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## The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Purchasing Decisions through Brand Image in the E-Commerce Industry

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**Abstract:** In Indonesia, technology is increasingly sophisticated, and the developing technology now causes the number of internet users to increase. The internet impacts people's behavior to shop online using e-commerce platforms. This study aimed to see the effect of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions through brand image on the marketplace platform. The principal data sources for this research, which employs a method that is quantitative, have been collected using online surveys. The data sample collected was 180 respondent from Gen Z in the DKI Jakarta area. The Accidental sampling method is used in the non-probability sampling method. In analyzing the data, also known as structural equation modeling, is used in this study to enable SMART PLS 3.0 software. The results of this study show that brand ambassadors have a positive effect on purchasing decisions mediated through brand image on the E-Commerce Platform.

**Keyword:** Brand Ambassador, Purchase Decision, Brand Image, E-Commerce, Customer.

### INTRODUCTION

Technology in Indonesia is now developing very quickly, accompanied by the business world's development. Technological advances from year to year are increasingly modern, supported by the increasingly sophisticated internet. The more sophisticated technology that is developing now causes the quantity of online users to increase (Nasution et al., 2020). The internet has an effect on individual's behavior in shopping, which used to shop directly. E-commerce is a service that facilitates product sales and purchases through online media. We can use the internet to look up information, compare prices, or see which products are offered before making an online purchase (Nugroho et al., 2020). Moreover, e-commerce is described as a type of business in which buyer and seller parties transact electronically without physically meeting. Crucially, there is a channel and media for communication via electronic media or the internet (Simarmata et al., 2020). Now, more have decided to shop online using

e-commerce. Some marketplace applications that trade via the Internet in Indonesia are Shopee, Tokopedia, Bukalapak, Lazada, and Blibli.

Based on Topbrandaward.com in 2023, it is known that five major marketplaces gained market in Indonesia, namely Shopee 45.80%, Lazada 15.10%, Tokopedia 11.30%, Blibli 10.60% and Bukalapak 4.70%. Therefore, it can be concluded that using e-commerce to shop online can allow customers to buy whenever they want without facing the challenges of queuing or paying in cash. E-commerce provides convenience in the purchasing process of the products or services it offers. The most significant benefit of e-commerce today is the increased convenience felt by consumers (Gupta et al., 2023).

Purchasing decisions are important to retain customers and become a customer response from the mismatch between the previous level of satisfaction and the actual performance felt after use (Gupta et al., 2023). E-commerce trust is an important thing that can influence purchase interest made online. Consumer purchasing decisions can be influenced by the ease of using e-commerce as a place to shop. Purchase decisions are not the only the conclusion of the customer purchasing method; instead, marketing expectations can take consumers to the next step, that is, where they will purchase the same goods again (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The purchase decision to buy indicates the intention of the customer to use e-commerce websites. A high-quality e-commerce website increases the likelihood that customers will be interested in making a purchase there. A well-designed e-commerce website greatly increases the likelihood that users will be interested in making purchases from it (Triani et al., 2019).

Using brand ambassadors as a marketing tool by well-known brands has shown to be quite successful in raising product sales (Jacobs, 2003), provided that the chosen brand ambassador leaves a positive impression on consumers and follows the target demographic and product category. This demonstrates that this new technique has the power to affect consumers' purchase choices; the key will be in how carefully marketers choose well-known models or personalities to represent their businesses (Xiong et al., 2013).

Brand image is also seen as consumers' opinions and beliefs about the quality of products produced by the organization and the integrity of the organization in the products offered to consumer (Aaker, 1997). According to (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005), According to the comparison, a customer will have faith in a brand because of the organization's ownership of the brand image if they think the company has a consumer-oriented attitude. Brand image plays a significant role in influencing consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in situations where consumers find it challenging to distinguish between goods and services based on intangible qualities (Susanti et al., 2020). Created brand identity can serve as a representation of the brand's overall quality, vision, and services (Frista Hakim et al., 2022).

Several empirical studies have been conducted to examine e-commerce users in the marketplace in Indonesia, and several research findings carried out by (Sugianto et al., 2023) found that variables brand ambassador and brand image variables partially and simultaneously positively affect purchasing decisions at Tokopedia. So, it is hoped that it can increase attention to the brand ambassador and brand image factors and increase purchasing decisions. The findings are not supported by the results of research conducted (Prasetyo, 2017), with the conclusion of research a lack of impact from brand ambassadors on XL Axiata consumers purchasing decisions mediated by brand image. The brand image variable as a mediating variable has a weak influence on purchasing decisions compared to the direct influence of brand ambassadors which is so strong. Departing from the problems described above, it is necessary to test the impact of brand image on marketplace usage in Indonesia. In addition, this research takes the title "Brand Ambassadors and Their Influence on Purchasing

Decisions Mediated by Brand Image" (Study on the Entire E-Commerce Industry in Jakarta with Gen-Z Population).

## Literature Review and Hypothesis

### 1. Brand Ambassador and Purchase Decision

"Brand ambassadors are people who support brands from various well-known public figures, apart from popular people, ordinary people can also support them" (Nurhasanah et al., 2021). Brand ambassadors can be used as a reference for consumer ratings and overall brand perception (Mudzakir, 2018). Culture's idols are brand ambassadors. They serve as promotional instruments for the commodification and commercialization of goods as well as the individuality of human greatness (Gita & Setyorini, 2016). Based on the opinion (Frans M. Royan, 2004), "a Brand Ambassador or a group of Brand Ambassadors can support in reinforcing with emotional influences related to the company's brand or business to customers and help indirectly to improve product perceptions and influence seriousness in buying."

H1: Brand Ambassador has a positive effect on Purchase Decision.

### 2. Brand Ambassador and Brand Image

Brand image can be defined as the brand's perception as reflected by brand associations stored in consumer memory". This implies that brand image refers to how customers see a brand as expressed by the brand connections they have in their minds (Kotler & Keller, 2016). "Brand association is anything linked in memory to a brand." This definition demonstrates how brand association relates to the brand's memory in the customer (David A. Aaker, 1991). Meanwhile, brand ambassadors play a crucial role in facilitating marketing efforts both locally and internationally (Lea-Greenwood, 2012). Brand ambassadors will aid in strengthening the emotional connection between a business or brand and its customers, so indirectly influencing consumer purchase and product use (Frans M. Royan, 2004).

H2: Brand Ambassador has positive effect on Brand Image.

### 3. Brand Image and Purchase Decision

Brand Image is a perception and belief held by consumers by what is in consumers' memories. This perception can arise from consumer experience with products that have been purchased before. According to (Kotler & Keller, 2016), Brand Image measurement can be done based on brand aspects. These aspects include the strength of brand association, favorable brand association, and uniqueness of brand association. The results of the research (Soepono, 2019) demonstrate the positive and considerable influence that brand image has on purchase decision.

H3: Brand Image has a positive effect on Purchase Decision.

### 4. Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision

Brand ambassadors are tools companies use to connect and communicate brands with the public, hoping that companies can increase sales (Lea-Greenwood, 2012). This refers to the attractiveness of the Brand Ambassador including physical and non-physical, trust in how the general public believes and can represent the product or brand, and the expertise possessed by the Brand Ambassador. Based on research (Sutan et al., 2022), it can be concluded that Brand Ambassadors have a positive effect on Product Purchasing Decisions.

Consumers' perceptions and beliefs about a brand image in the associations they establish in their minds (Kotler & Susanto, 2000). The definition of brand image, in general, is everything that is related to and describes the brand that exists in the minds and memories of consumers. The success of the Company and Brand Ambassadors in forming a good brand image can be influenced and measured by strength indicators, namely how brand information can enter and survive in the minds of consumers, indicators of the uniqueness of a brand such as attributes, functions, product features, and profit indicators, namely in the form of

competitive advantages so as to create favorable associations. Based on research (Sutan et al., 2022), it can be concluded that brand image affects purchasing decisions.

H4: Brand Image can mediate the relationship between brand ambassadors and purchase decision.

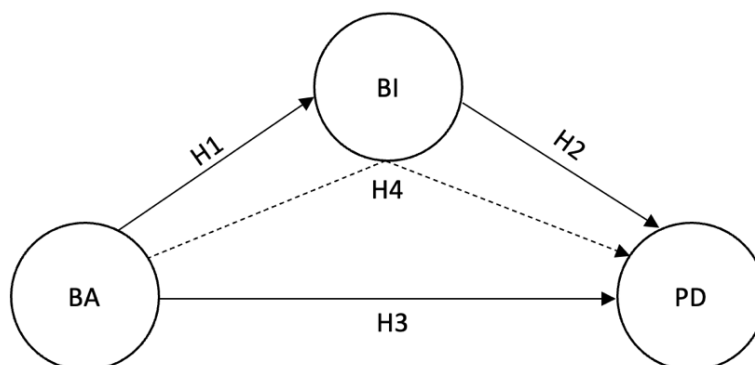


Figure 1. Framework

### METHOD

The method used in this study is called a quantitative technique. With this method, scores are used more as a basis for analysis, which is based on numbers. The poll method is used to get the score. According to (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000), this method is usually used in large and small populations. The population in this study are users of e-commerce platforms among Gen-Z throughout DKI Jakarta, with age criteria from 11 years to 28 years based on age data (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021).

The sample size was determined using the formula (Joseph Hair et al., 2010). The use of Hair's formula is due to the size of the research population which is not known with certainty. According to (Joseph Hair et al., 2010), a good sample size ranges from 100-200 respondents and can be adjusted to the number of indicators used in the questionnaire assuming 5-10 times the number of indicators available. Thus, the number of indicators used is 13 times ( $13 \times 10 = 130$ ). These calculations resulted in a minimal sample size for this research of 130 respondents. 180 samples were obtained and utilized in this investigation, as follows (Joseph Hair et al., 2010)

In this study, researchers distributed questionnaires online with Google Forms. Online Google forms have been distributed to Gen-Z circles through Instagram and WhatsApp. The questionnaire was distributed on a Likert Scale which uses a 5-point Likert scale type between 1 strongly disagree (STS), two disagree (TS), 3 Neutral (N), 4 Agree (S) and 5 Strongly Agree (SS), (Sugiyono, 2008). Additionally, respondents were questioned about their preferred e-commerce platform, age, kind of job, and length of previous shopping visit. A partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) strategy was utilized to evaluate the hypothesis using the Smart-PLS 3 application. PLS-SEM can balance and recognize fluctuation from variable indicators, making it clearer, simpler, and in charge of measuring absence from class (Joseph F. Hair et al., 2017). In addition, this application can figure out how independent variables are structured and measure the impact of each variable on the dependent variable (Ringle et al., 2015).

**Table 1. Respondent's Demographic Profile**

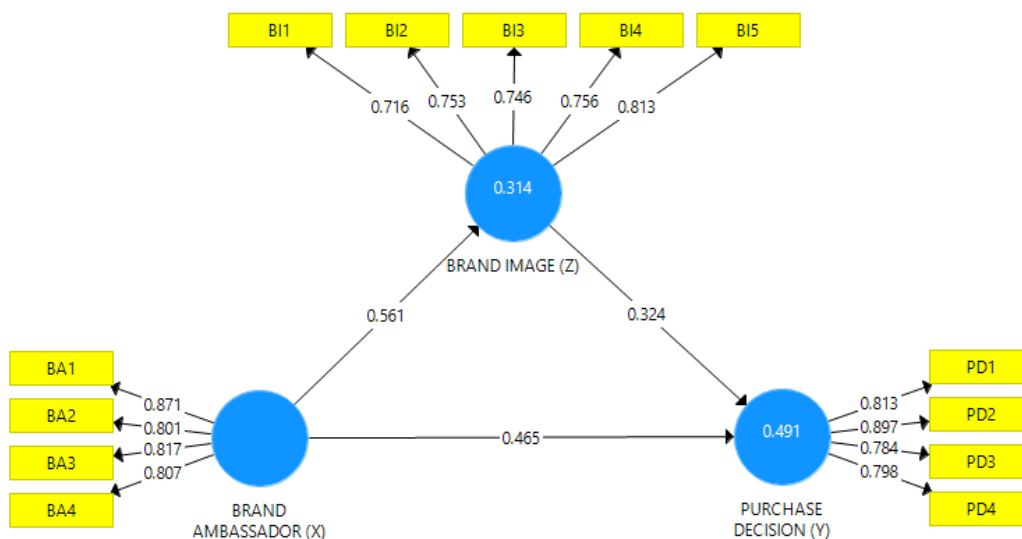
<b>Profile</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Domicile</b>		
West Jakarta	30	16,7
Central Jakarta	32	17,8
South Jakarta	36	20
East Jakarta	49	27,2
Jakarta Utara	33	18,3
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	90	50
Female	90	50
<b>Age</b>		
11 - 15	11	6,1
16 - 20	45	25
21 - 24	99	55
25 - 28	25	13,9
<b>Education</b>		
Junior High School	18	10
Senior High School	92	51
Diploma	21	11,7
Bachelor Degree	48	26,7
Master Degree	1	0,6
<b>Occupation</b>		
Civil Servant	14	7,8
Housewife	9	5,0
College Student	90	50,0
Private Employee	35	19,4
Student	25	13,9
Entrepreneur	7	3,9
<b>Average Monthly Shopping on E-commerce</b>		
< Rp. 500.000	98	54,4
Rp. 500.000 - Rp. 1.500.000	50	27,8
Rp. 1.500.000 - Rp. 2.500.000	12	6,7
Rp. 2.500.000 - Rp. 3.500.000	9	5
More Than Rp. 3.500.000	11	6,1
<b>Product Category</b>		
Electronic	39	21,7
Fashion	66	36,7
Foods & Drinks	7	3,9
Beauty and Care	47	26,1
Home Furnishing	21	11,6

Profile of respondents obtained from the questionnaire distributed, namely domicile, gender, age, education, occupation, average monthly shopping in E-commerce, and product category.

**Table 2. Measurement Variable**

Variable	Indikator	Source
Brand Ambassador	a. Visibility b. Credibility c. Attraction d. Power	(Nofrizal et al., 2023)
Brand Image	a. Brand is Friendly b. Brand is Modern c. Brand is Popular d. Brand is Useful e. Brand is Artificial	(Taqi & Muhammad, 2020)
Purchase Decision	a. Buy the products I need through e-commerce. b. Purchased the product needed through e-commerce. c. Buying products needed through e-commerce in the future. d. Buying products through e-commerce can be trusted	(Nofrizal et al., 2023)

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**



**Figure 2. Before Boothstraping**

**Table 3. Validity Test**

Variable	Indikator	Outer Loadings	Ave	Result
Brand Ambassador	BA1	0.871	0.680	Valid
	BA2	0.801		Valid
	BA3	0.817		Valid
	BA4	0.807		Valid
Brand Image	BI1	0.716	0.574	Valid
	BI2	0.753		Valid
	BI3	0.746		Valid
	BI4	0.756		Valid
	BI6	0.813		Valid
Purchase Decision	PD1	0.813	0.679	Valid
	PD2	0.897		Valid
	PD3	0.784		Valid
	PD4	0.798		Valid

### Convergent Validity

Convergent validity aims to determine the validity of each indicator. In evaluating convergent validity, external loads and extracted variants averages (AVE) should be considered (Joseph Hair et al., 2022). According to (Joseph F. Hair et al., 2017), convergence validity can be seen from outer loading values. Outer loading has a high degree of validity if the value exceeds 0.70. Values between 0.40 – 0.70 are recommended to do removal indicators if you want to improve reliability. However, suppose AVE (average variance extracted) is more than 0.50 and does not want to increase reliability too much. In that case, values between 0,40 – and 0,70 are acceptable, whereas load values less than 0.4 must always be removed from the construction (Joseph F. Hair et al., 2017). Table 3 shows that all construction variables have an external load > 0.708 and AVE above > 0.5.4.3 Reliability Test.

**Table 4. Reliability Test**

Latent Construct	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Brand Ambassador (X)	0.894	0.843	Reliable
Brand Image (Z)	0.870	0.817	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.894	0.842	Reliable

Composite Reliability is the part used to test the reliability of variable indicators. (Joseph Hair et al., 2010) states that Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha estimates of 0.7 or higher indicate good reliability. Based on the information in Table 4, it can be observed that the brand ambassador variable's Composite Reliability value is > 0.7, with a value of 0.894; the brand image variable's value is > 0.7, with a value of 0.870; and the purchase decision variable's value is > 0.7, with a value of 0.894. That proves it each variable has Composite Reliability> 0.70, indicating that the three variables are reliable.

The Composite Reliability reliability test above can be strengthened by using the value. According to the information in the aforementioned table, the Cronbach's Alpha value of the product brand ambassador variable is > 0.7 with a value of 0.843, the marketing brand image has a value > from 0.7, specifically 0.817, and the buy decision variable has a value > 0.7, namely 0.842. That proves it each variable has a Cronbach's Alpha> 0.70, indicating that the three variables are reliable.

### Discriminant Validity

**Table 5. Discriminant Validity**

Cross Loading	Brand Ambassador (X)	Brand Image (Z)	Purchase Decision (Y)
BA1	0.871	0.529	0.597
BA2	0.801	0.368	0.475
BA3	0.817	0.482	0.533
BA4	0.807	0.450	0.517
BI1	0.323	0.716	0.315
BI2	0.399	0.753	0.482
BI3	0.375	0.746	0.406
BI4	0.406	0.756	0.396
BI5	0.562	0.813	0.557
PD1	0.485	0.481	0.813
PD2	0.532	0.577	0.897
PD3	0.518	0.418	0.784
PD4	0.593	0.444	0.798

A discriminant validity is a factor cross-loading value that compares the loading value of the construct to be bigger than other constructs in order to determine if the construct has

enough discriminant impact. As a general rule, as compared to other constructs included in the model structure, the reflective measurement indicators for the model should have the largest cross-loading values on each latent variable underlying the construct (Joseph F. Hair et al., 2017). Based on the results of Table 5, there is the largest cross-loading value of each indicator that corresponds to its latent variable.

### R Square

Various independent latent variables' effect on the dependent latent variable is measured using the R-squared (R2) value. On the basis of the R square value, there are three grouping categories: the strong category, the moderate category, and the weak category (J. Hair et al., 2011). According to Hair et al., R square values of 0.75 and higher fall into the strong group, 0.50 and higher fall into the moderate category, and 0.25 and below fall into the weak category. The higher the R2, the better the study outcomes (J. Hair et al., 2011) R squared may be used to assess the quality of any model, not only regression models, by using the R squared formula. However, the application of R Square often causes problems, namely that the value will always increase with the addition of independent variables in a model.

**Table 6. R Square**

	R Square	Result
Brand Image (Z)	0.314	Moderate
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.491	Moderate

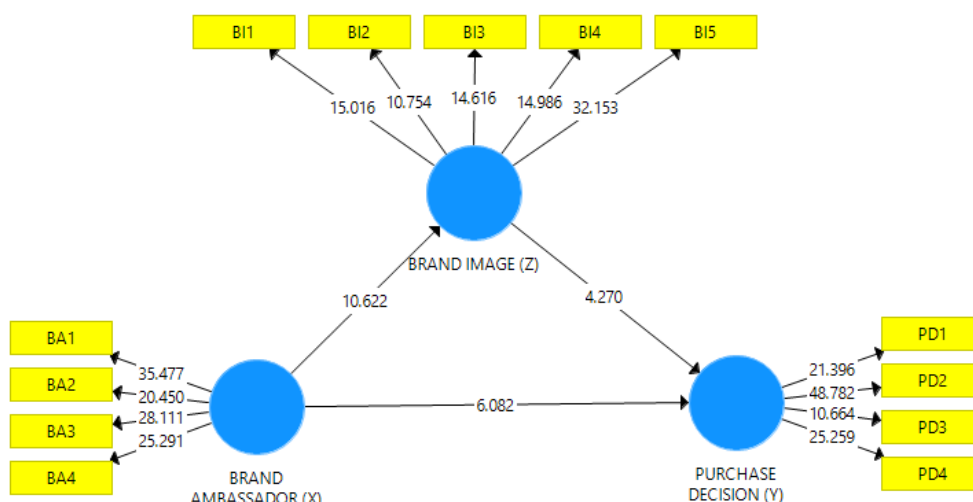
It is concluded that there is an influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions, providing a value of 0.491 or 49%. In addition, the influence of brand ambassadors on brand image gets a value of 0.314 or 31%.

Based on the R2 values of the two variables, it involved the relevance of the Q2 predictions. The fit of the structural model can be checked from the Q-square as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 Q2 &= 1 - (1 - 0,314) (1 - 0,491) \\
 &= 1 - (0,686) (0,509) \\
 &= 1 - 0,349174 \\
 &= 0.65
 \end{aligned}$$

The resulting Q-squared was 0.65. Because the Q-square was less than 0.75 (J. Hair et al., 2011), this model has been shown to have predictive relevance of moderate category.

### Hypothesis Test



**Figure 3. After Boothstraping**

Table 7. Hypothesis Test

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values	Result
BA -> BI	0.561	10.576	0.000	significant
BA -> PD	0.465	6.288	0.000	significant
BI -> PD	0.324	4.574	0.000	significant
BA -> BI -> PD	0.182	4.539	0.000	significant

Hypothesis 1 states that "brand ambassadors have a significant positive relationship with brand image." According to the results of the hypothesis test, the original sample value was 0.561, which is positive; the T-statistic value was 10.576, which is larger than 1.96; and the P-value was 0.000, which indicates that the value is less than 0.05. Thus, it has been shown that brand ambassadors enhance the perception of a company. The significance and acceptance of hypothesis one.

Hypothesis 2 states, "brand ambassadors have a significant positive relationship with purchase decision." Looking at the original sample value of 0.465 has a T-statistics value of 6.288, which means that the T-statistics value is greater than 1.96, and a P-value of 0.000, this denotes a number lower than 0.05. Therefore, it has been shown that brand ambassadors have a favorable impact on customer purchase choices. The significance and acceptance of hypothesis two.

Hypothesis 3 states that "brand image has a significant positive relationship with purchasing decisions." The hypothesis test results show that the sample value was 0.324, which is positive. The T-statistics value was 4.574, which is higher than 1.96, and the P-value was 0.000, which is less than 0.05. It has been shown that brand image makes people more likely to buy something. The third hypothesis is valid and important.

Hypothesis 4 states that " Brand image can mediate positive and significant on the relationship between brand ambassadors and purchase decisions" The test results for the hypothesis show that the sample value was 0.182, which is positive. The T-statistics value was 4.539, which is higher than 1.96, and the P-value was 0.000, which is less than 0.05. the research results show that brand ambassadors have a positive influence on purchase decision behavior, with brand image as a mediating variable.

Analyzing the outcomes also requires knowledge of the R square value. R square provides the percentage of the dependent variable's variation that the independent variable explains. R square for brand image is 0.314, explained by brand ambassadors or 31%. At the same time, the purchase decision provides a value of 0.491 or 49%, explained by brand ambassadors and brand image.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate and answer the hypothesis put forward in this study. The impact of brand ambassadors on purchase decision and brand image is examined in this research. The purpose of this research is to look into and address the hypothesis presented in the first chapter. This research looks at how brand ambassadors affect purchase decision and brand image. Brand ambassadors influence brand image and purchasing decision, according to a number of inferences that can be taken from the findings and discussions in the preceding section. As the conversation demonstrates, the hypothesis test results are supported and have a positive impact on other variables. In Indonesia, the use of brand ambassadors can be seen easily, and celebrities are widely used by companies to promote their brands. Brand ambassadors influence the brand attractiveness factor in the eyes of customers. Consumers in Indonesia believe that brand ambassadors have an influence in delivering brand messages on the perception of the brand itself in the minds of consumers.

Researchers can conclude, based on the data obtained that brand ambassador (X) has an influence on brand image (Z) with a value of 0.561, brand ambassador (X) has an influence on purchase decision (Y) with a value of 0.465, brand image (Z) has an influence on purchase decision (Y) with a value of 0.324 and brand ambassador (X) has an influence on purchase decision (Y) through brand image (Z) with a value of 0.182. Based on R square, the effect of brand ambassador (X) on purchase decision (Y) provides a value of 0.491 or 49%. In addition, the influence of brand ambassadors (X) on brand image (Z) getting a value of 0.314 or 31%. In this study, researchers concluded that brand ambassadors, through brand image, can influence purchase decisions in the e-commerce industry.

The significant results of a brand ambassador on purchasing decisions are mediated through the brand image. It is well-known that an effective brand Ambassador can help increase brand visibility and credibility in the e-commerce industry. Then, if the brand image is well-built, it can consolidate a positive image and consumer confidence in the brand.

The results could include increased sales, growth in market share, and stronger competitiveness. Besides, this strategy can also help brands stand out during fierce competition in the e-commerce industry. However, it remains important to maintain brand consistency and integrity to sustain the benefits of brand ambassadors and brand image.

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