

**BRAND AMBASSADOR AND BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASING
DECISIONS WITH WOM AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE IN ONLINE
SHOP SHOPEE ON COLLEGE STUDENTS
IN KERINCI DISTRICT AND SUNGAI PENUH CITY**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research based on the problems above is to find out whether brand ambassadors and brand image have a positive and significant influence on e-WOM in decisions. The object of this research is all students in Sungai Banyak City and Kerinci Regency with a total of 50 respondents. The results of this research are that Brand Ambassadors have a direct influence on purchasing decisions as evidenced by the results of $(0.001 < 0.05)$ and the calculated t value $< t$ table $(3.733 > 2.01063)$, Brand Image does not have a direct influence on purchasing decisions as evidenced by the results of $0.892 > 0.05$ and t count $< t$ table $(0.137 < 2.01063)$, Brand Ambassador has no influence on WOM (Word Of Mouth) as evidenced by the results of $0.862 > 0.05$ and t count $< t$ table $(0.345 < 2.01063)$, Brand Image has no influence on WOM (Word Of Mouth) as evidenced by the results $0.732 > 0.05$ and t count $< t$ table $(0.345 < 2.01063)$, WOM (Word of Mouth) has no influence on purchasing decisions as evidenced by the results of $0.140 > 0.05$ and t count $< t$ table $(1.503 < 2.01063)$.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, Purchase Decision, WOM (Word Of Mouth)

INTRODUCTION

Along with the advancement of information and communication technology, various human activities have become easier and more practical, the rapid development of technology has a great influence on various aspects of life, one of which is the business sector, with the internet creating changes in the world of commerce to become more modern. Economic actors do not have to meet face to face to be able to make transactions, they only need to make an agreement between the two parties and the goods will reach the buyer's location without having to bother visiting the store. This system is called an online shop. Therefore, the development of technology and information triggers a company so that it has the impact

of a strategic competition with the aim of attracting consumer attention through social media or targeted advertising (Fauziah, M, 2020).

The development of technology in Indonesia has led to the rapid development of *electronic commerce (e-commerce)*, *E-commerce* is the activity of buying and selling goods or suits by introducing business via the internet with various forms and types of *e-commerce*, one of the most prominent advances is seen in technological gadgets and trends such as online shopping (Agustina, Dwi Putri, Jatmika, 2024). This change makes people choose online purchases due to the convenience, ease, and variety of products available (Mahendra, Fian alif, 2024).

One of the marketplace companies that is currently growing is Shopee. Shopee occupies the most popular position in the e-commerce category, and is the most frequently visited and used (Agustina, Dwi Putri, Jatmika, 2024). Shoppe is an *e-commerce* site owned by the SEA group which was founded in 2009. According to the results of research by Asih (2024), shoppe is the most popular *e-commerce* in Indonesia mainly because of its advertising strategy, official stores from various brands (Asih, 2024), the company also offers programs such as free shipping, faster delivery and 50% grocery flash sales. Shoppe has a strategy in capturing the market besides offering offers, one of which is using *brand ambassadors*.

Brand ambassadors are people hired by an organization or company to represent a brand in a positive way and thus help increase brand awareness and sales. *Brand ambassadors* generally come from artists or famous people who can have an impact on society (Fauziah, M, 2020). This is because they can be more attractive and trusted by consumers if they have a relationship with the brand. Consumer perceptions of the brand (*Brand Image*) also have a significant influence. Customers will be more interested in considering and ultimately purchasing products on platforms such as Shopee, if the *Brand Ambassador* has a good reputation or fulfills brand values (Mahendra, Fian alif, 2024).

Brand image is a description of consumer associations and beliefs about certain brands (Erni Yunaida, 2017). *Brand image* is how consumers see the brand based on identity, communication, discussion, and other experiences. Building a *brand image* not only brings the brand to life, but also helps people gain interest in the brand and bring loyalty from consumers. A good *brand image* can increase the perception of product quality, perceived value, and willingness to buy from consumers. This will have an impact on consumer purchasing decisions in the marketplace (Yasin, 2024).

Apart from *brand ambassadors* and *brand image*, *Word Of Mouth* is the factor that has the greatest influence on product marketing strategies, especially in the context of today's rapidly developing technology. *Word of mouth* is basically information about a company's products or services, or the company itself, in the form of reviews of product performance, friendliness, honesty, speed of service, and other things that are conveyed

by word of mouth. The message conveyed can be positive or negative, depending on how the sender feels about the service he receives (Sharifpour *et al.*, 2016). *Word of Mouth* can come from the recommendations of trusted friends, other consumers, sales people, etc. Therefore, Word of mouth is formulated as information obtained from people who have used the product. The indicators that can be used to measure *Word Of Mouth* variables are positive stories, recommendations, and invitations (Amalia *et al.*, 2022).

The purpose of this study based on the above problems is to determine whether brand ambassadors, brand image have a positive and significant influence on e-WOM in purchasing decisions on the *Shopee marketplace* among private university students in Kerinci district and Sungai Penuh city.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Buyer Decision (Y)

Purchasing decisions are problem-solving activities carried out by individuals in selecting appropriate alternative behaviors from two or more alternative behaviors and are considered the most appropriate action in buying by first going through the stages of the decision-making process (Fauzi *et al.*, 2020). According to Setiadi, "Purchasing decisions are something related to consumers to buy certain products, as well as how many product units are needed in a certain period".

purchasing decisions have the following indicators: Determination to buy after knowing product information, Deciding to buy because of the most preferred brand, Buying because it suits your wants and needs, Buying because you get recommendations from others (Sudarmin, 2023).

Brand Ambassador (X1)

A *brand ambassador* is someone who has a passion for the brand so that they can introduce it or even voluntarily provide information about the brand. Brand ambassadors are used to attract consumer attention in using products because the use of brand ambassadors is usually based on people's image of artists or public figures (Amalia *et al.*, 2022). There are 4 main benefits of celebrity endorsement, namely, press coverage, changing perceptions of the brand, attracting new customers, freshening up an existing campaign. Generally, marketers choose brand ambassadors who are famous or have their own charm so that potential consumers are increasingly interested in the products or services offered. The indicators used to measure *brand ambassador* variables are transference, congruence, credibility, attractiveness, and power (Amalia *et al.*, 2022).

Brand Ambassador Indicators:

- a. *Transference*, is when a celebrity endorses a brand related to their profession.
- b. *Congruence*, is a key concept in brand ambassadors which ensures that there is a 'fit' between the brand and the celebrity.
- c. *Credibility* is the degree to which consumers perceive a source (ambassador) to have relevant knowledge, expertise or experience

and that the source (ambassador) can be trusted to provide objective and unusual information.

- d. Attractiveness is an attractive non-physical appearance that can support a product or advertisement.
- e. Power is the charisma emitted by the source to be able to influence consumers so that consumers are influenced to buy or use the product (Frederica & Utami, 2022).

Brand Image (X2)

Brand Image is an association of all information about the products, services, and companies of the brand in question. *Brand Image* is a representation of the overall perception of the brand and is formed from information and past experiences with the brand, brand image is built through 3 elements, namely, favorability of brand association, strength of brand association, uniqueness of brand association (Erni Yunaida, 2017).

Brand image can be a logo, brand name, motto or slogan of a product or service marketing company. The benefits of brand image are a means of identification to facilitate the process of handling or tracking products for the company, a form of legal protection for unique features, a signal of quality level for satisfied customers, so that they can easily choose and buy it again at a later time, create unique associations and meanings that distinguish products from competitors, a source of competitive advantage, especially through legal protection, customer loyalty, and a unique image formed in the minds of consumers, and a source of financial returns (Muhammad Ikhsan Putra *et al.*, 2023).

Brand Image Indicators:

- a. Company image:
The organization in question is both the producer of the product and the evaluator of the individual.
- b. Xian's user image:
Brand image refers to whether the personality of the brand matches the consumer. for example, lifestyle and social status.
- c. Product image:
Product image is a public view of a product or product category.

Word of Mouth (Z)

Word Of Mouth is word-of-mouth communication about views or assessments of a product or service, both individually and in groups that aim to provide personalized information. Word Of Mouth is one of the strategies that is very effective in influencing consumer decisions in using products or services and Word Of Mouth can build a sense of trust in customers (Joesyiana, 2018). *Word of mouth* has greater power than advertising and other forms of promotion. Word of mouth has an impact on consumer purchasing behavior where word of mouth can come from trusted friend recommendations, other consumers (Amalia *et al.*, 2022).

Word Of Mouth can be interpreted in general as an activity of providing assessment information or views on a product of goods and services to the

closest people whether the product or service is worth consuming or not for other potential consumers (Joesyiana, 2018).

Word Of Mouth Indicators:

Word Of Mouth indicators are as follows:

a. *Talkers*

Talkers are a group of people who have enthusiasm and rapport in delivering a message. Talkers are generally ordinary people of all ages, interests, incomes and status levels.

b. *Topics*

Various things can be topics such as good customer service, special sales, the latest 5 advanced features, attractive packaging, or unique advertisements.

c. *Tools*

Word of mouth is a very powerful, effective and efficient marketing tool but it does not last forever. *Word of mouth* will be much more effective if assisted by a medium or tool that allows the message to be passed on to others and can last for a longer period of time. E-mail, blogs, social media, and product review sites are examples of media that can be used to maximize *word of mouth*.

d. *Taking Part*

Word of mouth is a dialog. Someone talks about their experience of the quality of a good or service and then the interlocutor will respond, this conversation will determine the interlocutor's assessment of the goods or services.

e. *Tracking*

Tracking is the surveillance of *word of mouth* results where people start writing down everything they think through blogs, writing on social media, and sending to online review sites (Fauzi et al., 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Scope of Research

This research uses a descriptive approach with a measurement method to conduct surveys and collect data by providing questionnaires to customers who shop at Shopee. A research technique called survey research is used to find solutions to problems based on questions asked or problems seen. From the data obtained, it will be described thoroughly in accordance with the circumstances.

The object of this research is all students in Sungai Penuh city and Kerinci district.

Data Collection Technique

In conducting the research, the data collected was obtained through :

- a. *Library Research*: Library research is conducted to obtain data and information about theories related to the thesis prepared through

science books and writings on the internet which are also related to the subject matter (Nurjanah, 2021).

- b. *Field Research*: in this study the authors collected the necessary data by making direct observations (Nurjanah, 2021) on students of Sungai Penuh city and Kerinci district. Field research is conducted by:
1. *Interview* is a method of obtaining data by conducting direct questions and answers with the parties concerned in order to obtain supporting data and information.
 2. *Observation*, namely observation as a data collection technique, has specific characteristics when compared to other techniques. Observation is a complex process, a process composed of various biological and psychological processes. Two processes of observation and memory.
 3. *Questionnaire*: The collection in this study is the collection of primary data from students in the city of Sungai Penuh and the district of Kerinci who use Shopee using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to determine the analysis of factors that determine whether brand ambassadors, brand image have a positive and significant influence on e-WOM in purchasing decisions at *marketplace Shopee* among students of private universities in Kerinci district and Sungai Penuh city.
- c. The results of the questionnaire distribution were processed using the latest version of the SPSS application.

DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis Results

Based on the correlation value (*Pearson Correlation*) in the r_{count} column, it is obtained for each statement the value of $r_{(\text{count})} > r_{\text{table}}$ so that it can be said that all statements for the leadership variable are valid.

The Effect of *Brand Ambassador* (X1) on Purchasing Decisions (Y)

From the above analysis, it is obtained that the significance value of *Brand Ambassador* is $(0.001 < 0.05)$ and the value of $t_{\text{count}} < t_{\text{table}} (3.733 > 2.01063)$ so it can be concluded that directly there is a significant influence of *brand ambassadors* on purchasing decisions. This is in line with research conducted by (Amalia, 2019) where the results of his research show that the relationship or strong correlation of the brand ambassador variable (X1) and brand image (X2) on purchasing decisions (Y).

The influence of *brand image* (X2) on purchasing decisions (Y)

From the analysis above, the *brand image* significance value is $0.892 > 0.05$ and $t_{\text{count}} < t_{\text{table}} (0.137 < 2.01063)$ so it can be concluded that directly there is no significant effect of *brand image* on purchasing decisions.

This is inversely proportional to research conducted by (Widjaja & Wijayadne, 2023), the results of which show that it has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

The influence of *Brand Ambassador* (X1) on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*) (Z)

From the analysis above, it is obtained that the significance value of *Brand Ambassador* on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*) is $0.862 > 0.05$ and $t \text{ count} < t \text{ table}$ ($0.345 < 2.01063$) so it can be concluded that directly there is no significant effect of *Brand Ambassador* on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*). This is inversely proportional to the research conducted by (Oktaviani, 2024) where the results of his research state that *Brand Ambassadors* have no effect on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*).

The influence of *Brand Image* (X2) on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*) (Z)

From the analysis above, it is obtained that the significance value of *Brand Image* on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*) is $0.732 > 0.05$ and $t \text{ count} < t \text{ table}$ ($0.345 < 2.01063$) so it can be concluded that directly there is no significant effect of *Brand Image* on (*Word Of Mouth*). This is in line with research conducted by (Pilipus et al., 2021). That *Brand Image* has an effect on (*Word Of Mouth*).

Influence (*Word Of Mouth*) (Z) on purchasing decisions (Y)

From the analysis above, it is obtained that the significance value of the purchase decision is $0.140 > 0.05$ and $t \text{ hitung} < t \text{ table}$ ($1.503 < 2.01063$) so it can be concluded that directly there is no significant effect of purchasing decisions on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*). This is inversely proportional to the research conducted by (Anggreni & Febrina Hambalah, 2022) where the results of their research show that there is a direct influence between WOM (*Word Of Mouth*) on purchasing decisions.

The influence of *brand ambassadors* (X1) through purchasing decisions (Y) on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*) (Z)

It is known that the direct effect given by *brand ambassadors* on purchasing decisions is 0.472, while the indirect effect of X1 through Y on Z is the multiplication of the beta value of X1 on Y with the beta value of Y on Z, namely: $0.472 \times 0.997 = 0.470$ then the total effect given by X1 on Z is the direct effect plus the indirect effect, namely: $0.472 + 0.470 = 0.942$ based on the calculation value, it is known that the direct effect value is 0.472 and the indirect effect is 0.472 which means that the value of the indirect effect with the value of the direct effect, these results indicate that indirectly X1 through Y has a significant influence on Z. This is in line with research conducted by (Anggraini & Siregar, 2024) where the results of their research state that *Brand Ambassadors* have an indirect influence through Purchasing Decisions on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*).

The Effect of *Brand Image* (X₂) on Purchasing Decisions (Y) through WOM (*Word Of Mouth*) (Z)

It is known that the direct effect of X₂ on Y is 0.017, while the indirect effect of X₂ through Y on Z is the multiplication of the beta value of X₂ on Y by the beta value of Y on Z, namely: $0.017 \times 0.997 = 0.016$ then the total effect that X₂ has on Z is the direct effect plus the indirect effect, namely: $0.017 + 0.016 = 0.033$ based on these calculations, it is known that the direct effect value is 0.017 and the indirect effect is 0.033, which means that the indirect effect value is greater than the direct effect value, these results indicate that indirectly X₂ through Y has a significant effect on Z. This is in line with research conducted by (Aprianto, 2016) that *Brand Image* has an indirect influence through Purchasing Decisions on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*) (Z).

CLOSING

Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis and the previous discussion, it can be concluded as follows:

1. *Brand Ambassador* has a direct influence on Decisions
2. *Brand Image* has no direct influence on Purchasing Decisions
3. *Brand Ambassador* and *Brand Image* have no direct influence on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*)
4. WOM (*Word Of Mouth*) has no direct influence on Purchasing Decisions
5. *Brand Ambassador* and *Brand Image* have a significant indirect influence through Purchasing Decisions on WOM (*Word Of Mouth*), and the WOM (*Word Of Mouth*) variable acts as an intervening variable.

Advice

Based on the results of research and discussion in this study, the suggestions given are as follows:

1. For the Company
Suggestions in this study for the Shopee E-Commerce application in order to develop product and content innovations that can build prospective customers' trust in making purchases at Shopee E-commerce.
2. For researchers
It is hoped that further research will discuss other indicators of each existing variable and can use other variables not examined in this study that influence shopping.

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