

The Influence Of Social Media Marketing And Brand Ambassadors On Buyers' Decisions Regarding Scarlett Whitening Products (Case Study Of Faculty Of Economics And Business Students Muhammadiyah Palopo University)

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Abstrak

In the digital era, social media has become the main tool in promoting products and creating connections with consumers. Apart from that, the presence of a brand ambassador who is known and has appeal on social media platforms also has the potential to influence consumer purchasing decisions. This research aims to analyze the influence of social media marketing and the role of a brand ambassador on consumer purchasing decisions for Scarlet Whitening products. The method used in this research is quantitative research, the data collection technique is by distributing questionnaires using a Likert scale. The population in this study were 7th semester Muhammadiyah Palopo University Faculty of Economics and Business students who used the Scarlett Whitening product with a total of 122 respondents who were obtained using the Slovin formula. Data was collected through an online questionnaire that evaluates consumer perceptions of social media marketing and the influence of brand ambassadors. The collected data was analyzed using SmartPLS software. The research results show that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions Brand Ambassador have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. These results imply the role of using social media as a marketing strategy in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. The use of public figures as product representatives can increase consumer purchasing decisions.

keywords: Social media marketing; Brand Ambassador; Purchasing Decisions

1. Introduction

The cosmetics industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the global economy, with a market value that continues to increase year after year. Awareness of the importance of skin care and personal appearance has driven consumer demand for products such as Scarlet Whitening, which offers skincare solutions. In this context, the industry continues to experience product innovation, the development of beauty trends, as well as changes in marketing approaches [1]. One of the most significant changes is the shift towards marketing through social media and the use of brand ambassadors who have a strong influence on these platforms. A deep understanding of how social media marketing and brand ambassadors influence buyer decisions is therefore crucial in responding to the ever-evolving dynamics of the cosmetics market.

The importance of social media marketing in this research in the globally connected digital age In this age of industry 4.0, the advancement of digital technology is accelerating and affecting the Indonesian economy with the increasing number of companies in the digital economy sector [2]. Social media has become the primary channel for communicating, sharing information, and influencing consumer behavior. [3] stated that the utilization of marketing through social media is a very appropriate priority for companies in order to market and introduce their products. Another advantage of marketing strategies through social media is time efficiency, in which the information disseminated can be received by the public

directly or in real-time. Social Media Marketing also allows companies to leverage the visual appeal of products, share reviews and testimonials, and build strong engagement with a community of potential customers. [3] One of the skincare brands that has attracted attention in recent periods is Scarlett Whitening. Therefore, a deeper understanding of how social media marketing influences buyer decisions on products like Scarlet Whitening has significant strategic implications for companies in achieving their marketing success.

Brand ambassador concept in this booming digital age. [4] states that a brand ambassador must meet a number of criteria that include examples such as actors, athletes, or singers who have had fame among the public. This is because a brand ambassador is an iconic representation of a brand so that it can be easily recognized and remembered by the public. Skincare companies like Scarlet Whitening are increasingly relying on well-known or influential individuals appointed as brand ambassadors to promote their products. These brand ambassadors are often reputable figures or large followers on social media platforms.

[3] states that a well-known international celebrity who recently became Scarlett Whitening's product partner is a prominent actor from Korea, namely Song Joong Ki. The company that produces Scarlett Whitening products has even appointed the actor as the latest brand ambassador for Scarlett Whitening products. In this case, the role of brand ambassador not only allows the company to create a closer relationship with customers through the use of social media, but also provides additional authority and trust to the product, which can positively influence the buyer's decision and increase brand awareness. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the concept and influence of brand ambassadors is particularly relevant in the context of this study.

Scarlet Whitening products are one of the skin care products that have gained great attention in the cosmetic industry. In an era where the appearance of clean, glowing skin is a priority for many individuals, Scarlet Whitening offers a solution to achieve brighter, glowing skin. These products are known to have special formulations designed to address skin problems such as blemishes, hyperpigmentation, or skin tone unevenness. [4] stated that in addition, Scarlett Whitening ensures the safety of its products during the distribution process by using packaging designed to protect them. Scarlett Whitening products are usually packaged using different types of materials, including plastic and glass. Therefore, further understanding of the factors that influence buyer decisions regarding Scarlet Whitening products, including the influence of social media marketing and the role of brand ambassador, is essential in efforts to optimize the marketing and sales of these skincare products.

The impact of purchasing decisions in the various studies above reflects that buyer decisions regarding Scarlet Whitening products are a key factor in the highly competitive skin care industry. The buyer's decision in choosing this product involves a deep consideration of the quality, benefits and reputation of the brand. In addition, in a digital age dominated by social media marketing and brand ambassadors, the influence of these two factors on buyer decisions is essential to understand further, as the information and opinions circulating on these platforms can have a significant impact on the preferences and final decisions of buyers of Scarlet Whitening products.

The study's problem formulation focuses on the important role of Scarlet Whitening products in the skin care industry and the need to understand the impact of marketing strategies. One component of the integrated marketing strategy framework is marketing mix, which refers to the approach taken by companies in determining how they present products to specific market segments to which they target, such as social media marketing and the role of brand ambassador to buyer decisions.

Based on the background of the above problem formulation, the researchers titled “The influence of social media marketing and brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions on Scarlett Whitening Products” with the aim of this study to understand the extent of influence of social media marketing and the role of brand ambassador on buyer decisions, especially in the context of Scarlet Whitening products. Another goal of the study is to provide deep insight into how these two factors interact and influence buyer behavior in choosing skin care products, which will help companies in developing more effective and targeted marketing strategies and how these modern marketing strategies influence consumer behavior in choosing skin care products.

From the various results of previous studies, there are differences when conducting research. From the location that became the object of research, many previous studies conducted research using Scarlett Whitening Products in communities outside Sulawesi. Therefore, in this study the research object chosen was the Scarlett Whitening Product users of Muhammadiyah University Palopo students. Seeing that in previous studies there has been no similar research on Muhammadiyah University Palopo students who use Scarlett Whitening products. From the various results of previous studies there are differences when conducting research. From the location that became the object of research, many previous studies conducted research using Scarlett Whitening products in communities outside Sulawesi. Therefore, in this study the research object chosen was the user of Scarlett Whitening Products, students of Muhammadiyah University of Palopo. Seeing in previous studies there has been no similar research on Muhammadiyah University Palopo students who use Scarlett Whitening products. rbagai results of previous studies there are differences when conducting research. From the location that became the object of research, many previous studies conducted research using Scarlett Whitening products in communities outside Sulawesi. Therefore, in this study the research object chosen was the user of Scarlett Whitening Products, students of Muhammadiyah University of Palopo. Seeing that in previous studies there has been no similar research on Muhammadiyah University Palopo students who use Scarlett Whitening products.

Social media marketing is a marketing approach that uses social media platforms to interact with audiences, build brands, and promote products or services. The utilization of social media contributes significantly to online merchants, because through these platforms it can influence consumer purchasing interest [5]. This involves utilizing various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others to achieve marketing goals [6]. The positive effects that social media can provide include the ability to facilitate communication with a large number of individuals, expand social networks, overcome distance and time constraints, facilitate self-expression, increase speed in information dissemination, and reduce costs in the communication process [7]. Overall, through social

media, various forms of two-way communication and collaboration can occur, including information exchange, cooperation, and recognition through written, image, or audiovisual content formats [8]. Social media marketing indicators according to [9] there are 4 (four) indicators, namely: (1) Online community, a company or business can take advantage of social media as a place to form a community centered on interest in its products or services. The active involvement of the community in building loyalty, mobilizing discussions, and contributing with information makes a very meaningful contribution to the development and progress of the business. (2) Interaction, the basic characteristic of social media is the formation of networks between users. This network does not only focus on expanding friendship relationships or the number of followers on internet platforms, but also requires development through interaction between users. In simple terms, interaction on social media at least involves commenting or tagging each other, such as the "like" button on Facebook. For example, a video uploaded on YouTube can receive many comments, not only from users who deliberately visit the YouTube page, but also through other platforms. (3) Content sharing, content sharing addresses the aspects of individualized exchange, distribution, and acceptance of content according to the rules in a social media environment. (4) Accessibility, accessibility refers to the availability and low cost of utilizing the media.

Brand ambassador is one of the strategies adopted by businesses to market their products by involving a famous celebrity [10]. The selection of brand ambassadors must adhere to certain criteria, such as choosing individuals who have achieved fame in a wide circle such as actors, athletes, or singers for example [4]. The main characteristic inherent in brand ambassadors is their capacity to implement advertising strategies that empower customers and stimulate audiences to make larger product purchases [11]. Brand ambassador indicators There are 4 (four) indicators, namely: (1) Popularity, the popularity of a brand ambassador can reflect the image of the brand they represent. This can also indicate the extent of the fame of a celebrity who is representing a brand. (2) Credibility, credibility refers to the credibility or trust given by a celebrity, including the extent of expertise and objectivity possessed by the celebrity. (3) Attractiveness, attractiveness includes physical attractiveness, lifestyle characteristics, and a set of values, including intellectual abilities that can be accepted by the audience from a Brand Ambassador. This illustrates that consumers can have a preference or disapproval of the Brand Ambassador. (4) Power, the power of a celebrity lies in his ability to influence consumers, encouraging them to buy or consider the product being advertised or offered.

Purchasing decisions are the result of a process in which a person chooses one option from various available alternatives [12]. Purchasing decisions are the stage where consumers carry out the process of purchasing a product after evaluation and consideration [13]. Consumers will assess a number of factors before making a purchase decision on a product or service [14]. This process involves the integration of attitudes and knowledge to evaluate two or more alternative behaviors and finally choose one of these options [15]. This phenomenon is very visible especially when consumers decide to buy the brand for the first time and acquire it in lower quantities than usual [16]. Indicators of Purchasing Decisions according to [17] there are 3 (three) indicators, namely: (1) The stability of buying after knowing product information, consumer purchasing decisions occur after they obtain information about the

product, which then influences the decision to buy. (2) Deciding to buy because of the most preferred brand, consumers will purchase products because the brand is their favorite, either because of the suitability of the products of that brand or other reasons. (3) Buying because it suits their wants and needs, consumers will make purchasing decisions if they feel they have wants and needs. Desires reflect the desire to own a product, while needs indicate the needs that the product must fulfill.

Conceptual Framework

To see the relationship between variables can be seen in the conceptual framework image below:

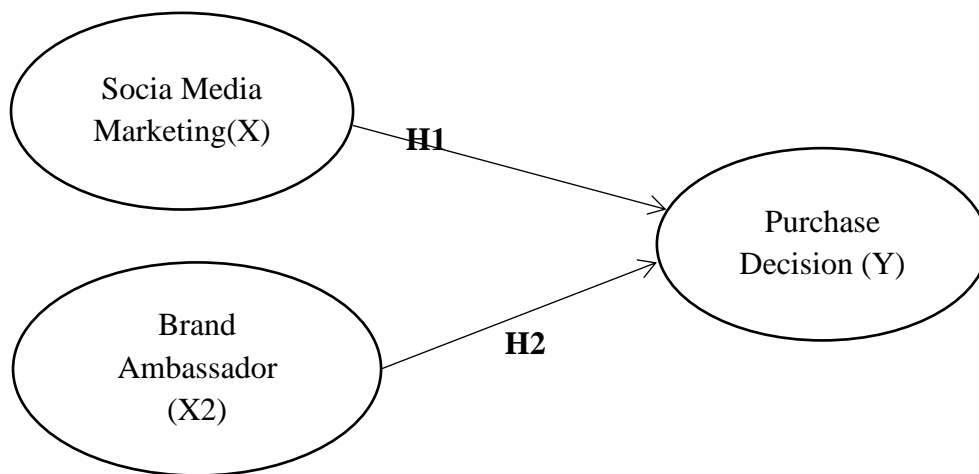


Figure I. Conceptual Framework

2. Methodology

This research is a type of quantitative research. Quantitative research emphasizes real phenomena without being influenced by personal opinion in the form of narratives studied using figures and statistical processing. The method used in this study is the survai method, in which case the data collection is carried out by creating a list of questions to be asked to the respondents in a certain number. Data collection from respondents was done using questionnaires or questionnaires shared online. The population in this study was Students of the University of Muhammadiyah Palopo Faculty of Economics and Business for the 7th semester. The respondents to be sampled are University of Muhammadiyah Palopo Students who have used Scarlett Whitening products. In this study, it was known that the student population of University of Muhammadiyah Palopo Faculty of Economics and Business in the 7th semester of 176 students and researchers used an error tolerance limit of 5% so that the number of samples was determined using Slovin formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Information:
 n = Sample Size

N = Population Size

e = Significant level refers to the threshold of error that can be tolerated in the sample

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{176}{1+176(0,05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{176}{122,2222}$$

n = 122,2222 or rounded up to 122 respondents so, the sample for this study with a tolerance level of 5% is 122,2222 rounded up to 122 respondents.

From the results of the calculation of the above formula, it is known that the sample needed for this study was 122 students of the University of Muhammadiyah Palopo Faculty of Economics and Business in the 7th semester. It does not exclude the possibility for the sake of data processing the number of samples can be added according to the needs of the study and the number of evenly distributed respondents.

The data used consists of primary data and secondary data, primary data is collected through a survey and the distribution of questionnaires to the respondents. Secondary data are collected through library studies and journals related to the research carried out.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

The analysis was performed to determine the influence between variables in this study using Structural Equation Modeling variance (VB-SEM) analysis with the help of SmartPLS software. SmartPLS is one of the SEM statistical methods that focuses on variant analysis and is designed to address specific problems in data, including small research samples, the presence of missing data, and multicollinearity (Iii, 2013). Before applying the SEM model to estimate the variables being analyzed, it is important to assess the validity and reliability of the SEM model that has been created.

1) Validity Test

In this study, a validity test was used to evaluate the validity level of the VB-SEM model, with a focus on convergent validity. There are two approaches to assess the validity of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) models using convergent validity techniques, this study examined the outer loading value and the average variance extracted (AVE) value to evaluate the validity of the model.

- Outer Loading

The desired loading factor value is > 0.7 , and in the validity test all indicators show a value > 0.7 . The first test result still has an outer loading value < 0.7 i.e. in item X2.1, for which the item must be removed from the model. The result of outer loading processing after the item is removed, the SEM Model that has been declared valid is presented in the figure below:

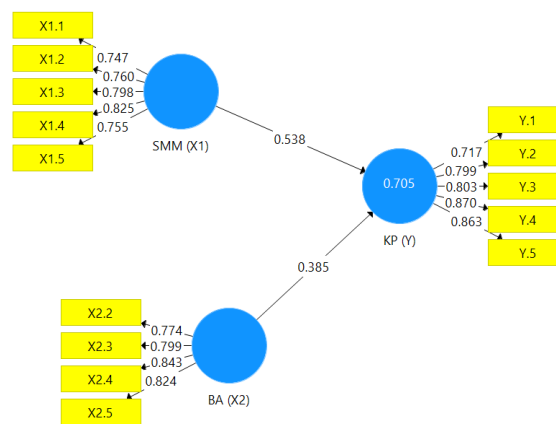


Figure 2. Outer Loading Test

Source: Data processed with Smartpls (2023)

- Average Variance Extracted

The measured value is the average variance extracted (AVE), where the expected value is > 0.5 . The results of the validity test to evaluate the AVE value are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Variance Extracted (AVE) Value

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Ambassador (X2)	0.656
Buying Decision (Y)	0.660
Social Media Marketing (X1)	0.605

Based on the above results, the AVE values of all variables observed in this study were found to be > 0.5 indicating that all variables had adequate validity and could be used to test SEM mode.

2) Reliability Test

Reliability is a consistent indicator of a measurement against its variables. Reliability assessment in SEM models using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. This type of reliability aims to evaluate the internal consistency of variable indicators

Table 2 Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha values

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Brand Ambassador (X2)	0,826	0,884
Buying Decision (Y)	0,870	0,906
Social Media Marketing (X1)	0,838	0,884

Cronbach's Alpha standard value for ensuring the reliability of a variable is > 0.6 , and the Composite reliability standard is > 0.7 . Therefore, based on the above table, it can be concluded that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha value > 0.6 and Composite Reliability value > 0.7 so it can be stated that the analyzed SEM model can be considered to have adequate reliability.

3) Influence Between Variables

SEM analysis was performed to test the extent to which independent variables affect dependent variables. The structure of the SEM model, which reflects the results of the analysis of influences between variables, is presented in this accompanying figure:

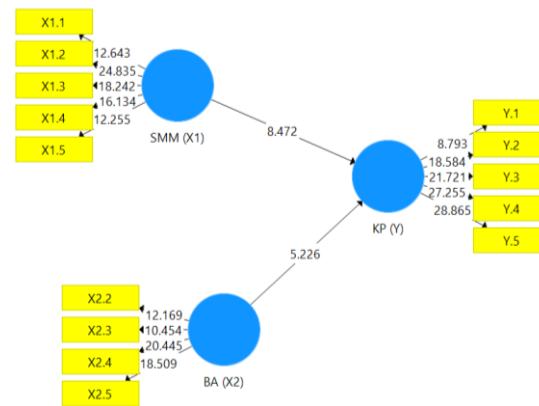


Figure 3. Direct Influence of Research Variables
 Source: Data processed with Smartpls (2023)

The influence analysis of the variables analyzed in this study was the influence of social media marketing variables (X1), brand ambassadors (X2), and purchasing decisions (Y). The analysis was also used as a hypothesis test in this study. The degree of influence of each variable is shown in the table below:

Table 3. Direct Influence of Research Variables

Direct Influence	T Count	T Table	P Values	Cut of value
<i>Social Media Marketing (X1) > Buying Decision (Y)</i>	8.472	1,658	0.000	0.05
<i>Brand Ambassador (X2) > Buying Decision (Y)</i>	5.226	1,658	0.000	0.05

3.2. Discussion

1. The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Buying Decisions Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Due to the results of the statistical t analysis, the value t is calculated = 8.472 > t table = 1.658 with P Values of 0.00 or less than the cut off value of 0.05. This means that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Thus it can be stated that the first hypothesis is accepted. Utilization of social media as part of marketing strategies can improve consumer purchasing decisions, Display of interesting content and context can influence consumer perception so as to improve consumer decision making, exposure to marketing through social media can influence

consumer purchasing decisions. This result is in line with the research of [18] stating that the utilization of social media marketing in MSMEs has a positive and significant impact. It emphasizes the importance of using the system and the effective use of social media for SMEs, with a focus on interesting content, so as to be able to have a significant impact on the development of SMEs. [19] concludes that the adoption of social media marketing strategies significantly influences purchasing decisions. This signifies the effectiveness of marketing practices through social media that Starbucks Coffee has implemented. Therefore, an improved approach to consumers in an effort to improve the effectiveness of social media marketing could potentially improve consumer purchasing decisions for Starbucks Coffee products.

2. Brand Ambassador's influence on Brand Ambassador purchasing decisions has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Due to the results of statistical t analysis, the calculated t value = 5.226 > t table= 1.658 is obtained with P Values of 0.00 or less than the cut off value of 0.05. This means that the brand ambassador has a positive and positive influence on the purchase decision. Thus it can be stated that the second hypothesis is accepted. The use of brand ambassadors in increasing brand awareness and also driving sales so that the use of brand ambassadors can influence consumer purchasing decisions. This result is in line with [20] research stating that the results of the analysis related to the assumption that brand ambassador attractiveness has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions turned out to be proven or accepted. This corresponds to the cracteristics of Raisa and Isyana as well-known public figures in the community. Both of these artists have an appeal through the charm of their beautiful voice and beauty. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong correlation between the attractiveness of a brand ambassador and the purchase decision. This shows that users of brand ambassadors in advertising, with high levels of selectivity, commonality, and familiarity, can improve consumers' decision to purchase Oppo F3 smartphones. The more famous the celebrity used in advertising, the greater the consumer's interest in the advertised product. According to [21] Based on the results of the analysis, it was concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between brand ambassador variables and purchasing decisions. In addition, brand ambassador variables and purchasing decisions together contributed 83.1%. And [22] also stated that brand ambassadors relate positively and significantly to Purchase Decisions.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study and discussion on this study, it is stated that namely:

1. It can be concluded that the variables of social media marketing have a positive and significant influence on the bound variable, namely the consumer's decision to purchase Scarlett Whitening.
2. In this regard, the brand ambassador variable also has a positive and significant influence on consumers' decision to purchase scarlett whitening products.

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