

The Influence of a Brand Ambassador and Brand Image on BTS Meal Purchase Decision

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Abstract. The sales reduction of several companies or businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic caused them to find other ways to maintain their business, as was done by McDonald's Indonesia by issuing a new BTS meal menu in collaboration with the South Korean boy group BTS. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of brand ambassador and brand image on purchasing decisions by using case studies of Kpop and non-Kpop fans. This research used a questionnaire to obtain data on brand ambassadors, brand image, and consumer purchasing decisions, then analyzed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and the rotational method of varimax factor analysis. From the result, 64 respondents showed brand ambassadors influenced brand image in BTS meal purchasing decisions by 28.6%, brand ambassadors influenced BTS meal purchasing decisions by 19.4%, brand image influenced BTS meal purchasing decisions by 6.4 %, and brand image can mediate brand ambassadors to influence BTS Meal purchasing decisions. The impact of using BTS as a brand ambassador does not directly affect BTS Meal purchasing decisions but the brand image of McDonald's Indonesia can mediate the brand ambassador to influence BTS Meal purchasing decisions.

Keywords: *Brand Ambassador; Brand Image; Purchase Decision; BTS meal; McDonald's Indonesia.*

1 Introduction

In July 2021, Indonesia was shocked by the news in various media about the long queues that occurred at one of the most popular fast-food restaurants, namely McDonald's. McDonald's issued a new menu of BTS Meal in collaboration with the most popular K-Pop boy group, BTS. The queue was dominated by online drivers who accepted consumer orders through the application. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, several companies and businesses have experienced reducing their income and many have given a promotion to keep their products sold, as some fast-food restaurants do.

The sales reduction of several companies or businesses was due to reducing consumer buying interest and also changing the Indonesian lifestyle to become

healthier due to the COVID-19 pandemic and many people did not want to buy instant products. According to data from the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) (Pratama, 2021), the company's revenue in 2020 decreased by 27.82 percent, compared to the previous year, including McDonald's. The shares slumped to 2.5 percent of sales and globally fell by 23.9 percent (Laucereno, 2020).

The sales reduction experienced by McDonald's can be made them find other ways to maintain their business during the pandemic. One way is to use a brand ambassador who can attract consumers to buy McDonald's products again. BTS is one of the most popular K-Pop boy groups in the world and has many fanatical fans from various countries. BTS is an abbreviation of Bangtan Boys which consists of seven members, namely Jin, Suga, J-Hope, RM, Jimin, Taehyung, and Jungkook (Mihardja, 2018). They debuted on June 13, 2013, and for eight years now BTS is finally crowned as the number one idol group in South Korea.

Their popularity causes them used as a brand ambassador for several companies, such as Puma, Dior, Fila, Hyundai Motors, Lotte Duty-Free, Line, Samsung, and so on. It made the companies that used BTS as a brand ambassador in their advertisement increasingly known throughout the world and also affected the product sales. Brand ambassadors are commonly referred to as corporate ambassadors that are hired by a company or organization to represent the brand positively and can increase the product sales or use of services (Yanis, 2020).

The researcher sees the influence of BTS as a brand ambassador on BTS Meal purchasing decisions at McDonald's Indonesia, there is a relationship between brand ambassadors, purchasing decisions, and brand images. Brand ambassador aims to influence or invite consumers to use products and brand image is a type of association that arises in consumers' minds when remembering a particular brand. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of a brand ambassador and brand image on BTS Meal purchasing decisions by using the case study of K-pop and non-K-pop fans.

The results are expected to be able to build an understanding of a brand ambassador and brand image that can influence purchasing decisions for BTS Meal, where several companies and businesses experience the income reduction during the pandemic and it can use a reference for further research on a brand.

2 Method

To determine the influence of brand ambassadors and brand image on BTS Meal purchase decisions based on the Korean wave phenomenon in Indonesia, the researcher uses a quantitative method with multiple regression analysis approaches. Quantitative research usually uses an explanatory design, where the

object of the study is to examine the hypothesized inter-variable relationships (Mulyadi, 2011).

As the initial stage of the research, the researcher collected data regarding BTS meal reporting on online news sites. Researchers saw a lot of enthusiasm from the public to buy BTS meals, where this is the latest menu issued by McDonald's in July 2021 in collaboration with the South Korean boy group, BTS. Of the ten news obtained, the researchers only used two pieces of news that were reported by Indonesian online news sites about BTS meals at McDonald's Indonesia.

This study uses primary data in the form of a questionnaire to analyze three variables, namely the independent variable is a brand ambassador (X), the dependent variable is purchase decision (Y) and the mediating variable is a brand image (M). The research sample used, namely the Indonesian people who buy McDonald's Indonesia products very rarely, less than 5 times a month, 5 times a month, 10 times a month, and more than 10 times a month. This questionnaire was distributed to Indonesian people aged 16 to 35 years, who are fans of K-pop or not and are aware of the existence of BTS Meal. Indonesian people aged 16 to 35 years were chosen because based on a survey conducted by Statista in 2020 (Annur, 2020) stated that active users of social media in Indonesia were aged 18 to 34 years.

The questionnaire distributed to the public contained several questions regarding brand ambassadors, brand image, and purchasing decisions. Brand ambassadors were measured using 12 questions, purchasing decisions were measured using 10 questions, and measuring brand image using 8 questions. Questionnaire data was measured using answers consisting of five choices, namely: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Neutral (N), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS) with an assessment of Strongly Agree (SS) given a value of 5, and so on it decreases until the answer Strongly Disagrees (STS) is given a value of 1, while for negative statements, the answer Strongly Agrees (SS) is given a value of 1, and so on it increases to the answer Strongly Disagrees (STS) which is 5.

The data were analyzed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and the rotational method of varimax factor analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software. Each question item that has a valid factor loading of 0.50 can indicate that the existing indicators are one unit of measurement that measures a common construct and can predict what is predictable. In addition, the validity of the correlation between variables in measuring a concept is seen by looking at the Kaiser Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO MSA) and the significance coefficient of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity stated in the analysis

results. If the KMO MSA coefficient is more than 0.50, then it is acceptable. However, if the coefficient value is less than 0.50 it is not acceptable.

To measure the questionnaire as an indicator variable, the researcher used IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software, and the reliability of the instrument was a requirement for testing the validity of the instrument in the reliability test of this study using the Cronbach Alpha technique.

3 Results

3.1 Findings of The Influence of Brand Ambassador on Brand Image

The statistical results of the t-test in **Table 1** for the brand ambassador variable obtained an at-count value of 5.117 with a significance level of 0.000 because the significance is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), and the regression coefficient has a positive value of 0.584; then the hypothesis which states that "brand ambassador has a positive and significant effect on the brand image of McDonald's Indonesia" is accepted. The magnitude of the influence of the brand ambassador on the brand image is 0.286; this means that the brand image is influenced by the brand ambassador by 28.6%, while the remaining 71.4% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

Table 1 Regression Analysis Results of the Influence of Brand Ambassador on Brand Image.

Constant	Regression Coefficient	t count	Sig.	Adjusted R ²
1,271	0,584	5,117	0,000	0,286

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2021

3.2 Findings of The Influence of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decisions

The statistical results of the t-test in **Table 2** for the brand ambassador variable obtained a t-count value of 4.018 with a significance level of 0.000; because the significance is smaller; of 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), and the regression coefficient has a positive value of 0.436; then the hypothesis which states that "brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on BTS Meal purchasing decisions" is accepted. The magnitude of the influence of brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions is 0.194; this means that the purchasing decision is influenced by the brand ambassador by 19.4%, while the remaining 80.6% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

Table 2 Regression Analysis Results of the Influence of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decisions.

Constant	Regression Coefficient	t count	Sig.	Adjusted R ²
1,275	0,436	4,018	0,000	0,194

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2021

3.3 Findings of The Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions

The statistical results of the t-test in **Table 3** for the brand ambassador variable obtained a t-count value of 2.308 with a significance level of 0.024; because the significance is smaller than 0.05 ($0.024 < 0.05$), and the regression coefficient has a positive value of 0.252; then the hypothesis which states that "brand image has a positive and significant effect on BTS Meal purchasing decisions" is accepted. The magnitude of the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions is 0.064; this means that purchasing decisions are influenced by brand image by 6.4%, while the remaining 93.6% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

Table 3 Regression Analysis Results of the Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions.

Constant	Regression Coefficient	t count	Sig.	Adjusted R ²
1,663	0,252	2,308	0,024	0,064

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2021

3.4 Findings of The Influence of Brand Ambassador and Brand Image on Purchase Decisions

Based on the data contained in **Table 4**, the brand ambassador variable has a significance value of less than 0.05; so that there is no influence of brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions. However, there is a possibility that the mediating variable, namely brand image, can mediate brand ambassadors because the brand image variable has a significance value greater than 0.05. Thus the fourth hypothesis which states "brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on BTS Meal purchasing decisions mediated by brand image" is accepted.

Table 4 Regression Analysis Results of the Influence of Brand Ambassador and Brand Image on Purchase Decisions.

Variable	Regression Coefficient	Sig.
Brand Ambassador	0,411	0,003
Brand Image	0,043	0,726

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2021

4 Discussion

4.1 Brand Image Influenced by Brand Ambassador

Table 1 shows that the brand ambassador variable obtained a t-count value of 5.117 with a significance level of 0.000; because the significance value is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), and the regression coefficient has a positive value of 0.584; then this study succeeded in proving the first hypothesis which states that "brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on the brand image of McDonald's Indonesia". The magnitude of the influence of the brand ambassador on the brand image is 0.286; this means that the brand image is influenced by the brand ambassador by 28.6%, while the remaining 71.4% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

Based on the results, the factor that influences brand image in the BTS meal purchase decision is the brand ambassador. BTS is one of the celebrities who are liked by many people, is considered capable of influencing the brand image of McDonald's Indonesia in selling BTS meals. BTS is considered capable of representing the brand image of McDonald's Indonesia as a fried chicken company because the South Korean people love eating fried chicken and also have a chimek culture, namely the culture of eating fried chicken with beer (Suryaningrum, 2019). Brand image must represent all internal and external character that can affect customers. A brand contains the company's promises to customers to give benefits, privileges, and services. The higher brand images in the customer's minds, the stronger the confidence of customers to stay loyal so that it can support the improvement of profit for the company (Sari Dewi et al., 2020).

4.2 Purchase Decisions Influenced by Brand Ambassador

Table 2 shows that the brand ambassador variable obtained a t-count value of 4.018 with a significance level of 0.000; because the significance value is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), and the regression coefficient has a positive value of 0.436; so this study succeeded in proving the second hypothesis which states that "brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on BTS Meal purchasing decisions". The magnitude of the influence of brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions is 0.194; this means that the purchasing decision is influenced by the brand ambassador by 19.4%, while the remaining 80.6% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

Based on the results, the factor that influences the purchasing decision of BTS meals is the brand ambassador. A brand ambassador is a tool used by a company to communicate and connect the company to consumers to increase sales

(Masyita & Yulianti, 2017). The use of the BTS boy group as a brand ambassador to sell BTS Meal to consumers is considered capable of increasing sales of McDonald's Indonesia products. The use of brand ambassadors usually uses well-known celebrities and has the most positive effect to help form a stronger emotional connection between a brand/company and its consumers, so that it can indirectly build a product image that has an impact on purchasing decisions (Prayogi & Djatmiko, 2019).

4.3 Purchase Decisions Influenced by Brand Image

Table 3 shows that the brand image variable obtained a t-count value of 2.308 with a significance level of 0.024; because the significance value is less than 0.05 ($0.024 < 0.05$), and the regression coefficient has a positive value of 0.252; then this study succeeded in proving the third hypothesis which states that "brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for BTS Meal". The magnitude of the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions is 0.064; this means that purchasing decisions are influenced by brand image by 6.4%, while the remaining 80.6% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

Based on the results, the factor that also influences BTS Meal purchasing decision is the brand image. The brand image of McDonald's Indonesia as a food company that sells fried chicken can also influence consumer purchasing decisions on McDonald's newest product, namely BTS meal. The good image of McDonald's Indonesia in selling its products so far has made people believe that they will continue to buy new products that have been released. Brand image refers to consumers' memories of a brand, namely the customer's interpretation of the attributes, advantages, uses, situations, users, and characteristics of the producer or the characteristics of the producer's product or brand. Brands that have a positive image will encourage consumers to buy products sold by that brand rather than buying the same products sold by other brands (Mubarok, 2018).

4.4 Purchase Decisions Affected by The Brand Image That Mediates the Ambassador Brand

In **Table 4**, it can be seen that there is no influence of brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions, but it is possible to brand image can mediate brand ambassadors to influence BTS Meal purchasing decisions because the significant value of a brand image is greater than 0.05, which is 0.726. The brand image variable as a mediating variable has a stronger influence on purchasing decisions than the direct influence of a weak brand ambassador. This is because the positive image owned by McDonald's Indonesia encourages consumers to buy BTS meals and the use of BTS boy groups as brand ambassadors help to form a stronger

emotional relationship between McDonald's Indonesia and its consumers so that it can indirectly build a product image that has an impact on purchasing decisions for BTS meal.

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