

# The Impact of Social Media Marketing Activities and Brand Ambassadors on University Purchase Decision: The Case of Unisa Yogyakarta's TikTok Campaigns

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) and brand ambassadors on brand equity, as well as how these variables directly and indirectly affect purchase decision at Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta (UNISA). The study focuses on UNISA's TikTok campaigns, which serve as the primary platform for digital marketing and brand ambassador engagement. Respondents in this study were active students of UNISA from the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 academic years who actively use TikTok. A total of 321 valid responses were collected through an online questionnaire. The research employed multiple linear regression and PROCESS Macro analysis using SPSS version 27 to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that both SMMA and brand ambassadors have a significant positive effect on brand equity and purchase decision. Brand equity also significantly affects purchase decision. However, SMMA and brand ambassadors do not have an indirect effect on purchase decision through brand equity.

**Keywords:** Brand Ambassadors; Brand Equity; Purchase Decision; Social Media Marketing Activities; TikTok

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media marketing activities (SMMA) has become essential in influencing consumer behaviour, especially in the context of purchase decision. TikTok, founded in 2016 by ByteDance Ltd., has experienced significant growth, particularly during the pandemic. Originally a short-form video app, it has evolved into a marketing tool, allowing brands to engage with customers. Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta (UNISA) is a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, that shares information about campus activities, events, academic announcements, and flagship programs through its official account. UNISA's TikTok is its most popular social media platform. With nearly 300k followers, UNISA has managed SMMA effectively as one of the main strategies to increase their brand equity and the purchase decision of prospective students.

Additionally, UNISA also optimizes the role of brand ambassadors as a promotional element that is considered effective in reaching prospective students on a more personal level. The chosen brand ambassadors ensure that the communicated message is perceived as more authentic and credible. Their presence not only helps expand the reach of communication but also contributes to the strengthening of brand equity and increasing purchase decision by building a positive image and enhancing public trust in UNISA.

Furthermore, the strong brand equity of UNISA not only serves as an intangible asset for the institution but is also expected to be a significant determining factor in influencing prospective students' purchase decisions. Once an affirmative perception of the university's brand has been established, encompassing its academic reputation, campus image, and the calibre of its educational services, prospective students tend to exhibit a greater degree of confidence in opting for UNISA over other universities.

## Theoretical Review

Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) refer to strategies used by brands to promote themselves on social media (Damayanti & Koswara, 2023). Social media has developed marketing by allowing brands to directly engage with their audience through interactive and personalised content, making it effective for building brand awareness, generating leads, and enhancing customer loyalty (Dolega et al., 2021).

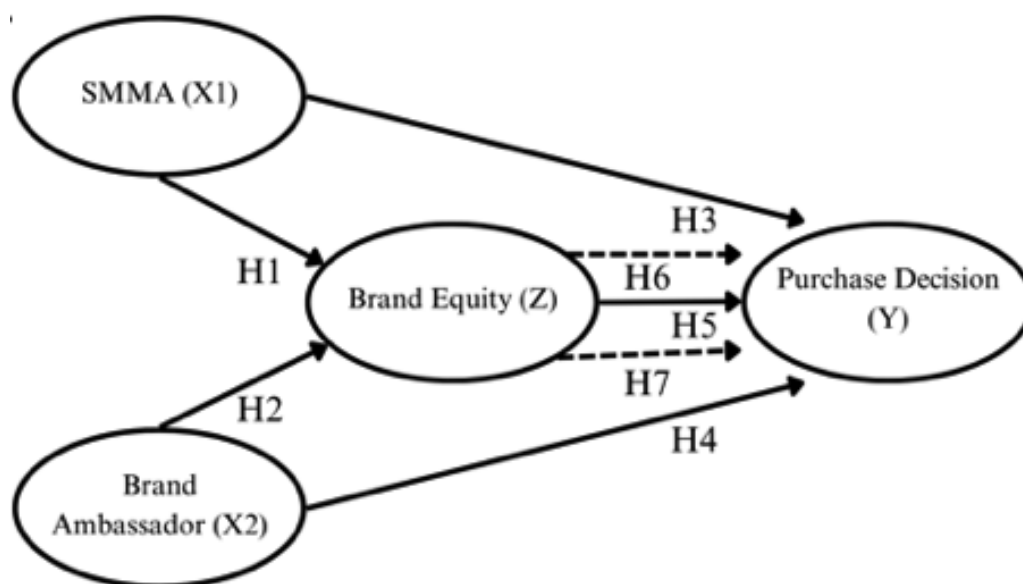
Brand ambassadors promote brands through personal endorsement (Smith et al., 2018). They play a significant role in marketing strategy, serving as trusted representatives who can influence consumer attitudes and behaviours. The effectiveness of brand ambassadors lies in their ability to connect with their audience on a deeper, more emotional level, creating trust that traditional advertisements cannot achieve (Yazid et al., 2021; Rahmat et al., 2024).

Brand equity is the value a brand adds to a product or service based on consumer perceptions (Leone et al., 2006). It is a crucial concept in marketing as it reflects the overall strength of a brand and its influence on consumer behaviour. Brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a

product or service. Brand equity impacts consumer behaviour by influencing their purchasing decisions (Aaker, 1991; Nibsaia & Kumar, 2023; Alsaraireh et al., 2022).

The purchase decision is a process of how consumers decide whether to buy a product or service (Ellitan et al., 2022; Mujahidah & Tan, 2021). This decision is based on brand preferences (Anderhofstadt & Spinler, 2019). The process involves five stages: need recognition, information search, alternatives evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase decision (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework

### Hypotheses Development

H1: Social Media Marketing Activities positively influence Brand Equity.

H2: Brand Ambassadors positively influence Brand Equity.

H3: Social Media Marketing Activities positively influence Purchase Decision.

H4: Brand Ambassadors positively influence Purchase Decision.

H5: Brand Equity positively influence Purchase Decision.

H6: Social Media Marketing Activities indirectly influence Purchase Decision through Brand Equity.

H7: Brand Ambassadors indirectly influence Purchase Decision through Brand Equity.

## METHODS

### Research Design

This study used a quantitative research method to examine the influence of SMMA and brand ambassadors on purchase decisions, with brand equity acting as a mediating variable. The study was conducted at UNISA Yogyakarta in Indonesia and involved students enrolled in the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years who actively use TikTok. Data was collected using a purposive sampling technique via an online questionnaire (Google Forms) and analyzed using SPSS version 27.

### Research Variables

The independent variables were SMMA (X1) and Brand Ambassadors (X2), the intervening variable was Brand Equity (Z), and the dependent variable was Purchase Decision (Y).

### Population and Sample

The population comprised UNISA students and the sample size of 357 was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) formula, with a confidence level of 95%. A non-probability purposive sampling approach was used to target respondents meeting specific criteria.

### Data Collection

Primary data were obtained through a structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale to measure the perceptions and opinions of respondents

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The sample of this study consisted of active students from the UNISA classes of 2023 and 2024, with an initial target of 357 individuals. However, due to technical errors and invalid responses in the online distribution via Google Forms, only 321 valid responses were collected and used for analysis.

### Classical Assumption Test

#### a. Normality Test

The objective of this test is to determine whether each of the variables are normally distributed or not. The One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov method used in this study to measure the normality of the model. The regression model is normally distributed if the significance value is higher than 0.05. The results of the normality test are shown in the table below:

<b>Table 1. Normality Test Table</b>		
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
		Unstandardized Residual
<b>N</b>		321
<b>Normal Parameters<sup>a,b</sup></b>	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	6,49183149
<b>Most Extreme Differences</b>	Absolute	,029
	Positive	,029
	Negative	-,028
<b>Test Statistic</b>		,029
<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)<sup>c</sup></b>		,200 <sup>d</sup>
<b>Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)<sup>e</sup></b>	Sig.	,748
	99% Confidence	Lower Bound
	Interval	Upper Bound
		,736
		,759

The table above shows that the significance value is 0.748 which is higher than 0.05. This result indicates that the regression model is normally distributed.

#### b. Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test is used to determine whether the regression model identifies a correlation between the independent variables. There is no multicollinearity if the tolerance value is  $> 0.10$  and the VIF value is  $< 10$ . The results of the multicollinearity test are shown in the table below:

<b>Table 2. Multicollinearity Test Table</b>		
Model	Tolerance	VIF
Social Media Marketing Activities	,336	2,979
Brand Ambassadors	,276	3,627
Brand Equity	,356	2,812

The table above shows that the tolerance values are higher than 0.10 and the VIF values are lower than 10. These results indicate the absence of multicollinearity among independent variables.

## c. Heteroskedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test is used to determine whether there is any inequality in the residual variances within the regression model. There is no heteroscedasticity if the significance value is higher than 0.05. The results of the heteroscedasticity test are shown in the table below:

**Table 3.** Heteroskedasticity Test Table

Model	Significance
Social Media Marketing Activities	,981
Brand Ambassadors	,686
Brand Equity	,808

The table above shows that the significance values are higher than 0.05. These results indicate the absence of heteroscedasticity among independent variables.

**Hypotheses Test**

## a. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The multiple linear regression analysis is used to determine the linear relationship between independent and dependent variables. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis are shown in the table below:

**Table 4.** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Table (Model I)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7,221	1,245		5,800	<,001
Social Media Marketing Activities (X1)	,253	,049	,284	5,118	<,001
Brand Ambassadors (X2)	,966	,096	,558	10,054	<,001

The table above shows the results of the multiple linear regression analysis. The regression equation, which is derived from coefficient B, is as follows:

$$Y = 7.221 + 0.253X_1 + 0.966X_2$$

Referring to the terms of the regression equation above, it can be concluded as follows:

1. The regression coefficient value for Brand Equity is 7.221 when all independent variables are zero.
2. The SMMA variable has a positive coefficient of 0.253 and a p-value of <.001, indicating a significant impact on Brand Equity.
3. The Brand Ambassadors variable has a positive coefficient of 0.966 and a p-value of <.001, indicating a significant impact on the Brand Equity.

**Table 5.** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Table (Model II)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3,816	1,491		2,560	,011
Social Media Marketing Activities (X1)	,120	,058	,109	2,057	,040
Brand Ambassadors (X2)	1,284	,126	,596	10,217	<,001
Brand Equity (Z)	,225	,064	,181	3,525	<,001

The table above shows the results of the multiple linear regression analysis.

$$Y = 3.816 + 0.120X_1 + 1.284X_2 + 0.225Z$$

Referring to the terms of the regression equation above, it can be concluded as follows:

1. The regression coefficient value for the Purchase Decision is 3.816 when all independent variables are zero.
2. The SMMA variable has a positive coefficient of 0.120 and a p-value of 0.040, indicating a significant impact on the Purchase Decision.
3. The Brand Ambassadors variable has a positive coefficient of 1.284 and a p-value of <.001, indicating a significant impact on the Purchase Decision.
4. The Brand Equity variable has a positive coefficient of 0.225 and a p-value of <.001, indicating a significant impact on the Purchase Decision.

#### b. Partial Test (t-Test)

The partial test is used to determine whether the independent variable has a significant effect or not on the dependent variable. The t-table value in this study is 1.967. Referring to the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Table (Model I), the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The SMMA variable has a calculated t-value of 5.118, higher than the t-table. The p-value is <.001, lower than 0.05. Thus, H1 is accepted and has a significant effect on Brand Equity.
2. The Brand Ambassadors variable has a calculated t-value of 10.054, higher than the t-table. The p-value is <.001, lower than 0.05. Thus, H2 is accepted and has a significant effect on Brand Equity.

Also, referring to the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Table (Model II), the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The SMMA variable has a calculated t-value of 2.057, higher than the t-table. The p-value is 0.040, lower than 0.05. Thus, H3 is accepted and has a significant effect on the Purchase Decision.
2. The Brand Ambassadors variable has a calculated t-value of 10.217, higher than the t-table. The p-value is <.001, lower than 0.05. Thus, H4 is accepted and has a significant effect on the Purchase Decision.
3. The Brand Equity has a calculated t-value of 3.525, higher than the t-table. The p-value is <.001, lower than 0.05. Thus, H5 is accepted and has a significant effect on the Purchase Decision.

#### c. Coefficient of Determination Test

The coefficient of determination test is used to determine the extent to which a model is capable of explaining the variations in the dependent variable. The results of the coefficient of determination are shown in the table below:

**Table 6.** Coefficient of Determination Test Table (Model I)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
,803 <sup>a</sup>	,644	,642	3,357

**Table 7.** Coefficient of Determination Test Table (Model II)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
,838 <sup>a</sup>	,702	,699	3,823

The tables above show the result of the coefficient of determination test. Based on Table (Model I), the adjusted R-square value of 0.642. This indicates the influence of the SMMA and Brand Ambassadors variable on the Brand Equity is 64.2%. Table (Model II) shows the adjusted R-square value of 0.702. This indicates the influence of the SMMA, Brand Ambassadors and Brand Equity variable on the Purchase Decision is 70.2%.

#### d. PROCESS Macro Analysis

The PROCESS Macro analysis is used to determine the direct and indirect effects between dependent and independent variables through mediators. The results of the PROCESS analysis are shown in the table below:

**Table 8.** PROCESS Macro Analysis Table (Model I)

Model	Coeff	Sig
X1	0,4385	0,0023
Z	0,5454	0,0005
Int_1 (X1*Z)	0,0000	0,9995

**Table 9.** PROCESS Macro Analysis Table (Model II)

Model	Coeff	Sig
X2	1,6285	<,0001
Z	0,3527	0,0044
Int_1 (X2*Z)	-0,0060	0,3914

The tables above show the result of the PROCESS Macro analysis. Based on Table (Model I), the p-value of the SMMA variable (X1) is 0.0023, and the brand equity variable (Z) is 0.0005. Meaning that each variable significantly has a direct effect on the Purchase Decision and there is no effect because the p-value of the SMMA through Brand Equity (X1\*Z) is 0.9995. Table (Model II) shows that the p-value of the Brand Ambassadors variable (X2) is <.0001, and the Brand Equity variable (Z) is 0.0044. Meaning that each variable significantly has a direct effect on the Purchase Decision and there is no effect because the p-value of the Brand Ambassadors through Brand Equity (X2\*Z) is 0.3914.

## Discussions

### a. The Effect of SMMA on Brand Equity

The results of this study show that the SMMA variable has a significant positive influence on brand equity. The t-value is 5.118, higher than the t-table value. The p-value is <.001, lower than 0.05. Meaning that an improvement in SMMA will increase brand equity at UNISA. Otherwise, a reduction in SMMA will decrease brand equity. Thus, it can be concluded that H1 is accepted. This finding aligns with research conducted by Haudi et al. (2022) and Zollo et al. (2020), which proved that there is a significant positive relationship between SMMA and brand equity.

### b. The Effect of Brand Ambassadors on Brand Equity

The results of this study show that the brand ambassadors variable has a significant positive influence on brand equity. The t-value is 10.054, higher than the t-table value. The p-value is <.001, lower than 0.05. Meaning that an improvement in brand ambassadors will increase brand equity at UNISA. Otherwise, a reduction in brand ambassadors will decrease brand equity. Thus, it can be concluded that H2 is accepted. This finding aligns with research conducted by Yuliadewi (2021) and Chandrawinata (2023) which proved that there is a significant positive relationship between brand ambassadors and brand equity.

### c. The Effect of SMMA on Purchase Decision

The results of this study show that the SMMA variable has a significant positive influence on the purchase decision. The t-value is 2.057, higher than the t-table value. The p-value is 0.040, lower than 0.05. Meaning that an improvement in SMMA will increase the purchase decision at UNISA. Otherwise, a reduction in SMMA will decrease the purchase decision. Thus, it can be concluded that H3 is accepted. This finding aligns with research conducted by Febriyani & Indriani (2023) and Muljadi et al. (2022) which proved that there is a significant positive relationship between SMMA and purchase decision.

### d. The Effect of Brand Ambassadors on Purchase Decision

The results of this study show that the brand ambassadors variable has a significant positive influence on the purchase decision. The t-value is 10.217, higher than the t-table value. The p-value is <.001, lower than 0.05. Meaning that an improvement in brand ambassadors will increase the purchase decision at UNISA. Otherwise, a reduction in brand ambassadors will decrease the purchase decision. Thus, it can be concluded that H4 is accepted. This finding aligns with research conducted by Aprianti & Tjiptogjojo (2023) and Agustina et al. (2023) which proved that there is a significant positive relationship between brand ambassadors and purchase decision.

### e. The Effect of Brand Equity on Purchase Decision

The results of this study show that the brand equity variable has a significant positive influence on the purchase decision. The t-value is 3.525, higher than the t-table value. The p-value is <.001, lower than 0.05. Meaning that an improvement in brand equity will increase the purchase decision at UNISA. Otherwise, a reduction in brand equity will decrease the purchase decision. Thus, it can be concluded that H5 is accepted. This finding aligns with research



conducted by Tresna et al. (2021) and Firmansyah et al. (2021) which proved that there is a significant positive relationship between brand equity and purchase decision.

f. The Effect of SMMA on Purchase Decision through Brand Equity

The results of this study show that the SMMA variable does not affect the purchase decision through brand equity. The p-value is 0.9995, higher than 0.05. Meaning that improvement in SMMA through brand equity will decrease the purchase decision at UNISA. Otherwise, a reduction in SMMA through brand equity will increase the purchase decision. In other words, brand equity is not able to mediate the relationship between SMMA and purchase decision significantly. Thus, it can be concluded that H6 is rejected. This finding aligns with research conducted by Safrudin & Anggarani (2024) which proved that brand equity has no mediating influence on the impact of SMMA on the purchase decision.

g. The Effect of Brand Ambassadors on Purchase Decision through Brand Equity

The results of this study show that the brand ambassadors variable does not affect the purchase decision through brand equity. The p-value is 0.3914, higher than 0.05. Meaning that improvement in brand ambassadors through brand equity will decrease the purchase decision at UNISA. Otherwise, a reduction in brand ambassadors through brand equity will increase the purchase decision. In other words, brand equity is not able to mediate the relationship between brand ambassadors and purchase decision significantly. Thus, it can be concluded that H7 is rejected. This finding aligns with research conducted by Firdaus et al. (2025) which proved that brand equity has no mediating influence on the impact of brand ambassadors on the purchase decision.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicate that SMMA and Brand Ambassadors both have a positive and significant effect on Brand Equity and Purchase Decision. Brand Equity also has a positive and significant effect on the Purchase Decision. However, neither SMMA nor Brand Ambassadors influence Purchase Decision indirectly through Brand Equity, indicating that their effects occur directly rather than through mediation.

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