand Trust, and this trust ultimately influences consumers in making purchase decisions.

Thus, Brand Trust is proven to serve as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision. The better the role of the Brand Ambassador, the higher the level of consumer trust in the brand, which ultimately increases consumers' tendency to make purchases.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 The Effect of Brand Ambassador on Brand Trust

The results show that Brand Ambassador has a significant direct effect on Brand Trust. This means that the more positive consumers' perceptions of a Brand Ambassador are, the higher their trust in the brand represented by that Brand Ambassador. Empirically, this finding shows that elements such as credibility, attractiveness, expertise, and the personal suitability of the Brand Ambassador with the promoted product can shape consumers' confidence in Shopee as the marketplace where they conduct transactions.

The SEM-PLS analysis shows a significant path coefficient in the relationship between Brand Ambassador and Brand Trust, meaning that the model explains that Shopee's Brand Ambassador clearly increases the level of trust among users in Kendari. This finding strengthens the position of Brand Ambassador as one of the key elements in Shopee's marketing communication strategy for building consumer trust in the digital market.

4.2.2 The Effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision

The results show that Brand Ambassador does not have a significant effect on Purchase Decision. This indicates that Shopee consumers in Kendari do not automatically make purchases merely because a Brand Ambassador is present. Purchase decisions are more strongly influenced by trust in the brand than by the direct influence of the Brand Ambassador figure.

However, in the context of Shopee users in Kendari, the direct influence was not proven. This means that although consumers may know and like the Brand Ambassador used by Shopee, this is not strong enough to directly encourage purchase decisions without the presence of trust in the brand. This finding indicates that the role of Brand Ambassador is more effective in building Brand Trust than in directly driving purchase decisions.

4.2.3 The Effect of Brand Trust on Purchase Decision

The results show that Brand Trust has a significant effect on Purchase Decision. This indicates that trust is an important factor in determining whether consumers decide to buy or not. When consumers perceive Shopee as a safe

and reliable platform that provides a good transaction experience, they become more confident in making purchases through the marketplace.

In this study, the SEM-PLS analysis shows that Brand Trust significantly affects Purchase Decision. Therefore, it can be concluded that Shopee users in Kendari feel confident and trust the platform, which encourages them to make purchase decisions more quickly and with greater confidence.

4.2.4 The Effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision Through Brand Trust

The results show that Brand Ambassador has a significant indirect effect on Purchase Decision through Brand Trust as a mediating variable. This finding indicates that the role of Brand Ambassador becomes more effective when it can first increase consumer trust in the brand. The success of a Brand Ambassador in influencing purchase decisions does not only come from attractiveness or popularity, but also from the ability to form consumer confidence that the promoted brand is trustworthy and worthy of being chosen.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Brand Trust plays a central role in bridging the influence of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision. Trust formed through positive perceptions of the Brand Ambassador makes consumers feel confident and secure in making purchase decisions. This finding shows that in the context of digital marketing, the use of Brand Ambassadors will have an optimal impact when it also strengthens consumer trust in the brand.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research results concerning the influence of Brand Ambassador on Brand Trust and Purchase Decision among Shopee Marketplace users in Kendari, it can be concluded that Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust. This indicates that Brand Ambassadors with a good reputation, positive image, and high credibility can increase consumers' confidence and trust perceptions toward Shopee. The presence of Brand Ambassadors who are relevant to the characteristics of the target market also encourages the formation of stronger trust.

Furthermore, Brand Ambassador does not have a significant direct effect on Purchase Decision. However, Brand Ambassador has a significant effect on Purchase Decision through Brand Trust as a mediating variable. This shows that trust in the brand is a key factor that bridges the influence of Brand Ambassador on purchase decisions.

Brand Trust was also found to have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision. Consumer trust is an important factor in determining whether consumers are willing to purchase a product online. When consumers perceive Shopee as trustworthy, safe, and capable of meeting their needs, their purchase decisions become stronger. This trust becomes the foundation of consumer comfort in conducting digital transactions.

This study also concludes that Brand Trust acts as a mediator in the influence of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision. This means that the influence of Brand Ambassador will have a stronger impact on purchase decisions when consumer trust in Shopee has first been formed. Thus, Brand Trust becomes an important bridge that strengthens the relationship between Brand Ambassador and Purchase Decision.

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