

THE ROLE OF BRAND AMBASSADORS ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION ON TOKOPEDIA MARKETPLACE

PERAN DUTA MEREK DALAM KEPUTUSAN PEMBELIAN PEMBELI DI LOKAPASAR TOKOPEDIA

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to find out the role of brand ambassadors on consumer purchase decision on Tokopedia marketplace. This research used Qualitative method and there were 15 informants who are domicile in North Sulawesi and confirmed to be affected by the ambassadors, they have been interviewed in order to get the result by using VisCAP (Visibility, Credibility, Attraction, and Power) Model by Rossiter and Percy as the indicators. This research shows that mostly the informants bought products on Tokopedia because of the Power, Attraction, and Credibility of the brand ambassadors, and none of them is being affected by the Visibility. To make it more specific, the informants bought things from Tokopedia to get the limited photo card of the brand ambassadors and to support their idol as the loyal fans (Power), they also bought things from Tokopedia because they find the brand ambassadors attractive (Attraction), and the last one, they bought products from Tokopedia because the brand ambassadors are professional in delivering the message and pursuing the consumer to buy from Tokopedia (Credibility).

Keywords: brand ambassador, purchase decision

Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan peran duta merek dalam keputusan pembelian pembeli di lokapasar Tokopedia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Kualitatif dan ada 15 narasumber yang berdomisili di Sulawesi Utara dan mengonfirmasi telah dipengaruhi oleh duta merek tersebut, mereka telah diwawancarai untuk mendapatkan hasil penelitian dengan menggunakan Model VisCAP dari Rossiter dan Percy sebagai indikator. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kebanyakan para narasumber membeli produk di Tokopedia karena Kekuatan, Daya Tarik, dan Kredibilitas dari duta merek tersebut, dan tidak ada yang dipengaruhi oleh Visibilitasnya. Untuk lebih jelasnya, para narasumber membeli barang dari Tokopedia untuk mendapatkan Kartu foto terbatas dari duta merek dan untuk mendukung idola mereka sebagai penggemar yang setia (Kekuatan), mereka juga membeli produk di Tokopedia karena mereka menganggap para duta merek itu menarik (Daya Tarik), dan yang terakhir, mereka membeli produk di Tokopedia karena para duta merek dianggap profesional dalam menyampaikan pesan dan membujuk penggemar untuk berbelanja di Tokopedia.

Kata Kunci: duta merek, keputusan pembelian

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

In early 2020, Covid-19 Pandemic made people have to stay home and even do the social distancing, meaning people are not allowed to go to the crowded places; even malls and stores are closed that time. That situation made people buy things from the internet especially marketplace, and Tokopedia in 2020 is the 3rd marketplace that Indonesia citizen use to buy products. In order to increase the sales or gain more customers,

every marketplace has its' own way and strategy on it. Based on marketing mix by Kotler, there are 4Ps that will affect the marketing which are Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. Since marketplace is online market base, promotion is so important to catch the consumer's attention and increase the sales.

There are so many ways to promote the brand; one of it is using Brand Ambassador. According to Lea-Greenwood (2012), brand ambassador is a tool used by companies to communicate and connect with the public, with the hope that they can increase sales. The brand ambassadors will promote the brand using their popularity by using the brand in their activity or giving information and pursue the consumer using their social media. Spreading the promotion strategy by using social media is one of effective way because based on the APJII survey above, using social media is the first reason why Indonesia citizen use the internet In early 2021, Tokopedia announced that BTS and Blackpink, two biggest Korean pop group, as their brand ambassadors at the same time. In 2021, Tokopedia seems to grew really well, it is also rank as the most visited marketplace in Indonesia since quartal I- III of 2021, taking the position from Shopee after few years. The explanation above is showing that BTS and Blackpink have good effect on Tokopedia, but none know how the brand ambassadors affect the consumers by the consumer's side and based on their own experience. So, this research is going to analyze how the brand ambassadors affect the costumer purchase decision on Tokopedia

Research Objective

The purpose of this research is: to know the role of brand ambassadors on consumer purchase decision on Tokopedia marketplace.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Brand Ambassador

According to Shimp (2003), Brand ambassadors are advertising supporters or also known as advertising stars who support the advertised product. The use of brand ambassadors is carried out by companies to influence or invite consumers to use a product. Meanwhile Lea-Greenwood (2012) defined Brand ambassadors as tools used by companies to communicate and connect with the public, with the hope that they can increase sales. A brand ambassador is a well-connected person or a celebrity who is used to promote and advertise the products (Aggarwal, 2009).

Characteristic of Brand Ambassador

According to Rossister and Percy (1985), there is a mechanism called VisCAP to evaluate the Visibility, Credibility, Attraction, and Power, of the endorser or promoter.

1. **Visibility (Popularity).** Visibility has a dimension of how far the popularity of a celebrity is represent the product. When connected in popularity, it can be determined by how many fans a person has celebrity brand ambassador (Popularity) and how often is it appearance in front of the audience (Appearances).
2. **Credibility (Skill).** The credibility of a celebrity has more to do with two things, namely expertise and objectivity. This skill will be related to knowledge celebrities about the advertised product. While objectivity refers more on the ability of celebrities to give confidence or confidence to consumer of a product. Celebrities who have existing abilities believed that its credibility would represent the advertised brand. Products that advertised will also fit the perception desired by the audience.
3. **Attraction.** The acceptance of the message depends on the attractiveness of the brand ambassador. Brand ambassadors will succeed in changing consumer opinions and behavior through attraction mechanism. The attractiveness of a brand ambassador has the following attributes: following: a) **Physical Likability,** is the audience's perception of appearance physical endorser that is considered attractive. Likability is related to a way to use someone attractive to get other people to do what the person said. In general, the audience likes to like brand ambassador who has physical perfection such as beautiful, handsome, ideal body and so on. b) **Non-physical Liability,** is the audience's perception regarding non-physical appearance or brand ambassador personality. In general audiences like brand ambassadors who are open, full of jokes and natural. c) **Similarity,** is the audience's perception regarding the similarity have with the brand ambassador. Whether it's from the factor of age, hobbies, activities undertaken, as well as the problems encountered as featured in the marketing.
4. **Power.** Power is the strength that the celebrity uses to persuade the customers to buy the products. Power is the ability to attract consumers to buy, besides famous and attractive, brand ambassadors also must be idolized for the audience. At this level, it will naturally lead to strong encouragement to the target audience to buy.

Consumer Behavior

According to Salomon (2011:33), consumer behavior is the study of the process involved when the individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of the products, ideas, or experience to satisfied needs and desire. Consumer behavior mainly sheds light on how consumers decide to spend their various resources like time, money etc. on various products so as to meet their needs and requirement. Consumer behavior encompasses study of what, when, why and where the consumers will buy their products. It also focuses on how often the consumers use the products.

Purchase Decision

According to Reighley (2010), Purchase decision refers as buying value, in this stage consumers decide on from whom to buy, where to buy the brand or product from or simple whether not to buy the product or brand in the first place. Meanwhile, Kotler (2002) defined that the purchasing decision is the act of consumers to want to buy or not to the product.

Previous Research

Fitrianto, Nofiawaty, and Iisnawati (2020) examined the effect of brand ambassador to consumer decision using the VisCAP indicator (Visual, Credibility, Attraction, and Power aspect). Using a descriptive design with a single cross-sectional. The samples were taken from 203 people, who had watched the advertisement and had visited the online market. The object of research is an Indonesian young famous singer, Isyana Sarasvati, who become a brand ambassador of Tokopedia (one of the largest online store in Indonesia). Regarding VisCAP indicators are used to measure the brand ambassador's performance, Credibility is an important thing that influences purchase intention from the brand ambassador of Tokopedia, while the others are insignificant. Brand Ambassador produces differences in variables that influence purchase intention. The marketplace could use ambassador to influence consumer decisions, but they have to realize that every ambassador has different characters and variables that could influence consumer decisions. This paper offers originality such as Indicators on VisCAP that influence purchase intention on Indonesia people could be different on each of the ambassadors. And this paper proposes a future research ide such as develop new research by using transfer meaning approach that could analyze whether the values possessed by ambassadors can spread to products and accepted by consumers.

Smith et al. (2018) examined the meanings and motivations of brand ambassadors in establishing relationships with an organization, and their considerations in representing and distributing content for an organization. In particular, we examined the consideration of corporate social responsibility (CSR) content among brand ambassadors. Findings suggest complex considerations of loyalties, commitments, and stakes within the brand ambassador-organization relationship. CSR content's value among ambassadors was questionable. The ethical issues of organizational ties, including compensation, are discussed.

Rahmawati and Kusumowidagdo (2018) determined the role of brand ambassador in increasing the customers' interests of Douj Protect products. The informants, as the chosen subjects in this research, are potential customers, customers, company owners, brand ambassadors and expert marketing. The object of this research is the Douj Protect Company. This research uses descriptive and qualitative approaches. The method used for data collection is interview supported with data documentation. Interviews are used to find out the opinions of the informants about the role of brand ambassador on Douj Protect products. The results indicate that brand ambassador can generate an appeal to the customers and potential customers through VisCap (visibility, credibility, attraction, power) model. The brand ambassador chosen by Douj Protect is popular on Youtube, which is known as the 'sneakers head' with good credibility. The chosen brand ambassador is in accordance with the target market of Douj Company and is able to generate customers and potential customers' interest of the product. Other than the brand ambassador, price and quality also come into customers' consideration in making purchases of a product so that companies must be able to compete in other markets.

Conceptual Framework



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Literature Review

RESEARCH METHOD**Research Approach**

This research uses Qualitative research method which means this research will be descriptive research to describe the Role of Brand Ambassadors on Costumer Purchase Decision on Tokopedia Marketplace. According to Moleong (2005:6) a qualitative research method is a study that discusses phenomena experienced by research subjects. For example, perceptions, motivations, actions, etc., holistically, and by way of description in the form of words and language, in certain natural contexts and by using various natural methods.

Population, Sample, and Sample Technique

The population of this research is those people who use or do transaction on Tokopedia in 2021 or can be short as Tokopedia users and buyers. The sample of this research is 15 People who have made transactions or who bought products on Tokopedia in 2021 based on the criteria which are Domicile in North Sulawesi and age are around 17-35 years old, and also confirmed as people who are already being affected by the Brand Ambassadors. This research is using Purposive and Snowball sampling techniques in order to get more valid and detailed result. Purposive sampling is a technique to collect sample of data source with some considerations like people who are considered understand the matter, can be trusted or people who has authority that will make it easier for the researcher to explore the certain object or social situation. Meanwhile, Snowball or chain referral sampling is a method that has been widely used in qualitative sociological research, the method yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981).

Data Collection Method

Data collection method divided into primary and secondary. In order to collect the primary data, this research use the In-depth Interviews, and the secondary data in this research were gathered from books, articles, several journals as the literature review that related to the study of this research.

Operational Definition of Research Variable**Table 1. Operational Definition and Indicato of Research Variable**

Variable	Definition	Indicator
Brand Ambassador	Brand ambassadors are advertising supporters or also known as advertising stars who support the advertised product. The use of brand ambassadors is carried out by companies to influence or invite consumers to use a product.	1. Visibility, 2. Credibility, 3. Attraction 4. Power

Data Analysis Method

- Data Collection is the process where the researcher found information or data from any kind of source such as the interview with the 15 informants, books, and also internet.
- Data Reduction, involves selecting few data from the other informant who had invalid or incomplete data, simplifying and transforming the data to make it more manageable and understandable.
- Data Display, in this qualitative research, the researcher organizes the information and shows detail explanations from the interview and result in descriptive way and also simple table.
- Drawing and Verifying Conclusion, drawing conclusion involves deciding what the identified themes and patterns and how they help to answer the research question. Verification involves checking and re-checking the data ensure the initial conclusions are realistic, supportable and valid. The conclusion in this research is also supported by some theories and previous researches.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION**Result****Table 2. Coding Categorization**

Indicator	Description	Respondent
Visibility	The brand ambassadors are famous in public	R1-R15
	The brand ambassadors are more famous than the other ambassadors from Tokopedia's competitors	R1, R2, R3, R6, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14, R15
	The brand ambassadors are not more famous than the other ambassadors from Tokopedia's competitors	R4, R5, R7
Credibility	Being trusted brand ambassador is important	R1-R15
	Being experienced brand ambassador is important	R1-R14
	Being experienced brand ambassador is not important	R15
	Being Brand Ambassadors for Tokopedia makes BTS and Blackpink more trusted especially in Indonesia	R3, R6, R8, R11, R13, R14
	Tokopedia works together with BTS and Blackpink makes both sides more trusted	R1, R9, R10, R15
	Being Brand Ambassadors for Tokopedia doesn't change the trust that people have for the Brand Ambassadors because they are already trusted even before being Tokopedia's ambassadors	R2, R4, R5, R7, R12
Attraction	Credibility of the brand ambassadors affected the decision most	R1, R9
	The Physic of the brand ambassadors affect the purchase decision	R3, R4, R6, R8, R9, R12, R13
	The Personality of the brand ambassadors affect the purchase decision	R1, R2, R5, R7, R11, R10, R14, R15
	Both Physic and Personality of the brand ambassadors affect the purchase decision	R10, R14, R15
	The Likability of the brand ambassadors affect the purchase decision more than the Similarity	R1-R15
	Tokopedia's brand ambassadors are more attractive than the other ambassadors from the competitors	R1-R15
	The Similarities between the ambassadors and Tokopedia are Skin-Care, Fashion, and Music stuff	R1, R2, R3, R5, R6, R7, R10, R11, R12, R15
The Similarities between the ambassadors and Tokopedia are the Creativity, the Marketing, Professionalism, and Popularity	R4, R8, R9, R13, R14	
Power	Attraction of the brand ambassadors affected the decision most	R3, R4, R5
	The limited Photo card of the ambassadors that Tokopedia gives to the lucky fans as a give away	R2, R3, R4, R5, R7, R9, R11, R12, R13, R14
	The funny and interesting contents about the brand ambassadors that Tokopedia made	R10, R13
	As a fan to support the brand ambassadors	R6, R8, R9, R12, R15
	To be seen like BTS and Blackpink in Fashion even in Skin health	R3
	Using the Discounts and coupons in Skin-care and Fashion items that only exist when BTS and Blackpink become Tokopedia's ambassadors	R1
	Will stop using Tokopedia if the brand ambassadors stopped being Tokopedia's brand ambassador	R6
	Will still use Tokopedia even though the current ambassadors stopped working for Tokopedia because of the Discount, Promos, and items availability	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14, R15
	By being the brand ambassador's loyal fans, buying things that the ambassadors promote still always depend on need, the use of the product itself, and money they have	R1-R15
	Power of the brand ambassadors affected the decision most	R2, R6, R7, R8, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14, R15

Discussion

The discussion in this research will be compiled from the most influential indicator to the least one along with the explanations based on the interview result.

Power

In this research, 10 informants confirmed that the Power of the brand ambassadors affected their decision more than the other indicators, and it is basically because they are the ambassador's fans. There are also 10 out of 15 informants, who said that one of the reasons why they bought things from Tokopedia is because of the limited photo cards of the ambassadors that Tokopedia give as a gift to lucky fans on special events. There are also 5 informants who said that they bought things from Tokopedia because they wanted to support their idol as the ambassadors of Tokopedia. In Power, even though all of all of the informants said that their purchase decisions are affected by ambassadors they all said that they don't always buy things that BTS and Blackpink promote. It is always depended on their needs, money they had, the use of it, and also because of the value of the products like merchandises of the idols. Power as the most affecting indicator also match the previous research by Fitrianto, Nofiawaty, and Iisnawati (2020).

Attraction

In this research, 3 of 15 informants chose Attraction over the other indicators and their reason are diverse. One of them said that she is already use Tokopedia before BTS and Blackpink become the brand ambassadors and she is also a fan of BTS already, but when Tokopedia released the limited photo cards, she found the brand ambassadors are so attractive there and she wants to get the photo card, so she ended up buying stuff from Tokopedia on special events as well. One informant admitted that she was just curious about the Photo card of the brand ambassadors; she likes Blackpink because they are pretty and make them her role model, so at that time she checked it on Tokopedia just purely because of her curiosity, but she ended up buying cute stuff for herself there. Another reason of one informant who chose Attraction is because she likes the brand ambassador's physic and personalities; they are good looking, talented, and kind. Also, in Attraction indicator, all of the 15 informants said that Tokopedia's brand ambassadors in 2021 are more attractive than the other ambassadors from the competitors.

Credibility

In this research, two informants chose Credibility as their affecting indicator because both of them liked the Professionalism of both the brand and the ambassadors. They said that the brand ambassadors can professionally deliver the message to pursue the customer to buy, and Tokopedia is also so professional in satisfying the customers. In Credibility part of this research, almost all of the informants confirmed that being trusted and experienced brand ambassador is important, but one of them (R15) added that she honestly didn't really think that being Experienced brand ambassador is important because the collaboration will depend on the same vision and mission of the brand and the ambassadors, and if they match then they will work together. Also, in this research, 6 informants said that by being Tokopedia's brand ambassadors made BTS and Blackpink more trusted especially in Indonesia because Tokopedia is trusted in this country, but 5 informants said that BTS and Blackpink is already trusted with or without working with Tokopedia because they are already become brand ambassadors for huge and international brands before and currently aside Tokopedia. There are also 4 informants who said that by working together BTS and Blackpink along with Tokopedia made each other more trusted like BTS and Blackpink made Tokopedia's name go international because they are global super stars, and Tokopedia made BTS and Blackpink more known and trusted in Indonesia because Tokopedia is one of the top marketplaces in Indonesia.

Visibility

In this research all of the informants confirmed that they knew the Brand Ambassador even before they become Tokopedia's brand ambassador. 11 Informants also said that the brand ambassadors are so famous in Public, and one informant said that they are so much more famous than the other ambassador from Tokopedia's competitors, but 3 informants said that comparing to other ambassadors, Tokopedia's is on the same level because few marketplaces in Indonesia also use K-pop groups to promote the brands as well but BTS and Blackpink seem more famous because they come to the public first. But in this research result, none of the informants pick Visibility as their most affecting indicator even though they admitted that the brand ambassadors are so famous.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**Conclusion**

1. Based on the interview result and discussion in the previous chapter, most of the informants said that they bought things from Tokopedia because they are the ambassador's fans who wanted to get the limited photo card of the ambassadors, and also wanted to support their idols. This result confirmed that the Power of the ambassadors affect the purchase decision the most. The limited photo card triggered the fans to buy products on Tokopedia because it is rare to get and the Photo card isn't sold anywhere but Tokopedia. Photo card is a part of merchandise of the celebrity and buy putting the mark 'Limited' on it, Tokopedia succeed to catch the fan's attentions and made them want those photos.
2. The Photo Card is also related to the second chosen answer which is Attraction. Most of the fans who said that they are being affected by the Attraction of the ambassadors confirmed that they chose Attraction because they find the ambassadors so attractive in those photo cards so they wanted to get them. It also confirmed that the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action) Hierarchy by Elmo Lewis about stage of customers move when they make purchase decision is correct in this research. The company or the seller needs to know how to catch the buyer's attention so they will end up buying from them. In this case, Tokopedia catch the fan's attention by using the limited photo card of the ambassadors as a gift to the lucky fans.
3. In this research, some informant also said that they bought things from Tokopedia because as fans, they wanted to support their idols. This action matches the theory of Factors Affecting Consumer Behavior by Kotler and Armstrong in Psychology factor that include the Believe of the consumer. In this case, the fans believe that they could become loyal fans if they bought products on Tokopedia to support their idols; just the same like buying music albums, streaming the music their idols released, and also collecting posters of the idols.
4. Some informant also answered that they are buying things from Tokopedia because of the Credibility of the ambassadors and the brand itself. The Informants like the way BTS and Blackpink being so professional in promoting the Tokopedia, and also how good Tokopedia serves the customers and never disappoint them.

Recommendation

The recommendations below are given to several parties.

1. Tokopedia: This research already showed how important the Photo cards of the brand ambassadors to the buyers, so I suggest Tokopedia to keep giving some merchandises of the ambassadors even though it is not going to be Photo card anymore; maybe Tokopedia can give limited merchandise like Key chain or Posters to the fans because posters is one of the most known merchandises in this era, and key chain is tiny so they can bring it anywhere. And if Tokopedia wants to go with higher price of the merchandise, they can go with limited T-shirt of the ambassadors, or even photo book of the ambassadors.
2. Tokopedia's buyers: In this research, all of the chosen informants are already being affected with the brand ambassadors, and my job is to know why it happens. But I also ask about the other reasons why the buyers buy things from Tokopedia aside of the ambassadors and all of the answers are just because of the discount and promos; surprisingly none of the buyer's answer is related to the image of Tokopedia as Indonesia local marketplace. I understand that in buying, the discount is very important, but please let it cross your mind that you buy this to support our country, to increase our own the economy level, and also to help our country to decrease its dependency to other countries. So here I just wanted to suggest the Tokopedia's buyers to be more aware about nationalism.
3. Brands that need to choose the right ambassador: Choosing the right ambassador is very important because the ambassador is going to be the face of the brand to represent the brand itself and also to increase the sell and awareness. So here I just want to suggest those brands to choose the ambassador that is really being idolized by the public, or have loyal fans. Being famous is just not enough, in order to make people finally buy your products through the ambassador, at least choose people who has impact to their job or even to the world because if you just choose famous people, it will only increase your brand awareness but it is not enough to increase your sells.
4. For the future researches: I suggest the future researchers that make similar research to this research, to probably use different method and criteria of informants because I only use 17 until 35 years old informants but marketplace like Tokopedia doesn't have age requirement to the buyers, so the future researchers can also make bigger sample size in their researches.

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