



Research Paper

# The Power Play: How Celebrity Endorser Credibility and Digital Marketing Shape Purchase Decisions through Brand Equity

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## ABSTRACT:

*This study aims to examine the influence of digital marketing and the credibility of celebrity endorsers on purchasing decisions through brand equity for the Erigo fashion brand in Malang Town Square. By involving 105 respondents as a sample by quantitative researched, the researchers found that celebrity endorser credibility had a positive effect on brand equity and purchasing decisions, while digital marketing only had a positive effect on purchasing decisions and had no effect on brand equity. Overall, the results of the study indicate that brand equity mediates the influence of celebrity endorser credibility on purchasing decisions. This study provides an overview of how the influence of digital marketing and the credibility of celebrity endorsers can influence purchasing decisions through brand equity at the Erigo fashion brand in Malang Town Square.*

**KEYWORDS:** Lifestyle, financial literacy, financial technology, financial management

*Received 14 Oct., 2023; Revised 27 Oct., 2023; Accepted 29 Oct., 2023 © The author(s) 2023.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Technological developments that have an accelerating impact on the distribution of information have become an opportunity in the field of marketing a product. The widespread use of social media as a sales medium has created a new trend in the application of promotion mixes so that Digital marketing strategies have replaced traditional marketing strategies (Al-azzam & Al-mizeed, 2021). The use of influencers to introduce products effectively can influence purchasing decisions. In fact, 49% of consumers rely heavily on influencer recommendations before they buy (Lengkawati & Saputra, 2021). The selection of Influencers or Celebrity Endorsers for companies must guarantee that the usage of Figure Endorsers provides benefits to the firm (Amelia et al., 2020). When a business actor has paid a high price or partnered with a Celebrity Endorser who is not credible, it could be because a Sensational Celebrity Endorser makes the Celebrity Endorser unpopular in the community, or a Celebrity Endorser who is found to behave inappropriately in society, this can have an impact on the brand image used. The findings of Ramadhani & Nadya's (2020) study show that Celebrity Endorsers have no significant influence on purchasing decisions, in contrast to the findings of Pratiwiningsih (2018), who claims that the higher the quality and popularity of Celebrity Endorsers used, the greater the desire of consumers to make purchasing decisions (Paramytha et al., 2020)

On the other side, purchasing decisions are strongly tied to brand equity, which is the extra value offered to products and services. (A. Y. Pratama et al., 2022) This value may be demonstrated in how customers think, feel, and act in relation to the company's brand, pricing, market share, and profitability (Agustini & Suasana, 2020). Customers base their purchasing decisions on brand equity. The company's strong Brand Equity will be able to affect customer satisfaction, which will have an impact on product purchase intentions (Febrian & Ahluwalia, 2020). The development of the digital world has an influence on how products are marketed. Shopping patterns are shifting from traditional to online based. This of course forces the business world to adjust the marketing strategies used. The internet opens up access for companies to take advantage of extraordinary digital marketing opportunities. By using various Digital Marketing platform channels that cover all marketing efforts that use electronic devices or the internet (Al-azzam & Al-mizeed, 2021) (Barokah, 2022) proves that Digital Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions with a large 49.73%

influence and the remaining 50.27% influenced by other factors. In its development, the world of digital marketing requires people who are able to explain their products in detail and at the same time have an influence so that their products can be trusted, which ultimately helps consumers make purchasing decisions. The people chosen to market this product are selected from public figures or people who have influence on society or customers. This strategy is often called endorsement, namely marketing communications using famous figures such as artists, fashion bloggers, fashion stylists and others as a means of supporting and supporting public interest in the products offered on the social media used (Makna & Setiadi, 2022).

Problems arise when companies have to choose which digital platforms and celebrities can boost sales. The phenomenon that exists is that using widely popular platforms and well-known celebrities does not necessarily encourage increased sales, and in certain cases, errors in selecting digital platforms and celebrities can actually worsen the product's brand image. research conducted by (Khoziyah & Lubis, 2021) revealed that the choice of digital marketing even has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, and the use of celebrities to increase sales does not necessarily increase.

Problems arise when companies have to choose which digital platforms and celebrities can boost sales. The phenomenon that exists is that the use of widely popular platforms and famous celebrities does not necessarily encourage increased sales, and in certain cases the wrong choice of digital platforms and celebrities can actually worsen the product's brand image. research conducted by (Harlim et al., 2022) revealed that choosing digital marketing did not even have a significant effect on purchasing decisions, and the use of celebrities to increase sales did not necessarily increase purchasing decisions (Febriani & Khairusy, 2020), while other research revealed findings that actually stated the importance of using digital marketing and celebrities to introduce products that encourage purchasing decisions (Mewoh, 2019) Answering how information about a product can reach customers, especially for the Erigo brand, which is expected to increase purchasing decisions, research that examines the influence of digital marketing and the use of celebrities on purchasing decisions mediated by product brand equity needs to be carried out to determine the position of these variables in strategy. marketing that will be used

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Purchasing choices are the purpose of all marketing instruments employed while selling a product. According to (Astuti, 2021), purchase decisions are acts done to solve problems that develop and must be addressed, or efforts taken to attain goals as soon and as cheaply as feasible. Cultural, social, personal, and psychological aspects all affect purchase decisions (Kotlert and Keller, 2016). A purchasing decision reflects consumer behaviour because purchasing decisions will ultimately result in customer satisfaction, so purchasing decisions are reflected in product selection, brand selection, distributor location selection, purchase time and purchase amount, as well as payment methods (Kotlert and Keller, 2016)

In their endeavor to influence consumer buying decisions, entrepreneurs employ various sales strategies for their products, with one of them being digital marketing. Digital marketing is a promotional approach that heavily leverages the internet and relies on social media platforms (Fadhli & Pratiwi, 2021). In today's globalized world, the adoption of digital marketing is crucial due to its wide reach and user-friendliness (Sopiyan, 2022). As highlighted by Utami & Marzuko (2021), there are several benefits associated with using digital marketing for product promotion. These advantages encompass the ability to target specific demographics, lifestyles, and habits; facilitate easy product discovery; allow sellers to make prompt adjustments if needed; extend the marketing reach; provide measurable outcomes; and offer convenient customer engagement opportunities. Given the ever-accelerating pace of technological advancement, contemporary marketing strategies must stay up-to-date. Digital marketing emerges as a preferred choice in this context, guided by parameters identified by D Herhausen (2020), including social media, digital relationships, and digital technology.

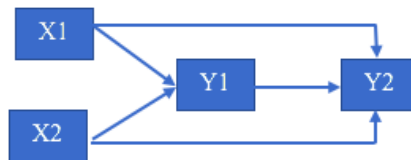
Utilising digital platforms for marketing necessitates individuals who are regarded as trustworthy to introduce the product. This is because online sales diverge from the traditional sales approach, which places greater emphasis on the buyer's direct interaction with the merchandise, allowing them to assess various aspects, including product quality. As previously discussed, purchasing decisions are a manifestation of consumer behaviour, which, in theory, culminates in consumer satisfaction. To attain this ultimate objective, it becomes essential to enlist individuals capable of representing the company, elucidating product specifications, and furnishing dependable information. This may manifest in the form of testimonials regarding product usage, thereby obviating the necessity for consumers to engage directly with the merchandise on offer and instead rely on explanations provided by company representatives. Companies collaborate with individuals who endorse products and whose credibility is beyond question in conveying advertising messages; this concept is known as endorser credibility. Consumers inclination to rely on endorsers as conveyors of a brand's message is influenced by the credibility of the information transmitter. This credibility, in turn, plays a crucial role in

shaping beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and behaviours during the evaluation process. The message recipient's trust in the information sourced from a credible communicator is a key aspect, as outlined by Belch (2014). This trustworthiness is gauged through parameters such as 1) the endorser's trustworthiness, 2) the endorser's expertise, 3) the endorser's physical attractiveness, 4) the endorser's accomplishments, and 5) the endorser's hobbies or passions.

Among the multitude of factors capable of impacting consumer purchasing decisions, the pivotal determinant that profoundly affects customer satisfaction remains the product itself. Typically, a product is accompanied by a brand to set it apart from similar offerings in the market. The brand plays a crucial role by providing an identity that can imbue added value if it has the potential to influence an individual's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors regarding the brand.(Rofiq et al., 2020) Furthermore, it significantly contributes to aspects like price, market share, and the company's profitability, a concept referred to as brand equity.As elucidated by Algustin & Matoati (2020,) the primary parameters that determine a product's brand equity encompass 1) Brand Awareness 2) Brand Image/Brand Association 3) Brand Loyalty.

Based on the assortment of assumptions crafted to identify the determinants impacting purchasing decisions, a research framework can be constructed in the form of the following figure:

**Figure 1. Conceptual framework research**



Note: Y1 = Brand Equity; Y2 = Purchase Decisions; X1 = Digital Marketing; X2 = Celebrity Endorser Credibility

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

The research methodology employs a causal design utilizing a quantitative approach. Data for this study is derived from a questionnaire distributed to consumers visiting the Erigo booth located at Malang Town Square. The sample size comprised 105 individuals, and the distribution of frequencies is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1. Distribution Frequency**

Digital Marketing Items	Average
I was interested in buying Erigo products after seeing the products through social media	4,35
I got information about Erigo through social media very easily	4,30
I can get services from Erigo through social media	4,34
<b>Average social media score</b>	4,33
Erigo always responds well to online complaint services	4,31
Online communication can help save time	4,30
<b>Average Digital Relationship score</b>	4,31
Content (images or videos) on Erigo social media attracts attention	4,34
Erigo product and purchasing information can be accessed easily via mobile phone	4,38
<b>average Digital Technologies score</b>	4,36
<b>average digital marketing score (x1)</b>	4,33
Celebrity endorser credibility items	Average
Celebrities or celebrity endorsers of Erigo can be recognized for their credibility	4,35
Erigo products presented by celebrities or celebs as endorsers increase the feeling of confidence in trying the product	4,30
<b>Average trust score</b>	4,33
Celebrities or celebrities as endorsers attract attention when introducing and using Erigo products	3,99
Celebrities or celebrities as endorsers are charismatic, good-looking and attractive	4,28

Digital Marketing Items	Average
<b>average attractiveness score</b>	4,14
Celebrities or celebrities as endorsers are experts in conveying messages about Erigo product	4,34
Celebrities or celebs as endorsers have experience in using Erigo products	3,96
<b>average skill score</b>	4,15
<b>average celebrity endorser credibility score (X2)</b>	4,20
Brand Equity Items	Average
Erigo brand Familiar (not foreign) in my environment	4,33
The Erigo brand is easy to remember and recognize	4,01
The Erigo brand is easy to find everywhere	4,33
<b>Average Brand awareness score</b>	4,22
Erigo products provide quality results	4,03
The products and services offered are complete	4,02
<b>average Brand Association score</b>	4,03
Erigo products are satisfactory	4,34
I recommend others to use Erigo	4,33
I made a repeat purchase	4,32
<b>average Brand Loyalty score</b>	4,33
<b>average Brand Equity score (Y1)</b>	4,19
Purchase Decision Items	Average
Erigo products have advantages over competitors with the same price and product	3,98
Erigo products have good reviews	3,96
Erigo product prices are affordable	3,96
<b>average Product Selection score</b>	3,97
The Erigo brand is well known in my area	3,98
Erigo is a trusted brand	4,39
Erigo Easy to reach	3,99
<b>average Brand selection score</b>	4,12
It's easy to make purchases at Erigo	4,34
The price of Erigo for each outlet is the same	4,02
<b>Average Dealer Selection score</b>	4,18
I purchased more than one product	4,00
Erigo offers product promo packages	3,99
I buy as needed	4,38
<b>Average purchase count score</b>	4,12
The operational hours of outlets and distributors are according to my time	3,99
Erigo often holds promos at certain times	4,09
Average timing score	4,04
Payment methods at Erigo vary	4,39
Fast payment process	4,01
<b>Average payment method score</b>	4,20
<b>Average Purchase Decision score (Y.2)</b>	4,11

#### IV. RESEARCH RESULT

The Erigo fashion store at Malang Town Square is situated on the third floor of Jalan Veteran no 2, Penanggungan, in the Klojen sub-district of Malang city. It's conveniently located just across from Cinepolis Malang Town Square, making it easily accessible. On specific days, the staff members overseeing the Erigo store are expected to wear clothing from the Erigo brand. This practice is aimed at assuring customers of

the product quality and providing a sense of what it's like to use their products. The brand is known for its contemporary, stylish, comfortable, and affordable offerings, making it a popular choice among customers. The participants in this research were individuals who visited and made purchasing decisions at the Erigo store, with the majority of them being females, accounting for 54.29%. Approximately 40% of them fell within the age group of 20-25, while 32% were under the age of 20. This suggests that a significant portion of Erigo's customer base comprises young individuals.

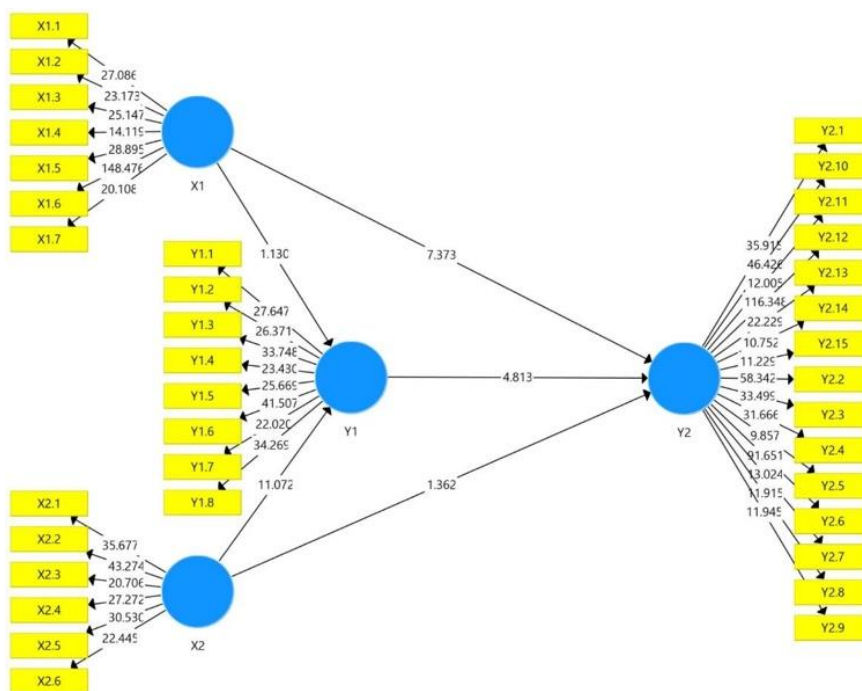
The results of the descriptive statistical analysis indicate that the average score for the digital marketing variable is quite impressive, standing at 4.33. Notably, the interest indicator related to the statement "Accessing Erigo product and purchasing information via mobile phone is easy" has the highest average score of 4.38, whereas the indicator associated with the statement "Obtaining information about Erigo through social media is very easy" has the lowest average score of 4.30.

In terms of the Celebrity Endorser Credibility variable, the average score is 4.20. The indicator related to the credibility of Celebrities or celebrity endorsers of Erigo has the highest average score of 4.35, while the indicator reflecting their experience in using Erigo products has the lowest score, which is 3.99.

Regarding the Brand Equity variable, indicators such as "The Erigo brand is familiar in my environment," "The Erigo brand is easily accessible everywhere," and "I recommend others to use Erigo" have the highest average score of 4.33. Conversely, the indicator "The Erigo brand is easy to remember and recognize" has the lowest score of 4.01.

In the context of the purchasing decision variable, the overall average score is 4.11. The indicator item "Payment methods at Erigo vary" has the highest score, standing at 4.39, while the lowest score pertains to the items "Erigo products have good reviews" and "Erigo product prices are affordable," both with a score of 3.96.

Figure 2. Results of Outer Model



Using SmartPLS v.3.2.9 software to analyze the outer model's indicator loadings, we can establish hypothesis testing based on the subsequent table.

Table 2: Immediate Effect

	T Statistik (  O/STDEV  )	P Values	Result
X1 -> Y1	1,13	0,26	Rejected
X1 -> Y2	7,37	0,00	Accepted
X2 -> Y1	11,07	0,00	Accepted
X2 -> Y2	1,36	0,17	Rejected
Y1 -> Y2	4,81	0,00	Accepted

**Table 3: Indirect Effect**

	T Statistik ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Result
X1 -> Y1 -> Y2	1,03	0,35	Rejected
X2 -> Y1 -> Y2	4,60	0,00	Accepted

Here is an explanation of the table above: The variable "Digital Marketing" (X1) has a t-count value that is less than the t-table value, specifically, the P-Value is 0.26, which is greater than 0.05, and the t-statistic is 1.13, which is less than 1.96. Consequently, Hypothesis 1 is rejected, indicating that "Digital Marketing" (X1) does not exert an influence on "Brand Equity." In other words, the utilization of digital marketing does not impact the enhancement of Erigo product brand equity. On the other hand, the P-Value for "Digital Marketing" is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, and the t-statistic is 7.37, which is greater than 1.96. This signifies that digital marketing indeed affects "Purchasing Decisions." In simpler terms, the use of digital marketing can lead to an increase in consumer purchasing decisions.

Regarding the variable "Celebrity Endorser Credibility" (X2), its P-Value is 0.000, less than 0.05, and the t-statistic is 11.07, exceeding 1.96. This implies that "Celebrity Endorser Credibility" significantly influences "Brand Equity." In essence, incorporating Celebrity Endorser Credibility into marketing strategies contributes to an increase in Erigo product brand equity. In the subsequent hypothesis, the P-Value for "Celebrity Endorser Credibility" is 0.00, less than 0.05, but the t-statistic is 1.36, less than 1.96. This suggests that "Celebrity Endorser Credibility" does not have a substantial effect on "Purchasing Decisions." In other words, using Celebrity Endorser Credibility doesn't necessarily guarantee that consumers will make purchases; their decisions still hinge on personal preferences and desires.

Moving on to the variable "Brand Equity" (Y1), its P-Value is 0.00, less than 0.05, and the t-statistic is 4.81, surpassing 1.96. This indicates that "Brand Equity" indeed influences "Purchasing Decisions," implying that consumers are more inclined to make purchase decisions when the brand has a strong product equity. Additionally, with a P-Value of 0.00, less than 0.05, and a t-statistic of 1.03, less than 1.96, "Brand Equity" cannot mediate the relationship between "Digital Marketing" and "Purchasing Decisions." This suggests that the use of digital marketing alone does not necessarily increase brand equity, which, in turn, could aid consumers in their purchasing decisions. Finally, the results of the last hypothesis test show a P-Value of 0.00, less than 0.05, and a t-statistic of 4.60, exceeding 0.000. This indicates that "Brand Equity" can mediate the impact of "Celebrity Endorser Credibility" on "Purchasing Decisions." In other words, the utilization of Celebrity Endorser Credibility will boost product brand equity and ultimately contribute to increased purchasing decisions for Erigo products.

## V. DISCUSSION

In this study, the results differ from those of Silalahi's (2019) research and align with the findings of Angkie's (2019) study, which demonstrates a notable positive impact of digital marketing on Brand Equity. However, this research presents a contrasting perspective. Establishing brand equity is a prolonged endeavor that necessitates patience. While digital marketing can expedite this process, it requires time for consumers to become familiar with, recall, and develop trust in the brand. Ultimately, the quality of the product or service plays a pivotal role in determining brand equity. If the product or service fails to meet expectations or quality standards, it can have an adverse effect on brand equity (D. E. Pratama et al., 2019). Divergent outcomes emerged from the statistical data analysis assessing the impact of digital marketing on buying decisions. These research findings corroborated the studies conducted by Darmaningrum (2022) and Putri et al (2022), which demonstrated the significant influence of digital marketing on purchasing decisions. This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that digital marketing enables brands to extend their reach to a broader online audience. Through the optimization of websites, online advertising campaigns, and an active presence on social media, brands can effectively connect with potential customers across the globe. This expansive reach offers access to a larger market compared to conventional marketing methods. Additionally, digital marketing empowers brands to pinpoint and target specific demographic and behavioral segments with enhanced precision. Leveraging user data available on digital platforms, advertisements can be tailored to align with individual preferences and requirements, thereby elevating the likelihood of conversion.

The data analysis outcomes further validate the second hypothesis, affirming the influence of Celebrity Endorser Credibility on Brand Equity. This aligns with the findings of Piirman's (2022), which demonstrates a substantial positive impact of Celebrity Endorser Credibility on Brand Equity. This phenomenon arises from consumers' inclination to place trust in celebrities they admire. By establishing an association between a brand and a respected celebrity, consumers tend to instill greater confidence in the brand. This, in

turn, contributes to fostering consumer trust in the brand—a pivotal component of brand equity. Moreover, celebrity endorsers are frequently chosen based on shared values, lifestyles, or characteristics with the brand, fostering a favorable connection between the celebrity and the brand. Consequently, when consumers witness the celebrity endorsing or using the brand's products or services, they are inclined to link these favorable values and traits with the brand. Divergent findings were also observed in the hypothesis examination regarding the impact of Celebrity Endorser Credibility on purchasing decisions, indicating a lack of influence. This study deviates from prior research, which asserted a connection between Celebrity Endorser Credibility and purchasing decisions. This situation could arise due to the presentation of advertising messages and the manner in which the celebrity's credibility is conveyed within the message, both of which have the potential to shape research outcomes. If the framing fails to explicitly emphasize the credibility of the celebrity or is portrayed in a less persuasive manner, the impact may be diminished. Additionally, the context in which celebrity endorsers are featured in advertisements can also play a role in shaping the influence of their credibility on purchasing decisions. When the advertising message does not establish a clear link between the celebrity's credibility and the utility of the promoted product or service, the influence may remain imperceptible.

Based on the outcomes of the hypothesis examination, it is evident that Brand Equity exerts an impact on purchasing decisions. This aligns with the findings of investigations conducted by Jadfán (2017) and receives backing from the research conducted by Khafid (2022). This can be elucidated by the fact that Brand Equity engenders robust brand recognition among consumers. Consumers typically gravitate towards familiar and well-established brands as opposed to unfamiliar ones. When consumers possess a heightened awareness of a brand, they are more inclined to contemplate that particular brand when they are in the process of making a purchase. Furthermore, brands endowed with formidable Brand Equity are often perceived by consumers as being of superior quality. This perception can wield influence over purchasing decisions since consumers frequently display a greater willingness to invest more in products or services that they perceive as being of superior quality. When examining how Brand Equity, digital marketing, and the credibility of celebrity endorsers collaborate to impact purchasing decisions, it is crucial to take into account the particular context, marketing tactics, and the attributes of the consumers involved. In certain scenarios, Brand Equity may not function as a mediating factor in the connection between digital marketing and purchasing decisions, whereas in alternative situations, Brand Equity may exhibit a more pronounced role in establishing a link between the credibility of celebrity endorsers and the decisions to make purchases.

## **VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Enhancing the sales of a product brand can be achieved through a variety of marketing strategies. Numerous factors play a role in shaping consumer buying choices for a product, especially in the context of contemporary marketing approaches. Brand equity can be cultivated through the implementation of digital marketing campaigns and the endorsement of credible celebrities, potentially elevating consumers' purchasing decisions. However, these two factors may not have an immediate impact on the establishment of brand equity and, consequently, may not lead to increased purchasing decisions for several reasons. This research has revealed that digital marketing fails to exert any influence on brand equity, and the utilization of credible celebrities does not affect purchasing decisions to a degree where brand equity can serve as a mediating factor in the relationship between digital marketing and purchasing decisions. Further investigations are warranted to delve deeper into additional factors that could significantly shape the development of brand equity and purchasing decisions, utilizing alternative methodologies to differentiate from the findings of this study.

Recommendations for the Malang Erigo Outlet are to research through a more in-depth survey about other variables that can influence brand equity which can increase purchasing decisions in order to increase sales of Erigo products and be able to dominate the target market that is widely available

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