

Surviving Without a Brand Ambassador: Apple After Steve Jobs

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine how Apple Without a Brand Ambassador on Sales Level and its impact on Apple stock sales. With a quantitative descriptive method, the questionnaire was spread as a tool to collect data using PLS software. The respondents of this study were from all levels of society who have opportunities as consumers of Apple products with the Non-Probability Sampling technique or method of determining the sample by accident (accidental) with 150 samples taken. This study shows that without a brand ambassador, a positive effect on Apple Sales was found. Apple increased sales even though it does not have a Brand Ambassador. Nevertheless, there is no evidence for the non-existence of at the level of stock sales. This means that with or without a Brand Ambassador, the level of stock sales at Apple is not affected.

Further research can be done with other variables, such as the company's performance, which is suspected to influence stock sales. There is a positive influence on Apple's Sales Rate on the Level of Stock Sales. When Apple's sales chart increases, the same thing happens to Apple stock charts.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Sales Rate, Share Sales Rate.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many companies use celebrities to world-famous figures as Brand Ambassadors for their products. For example, Samsung collaborates with BTS as Brand Ambassadors [1] and Huawei with Leonel Messi [2]. Meanwhile, Apple almost never has a Brand Ambassador [3]. The most famous face of Apple is only Steve Jobs, and it's because Steve Jobs is one of the most iconic leaders in the world. Instead of choosing celebrities to be brand ambassadors, Apple invites users of iPhone, iPod, MacBook, and all their products to become Brand Ambassadors. Users are the ones who understand the advantages of each product.

The brand credibility of a product conveyed by a well-known artist to the audience, compared to the credibility of a user who promotes the product to his closest relatives, will undoubtedly provide a different sense of trust [3].

This research aims to find out how Apple is without a brand ambassador, how is the level of sales of Apple products, and how is the level of stock sales at Apple.

1.1. Brand Ambassador

Brand Ambassador is a tool that companies use to connect and communicate with the public about how they take advantage of sales [4]. The job of a brand ambassador provides the means to humanize the brand and develop a particular identity for it [5]. With the right BA selection decisions, companies begin to build higher trust and consumer relationships [5]. Brand Ambassadors can embody the human component of the brand value structure [6] and show their enviable nature because of their status [7]. Ambassadors are often synonymous with or related to celebrities or public figures influential in a country or the world. Celebrities are believed to be a psychological supporting factor that can influence consumer attitudes and beliefs about products [8].

H1: Brand Ambassador has a positive effect on Sales Level

H2: Brand Ambassador has a positive effect on the level of stock sales through Apple's sales level.

1.2. Sales Rate

Sales Rate are goods sold in the form of money for a certain period and have a good service strategy [9]. Another definition of Sales Level is the amount offered from a company by industrial users using distributors [10]. The level of sales is goods produced to meet sales needs and will affect a company [11]. Sales in the scope of activity are often misinterpreted with the notion of marketing. Sales in this scope mean the act of selling goods or services. Marketing activities are sales within the scope of results or income means an assessment of the company's real sales in a period [12].

The data in figure 1 shows that Apple's sales rate has increased from Year to Year, which means that consumers are confident in Apple products even without a Brand Ambassador. This can be seen in the Figure 1 below.

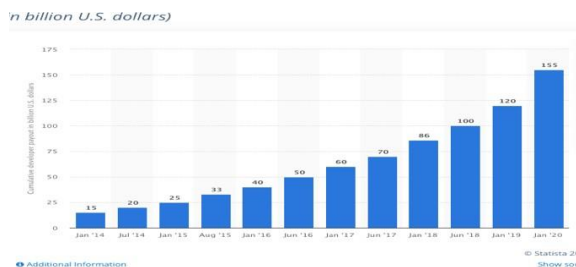


Figure 1. Apple's sales chart

Source: [13]

According to The Verge report, the most significant Apple Inc. revenue was obtained from the sales of mobile phones that scored gains up to USD100 billion in the final quarter of 2020. This further shows that without a Brand Ambassador Brand, Apple even sold in the international market for a total of Rp 916 trillion. In the picture below, Apple's sales rate has increased compared to its competitors' products.

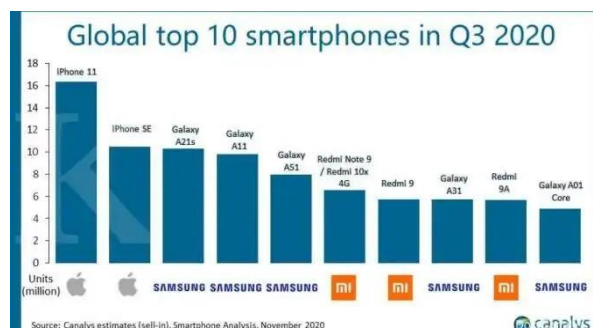


Figure 2. Apple Sales Chart

H2: Apple's sales level has a positive effect on the level of stock sales

1.3. Share sales rate

This study aims to find out how Apple stock sales rate. The share price is the price assigned to a company for other parties who wish to have share ownership rights. Another understanding of the stock price is the price on the real market and is the price that is most easily determined because it is the price of a stock in the ongoing market, or if the market is closed, then the market price is the closing price [14].

Amid the collapse of technology stocks in the United States (US), shares of iPhone gadget maker Namely Apple Inc. closed up among other competitors such as Google, Amazon, Meta (formerly Facebook), and Microsoft. Although it had decreased due to pandemics, Apple could survive and increase again (Investor.apple.com). As Figure 3 below shows, the level of sales of Apple shares is relatively likely to increase until October 2020. This is one of the causes of the title of the wealthiest technology company in the world still held by Apple.

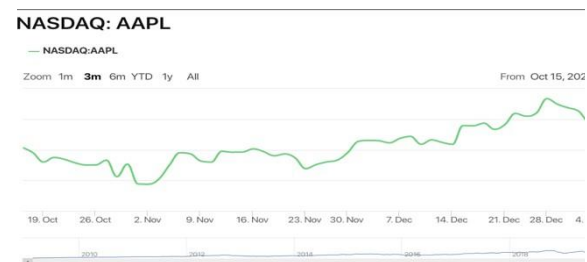


Figure 3. Apple Stock Sales Chart

Source: [15]

The same is also seen in figure 4 reported from World Stock which shows the sale of Apple shares is in the top position compared to Intel, Microsoft, Cisco, and JPMorgan.

World Stocks »						
<div> Dow Jones S&P 500 Nasdaq 100 DAX FTSE 100 Nikkei 225 </div>						
Most Active Stocks »						
Name	Last	Prev.	High	Low	Chg. %	Vol.
Apple	127.14	128.91	130.22	127.00	-1.37%	111.60M
Intel	57.58	59.25	59.65	57.50	-2.82%	50.27M
Microsoft	212.65	213.02	214.51	212.03	-0.17%	31.75M
Cisco	45.43	45.15	45.65	44.88	+0.62%	30.27M
JPMorgan	138.64	141.17	141.65	137.01	-1.79%	27.88M
» More Dow Jones Industrial Av						
Top Gainers »						
Name	Last	Chg.	Chg. %	Name	Last	Ch
Home Depot	275.59	+7.25	+2.70%	Dow	57.31	-2.
Amgen	245.49	+3.83	+1.58%	Chevron	92.09	-3.
Merck&Co	83.38	+1.21	+1.47%	Intel	57.58	-1.
McDonald's	209.91	+1.41	+0.68%	Boeing	204.32	-5.
Travelers	143.24	+0.92	+0.65%	Goldman Sachs	301.01	-6.

Source: [16]

Figure 4. Apple's Sales Position

2. METHODS

The research method is a scientific step to obtain data with a specific purpose and use [17]. This type of research is descriptive quantitative, using a questionnaire to collect data using Partial Least Squares (PLS) software. With Research Hypothesis as follows:

H1: Apple without a Brand Ambassador has a positive effect on Product Sales Level

H2: Apple Sales Level has a positive effect on Stock Sales

H3: Apple without a Brand Ambassador affects the Level of Share Sales through Apple's Sales Level.

2.1. Sampling

Sampling technique is a sampling technique [18]. Non-Probability Sampling, particularly the accidental sampling method, referred to [19] that the sample number must be at least four or five times the number of question items so that $5 \times 30 = 150$ samples are obtained.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

Partial Least Squares (PLS) paths were used to estimate the measurement components and structure of the model simultaneously. PLS is a component-based structural equation modeling technique with advantages over covariance modeling [20]. There are many precedents for the use of PLS in marketing studies [21; 22; 22]. The correlation and square roots of the average variance extracted show by Table 1 as a follow:

Table 1. Correlations and square roots of the average variance extracted

	Brand Ambassador	Sales rate	Share sales rate
Brand ambassador	na	.42**	.02
Sales rate	.42**	.97	.23**
Share sales rate	.02	.23**	.73

Note: Square roots of average variances extracted (AVEs) are shown on diagonal in bold

Abbreviation: na, not applicable.

**p < .01.

Result of partial least squares analysis show by Table 2 as a follow:

Table 2. Results of partial least squares analysis

Hypothesis Path		Standardized Beta
H1	Apple without a Brand Ambassador has a positive effect on Sales Level	.20**
H2	Sales Level has a positive effect on Sales Level	.20**
H3	Apple without a Brand Ambassador has a positive effect on the Level of Share Sales through Apple's Sales Level.	.17**
R ² BA = .13, pseudo R ² Share Sales Rate = .23. GOF = .391		

Note: N = 150. Abbreviation: ns, not significant.

**p < .01

3.2. Discussion

The results of the path model are shown in Table 2. The evidence was found for Apple's H1 without a Brand Ambassador positive effect on Apple's Sales Level ($\beta = .20$, $p < .01$), in H2 Sales Level had a positive impact on Share Sales Level ($\beta = .20$, $p < .01$). and for H3, Apple without a Brand Ambassador has a positive effect on the level of stock sales through the level of sales of Apple ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$). If previous researchers discussed the role of brand ambassadors in this study, they discussed products without a Brand Ambassador. The consumers shown in this study indicated they prefer to be loyal to Apple products rather than switching to alternative brands. Brands are actively suppressing the efforts of these loyal consumers to modify and, in some cases, improve their products through continuous technological innovation. Overall, this study highlights the contradictory relationship between Apple and its competitors. In the results of previous studies, the Influence of Brand Ambassadors on International Brand Image and Its Impact on Study Purchase Decisions on Smartphone Users show how Brand Ambassadors significant positive effect on the global brand image variable as much as 75.5%. The brand ambassador variable significantly after purchasing decision variable, with 32.4% direct influence, 38.3% indirect influence, and 70.7% total influence.

Furthermore, previous research with Software-Based Brand Ambassador Selection-A Celebrity-Branding Assessment Framework in Action (Selina Görgner, Philipp Brune : 2018) shows the results of celebrity assessments to formalize Brand Ambassador selection decisions and evaluate their implementation in prototype software in real-world scenarios from leading German premium car brands. The higher the consumer's positive perception of the brand ambassador, the higher the brand awareness, and the higher the brand image. Brand ambassadors have a significant effect on purchasing decisions. The higher the consumer's positive perception

of the brand ambassador, the higher the purchase decision. The higher the consumer's positive perception of the brand ambassador, the higher the brand awareness, the higher the brand image. Brand ambassadors have a significant effect on purchasing decisions. The higher the consumer's positive perception of the brand ambassador, the higher the purchase decision. The higher the consumer's positive perception of the brand ambassador, the higher the brand awareness, the higher the brand image. Brand ambassadors have a significant effect on purchasing decisions. The higher the consumer's positive perception of the brand ambassador, the higher the purchase decision.

According to [23] showed that Brand ambassadors are negatively related to purchasing decisions. This means that people who have high purchasing decisions do not necessarily see who is the Brand Ambassador of the goods or services to be purchased.

Meanwhile, [24] showed that the level of sales had no significant effect on stock prices. The results of the sales growth regression coefficient of -2.466 and the results of the t-test between sales growth and stock prices obtained a critical t-count t value, namely -0.240 2.013 with a significance level of 0.812 or > 0.05 . The results of this study follow research from [25]. The development of business in the digital era and social media gave birth to Brand Ambassadors as a substitute for the old method of word of mouth marketing. The study results show that Apple can still increase the level of sales, which also resulted in growing sales of Apple shares in the world investment scene.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The credibility of a product conveyed by a famous artist to a massive audience, compared to the credibility of a user who promotes a product to his closest relatives, will certainly give a different sense of trust. Market Share is not Apple's main goal because Apple focuses on quality. *Still, they value their product and their value their customers*, which impacts consumer loyalty to the Apple brand and of course, on the level of product sales. This demand will affect the revenue and profit that Apple generates each quarter

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