

The Influence Of K-Pop Artists As Brand Ambassadors On Affecting Purchasing Decisions And Brand Loyalty (A Study of Skincare Products in Indonesia Consumers In Indonesia)

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Abstract

One of the current promotional strategies adopted by many brands in Indonesia is leveraging the K-Wave (Hallyu) phenomenon. A skincare manufacturer aims to capitalize on this opportunity by appointing the popular K-Pop girl group, Twice as their brand ambassador. The significant investment in this collaboration raises high expectations for skincare products, particularly regarding their chosen brand ambassadors' impact on purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Hence, this research examines the influence of various dimensions (visibility, credibility, attractiveness, and power) of K-Pop artist Twice on skincare product consumers' purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between purchasing decisions and brand loyalty among cosmetics product consumers. This research employs a non-probability purposive sampling technique, with a sample size of 200 respondents aged between 15 and 34 years, encompassing all genders. The respondents must have prior experience using cosmetics products and be aware of Twice as one of the skincare brand ambassadors. The data analysis technique employed is the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Partial Least Squares (PLS) method. The findings indicate that the dimensions of "visibility" and "power" have a positive yet insignificant effect on purchasing decisions, while "credibility" and "attractiveness" exhibit a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions. Additionally, the "visibility" dimension of the brand ambassador demonstrates a positive and significant influence on brand loyalty. However, the dimensions of "credibility," "attractiveness," and "power" of the brand ambassador show a positive but insignificant effect on brand loyalty. Furthermore, the results highlight the positive and significant influence of purchasing decisions on customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction, in turn, has a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty.

Keywords: brand ambassador; brand loyalty; customer satisfaction; purchasing decision.

A. INTRODUCTION

Brands employ various promotional strategies to attract the attention of potential buyers and stand out in the competitive market. Among these strategies, using K-Pop artists as brand ambassadors have become popular in different industries, including food, clothing, beverages, and skin care. Scarlett Whitening is one such brand that has chosen Twice, a K-Pop girl group, as their brand ambassador. Previous studies, including Wang (Hariandja, 2016), have shown that brand ambassadors positively impact consumer purchasing decisions. However, the author's preliminary research on 33 respondents who regularly purchase skincare products revealed that the majority (81.2%) made their purchase decisions based on factors other than the brand ambassador. This disparity between the initial findings and the provided information has motivated the author to investigate how a brand ambassador's dimensions can influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Therefore, this study explores how Twice's dimensions as a skincare brand ambassador influence consumers' purchasing decisions for skincare products.

(Ismail, 2017) the study found a correlation between the promotional budget and consumer brand loyalty. Similarly, other research suggests that influencers consistently affect loyalty (Audi et al., 2015). However, finding loyal customers is challenging, as most consumers switch brands. This behavior stems from consumers' limited attention to a specific brand, leading them to move on once their interest wanes.

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The low cost of switching brands makes it difficult to maintain customer loyalty. Therefore, customer satisfaction plays a crucial role. Satisfied customers are likelier to remain loyal, purchase new products, and exhibit less interest in other brands. They are less price-sensitive and can enhance the company's value proposition (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Thus, customer satisfaction can foster brand loyalty. Based on this information, the researchers aim to investigate how the brand ambassador dimensions of Twice influence customer brand loyalty towards skincare products and how customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Analyzing and studying the gap between previous research theories and the current situation regarding the use of brand ambassadors and their impact on purchasing decisions and brand loyalty for skin care is an intriguing topic.

The study aims to: 1) define how the dimensions of K-Pop artists influence the purchasing decision of skincare product consumers; 2) define how the dimensions of K-Pop artist influence brand loyalty to skincare product consumers; and 3) define how customer satisfaction intervening variable mediates the relationship between purchasing decisions and brand loyalty.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a non-probability sampling method utilizing a purposive quota sampling technique to gather data from specific target groups, namely individuals who have used skincare products. The study population consisted of Indonesian individuals aged between 15 and 34, of all genders, who have used skincare products and are aware of Twice as one of the brand ambassadors. In order to obtain comprehensive and extensive insights from the respondents, online questionnaires were utilized. The researcher conducted data processing and interpretation based on responses obtained from 200 participants, and the findings will be presented in the subsequent chapter.

This study employs a quantitative research methodology. It adopts a deductive approach, as outlined by (Sekaran, 2006). Before conducting the survey, a pilot testing phase was implemented, where a subgroup of respondents representing the target research sample completed the questionnaire. Statistical analysis and feedback reduced the number of questionnaire items to an appropriate level. Once the pilot test confirmed the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher proceeded with a larger-scale quantitative study focusing on the impact of Twice as a brand ambassador on brand loyalty and purchasing decisions. The data analysis encompassed validity analysis, reliability analysis, multicollinearity test, R^2 (Coefficient of Determination), simultaneous significance test (F Test), path analysis, and hypothesis testing (T-test).

C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

All the indicators utilized in this study yielded valid and reliable results. This is evidenced by the overall r_{count} values for each dimension being greater than the r_{table} (values $r_{count} > r_{table}$). Additionally, all the indicators employed in this research produced reliable outcomes, as evidenced by their Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.7. The researcher employed multicollinearity tests to assess the extent of collinearity among variables. The results indicated that all questionnaire items had VIF (variance inflation factor) values below 5. VIF values below 5 suggest that the data used exhibited low levels of collinearity.

As per marketing research studies, R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are considered significant, moderate, and weak, respectively. These classifications reflect how much the regression model accounts for the variability observed in the dependent variable. In this study, the following findings were obtained R^2 , as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. R^2 and Adjusted R^2

	R-square	Adjusted R-square
Purchasing Decision	0.457	0.446
Brand Loyalty	0.391	0.375

Source: processed data, 2023

Based on the results, it can be inferred that brand ambassadors' dimensions of visibility, credibility, attractiveness, and power account for 45.7% of the variance in purchasing decisions (moderate effect), while these dimensions explain 39.1% of the variance in brand loyalty (moderate effect). Based on the calculation of the F-stat, the relationship between purchasing decisions and customer satisfaction exhibits a larger effect size. The dimensions of visibility, credibility, attractiveness, and customer satisfaction weakly affect purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. On the other hand, the dimensions of power have no substantial effect on purchasing decisions or brand loyalty.

Table 2. Direct Effect (Correlation between Variable)

Path	Path Coefficient
Visibility -> Purchasing Decision	0.165
Credibility -> Purchasing Decision	0.214
Attractiveness -> Purchasing Decision	0.348
Power -> Purchasing Decision	0.108
Visibility -> Brand Loyalty	0.332
Credibility -> Brand Loyalty	0.067
Attractiveness -> Brand Loyalty	0.082
Power -> Brand Loyalty	0.026
Purchasing Decision -> Customer Satisfaction	0.540
Customer Satisfaction -> Brand Loyalty	0.262

Source: processed data, 2023

The path coefficient test results demonstrate that each path exhibits a positive path coefficient, implying that all relationships between variables have a positive impact.

In order to examine the mediating role of "customer satisfaction" as an intervening variable between purchasing decisions and brand loyalty, researchers conducted an indirect path analysis. The results of this analysis confirmed that customer satisfaction acts as an intervening variable, mediating the indirect relationship between the two other variables. In this test, the hypothesis is considered valid if the T value exceeds 1.96 and the P-value is below 0.05.

Table 3. Indirect Path through Intervening Variable "Customer Satisfaction"

Variables	T-Statistics	P-Values
Purchasing decision -> Customer Satisfaction -> Brand Loyalty	2.340	0.020

Source: processed data, 2023

The test results reveal that the relationship between purchasing decisions and brand loyalty, mediated by the intervening variable customer satisfaction, yields a T-value of 2.340, exceeding the threshold of 1.96, and a P-value of 0.020, falling below 0.05. Thus, it can be inferred that customer satisfaction, acting as an intervening variable, plays a significant role in mediating the association between purchasing decisions and brand loyalty (as indicated by the P-value of $0.020 < 0.05$).

The research hypotheses were tested using the t-test, a comparison between t-count and t-table, with a significance level of 0.05 or 5%.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Hip.	Structural Path	Path Coefficient	T Values	P Values	Result
H1	Visibility > Purchasing Decision	0.165	1.847	0.066	Not Significant
H2	Credibility > Purchasing Decision	0.214	2.500	0.013	Significant
H3	Attractiveness > Purchasing Decision	0.348	3.722	0.000	Significant
H4	Power > Purchasing Decision	0.108	1.421	0.157	Not Significant
H5	Visibility > Brand Loyalty	0.332	2.522	0.012	Significant
H6	Credibility > Brand Loyalty	0.067	0.821	0.413	Not Significant

Hip.	Structural Path	Path Coefficient	T Values	P Values	Result
H7	Attractiveness > Brand Loyalty	0.082	1.250	0.213	Not Significant
H8	Power > Brand Loyalty	0.026	0.314	0.754	Not Significant
H9	Purchasing Decision > Customer Satisfaction	0.540	7.716	0.000	Significant
H10	Customer Satisfaction > Brand Loyalty	0.262	2.869	0.005	Significant

Source: processed data, 2023

From the ten hypotheses tested, as shown in the table above, it can be observed that all paths have a positive influence. Furthermore, 5 out of the ten hypotheses exhibit a significant effect (P-value < 0.05), while the remaining five paths do not demonstrate a significant effect (P-value > 0.05). These results show that: 1) Visibility has a positive but insignificant influence on purchasing decision at a 95% confidence level with a statistical T-value of 1.847; 2) Credibility has a positive and significance influence on purchasing decision at a 95% confidence level with a statistical T-value of 2.500; 3) Attractiveness has a positive and significance influence on purchasing decision at a 95% confidence level with a statistical T-value of 3.722; 4) Power has a positive but insignificant influence on purchasing decision at a 95% confidence level with a statistical T-value of 1.421; 5) Visibility has a positive and significance influence on brand loyalty at a 95% confidence level with a statistical T-value of 2.522; 6) Credibility has a positive insignificant influence on brand loyalty at a 95% confidence level with a statistical T-value of 0.821; 7) Attractiveness has a positive but insignificant influence on brand loyalty at a 95% confidence level with a statistical T-value of 1.250; 8) Power has a positive but insignificant influence on brand loyalty at a 95% confidence level with a statistical T-value of 0.314; 9) Purchasing decision has a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction at a 95% confidence level with a statistical T-value of 7.716; and 10) Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on brand loyalty at a 95% confidence level with a statistical T-value of 2.869.

Discussion

Brand ambassador dimension "visibility" has a positive influence on purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis 1 asserts that the brand ambassador variable with the "visibility" dimension positively impacts the purchasing decision variable. However, the T-value for this hypothesis is 1.847, which falls below the critical threshold of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). These findings align with previous research conducted by Hargiyanto (2017), which indicated a positive effect of visibility on purchasing decisions. However, regarding significance, the results indicate that visibility has an insignificant effect on purchasing decisions. This differs from the research conducted by Wulandari et al. (2019), which found a significant influence of the visibility variable on purchasing decisions. These results suggest that the visibility of brand ambassadors does not significantly impact the purchasing decisions of skincare product consumers. This could be attributed to the fact that the purchasing decisions made by skincare product consumers are not solely driven by the widespread recognition and public awareness of Twice, the brand ambassador. Some likely other reasons and dimensions exert a stronger influence on the purchasing decisions of skincare product consumers.

Brand ambassador dimension "credibility" has a positive influence on purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that the brand ambassador variable with the "credibility" dimension positively affects the purchasing decision variable. The T-value for this hypothesis is 2.500, surpassing the critical threshold of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). Consequently, the hypothesis demonstrates a positive and significant influence between the "credibility" dimension of the brand ambassador and purchasing decisions. This finding is consistent with prior research conducted by Faatin et al. (2022), which examined

the impact of endorser credibility on purchasing decisions using the @kulinerbandung Instagram account as the research subject. The study revealed that the "credibility" of the endorser influenced purchasing decisions. Credibility is important as it shapes consumer attitudes and impacts purchasing decisions. When consumers perceive a brand ambassador as credible, they often believe the ambassador possesses relevant knowledge, trustworthiness, and expertise regarding the endorsed product or service. Credibility enhances the persuasive impact of the brand ambassador's message and positively affects consumers' perceptions of the brand. Hence, credibility is a significant factor influencing the purchasing decisions of skincare product consumers in Indonesia.

Brand ambassador dimension "attractiveness" has a positive influence on purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis 3 suggests that the brand ambassador variable with the "attractiveness" dimension positively influences the purchasing decision variable. The T-value for this hypothesis is 3.722, exceeding the critical threshold of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). Thus, the hypothesis demonstrates a positive and significant impact between the "attractiveness" dimension of the brand ambassador and purchasing decisions. This finding aligns with prior research conducted by Timpal et al. (2022), which investigated the role of brand ambassadors in purchase decisions on the Tokopedia marketplace. The study revealed an influence between the "attractiveness" dimension of brand ambassadors and purchasing decisions among consumers in the Tokopedia marketplace. In the case of skincare products, the attractiveness of Twice as the brand ambassador plays a significant role in influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. Respondents perceived Twice as highly attractive due to their popular songs and visually appealing members. This aligns with the image the skincare product aims to portray and the #RevealYourBeauty tagline emphasized in their collaboration. When consumers perceive a brand ambassador as attractive, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward the brand and establish a personal connection with it.

Brand ambassador dimension "power" has a positive influence on purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis 4 posits that the brand ambassador variable with the "power" dimension positively impacts the purchasing decision variable. However, the T-value for this hypothesis is 1.421, which falls below the critical threshold of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). Consequently, the hypothesis demonstrates a positive effect but an insignificant influence between the "power" dimension of the brand ambassador and purchasing decisions. These findings contradict the research conducted by Timpal et al. (2022) on the role of brand ambassadors in purchase decisions on the Tokopedia marketplace, which indicated that the "power" dimension of brand ambassadors had the greatest influence. This discrepancy may be attributed to using different brand ambassadors in the studies. In this study, Twice was used as the brand ambassador, while Timpal et al. (2022) employed BTS as the brand ambassador for Tokopedia, widely recognized as the world's top boy group. These two K-Pop artists' differing power and influence may have resulted in distinct outcomes in this study. A powerful brand ambassador possesses essential attributes such as a strong presence, credibility, and the ability to captivate and connect with consumers. They have the potential to shape consumer opinions, influence brand preferences, and drive purchasing decisions. When consumers perceive a brand ambassador as powerful, they tend to place greater trust in their recommendations, associate positive qualities with the brand, and develop a stronger sense of connection and identification with the brand. Identifying brand ambassadors with significant power is crucial to influence consumer purchasing decisions effectively.

Brand ambassador dimension "visibility" has a positive influence on brand loyalty

Hypothesis 5 asserts that the brand ambassador variable with the "visibility" dimension positively affects brand loyalty. The T-value for this hypothesis is 2.522, surpassing the critical threshold of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). Therefore, the hypothesis demonstrates a positive and significant influence

between the "visibility" dimension of the brand ambassador and brand loyalty. These findings align with previous research conducted by Utaminingsih & Sudrajat (2021), which indicated a strong and significant influence of Stray Kids' "visibility" as brand ambassadors on brand loyalty. The visibility of a brand ambassador plays a vital role in shaping brand loyalty. When a brand ambassador is prominently featured and actively involved in promoting the brand, it can significantly influence consumers' perceptions of the brand and their level of loyalty to it. Continuous and frequent exposure to the brand ambassador's endorsement and representation fosters a sense of familiarity and trust among consumers. This heightened visibility contributes to the strengthening of brand loyalty. When consumers consistently encounter the brand ambassador's association with the brand, it creates a sense of connection and reliability. This visibility is a foundation for building a strong relationship between consumers and the brand, fostering loyalty and commitment.

Brand ambassador dimension "credibility" has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 6 posits that the brand ambassador variable with the "credibility" dimension positively impacts brand loyalty. However, the T-value for this hypothesis is 0.821, which is lower than the critical threshold of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). As a result, the hypothesis demonstrates a positive effect but an insignificant influence between the "credibility" dimension of the brand ambassador and brand loyalty. Consequently, this hypothesis contradicts previous research conducted by Utaminingsih & Sudrajat (2021), which indicated a strong and significant influence of Stray Kids' "credibility" as brand ambassadors on brand loyalty. However, in the present case, Twice's credibility does not significantly impact consumer brand loyalty toward skincare products. This could be attributed to the notion that credibility alone cannot convert consumer purchasing decisions into enduring brand loyalty. Other factors are more prominent in fostering consumer loyalty toward skincare products.

Brand ambassador dimension "attractiveness" has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 7 asserts that the brand ambassador variable with the "attractiveness" dimension positively influences brand loyalty. The T-value for this hypothesis is 1.250, which exceeds the critical threshold of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). Therefore, the hypothesis demonstrates a positive effect and a significant influence between the "attractiveness" dimension of the brand ambassador and brand loyalty. This finding contradicts previous research conducted by Utaminingsih & Sudrajat (2021), which indicated a strong and significant influence of Stray Kids' "credibility" as brand ambassadors on brand loyalty. A brand ambassador's attractiveness plays a significant role in shaping brand loyalty. When consumers perceive a brand ambassador as visually appealing and possessing desirable personality traits, it positively affects their attitudes and behaviours toward the brand, increasing loyalty. However, Twice's attractiveness does not significantly impact consumer brand loyalty toward skincare products in this particular case. This could be due to the understanding that attractiveness alone cannot convert consumer purchasing decisions into sustained brand loyalty. Other factors contribute to fostering loyalty among consumers towards skincare products.

The brand ambassador dimension of "power" positively influences brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 8 suggests that the brand ambassador variable with the "power" dimension positively influences brand loyalty. However, the T-value for this hypothesis is 0.314, which is lower than the critical threshold of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). Despite the positive effect, the influence between the "power" dimension of the brand ambassador and brand loyalty is not statistically significant. This finding contradicts previous research conducted by Utaminingsih & Sudrajat (2021), which indicated a strong and significant influence of Stray Kids' "credibility" as brand ambassadors on brand loyalty. The impact of a brand ambassador on brand loyalty holds significant importance. When a brand ambassador possesses

substantial influence and exerts power, it has the potential to greatly shape consumer attitudes and behaviours, resulting in heightened brand loyalty. A powerful brand ambassador can sway consumer opinions and mould their perceptions of the brand. Their persuasive presence and authoritative stance significantly impact consumer decision-making processes. However, in this specific case, the power exhibited by Twice does not have a significant effect on brand loyalty. This could be due to the understanding that a brand ambassador's power alone cannot convert consumer purchasing decisions into enduring brand loyalty. Other factors play a more significant role in fostering loyalty among consumers toward skincare products.

Purchasing decision has a positive influence on customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 9 proposes that purchasing decisions have a positive influence on customer satisfaction. The T-value for this hypothesis is 7.716, which exceeds the critical threshold of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). Thus, the hypothesis demonstrates a positive effect and significant influence between purchasing decisions and customer satisfaction. Accordingly, purchasing decisions have a positive and significant impact on the satisfaction of skincare product consumers. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Diawan et al. (2015) on the influence of store atmosphere on purchase decisions and its effect on customer satisfaction. The study revealed a positive relationship between the elements of customer purchase decisions examined in this study and customer satisfaction.

Additionally, the results of Cindia et al.'s (2016) study on customer satisfaction through purchase decisions and fashion interest in purchasing imitation handbags indicated that purchase decisions influence customer satisfaction in purchasing imitation handbags. Specifically, higher purchase decisions were associated with increased customer satisfaction among imitation handbag customers. Recognizing the impact of purchasing decisions on customer satisfaction is crucial in understanding consumer behaviour and the success of a brand. When customers make informed decisions to purchase a product or service, it directly influences their level of satisfaction. If the chosen product meets or exceeds their expectations, it increases customer satisfaction. Conversely, if the product fails to meet their expectations or falls short of their needs, it can result in lower satisfaction levels.

Customer satisfaction has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 10 posits that customer satisfaction has a positive influence on brand loyalty. The T-value for this hypothesis is 2.869, which exceeds the critical threshold of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). Hence, the hypothesis demonstrates a positive effect and significant influence between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Consequently, customer satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on the loyalty of skincare products. These findings align with the research conducted by Fahira et al. (2022), which asserts that consumer satisfaction significantly and positively influences consumer loyalty. In their study, satisfaction was derived from respondents' satisfaction with the alignment of product quality, price, and overall satisfaction.

Additionally, the research conducted by Widjaja et al. (2019) on the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty to Gojek revealed that customer satisfaction with Gojek's service significantly impacted customer loyalty. These results underscore the critical role of customer satisfaction in shaping brand loyalty. When customers experience a sense of contentment with a product or service, it engenders a favourable perception of the brand. This favourable perception, in turn, cultivates trust and confidence in the brand, motivating customers to maintain their loyalty and ongoing affiliation with the brand.

D. CONCLUSION

These findings conclude that visibility, credibility, attractiveness, purchase decision, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty are interrelated in the context of this research. These findings support several related theories and research in marketing and consumer behaviour. First, these findings support the theory that credibility, attractiveness, and visibility can influence consumer purchasing decisions. Brand credibility, which includes aspects of trust and reliability, is proven to have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. This is consistent with the theory that consumers tend to choose brands that are considered credible and reliable. In addition, brand attractiveness has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions, indicating that attributes that attract consumers, such as product design or brand image, can influence purchasing decisions.

Second, these findings confirm the relationship between brand visibility and brand loyalty. Brand visibility has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty, indicating that the more consumers see and are exposed to a brand, the more likely they are to remain loyal. This is consistent with the brand theory, which states that consumers choose familiar and well-recognized brands. Furthermore, these findings indicate that purchasing decisions positively and significantly influence customer satisfaction. This is consistent with the theory that purchasing decisions that meet consumer expectations and needs will increase customer satisfaction. In this context, customer satisfaction also positively and significantly influences brand loyalty, underlining the importance of obtaining high customer satisfaction to maintain consumer loyalty.

However, these findings also indicate that some factors, such as power, have an insignificant effect on purchase decisions and brand loyalty in the context of this study. This suggests that other factors or additional variables may need to be considered to understand power's influence in this relationship more deeply. These findings provide a better understanding of the factors influencing purchase decisions and brand loyalty. The implication is that companies must pay attention to factors such as credibility, attractiveness, and visibility to influence consumer behaviour and build brand loyalty. Further research can involve additional variables or deepen understanding of factors that are not significant in these findings to improve marketing strategy and brand management.

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