How Micro-Influencers, Brand Ambassadors, and Brand Communities Drive E-Commerce Sales

Vincent Octavianus
Program Studi Bisnis Digital, Universitas Bunda Mulia, Jakarta, Indonesia

Helidorus Fourtiando Wijaya
Program Studi Bisnis Digital, Universitas Bunda Mulia, Jakarta, Indonesia

Shellda Lestari
Program Studi Bisnis Digital, Universitas Bunda Mulia, Jakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Objective – This study tries to measure the influence of micro influencers, brand ambassadors and brand communities on luxury brand sales in e-commerce.

Methodology – To analyze the influence and relationships between the variables and potentially generalize findings, a quantitative research design is the method that involves collecting numerical data and using statistical analysis to identify patterns and test hypotheses. A survey method using questionnaires is a strong possibility for collecting data from a large enough sample of consumers who purchase luxury brands on e-commerce platforms. The study employs purposive sampling to target individuals who meet specific criteria, such as those who follow micro-influencers and brand ambassadors, are part of brand communities related to luxury brands, and have made luxury brand purchases on e-commerce platforms.

Findings – This research found that micro-influencers, brand ambassadors, and brand communities each positively and significantly influence luxury brand purchasing behavior in e-commerce. Furthermore, the combined use of these three marketing strategies has a substantial positive impact on driving luxury brand sales online.

Novelty – While individual roles of micro-influencers, brand ambassadors, and brand communities might have been studied separately, this research provides empirical evidence for their *combined and complementary influence* on luxury brand purchasing behavior specifically within the e-commerce context.

Keywords: micro influencer, brand ambassador, brand communities, luxury brand

I. INTRODUCTION

The presence of e-commerce platforms has enabled consumers to access a wide variety of products, including luxury brand products. With the presence of e-commerce, various forms of digital marketing have

also begun to emerge from brands that use e-commerce platforms. Social media brand ambassadors are a common marketing strategy used to raise brand recognition (Aisyah, 2023). The increase in brand awareness has led to an increase in brand consumers, including Micro Influencers. From this increase in consumers, a brand community can also be formed, which is a community of consumers who are loyal to a brand (Amoah et al., 2022). The phenomenon of influencer marketing plays an important role in influencing consumer preferences and purchasing decisions, especially in the context of luxury brand products (Joyce, 2024).

In this era, the use of influencers has become a popular marketing strategy for luxury brands, given the appeal and influence of influencers in creating emotional connections with their audiences (Li, 2024). However, although there have been many studies examining the influence of influencers in the context of marketing, there is still little research that focuses on the relationship between the influence of micro influencers, brand ambassadors, and brand communities in the context of luxury brand purchases on e-commerce platforms.

Thus, this study aims to analyze the influence of these three entities (micro influencers, brand ambassadors, and brand communities) on consumer purchasing behavior towards luxury brands on e-commerce platforms. A deep understanding of how these three entities interact and influence each other in this context will provide valuable insights for everyone to know the main factors that cause this form of marketing.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Micro Influencer

Micro influencers are individuals who have followers on social media in the range of 10,000 to 50,000 followers (Conde & Casais, 2023). The presence of micro influencers is often considered a more credible and trustworthy source of information by their followers (van Reijmersdal et al., 2024). This is because micro influencers build more intense relationships with their audiences, usually based on shared interests and hobbies.

For example, a micro influencer who focuses on fitness is likely to have followers who are genuinely interested in health and sports topics. In the context of digital marketing, micro influencers play a role in helping brands reach specific audiences. With a more personal and authentic approach, they can help brands build stronger relationships with consumers and increase brand awareness among targeted audiences. One of the main advantages of micro influencers is having a high engagement rate.

Brand Ambassador

Before the internet era, word-of-mouth marketing or word-of-mouth marketing techniques were enough to support a company's marketing efforts (Zhao et al., 2023). Now, word-of-mouth marketing has undergone many changes and modifications in a new form. We live in a time when business on social media is growing rapidly.

A brand ambassador is someone who promotes a brand and its products to their network with the aim of increasing brand awareness and driving sales (Clarissa & Bernarto, 2022). A brand ambassador is someone who loves your brand, wants your brand to succeed, and really uses your product. If the company chooses the brand ambassador, then they will continuously promote your brand according to the agreed and determined time. Overall, they must agree according to the contract and choose your brand, either offline such as seminars and exhibitions or online through social media. Because this then calls for appearances on social media, events, shows, and others, they then have to always choose your brand over the competitor's brand. Usually, a BA is someone who is famous such as a public figure, actor, model, or musician with

Vincent Octavianus, Helidorus Fourtiando Wijaya, Shellda Lestari

social media followers ranging from tens of thousands to tens of millions. In general, a brand ambassador is an influencer or someone who is known by many people and is paid to then accept an endorsement of a product.

Brand Community

Brand community is a social group consisting of people who are formed on the basis of closeness or similarity of interest in liking a particular product or brand, and are active in the real world, physical or virtual world (Martínez-López et al., 2021). A brand community is a community that is structured on the basis of a person's closeness to a product or brand, so that they have the same thoughts and commitments about a particular brand that is not based on geography, but rather on the social structure of the community.

A brand community is one of the important tools in building a brand. A brand community can be formed physically in the real world (offline) or virtually in the virtual world (online). In the real world, community members generally gather and interact in a predetermined location which is usually under the auspices of the brand owner (Aditya & Setyawan, 2024). Meanwhile, virtual communities share interactions and experiences about brands in the online virtual world.

Luxury Brand

Luxury brand is a brand that has the characteristics of high quality, exclusive, and relatively expensive prices (Ko et al., 2019). This luxury brand is present in various sectors, ranging from hospitality, clothing, automotive, gadgets, and many more. Entrepreneurs who use the luxury brand strategy try to sell to everyone who can afford it. Even though it is sold at a very high price, these luxury brands are still in demand. This is inseparable from how to maintain quality, marketing, and management. In essence, scarcity is the key in marketing these luxury goods, making them aspirational (Wang et al., 2024). There are several characteristics of luxury brands, such as expertise, heritage, creativity, and superior performance. This is what then makes luxury and expensive goods still sell well on the market.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the discussion, the hypotheses of this study are:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the existence of a Brand Ambassador and the decision to purchase a luxury brand in e-commerce.

H2: There is a positive relationship between participation in Brand Communities and purchasing decisions for luxury brands in e-commerce.

H3: There is a positive relationship between the combined influence of Micro Influencers, Brand Ambassadors, and Brand Communities with luxury brand purchasing decisions in e-commerce.

III. METHODOLOGY

The subjects in this study were social media users and e-commerce platforms who follow micro influencers, brand ambassadors or are included in brand communities. The object of this study is user behavior in purchasing luxury brand products if influenced by micro influencers, brand ambassadors or brand communities.

Distribution of online questionnaire links via Google form to subjects to obtain each subject's opinion regarding their behavior in purchasing luxury brand products if influenced by micro influencers, brand ambassadors and brand communities. In this questionnaire we use a Likert scale from one to five, one is 'Strongly disagree' and five is 'Strongly agree'. The data we obtain from the survey will be analyzed descriptively to obtain a general picture of user behavior towards various variables.

Vincent Octavianus, Helidorus Fourtiando Wijaya, Shellda Lestari

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Based on the data, it is known that the majority of respondents are male, with 68 respondents or 66% of the total 103 respondents, and female respondents with 35 respondents or 34% of the 103 respondents. Based on the data, the largest number of respondents were aged 16-20 years with a frequency of 58 respondents which is 56.3% of 103 respondents, then followed by the age of 21-25 with a frequency of 28 (27.2% of 103 respondents), the age of 26-30 with a frequency of 11 (10.7% of 103 respondents), and finally the smallest number of respondents were respondents aged 30 and above (> 30) which is 5.8% of 103 respondents. Based on the data, respondents domiciled in the Jabodetabek area have 72 respondents, covering 69.9% of the 103 respondents, while respondents domiciled outside Jabodetabek have 31 respondents, covering 30.1% of the 103 respondents.

Reliability and Validity

It can be seen that all variables passed the Cronbach's alpha evaluation because each variable has a Cronbach's alpha value > 0.70. Then from the composite reliability evaluation, it can also be seen that each variable passed the composite reliability evaluation test because all of them have a composite reliability value greater than the standard, namely 0.70. As shown by the previous validity and reliability value evaluation, the data collection instruments used in this study are valid and reliable. so it can be concluded that the measuring instrument or instrument used in this study has a consistency that can be accounted for.

The first stage validity test is the convergent validity test. The convergent validity test is divided into two stages, namely outer loadings and AVE. In the results of the convergent validity test, there are outer loading values that do not meet the standard value above 0.70.

Table 1 shows the AVE value of all variables where the four research variables have met the set AVE standard, namely > 0.50. This shows that the convergent validity test can be accepted and continued by conducting a discriminant validity test.

Table 1 Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Ambassador	0.717	0.717	0.876	0.779
Brand Communities	0.789	0.823	0.876	0.703
Micro Influencer	0.772	0.786	0.897	0.813
Perilaku Pengguna	0.614	0.614	0.796	0.567

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the attached Path Coefficient (see Table 2), it can be concluded that the BA variable has a positive and very significant effect on the PP variable with a p value of 0.000 or less than 0.05. Meanwhile, the relationship between the MI variable has a positive effect on the PP variable with a p value of 0.033 which is less than 0.05, as well as the relationship between the BC variable which has a positive effect on the PP variable with a p value of 0.047 which is also less than 0.05

Table 2 Bootstrapping Results

Vincent Octavianus, Helidorus Fourtiando Wijaya, Shellda Lestari

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Brand Ambassador -> Perilaku Pengguna	0.489	0.485	0.105	4.636	0.000
Brand Communities -> Perilaku Pengguna	0.201	0.201	0.101	1.991	0.047
Micro Influencer -> Perilaku Pengguna	0.234	0.239	0.110	2.140	0.033

Discussion

In testing the research hypothesis, it was carried out using SmartPLS data processing software version 3.2.9, so we have obtained the results of the overall test. The first variable is MI (Micro Influencer, the second variable is BA (Brand Ambassador), the third variable is BC (Brand Communities), and the last variable is PP (User Behavior).

The following are some of the variable relationships that have been summarized. The BA variable has a positive and very significant effect on the PP variable with a p value of 0.000 or less than 0.05. While the relationship between the MI variable has a positive effect on the PP variable with a p value of 0.033 which is less than 0.05, as well as the relationship between the BC variable which has a positive effect on the PP variable with a p value of 0.047 which is also less than 0.05.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn. Influence of Micro Influencers: Micro influencers play an important role in influencing the purchasing behavior of luxury brand products in e-commerce. Their influence on consumer purchasing decisions is quite positive because of the more personal and authentic relationships they build with their audience.

Role of Brand Ambassadors: Brand ambassadors have a significant influence in influencing consumer purchasing decisions for luxury brand products in e-commerce. Their presence increases brand awareness and builds a strong brand image in the eyes of consumers.

Interaction in Brand Communities: Participation and interaction in brand communities also contribute positively to luxury brand purchasing decisions. This community provides a sense of togetherness and responsibility among members, which strengthens consumer loyalty to the brand.

Combination of Influences: The combination of influences from micro influencers, brand ambassadors, and brand communities has a significant impact on consumer purchasing behavior. These factors complement each other and strengthen each other's influence in shaping consumer preferences and purchasing decisions.

This study reveals that micro influencers, brand ambassadors, and brand communities have a positive and significant influence on luxury brand product purchasing behavior in e-commerce. This shows that marketing strategies involving these three entities can be a key factor in increasing luxury brand sales on e-commerce platforms.

Overall, the conclusion obtained is that micro influencers, brand ambassadors, and brand communities have a positive and significant influence on luxury brand product purchasing behavior in e-commerce. This shows that marketing strategies involving these three entities can be a key factor in increasing luxury brand sales on e-commerce platforms.

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, the researcher provides the following suggestions: (1) Optimizing Micro Influencer Strategy: Companies can optimize their marketing strategies by working more with micro influencers who have loyal followers. Selecting micro influencers that match the characteristics of the target market can increase the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, (2) Utilizing Brand Ambassadors: Utilizing brand ambassadors who have a positive image and are in line with the values

Vincent Octavianus, Helidorus Fourtiando Wijaya, Shellda Lestari

of the luxury brand will help build a strong emotional connection with consumers. The selection of brand ambassadors must consider their popularity and influence on the target audience, (3) Developing Brand Communities: Companies need to focus on developing and empowering brand communities by holding special events and providing a comfortable interaction platform for community members. Building a sense of togetherness and commitment in the community will increase consumer loyalty, (4) Combination of Marketing Strategies: Combining various marketing strategies through the use of micro influencers, brand ambassadors, and brand communities will provide more optimal results. Companies need to design integrated marketing campaigns to utilize the strengths of each entity in influencing consumer purchasing decisions, (5) Further research is needed to better understand the interaction mechanism between micro influencers, brand ambassadors, and brand communities in influencing consumer purchasing behavior, (6) Longitudinal studies can be conducted to see changes in consumer purchasing behavior over time in response to marketing strategies involving the three entities, and (7) It is important to consider other factors that can also influence consumer purchasing behavior, such as price, product quality, and brand reputation, in the context of luxury brand purchases in e-commerce.

Future Research
Conduct a comparative study between the influence of micro influencers, brand ambassadors, and brand communities on consumer purchasing behavior on other e-commerce platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok. Expand the scope of the study to involve respondents from various regions, not just from Jabodetabek, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of consumer purchasing behavior in Indonesia. Examine the impact of external factors, such as fashion trends, economic conditions, and cultural factors, on purchasing behavior of luxury brand products on e-commerce.

REFERENCES

Aditya, D., & Setyawan, A. A. (2024). The Role Of Brand Communities And Community Engagement In Building Brand Trust In Social Media. Management Studies and Entrepreneurship Journal (MSEJ), 4(5), 5727–5733.

Aisyah, M. (2023). The impact of a regional brand ambassador and social media advertising on brand trust and brand loyalty of Lazada in Indonesia. International Journal of Data and Network Science, 7, 1929-1940.

Amoah, J., Jibril, A. B., Bankuoru Egala, S., & Keelson, S. A. (2022). Online brand community and consumer brand trust: Analysis from Czech millenials. Cogent Business & Management, 9(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2022.2149152

Clarissa, C., & Bernarto, I. (2022). The Influence of Brand Ambassador, Brand Awareness, Brand Image and Prices on Purchase Decisions on Online Marketplace. Business and Entrepreneurial Review, 22(2), 273-288.

Conde, R., & Casais, B. (2023) Micro, macro and mega-influencers on Instagram: The power of persuasion via the parasocial relationship. Journal of Business Research, 158, 113708.

Joyce L. (2024). Influence of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intentions. American Journal of Public Relations, 3(1), 1–11.

Ko, E., Costello, J. P., & Taylor, C. R. (2019). What is a luxury brand? A new definition and review of the literature. Journal of Business Research, 99, 405-413.

Li, J. (2024). A Study of Utilizing Social Media for Luxury Brand Promotion. Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, 35, 373-379.

Martínez-López, F. J., Aguilar-Illescas, R., Molinillo, S., Anaya-Sánchez, R., Coca-Stefaniak, J. A., & Esteban-Millat, I. (2021). The Role of Online Brand Community Engagement on the Consumer–Brand Relationship. Sustainability, 13(7), 3679.

van Reijmersdal, E. A., Walet, M., & Gudmundsdóttir, A. (2024), Influencer marketing: explaining the effects of influencer self-presentation strategies on brand responses through source credibility. Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 42(7), 1214-1233.

Wang, X., Sung, B. & Phau, I. How rarity and exclusivity influence types of perceived value for luxury. Journal of Brand Management, 31, 576–592.

Zhao, S., Jiang, Z., Li, Y., & Meng, J. (2023). How does Word-of-mouth Marketing Affect Customer Loyalty. Advances in Economics, Management and Political Sciences, 10, 51-57.

Vincent Octavianus, Helidorus Fourtiando Wijaya, Shellda Lestari