

## The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decision of Scarlett Cosmetics Mediated by Brand Ambassador

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### Abstract

*This study aims to determine and analyze the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions mediated by brand ambassadors. This research was conducted at the official Scarlett cosmetic store located in Malang City totaling 120 respondents. This study uses a non-probability sampling technique with purposive sampling. Data collection techniques using a questionnaire and analyzed with Smart-PLS. This study found that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, brand image has a positive and significant effect on brand ambassadors and brand ambassadors mediate brand image on purchasing decisions.*

**Keywords**—brand image, brand ambassadors, purchase decision.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan menganalisis pengaruh citra merek terhadap keputusan pembelian yang dimediasi oleh brand Ambassador. Penelitian ini dilakukan di toko kosmetik resmi Scarlett yang berlokasi di Kota Malang berjumlah 120 responden. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik non-probability sampling dengan purposive sampling. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner dan dianalisis dengan Smart-PLS. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa citra merek berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian, duta merek berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian, citra merek berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap duta merek dan duta merek memediasi citra merek terhadap keputusan pembelian.

**Kata kunci:** citra merek, duta merek, keputusan pembelian

## INTRODUCTION

Diplomatic relations between Indonesia and South Korea began in 1973, South Korea is one of the countries that has the largest amount of investment and is widely spread in various projects in Indonesia (Bhaskara, 2019). The flow of globalization has had a major impact on the development of the situation in today's society, one of which is that Korean cultural practices in Indonesia can be considered quite high. The gateway to Korean culture through Korean music and drama, as well as the emergence of boybands and girlbands has made many Indonesians fall in love with Korea.

### Article info

Received (10/09/2023)

Revised (24/10/2023)

Accepted (30/11/2023)

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The current existence of K-pop artists influences the preferences of millennials in several ways. For example, the increasingly widespread use of Korean skincare and make-up products, Korean style, consumption of Korean food, and others. Recently, beauty products have been favored by various groups of people, especially women. Cosmetics comes from the Greek, *kosmein* which means to decorate or mandatory dress and important items to wear (Yuliawan, 2022). Purchasing decisions are very important in the aspect of meeting needs, in addition to meeting the needs of deciding to buy an item or service it is also useful for its own satisfaction. Purchasing decision behavior is important to study because this purchase decision is able to fulfill the desires and needs of consumers. Making purchasing decisions, of course, as consumers think about the brand image of the product to be purchased. So brand image can be said to be very important because this is what causes consumers to often use the brand image of a product as a reference in making a purchasing decision. Brand ambassadors are very important because they can enhance the image of the product in front of the public, especially potential customers. According to research Mardiana (2021) says that brand ambassadors have no effect on product purchasing decisions. But in research Purwanti, *et al.*, (2022), Osak, *et al.*, (2020), Sriyanto, *et al.*, (2019), Wulandari (2018), Streie, *et al.*, (2019), Lailiya (2020), Sagia, *et al.*, (2018), Ilaisyah, *et al.*, (2020), Susilawati, *et al.*, (2021), Amin, *et al.*, (2021) states that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. From some of these studies, there is gap research, from the differences in these results it is necessary to do research on brand ambassadors with purchasing decisions.

Scarlett Whitening is a local skincare brand that is quite new in the skincare industry in Indonesia and is known for having a wide variety of products ranging from facial care to body care. Scarlett offers very attractive products and is well-known as a skincare product that can brighten instantly. Even though Scarlett's new product has received MUI halal certification and the product is BPOM. This is one of the considerations for consumers to make a purchasing decision on Scarlett Whitening cosmetic products (Joan, 2021). Scarlett is ranked first, this shows that Scarlett products are local products that are trusted by the Indonesian people with their various whitening products. Scarlett products also have halal certification, which makes consumers increasingly confident in Scarlett products. The success of this local product has attracted several brand ambassadors from within the country and abroad. This Scarlett product attracted actor Song Joong-Ki as a brand ambassador. It is known that Song Joong-Ki is Scarlett's first Star Ambassador from abroad. Apart from that, the Korean wave trend is also currently increasing rapidly. Scarlett has spread throughout Indonesia and even abroad, they have started to introduce this local product, various official Scarlett outlets have spread everywhere and one of them, Scarlett chose the city of Malang for its official store. The researcher chose the research object in Malang City because Malang City has one of the official stores for Scarlett products not only that, Malang City is a student city and the majority of students are already familiar with skincare products with the Scarlett brand, which makes it easier for researchers to conduct research. Thus, this research determines to analyze the effect of brand image on the purchasing decision of Scarlett cosmetics mediated by brand ambassadors in Malang City.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Tjiptono (2010) purchasing decisions are a process in which consumers identify problems, seek information about certain products or brands, and evaluate how well each of these alternatives can solve the problem, which then leads to purchasing decisions. Kotler & Keller (2018) explain that purchasing decisions are a process consisting of several stages that are carried out by consumers before purchasing a product. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) purchasing

decisions are choosing from two or more alternative purchasing decision options, meaning that a person can make a decision, and several alternative choices must be available.

Kotler & Keller (2018) state that brand image is a consumer's perception of a brand as a reflection of brand associations that exist in consumers' minds. Alma (2008) also stated that brand image is a set of brand associations that are formed and embedded in the minds of consumers. Brand image is a type of association that appears in the minds of consumers when remembering a particular brand. Supranto & Limakrisna (2007) explain that brand image is what consumers think and feel when they hear or see a brand and what consumers learn about the brand. Brand image is also called schematic brand memory, containing the target market's interpretation of product characteristics, product benefits, usage situations and marketing characteristics. The results of research conducted by Sari, et al., (2014), Ariyanti, et al., (2021), Supriyadi, et al., (2017), Huda (2020), Sari, et al., (2022), Abi (2020), Sarippudin, et al., (2019), Aeni, et al., (2021), Yulianti (2020), Ling, et al., (2020) state that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

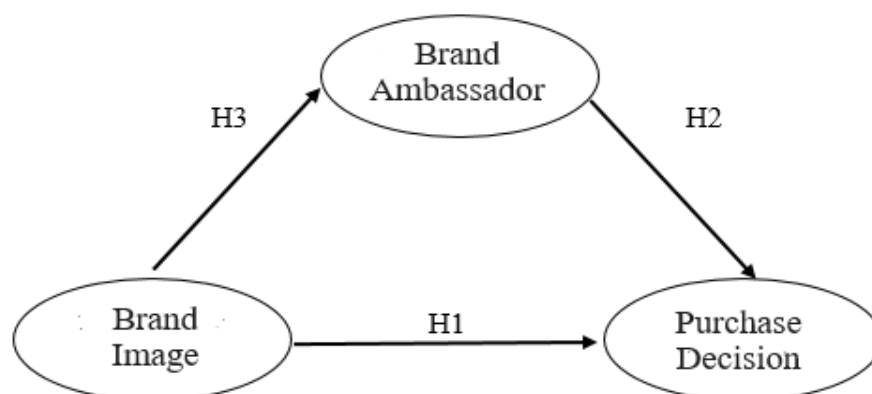
According to Shimp (2010) brand ambassadors are people who support a brand from various popular public figures. Brand ambassadors are people who are invited to work with a company to become the 'face' or icon of a brand. Brand ambassadors generally can only be invited to work together for a limited time in accordance with the agreed work contract. The use of brand ambassadors is carried out by companies to influence or invite consumers. This aims to make consumers interested in using the product, especially because the selection of brand ambassadors is usually based on imagery through a well-known celebrity (Royan, 2012). Research conducted by Yusiana, et al., (2015), Osak, et al., (2020), Sriyanto, et al., (2019), Wulandari, et al., (2018), Streie, et al., (2019), Lailiya (2020), Sagia, et al., (2018), , Ilaisyah, et al., (2020), Susilawati, et al., (2021), Amin, et al., (2021) stated that brand ambassadors have a significant effect on purchasing decisions. Research conducted by Gita, et al., (2016), Yusiana, et al., (2015), Naomi, et al., (2021), Muhtadin, et al., (2018), Aulia, et al., (2018) states that brand image positive effect on brand ambassadors. The results of research conducted by Sari, et al., (2014), Gita, et al., (2016), Yusiana, et al., (2015), Astridianty, et al., (2022) concluded that brand ambassadors mediate the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions. Based on the explanation above, it was found that the hypotheses proposed in this study include:

**H1:** Brand image has a positive and significant direct effect on purchasing decisions

**H2:** Brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions

**H3:** Brand image has a positive and significant effect on brand ambassadors

**H4:** Brand ambassadors mediate the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions



**Figure 1.** Research Framework

## RESEARCH METHODS

The location of this research was carried out at the official scarlett cosmetic store located on Jl. Kauman No. 40 Kauman Kec Klojen Kab, Malang, Jl. Perum Citra Pesona Buring Raya blok D2 No.29 Kec. Kedungkandang Malang City and Jl. KH. Malik Dalam, Buring, Kec. Kedungkandang, Malang City. This type of research is quantitative. The population in this study was Scarlett cosmetic consumers, the sample used in this research was 120 consumers. This study uses a non-probability sampling technique with purposive sampling. Data collection techniques using a questionnaire. The technique for measuring the variables in this study uses a Likert scale. The data analysis technique used in this study is the scale range. The analysis tool uses Smart-PLS.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data for this research is with a questionnaire related to these variables. The number of samples in this study was 120 respondents with a total of 12 questions. The research results obtained from the field are presented as follows:

**Table 1.** Respondent Demography

Item	Variant	Respondents	Percentage
Age	17-20 years	24	20%
	21-24 years	48	40%
	25-30 years	36	30%
	31-40 years	12	10%
Work	Student /University Student	55	46%
	State Officer	18	15%
	Private sector employee	36	30%
Education	Businessman	10	9%
	Junior High School	24	20%
	High School	40	33%
	Bachelor	44	37%
Income	Master	12	10%
	1-2 million	26	22%
	2-3 million	82	68%
	3-4 million	12	10%
	>4 million	0	0%

*Source: primary data processed (2023)*

It is known in the table above that the characteristics of respondents based on the age dominant with ages 21-24 are 48 people or 40% which has a high interest in cosmetics to support their appearance. The most dominant respondents were those with an undergraduate or graduate educational background because these respondents fit the age range of 21-24 years where they really pay attention to appearance, especially at the age of 21-24 many students who continue their studies and become part-time are required to attractive. Students who are still pursuing advanced studies are the dominant respondents who use Scarlett body care. In addition, this also indicates that students really like Scarlett's body. Consumers with an allowance of IDR 2,000,000 to IDR 3,000,000 prefer Scarlett body care because the price of Scarlett body care is still affordable. Pocket money per month of IDR 2,000,000 to IDR 3,000,000 can be said to be quite a lot, but consumers still choose to buy and use Scarlett body care because they believe in the brand image of Scarlett and the benefits derived from the Scarlett body care.

**Table 2.** Convergent Validity Test

Variable	Indicators	Outer Weights	Loading Factor	Information
Brand Image	Famous brand	0,292	0,823	Valid
	Brands have distinct characteristics	0,343	0,796	Valid
	Quality brand	0,283	0,795	Valid
	Unique packaging	0,319	0,817	Valid
Brand Ambassador	Attractiveness	0,254	0,983	Valid
	Modern individual figure	0,252	0,979	Valid
Purchase Decision	Professional suitability	0,260	0,986	Valid
	Trusted celebrity	2,60	0,948	Valid
	Want and need	0,322	0,931	Valid
	Most preferred brand	0,248	0,806	Valid
	Convenience of buying	0,262	0,846	Valid
	Recommendation	0,322	0,867	Valid

Source: primary data processed (2023)

Based on table 2, shows that each of the instruments used in this study includes brand image, brand ambassador, and purchasing decision variables that can be said to be valid. This condition is because the correlation coefficient value of each variable is more than 0.5 so that the test on this validity can be said to be valid, which means that the items in the research questionnaire are able to reveal brand image, brand ambassadors, and purchasing decisions for Scarlett cosmetics consumers in the city.

**Table 3.** Reliability Test

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	Result
Brand Image	0,883	0,823	0,653	Reliable
Brand Ambassador	0,987	0,982	0,949	Reliable
Purchase Decisions	0,921	0,886	0,746	Reliable

Source: primary data processed (2023)

Based on the test results above, the composite reliability value of the brand image variable is obtained at 0.883, the brand ambassador variable at 0.987 and the purchase decision variable of 0.921. Meanwhile, Cronbach's alpha value for the brand image variable is 0.823, the brand ambassador variable is 0.982, and the purchasing decision variable is 0.886. That is, all the variables above are said to be reliable because the composite reliability is greater than 0.7 and Cronbach's alpha is above 0.6, so the questionnaire can produce stable or constant measuring results. The results of the inner model will be seen by the R2 value for endogenous latent variables and parameter values and their T-Statistics in the table below:

**Table 4.** Result of R-Square

Variable	R-Square
Brand Ambassador	0,231
Purchase Decisions	0,815

Source: primary data processed (2023)

Based on the table above, the results show the R-square value for the brand ambassador variable is 0.231 or 23.1%. This indicates that the brand ambassador variable can be explained by the brand image variable of 23.1% while 76.9% is influenced by other variables that are not included in this study. The R-square value for purchasing decisions is 0.815 or 81.5%. This value indicates that this variable

can be explained by the brand image variable of 81.5% and the remaining 18.5% is influenced by other variables not included in this study. In addition, to measure whether or not the model can be predicted, it can be measured through Qsquare. If the Qsquare value is more than 0, it can be interpreted that the model can be predicted. Meanwhile, if the model is less than 0, then the model cannot be predicted. The respective Rsquare values in this study were R2 1 of 0.231 and R2 2 of 0.815. The following are the results of the calculations in this study:

Apart from that, to measure whether or not the model can predict, it can be measured via Qsquare. If the Qsquare value is more than 0, it means the model can be predicted. Meanwhile, if the model is less than 0, then the model cannot be predicted. The respective Rsquare values in this study are R21 of 0.231 and R22 of 0.815. The following are the results of the calculations in this research:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R^2_1) (1 - R^2_2) \quad (1)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0,231) (1 - 0,815)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (0,769) (0,185)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - 0,142$$

$$Q^2 = 0,858$$

$$Q^2 = 85,8\%.$$

Based on the  $Q^2$  test, it shows that the predictive relevance value is 0.858 or 85.8%. This indicates that the model is said to be feasible, because the diversity of data can be explained by the model by 85.8%. While the remaining 14.2% is explained by other variables not explained in the research model or error.  $Q^2$  results of 85.8% indicate that the PLS model formed is good, because it is able to explain 85.8% of all information.

**Table 5.** Hypotheses Result

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistic	P Values
Brand image (X)→ Purchase Decision (Y)	0,420	0,433	0,091	4.615	0,00
Brand ambassador (Z)→ Purchase Decision (Y)	0,911	0,911	0,028	32.645	0,00
Brand image (X)→ Brand ambassador (Z)	0,480	0,492	0,085	5.647	0,00
Brand image (X)→ Brand ambassador (Z)→ Purchase Decision (Y)	0,437	0,448	0,0079	5,554	0,000

Source: Data processed (2023)

Based on Table 5, the results of the inner model obtained based on the output of SmartPLS can be explained that brand image has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. This can be seen from the Tstatistic value  $>1.96$  or P-values with a value  $<0.05$ . This means that the better the brand image of a product, the higher the opportunity for consumers to decide to make a purchase. Brand ambassadors are stated to have a significant influence on purchasing decisions when viewed from a P-value of  $0.00 > 0.05$  meaning that if a product has a good brand ambassador or is known by many people, it will increase purchasing decisions. Likewise, with the brand image of the brand ambassador, the influence is significant when viewed from the value of Pvalues  $0.00 < 0.05$ , which means the better the brand image of a product, the higher the brand ambassador it uses. The table also shows that brand ambassadors are able to mediate the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions significantly which can be seen from Pvalues  $<0.05$ , meaning that the better the brand image, the better the brand image and then have an impact on purchasing decisions.

As a result of testing the first hypothesis, it is known that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Scarlett cosmetics. This means that the higher the brand image of Scarlett

products, the higher the level of decision to purchase Scarlett products. The independent variable brand image is measured using 4 indicators, namely well-known brands, brands with distinctive characteristics, quality brands, and unique packaging. Meanwhile, the dependent variable purchasing decisions are measured using 4 indicators, namely buying because you want and need it, customer likes, purchase stability, and recommendation. The Scarlett cosmetics brand, which has different characteristics from other brands, is a distinct advantage of this product, with ingredients that have been tested for safety and presents products that suit the desires and needs of skin in Indonesia. This makes consumers confident and confident in making purchasing decisions on Scarlett products.

The Scarlett cosmetic brand, which has characteristics that are different from other brands, with a texture that is much softer and easily absorbed by Scarlett's skin, is enough to instill this in the minds of consumers. With reviews that match the product, many consumers buy Scarlett products because they get recommendations from other consumers who have used them before. The results of this research are in line with and support the research conducted by Sari, et al., (2014), Ariyanti, et al., (2021), Supriyadi, et al., (2017), Huda (2020), Sari, et al., (2022), Abi (2020), Sarippudin, et al., (2019), Aeni, et al., (2021), Yulianti (2020), Ling, et al., (2020) state that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

The results of testing the second hypothesis show that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions for Scarlett cosmetics. This means that Scarlett consumers tend to buy because of the Scarlett brand ambassador, so the higher the brand ambassador, the higher the Scarlett purchasing decision. This research proves that the profession of a brand ambassador must be in accordance with the product to be presented. Song Joong-Ki's profession as an actor is very suitable to be a brand ambassador, this is very important because the suitability of the profession with the product will influence purchasing decisions. This research supports the research conducted by Yusiana, et al., (2015), Osak, et al., (2020), Sriyanto, et al., (2019), Wulandari, et al., (2018), Streie, et al., (2019), Lailiya (2020), Sagia, et al., (2018), Ilaisyah, et al., (2020), Susilawati, et al., (2021), Amin, et al., (2021) stated that brand ambassadors have a significant effect on purchasing decisions.

The results of testing the third hypothesis, it is known that brand image has a positive and significant effect on Scarlett cosmetics brand ambassadors. This means that the higher the brand image of the Scarlett product, the higher the brand ambassador that will be used to represent the Scarlett product. This research supports the conducted by Gita, et al., (2016), Yusiana, et al., (2015), Naomi, et al., (2021), Muhtadin, et al., (2018), Aulia, et al., (2018) states that brand image positive effect on brand ambassadors.

Based on the results of the mediation tests that have been carried out, the results show that brand ambassadors mediate the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions. This means that brand ambassador Song Joong-Ki is able to mediate between the Scarlett brand image and the decision to purchase Scarlett products. The results of this research are supported by previous research by Astridianty & Suharyanto (2022), Kristian et al. (2021) and Purwati & Cahyanti (2022) which show that brand ambassadors mediate the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions. Consumers see that Song Joong-Ki is a special attraction, this means that consumers tend to see brand ambassador Song Joong-Ki in Scarlett cosmetics advertisements and look at Scarlett's brand image before they decide to make a decision to purchase Scarlett products. This shows that the stronger the attractiveness and suitability of the profession as a famous actor of a brand ambassador chosen by Scarlett Cosmetics, the more it will build a better brand image. With a brand ambassador who has a strong appeal and the higher the brand image, the more confident consumers will be in making purchasing decisions for Scarlett cosmetic products.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted and has been described previously, several conclusions can be drawn from the overall research results. This study proves that there is a significant positive influence between brand image on purchasing decisions by consumers of Scarlett cosmetics in Malang City. This shows that the better the quality of the brand, the uniqueness of the brand, and the brand that is known to the wider community, the higher the decision to buy Scarlett cosmetics. There is a significant positive influence between brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions by consumers of Scarlett cosmetics in Malang City. This is because consumers are interested in buying a product starting from the artists they like to advertise a product so that brand ambassadors become the influence of consumers in making purchasing decisions. There is a significant positive influence of brand image on Scarlett's cosmetic brand ambassadors in Malang City. This is because with a good brand image of Scarlett cosmetics, the product owner will use the brand ambassador Song Joong-Ki, who is widely recognized by the public as a public figure. So that later consumers will trust the Scarlett cosmetics that are purchased. This study proves that there is an influence of brand image on purchasing decisions with brand ambassadors with mediation variables on Scarlett consumers in Malang City. This is because consumers will decide to buy Scarlett cosmetics, tend to see the brand image of Scarlett cosmetics and the brand ambassador, Song Joong-Ki, who is much loved by young people today.

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