

THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND AMBASSADORS, VIRAL MARKETING, AND CONSUMER TRUST ON PURCHASE DECISIONS (Study on MS Glow Skincare Product Consumers)

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Abstract

The study analyses the effect of brand ambassador and viral marketing on purchase decision with consumer trust as the mediating variable of research on MS Glow. This research is quantitative. The sampling technique used was judgmental with 176 respondents. This questionnaire use a Likert scale and it was distributed online. The statistical analysis in this research used a Path Analysis with Warp PLS software version 8.0. The result showed that brand ambassador and viral marketing positively and significantly effect on consumer trust. Brand ambassador has no significant effect on purchase decision. While viral marketing and consumer trust have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. MS Glow can use the services of other celebrities who are more proficient in related industries as brand ambassadors to increase consumer trust and consumer purchasing decisions for this brand.

Keywords:

Brand Ambassador; Viral Marketing; Consumers Trust; Purchase Decision; MS Glow

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Introduction

Indonesia's cosmetic industry, particularly in skincare, has grown significantly, becoming one of the world's largest markets. The BPS reports a 9.39 percent increase in the Indonesian cosmetic industry in the current era, particularly in skincare products. With a 70% consumer demand, the industry contributed to a 1.92 percent GDP growth in 2020 (Azzura, 2021). The increase in public awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy skin has made skincare a daily necessity, leading to continuous purchases.

Purchasing skincare products online offers companies an opportunity to develop innovative marketing strategies, influencing consumer purchasing decisions. These products directly impact health, safety, and personal appearance, necessitating a sense of trust for consumers to make informed choices about skincare products. Purchasing skincare products is crucial for maintaining health and personal appearance. Trust in these products is essential for consumers, shaping their purchasing decisions (Gunawan, 2022). Brand ambassadors, such as celebrities, can help build consumer trust in the skincare industry. They can promote products well, fostering a sense of confidence and encouraging the audience to use the products they advertise.

In today's modern era, marketers utilize the development of information technology to make it easier for consumers to find various information about a product. This is used by marketers to carry out a marketing strategy, one of which is E-WOM. One strategy that can be applied from E-WOM is a viral marketing strategy. According to Kotler & Armstrong, (2011) viral marketing is an effort to disseminate information about a product by word of mouth through infectious social media so that consumers are willing to spread it to others.

People are becoming more and more aware of the importance of maintaining their skin's health and appearance, which has created a huge opportunity for the skincare industry. Many skincare products have emerged in the market, but only a few have managed to achieve a high level of popularity, even becoming the number one brand on e-commerce platforms. Research conducted by compass.co.id shows the top 10 ranking of the best-selling skincare brand categories sold on e-commerce. MS Glow occupied the first position of the best-selling brand with total sales of RP. 38.5 billion. Then followed by Scarlett with sales of Rp. 17.7 billion. After that there is Somethinc brand in the third position with total sales of Rp. 8.1 billion. There are various other brands that follow such as Avoskin, Wardah, Whitelab, etc (Compass, 2021).

The data shows that the first rank of the best-selling skincare is occupied by the MS Glow brand with total sales of 38.5 billion rupiah. MS Glow is a skincare and bodycare brand that was established in 2013 and

currently has 15 official branches in Indonesia. MS Glow stands for Magic for Skin which describes the best glowing products in Indonesia. This phenomenon shows that there is great interest from the public in the skincare products offered by MS Glow. Not only are the products of high quality, but the marketing strategy and engagement with consumers through social media also contribute to the success of this brand.

MS Glow markets its products on various social media, including on the TikTok platform. The hashtag #msglowskincare has had 1.1B views where there are various videos showing how a person's face changes when using MS Glow products. Smart and creative marketing strategies on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Youtube can help create buzz among potential consumers (Rachmad, 2023). This strategy is carried out by marketers with the hope of influencing the public to make purchasing decisions.

Purchasing activities that have been carried out by consumers can be seen from how many products from a brand have been sold. Kompas has also conducted research on the favorite skincare brands of Indonesians based on total sales in e-commerce in mid-2022. The first position is occupied by Somethinc brand with total sales of RP. 53.2 billion. Next followed by the Scarlett brand with sales of RP. 40.9 billion. Then the third position is occupied by MS Glow with total sales of RP. 29.4 billion which shows a decrease from the total sales in the previous year. Then followed by Avoskin, Whitelab and Azarine brands in the last position (Kompas, 2022).

The data shows that MS Glow's position is ranked number 3 of the best-selling skincare brands in e-commerce. This phenomenon shows a decrease in the ranking position occupied by MS Glow from first to third in the category of best-selling skincare brands in e-commerce. In addition also shows a significant decrease in total sales of the MS Glow brand from 2021 to 2022.

One of MS Glow's efforts to rise in this event is to use the services of a viral artist as the latest brand ambassador, namely Mother Corla. The strategy is expected to benefit from the popularity and influence of celebrities in getting consumer attention. The selection of celebrity brand ambassadors has the potential to have a major impact on marketing strategies. A celebrity's association with the public and a wide range of fans can expand a brand's reach, create an emotional connection with consumers, and give credibility to the product. When a viral or popular celebrity is associated with a brand, media attention and discussion on social media can increase the exposure of the brand.

Literature review

Brand Ambassador and Viral Marketing on Consumers Trust

Research conducted by Putri W and Harti, (2022) states that brand ambassadors have an influence on consumer trust. Brand ambassadors have a

role in marketing a product. Brand ambassadors who are right and in accordance with the characteristics of the product of a brand can make potential consumers increase their trust in the products they promote. These results are supported by research conducted by Kristian et al., (2021) that brand ambassadors have a significant positive effect on consumer trust.

H1: Brand ambassadors have a significant positive influence on MS Glow consumer confidence

In the research of Suciati et al., (2021) revealed that viral marketing has a direct influence on consumer trust. This shows that viral marketing works well in delivering a message, so that it can make a product or service famous and can bring trust to consumers. The results of this study are supported by Setyo et al., (2022) in his research which states that viral marketing has an influence on consumer trust.

H2: viral marketing has a significant positive effect on MS Glow consumer trust

Brand Ambassador and Viral Marketing on Purchase Decision

According to Susanti et al., (2022) brand ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. This means that every increase in the value of the brand ambassador is accompanied by an increase in the purchasing decision process variable. Endorsers who successfully advertise a product well can encourage their audience to make purchases on that product. This is also supported by the results of research conducted by Jayanti & Wulandari, (2022).

H3: brand ambassadors have a significant positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions MS Glow

According to Tanuwijaya & Mulyandi, (2021) and Usman & Zuhurifa, (2022) in their research stated that viral marketing has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. This means that viral marketing can encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions on a product.

H4: viral marketing has a significant positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions MS Glow

Consumers Trust on Purchase Decision

Karina et al., (2019) have conducted research with the title "The Effect of Viral Marketing and Customer Trust on Online Shop Purchase Decision Based on Application in Faculty of Economic and Business, University of North Sumatra" where the results of the study state that consumer trust has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. These results are obtained due to the influence of the suitability of product expectations that consumers want and good enough testimonials from consumers who have made purchases at

the research object store. This can foster new consumer confidence so that it can encourage them to make purchases. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Parmariza, (2019) namely consumer trust has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.

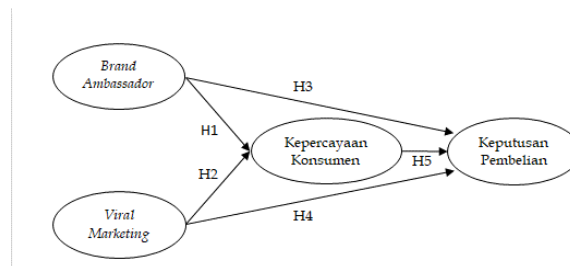
H5: consumer trust has a significant positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions for MS Glow skincare products.

Research method

The type of research used is conclusive research and uses a causal approach. The analysis model used in this research is based on the research objectives and hypotheses as follows:

Source: Processed by researchers

Figure 1
Research design



The population in this study are people who actively use social media and have purchased and consumed MS Glow skincare products. Population is infinite, meaning the population is unknown. The sampling technique used in this study is nonprobability sampling using the judgmental sampling method. The sample of this study was 176 respondents. The research measurement uses a 5-point Likert scale with answer options from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire distribution was carried out online by sharing the questionnaire link with respondents through social media.

In this study, in addition to testing and analyzing the relationship between variables, researchers also checked the validity, reliability, linearity, and normality of the research instrument as a whole. Thus, this study uses data analysis techniques in the form of Path Analysis.

Data analysis and results

This research was processed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the alternative method of Partial Least Square (PLS), the software used was Warp PLS 8.0. Measurement model analysis and structural model analysis are the two phases of SEM-PLS hypothesis testing. In the first phase, it involves testing the study's instruments by evaluating the measurement model. The validity of the instrument must be evaluated by assessing its quality in

relation to the requirements necessary for the instrument to be both valid and reliable. The second stage is evaluating the structural model to test the hypotheses proposed in the study.

Sample Characteristics

The number of respondents was dominated by women (93.2%) and the majority respondents were 22 years old (29%). Followed by 25 years old (14.2%), then 24 years old (11.4%), 21 years old (10.8%), 23 years old (9.1%), 26 years old (8%), 20 years old (4%), 27-29 years old (3.4%), 17 and 19 years old (1.1%), finally 18 and 30 years old (0.6%).

Model measurement

The effectiveness of the measuring tool of a construct is assessed using the evaluation of the measurement model. The two measurements employed in the assessment of the measurement model are formative and reflective measurements. Reflective measures are assessed according to the loading value of each construct since the constructs in this study are derived from the previously listed constructions. The assessment of the validity and reliability of the measurement model is tested. A convergent validity test shows that all indicators are considered to have satisfied the convergent validity test requirements because their loading factors are more than 0.50 and all indicators have a p-values<0.001. The validity tests used in this inquiry were a discriminant validity test (see Table 1). Meanwhile, the reliability test makes use of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha (refer to Table 2).

To ascertain discriminant validity, the second validity test contrasts the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) of the correlation between the constructs. The findings of the discriminant validity test are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Discriminant Validity

	BA	VM	CT	PD
BA	0.752	0.552	0.604	0.464
VM	0.552	0.675	0.593	0.583
CT	0.604	0.703	0.749	0.709
PD	0.464	0.613	0.569	0.655

Note(s): BA= brand ambassador, VM= viral marketing, CT= consumers trust, PD= purchase decision

The results of the study's discriminant validity test have been met, as evidenced by the fact that the square root value of AVE in Table 1's diagonal column is higher than the construct correlation in the same column. In

comparison to the other constructions in the same column, the construct's results show a larger discrepancy.

Table 2
Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
BA	0.888	0.911
VM	0.798	0.853
CT	0.902	0.920
PD	0.776	0.839

Table 3's reliability test results demonstrate that each research construct fulfills the requirements for internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability values greater than 0.60 support this.

Structural Measurement

The structural model on the endogenous variables was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the Q-Square value, which is greater than the other factors not included in this study. The coefficient of determination (R^2) in Table 5.12 shows that the percentage of variance in endogenous constructs that can be explained by exogenous constructs. Based on the results of data processing, it shows that the R^2 of the endogenous purchase decision (PD) variable is 0.615. These results mean that the magnitude of the influence of customer trust (CT) on PD is 61.5%. Meanwhile, the R^2 value of the customer trust (CT) variable is 0.673. These results mean that the magnitude of the influence of the brand ambassador variable (BA) and the virtual marketing variable (VM) on CT is 67.3%. Where, each contribution of BA, VM and CT to PD is 0.005 (BA), 0.139 (VM), and 0.471 (CT). This means that BA has an influence on PD by 0.5%, VM has an influence on PD by 13.9% and CT has an influence on PD by 47.1%.

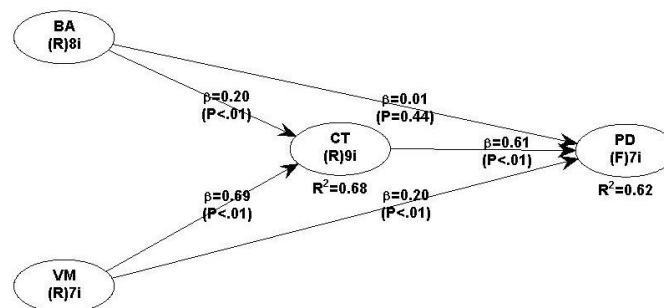
The test results using SEM-PLS show that the Q-Square value on endogenous variables is greater than zero, namely PD of 0.608 and CT of 0.673. The test shows that the Q-Square value on the endogenous variables in this study is greater than zero so that the model has predictive relevance. This means that the model built has a very good level of accuracy.

This study also uses effect size in evaluating structural models. Effect size is used to see the absolute value of the individual contribution of each predictor latent variable to the R^2 value of the criterion variable. Effect size can be grouped into three parts, namely 0.02 classified as low, 0.15 classified as medium, and 0.35 classified as high (Hair et al., 2013). Based on the results of the effect size calculation, it is known that the effect size for brand ambassadors

(BA) on customer trust (CT) is 0.122 (classified as medium) and on purchase decision (PD) of 0.005 (classified as low). The effect size indicates that BA has an influence at a moderate structural level on CT and has an influence at a low structural level on PD. The effect size for virtual marketing (VM) on customer trust (CT) is 0.555 (classified as high) and on purchase decision (PD) is 0.198 (classified as medium). The analysis results show that the effect of VM on CT is at a high level and the effect of VM on PD is at a moderate level. Effect size for customer trust (CT) on purchase decision (PD) is 0.471 (classified as high). The analysis results show that CT has a high structural level influence on PD.

Hypothesis Testing

Using Warp PLS 8.0 software, the alternative Partial Least Square (PLS) approach and Structural Emotional Modeling (SEM) were used to assess the study's hypotheses. This hypothesis is tested by looking at the value and p-value of the path coefficient. If the path coefficient value is positive, the exogenous variable has a positive effect on the endogenous variable. The negative path coefficient value indicates that the external variable has an adverse effect on the endogenous variable. P-value < 0.01 (significance at the 1% level), p-value < 0.05 (significance at the 5% level), and p-value < 0.1 (significance at the 10% level) are the three categories of significant value. The results of the hypothesis testing are shown in Figure .



A p-value of <0.01 (significant at the 1% level), a p-value of < 0.05 (significant at the 5% level), and a p-value of 0.1 (significant at the 10% level) are claimed to accepted the H1, H2, H4 and H5 in this study. Meanwhile the H3 is rejected. Using SEM-PLS, Table 6 displays the results of the hypothesis test as shown by the path coefficient and p-value.

Table 3
Hypothesis Testing

Variable Relationship	Path Coefficient	P-Value	Results
BA → CT (H1)	0.202	0.003	Accepted

VM → CT (H2)	0.688	<0.001	Accepted
BA → PD (H3)	0.011	0.443	Rejected
VM → PD (H4)	0.202	0.003	Accepted
CT → PD (H5)	0.612	<0.001	Accepted

Hypothesis testing in table 3 shows that consumer trust (CT) is influenced by brand ambassadors (BA) and viral marketing (VM) in accordance with hypotheses 1 and 2. The outcomes of hypothesis test reveal that BA and VM significantly improves CT. As a result, it can be inferred that hypothesis 1 and 2 are accepted. This is supported by the path coefficients BA → CT of 0.202, p-value<0.01, and VM → CT of 0.688, p-value<0.01. It means if the brand ambassador can advertise the brand in accordance with the expectations of consumers and good viral marketing occurs, it can increase consumer trust in the MS Glow brand. This finding supports the results of research conducted by Putri W and Harti, (2022) and Setyo et al (2022).

Purchase Decision (PD) is not influenced by BA. In table 63 shows that path coefficient BA → PD of 0.011, p-value>0.05 it means the hypothesis 3 is rejected. This means that the brand ambassador raised in this study cannot influence consumers to make purchases on MS Glow skincare products. If the brand ambassador is not seen as credible or their authenticity is questionable, this can reduce their impact. This finding cannot support the results of research from Susanti et al., (2022) and Jayanti & Wulandari, (2022). Modern customers tend to look for authenticity, and if they feel that the brand ambassador is insincere or just doing a promotion for pay, their trust could be eroded which ultimately results in a reluctance to purchase MS Glow.

PD is influenced by the VM and CT, according to hypothesis 4 and 5. With a p-value<0.01, the VM → PD path coefficient value is 0.202. Then the path coefficient of CT → PD is 0.612. The indicates that VM and CT have a significant positive influence on PD, supporting the acceptance of hypotheses 4 and 5. This shows that good viral marketing and increased consumer trust in the MS Glow brand can also increase consumer purchases of this brand. Responsiveness to customer interactions resulting from viral campaigns can increase customer trust. If brands actively engage and respond to customer responses, this can strengthen relationships and influence purchasing decisions in the MS Glow. These results can support the research results from Usman & Zuhurifa (2022) and Parmariza, (2019).

From the results of the indirect effects test for path with 2 segments, it is also known that the significant relationship between brand ambassadors and virtual marketing on purchase decisions through customer trust is 0.124 (BA) and 0.421 (VM), with a BA p-value of 0.009 (smaller than 0.1) and a VM p-

value of <0.001 . Based on the test results, customer trust significantly mediates the influence of brand ambassadors and virtual marketing on purchase decisions. Positive experiences with products or services recommended by brand ambassadors can strengthen customer trust. If customers feel that the recommendation matches their expectations and provides added value, they are more likely to trust and be willing to make a purchase (Suleman et al., 2023). Trust creates the basis for interaction between customers and brands in a virtual environment. Customers who trust the brand will be more open to interacting with digitally delivered content, adverts and marketing messages. If they believe in positive reviews or recommendations from adverts, content and marketing messages, they may be more motivated to purchase the product or service. (Anhar & Suhasti, 2021).

Conclusion

Brand ambassadors and viral marketing are proven to have a significant positive influence on consumer trust. However, brand ambassadors are not proven to have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, viral marketing and consumer trust are proven to have a significant positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions. Then consumer confidence is able to mediate the influence of brand ambassadors and viral marketing on purchasing decisions.

This research distributes questionnaires online so that various things can occur that cannot be controlled by the author in filling out the questionnaire by the respondents, such as the opportunity for the same respondent to fill out a questionnaire with a different account. In addition, the characteristics of respondents can also be manipulated because respondents do not meet directly with surveyors. This can be taken into consideration for future researchers in conducting similar research to distribute questionnaires in a hybrid manner.

The research results show that the ambassador brand has no influence on purchasing decisions. Therefore, as a cosmetics and skin care brand, MS Glow can use the services of other celebrities who are more credible, clear and appropriate to the target audience in the related industry so that it can increase consumer trust and ultimately have an impact on MS Glow purchasing decisions.

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