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The power of brand ambassador Twice influences brand image and purchase intention on Scarlett Whitening beauty products

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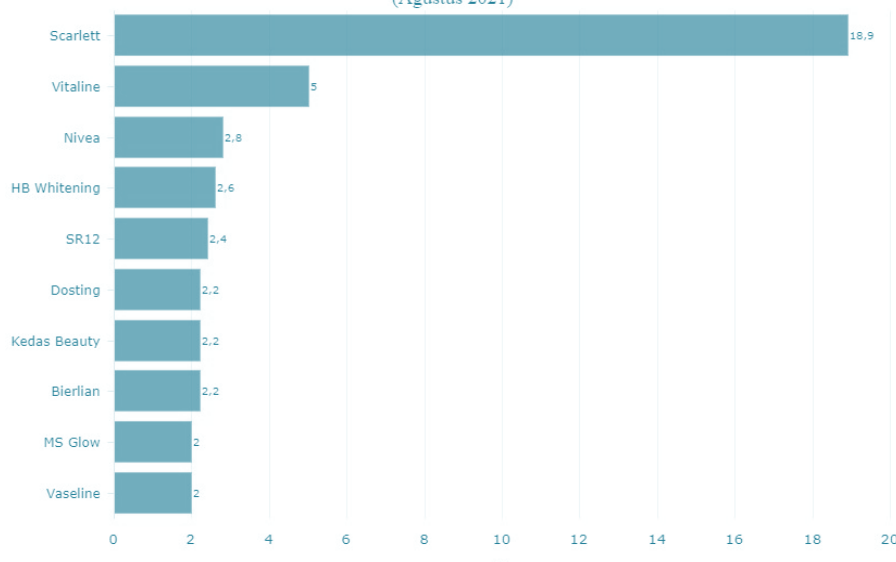
ABSTRACT

Previous studies have shown inconsistent results regarding brand ambassadors' influence on purchase intention. This study aims to determine the power of brand ambassadors in influencing brand image and purchase intention of beauty products. This research replicates Oktaviani and Zainurossalamia's (2021) model by differentiating the research context and using the concept of brand ambassadors, brand image, and purchase intention. With Scarlett Whitening's products in mind, the data were collected using questionnaires distributed through Google Forms to 151 respondents selected judgmentally from customers who ever bought and used Scarlett Whitening. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the data with the help of WarpPLS 8.0, the study found that brand ambassadors' power positively influences brand image and purchase intention. The author suggests companies consider adding product variants for other skin types. Future researchers can add or use different variables to enrich these research findings.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the industrial world is proliferating, especially in the beauty industry. This is certainly proof that there is increasingly fierce competition in the business world, one of which is the beauty industry. The increase in consumer demand and purchase intention is evidenced by the high level of beauty products in e-commerce, especially in Indonesia. One of the hype beauty products in Indonesia is Scarlett Whitening. Scarlett Whitening is a local beauty care product founded in 2017 by Felicia Angelista. PT. Motto Beringin Abadi is a company that produces Scarlett Whitening products. Scarlett focuses on body care, face care, and hair care products. In addition, Scarlett's products have also been tested by BPOM RI. The official account for Scarlett Whitening products has an average sales reaching up to 10,000+ products sold and their official account has been followed by 4.2 million followers with a rating of 4.9 (3.1 million ratings).

Figure 1.
Potential Market for Indonesian Cosmetic Products
10 Merek Produk Perawatan Tubuh Terlaris di Indonesia Menurut Pangsa Pasar (Shopee & Tokopedia)
(Agustus 2021)



Source: Rizaty, M.A. (2021, October 5). Industri Kosmetik Tumbuh 5,59 persen, ini Merek Perawatan Tubuh Terlaris pada Agustus 2021. *Databoks* [Business Statistic Website].

<https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2021/10/05/industri-kosmetik-tumbuh-559-persen-inimerek-perawatan-tubuh-terlaris-pada-agustus-2021>

With the intense competition in beauty products in Indonesia, certainly makes competition between companies. So every company designs a marketing strategy to attract the interest and attention of consumers by using the brand ambassador method. A brand ambassador is a tool used by companies to engage in communication with people about how to increase sales (LeaGreenwood, 2012). The chosen brand ambassador is usually a celebrity.

Seeing the enthusiasm of the Indonesian people who like the Korean Wave, especially Korean Pop and the owner of the Scarlett Whitening beauty product is interested in taking advantage of this opportunity. Twice, which is a girl band from South Korea from JYP Entertainment, will become the official brand ambassador on October 16, 2021. This can become Scarlett Whitening's branding at the end of 2021 apart from

producing quality products. The following is a promotional pamphlet for Scarlett Whitening with Twice as the brand ambassador.

Table 1.
Some Inconsistencies of Previous Research Results

No.	Researcher	Independent Variable	Mediating Variable	Dependent Variable	Conclusion
1.	Wulandari, et al (2021)	Brand Ambassador	Brand Image and Brand Awareness	Purchase Intention	brand ambassadors do not have a positive influence on purchase intention
2.	Oktaviani and Zainurssalamia ZA (2021)	Brand Ambassador	Brand Image	Purchase Intention	Brand ambassadors have a positive and significant impact on purchase intention for the Shopee e-commerce application.
3.	Anandyara and Samiono (2022)	Brand Ambassador	E-Trust, E-WOM, Brand Awareness, Attitude Toward Advertisement	Purchase Intention	Brand ambassadors do not have a direct and significant effect on purchase intention
4.	Sabella, et al (2022)	Brand Ambassador	Brand Image	Purchase Intention	The brand ambassador has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention through brand image
5.	Rahayu and Jamian (2021)	Brand Ambassador	-	Consumer Purchase Intention	The variable brand ambassador has a significant negative impact on purchase intention

Regarding the influence of brand ambassadors on brand image and purchase intention, previous studies have shown inconsistent results. This study aims to determine the power of brand ambassadors in influencing brand image and purchase intention for Scarlett Whitening beauty products. Can the power of Twice's brand ambassadors influence brand image and purchase intentions for Scarlett Whitening beauty products? This question is the research problem in this study. This study aims to answer that question. In detail, the research questions are as follow:

1. How does Twice brand ambassador power affect Scarlett Whitening's brand image?
2. How does Twice brand ambassadors' power influence Scarlett Whitening's purchase intention?
3. How does brand image affect the purchase intention of Scarlett Whitening?
4. What is the indirect effect of the Twice brand ambassador power on Scarlett Whitening's purchase intention?

LITERATURE REVIEWS

1. Brand Ambassador

Brand ambassadors are people who like a product and can attract consumers to buy the product. The purpose of using brand ambassadors for companies is to influence customers to buy the product (Firmansyah, 2019:137). In general, brand ambassadors are representatives of brands who can strengthen brand images (Sadrabadi, N. et al., 2018). Brand ambassadors are people who represent a product as well as the company in communicating the product so that it has a positive impact on business.

According to Lea-Greenwood (2012:77), Brand ambassadors has a five characteristic: (1) transference is when a celebrity endorses a brand related to their profession; (2) congruence, this indicator ensures that celebrities have compatibility and similarities between brands and brand ambassadors; (3) credibility is a level where consumers can see a brand ambassador of a brand has the ability and insight to provide information that consumers can trust; (4) attraction is a non-physical appearance that can generate interest in supporting a product or advertisement, and (5) power is the power of influence that brand ambassadors process to promote products to influence and persuade consumers to make purchases or use advertised products.

2. Brand Image

Keller and Swaminathan (2020:67) stated that brand image is an understanding or view of consumers about a brand which is a reflection of brand associations held in consumer memory. Creating a positive brand image requires marketing activities that are strongly and favorably to the brand in consumer memory. Brand image is a state when consumers think and feel the attributes of a particular brand so that it can generate purchase intentions and increase the value of the brand properly (Khuong & Tran, 2018).

Brand image is basically brand association. Aaker (1991) defined brand association as everything related to consumer memory about a brand. Aaker (1991) described that the affiliation associated with a brand can be associated with various things as follows:

1. Product attributes are a positioning strategy that is often carried out to associate the characteristics of a product. If there is meaning in the product attribute, the association can be interpreted directly in the reason for purchasing a brand so that it is effective in developing associations.
2. Intangible attributes it is an association that cannot be compared and is not measurable.
3. Customer benefits. Benefits can be divided into two, namely rational and psychological benefits. Psychological benefits are closely related to intangible attributes and the feeling achieved when buying the product. Meanwhile, rational benefits are closely related to the attributes of a product.
4. Relative price is a brand that usually only exists in one price category to clearly define the position of the brand.
5. Usage is the approach of associating a brand with an application or customer of the product.
6. User/customer is an approach of associating a brand with the type of customer of the product.

7. Famous people /audiences: Associating a famous artist or party with a particular brand so that it can move the strong association that the artist has.
8. Lifestyle /personality: Associating the brand with the personality patterns of the brand's consumers.
9. Product class. Brands are associated based on their product class.
10. Competitors. Create the view that a brand has the same advantages as competing brands if competitors have a strong presence in the market and it is difficult to surpass it.
11. Country/geographic region. If it has a close relationship with products, materials, and capabilities, a country can become a strong symbol.

3. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention manifests in many form, namely willingness, expectation, implementation intention and plan (Simamora, 2022). Purchase intention comes from a way of learning and a way of thinking that creates understanding (Hendrawan & Zorigoo, 2019). Purchase intention is a form of consumer behavior in making shopping, where an experience based willingness to buy a certain product arises (Kotler & Keller, 2016:198).

Gollwitzer (1999) describes two types of behavioral intention. The first is goal intention, namely the desire, intent, or plan to achieve a goal. For example: "I want to lose 5 kg" or "I want to shop online through Shopee". Second, implementation intention, the intention is defined as an 'if-then' plan that connects situational aspects in the form of a reasonable opportunity to act or a critical moment that encourages action (if) with a response (then) that is considered effective in achieving the desired goal or result. For example, "when the weather is favorable and my body is in shape, I decide to run at least 30 minutes every morning". Implementation determines when, where, and how a person produces thoughts, feelings, or action that can help people achieve their goals.

Gollwitzer (1999) stated that the formation of purchase intention in the form of an effective implementation intention is divided into three as follows:

1. Precision in selecting the if-parts and then-parts of implementation intentions If-then planning may not be very effective if relevant opportunities and responses are not precisely defined so having to consider when, where, and what to do on the spot means the person is unlikely to benefit from the increased accessibility of critical cues and response automation provided by form appropriate if-then plans.
2. Forming multiple implementation intentions. Achieving complex goals requires people to engage in a wide variety of behaviors and face many self-regulation problems. For example, establishing more than one if-then plan by providing appropriate, feasible, instrumental, and non-overlapping plan components and the formation of multiple implementation intentions should prove helpful in promoting goal attainment.
3. Format of implementation intentions. By definition, an if-then plan has a contingent format. The if-then format is very important when developing a plan. If there is a clear similarity between control and implementation intention of instructions, the conditional structure of implementation intention has a dramatic impact suggesting that using an if-then definition format in the induction of implementation intention is important to ensure strong implementation intention.

4. Research Framework

This research is based on a frame of thinking in which the power of brand brand ambassador influences purchase intention directly and indirectly through brand image. In the next section the authors propose the argument for evary path.

The Influence of the power of Brand Ambassadors on Brand Image

Apart from information conveyed through marketing communications, ambassadors also influence brand image using their own image. According to Heider's balance theory (Belaza et al., 2017; Munroe, 2019), if two nodes are associated, there will be a balance of perception, where the node with the lower image will increase and the one with the higher image will decrease. This theory asserts that people tend view two or more associative nodes as having cognitive and emotional balance. Therefore, a brand will obtain higher image from the association with brand ambassadors who usually have high image. In other words, a brand ambassadors influence brand image positively, as found by Wulandari et al. (2021) and Oktoviani and Zainurossalamia, (2021). This argument enables us to formalize the following hypothesis in this research:

H1: Brand ambassador's power influence on the brand image positively.

The Influence of the Power of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Intentions

As reference group, brand ambassador can influence purchase intention, as found by Ding et al. (2020), especially when the product has low risk of purchase. This premise has also proposed by Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model, in which, when using pheriperal route, consumers can directly change their behavioral response as response to secondary cues of a stimulus, such as the source of message. Therefore, the authors formulate the following hypothesis:

H2: The power of brand ambassador influence on the intention positively.

Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Intentions

Consumers can not make decision objectively, but subjectively. In other words, they can not develop an objective assessment on a brand value, but rely on their perception about the brand (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Brand perception is everything consumers know and feel about a brand (Keller, 2013). Cognition and affection are part of attitude that influence behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, the premise that brand image influences purchase intention has almost become a law. This argument enables the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H3: Brand image influence on purchase intentions positively.

METHODS

1. Respondents

Respondents are those who ever purchased and used Scarlett Whitening products and are at least 15 years old. The sample consisted of 151 respondents who are drawn using judgment. The largest proportion of respondents were: female (67.5%), aged between 21-23 years (41.4%), work as undergraduate students (42.0%), and had purchased Scarlet Whitening for their own use more than once (75.8%) (Table 2).

Table 2.
Respondent Profile

Gender	Male	51	3.5%
	Female	106	67.5%
Age	15 – 17 years old	10	6.4%
	18 – 20 years old	22	14%
	21 – 23 years old	65	41.4%
	24 – 26 years old	12	7.6%
	>26 years old	48	30.6%
Occupation	Student	11	7%
	College Student	66	42%
	Employee	43	27.4%
	Other	37	23.6%
Skincare Buying Experience	Yes	151	95.2%
	No	6	3.8%
Skincare Buying Frequency	1X	38	24.2%
	> 1X	119	75.8%

2. Measurements

Brand ambassador measurement is based on Lea-Greenwood's (2012:77) concept and utilized five questions. Brand image is measured using four questions developed from Scarlett Whitening association obtained from preliminary research. Brand intention uses three items of question adapted from Gollwitzer (1999). All questions (Table 3) use a five-level Likert scale to record respondents' responses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Validity Evidences Verification

As suggested by (AERA et al., 2004), in this research, *validity* is defined as: "The extent to which an inference is supported theoretically and empirically." The authors ensure the fulfillment of validity evidence for each construct regarding content validity, response process, and internal structure evidence. The authors ensure the theoretical support by using mature theory to develop the measurements. Response process evidence verifies that the respondents have responded accurately by using effective sentences for each question and randomizing the order of the question and answer choices.

The internal structure of each contract is verified using factor loading (FL) and average variance extracted (AVE). Each construct fulfills the requirements specified by Hair et al. (2014) that $FL \geq 0.50$ and $AVE \geq 0.50$ (Table 3). Internal and external validity requirements are also fulfilled, as shown by composite reliability and Cronbach alpha, which exceed the minimum value of 0.70.

Table 3.
Construct Internal Structure Validity Evidence and Reliability

Items	Instrument	Factor Loading	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Brand Ambassador Power					
BA1	I believe that Twice uses Scarlett's products and it works	0.716	0.567	0.809	0.867
BA2	Twice is good at promoting beauty products	0.767			
BA3	Twice has expertise in the skincare they promote	0.739			
BA4	Twice has expertise in the skincare they promote	0.767			
BA5	Twice has the charisma to promote Scarlett Whitening's products	0.775			
Brand Image					
BI1	Scarlett Whitening has a soft and non-sticky texture	0.836	0.644	0.815	0.878
BI2	Scarlett Whitening products have a long-lasting fragrance	0.733			
BI3	All Scarlett Whitening products are suitable for all skin types	0.831			
BI4	Scarlett Whitening can brighten the skin	0.807			
Purchase Intention					
PI1	If I have decided to use skincare, then I will choose Scarlett Whitening products	0.916	0.806	0.880	0.926
PI2	I intend to use Scarlett Whitening products because the ingredients and basic ingredients suit my skin's needs	0.894			
PI3	If I want healthy and nourished skin, then I have to use Scarlett Whitening products	0.884			

2. SEM Model

The authors utilize structural equation modelling (SEM) using partial least square with the help of WarpPLS. The model generated by SEM is good fit as shown by the fulfillment of prominents indicators used by WarpPLS (Table 4).

Table 4.
Goodness-of-Fit Indicators

GOF	Cut Off Value	Result	Criteria
Average Path Coefficient (APC)	P-value ≤ 0.05	0.509 P-value < 0.001	Good Fit
Average R-Squared (ARS)	P-value ≤ 0.05	0.543 P-value < 0.001	Good Fit
Average block Variance Inflation Factor (AVIF)	≤ 3.3 , but a value of ≤ 5 is still acceptable	2.030	Good Fit
Average Full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	≤ 3.3 , but a value of ≤ 5 is still acceptable	2.377	Good Fit
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	≥ 0.10 , ≥ 0.25 , and ≥ 0.36 (small, medium, and large)	0.604	Good Fit
Sympson's Paradox Ratio (SPR)	Ideally = 1, but values ≥ 0.7 are still acceptable	1.000	Good Fit
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	Ideally = 1, but values ≥ 0.7 are still acceptable	1.000	Good Fit
Statcal Suppression Ratio (SSR)	Must be ≥ 0.7	1.000	Good Fit
Nonlinear Bivariate Causality Direction Ratio (NLBCDR)	Must be ≥ 0.7	1.000	Good Fit

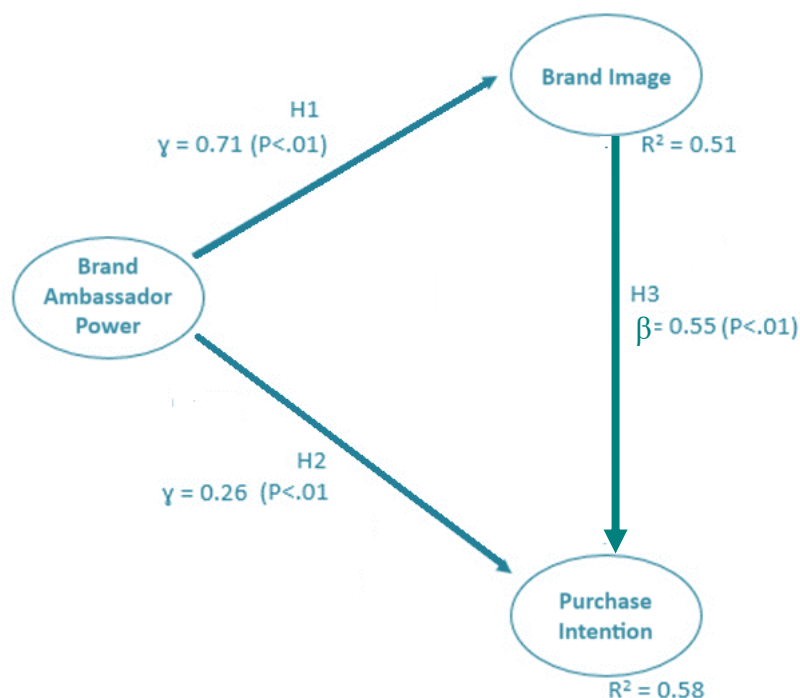
3. Structural Model

The structural model generated by SEM is displayed in Figure 2. We can see that all paths the represent the hypotheses are positive and significant. This result affirms that all hypotheses are confirmed. Therefore, we can state that brand ambassador power influence brand image positively ($\gamma=0.70$, $p\text{-value}<0.01$) as specified by H1. Determinant coefficient of this path is 0.51 or 51% or brand ambassadors can explain 51% of brand image change. Brand ambassador can also stimulate purchase intention directly (as expected in H2 ($\gamma=0.26$, $p\text{-value}<0.01$)).

Brand image also influences purchase intention positively ($\gamma=0.55$, $p\text{-value}<0.01$), as expected by H3. By multiplying the coefficient of path 1 (that represents H1) and path 3 (that represents H3), we can obtain the coefficient value of 0.39, which is significant at $p<0.001$ according to WarpPLS results. This value indicates the indirect effect of brand ambassadors on purchase intention. This value is higher than the coefficient of path 2 (which represents H2). Therefore, we can assert that the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase intention is stronger indirectly

through brand image than directly. The two routes of influence can explain 58% of purchase intention, as shown by the determinant coefficient (R^2) (Figure 2).

Figure 2.
Structural Model



The more substantial indirect effect of brand ambassadors on purchase intention than the direct effect indicates that consumers rely heavily on brand image when purchasing cosmetic products. Therefore, brand ambassadors should be used to increase brand image, not stimulate purchase intention by copying their behavior instantaneously.

Ding et al. (2020) found that the instant effect of the reference group on purchase intention can be substantial only for low-involvement products. In high-involvement products, consumers internalize the reference group suggestions before making a decision. The authors believe that cosmetics are high-involvement products toward which customers mostly consider brand trust and image to make purchase decisions.

CONCLUSION

Brand ambassador influence brand image and purchase intention positively. Brand image influence purchase intention positively. The influence of brand ambassador on purchase intention is mediated by brand image partially. The indirect effect on brand ambassador on purchase intention is higher than direct effect.

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