



ABSTRACT

K-pop has become a global phenomenon recently. Many companies use them as part of marketing strategies. Shopee uses Blackpink as a brand ambassador. This study aims to identify whether there are effects of Blackpink on Shopee's brand image and customers' purchase intention. Therefore, the researchers judgmentally recruited 120 Blackpink fans as the sample. Using Structured Equation Modelling (SEM) with LISREL version 8.80 for data analysis, the researchers found that the power of the brand ambassador positively and significantly affected the brand image and purchase intention. However, in this research, the researchers have not considered the moderation of fan engagement. Future research is suggested to verify this notion.

Keywords:

Brand ambassador, brand image, purchase intention

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Research Article

Blackpink as Shopee's brand ambassador: Does it influence brand image and purchase intention?

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INTRODUCTION

The times are changing to become more sophisticated due to fast technological development. The very impact of this change is the acceleration of the dissemination of information through the internet (Kasiyanto, 2017, p. 145). In 2021, there were 202.6 million Indonesian internet users. It means 73.7% of Indonesian people have used internet technology for various activities (Riyanto, 2021). One of the areas that are affected strongly by the increase in internet users is business and commerce. This development forces companies to develop marketing strategies that include the internet as its main part, especially in disseminating their product information.

E-commerce is the type of business that is most dependent on digital marketing. E-commerce is a form of online marketing channel that can be reached by computer assistance, which can be used by business people in supporting their business activities or by consumers to obtain information (Kotler & Keller, 2017). Currently, the development of the e-commerce market continues to increase from year to year, and Indonesia is no exception. One of the Indonesian people's most famous and in-demand e-commerce today is Shopee.

Shopee is an e-commerce platform founded in 2009 by Forrest Li. This e-commerce is based in Singapore and is under the auspices of the SEA Group. Shopee is ranked first based on application rankings based on research from iPrice regarding the Map of ECommerce in Indonesia, followed by Tokopedia, which is in the second position in the Apple App Store and fourth in the Google Play Store (Imandiar, 2021). We can see how Shopee is superior as an online shopping platform because Shopee is reliable and is the best in this field.

Nevertheless, Shopee must face a high level of competition among online shopping platforms, mainly due to changes in people's lifestyles caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and requiring people to be able to adapt to technology quickly. People who have never shopped online now rely on digital shopping platforms to meet their needs, especially during the pandemic. These changes have resulted in the rapid growth of e-commerce.

Facing the intense e-commerce competition, Shopee needs to maintain its brand image and increase consumer purchase intentions through innovation and new strategies. Delivering an effective promotion and marketing strategy is necessary to attract consumers' attention, maintain brand image, and increase purchase intention.

To make its marketing efforts more effective, Shopee uses brand ambassadors as its promotional media and brand representations. The company's expansion of message delivery will increase if the brand ambassador has a high level of popularity. One of the Shopee brand ambassadors who have high popularity so that it can attract the attention of the Indonesian people is Blackpink. Blackpink is a female vocal group under YG Entertainment from South Korea with four members: Lisa, Rose, Jennie, and Jisoo. Blackpink has high credibility and attractiveness to be Shopee's representative because it has the appropriate values and spirit so that Shopee can create a strong brand image. Blackpink plays an essential role in the existence of the Shopee brand. Because a good brand image can be a valuable asset for the company in achieving its success, Shopee will get special attention from consumers by choosing a suitable brand ambassador to build its image.

Seeing the popularity of Blackpink as Shopee's brand ambassador also influences consumers' buying intentions. When the figure who becomes the brand ambassador uses, provides information, and invites consumers to use a product, consumers who like the brand ambassador will be more easily interested in using the advertised product. That is why Shopee uses Blackpink as one of its brand ambassadors. With this great interest in Blackpink, Shopee began to take advantage of these various opportunities to increase consumers' buying intentions through consumer liking for Blackpink, especially Shopee's consumers that were

fans of Blackpink. Therefore, researchers are interested in researching the effect of brand ambassador Blackpink on Shopee's brand image and consumer purchase intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Ambassador

A brand ambassador is a person who is trusted to be a representative of a company's product. In order to build and maintain brand image and increase consumer interest, marketers use brand ambassadors to promote the company's products to consumers (Lea-Greenwood, 2012). A brand ambassador is a figure assigned to support a product and show positive things about a brand, which aims to encourage consumers to take action to purchase products from a brand (Yolanda & Soesanto, 2017).

Brand ambassadors play an essential role in the sustainability of the company. Therefore, a brand ambassador is chosen with full consideration where they must have an ability or expertise in their respective fields according to the advertised product (Royan, 2004). In addition, celebrities are believed to be one of the supporting factors from the psychological side that can influence consumer attitudes and beliefs about a company's products (Lailliya, 2020).

Being a celebrity who will represent a brand does not only require a charming appearance or expertise in the field in that he is involved in the entertainment world. However, it must have expertise in attracting consumers' attention and have a positive image so that consumers can trust the brand ambassador (Pratami and Sari, 2020).

A celebrity acts as a distributor, speaker, and liaison in an advertisement to introduce a product or service to consumers who are considered representatives of the product or service's identity. The personality of a Brand Ambassador will affect the personality of a brand. The brand ambassador's personality will later affect the public's perception of the brand image and can attract consumers to buy (Lestari et al., 2019). According to Lea-Greenwood (2012:4), brand ambassadors have several indicators, namely:

- Transference is when a brand ambassador must support a brand or product related to their profession.
- Congruence is a concept or key to the popularity attached to the brand ambassador.
- Credibility is a level where consumers can see that the credibility of the trusted brand ambassador has insight from the level of knowledge, expertise, or experience. So that consumers expect them to be able to provide objective and different information and not like promotions in general.
- Attraction is the appearance of a brand ambassador who has an assessment. So that it can attract and support the communication of a product through advertising.
- Power is the power or influence that brand ambassadors possess to promote products to influence and persuade consumers to make purchases or use advertised products.

Brand Image

Brand image is a crucial element that defines a connection between companies and customers through a brand name and symbol (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Brand image is a product or service description extrinsically applied by a brand to meet customers' psychological and social needs (Kotler & Keller, 2017). "Brand image can be defined as a perception about a brand as reflected by the brand association held in consumer memory." It can be concluded that brand image is a brand perception in the consumer's memory described through brand associations. (Keller, 2013).

A good brand image can create consumer confidence in a brand by describing brand associations; in other words, it reflects consumers' memories of things that have been believed and trusted by these consumers. Thus, the brand image becomes consumers' understanding of a brand which includes strategic efforts to ensure that consumers have strong and positive associations in their minds about a company brand (Tjiptono & Diana, 2016). One of the most important assets of a company is the brand image is the most important asset of a company. A good brand image effectively attracts consumers so that consumers are willing to choose the company's products or services, and it can increase customer satisfaction with the company (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Brand image cannot be intentionally manipulated. It comes from the company's efforts. Communication and company disclosure are the main factors in getting a good brand image in the eyes of consumers. A good brand image positively impacts the company because it can provide satisfaction to its consumers/customers. It can also increase consumer willingness to use the company's products (Anggoro, 2018).

Kotler and Keller (2016) state that brand image is the collection of association, any entity toward which the brand can be associated. They describe brand association as a construct constructed by the following dimensions:

- Brand association's advantages are factors that form a brand image. A brand has the advantage of brand association if a brand's product is superior to the others.
- Brand association's strength measures the quantity and quality of the information received by consumers about a brand. A brand is said to have strong association power when consumers actively interpret the information they get on a product or service.
- Brand association's uniqueness means that a brand has its uniqueness that can make a difference and create a competitive advantage. Hence, consumers have no reason to switch to another brand.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a form of consumer behavior in making purchases where there is a will from themselves based on their experience to buy a particular product (Kotler & Keller,

2016:198). According to Simamora (2022), purchase intention is the desire to buy a product that reflects consumer commitment to the company's brand. Purchase intention is a behavior that appears in response to an object that supports all inputs in the form of information, brings consumers to the stage when someone is interested in the product, and shows a person's desire to make a purchase decision.

Purchase intention forms a perception in consumers' minds, obtained from learning and thought processes. Purchase intentions create a motivation that continues to be recorded in the consumer's mind, and when a consumer has to fulfill their needs, they will actualize what is in their minds (Alifia, 2018). Purchase intention is accompanied by feelings of pleasure for goods that cause a desire and a feeling of reassurance that the goods have benefited, so they want to have these goods by paying or exchanging them (Susilo & Kholilurrohman, 2019).

According to Kotler and Keller (2010), several factors influence purchase intention: psychological, cultural, social, memory, and personal. Lucas and Britt (2003) stated that three aspects influence consumer buying intentions: attention, interest, and desire. According to Ferdinand (2016), purchase intention is identified through the following indicators:

- Transactional intention is a person's tendency to buy a product due to the desire that arises in them. It means that there is a desire for consumers to buy products that they are interested in.
- Referential intention is the tendency of consumers to recommend and refer a product to others around them. So, consumers will advise their closest people to buy the same product.
- Preferential intention is a consumer tendency that describes the main preference behavior towards a product. This preference can occur if consumers have an interest in a particular product.
- Exploratory intention is the tendency to describe the behavior of consumers who are always looking for information and positive characteristics about the product they are interested in.

The Effect of Brand Ambassadors on Brand Image

Brand ambassadors can be a communication bridge that connects brands with consumers (Yolanda, 2017). The unique perception created by the brand ambassador can make the brand look different in the eyes of consumers compared to other brands. Brand ambassadors must have expertise in attracting consumers' attention in terms of informing, introducing, persuading consumers, and having a positive image in society so that consumers believe in using the informed products (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Thus, the higher the credibility of a brand ambassador, the higher the image of a brand.

H1: Brand ambassador has a positive and significant effect on brand image

The Effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Intention

Lea-Greenwood (2012) states that brand ambassadors can help companies and consumers create a stronger emotional relationship, which can drive consumers to purchase a product. By selecting a good brand ambassador, purchase intention can be increased. Schiffman and Kanuk (2012) state that using celebrities with a good image as brand ambassadors can effectively communicate between companies and consumers. Because celebrities have their charm that can create an intention in every consumer to an act of purchasing a product, the better the brand ambassador's image, the consumer's purchase intention will also increase.

H2: Brand ambassador has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention

RESEARCH METHOD

The object of this research is the e-commerce company Shopee. The population in this study are Shopee users in the North Jakarta area, aged at least 17 years old, and know Blackpink as Shopee's brand ambassador. In addition, the sample was taken using nonprobability sampling with the judgment sampling technique. In taking the sample, it must be able to provide opportunities for all people included in the population that had previously been determined to be respondents.

This study uses primary data. The method used for primary data collection in this study is a survey method using an instrument in the form of a questionnaire distributed online via a google form. The research analysis uses Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to analyze the influence of brand ambassadors on brand image and purchase Intention. In deciding the number of respondents, Hair et al. (2014) state that the critical sample size for analysis using SEM is 100 to 200 samples. In other words, using SEM, 100 to 200 samples can provide sufficient statistical power for data analysis. The data was obtained from questionnaires distributed to respondents as many as 120 people. The program used in this research is LISREL 8.80.

RESULTS

Respondent Profiles

Table 1 shows that most respondents (70.8%) are Shopee consumers aged 17 to 24. Furthermore, gender shows that most of the respondents are male, which is 55% of the total respondents. Based on the occupation aspect, most of the respondents are students. Lastly, based on domicile, 120 respondents live in North Jakarta, and all know Blackpink as a brand ambassador from Shopee. So, all respondents in this study have met the characteristics of the respondents that have been determined.

Table 1
Respondent Profile

Gender	Male	54	45%
	Female	66	55%
Age	17 – 24 years old	85	70.8%
	25 – 34 years old	20	16.7%
	35 – 50 years old	15	12.5%
	> 50 years old	0	0%
Occupation	Employee	15	12.5%
	Entrepreneur	8	6.7%
	Student	85	70.8%
	Civil Servant	7	5.8%
	Other	5	4.2%
Live in North Jakarta	Yes	120	100%
	No	0	0%
Knowing Blackpink as Shopee's Brand Ambassador	Yes	120	100%
	No	0	0%

Descriptive, Validity, and Reliability Analysis

Table 2 shows the mean value of each indicator of the brand ambassador variable, with an average value of 4.06, which means that the respondent's response is to agree. The indicator with the highest mean score was obtained on the "Blackpink has the suitability as a Shopee brand ambassador" indicator, and the lowest was obtained on the indicator "Blackpink can make Shopee trusted by customers."

Table 2
Variable Brand Ambassador

Items	Instrument	Mean	Std. Dev.	Loading	AVE	CR	Alpha
Brand Ambassador Power							
BA1	Blackpink is a popular girl group known to the public	4.10	0.791	0.93	0.63	0.89	0.90
BA2	Blackpink has the suitability as a Shopee brand ambassador	4.12	0.773	0.75			
BA3	Blackpink can make Shopee trusted by consumers	4.01	0.680	0.66			
BA4	Blackpink has an attractive appearance as its attraction.	4.04	0.760	0.69			
BA5	Blackpink can influence consumers to shop at Shopee	4.03	0.783	0.89			

Table 2
(Continued)

Items	Instrument	Mean	Std. Dev.	Loading	AVE	CR	Alpha
Brand Image							
BI1	Shopee is superior to its competitors in terms of offering quality products.	4.02	0.733	0.83	0.63	0.80	0.97
BI2	Shopee has a good image as an online shopping site.	4.13	0.777	0.76			
BI3	Shopee has a uniqueness that distinguishes itself from competitors.	3.87	0.721	0.67			
Purchase Intention							
PI1	I am interested in shopping at Shopee because many product variants are available.	4.25	0.689	0.71	0.56	0.83	0.82
PI2	I am willing to recommend Shopee to my friends and family.	4.22	0.663	0.78			
PI3	I chose Shopee as my preferred online shopping site.	4.13	0.681	0.87			
PI4	I find out information about Shopee by asking people who have shopped at Shopee.	4.10	0.679	0.61			

Table 2 shows the mean value of each indicator of the brand ambassador variable, with an average value of 4.01, which means that the respondents' response is Agree. The indicator with the highest mean score was obtained on the indicator "Shopee has a good image as an online Shopping site," and the lowest was obtained on the "Shopee has a uniqueness that distinguishes itself from competitors."

Table 2 shows the mean value of each indicator of the purchase intention variable, with an average value of 4.18, which means that the respondent's response is Agree. The highest mean was obtained on the indicator "I am interested in shopping at Shopee because there are many product variants available," and the lowest indicator was obtained on the indicator "I find out information about Shopee by asking people who have shopped at Shopee."

Validity and Reliability

The validity test can be seen from the loading factor for each indicator. The loading factor can be accepted if the value is more than 0.50 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015:39). Based on Table 2, each indicator has a factor loading of 0.50 or higher. Therefore, they all reflect their latent variables or deserve to be used for further analysis. Meanwhile, in the reliability test, the

composite reliability value must be greater than 0.70 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015:75). Composite reliability value of each variable has met or has a value of > 0.70 . In sum, we can see that all research variables are valid and reliable.

The goodness of Fit Test

The model's goodness of fit test results is presented in Table 3. Most of the criteria indicate the model as good. On some criteria, the model is a bad and marginal fit.

Table 3. Model's Goodness of Fit Test Results

GOF	Cut Off Value	Result	Criteria
Absolute Fit			
Chi-Square	$p\text{-value} \geq 0.05$	0.032	Bad Fit
GFI	$GFI \geq 0.90$ good fit $0.80 \leq GFI \leq 0.90$ marginal fit	0.91	Good Fit
RMSR	$RMSR \leq 0.05$ good fit	0.027	Good Fit
RMSEA	$RMSEA \leq 0.05$ close fit $0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.08$ good fit	0.054	Good Fit
ECVI	ECVI Model < ECVI Saturated and ECVI Independence	$1.22 < 1.31$ and 15.06	Good Fit
Incremental Fit			
NNFI	$NNFI \geq 0.90$ good fit $0.80 \leq NNFI \leq 0.90$ marginal fit	0.99	Good Fit
NFI	$NFI \geq 0.90$ good fit $0.80 \leq NFI \leq 0.90$ marginal fit	0.96	Good Fit
AGFI	$AGFI \geq 0.90$ good fit $0.80 \leq AGFI \leq 0.90$ marginal fit	0.87	Marginal Fit
RFI	$RFI \geq 0.90$ good fit $0.80 \leq RFI \leq 0.90$ marginal fit	0.95	Good Fit
IFI	$IFI \geq 0.90$ good fit $0.80 \leq IFI \leq 0.90$ marginal fit	0.99	Good Fit
CFI	$CFI \geq 0.90$ good fit	0.99	Good Fit
Parsimonious Fit			
PGFI	$PGFI \geq 0.60$ good fit	0.61	Good Fit
PNFI	$PGFI > 0.90$ good fit	0.76	Bad Fit
AIC	AIC Model < AIC Saturated and Independence	$122.09 < 156.00$ and 1987.40	Good Fit
CAIC	CAIC Model < CAIC Saturated and CAIC Independence	$220.57 < 451.42$ and 2032.85	Good Fit

In Wijanto (2008), the value of GFI, AGFI, NFI, RFI, IFI, CFI, NNFI, and PNFI will range from 0 (poor fit) to 1 (perfect fit). A value of ≥ 0.90 is a good fit, while a value between 0.80 and 0.90 is often considered a marginal fit. As seen from the table, the SEM model in this research shows that the GFI and AGFI were in the marginal fit, and the NFI, RFI, IFI, and CFI were in the good fit category. However, PNFI is in the bad fit category because its

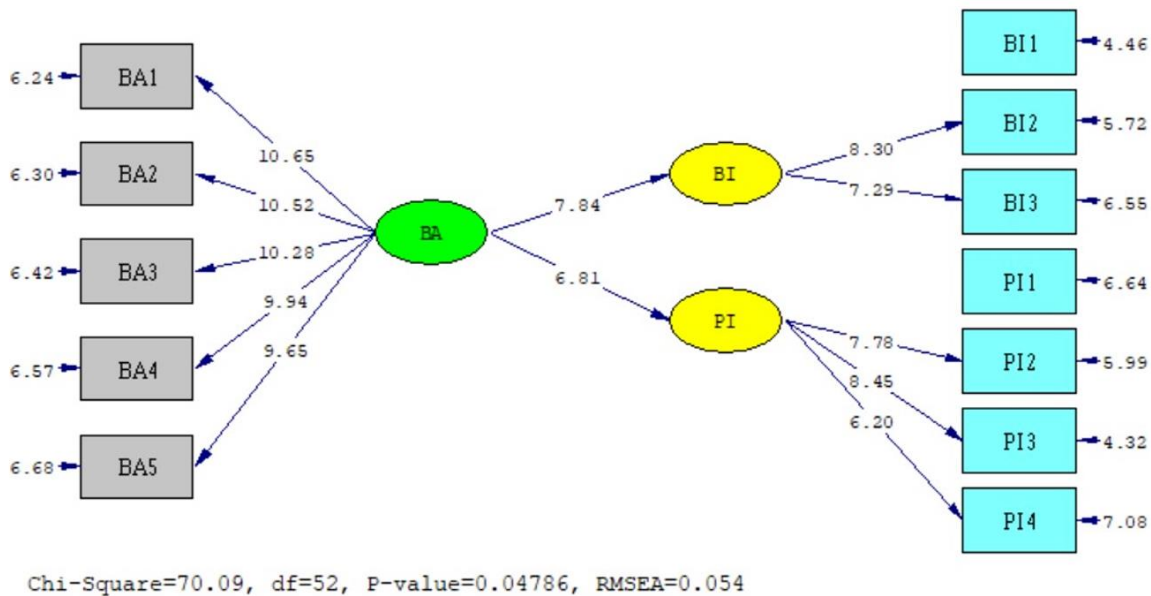
value is below 0.90. Meanwhile, if the value of PGFI is ≥ 0.60 , PGFI is said to be in the good fit category. Therefore, PGFI in this research model is in the good fit category.

RMSEA value of ≤ 0.05 indicates a close fit, while $0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.08$ indicates a good fit (Ghozali and Fuad, 2008). In this research, the initial SEM model also shows a good value. An RMR value of ≤ 0.05 indicates a good fit, so this research model has an RMR in the good fit category. According to Ghozali and Fuad (2005), the values of ECVI, AIC, and CAIC are said to have a good fit model if the value in the model is lower than the value of the saturated model and independent model. In the SEM model, the values of ECVI, AIC, and CAIC are in the category of good fit because the value model is lower than the value of the saturated model and the independence model.

Structural Analysis

The decision to accept or reject a hypothesis is based on p-values. In the bootstrap resampling method in this study, the significance value used (two-tailed) t-value is 1.96 (significance level = 5%), provided that the t-statistic value must be greater than 1.96.

Figure 1. Complete Models of SEM



Based on Table 4, it can be concluded that the brand ambassador has a positive and significant effect on the brand image, which is indicated by the coefficient value of 0.78, which is greater than 0.1. This coefficient is also indicated by the t-value of 7.84, greater than 1.96 (t-table). Based on the results of the tests carried out above, it can be concluded that H1 is accepted, meaning that the brand ambassador has a significant effect on brand image.

Table 4. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	t-value	Cut off-value	Criteria
H1	Brand Ambassador → Brand Image	0.78	7.84	1.96	Supported
H2	Brand Ambassador → Purchase Intention	0.77	6.81	1.96	Supported

The brand ambassador also significantly affects purchase intention, as indicated by the coefficient value of 0.77, which is greater than 0.1. This coefficient has a t-value of 6.81, which is higher than 1.96 (t-table). With this result, we can conclude that H2 is accepted, and therefore, brand ambassador positively and significantly affects purchase intention.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Brand Ambassadors on Brand Image

Based on the results of the SEM analysis, the t-value of 7.84 is greater than the t-table of 1.96. So the decision is H0 rejected. Consequently, the hypothesis (H1) states that Brand Ambassador has a significant positive effect on Brand Image is accepted. The standardized coefficient value of the influence of brand ambassadors on brand image is 0.78. It shows that the brand ambassador affects the brand image, meaning that using Blackpink as a brand ambassador can create a good and positive image for Shopee. The results of the study indicate that the brand ambassador gives an influence based on indicators including transference, congruence, credibility, attractiveness, and power on the brand image.

The brand image in the minds of consumers created by a brand ambassador will produce a positive attitude if the brand ambassador who delivers the advertisement is recognized, especially related to their profession. Then has good credibility when delivering a message. In addition, the attractiveness of a brand ambassador in conveying advertising messages can create a positive image of the related brand. Shimp (2010) stated that the company's representative is the main consideration in most matters relating to brand image. Furthermore, most potential consumers judge an ad from the model so that the brand ambassador can influence consumers' thinking about a brand.

Hoyer, Macinnis, and Pieters (2013) state that consumers judge a brand's image from the model representing the company, which in this case is the brand ambassador. The brand ambassador must be attractive and can attract people's attention. This statement is confirmed by Darwati and Yulianto (2019) and Masyita and Yuliati (2017). Both studies found that brand ambassador positively and significantly affects brand image.

The Effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Intention

Based on the results of the SEM analysis, the t-value of 6.81 is greater than the t-table, which is 1.96. So the decision is H_0 rejected, meaning that the second hypothesis (H_2) states that a brand ambassador's positive and significant effect on purchase intention is accepted. The standardized coefficient value of the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase intention is 0.77. It shows that brand ambassadors affect purchase intentions, meaning that using Blackpink as a brand ambassador can cause audiences to be encouraged and more interested in buying Shopee's products. Brand ambassadors who are attractive and persuasive in conveying information can encourage attitudes towards a brand or product to lead to an intention to buy the product.

The study indicates that the influence of brand ambassadors occurs through transference, congruence, credibility, attractiveness, and power on the purchase intention. These dimensions form the charisma emitted by a brand ambassador who can influence prospective consumers to purchase the company's products because of a sense of interest in advertising that the brand ambassador has conveyed. Furthermore, Shimp (2014:261) revealed that when a sense of interest arises in consumers after seeing a brand ambassador, potential consumers will tend to adopt the brand ambassador's attitudes, behaviors, intentions, or preferences.

Using a brand ambassador is important in generating buying interest in potential consumers for a product. That is why many companies currently use brand ambassadors to attract the attention of potential consumers. In selecting a brand ambassador, there are several things to consider. Such as the experience and expertise possessed by a brand ambassador with the hope that after the selection of the brand ambassador, it will be able to attract the attention of potential consumers and generate purchase intentions in the community. This statement is supported by the research conducted by Darwati and Yulianto (2019), which states that a brand ambassador has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. Likewise, Oktaviani and Zainurossalamia's (2017) research also shows that brand ambassador significantly affects consumers' purchase intentions.

CONCLUSION

In an increasingly competitive business world, companies need to think about how to get a good image in the eyes of consumers and increase consumers' purchase intentions to buy company products. In its marketing activities, Shopee sees an opportunity to achieve this goal by using brand ambassadors as a strategy to market its products. Based on the results of research and discussions that researchers have carried out, the conclusions of this study are: the results of the tests carried out prove that brand ambassador has a positive and significant effect on brand image. Furthermore, the results of tests also prove that a brand ambassador has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

Suggestions

This research has implications for companies in determining policies and developing marketing strategies. Several strategies that Shopee can develop are to maintain a good brand image and further increase consumer buying intentions by using brand ambassadors so that consumers are more interested and trusted in Shopee's products. This study has limitations in the number of samples and variables. For further research, it is suggested that researchers can improve the limitations of this study by increasing the number of samples and data collection methods to obtain comprehensive results. Further researchers are expected to be able to develop and include other variables besides brand ambassador and brand image variables that affect purchase intention.

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