

The Influence of NCT 127 Brand Ambassador Usage on Nu Green Tea Purchase Decision through Brand Awareness as an Intervening Variable among NCTzen Malang"

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the impact of the NCT 127 brand ambassador on purchase decisions, with brand awareness serving as a mediating factor. This study used a descriptive causal approach to explore how the NCT 127 brand ambassador affects purchase decisions, mediated by brand awareness. It focused on NCT 127 fans in Malang City, with a 100-person sample determined using the Cochran formula. Analyses included instrument, classical assumption tests, path analysis, coefficient of determination, and partial t-tests. The results show the brand ambassador significantly impacts brand awareness (<0.05), positively affecting purchase decisions. Path analysis indicates 84% of decisions link to brand awareness and the ambassador, confirming brand awareness' mediating role.

INTRODUCTION

At this time, along with the times, the tea industry has become one of the sectors that is developing rapidly in Indonesia (Rahmatullah, M, 2021). This is because Indonesia is an equatorial country that gets lots of sunlight, so it is able to produce high quality tea (Sumedi, et.al, 2022). In 2017, sales of packaged tea in Indonesia were at 11.81 trillion, this value increased to 11.96 trillion in 2018, and 12.37 trillion in 2019. Data on sales of packaged tea is presented in the following figure:

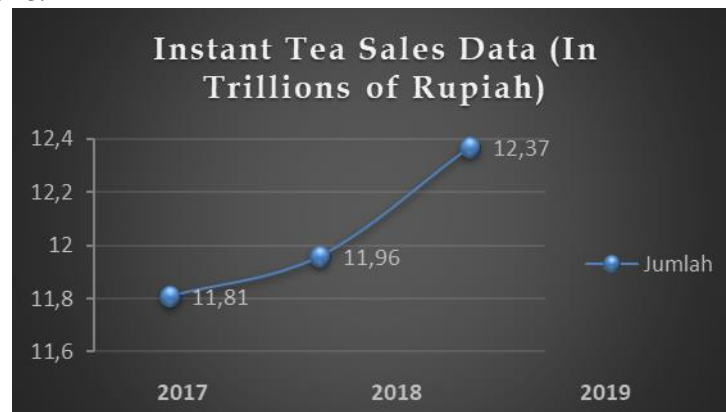


Figure 1 Instant Tea Sales Data 2017-2019

Source: Nielsen in Bisnis.com (2019)

According to Kotler, P & Keller, K.L, (2016), Brand ambassador refers to an individual or character who is specifically identified with a brand and selected by a company to promote their products or services. A characteristic of brand ambassadors is their ability to carry the brand identity effectively, often through their prominent presence in marketing campaigns, advertising and brand promotions. In recent years, music with South Korean culture has begun to attract various countries in the world, including Indonesia (Kristian et al., 2021). Korean Pop (K-pop) is a type of music in South Korea with the dance pop genre and is danced by idols who have charming visuals (Hidayati, N & Indriana, Y, 2022). Recently, the boy group from SM Entertainment, namely NCT, has become one of the boy groups most popular with teenagers in Indonesia. Not only teenagers, even mothers also idolize this boy group.

One instant drink brand with great popularity is NU Green Tea. NU Green Tea is an instant drink product that combines the deliciousness and health benefits of green tea with the convenience of instant drinks. Green tea has been known for years as a refreshing drink. The combination of the freshness of the green tea blend and the ease of purchasing instant drinks has made NU Green Tea a popular choice among individuals who have an instant lifestyle.

The high popularity of NCT 127 has made this boy group receive many offers to become brand ambassadors for a brand. One of the industries that collaborates with NCT 127 by making them Brand Ambassadors is the instant tea beverage industry, namely Nu Green Tea. The use of NCT 127 members as brand ambassadors for Nu Green Tea is a decision that takes into account the global appeal of this boy group.

This research also refers to an important concept in marketing known as brand awareness. According to Keller (1993), Brand awareness is the level of knowledge or awareness that consumers have about the brand of a product. In the context of this research, the focus is on the extent to which the use of NCT 127 as brand ambassadors can have a positive impact on the level of brand awareness of Nu Green Tea.

This research not only focuses on the direct influence of the use of Brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions, but also tries to explain how Brand awareness plays a role as an intervening variable in this relationship. This theory is strengthened by the concept put forward by Keller (1993), which states that brand awareness has an important role in influencing consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. This concept describes how brand awareness acts as an intermediary that links the use of brand ambassadors to purchasing decisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Ambassador

According to Kotler, P & Keller, K.L, (2016), a brand ambassador is an advertising supporter or also known as a product spokesperson who is chosen from a famous person or an unknown person who has an attractive appearance to attract the attention and memory of consumers. The use of brand ambassadors is carried out by a company with the aim of inviting and influencing consumers to use the products offered by the celebrity.

There are three characteristics needed to use a brand ambassador. Royan, F.M (2005) defines the three characteristics of these indicators, including:

- a. Attractiveness
- b. Trustworthiness
- c. Expertise

Brand Awareness

According to Kotler, P & Keller, K.L, (2009), Brand awareness is the ability to identify (recognize or remember) brands in a category, with enough detail to make a purchase. Brand awareness is the consumer's ability to identify a brand in different conditions, which can be done by brand recognition and recall of a particular brand. Brand awareness through repeated exposure so that consumers feel familiar with the brand, according to Keller (2009) in (Saputro, R.Y et al., 2016)

According to Kotler, P & Keller, K.L (2012), Brand awareness indicators are as follows:

- a. Unware of brand
- b. Brand recognition
- c. Brand recall
- d. Top of mind

Purchase Decision

According to Kotler, P & Keller, K.L, (2016) purchasing decisions are the study of how individuals, groups and organizations select, buy, use and how goods, services, ideas or experiences satisfy their needs and desires. Meanwhile, Hawkins, D.I & Motehrsbaugh, D.L (2016), stated that purchasing decisions are the result of an individual's image that carefully evaluates the attributes of a set of products, brands or services and rationally chooses the one that can clearly meet needs at the lowest cost.

The purchasing decision indicators according to Kotler, P & Keller, K.L, (2012) are:

- a. Problem recognition
- b. Information search
- c. Evaluation of alternatives
- d. Buying decision
- e. Post-purchase behavior

The relationship between Brand ambassadors and Purchase decisions reflects the significant influence that Brand ambassadors have in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Brand ambassadors have the ability to shape consumers' positive perceptions of the brands and products they represent. Based on research by Yovita, A.S & Saputro, R.P (2022); Osak, D.J & Pasharibu, Y (2020) found that brand ambassadors have a significant influence on purchase decisions.

H1: Brand ambassadors influence purchase decisions

Brand ambassadors have a very important role in increasing brand awareness or brand awareness of a company. When a well-known brand ambassador appears in advertising, social media, interviews, or public events, the brand becomes more visible to consumers. This creates buzz and attention that contributes to increased brand awareness. Lestari and Nurhadi's research results show the influence of brand ambassadors on brand awareness.

H2: Brand ambassadors influence brand awareness.

Brand awareness has a central role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Brand awareness is a fundamental first step in a consumer's journey to purchase. When consumers consider a product or service, a familiar brand has a significant advantage. The research results of Larasati, T.A et al., (2022) shows that brand awareness influences purchase decisions.

H3: Brand awareness influences purchase decisions.

The relationship between Brand ambassadors, Purchase decisions, and Brand awareness illustrates the complex dynamics in the world of marketing. In this context, brand ambassadors, who are individuals or characters identified with the brand, have an important role in influencing consumer behavior, especially in making purchasing decisions. However, the role of Brand ambassador does not stand alone; it is connected through an intermediary variable called Brand awareness. Research by Osak, D.J & Pasharibu, Y, (2020) shows that brand ambassadors mediate the influence on purchase decisions.

H4: The mediating role of brand awareness on the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions

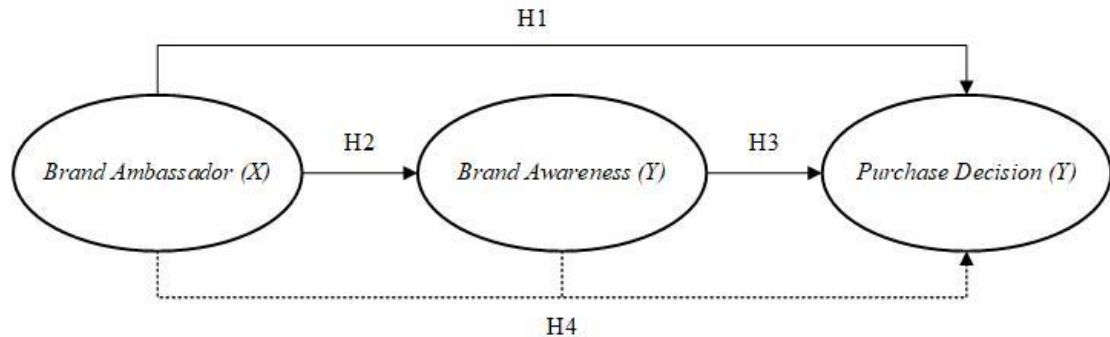


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

The type of research used in this research is a descriptive and casual quantitative approach. The population in this study were NCT 127 fans who live in Malang City. The sample used was 100 respondents taken using the Cochran formula with certain criteria. The data collection technique uses questionnaire distribution via Google Form. Questionnaire measurements use a Likert scale with a range of 1-5 points. Data analysis techniques use instrument tests, classical assumption tests, path analysis, coefficient of determination tests, and partial t tests.

RESEARCH RESULT

Validity Test

The validity test is used to test the extent to which an instrument is accurate or correct as a tool for measuring research variables. Data is said to be valid if the calculated result $r \geq 0.05$ and said to be invalid if $r < 0.05$.

Table 1. Validity Test

No	Item	Pearson Correlation (r hitung)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig Maksimum	Description
1	X1.1	0,686	0	0,05	Valid
2	X1.2	0,712	0	0,05	Valid
3	X1.3	0,698	0	0,05	Valid
4	X1.4	0,698	0	0,05	Valid
5	X1.5	0,743	0	0,05	Valid
6	X1.6	0,702	0	0,05	Valid
7	X1.7	0,719	0	0,05	Valid
8	X1.8	0,651	0	0,05	Valid
9	Z1.1	0,511	0	0,05	Valid
10	Z1.2	0,594	0	0,05	Valid
11	Z1.3	0,485	0	0,05	Valid
12	Z1.4	0,721	0	0,05	Valid
13	Z1.5	0,826	0	0,05	Valid

14	Z1.6	0,821	0	0,05	Valid
15	Z1.7	0,826	0	0,05	Valid
16	Z1.8	0,821	0	0,05	Valid
17	Y1.1	0,671	0	0,05	Valid
18	Y1.2	0,862	0	0,05	Valid
19	Y1.3	0,767	0	0,05	Valid
20	Y1.4	0,675	0	0,05	Valid
21	Y1.5	0,700	0	0,05	Valid
22	Y1.6	0,728	0	0,05	Valid
23	Y1.7	0,771	0	0,05	Valid
24	Y1.8	0,827	0	0,05	Valid
25	Y1.9	0,643	0	0,05	Valid
26	Y1.10	0,653	0	0,05	Valid

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023.

Based on the table data above, it can be seen that the results of the significance value in the total value of all question items are worth more than 0.05, so the conclusion results show that all question item data in the research can be said to have passed the validity test.

Reliability Test

Reliability testing is a test that is oriented to the degree of stability, consistency, data precision and accuracy. The rule for determining whether an instrument is reliable or not is that if the Cronbach Alpha reliability figure exceeds 0.6 then the instrument is reliable, the questionnaire can be trusted and can be used.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Critical point	Description
Brand ambassador	0,812	0,6	Reliabel
Brand awareness	0,841	0,6	Reliabel
Purchase decision	0,898	0,6	Reliabel

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023.

Based on the data in table above, it can be seen that the results of the significance value for the total value of all question items are more than 0.6, so the conclusion results show that all question item data in the research can be said to have passed the reliability test.

Normality Test

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is a normality test by comparing the data distribution with the standard normal distribution. The standard normal distribution is data that is transformed into Z-score form. If the significance value of the Kolmogorv-Smirnov test is <0.05 then the data distribution is not normal, but if the significance value is ≥ 0.05 then the data distribution is said to be normal.

Table 3. Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		100
Normal Parameters ^a	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	3.71272254
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.063
	Positive	.031
	Negative	-.063
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.635
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.815

a. Test distribution is Normal.

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023.

Based on the table above, it is known that the significance value in this test is 0.815, where this value is greater than the minimum significance value, namely 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data used in this research is normally distributed.

Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity testing in this research uses tolerance values and VIF or Variance Inflation Factor. The condition that multicollinearity does not occur is when the tolerance value is more than 0.1 and the VIF value is less than 10.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test

		Coefficients ^a					Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	24.999	.874		28.600	.000		
	BRAND AMBASSADOR	.231	.028	.405	8.262	.000	.686	1.457
	BRAND AWARENESS	.322	.025	.626	12.751	.000	.686	1.457

a. Dependent Variable: PURCHASE DECISION

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023.

Based on this table, in model 2, involving all variables, the tolerance and VIF values are 0.686 and 1.457, so that model 2 is free from symptoms of multicollinearity.

Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test aims to test that in the linear regression model there is inequality of variance from the residuals of one observation to another observation. A good regression model is one that is homoscedastic or does not have heteroscedasticity. Testing for heteroscedasticity in this study uses the Glejser test with the assumption that if the Sig value of the independent variable is > 0.05 then the data tested in this study is free from symptoms of heteroscedasticity.

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.729	.869		1.991	.049
	BRAND AMBASSADOR	-.044	.028	-.194	-1.601	.113
	BRAND AWARENESS	.028	.025	.137	1.135	.259

Test a. Dependent Variable: ABS_RES2

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023.

Based on this table, the results obtained are significant > 0.05, namely brand ambassador is 0.113 and brand awareness is 0.259, so there are no symptoms of heteroscedasticity in model 2.

Path Analysis Test

The research uses statistical analysis, namely path analysis. This analysis is used to test the influence of intervening variables (Z) where regression analysis is used to estimate the causal relationship between variables (casual model). Path analysis is an extension of multiple linear regression analysis or path analysis is the use of regression analysis to estimate causal relationships between variables that have been previously determined based on theory.

a. Model 1

Table 6. Path Analysis Model 1

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.560 ^a	.314	.307	3.30035

a. Predictors: (Constant), BRAND AMBASSADOR

b. Dependent Variable: BRAND AWARENESS

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023.

1. Referring to the coefficient table, the significance of brand ambassador on brand awareness is <0.05, so that the brand ambassador variable has a positive effect on brand awareness.
2. Referring to the coefficient of determination below, the R value is 0.560, so the influence of brand ambassadors on brand awareness is 56%.

b. Model 2

Tabel 7. Path Analysis Model 2

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.916 ^a	.840	.836	.82518

a. Predictors: (Constant), BRAND AWARENESS, BRAND AMBASSADOR

b. Dependent Variable: PURCHASE DECISION

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023.

1. Referring to the coefficient table, it is found that the significance of brand ambassador and brand awareness on purchase decisions is <0.05 so that both independent variables have an influence on purchase decisions.
2. Referring to the coefficient of determination below, the R Square value is 0.840, so the influence of brand awareness and brand ambassadors on purchase decisions is 84%

Path Reference Table

Table 8. Line 1 Reference Table

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	13.082	3.237		4.042	.000		
	BRAND AMBASSADOR	.620	.093	.560	6.693	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: BRAND AWARENESS

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023.

Table 9. Line 2 Reference Table

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	24.999	.874		28.600	.000		
	BRAND AMBASSADOR	.231	.028	.405	8.262	.000	.686	1.457
	BRAND AWARENESS	.322	.025	.626	12.751	.000	.686	1.457

a. Dependent Variable: PURCHASE DECISION

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023.

Based on the table above, the influence can be seen directly or through intervening variables which are known from the std coefficients beta and are depicted in the path below:

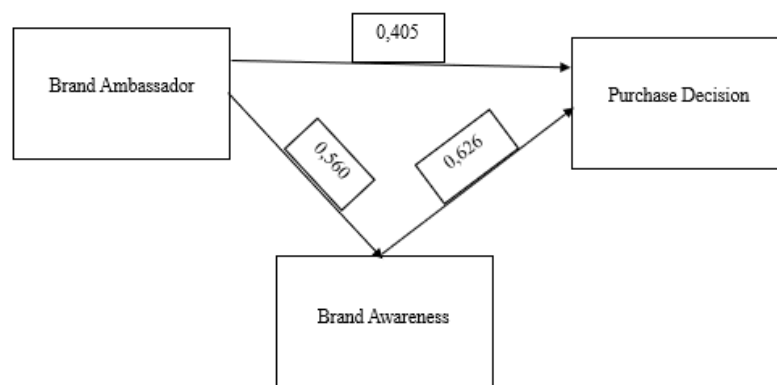


Figure 3. Path Reference Diagram

t-test

The t test was carried out to determine the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable individually, where there are 2 relationships between the variables brand ambassador and brand awareness on purchasing decisions.

Table 10. T test

		Coefficients ^a					Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	24.999	.874		28.600	.000		
	BRAND AMBASSADOR	.231	.028	.405	8.262	.000	.686	1.457
	BRAND AWARENESS	.322	.025	.626	12.751	.000	.686	1.457

a. Dependent Variable: PURCHASE DECISION

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results presented above, the results show that brand ambassadors have a significant positive effect on purchase decisions. This shows that H1 in this study is accepted. Brand ambassadors have a significant influence in influencing purchasing decisions. The presence of a figure associated with a brand can form a strong and convincing image for consumers. When respected or influential individuals engage with a brand, it strengthens the belief that the product or service has quality and value worthy of trust.

Next, H2 is accepted because the results show that brand ambassadors have a significant positive effect on brand awareness. One important aspect of the role of a brand ambassador is their ability to reach a wide audience. With a large fan base on social media or presence at various public events, brand ambassadors have greater access to introduce the brand to a wider audience. When they are actively involved in promotions and conveying brand messages, this helps in establishing the brand's presence in the minds of consumers.

Furthermore, based on the results presented above, the data shows that brand awareness has a significant positive effect on purchase decisions. This shows that hypothesis 3 or H3 is accepted. By referring to these results, it can be seen that the higher the awareness of the Nu Green Tea brand, the more likely consumers are to make higher purchasing decisions. Conversely, if awareness of the Nu Green Tea brand is low, consumers tend to make lower purchases.

And finally, it can be seen that brand awareness is able to mediate the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions. This indicates that in a marketing context, there is a relationship between the two key factors, brand ambassador and brand awareness, which influence consumer purchasing behavior. Brand ambassadors are famous figures or public figures who are associated with a particular brand to improve the brand's image. Their presence is considered to influence consumer perceptions of the brand and its products. Referring to the coefficient of determination below, the R Square value is 0.840, so the influence of brand awareness and brand ambassadors on purchase decisions is 84%.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that brand ambassadors have a positive influence on purchase decisions, brand ambassadors have a positive influence on brand awareness, brand awareness has a positive influence on purchase decisions, and brand awareness is able to mediate the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions.

For the Nu Greentea company, researchers suggest that companies continue to pay attention to the brand ambassadors they use and the brand awareness they develop so that they have a positive impact on increasing sales. Choosing the right brand ambassador and brand awareness that is well known to consumers will influence consumer purchasing decisions so that they can increase the company's operational profit.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

For further research, it is recommended to expand the research domain by involving more subjects and variables. This research focuses on one independent variable, one dependent variable, and one intervening variable with a sample size limited to 100 respondents with certain criteria. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope of research that has not been examined in this study.

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