

THE ROLE OF *PERSONAL SELLING* IN MEDIATING THE EFFECT OF SALES PROMOTION ON THE DECISIONS TO PURCHASE REVLON BEAUTY PRODUCTS AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AT NATALIA'S SHOP IN DENPASAR

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ABSTRACT

Purchasing decisions are the process of selecting a product or brand from various existing alternatives and determining attitudes after the actual purchase is made. Purchasing decisions are strongly influenced by sales promotions and direct interactions between sellers and potential consumers, which are generally carried out through personal selling activities. This study aims to analyze and evaluate the effect of sales promotion on purchasing decisions with personal selling as an intervening variable. This study was conducted at a special retail store located at Natalia Shop Denpasar. The sampling method in this study uses a non-probability method. The sampling technique used was accidental sampling. The sample size for this study was 130 respondents. The data collection method was carried out through a questionnaire with a question format. The analysis technique used in this research is multiple linear regression analysis with intervening variables using the causal step method assisted by SPSS software. The results show that sales promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Sales promotion also has a positive and significant effect on personal selling. Sales promotion and personal selling partially and simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. The Sobel test results show that the personal selling variable is able to mediate the effect of sales promotion on purchasing decisions.

Keywords: *personal selling and purchase decision, sales promotion*

1. INTRODUCTION

Beauty has long been a desire for women, because beauty is synonymous with loveliness and attractiveness (Satria and Junaedi, 2022). The charm of beauty has now become a necessity for women to support their appearance and create a confidence in every activity (Diantary, 2019). Looking beautiful does not solely arise because of the woman's own personal desire to support her appearance, but because of work demands requiring women to use beauty products to appear more attractive. The need to look beautiful and attractive has encouraged most women to allocate part of their income to purchase beauty products. This condition then encourages increased market demand for beauty products which in turn will have an impact on increasing revenue in the beauty industry sector.

Revlon is a beauty product founded by Charles Revson, his brother Joseph Revson and chemist Charles Lachman in 1932 in New York, USA. The company started by introducing a new type of nail enamel for Hollywood actresses. Today, its expanding product line includes: Make up, Beauty Tools, Hair and Nail (www.revlon.com). The brand holder distribution of Revlon products in Indonesia is

currently held by Tempo Scan Group Ltd with its marketing and product distribution network reaching all corners of the archipelago through 46 sales branches, more than 100 sales points with Distribution Centers in 4 major cities. The company serves approximately 100,000 off-line outlets/consumers including pharma trade, modern trade, and general trade channels. The company also serves consumer purchases from e-Commerce channels (www.temposcangroup.com).

The marketing distribution network of product includes retail stores, both local and national chain retailers. One of the micro, small and medium enterprise stores that belongs to the category of local retail specialty stores that specialize in selling beauty products in Bali is "Natalia Shop" located at Kerta Wijaya Mall B14-B16, Maluku Street, Dauh Puri, West Denpasar, Denpasar City. The specialty store marketing distribution system makes Revlon have to compete with other brands that are no less famous such as *Maybelline*, *Wardah*, *SK-II*, *Herborist*, and dozens of other brands that are no less attractive. This of course has an impact on Revlon products sale.

Sales of Revlon show sharp sales fluctuations, where the highest total sales amount occurred in December 2022 with a sales value of Rp.96,252,000, while the lowest total sales value occurred in February 2022 amounting to Rp.36,292,000. This trend shows the level of sales value fluctuations that occur in the market and the potential risk of a sharp decline in sales that might occur in the future if marketers do not take preventive action through sales promotion instruments. Revlon needs to redesign a more effective sales promotion supported by a reliable sales force to maintain its business continuity in the market by increasing efforts that can realize consumer purchasing decisions to maintain and increase sales of its products in the cosmetics market.

Purchasing decision is a decision-making process and concrete actions to make purchases by people involved in the process of purchasing and consuming products (Putro and Santoso, 2020). On the other hand, Kosasih et al. (2021) state that purchasing decisions are the process of choosing a product or brand from various existing alternatives and determining attitudes after making actual purchases. Another perspective also states that purchasing decisions indicate a series of processes in which consumers integrate knowledge, recognize existing choices and choose at least one of them (Putra et al., 2021). Purchasing decisions are influenced by sales promotion and personal selling (Santosa and Chayaningtyas, 2020).

Sales promotions in a number of empirical studies that have been conducted show that there is a positive and significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions. The study of Affif et al. (2020) revealed that sales promotions carried out on an ongoing basis have an impact on increasing consumer purchasing decisions. The results of this study are supported by Azmi and Karsa, (2022); Gultom et al. (2022); Hastuti and Anasrulloh (2020); Prilano et al. (2020). On the other hand, some empirical findings provide different conclusions. Research by Yuvita et al. (2019) and Purba and Saifullah (2020) show that sales promotion has no significant effect on purchasing decisions. The conclusion is also supported by the research of Muhtarom et al. (2022) that sales promotion has a negative and insignificant effect on sales decisions.

Substantial empirical studies have been conducted to test and analyze the effect of sales promotion on purchasing decisions (Hastuti and Anasrulloh, 2020; Lukito and Fahmi, 2020; Maryana and Permatasari, 2020; Solihin, 2020; Amba and Sisnuhadi, 2021; Ernawati et al., 2021). The results of this study as a whole conclude that sales promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. However, the main difference between this study and previous studies lies in the role of the personal selling variable as a mediator of the effect of sales promotion on purchasing decisions, which has not received much attention from researchers.

Kotler et al. (2020) mention personal selling is a personal presentation that can influence purchasing decisions, attract customers and build customer relationships.

2. RESEARCH METODOLOGY

The population in this study were all Natalia Shop consumers who bought Revlon products with an unknown number. The size of the sample refers to Hair et al. (2010), which is 5 to 10 times the number of research indicators. This study uses 26 indicators, referring to the provisions of Hair et al., then the minimum sample size required is $(26 \times 5) = 130$ respondents. The sampling method uses a non-probability method (non-probability sample). The sampling technique used is accidental sampling with the data collection method carried out through a questionnaire with a question format.

The analysis technique used in this study is multiple linear regression analysis with mediation variables using the causal step method assisted by SPSS software. The classical assumption test is carried out to get the best linear unbiased estimation regression coefficient. To test the magnitude of the indirect effect of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y) through the mediating variable (M), the Sobel Test was conducted. The regression equation model is formulated as follows.

$$\text{First regression equation } Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + e_i \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

$$\text{Second regression equation } M = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_{1i} + e_i \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

$$\text{Third regression equation } Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 M_{2i} + e_i \dots\dots\dots(3)$$

Where:

Y= Purchase Decision, X = Sales Promotion, M = Personal Selling,

β_1, \dots, β_3 = Regression coefficient, i = observation index, e = error.

3. RELATED RESEARCH/LITERATUR REVIEW

Personal selling, is a promotional action in the form of direct personal contact between potential consumers and sales person (Firmansyah, 2018: 202). Furthermore, personal selling can be interpreted as direct communication from the seller to the buyer to introduce the product so that consumers become interested in the product (Putra et al., 2021). Personal selling is an impressive method because there is direct communication between sales person and consumers to convince consumers to be directly interested in the product in making purchasing decisions (Wahyuningtyas and Soedarsono, 2020). Based on various empirical and theoretical studies, it can be stated that personal selling is a sales technique carried out by sales person through communicating directly with potential consumers to encourage consumer purchasing decisions.

Sales promotions are various incentives offered to the market or consumers within a short period of time with the aim of encouraging purchases or increasing product sales (Fakhri, 2020). Sales promotion is a marketing initiative by providing short-term price discounts carried out with the aim of increasing market response to company offers (Pramezwarly et al., 2021). Sales promotion is one of the main things in a marketing campaign, consisting of several incentive tools, most of which are short-term, designed to influence more quickly the purchase of certain products or services by consumers (Anbiya and Sofyan, 2021). Explicitly, Kotler et al. (2020) say the main objective of sales promotion is to encourage short-term consumers to buy products or increase brand-oriented customer engagement.

Purchasing decision is a decision-making process and the actual act of making a purchase by consumers involved in purchasing and consuming products (Putro and Santoso, 2020). On the other hand, Kosasih et al. (2021) suggest that purchasing decisions are the process of choosing a product or brand from various

existing alternatives and determining attitudes after the actual purchase is made. According to Putra et al. (2021) purchasing decisions indicate a series of processes in which consumers integrate knowledge, recognize existing choices and choose at least one of the existing alternatives.

Sales promotions affect consumer purchasing decisions because sales promotions can influence consumer behavior in making purchasing decisions. The influence of this variable has been confirmed by Afifi's study (2020) which states that sales promotion has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions. This study is also supported by several research results that corroborate previous studies Gultom et al. (2022); Lahensel et al. (2022); Tolan et al. (2021). Based on the results of previous studies and research, the hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows.

H1: Sales promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

The influence of sales promotion on personal selling has long been an object of research in modern marketing management. Several studies have shown that sales promotion is influenced by the role of personal selling variables because of the two-way interaction factor that can provide a comprehensive explanation of better product benefits for consumers. Kristina S and Surbakti's research (2023) implicitly reveals that personal selling has a positive and significant effect on increasing sales volume because it is supported by the important role of sales promotion. This study is supported by the research by Octavianita and Dermawan (2021); Ervandi and Nainggolan (2021); Satoso et al. (2022); Putro and Santoso (2020). Based on previous studies, the hypothesis of a study is formulated as follows.

H2: Sales promotion has a positive and significant effect on personal selling.

Sales promotion has long been recognized in marketing literature as an important variable in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Gultom et al. (2022) suggests that sales promotion is a value activity carried out by companies to influence potential and actual consumers to make purchases. However, companies cannot ignore the role of personal selling in mediating purchasing decisions. Study Putra et al. (2021) personal selling has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions. The study are supported by Santoso et al. (2022); Mardiyono and Digdowiseiso (2023) reveal that sales promotions can influence purchasing decisions and personal selling is able to mediate the effect of sales promotion on purchasing decisions. The results of this study are supported by several previous studies Yasin (2020); Wahyuningtyas and Soedarsono (2020); Rumbiati (2021). Based on the previous studies and research, the hypothesis of a study is formulated as follows.

H3: Personal selling plays a significant role in mediating the effect of sales promotion on purchasing decisions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Hypothesis Test Results (t Test) Sales Promotion on Purchasing Decisions

No.	Variables	β	Std. Error	t	p-value	Conclusion
1	Constant	7,2100	0,9490	7,5990	0,0000	
2	Sales Promotion	0,4830	0,0320	15,2180	0,0000	Reject H ₀

Source: data processed from questionnaire(2023)

Table 1 presents a hypothesis testing with the t test which shows that the conclusion fails to reject the null hypothesis (H₀) where the p-value <0.05. It can be

concluded that sales promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. The partial test show that the hypothesis (H1) is proven. This study provides empirical support for previous research conducted by Afifi (2020), Gultom et al. (2022); Lahensel et al. (2022); Tolan et al. (2021). This study rejects the research by Yuvita et al. (2019) and Purba and Saifullah (2020).

Table 2. Hypothesis Test Results (t Test) Sales Promotion on Personal Selling

No	Variables	β	Std. Error	t	p-value	Conclusion
1	Constant	15,0710	2,1190	7,1130	0,0000	
2	Sales Promotion	1,4990	0,0710	21,0840	0,0000	Reject H0

Source: data processed from questionnaire (2023)

Table 2 presents a hypothesis testing with the t test which shows the conclusion of failing to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) where the p-value <0.05 . It can be concluded that sales promotion has a positive and significant effect on personal selling. The partial test show that the hypothesis (H2) is proven. The study provides empirical support for the research previously conducted by Kristina and Surbakti (2023), Octavianita and Dermawan (2021), Santoso et al. (2022). This study rejects the research by Yudhiartika and Haryanto (2012) and Julitawaty et al. (2020) which states that sales promotion is not influenced by personal selling.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results (t Test) Sales Promotion (X) and Personal Selling (M) on Purchasing Decisions (Y)

No.	Variables	β	Std. Error	t	p-value	Conclusion
1	Constant	4,2880	0,9750	4,3970	0,0000	
2	Sales Promotion	0,1730	0,0600	2,9070	0,0040	Reject H0
3	Personal Selling	0,2040	0,0340	5,9130	0,0000	Reject H0

Source: data processed from questionnaire (2023)

Table 3 presents a hypothesis testing with the t test, the sales promotion variable has p-value <0.05 , partially fails to reject H_0 . Meanwhile, the personal selling variable has a p-value <0.05 , partially also fails to reject H_0 . It can be concluded that sales promotion and personal selling partially have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, so based on the causal step method, the personal selling variable partially mediates the effect of sales promotion on purchasing decisions (Munawaroh et al., 2015). (2015). The results of mediation test prove that the hypothesis (H3) is proven.

Mediation Test (Sobel Test)

The role of personal selling variables in mediating the effect of sales promotion on purchasing decisions was carried out with the Sobel test. According to Munawaroh et al. (2015), if the value of $Z_{count} > Z_{table}$, the variable hypothesized as the mediating variable is concluded to mediate the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The Sobel test formula is formulated as follows.

$$Z = \frac{ab}{\sqrt{(b^2 SE_a^2) + (a^2 SE_b^2)}}$$
$$Z = \frac{0,438 \times 0,204}{\sqrt{(0,204^2 \times 0,032_a^2) + (0,438^2 \times 0,034_b^2)}}$$

$Z_{count} = 5,7137$ and the vaule of $Z_{table} = 1,96$

Based on the results of the Sobel test, the value of Z_{count} (5.7137) > Z_{table} (1.96), it can be concluded that the personal selling plays a role in mediating the effect of sales promotion on purchasing decisions. The Sobel test prove that the hypothesis (H3) is proven.

5. CONCLUSION

The study prove that sales promotion is an important variable in influencing consumer behavior to determine purchasing decisions. Sales promotion is a short-term incentive that aims to stimulate purchasing decisions. Apart from influencing purchasing decisions, sales promotion also affects personal selling because the effectiveness of sales promotion is strongly influenced by the interaction of personal selling. The success of the seller's interaction with potential consumers is strongly influenced by the ability and capability of personal selling in conveying the benefits of the product that will be received by consumers, so that the product is considered to have consumer value. Sales promotion and personal selling simultaneously influence purchasing decisions. The amount of sales promotion costs supported by the ability and proficiency of personal selling will have a very significant impact in changing consumer behavior which has an impact on purchasing decisions. The results of this study also prove that personal selling can play a role in mediating the effect of sales promotion on purchasing decisions.

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