

## The Influence of Brand Ambassadors and Digital Marketing on Purchase Decisions Through Brand Trust of Whiskas Cat Food Products Among Cat Owners in Samarinda

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### Abstract

This research aims to analyze the influence of brand ambassadors and digital marketing on the purchase decisions of Whiskas cat food products through brand trust in Samarinda. The method used in this study is a quantitative approach with SEM-PLS analysis. The results show that brand ambassadors have a significant positive effect on brand trust and purchase decisions. Conversely, digital marketing does not show a significant effect on brand trust but positively contributes to purchase decisions. Brand trust mediates the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions, while it does not mediate the influence of digital marketing. These findings provide important implications for Whiskas' marketing strategy in enhancing consumer trust and the effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

**Keywords:** Brand Ambassador; Digital Marketing; Purchase Decisions; Brand Trust; Whiskas Cat Food.

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the pet food industry creates increasingly fierce competition in the cat food market. The number of cat owners in Indonesia is growing, and among pets, cats have become the number one pet in Indonesia, leading to the emergence of many new cat food products in the market. In an effort to attract consumer attention, cat food companies do not only rely on product quality but also effective marketing strategies to keep up with the rapidly evolving digital era. A professional and appealing brand ambassador can attract and enhance consumer trust in the Whiskas brand. The better and more professional a brand ambassador, the more consumer trust in Whiskas products will increase. Effective digital marketing strategies can improve brand image and create positive interaction with consumers, thus increasing consumer trust in Whiskas products.

Furthermore, good brand trust can motivate consumers to purchase Whiskas products because they will believe that the product is tested and reliable according to what the company promises. This is similarly true for brand ambassadors; widely recognized brand ambassadors can directly motivate purchase decisions, where consumers will choose to buy products promoted by individuals they trust. Besides brand ambassadors, digital marketing is also crucial; good digital marketing activities will create higher awareness and interest, ultimately increasing purchase decisions for Whiskas products.

In addition to brand ambassadors and purchase decisions, brand trust serves as a mediator linking brand ambassadors and digital marketing with purchase decisions. This means that both brand ambassadors and digital marketing strategies will effectively influence purchase decisions if Whiskas has built its brand trust.

Companies must enhance their promotional styles, one of which is through innovative use of ambassadors, who can be defined as advertising supporters or spokespersons selected from well-known individuals or unknown people who have attractive appearances to capture consumer attention (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, in Suleman et al., 2023). Brand ambassadors serve as representatives of products or brands that can influence consumer perceptions. They are chosen based on popularity, attractiveness, and credibility that can attract consumer attention. In the context of digital marketing, the role of brand ambassadors is increasingly relevant, as digital marketing aims to promote a brand using digital media that can reach consumers in a timely, personal, and relevant manner (Kok et al., 2021). According to the research by Sastra Millennium et al. (2021), digital marketing also allows for more direct and personal interaction between companies and consumers, which can enhance customer engagement and loyalty.

Whiskas utilizes various marketing strategies to promote its products, one of which is partnering with artists or influencers to promote their products. Whiskas chose Raisa as their brand ambassador because her popularity gives her a broad reach among audiences, especially pet lovers. Whiskas announced Raisa as their brand ambassador on their official Instagram in June 2023. Raisa is well-known as a singer in Indonesia and many of her fans know that she is a cat lover. Currently, Raisa has 37.7 million followers on her verified Instagram account and often participates in promotional activities for various new Whiskas products.

Choosing the right brand ambassador is crucial for the success of a marketing campaign, and a systematic framework can help marketers make better decisions and gain a deeper understanding of the psychological and social mechanisms that drive brand ambassador influence. This understanding will enable more effective and measurable strategies. Research by Suleman et al. (2023) shows that brand ambassadors have a significant influence on consumer purchase decisions and indicate that brand ambassadors can enhance product appeal and influence consumer perceptions. This statement is further supported by research conducted by Cantika et al. (2023), which states that brand ambassadors positively influence purchase decisions, as they can affect purchase decisions through their image and popularity. In contrast, Azzura & Ainun (2023) state that brand ambassadors do not have a significant influence on purchase decisions. Research by Thabit Mohamed (2024) also reveals that brand ambassadors do not

significantly influence purchase decisions. According to the research by Ryan & Johan (2022), brand ambassadors have a positive influence but not significant. The uncertainty in research findings regarding the influence of brand ambassadors indicates the need for more in-depth studies and analyses to understand the psychological and social mechanisms that affect purchase decisions. Therefore, more effective and measurable marketing strategies can be achieved through a systematic approach to the selection and use of brand ambassadors.

Digital marketing plays a crucial role in providing information about the products we promote, attracting more consumers. The increasing prevalence of digital marketing practices (such as the use of personal data and personalized advertising) raises ethical concerns. Existing conceptual models often overlook the ethical impact of digital marketing on brand trust and customer loyalty. The current focus is more on the effectiveness of marketing tactics, neglecting the long-term impact of unethical practices. Previous research by Taurino (2022) states that digital marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. In contrast, research by Sastra Millennium et al. (2021) indicates that digital marketing has a negative and insignificant effect on purchase decisions.

In the pet food industry, particularly cat food, consumer trust in a brand is a key factor in purchase decisions. Cats, as pets, require special attention regarding food quality, leading cat owners to be selective in choosing products. Brand trust is not only built through product quality but also through the image and reputation communicated by the company.

Whiskas has been producing cat food since 1958. Whiskas cat food is produced by PT Mars Symbioscience Indonesia. Throughout its development, Whiskas has committed to continuously improving the best quality cat food.

**Table 1. The percentage of pet ownership in Indonesia.**

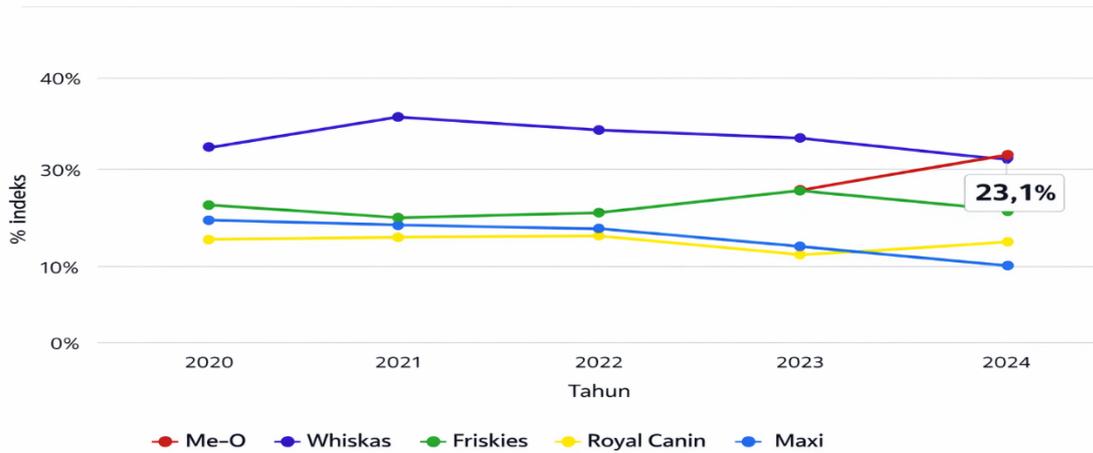
Hewan	16-24 Tahun	25-34	35-44 Tahun	45-54	55+
Kucing	73.00	69.00	66.00	64.00	51.00
Ikan	26.00	32.00	33.00	33.00	31.00
Burung	19.00	27.00	25.00	25.00	16.00
Anjing	11.00	13.00	14.00	16.00	23.00
Lain-lain	7.00	5.00	6.00	4.00	6.00
Kelinci	7.00	7.00	5.00	3.00	3.00
Hamster/Chinchilla	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00
Serangga	2.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Kura-kura/Terrapin	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	2.00
Ular atau reptil lain	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Mice	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Cicak/Kadal	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	0.00

Source: Rakunten web 2025

Whiskas is one of the products well-known by cat lovers in Indonesia, offering various wet and dry food variants for cats. Whiskas has been a pioneer in selling both dry and wet cat food, whereas most other cat food brands only sell one or the other. In Samarinda, we can see that every pet shop outlet sells Whiskas food products, both dry and wet, indicating good production levels and accessibility

### Hasil Komparasi Brand

Kategori: MAKANAN DAN MINUMAN Sub Kategori: MAKANAN KUCING



**Figure 1. Top Brand Award**  
**Source: Top Brand Award, 2024**

However, data from the Top Brand Award shows that Whiskas is ranked second with a brand index of 26.5% in 2024, while Me-O is in first place with a top brand index of 28.5%. Based on this data, we can see that Whiskas experienced a decline in brand index in 2024 by 4.9%, despite leading the brand index since 2021. Many cat food brands are becoming well-known among pet lovers, one of which is Me-O, which just entered the market in 2023 and managed to surpass Whiskas in 2024. Given the increasing number of emerging cat food brands and diverse promotional strategies, the data presented raises the question of why Whiskas is losing ground to Me-O, despite both brands having celebrity brand ambassadors.

### Literature Review

Brand ambassadors play a crucial role in marketing strategies by influencing consumer perceptions. They are typically individuals, often celebrities or influencers, who represent and promote a brand (Nurhasanah et al., 2021). The effectiveness of a brand ambassador is closely linked to their credibility, attractiveness, and visibility (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Research by Suleman et al. (2023) demonstrates that brand ambassadors significantly impact consumer purchasing decisions, enhancing product appeal and influencing consumer perceptions.

Conversely, Azzura and Ainun (2023) found that the effect of brand ambassadors can vary, with some studies indicating no significant impact on purchasing decisions. This highlights the need for further exploration into the conditions that amplify or diminish the effectiveness of brand ambassadors in different contexts.

Digital marketing has become an essential component of modern marketing strategies, leveraging various digital platforms to reach consumers (Saputra & Ardani, 2020). A study by Taurino (2022) confirms that digital marketing positively influences purchasing decisions. However, other research, such as that by Sastra Millennium et al. (2021), suggests that digital marketing can have a non-significant negative impact on purchase decisions, indicating a complex relationship that warrants deeper investigation.

The effectiveness of digital marketing is often contingent on the quality of information provided and the engagement level of consumers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016). As digital channels evolve, understanding how consumers interact with digital marketing efforts is critical for brands seeking to enhance consumer trust and influence purchasing behavior.

Brand trust refers to the confidence consumers have in a brand regarding its quality and reliability (Kotler et al., 2022). Research by Rahajeng et al. (2024) indicates that brand trust significantly influences purchasing decisions, reinforcing the notion that consumers are more likely to buy from brands they trust. The development of brand trust is influenced by various factors, including brand credibility, perceived quality, and emotional connections with the brand (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005).

Additionally, studies have shown that brand trust mediates the relationship between marketing strategies, such as brand ambassador promotion and digital marketing, and purchasing decisions (Azzura & Ainun, 2023). This mediating role emphasizes the importance of cultivating trust as a key strategy in marketing.

The purchase decision process is complex and involves multiple stages, including problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and the final decision (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). According to Cantika et al. (2023), various factors influence this decision-making process, including brand reputation, product quality, and the effectiveness of marketing communications.

Research indicates that both brand ambassadors and digital marketing strategies significantly impact purchase decisions, although the mechanisms may differ. For instance, while brand ambassadors can create emotional connections that enhance brand trust and influence purchase decisions, digital marketing often facilitates immediate purchases through effective communication and information delivery (Dewi Ni Putu Sita Krisna et al., 2024).

The theoretical foundations of this study are rooted in established marketing theories, including the Hierarchy of Effects model, which outlines the stages consumers go through from awareness to purchase. This model is supported by findings that suggest effective brand ambassadors can enhance brand trust, thereby influencing purchasing behavior (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Furthermore, the Theory of Planned Behavior can be applied to understand how attitudes toward brand ambassadors and digital marketing influence consumer intentions and behaviors in the context of purchasing decisions.

## **METHOD**

In this research, the method used is an explanatory and quantitative approach with a focus on surveys. The main goal is to explain the influence of related variables on the purchase decisions of Whiskas cat food products.

The research subjects consist of consumers in Samarinda, specifically those active on social media and involved in cat lover communities. The variables analyzed include Brand Ambassador, Digital Marketing, Brand Trust, and Purchase Decisions.

Data is collected through online surveys, using questionnaires designed to measure respondents' perceptions of these variables. This research will take place from January to December 2025.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement tool, convergent validity tests and reliability analyses are conducted. Furthermore, the collected data will be analyzed using SmartPLS software, which allows for testing relationships between variables using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The research results indicate that the Brand Ambassador significantly influences brand trust in Whiskas cat food products, with a coefficient value of 0.752 and a t-statistic of 9.062, as well as a p-value of 0.000. This shows that the more effective the Brand Ambassador, the higher the consumer's trust in the brand.

On the other hand, although the Digital Marketing strategy is applied, its influence on brand trust is not significant, with a coefficient value of 0.053, a t-statistic of 0.549, and a p-value of 0.583. This indicates that the information conveyed through digital channels is not sufficient to build strong trust.

Brand trust proves to have a positive influence on purchasing decisions, with a coefficient value of 0.293, a t-statistic of 4.172, and a p-value of 0.000. Consumers who trust the quality of the products are more likely to choose Whiskas. Brand trust also functions as a mediator between the Brand Ambassador and purchasing decisions, with an indirect effect of 0.221 and a p-value of 0.001, indicating that this relationship is significant.

However, brand trust does not mediate the influence of Digital Marketing on purchasing decisions, with an indirect effect value of only 0.015 and a p-value of 0.581. This shows that although the Digital Marketing strategy is effective in encouraging purchasing decisions, it does not necessarily build brand trust beforehand.

The evaluation of the measurement model aims to ensure the validity and reliability of the indicators used to measure latent variables in the research. The evaluation steps include:

### Convergent Validity Test

Convergent validity is the degree of correspondence among indicators measuring the same latent variable. This validity is tested by assessing whether the indicators within a construct have a high correlation with one another. Convergent validity measurement generally uses Outer Loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR).

Convergent validity is considered fulfilled if:

Outer Loading of each indicator > 0.70;

AVE > 0.50, indicating that more than 50% of the variance of the indicators can be explained by the latent variable; and

CR > 0.70, ensuring internal consistency of the construct.

When convergent validity is fulfilled, it can be concluded that the indicators within a variable accurately measure the same concept.

**Table 2. Outer Loading Measurement**

Variabel/Indikator	Outer Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Brand Ambassador X1		0,742	0,740	0,564
Popularity (Visibility)	0,764			
Credibility (Credibility)	0,797			
Attractiveness (Attraction)	0,744			
Power (Power)	0,695			
Digital Marketing X2		0,850	0,850	0,689
Trust	0,821			
Ease of use	0,809			
Information Quality	0,851			
Trust	0,839			
Brand Trust Y1		0,850	0,853	0,690
Attraction	0,845			
Expertise	0,855			
Trust	0,841			
Power	0,779			
Purchase Decision Y2		0,806	0,814	0,562
Product Selection	0,811			
Brand Selection	0,748			
Channel Selection	0,717			
Purchase Timing	0,719			
Payment Method	0,751			

The Fornell-Larcker Criterion analysis is used to evaluate discriminant validity in SEM-PLS. Discriminant validity indicates the extent to which the constructs measured in this study are truly distinct from one another. The Fornell-Larcker criterion states that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each latent variable must be

greater than the correlation between that variable and other variables in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

**Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion**

	X1. Brand ambassador	X2 digital marketing	Y1 Brand Trust	Y2 Purchase Decision
X1 Brand Ambassador	0,850			
X2 Digital Marketing	0,640	0,850		
Y1 Brand Trust	0,600	0,590	0,870	
Y2 Purchase Decision	0,680	0,740	0,690	0,840

Uji reliabilitas dalam SEM-PLS bertujuan untuk menilai sejauh mana indikator dalam setiap konstruk memiliki konsistensi internal yang baik. Reliabilitas dapat dievaluasi menggunakan Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability (rho\_A dan rho\_C), serta Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

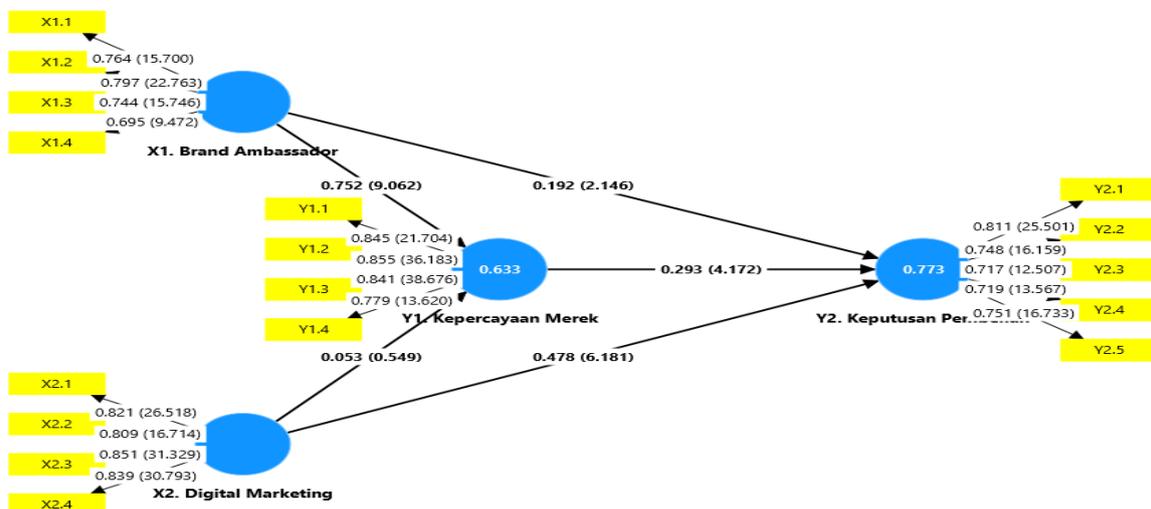
**Table 4. Reliability Test**

	Cronbach Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
X1 Brand Ambassador	0,724	0,740	0,838	0,564
X2 Digital Marketing	0,850	0,850	0,899	0,689
Y1 Brand Trust	0,850	0,853	0,899	0,690
Y2 Purchase Decision	0,860	0,814	0,865	0,562

The results of the reliability test indicate that all constructs in the research model meet the criteria for good internal consistency. The Cronbach’s Alpha value for the Brand Ambassador construct is 0.742, while Digital Marketing and Brand Trust reach 0.850 each, and Purchase Decision is 0.806. All these values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating adequate reliability.

Additionally, the Composite Reliability (rho\_A and rho\_C) values for the four constructs range from 0.740 to 0.899, which is also above the minimum threshold, indicating strong internal consistency. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test shows that all constructs Brand Ambassador (0.564), Digital Marketing (0.689), Brand Trust (0.690), and Purchase Decision (0.562) have AVE values above 0.50.

This demonstrates that the indicators used are able to explain the variance of the constructs well, indicating strong convergent validity. Overall, these testing results support the conclusion that the measurement instruments in this research have met the necessary statistical requirements, making the constructs suitable for further analysis in the SEM-PLS model.



**Figure 2. Inner Model**

### R Square (R<sup>2</sup>)

The R-square (R<sup>2</sup>) test in SEM-PLS is used to evaluate how much the independent variables in the model can explain the dependent variable. The R-square value ranges from 0 to 1, where a higher value indicates a better ability of the model to explain the variability of the observed variables (Hair et al., 2023).

**Table 5. R-Square (R<sup>2</sup>)**

	R- Square	R-Square adjusted
Y1 Brand Trust	0,633	0,629
Y2 Purchase Decision	0,773	0,769

### F-square Test

The F-square (f<sup>2</sup>) test in Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) is used to assess the effect size of an independent variable on a dependent variable. The f<sup>2</sup> value measures the extent of the change in R-square when the independent variable is removed from the model, providing an indication of the relative impact of each predictor variable on the dependent variable (Cohen, 1988). The categories for f<sup>2</sup> values are based on the following guidelines: 0.02 – 0.14 indicates a small effect, 0.15 – 0.34 indicates a medium effect, and ≥ 0.35 indicates a large effect.

**Table 6. F-Square test**

	F-square
X1. Brand Ambassador -> Y1. Brand Trust	0,535
X1. Brand Ambassador -> Y2. Purchase Decision	0,037
X2 Digital marketing -> Y1 Brand Trust	0,125
X2. Digital marketing -> Y2 Purchase Decision	0,349
Y1. Brand Trust-> Y2 Purchase Decision	0,139

The f-square analysis results in the SEM-PLS model reveal the relative contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous construct. The f-square value is used to measure the effect size of the predictor variable on the dependent variable.

The findings indicate that the influence of the Brand Ambassador on Brand Trust has an f-square value of 0.535, which falls into the large effect category. This shows that the Brand Ambassador significantly enhances consumer trust in the brand. However, its influence on Purchase Decision is only 0.037, categorized as a small effect, indicating that its contribution is more effective through the mediation of brand trust.

Conversely, Digital Marketing shows a medium effect on Brand Trust with an f-square value of 0.125, and a large effect on Purchase Decision at 0.349. This emphasizes that digital marketing strategies play a crucial role in building trust and driving consumer purchasing decisions.

Brand Trust itself has an f-square value of 0.139 concerning Purchase Decision, which is also categorized as a medium effect, indicating that trust contributes to the purchasing decision of Whiskas products, although not as strongly as the direct influence from digital marketing.

Overall, the f-square analysis demonstrates that the Brand Ambassador is dominant in shaping Brand Trust, while Digital Marketing serves as a key factor influencing Purchase Decision. Brand Trust acts as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between marketing strategies and purchasing decisions, highlighting the importance of building trust and the effectiveness of digital strategies in influencing consumer behavior.

**Table 7. Q-Squared Test**

	SSO	SSE	Q2=(1-SSE/SSO)
X1 brand ambassador	680,000	680,000	0,000
X2 digital marketing	680,000	680,000	0,000
Y1 Brand Trust	680,000	390,408	0,426
Y2 Purchase Decision	850,000	499,225	0,413

The analysis results indicate that the Brand Trust construct has a Q<sup>2</sup> value of 0.426, and the Purchase Decision construct has a Q<sup>2</sup> value of 0.413. Both values fall into the category of moderate predictive relevance, indicating that the model has a good capability to predict these variables. This means that the model not only explains the relationships among constructs but is also able to adequately predict data that was not used in model estimation.

Meanwhile, the Brand Ambassador and Digital Marketing constructs show a Q<sup>2</sup> value of 0.000, which is reasonable since both are exogenous and are not predicted by other variables in the model. This zero value reflects that both constructs serve as sources of influence rather than prediction objects.

Overall, this model exhibits good predictive relevance for the main endogenous variables, namely Brand Trust and Purchase Decision. Therefore, the model established in this research not only possesses structural reliability but is also reliable in predicting consumer behavior beyond the observational data used for model estimation.

**Multicollinearity (Collinearity Statistics)**

Multicollinearity in SEM-PLS is analyzed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). VIF is used to assess whether there is excessive correlation among independent variables in the model, which could lead to distortion in parameter estimation (Hair et al., 2023).

**Table 8. Multicollinearity Test**

	VIF
X1 brand ambassador ->Y1 Brand Trust	2,882
X1 brand ambassador->Y2 Purchase Decision	4,425
X2 digital marketing->Y1 BrandTrust	2,882
X2 digital marketing->Y2 Purchase Decision	2,890
Y1 Brand Trust->Y2 Purchase Decision	2,725

The results of the multicollinearity analysis using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) indicate that there are no serious issues related to high correlation among predictor constructs in the SEM-PLS model. Generally, VIF values below 5 are considered safe, and all values in this analysis fall below that threshold, indicating that multicollinearity is not a significant concern.

The VIF values for the relationships from Brand Ambassador to Brand Trust and from Digital Marketing to Brand Trust are 2.882 each, while the value for Digital Marketing to Purchase Decision is 2.890, and from Brand Trust to Purchase Decision is 2.725. All these values indicate that each predictor variable can stand independently in statistical terms.

However, the path from Brand Ambassador to Purchase Decision has a higher VIF value of 4.425. Although still below the maximum tolerance limit, this value suggests a relatively strong correlation with other predictor variables, thus warranting further attention.

Overall, this model shows no significant multicollinearity issues, and all VIF values are within the tolerance limits. This allows for independent analysis of the constructs and ensures the validity and stability of the estimated relationships among constructs in the model.

**Model Fit Test**

The model fit in Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) is used to assess the extent to which the research model accurately represents the data. Several

key indicators used in model fit testing include the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), d\_ULS, d\_G, Chi-Square, and Normed Fit Index (NFI) (Hair et al., 2023).

**Table 9. Model Fit Test**

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0,121	0,121
d_ULS	2,224	2,224
d_G	0,750	0,750
Chi_square	4876,000	4876,000
NFI	0,890	0,890

**Goodness of Fit Testing Results for the Model Using SEM-PLS Approach**

The goodness of fit testing results for the model using the SEM-PLS approach indicate that the overall model fit to empirical data is quite good, although there are some indicators that need attention. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value is recorded at 0.121, which exceeds the ideal threshold (< 0.08) and slightly surpasses the maximum tolerance limit of 0.10. This indicates a mismatch between the actual covariance matrix and that predicted by the model.

However, other indicators provided more satisfactory results. The d\_ULS value (2.224) and d\_G (0.750) fall within a reasonable tolerance range, indicating good model fit. Although the Chi-square value of 4876.000 reflects the model complexity, in the context of PLS-SEM, this value is not the main benchmark since PLS focuses more on prediction.

The Normed Fit Index (NFI) indicates a value of 0.890, which is close to the ideal limit ( $\geq 0.90$ ) and above the minimum threshold ( $\geq 0.80$ ), indicating that the model has a fairly good fit. This NFI suggests that the structural model used is better than the baseline model, providing a justification for the model’s theoretical feasibility.

Overall, despite the weakness in the SRMR value, the combination of other fit indicators supports the conclusion that the model is still acceptable. This structural model has strong validity for explaining the relationships between variables in the context of purchasing decisions for Whiskas products in Samarinda City, and is suitable for further interpretation.

**Hypothesis Testing Results for SEM-PLS**

Hypothesis testing was conducted by examining the T-statistics and P-values. A hypothesis is accepted if T-statistics > 1.96 and P-values < 0.05, indicating that the relationship between variables is significant at a 95% confidence level. Below are the hypothesis testing results based on the SEM-PLS analysis:

**Table 10. Hypothesis Testing Results**

No	Hipotesis	Koefisien (O)	t-statistic	p-value	Kesimpulan
H1	Brand ambassador → Brand Trust	0,752	9,062	0,000	Accepted (significant)
H2	Digital marketing → Kepercayaan merek	0,053	0,549	0,583	Not Accepted (Not Significant)
H3	Brand ambassador → Keputusan pembelian	0,192	2,146	0,032	Accepted (significant)
H4	Digital marketing → Keputusan pembelian	0,478	6,181	0,000	Accepted (significant)
H5	Kepercayaan merek → Keputusan pembelian	0,293	4,172	0,000	Accepted (significant)
H6	Brand ambassador → Kepercayaan merek → Keputusan pembelian	0,221	3,381	0,001	Accepted (Mediation significant)

No	Hipotesis	Koefisien (O)	t-statistic	p-value	Kesimpulan
H7	Digital marketing → Kepercayaan merek → Keputusan pembelian	0,015	0,552	0,581	Not Accepted (Mediation Not Significant)

The analysis shows significant variations in the effects between the hypotheses tested in this study. First, the first hypothesis confirms that the brand ambassador has a significant positive effect on brand trust for Whiskas products. With an original sample value of 0.752, a p-value of 0.000, and a t-statistic of 9.062, it can be concluded that the more effective the brand ambassador, the higher the consumer's trust in the brand.

However, for the second hypothesis, digital marketing does not show a significant effect on brand trust. The original sample value is only 0.053, with a p-value of 0.583 and a t-statistic of 0.549, indicating a weak influence in this context.

Next, the third hypothesis indicates that the brand ambassador also has a significant positive contribution to purchase decisions, with a coefficient value of 0.192, a p-value of 0.032, and a t-statistic of 2.146. This suggests that the presence of a brand ambassador can encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions.

In terms of digital marketing, the fourth hypothesis shows a significant positive effect on purchase decisions, with a coefficient value of 0.478, a p-value of 0.000, and a t-statistic of 6.181. This emphasizes the importance of digital marketing strategies in influencing consumer decisions.

The fifth hypothesis highlights that brand trust has a significant positive effect on purchase decisions. With an original sample value of 0.293, a p-value of 0.000, and a t-statistic of 4.172, the greater the consumer's trust in the Whiskas brand, the more likely they are to purchase the product.

The sixth hypothesis indicates that brand trust mediates the effect of the brand ambassador on purchase decisions. The indirect effect value is 0.221, with a p-value of 0.001 and a t-statistic of 3.381, showing significant mediation.

However, the seventh hypothesis states that brand trust does not mediate the effect of digital marketing on purchase decisions. The indirect effect is only 0.015, with a p-value of 0.581 and a t-statistic of 0.552, indicating that mediation does not occur significantly.

Overall, these findings emphasize the important roles of brand ambassadors and digital marketing in building brand trust and influencing purchase decisions, as well as demonstrating the mediating role of brand trust in certain contexts.

### Limitation

The study has several limitations that affect its findings. First, it focuses specifically on Whiskas cat food and cat owners in Samarinda, meaning the results may not apply to other regions or consumer groups. The sample size and diversity are also critical; a limited or homogeneous sample could compromise the robustness of the conclusions.

Additionally, the research employs a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single moment, which does not account for changes in consumer behavior over time. There is also the potential for measurement bias since respondents might give socially desirable answers instead of their true opinions.

The complexity of constructs like brand trust and digital marketing, influenced by numerous external factors, may not be fully considered. As digital marketing strategies evolve rapidly, the effectiveness of the tactics referenced might change.

Furthermore, while the study identifies relationships between variables, it does not establish clear causation, particularly in how brand trust mediates the effects of brand ambassadors and marketing. Its regional focus means it might not reflect broader trends, especially between urban and rural behaviors.

The emphasis on immediate purchase decisions risks ignoring long-term brand loyalty trends, and subjective evaluations of the effectiveness of marketing strategies could lead to results that do not accurately represent actual sales or performance.

## CONCLUSION

The study on the influence of brand ambassadors and digital marketing on purchasing decisions for Whiskas cat food products in Samarinda reveals several key findings. First, brand ambassadors play a significant role in building brand trust, as credible public figures can enhance consumer perceptions. Conversely, digital marketing does not show a significant impact on brand trust, indicating the need for a more relational approach.

Brand ambassadors also directly contribute to purchasing decisions, although their influence is not as strong as that of brand trust. Digital marketing, on the other hand, proves effective in driving purchase decisions through relevant information and media accessibility. Brand trust serves as a crucial factor in purchasing decisions and mediates the influence of brand ambassadors. However, brand trust does not mediate the impact of digital marketing, suggesting that a more direct approach is necessary.

Based on the research findings, several recommendations can be made. First, companies are advised to choose brand ambassadors who have appeal and relevance to the pet care industry. Second, digital marketing strategies should be improved by focusing on emotional connections through educational content and interactions on social media.

Companies must also maintain consistent quality of products and services to uphold consumer trust. Additionally, integrated campaigns combining brand ambassadors and digital content can be more effective in building positive perceptions. Market segmentation based on consumer digital preferences and an emphasis on trust-based marketing should also be implemented to strengthen long-term relationships.

Regular evaluations of marketing strategy effectiveness and increasing consumer knowledge about the products are also very important. Finally, building a community of cat lovers can enhance emotional engagement and brand loyalty.

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