

The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Purchase Decisions: The Mediating Role of Electronic Word of Mouth and the Moderating Effect of Brand Image in the Indomie Market

Dede Farida^{1*}, Latifah Ayu Tiarani², Lita Aliyyusia³, Septiana Dewi⁴, Tiara Maharlica Puteri Amalia⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5} Universitas Pelita Bangsa
Email: defariida251@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of Brand Ambassadors on purchase decisions of Indomie products, with Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) as a mediating variable and brand image as a moderating variable. The objective is to examine how Brand Ambassadors affect purchasing decisions both directly and indirectly through E-WOM, and to what extent brand image strengthens this relationship. A quantitative approach was employed, with data collected through questionnaires from 103 respondents and analyzed using SmartPLS 3 software. The results show that Brand Ambassadors have a significant influence on E-WOM, but not directly on purchase decisions, suggesting that digital word-of-mouth serves as a critical transmission channel through which endorsement effects are converted into consumer action. However, E-WOM and brand image significantly mediate and moderate the relationship, demonstrating that consumer-generated digital interactions and brand perceptions jointly shape purchasing behavior in high-frequency consumption markets. In conclusion, E-WOM strengthens the influence of Brand Ambassadors on purchase decisions, and brand image reinforces this relationship, highlighting the importance of an integrated digital marketing strategy while also contributing to digital marketing and consumer behavior theory by clarifying the indirect and conditional pathways through which endorsement influences operate in FMCG settings.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Purchase Decision, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), Brand Image, Digital Marketing

Introduction

The development of information technology, especially social media, has fundamentally changed the global marketing landscape. Social media not only serves as an information-sharing platform, but also becomes a major catalyst in the transformation of marketing to digital forms and changes in consumer behavior. Marketers are required to adapt quickly, utilizing digital marketing technology as a complement to conventional strategies. This transformation includes a shift from a static traditional marketing approach to a more dynamic and technology-based, enabling real-time consumer interaction, viral content spread, and deeper customer engagement (Ulfia et al., 2024).

The changing lifestyle of modern society, which increasingly relies on online shopping, opens up great opportunities for the online sales market in Indonesia. The rapid and instant exchange of information through social media has changed the way consumers search

for information and make purchasing decisions. They now rely more on reviews and recommendations from social media before buying products or services. Therefore, companies need to reformulate their marketing strategies to suit digital dynamics, including utilizing influencer marketing that has proven effective in building consumer trust and reaching a wider audience (Zaki, 2018).

One of the food products that is often the choice of the public is instant noodles. Various kinds of instant noodles are scattered throughout the region with various brands. With the ease and practicality that does not take long to process, instant noodles have become one of the favorite foods in Indonesia. It is certain that Indonesian people have tasted instant noodles and have a supply of instant noodles at home, it is not uncommon for Indonesians to bring instant noodles as supplies when traveling. This makes Indonesia included in the list of countries with the highest consumption of instant noodles in the world (Brands & Products, 2023).

Table 1. Data on the World's Most Instant Noodle Eaters (in million servings)

| Yes | Country | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|-----|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. | China/Hong Kong | 40 million | 41 million | 46 million |
| 2. | Indonesia | 13 million | 13 million | 13 million |
| 3. | Vietnam | 5 million | 5 million | 7 million |
| 4. | India | 6 million | 7 million | 7 million |
| 5. | Japan | 6 million | 6 million | 6 million |
| 6. | United States | 5 million | 5 million | 5 million |
| 7. | Philippines | 4 million | 4 million | 4 million |
| 8. | South Korea | 4 million | 4 million | 4 million |
| 9. | Thailand | 3 million | 4 million | 4 million |
| 10. | Brazil | 2 million | 2 million | 3 million |

Based on table 1 above, it shows that Indonesia is ranked second as the country that consumes the most instant noodles in the world with 13 million servings in 2018-2020. This shows that instant noodles are very favorite in Indonesia and are the menu of choice for the public. There are many brands of instant noodles on the market. Starting from Indomie, Mie Sedaap, Sarimi, Supermi and many more. Seeing the large number of instant noodle enthusiasts in Indonesia, of course all brands compete with each other to attract the interest of their consumers by creating varied and quality products.

Table 2. Data Top Brand Index Instant Noodles

| Brand Name | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|
| Indomie | 78% | 72% | 70% |
| Delicious Noodles | 10% | 18% | 16% |
| Sarimi | 4% | 3% | 4% |
| Supermi | 4% | 4% | 2% |

From the Top Brand Index of Instant Noodles in packaged data, Indomie has become the top brand for the past three years with a gain of 78% in 2018, 72% in 2019, and 70.% in 2020, its presentation can be said to have decreased. Therefore, Indomie continues to dominate compared to its competitors. This proves that Indomie remains the most preferred brand by the Indonesian people (Rasa et al., n.d.).

Indomie has long been the leader of the instant noodle market in Indonesia, not only as a brand, but also as part of the community's cultural identity. However, between 2018 and 2020, there was a decline in market share which indicates a real challenge from new competitors. Emerging brands bring innovation and offer unique flavor variants, which appeal to consumers, especially the younger generation who tend to look for new things. This is a signal for Indomie to continue to innovate to remain relevant amid changing market dynamics. In choosing instant noodles, Indonesian consumers strongly consider taste as the main factor. However, price and packaging are also determinants, especially for cost-sensitive consumers. In the digital era like now, effective promotions and recommendations from the closest people or social media also have a big influence on purchasing decisions. For this reason, it is important for Indomie to understand more deeply consumer preferences and adjust its marketing strategy and products to remain competitive.

More than just a product, Indomie has been firmly embedded in the social and cultural life of the Indonesian people. These instant noodles are often a practical choice in a variety of situations, from quick lunches to serving in moments of togetherness. By presenting flavor variants that arouse local tastes, Indomie not only indulges the taste buds of its consumers, but also maintains its position as a symbol of Indonesian culinary culture. To maintain its dominance, Indomie must continue to adapt to trends, maintain quality, and strengthen emotional relationships with its consumers (Rasa et al., n.d.).

Brand Ambassadors simultaneously influence the purchase decision. This is also supported by statistical results that state the level of significance of Brand Ambassadors to the variables of the purchase decision received (Malensang et al., 2022). From other studies, the results also mentioned the Brand Ambassador variable which means that brand ambassadors have a partial effect on purchase decisions. (Subiyakto & Nadiani, 2022). Meanwhile, it was found that the results of previous research showed that there was no significant influence of brand ambassadors on the purchase decision variable, so it can be said that the brand ambassador variable on the purchase decision variable was rejected. From the results of the analysis, it can be interpreted that brand ambassadors that include popularity, credibility, attractiveness, and power do not affect purchase decisions (Fauzi et al., 2023). So from the inconsistent results, this study needs mediation and moderation. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out how the role of Brand Ambassador influences purchasing decisions directly or indirectly through E-WOM, as well as the extent to which the brand image strengthens the relationship.

Method

This study uses quantitative data, where data is collected from various individual research journals. Research with a quantitative approach is generally carried out through the use of statistical methods that aim to collect numerical data from the research conducted. In this method, the researcher utilizes mathematical principles and theories related to the numbers being studied. (karimuddin Abdullah, Misbahul jannah ummul aiman, suryadin hasda zahara fadilla, Taqwin, Masita Ketut ngurah Ardiawan, 2022). The population of

respondents to this study is consumers who use Indomie products. This study uses primary data, namely collecting with questionnaires distributed to respondents and the sample obtained is 103 respondents, which is considered adequate for Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling given the complexity of the research model and the minimum sample size requirements recommended for PLS-based analysis. Of the 24 result statements that have been obtained, they are processed into SmartPLS 3 software with Outer model, R square, Path Coefficients, and Spesifict tests to evaluate measurement validity, reliability, and the structural relationships among constructs. Samples were taken using the Non-Probability Technique and sampling was done using the Hair formula by applying purposive criteria to ensure that the selected respondents were relevant to the research objectives and that the sample size met the statistical power considerations for the proposed model.

Results and Discussion

Respondent Profile

Table 3. Respondent Profile

| Items | Type | Respondent | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| Gender | Male | 26 | 25% |
| | Female | 77 | 75% |
| Education | Studies | 70 | 68% |
| | Diploma (D1-D3) | 4 | 4% |
| | Undergraduate | 29 | 28% |
| Age | < 20 Years | 45 | 44% |
| | 20-26 Years | 39 | 38% |
| | > 26 years old | 19 | 18% |
| Monthly Income | < 1 M | 58 | 56% |
| | 1Mt-4M | 25 | 24% |
| | > 5M | 20 | 19% |

The majority of respondents were women as many as 75% (77 people) while men were only 25% (26 people), thus showing the dominance of women's participation in the survey. In terms of education, most of them have a background in studies (68%) and bachelor's (28%) education, indicating that the level of education of the respondents is relatively high. Judging from age, respondents aged under 20 years are the most (44%), followed by 20–26 years old (38%), and over 26 years old (18%), which reflects the dominance of the young age group. Meanwhile, in terms of income, most have an income below 1 million rupiah (56%), followed by the group with an income of 1-4 million (24%), and above 5 million (19%). Overall, respondents were dominated by young women with higher education and low incomes.

Outer Model

Table 4. Outer Model Results

| Variable | Outer Loading | Composite Reliability | AVE |
|----------|---------------|-----------------------|-------|
| BA | 0.743 – 0.830 | 0.907 | 0.620 |

| | | | |
|-----|---------------|-------|-------|
| CM | 0.629 – 0.792 | 0.881 | 0.555 |
| EWM | 0.732 - 0.812 | 0.853 | 0.593 |
| KP | 0.684 – 0.816 | 0.887 | 0.569 |

Based on the table displayed, it can be observed that each variable (BA, CM, EWM, and KP) has indicators with a fairly high outer loading, ranging from 0.629 to 0.830. The composite reliability value for all variables also showed good results, with values above 0.85, indicating a high level of internal consistency between the indicators in measuring their respective constructs. Further, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each variable is above the 0.5 threshold, which means that more than 50% of the indicator's variance can be explained by its Latin construct. Overall, the results of this table provide an early indication that the measured constructs have convergent validity and adequate reliability.

R Square

Table 5. R Square Results

| R Square | |
|----------|-------|
| EWM | 0,389 |
| KP | 0,762 |

The results of the analysis of the R Square value show that 38.9% of the EWM variability and 76.2% of the KP variability can be explained by the model, which means that the model has strong predictive capabilities especially against KP variables.

Path Coefficients

Table 6. Path Coefficients Results

| | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics (O/STDEV) | P Values |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| FOR -> EWM | 0,624 | 0,634 | 0,079 | 7,862 | 0,000 |
| BA -> KP | 0,161 | 0,165 | 0,089 | 1,795 | 0,073 |
| CM -> KP | 0,371 | 0,375 | 0,104 | 3,580 | 0,000 |
| EWM -> KP | 0,344 | 0,340 | 0,083 | 4,125 | 0,000 |
| Moderating Effect 1 -> KP | -0,127 | -0,127 | 0,058 | 2,199 | 0,028 |

The results of the analysis showed that BA had a significant effect on EWM ($p = 0.000$), but indirectly significant on KP ($p = 0.073$). CM and EWM both had a significant effect on KP ($p = 0.000$). The moderation effect was also significant ($p = 0.028$) in a negative direction, suggesting that moderators weakened the relationship to KP.

Specific Indirect Effect

To determine the indirect influence between variables, a specific analysis was carried out which is presented in the following table.

Table 7. Indirect Specific Results

| | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics (O/STDEV) | P Valu es |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| BA -> EWM -> KP | 0,215 | 0,215 | 0,060 | 3,585 | 0,000 |

The results of the analysis showed that the influence path from BA through EWM to KP had a coefficient value of 0.215. This value is consistent between the original sample and the sample average, indicating the stability of the estimate. With a standard deviation of 0.060 and a t-value of 3.585, this result is statistically significant. This is reinforced by a p-value of 0.000, which is well below the significance threshold of 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the indirect influence of BA on KP through EWM is significant.

Discussion

The Relationship of Brand Ambassadors to Purchase Decisions

Brand Ambassadors simultaneously contribute to the purchase decision. This is also supported by statistical results that state the level of significance. Brand Ambassador to the Purchase decision variable accepted. So partially Brand Ambassadors have a significant influence on purchase decisions (Malensang et al., 2022). also agrees with the research (Subiyakto & Nadiani, 2022) based on the results of research on the Brand variable, which means that brand ambassadors have a partial effect on purchasing decisions.

As a result of this research, there are several practical implications that companies can apply in their marketing strategies. First, the selection of a brand ambassador should be based on the image of a brand ambassador who is well-known and has a strong appeal to be able to influence consumer purchase decisions. The use of brand ambassadors in marketing products is believed to increase consumer trust and effectiveness in encouraging purchases. Thus, it is hoped that the presence of brand ambassadors will increase consumer actions in making purchases through their influence (Punjungawidya & Murtiyanto, 2022).

Brand Ambassador's Relationship to E-WOM

Brand Ambassadors have an effect on E-WOM. In addition, the influence of Brand Ambassadors on E-WOM can be said to be significant. The results of this study are similar to the results of previous research conducted by (Anandyara & Samiono, 2022). also agree in the study (Saraji et al., 2018) that Brand Ambassador will affect E-WOM. The value and significance of the direct pathway and then each of the indirect pathways, and finally the collective effects must be measured to investigate these effects. The significant value of Brand Ambassadors from E-WOM Therefore, the observed correlation is significant.

The research has implications It is important for marketers, local brands, and social media managers to develop effective digital communication plans, especially in leveraging the potential of brand ambassadors on social platforms. By understanding the communication patterns of E-WOM that occur among fans, brands can be more accurate in designing

marketing messages, choosing interesting public figures, and creating genuine interactions with the fan community (Exo & Vinaring, 2024).

The Relationship of E-WOM to Purchase Decisions

Electronic Word Of Mouth has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, so the third hypothesis (H3) is accepted. This variable is also the most dominant variable that affects purchasing decisions. This means that the better the quality of E-Lectronic Word Of Mouth regarding Shopee e-commerce, namely the purchase experience and the experience of using goods and services, the better the purchase decisions will be (Wiguna et al., 2023). Agrees with the research by (Romadhon & Nawawi, 2024). With these results, the better E-WOM can influence purchasing decisions.

The implications of these findings show that e-WOM has a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. When consumers are exposed to e-WOM, they feel more confident in making purchasing decisions because they receive social validation, reviews from other users, and influence from friends or influencers. E-WOM also builds trust, reduces uncertainty, and creates a sense of social need to keep up with trends. Therefore, e-WOM can have a significant effect on purchasing decisions (Romadhon & Nawawi, 2024).

The relationship of Brand Ambassadors to Purchase Decisions through Brand Image as a moderation variable

That brand image moderates brand ambassador reviews on purchase decisions has influence and is significant and can be accepted and proven to be true. It can be concluded that brand image can strengthen the influence of brand ambassador reviews, it can be known that brand image can strengthen purchase decisions. This means that consumers will make purchases by considering the brand image of a brand even though the brand has used a brand ambassador that is already known by the public. Consumers will make purchasing decisions based on the brand of the product and the brand ambassador used by the product in making a purchase (Affrendha & Lestari, 2024). Also argued by research (Brand Ambassador and Brand Awareness of Purchase Decisions Moderated by Brand Image Abd Rohim & Asnawi, 2023) So empirically this value shows that brand image is able to moderate the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions. The significant role of brand image in moderating brand ambassador relationships and purchase decisions is inseparable from empirical phenomena in the field.

This research shows that brand ambassadors and brand awareness play an important role in driving purchase decisions in e-commerce companies. Marketing strategies need to focus on strengthening the role of brand ambassadors and a positive brand image as moderation so that the impact is maximized. The limitations of the study include the geographical scope and focus of the company, so the generalization of the results must be done carefully. In addition, other factors such as price, promotion, and user experience need to be further researched to strengthen the findings (Brand Ambassador and Brand Awareness Towards Purchase Decisions Moderated By Brand Image Abd Rohim & Asnawi, 2023).

The relationship of Brand Ambassadors to Purchase Decisions through E-WOM as a mediating variable

With these results, E-WOM was involved as a variable that strengthened the influence of influencer marketing on purchase decisions. However, it can also mean that there are other

factors that can be more influential than E-WOM in the decision-making process (Romadhon & Nawawi, 2024). Just like the research (Febrianto et al., 2023) The influence of celebrity endorsers on purchase intention can be mediated by Electronic Word of Mouth because basically consumers will go through the stages of searching for information before making a purchase, one of which is information obtained from E-WOM which can be in the form of comments or reviews on the internet.

This research emphasizes the importance of companies optimizing influencer marketing and E-WOM strategies to improve purchasing decisions, with the right selection of influencers as the key to success. However, the findings show that content marketing has no significant effect, so content strategies need to be evaluated to be more relevant and effective. This study has limitations in the geographical scope and specific product, so the generalization of results needs to be careful. In addition, there is a need for further studies to consider other factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions (Romadhon & Nawawi, 2024).

Relation to the theory

E-WOM can serve as a mediator in the relationship between brand ambassadors and purchase decisions. Effective brand ambassadors can increase brand awareness and encourage online conversations about brands (E-WOM), which in turn can influence consumer purchasing decisions. (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017) show that positive E-WOM generated in response to brand ambassador campaigns can significantly influence consumers' attitudes towards brands and their purchase intentions. E-WOM in this case acts as a bridge that connects the influence of brand ambassadors with consumer purchasing decisions. This mediation mechanism can be explained through the theory of the influence of social information. According to this theory, consumers often rely on information from others (in this case, both from brand ambassadors and from E-WOM) to reduce uncertainty and risk in purchasing decisions (Kyung Hyan, Kyong Shin Lee, 2016). Research supports the role of brand image moderation in the context of celebrity endorsements. They found that the influence of celebrity endorsements on purchase intent was stronger when there was a high match between celebrity image and brand image (Scheinbaum & Wang, 2018).

Conclusion

This study found that Brand Ambassadors do not directly influence purchase decisions, but have a significant effect through E-WOM mediation, thereby contributing to the influencer marketing and E-WOM literature by demonstrating that endorsement effectiveness in digital contexts operates primarily through consumer-generated communication rather than direct persuasive cues. Brand image has been proven to strengthen the influence of Brand Ambassadors on purchase decisions as a moderation variable, offering a theoretical extension by identifying brand image as a boundary condition that amplifies or constrains the impact of influencer-driven E-WOM on consumer decision-making. Practically, companies need to integrate influencer marketing strategies with good E-WOM management and build a strong brand image to encourage consumer purchase intent, while theoretically these findings refine existing models of influencer marketing by clarifying the indirect and conditional mechanisms through which influence is translated into behavioral outcomes. For further research, it is recommended to expand the geographical scope and explore other variables such as price, promotions, and user experience to enrich a more

comprehensive understanding of consumer purchasing behavior , as well as to adopt more theoretically driven designs such as longitudinal studies, platform-specific analyses, or comparative research across product categories to advance theory development in digital consumer behavior and online influence dynamics.

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