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The Influence Of K-Pop Artist As Brand Ambassador On Affecting Purchasing Decision and Brand Loyalty (A Study Of Scarlett Whitening's 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. Scarlett Whitening aims to capitalize on this opportunity by appointing the popular K-Pop girl group, Twice, as their brand ambassador. The significant investment involved in this collaboration raises high expectations for Scarlett Whitening, particularly in terms of the impact that their chosen brand ambassadors have on purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Hence, the objective of this research is to examine the influence of various dimensions (visibility, credibility, attractiveness, and power) of K-Pop artist Twice on the purchasing decisions and brand loyalty of Scarlett Whitening consumers. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between purchasing decisions and brand loyalty among Scarlett Whitening 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 are required to have prior experience using Scarlett Whitening products and possess awareness of Twice as one of Scarlett Whitening's 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" "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, Scarlett Whitening X Twice.

A. INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background

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 has become popular in different industries, including food, clothing, beverages, and skincare. Scarlett Whitening is one such brand that has chosen Twice, a K-Pop girl group, as their brand ambassador. Previous studies, including Wang and Hariandja (2016), have shown that brand ambassadors have a positive impact on 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 further investigate how the dimensions of a brand ambassador can truly influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the dimensions of Twice as Scarlett Whitening's brand ambassador influence consumers' purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products.

Ismail's (2017) study found a correlation between the promotional budget and consumer brand loyalty. Similarly, other research suggests that influencers have consistent effects on loyalty (Audi et al., 2015). However, it is currently challenging to find loyal customers, as most consumers tend to switch between brands. This behavior stems from the limited attention consumers pay to a specific brand, leading them to move on once their interest wanes. The low cost of switching brands makes it difficult to maintain customer loyalty. Therefore, customer satisfaction plays a crucial role. Satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal, purchase new products, and exhibit less interest in other brands. They are less price-sensitive and can contribute to enhancing 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 Scarlett Whitening 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 Scarlett Whitening is an intriguing topic.

A.2 Objectives

- 1. To define how the dimensions of K-Pop artist influence the purchasing decision of Scarlett Whitening consumers.
- 2. To define how the dimensions of K-Pop artist influence brand loyalty to Scarlett Whitening consumers.
- 3. To define how customer satisfaction as intervening variable mediates the relationship between purchasing decisions and brand loyalty

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Data Collection

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 Scarlett Whitening products. The study population consisted of Indonesian individuals aged between 15 and 34, of all genders, who have used Scarlett Whitening products and are aware of Twice as one of Scarlett Whitening's brand ambassadors. To obtain comprehensive and extensive insights from the respondents, online questionnaires were utilized. Data processing and interpretation were conducted by the researcher based on responses obtained from a total of 200 participants, and the findings will be presented in the subsequent chapter.

Analysis Techniques

This study employs a quantitative research methodology. It adopts a deductive approach, as outlined by U. Seharan (2006). Before conducting the survey, a pilot testing phase was implemented, where a subgroup of respondents, representing the target research sample, completed the questionnaire. Through statistical analysis and feedback, the number of questionnaire items was reduced 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, R2 (Coefficient of Determination), simultaneous significance test (F Test), path analysis, and hypothesis testing (T-test).

C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

C.1 Validity and Reliability

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.

C.2 Multicollinearity Test

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.

C.3 R2 (Coefficient of Determination)

As per marketing research studies, R2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are considered significant, moderate, and weak, respectively. These classifications reflect the extent to which the regression model accounts for the variability observed in the dependent variable. In this study, the following findings were obtained:

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

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).

C.4 F- Stat

Based on the calculation of F-stat, the relationship between purchasing decisions and customer satisfaction exhibits a larger effect size. The dimensions of visibility, credibility, attractiveness, and customer satisfaction have a weak effect on purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. On the other hand, the dimensions of power have no substantial effect on either purchasing decisions or brand loyalty.

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C.5 Direct Path (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			

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

C.6 Indirect Path through Intervening Variable "Customer Satisfaction"

In order to examine the mediating role of "customer satisfaction" as an intervening variable between purchasing decision and brand loyalty, researchers conducted 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.

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

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).

C.7 Hypothesis Testing

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

Hypo- thesis	Structural Path	Path Coefficient	T Values	P Values	Result
H1	Visibility > Purchasing Decision	0.165	1.847	0.066	Not Significant
Н2	Credibility > Purchasing Decision	0.214	2.500	0.013	Significant
Н3	Attractiveness > Purchasing Decision	0.348	3.722	0.000	Significant
Н4	Power > Purchasing Decision	0.108	1.421	0.157	Not Significant
Н5	Visibility > Brand Loyalty	0.332	2.522	0.012	Significant
Н6	Credibility > Brand Loyalty	0.067	0.821	0.413	Not Significant
Н7	Attractiveness > Brand Loyalty	0.082	1.250	0.213	Not Significant
Н8	Power > Brand Loyalty	0.026	0.314	0.754	Not Significant
Н9	Purchasing Decision > Customer Satisfaction	0.540	7.716	0.000	Significant
H10	Customer Satisfaction > Brand Loyalty	0.262	2.869	0.005	Significant

From the 10 hypotheses tested, as shown in the table above, it can be observed that all paths have a positive influence. Furthermore, 5 out of the 10 hypotheses exhibit a significant effect (P-value < 0.05), while the remaining 5 paths do not demonstrate a significant effect (P-value > 0.05).

- 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
- 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
- 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

D. CONCLUSION

H1: Brand ambassador dimension "visibility" has a positive influence on purchasing decision

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, in terms of 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 Scarlett Whitening consumers. This could be attributed to the fact that the purchasing decisions made by Scarlett Whitening consumers are not solely driven by the widespread recognition and public awareness of Twice, the brand ambassador. There are likely other reasons and dimensions that exert a stronger influence on the purchasing decisions of Scarlett Whitening consumers.

b. H2: Brand ambassador dimension "credibility" has a positive influence on purchasing decision

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 had an influence on purchasing decisions. Credibility holds great importance as it has the ability to shape consumer attitudes and impact their purchasing decisions. When consumers perceive a brand ambassador as credible, it is often because they 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 stands as a significant factor influencing the purchasing decisions of Scarlett Whitening consumers in Indonesia.

c. H3: Brand ambassador dimension "attractiveness" has a positive influence on purchasing decision

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 Scarlett Whitening, 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 the visually appealing members. This aligns with the image Scarlett Whitening 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 towards the brand and establish a personal connection with it.

d. H4: Brand ambassador dimension "power" has a positive influence on purchasing decision

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 the use of 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 ambassadors for Tokopedia, who were widely recognized as the world's top boy group. The differing power and influence of these two K-Pop artists 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. It is crucial to identify brand ambassadors with significant power to effectively influence consumer purchasing decisions.

e. H5: 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 serves as a foundation for building a strong relationship between consumers and the brand, fostering loyalty and commitment.

f. H6: 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 towards Scarlett's products. This could be attributed to the notion that credibility alone is not a sufficient factor to convert consumer purchasing decisions into enduring brand loyalty. Other factors play a more prominent role in fostering consumer loyalty towards Scarlett Whitening products.

g. H7: 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. The degree of attractiveness displayed by a brand ambassador 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 behaviors towards the brand, leading to increased loyalty. However, in this particular case, Twice's attractiveness does not significantly impact consumer brand loyalty towards Scarlett's products. This could be due to the understanding that attractiveness alone is not sufficient to convert consumer purchasing decisions into sustained brand loyalty. There are other factors that contribute to fostering loyalty among consumers towards Scarlett Whitening products.

h. H8: Brand ambassador dimension "power" has a positive influence on 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 behaviors, resulting in heightened brand loyalty. A powerful brand ambassador can sway consumer opinions and mold 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 the power of a brand ambassador alone is not sufficient to convert consumer purchasing decisions into enduring brand loyalty. Other factors play a more significant role in fostering loyalty among consumers towards Scarlett Whitening products.

i. H9: 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 Scarlett Whitening 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 the purchase of 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 behavior 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 typically leads to higher levels of customer satisfaction. Conversely, if the product fails to meet their expectations or falls short of their needs, it can result in lower levels of satisfaction.

j. H10: 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 Scarlett Whitening consumers. 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 and price, as well as overall satisfaction. Additionally, the research conducted by Widjaja et al. (2019) on the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty of Gojek revealed that customer satisfaction with Gojek's service exerted a significant impact on 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 favorable perception of the brand. This favorable perception, in turn, cultivates trust and confidence in the brand, motivating customers to maintain their loyalty and ongoing affiliation with the brand.

Each dimension demonstrates a positive influence on purchasing decisions and brand loyalty, indicating that enhancing these dimensions will result in increased purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. However, only two of the four dimensions, namely "credibility" and "attractiveness," significantly affect purchasing decisions. Furthermore, only the "visibility" dimension significantly impacts brand loyalty. This implies that as a brand owner, it is crucial to identify brand ambassadors who possess these highly valued dimensions. It is important to recognize that the impact of brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions can vary depending on factors such as their suitability for the target audience, authenticity, and alignment of values with the brand. Additionally, consumers may consider other factors, including product quality, price, and personal preferences, when making purchasing decisions.

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