

The Influence of Brand Ambassador and Promotion on Purchase Intention through Brand Image as an Intervening Variable on Tokopedia E-Commerce

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Abstract

The development of the internet provides innovation in the form of digital marketing which is the company's process of conducting business activities electronically or e-commerce. Some e-commerce is influenced by popular trendsetters so that they become brand ambassadors to attract consumers in the promotion process and can build a brand image of a company in the eyes of the public. The purpose of this study is to test and analyze the influence of brand ambassadors and promotions directly or indirectly on purchase intention through brand image on Tokopedia e-commerce. This study uses data analysis methods using PLS-SEM, measurement tests and structural model tests to determine the influence between each construct on the study. The results showed that there was a positive and significant influence on brand ambassadors and promotions directly or indirectly on purchase intention through brand image on Tokopedia e-commerce.

Keywords: brand ambassador, promotion, brand image, purchase intention, e-commerce.

1. Introduction

In the field of marketing, the development of the internet has introduced a new innovation in the form of digital marketing, which refers to the process by which companies carry out business activities electronically, or through e-commerce. By utilizing widely connected and globalized technology, business actors can promote goods or services to a worldwide audience.

The rise of e-commerce has shifted several consumer behaviors, one of which is the shift from traditional and physical retail shopping to online shopping through digital platforms. The e-commerce concept reduces costs related to transportation, marketing, and operations, thereby enabling lower product prices. In Indonesia, the number of e-commerce platforms has significantly increased, allowing consumers greater freedom to choose where to shop online.

Tokopedia is an e-commerce platform established in 2009 by William Tanuwijaya and Leontinus Alpha Edison under PT Tokopedia. On May 17, 2021, Tokopedia officially merged with Gojek to form the GoTo Group. The name "GoTo" derives from both Gojek and Tokopedia and is also inspired by the Indonesian concept of mutual cooperation, "gotong royong" (Laucereno, 2021).

Since its official launch, Tokopedia has emerged as one of Indonesia's fastest-growing e-commerce platforms. It also offers a variety of financial products to facilitate various consumer transactions (Tokopedia, 2021). In marketing practices, some e-commerce platforms are influenced by popular trendsetters, who are often appointed as brand ambassadors to attract consumers. Beyond consumer attraction, brand ambassadors also serve to build the brand image of the company in the public eye (Dreambox, 2020).

On October 7, 2019, Tokopedia officially appointed BTS (Bangtan Sonyeondan), a South Korean boyband, as its brand ambassador. BTS, managed by Big Hit Entertainment, was selected due to their rapid growth and achievements in recent years, which made them an ideal brand persona for Tokopedia (Tokopedia, 2021). In January 2021, Tokopedia also announced BLACKPINK, another globally renowned South Korean girl group under YG Entertainment, as its brand ambassador—an announcement met with great enthusiasm from the public. According to Ningrum (2016), companies must carefully assess various positive aspects when selecting a brand ambassador, as the ambassador's achievements can influence consumer perceptions. Similarly, Sadrabadi et al. (2018) stated that the use of brand ambassadors in advertising and brand promotion can significantly influence brand image.

Fitriahningsih (2020) found that brand ambassadors influence both brand image and purchase intention, and that brand image mediates the relationship between brand ambassador and purchase intention. In contrast, Mardiana (2020) found that brand ambassadors do not significantly affect purchase intention. Based on these mixed findings, the present study aims to examine the direct and indirect effects of brand ambassadors and promotions on purchase intention through brand image in the context of Tokopedia's e-commerce platform.

2. Literature Review

Several previous studies have examined the variables used in this research—namely brand ambassador, promotion, brand image, and purchase intention. For instance, Mardiana (2020) found that brand ambassadors do not significantly influence purchase intention, while brand image and product quality do. Marsyaf (2021) showed that promotion positively affects purchase intention. Other studies, such as by Andini & Lestari (2021) and Ningrum (2016), reported mixed results regarding the direct influence of brand ambassadors and brand image on purchase intention.

Wahyoedi et al. (2021) and Wang (2019) emphasized the significant role of brand image and internet-based promotions in shaping consumer behavior and purchase decisions. Usman & Aryani (2019) discovered that product price had the strongest influence on purchase intention, while brand ambassadors had a minimal effect. Meanwhile, Putri et al. (2021) concluded that brand ambassadors had a simultaneous positive impact on purchase intention among Shopee users.

Compared to previous studies, this research offers the following novelty and differentiation: (1) The study is conducted in Malang, Indonesia. (2) Brand image is introduced as a mediating variable between brand ambassador/promotion and purchase intention. (3) The indicators used are a synthesis of previous empirical studies to strengthen measurement validity.

Marketing Management is defined as the process of analyzing, planning, implementing, and controlling marketing activities to meet consumer needs efficiently (Sari, 2021; Manullang & Hutabarat, 2016). Marketing Mix (4Ps) consists of Product: Goods/services provided to meet consumer needs. Price: The monetary value consumers must pay. Place: Channels and locations of distribution. Promotion: Communication efforts to inform and persuade consumers. Marketing Strategy involves deliberate planning and execution of promotional activities to reach target markets and achieve company objectives (Haque-Fawzi et al., 2022).

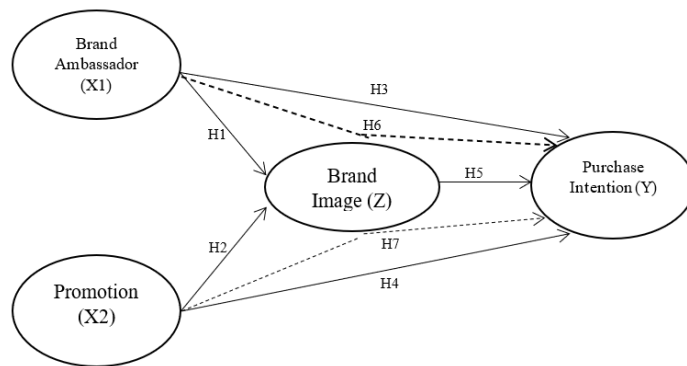
A brand ambassador is an individual (often a celebrity or influencer) who represents a brand and influences public perception (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Effective brand ambassadors build emotional connections with consumers and positively influence brand image (Gultom, 2019; Fatahillah, 2019). Indicators often used include: Visibility. Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Respect, Similarity, Expertise (Sterie et al., 2019; Sulayman, 2016)

Promotion is a tool for businesses to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about their products using both personal and non-personal communication (Tjiptono, 2015; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Indicators include: Advertising, Sales promotion, Direct marketing, Public relations, Personal selling Brand image refers to consumers' perceptions and associations with a brand (Wang & Hariandja, 2016). A strong brand image fosters trust, preference, and purchase behavior. Key dimensions include: Strength, Uniqueness, Favorability (Keller in Sterie et al., 2019)

Purchase intention is a consumer's mental readiness to buy a product or service (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It reflects behavioral tendencies like seeking product information, considering purchases, and actual buying decisions (Ferdinand, 2014; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Consumer behavior is shaped by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors (Suharno & Sutarso, 2010). Understanding these helps marketers design better strategies and influence consumer decision-making effectively.

Based on the literature review, the proposed research model investigates direct and indirect relationships among brand ambassador, promotion, brand image, and purchase intention. Brand image acts as a mediating variable between the independent variables (brand ambassador and promotion) and the dependent variable (purchase intention).

Figure 1. Research Model



Based on the research problem and objectives, the hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

H1: There is a significant influence of brand ambassador on brand image.

H2: There is a significant influence of promotion on brand image.

H3: There is a significant influence of brand ambassador on purchase intention.

H4: There is a significant influence of promotion on purchase intention.

H5: There is a significant influence of brand image on purchase intention.

H6: There is a significant indirect influence of brand ambassador on purchase intention through brand image.

H7: There is a significant indirect influence of promotion on purchase intention through brand image

3. Research Method

This study employs explanatory research, which aims to explain the causal relationships among variables through hypothesis testing (Solimun, 2017). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms, featuring closed-ended questions to facilitate the assessment of respondent answers. The questionnaire link was distributed online, allowing participants to respond based on their individual perceptions and opinions.

The primary data used in this study are qualitative, which are then quantified using a Likert scale. The population comprises individuals in the Malang area who have been exposed to Tokopedia

advertisements. Sampling was conducted using non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique. Following Hair et al. (2014), a minimum sample size should be at least five times the number of indicators used. This study involved 160 respondents.

Data Analysis was conducted using descriptive analysis which examines respondent characteristics and response distributions. We also use: (1) Measurement Model (Outer Model) Testing to assess convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA). (2) Structural Model (Inner Model) Testing using R-square (R^2) and Q-square (Q^2) values. (3) Hypothesis Testing based on t-test results and analysis of indirect effects.

4. Finding and Discussion

The first result is respondent demographics as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Characteristic	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	44	27.50%
	Female	116	72.50%
Age	17–21 years	63	39.40%
	22–26 years	97	60.60%
Total		160	100%

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were female (72.5%), and most were aged between 22–26 years (60.6%).

Table 2. Measurement Model

	<i>Brand Ambassador</i> (X1)	Promotion (X2)	Brand Image (Z)	Purchase Intention (Y)	P-Value
X1.1	(0.808)	0.168	-0.574	-0.124	<0.001
X1.2	(0.794)	0.464	-0.332	-0.223	<0.001
X1.3	(0.796)	0.257	0.129	0.215	<0.001
X1.4	(0.839)	-0.148	0.270	-0.316	<0.001
X1.5	(0.593)	-0.985	0.670	0.626	<0.001

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	<i>Brand Ambassador (X1)</i>	<i>Promotion (X2)</i>	<i>Brand Image (Z)</i>	<i>Purchase Intention (Y)</i>	P-Value
X2.1	-0.385	(0.819)	0.197	0.060	<0.001
X2.2	-0.224	(0.775)	0.067	-0.020	<0.001
X2.3	0.322	(0.732)	-0.173	-0.411	<0.001
X2.4	-0.006	(0.787)	-0.029	0.426	<0.001
X2.5	0.317	(0.813)	-0.078	-0.084	<0.001
Z1	0.324	-0.170	(0.810)	-0.304	<0.001
Z2	0.264	0.528	(0.752)	-0.683	<0.001
Z3	-0.147	-0.037	(0.789)	0.412	<0.001
Z4	-0.055	-0.005	(0.817)	0.360	<0.001
Z5	-0.374	-0.281	(0.803)	0.174	<0.001
Y1	-0.214	0.382	-0.110	(0.805)	<0.001
Y2	0.200	-0.145	-0.522	(0.684)	<0.001
Y3	0.362	-0.154	-0.355	(0.769)	<0.001
Y4	-0.275	-0.066	0.515	(0.705)	<0.001
Y5	-0.061	-0.054	0.449	(0.791)	<0.001

All indicators showed significant loading factors (>0.7 is ideal), indicating good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Although one item (X1.5) had a loading value below 0.7, it was retained due to a significant p-value (<0.05), meeting discriminant validity criteria.

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Ambassador	0.879	0.825
Promotion	0.890	0.844
Brand Image	0.895	0.854
Purchase Intention	0.866	0.807

Table 3 shows that all variables meet the reliability threshold, with CR and CA values exceeding 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4. R-Squares and Q-Squares Value

Variable	R-Square	Variable	Q-Square
Brand Image	0.813	Brand Image	0.812
Purchase Intention	0.762	Purchase Intention	0.760

Based on Table 4, Brand Ambassador and Promotion explain 81.3% of the variance in Brand Image and 76.2% of the variance in Purchase Intention. Q-Squares value also indicate that both endogenous variables (Brand Image and Purchase Intention) have strong predictive relevance.

Table 5. Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Path	t-Statistic	P-Value	Result
H1	$X1 \rightarrow Z$	5.761	<0.001	Significant
H2	$X2 \rightarrow Z$	7.219	<0.001	Significant
H3	$X1 \rightarrow Y$	4.287	<0.001	Significant
H4	$X2 \rightarrow Y$	4.742	<0.001	Significant
H5	$Z \rightarrow Y$	3.287	<0.001	Significant
H6	$X1 \times Z \rightarrow Y$	0.103	0.031	Significant
H7	$X2 \times Z \rightarrow Y$	0.127	0.011	Significant

Based on the data processing results in Table 5, the t-statistic value for the variable Brand Ambassador on Brand Image is 4.030. This value is greater than the t-table value of 1.96, indicating that the Brand Ambassador variable has a significant influence on the Brand Image variable. Additionally, the p-value is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05, further confirming the significant influence of the Brand Ambassador variable on Brand Image. This shows that Hypothesis 1 (H1) is accepted, meaning that Brand Ambassador significantly influences Brand Image.

This finding supports the results of Sadrabadi et al. (2018), which explain that Brand Ambassador has a significant and positive effect on Brand Image. When a company appoints a brand ambassador with a good reputation and personality, consumers will perceive the brand as having positive values. In the context of this study, Tokopedia uses well-known figures such as BTS and BLACKPINK as brand ambassadors. Their positive image as idols who are talented, disciplined, and have a strong fan base can be transferred to Tokopedia's brand, thereby strengthening its brand image.

The results of data processing show that the t-statistic value for the Promotion variable on Brand Image is 5.405, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.96. The p-value is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the Promotion variable has a significant influence on the Brand Image variable. This indicates that Hypothesis 2 (H2) is accepted, meaning that Promotion significantly influences Brand Image.

This finding is in line with the research of Azzuhri (2021), which states that promotion can improve brand image. Promotional activities such as cashback, free shipping, and discounts make Tokopedia more attractive in the eyes of consumers. The intensity and frequency of promotions also give the impression that Tokopedia is a brand that provides value and convenience for consumers, thus enhancing its brand image.

The results show that the t-statistic value for the Brand Ambassador variable on Purchase Intention is 2.788, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.96, and the p-value is 0.006, which is less than 0.05. These results indicate that the Brand Ambassador variable has a significant influence on the Purchase Intention variable. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 (H3) is accepted, meaning that Brand Ambassador significantly influences Purchase Intention.

This is supported by the research of Fitriahningsih (2020), which found that Brand Ambassador has a significant effect on Purchase Intention. The use of BTS and BLACKPINK as brand ambassadors is a strategic step by Tokopedia to attract young consumers who admire these artists. With the popularity and positive image of the brand ambassadors, consumers are more likely to be interested in and trust the products or services offered, thereby increasing purchase intention.

The t-statistic value for the Promotion variable on Purchase Intention is 3.614, which is greater than 1.96, and the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. These values indicate that Promotion has a significant influence on Purchase Intention. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 (H4) is accepted.

This is consistent with the theory of Kotler and Keller (2016), who state that promotion is one of the most influential marketing mix elements in forming purchase decisions. Consumers are generally interested in promotions such as discounts, cashback, or other special offers. Tokopedia often provides massive promotions during special events such as Harbolnas (National Online Shopping Day), payday promos, and so on. These promotions encourage consumers to make purchases more frequently or in larger quantities.

The t-statistic value for the Brand Image variable on Purchase Intention is 4.665, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.96, and the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. These values indicate that Brand Image has a significant influence on Purchase Intention. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 (H5) is accepted.

This result is in line with the research of Rinjani and Darma (2017), which explains that brand image has a significant and positive influence on purchase intention. A good brand image makes consumers trust and feel comfortable with the products or services offered, thereby encouraging them to make a purchase. In Tokopedia's case, the brand image built through professional services, attractive promotions, and collaboration with well-known brand ambassadors makes consumers more inclined to make purchases through this platform.

The Sobel test result shows that the Brand Image variable significantly mediates the influence of the Brand Ambassador variable on Purchase Intention. This is indicated by a t-value of 3.677 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Thus, Hypothesis 6 (H6) is accepted.

This supports the theory that brand ambassadors can shape consumers' perceptions of a brand (brand image), which in turn affects their purchase intentions. When a brand ambassador is trusted and liked by consumers, they tend to associate those positive feelings with the brand itself. Therefore, the better the brand image created through the brand ambassador, the greater the consumer's purchase intention.

The Sobel test result shows that the Brand Image variable significantly mediates the influence of the Promotion variable on Purchase Intention. This is indicated by a t-value of 3.697 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Thus, Hypothesis 7 (H7) is accepted.

This finding indicates that the promotional strategy implemented by Tokopedia is not only able to directly influence purchase intention but also indirectly through the formation of a positive brand image. Promotions that are continuous, creative, and provide real benefits to consumers will make

the brand appear more valuable and reliable in the eyes of consumers. A positive image, in turn, encourages consumers to make purchases more confidently.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that brand ambassador, promotion, and brand image all have significant and positive effects on purchase intention. Brand ambassador and promotion significantly influence brand image. Brand ambassador and promotion also have a direct and significant effect on purchase intention. Brand image itself significantly affects purchase intention. Moreover, brand image mediates the effect of brand ambassador and promotion on purchase intention.

These findings suggest that companies aiming to enhance consumer purchase intention should invest not only in credible and relevant brand ambassadors but also in consistent and appealing promotional strategies. Additionally, building a strong brand image remains crucial, as it serves as a mediator that enhances the impact of marketing efforts on consumer purchasing behavior.

For Tokopedia, the use of internationally renowned figures such as BTS and BLACKPINK, coupled with frequent and engaging promotional campaigns, has proven effective in shaping a strong brand image and driving consumer purchase intention.

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