

Influence of Brand Ambassador Song Joong Ki on Consumer Purchase of Scarlett Whitening Product

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ABSTRACT

The spread of Korean artists as brand ambassadors for various products triggers the researchers' interest. One of the product types, namely fashion, has also been spared by the producer's efforts to involve Korean artists in marketing their products. This research discusses the influence of brand ambassador Song Joong Ki on consumer buying interest. The theory used in this research is the Source Credibility Theory proposed by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley. In this theory, there are two elements, namely, trust and expertise possessed by the communicator, that strongly influence the consumer. Meanwhile, the concepts used are brand ambassadors and purchase interest. Using a quantitative approach, survey questionnaires were distributed to 74 respondents selected using stratified random sampling. The research results showed a normality test result of 0.099, a correlation of 0.793, a regression result of 0.648, and a coefficient of determination result of 62.9%. Thus, the conclusion obtained is that the influence of the Song Joong Ki brand ambassador on Scarlett Whitening consumers' buying interest has a strong level of relationship. Based on the hypothesis results, the t-count value is greater than the t-table, which means that the influence of brand ambassadors has an influence on consumer buying interest. Lastly, this article confirmed the previous research, which stressed the power of brand ambassadors in influencing consumer behavior, despite the limitations of this research, which only raised two variables. Hopefully, future research will develop other variables.

ABSTRAK

Membanjirnya artis Korea sebagai duta merek beragam produk melatarbelakangi ketertarikan peneliti. Salah satu jenis produk yakni fesyen pun tak luput dari upaya produsen melibatkan artis Korea dalam pemasaran produknya. Penelitian ini membahas pengaruh *Brand Ambassador* Song Joong Ki terhadap minat beli konsumen. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui adakah pengaruh *brand ambassador* terhadap minat beli konsumen. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah Teori Kredibilitas Sumber yang dikemukakan oleh Hovland, Janis, dan Kelley. Dalam teori ini terdapat dua unsur yakni, kepercayaan dan keahlian yang dimiliki komunikator yang erat mempengaruhi konsumen. Sedangkan konsep-konsep yang digunakan adalah *brand ambassador* dan minat beli. Melalui pendekatan kuantitatif, kuesioner survei disebarkan kepada 74 responden yang dipilih secara Stratified Random Sampling. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan hasil uji normalitas sebesar 0,099; korelasi sebesar 0,793; hasil regresi sebesar 0,648, dan hasil koefisien determinasi sebesar 62,9%. Sehingga, kesimpulan yang didapatkan bahwasanya pengaruh brand Ambassador Song Joong Ki terhadap

minat beli konsumen Scarlett Whitening dengan tingkat hubungan yang kuat. Berdasarkan hasil hipotesis diperoleh nilai t-hitung lebih besar dari t-tabel yang berarti pengaruh brand ambassador berpengaruh terhadap minat beli konsumen. Sehingga, artikel ini semakin memperkuat kekuatan *brand ambassador* sebagai variabel yang kuat mempengaruhi perilaku konsumen terlepas dari keterbatasan penelitian ini yang mengangkat hanya dua variabel. Diharapkan, penelitian selanjutnya dapat mengembangkan variabel lainnya.

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Keywords: Brand ambassador, consumer purchase, scarlett whitening.

Kata Kunci: Duta merek, minat membeli, *scarlett whitening*.

INTRODUCTION

As a company that focuses on selling products, brand ambassadors have a very important influence on the company's sustainability. Brand ambassadors are individuals or groups who are designated as icons to represent certain products as the main image of a company. According to Gita and Setyorini (2016), brand ambassadors are cultural or identity icons who act as marketing tools that represent the achievement of human individualism and glory as well as the commodification and commercialization of a product. A brand ambassador is able to promote the brand and its products to consumers to increase brand awareness, attract consumer attention, and increase product sales. To become a brand ambassador, you need someone who has high credibility and a good reputation. Therefore, brand ambassadors have become a new trend to improve company promotional strategies.

Brand ambassadors are one of the factors in consumer buying interest in a product because they are able to provide benefits, privileges, and certain characteristics, so they can influence product sales. According to Firmansyah (2020), a brand ambassador is someone who has a passion for a brand and can influence or invite consumers to buy or use a product. Consumers are more interested in buying products from well-known brands, and the presence of brand ambassadors increasingly influences consumer interest in purchasing a product. Apart from that, when purchasing a product, consumers choose a product that is deemed to suit their needs and desires.

In fulfilling their needs and desires, some consumers choose products according to their needs because consumers need these products for daily use or consumption, and there are also consumers who choose products according to their desires compared to their needs because not a few consumers are familiar with the product. with interest in being a brand ambassador. Companies must be selective in choosing brand ambassadors to promote company products.

There are several factors needed in choosing a brand ambassador, namely, choosing someone who is relevant to the product or brand being sold, has a big influence on consumer buying interest, is in line with the company's vision and mission, and, in looking for a brand ambassador, the company must understand the appropriate target market. with current trends. One trend that is currently in demand by all groups, especially young people, is the Korean Wave. Through music, dramas, and films, it has become one of the factors influencing current Korean trends. According to Shimp (in Suhendro., et.all: 2023), it is said that a brand ambassador is a person who supports a brand through various popular public figures; apart from popular public figures, they can also be supported by ordinary people and are more often called ordinary endorsers. So, brand ambassadors use celebrities who look attractive and have high enough popularity to attract the attention of consumers.

With the massive development of information technology, it is increasingly influencing people's enthusiasm for liking Korean culture, so that it has become one of the current trends. In Indonesia itself, Korean trends are becoming popular among young people, especially women. As time goes by, Korean culture is implemented in everyday life, such as fashion, make-up, food, style of speech, and even beauty products. Based on data reported by TEMPO.CO, K-pop is one of the dominant discussion topics on social media. It was recorded that from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, according to Twitter research, there were 7.5 billion tweets related to K-pop. Indonesia ranks first with the highest number of K-Pop fans from July 2020 to 2021 (Javier, 2021).

Thus, many companies look for big opportunities in choosing brand ambassadors for popular Korean artists in Indonesia. It has been proven that several Korean artists have become brand ambassadors for several

products, such as Twice, Kim Seon Ho, Cha Eun Woo, and Song Joong Ki. Due to its credibility and large number of fans, Song Joong Ki is considered capable of attracting Scarlett's buying interest. Song Joong Ki started as a brand ambassador for Scarlett Whitening on September 5, 2021.

Scarlett Whitening is a company in Indonesia owned by Felicya Angelista. Starting the Scarlett Whitening in 2017, the owner collaborated on launching several skin care products. Scarlett Whitening focuses on brightening and whitening the skin of the body and face. In marketing this, Scarlett Whitening utilizes their official website and social media, such as Instagram (@scarlett_whitwning), WhatsApp, Line, and the official e-commerce site Shopee. After being successful in selling the products, Felicya Angelista decided to expand its target market to foreign countries. Here, the owner introduced the product by using a brand ambassador with high popularity and a good reputation.

Purchase interest is a desire that is stimulated by the consumer's own need and pleasure for a product. Purchase interest coexists with purchasing actions through several stages. According to Duriyanto et al. (2004), buying interest is the desire to own a product; buying interest will arise if a consumer has been influenced by the quality of a product or information about the product. Purchase interest is the final stage in the purchasing decision process. Kotler and Keller (in Kurniawati et.al, 2022) explain that there are indicators of buying interest, namely through the AIDA stimuli model, which consists of attention, interest, desire, and action. Based on this, buying interest goes through various stages until it ends in the act of purchasing. In the act of purchasing, consumers will choose various products that are considered superior to other products.

In this modern era, there is increasingly tight sales competition, so this makes various companies compete to make their products superior to other products. Especially with Scarlett Whitening, Scarlett Whitening does everything to make its products superior to other products.

From the description presented above, the researcher decided to conduct further research on teenagers from Cilincing RW 02 because they saw that currently many teenagers are using Scarlett Whitening with good quality and relatively cheap prices among the public. Teenagers in the Cilincing RW 02 sub-district have different individual perceptions due to many of the series of publications carried out by Scarlett Whitening. Therefore, observations made by researchers are that teenagers in the Cilincing RW 02 sub-district have an influence on Song Joong Ki, who is one of the Scarlett Whitening brand ambassadors. Therefore, the authors state the research question as follows: How big is the influence of brand ambassador Song Joong Ki on consumers' buying interest in Scarlett Whitening?

Then, this research uses Source Credibility Theory by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley. This theory explains that someone will be more easily persuaded if the sources of persuasion (communicators) are credible enough. In Source Credibility Theory, the credibility of a communicator can be formed by the skills of a communicator. A communicator must study various pieces of information about the object to be addressed and have confidence in the standard of authenticity of the information to be sent. According to Wang, S., & Scheinbaum, A.C. (2017), in Source Credibility Theory, there are two elements, namely, trust and expertise, possessed by the messenger or communicator. Meanwhile, according to Winoto (2016), credibility in source credibility theory contains three main elements or components, namely:

1. Skills that will be formed by the communicant regarding the communicator's abilities in relation to the topic being discussed,
2. The communicator's trust in the communicator is determined by the communicator's expertise in the field of work duties,
3. Attractiveness is a complementary component in establishing the credibility of a source or communicator.

Based on the explanation of the Source Credibility Theory above, choosing Song Joong Ki as one of Scarlett Whitening's brand ambassadors is appropriate to the communication skills in conveying information about the target object, can earn the communicant's trust, and is also attractive.

When discussing the brand ambassador, it is intended by companies to provide understanding of information related to a product. Furthermore, a representative is someone who is trusted to represent a particular product. The use of brand ambassadors is carried out by companies to influence or encourage consumers to use a product. The choice of brand ambassador is usually a famous celebrity.

According to Lea-Greenwood (2012), brand ambassadors are a tool used by companies to communicate and connect with the public about how they can increase sales. Meanwhile, according to Gita and Setyorini, (2016), brand ambassadors are cultural icons or identities, where they act as marketing tools that represent the achievement of individualism and human glory, as well as the commodification and commercialization of a product.

Based on the understanding that has been explained by several experts, it can be concluded that a brand ambassador is a series of efforts carried out by a company to convey or promote a product, using someone who has high popularity as a spokesperson to present a good image of a product, with the hope that that is published, is easily well received by consumers, and influences consumers to use the product.

Meanwhile, another variable taken in this article is purchase interest. This concept means a desire that is stimulated by the consumer's own need and pleasure for a product. According to Duriyanto et al. (2004), buying interest is the desire to own a product. Buying interest will arise if a consumer has been influenced by the quality and information about the product. Keller (in Sulistyari and Yoestini, 2012) said that consumer buying interest is how likely consumers are to buy a brand or how likely consumers are to switch from one brand to another. If the perceived benefit is greater than the sacrifice to get it, then the urge to buy it will be higher.

Another opinion comes from E. Jerome Mc. Carthy (in Hidayat et al. 2012), who defines purchase interest as the impulse that arises in a person to buy a product to fulfill their needs. Based on the understanding explained above, it can be concluded that purchase interest is a consumer's desire for a product based on the benefits and advantages of other products.

There are factors that can influence consumer buying interest. Schiffman and Wisenblit (2014) mentioned some indicators that influence buying interest, as follows:

- a) Have a desire to find information about products. Consumers will describe behavior that always looks for information about the products they are interested in and tend to look for information to support a positive impression of the product
- b) Consider purchasing. A consumer will describe behavior to consider several aspects, especially cost and time
- c) Have the desire to try. Consumers will be interested in trying and finding out the advantages of the product, what makes the product one of the products they want to own and are interested in.
- d) Have curiosity about the product. Before using a product, consumers will find out about the product which makes this product superior to other products.
- e) Want to have a product. After going through the series of processes above, consumers will have specific answers regarding the product, and consumers will tend to want to own an item and will be willing to buy it.

METHOD

This research used a quantitative research approach. According to Sugiyono (2013), the use of a quantitative approach is defined as a research method based on the philosophy of positivism, which views phenomena as having a cause-and-effect relationship, used to research certain populations or samples, data collection using research instruments, and statistical data analysis with the aim of testing the established hypothesis. Apart from that, this research is explanatory in nature using a survey method. The survey method is a research method that uses questionnaires as a data collection tool. The goal is to obtain information about a series of respondents who are considered representative of a particular population (Kriyantono, 2014).

By applying two variables, namely brand ambassador (variable X) and purchase intention (variable Y), which have dimensions, Rossiter and Percy stated there are four dimensions of brand ambassadorship, namely (a) visibility; (b) credibility; (c) attraction; and (d) power (in Kertamukti, 2015), in which there are fifteen indicators. Meanwhile, Kotler and Keller (2016) mentioned that the dimensions of buying interest are: (a) attention; (b) interest; and (c) desire, which contains twelve indicators.

Furthermore, the collection of data was done by using primary data from a questionnaire (Likert scale). A questionnaire is a data collection technique that is carried out by giving a set of questions or written statements to respondents to answer (Sugiyono, 2016). Apart from that, the author also took data from several relevant issues, publications, and articles, which will be used to analyze the results of the research. Then, validity and reliability tests will be used to analyze the data using SPSS 26.

The population is the overall result of the research object, which produces a conclusion. Morissan (2015) stated that population is a subject, variable, concept, or phenomenon. Then, the sampling technique is stratified random sampling or probability sampling, which provides an equal opportunity for each element (member) of the population to be selected as a member of the sample (Sugiyono, 2016). Following, the data shown about the total population (280 people) and sample (74 people: 54 female and 20 male) are taken using the formula below.

Table 1. Population

District	Number of Teenagers
001	26
002	24
003	25
004	27
005	24
006	17
007	16
008	25
009	24
010	9
011	10
012	15
013	8
014	16
015	14
Total	280

Figure 1. The formula of sample

$$n_i = \frac{N_i}{N} \times n$$

The samples were teenagers who used Scarlett whitening products and lived in a district in the Cilincing area (North Jakarta). Among the respondents, those 21–24 years old are the most likely to be still in college, have just graduated, or were working and have a bachelor's degree. This technique begins by collecting a number of youth data points from each sub-district and then determining the number of samples needed. The reason for choosing the stratified random sampling technique is because the objects are not homogeneous and proportionally stratified. Thus, the author applies the proportionate formula (Ulya & Hendikawati, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The pre-test has been taken, which has resulted in validity and reliability for all the indicators. Based on the r-table with a significance of 5%, the r-table is obtained at 0.361. The following are the results of validity testing on 15 items of variable X and 12 items of variable Y regarding the conclusions obtained from the results of the validity test.

Table 2. Validity Test for Variable X (Brand Ambassador)

X Validity Test			
Statement	R Table	R Count	Information
1	0.361	0.548	Valid
2	0.361	0.625	Valid
3	0.361	0.544	Valid
4	0.361	0.586	Valid
5	0.361	0.730	Valid
6	0.361	0.652	Valid
7	0.361	0.465	Valid
8	0.361	0.659	Valid
9	0.361	0.680	Valid
10	0.361	0.619	Valid
11	0.361	0.477	Valid
12	0.361	0.602	Valid
13	0.361	0.612	Valid
14	0.361	0.539	Valid
15	0.361	0.453	Valid

The results obtained for statement items that have r_{count} are bigger than the value r_{table} . The indicators were declared valid.

Table 3. Validity Test for Variable Y (Purchase Interest)

Y Validity Test			
Statement	R Table	R Count	Information
1	0.361	0.730	Valid
2	0.361	0.674	Valid
3	0.361	0.626	Valid
4	0.361	0.442	Valid
5	0.361	0.657	Valid
6	0.361	0.695	Valid
7	0.361	0.803	Valid
8	0.361	0.831	Valid
9	0.361	0.895	Valid
10	0.361	0.786	Valid
11	0.361	0.783	Valid
12	0.361	0.542	Valid

Meanwhile, for the last variable, all indicators are valid. For reliability, it was obtained at 0.846 for variable X and 0.901 for variable Y.

Discussion

The theory assumes that a brand ambassador is someone trusted to represent a product. The use of brand ambassadors is to influence consumers to use the product. Previously, there were some research findings that relate to this article. Firstly, as shown in (Situmeang, 2021), source credibility as an independent variable has a strong correlation with other variables, especially the purchase interest variable. Also stated, Situmeang (2021) has proved that purchase interest as a variable can be closely influenced by other variables. Therefore, according to the initial research, the choice of actress Song Joong Ki was the right choice as the brand ambassador for the scarlet whitening product because it was proven that it could influence the buying interest of teenagers in the Cilincing district. Song Joong Ki himself has credibility as the brand ambassador for this product and has many fans, so it can arouse teenagers' buying interest in the Cilincing district. So, it can be concluded that actress Song Joong Ki, as a brand ambassador, has a big influence on the buying interest of teenagers in Cilincing district to buy scarlet whitening products.

In this research, the authors measured several dimensions in variable X, such as the visibility dimension (popularity). Based on the distribution of the questionnaire given, 74.3% of respondents strongly agreed that they already knew Song Joong Ki before becoming the brand ambassador for the Scarlett Whitening product. It can be concluded that most respondents already knew Song Joong Ki before becoming the brand ambassador for Scarlett Whitening products.

Then, for the credibility dimension, it can be seen that 68.9% of respondents stated that they strongly agree that Song Joong Ki has the ability to provide confidence that the Scarlett Whitening product is a product that has many benefits. Based on this, it can be concluded that some respondents believe that Song Joong Ki has the ability to provide confidence that Scarlett products have many benefits.

For the attraction dimension, 60.8% of respondents strongly agree that Song Joong Ki is an artist who has modern insight so that he can reflect today's soul. It can be concluded that most respondents see actress Song Joong Ki as an artist who has modern insight and a contemporary spirit. Meanwhile, for the power dimension, it can be seen that 63.5% of respondents stated that Song Joong Ki's expertise as an actress could be a supporting factor as a brand ambassador for Scarlett Whitening products.

The authors also conducted correlational research, aimed at determining the relationship between variations in one factor and variations in other factors. Based on the results of a simple correlation analysis, there is a relationship between variable X, namely brand ambassador Song Joong Ki, and variable Y, namely consumer interest in purchasing products from Scarlett Whitening. In order to find out how much interest consumers have in buying Scarlett products, researchers measure several dimensions, such as attention, interest, and desire. In the attention dimension, it can be seen at 64.9%. Respondents stated that they strongly agreed that the majority of respondents observed the advantages of the advertised product first before deciding whether they would be interested in purchasing the Scarlett Whitening product. It can be concluded that before the emergence of interest in purchasing Scarlett products, respondents paid attention to the product first.

For the interest dimension, it can be seen that 68.9% of respondents stated that they strongly agreed that the majority of respondents were interested in buying the product because it contained ingredients that could give the impression of clean skin. It can be concluded that, after getting some information about the product, consumer interest in the product arises. Meanwhile, the desire dimension can be seen in 64.9% of respondents stating that they strongly agree that the Scarlett whitening product has many benefits, so that it can influence my buying interest. It can be concluded that after consumers learn more about the product, they will have a greater desire to decide to buy it.

Based on the results of the respondents' level of achievement in variables X and Y, it can be said that the level of achievement in the research is very good. This can be seen from the values produced by variables X and Y, which have values of 91.6% (X) and 90.4%, respectively. Next, to find out whether the residual values obtained

from the regression distribution were normal or not, the researchers used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test method. Based on the research, the significance value obtained in the normality test was $0.099 > 0.05$, so it can be concluded that the residual value is normal. Then, to find out the level of relationship between brand ambassador Song Joong Ki (X) and consumer purchasing interest (Y), it can be explained using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test. The results obtained show that there is a correlation between the influence of brand ambassador Song Joong Ki and consumer purchasing interest in scarlet whitening.

Next, based on the results of hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that there is a significant influence between variables X and Y. This is proven by H_a being rejected and H_o being accepted, or t count $11.049 > t$ table 1.993. Then we get the regression equation $Y = 9.485 + 0.652X$. From the results obtained, the equation is in accordance with a simple linear formula, namely, where Y is the dependent variable, a is a constant, and b is the regression coefficient for the independent variable (X). So, it can be concluded that from the results of the t test, there is a significant influence between variable Ki, which is significant for consumer buying interest in Scarlett Whitening.

Finally, it can be concluded that the concept of a brand ambassador is related to this research. Because it has been proven that having the right person as a brand ambassador can generate quite significant buying interest. Also based on the results of the analysis above, it can be interpreted that brand ambassador Song Joong Ki influences consumers' buying interest in Scarlett Whitening products.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the theoretical framework, conceptual framework, research results, and data analysis tests that researchers have carried out by distributing questionnaires via Google Forms to 74 teenager respondents from the Cilincing subdistrict, the conclusion is first to seek the influence of variable X (brand ambassador) on other variables. Based on the results, it shows that the correlation test results between brand ambassador and purchase interest have an influence of 0.793 and can be said to be positive. From these statistics, the variables of brand ambassadors have a strong relationship with consumer buying interest. Secondly, the researchers obtained simple linear regression results with a constant value of 9.485 and a regression of 0.652. The regression coefficient value is considered very influential, so the direction of the brand ambassador's influence on purchase interest is said to be positive. Lastly, it is found that partial test results (t test) of the hypothesis were obtained, namely H_o rejected and H_a accepted with t count $11.049 > t$ table 1.993. Through this, it can be said about the influence of the brand.

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