THE INFLUENCE OF STRAY KIDS AS BRAND AMBASSADOR AND KOREAN WAVE THROUGH BRAND IMAGE AS MEDIATING VARIABLE ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE DECISION OF 'NACIFIC' FRESH HERB SERUM IN JAKARTA

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Abstract: NACIFIC is a cosmetic brand from South Korea known for its high-quality skincare products with one of its flagship products, namely Fresh Herb Serum. Along with the growing interest in Korean beauty products, NACIFIC has gained popularity in the international market, including in Indonesia. However, from 2019 to 2023 NACIFIC's sales of Fresh Herb Serum in Jakarta has been fluctuated. If the Company does not make innovations to increase sales, then the Company will suffer losses and threaten its existence. This study aims to find out the influence of Stray Kids as a Brand Ambassador and Korean Wave on Purchase Decision through Brand Image as a Mediation Variable. The type of research used is explanatory research using data collection techniques in the form of questionnaires. The sample used in this study was 100 people with the technique of nonprobability sampling of purposive sampling type. The sample criteria in this study were respondents who were domiciled in Jakarta City, had bought NACIFIC fresh herb serum product at least 1 time, and were aged over 17 years old. Data processing is carried out with SPSS for Windows version 25.0. The research results show that Brand Ambassador and Korean Wave have a positive and significant influence on Purchase Decision, both directly and indirectly through Brand Image. The relationship of Brand Image as a mediating variable is a partial mediation for both independent variables. Suggestions that can be given to NACIFIC, include to create interesting content on social media platforms, as well as collaborating with popular celebrities as brand ambassadors which can help increase the visibility of brand image.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Korean Wave, Purchase Decision, Brand Image

Introduction

The demand for skincare products has become the highlight in business sector of beauty industry. The rapid growth in the beauty industry has attracted business people to market and distribute skincare products, including South Korean brands that are eagerly entering the international market, riding the wave of the Korean Wave cultural phenomenon. The Korean wave has also brought Korean beauty, which has become popular worldwide. As a result, it is expected that South Korean brands will be able to penetrate the international market, including Indonesia. This is evidenced by market share of South Korean skincare users' data (www.statista.com, 2023) that shows among Asian nations, Indonesia is rated third in terms of using South Korean brands with the percentage of female brand users reaching 63%. This happened in Indonesia because skincare and cosmetics have grown to become one of the most crucial desires, especially for women (Sagia & Situmorang, 2018).

Some companies take advantage of the Korean wave phenomenon to boost their sales. The company utilize Korean wave with the use of K-pop idols, who have many fans in various countries, including people in Indonesia, as a strategy to attract the public. One of the South Korean brands, Nacific, which has entered the international market, especially in Indonesia, use this marketing strategy by using Stray Kids as their Brand Ambassador. Nacific offers beauty care products in the form of a fairly complete range of skincare and cosmetic products. The

following picture shows the choice of Indonesians for cosmetic products from South Korea based on monthly sales in E-Commerce (www.compas.com, 2022)

Figure 1. South Korean Skincare Brands Ranked Based on Monthly Sales in Official Stores on E-Commerce

This data shows that there is a strong demand for Korea skincare products in e-commerce, with some brands being more dominant. Brands with good product innovation and effective marketing strategies tend to have higher sales. With sales of 3,000 units, Nacific is in last position on the list. While it still has good sales, these brands may need to evaluate their marketing strategies or products to attract more customers and increase sales.

According to the Global Business Guide, the highest sales are found in 5 major cities in Indonesia, namely Jakarta, Makassar, Surabaya, Medan and Bandung. Jakarta is included in one of the cities that has experienced an increase in the cosmetic industry, the following is sales data for one of Nacific products with the highest sales, namely Fresh Herb Serum:

Table 1. Nacific Fresh Herb Serum Data Sales in DKI Jakarta Period 2019 to 2023

Year	Target of Sales	Realization of Sales	Target Achievement
2019	50,000,000	48,120,000	96,24%
2020	60,000,000	61,270,000	102,11%
2021	75,000,000	89,290,000	119,05%
2022	100,000,000	95,020,000	95,02%
2023	125,000,000	130,924,000	104,73%

Source: PT. Abill Indonesia Jaya, 2023

Based on the data obtained, the sales of Nacific Fresh Herb Serum have fluctuated over the past five years, from 2019 to 2023, which become the main focus in market research. This prompted Nacific brand to refine its marketing strategy. With this background, the author wants to prove whether the utilization of Korean wave with use of Stray Kids as Nacific's Brand Ambassador, can have an impact or influence in building a good Brand Image for Nacific. The goal is for consumers to purchase Nacific products amid competition with other cosmetic brands.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that there are seven problem formulations in this research:

- 1) Does brand ambassador affect the brand image of Nacific Fresh Herb Serum in Jakarta?
- 2) Does Korean wave affect the brand image of Nacific Fresh Herb Serum in Jakarta?
- 3) Does brand ambassador affect the purchase decision of Nacific Fresh Herb Serum in Jakarta?
- 4) Does Korean wave affect the purchase decision of Nacific Fresh Herb Serum in Jakarta?

- 5) Does brand image affect the purchase decision of Nacific Fresh Herb Serum in Jakarta?
- 6) Does brand ambassador affect the purchase decision through brand image of Nacific Fresh Herb Serum in Jakarta?
- 7) Does Korean wave affect the purchase decision through brand image of Nacific Fresh Herb Serum in Jakarta?

Theoretical Framework

Consumer Behavior

According to Sciffman and Kanuk (2004), Consumer Behavior is a process that is passed by a person in finding, buying, using, evaluating and acting after consuming products, services and ideas that are expected to meet their needs. Based on the three definitions of consumer behavior above, consumer behavior is defined as a decision-making process in assessing, buying, and using goods and services.

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), Consumer behavior is the study of how individuals, groups, and organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires.

Brand Ambassador (X1)

Shimp (2014) defines Brand ambassador are advertisements that use famous people or figures (public figures) to support products. The indicators are including: Visibility, Credibility, Attraction, and Power (Shimp, 2014).

Korean Wave (X2)

Lee and Cho (2012) define a Korean wave itself is a phenomenon of the rapid growth of Korean culture through mass media. Korean Wave in changing consumer behavior starts from several Korean Wave indicators. The indicators are including: Understanding, Attitude and Behavior, and Perception (Lee and Cho, 2012).

Brand Image (Z)

Kotler and Keller (2016) define a brand as a name, term, sign, emblem or design that combines to provide a distinctive feature or identifier of one of the sellers or groups of sellers to distinguish them from competitors in their field. The indicators are including: strength of brand associations, favorability of brand associations, uniqueness of brand associations (Keller, 2013).

Purchase Decision (Y)

Kotler and Amstrong (2015) say that purchasing decisions are actions from consumers to want to buy or not the product driven by awareness of fulfilling needs or desires and realizing there are future problems. The indicators are including: product selection, brand selection, distribution option, time of purchase, and number of purchase (Kotler and Amstrong, 2015).

Research Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a provisional conjecture that needs to be proven true. According to Sugiyono (2010), a hypothesis is a provisional answer to the formulation of a research problem.

Figure 2. Research Hypothesis Model

Based on the background, problem formulation, and results of previous research, the researcher made a hypothesis in this study, which is as follows:

- H1: There is a positive and significant influence of Brand Ambassador on Brand Image.
- H2: There is a positive and significant influence of Korean Wave on Brand Image.
- H3: There is a positive and significant influence of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision.
- H4: There is a positive and significant influence of Korean Wave on Purchase Decision.
- H5: There is a positive and significant influence of Brand Image on Purchase Decision.
- H6: There is a positive and significant influence of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision through Brand Image.
- H7: There is a positive and significant influence of Korean Wave on Purchase Decision through Brand Image.

Research Method

The type of research used by the researcher is explanatory research with quantitative approach, which is research that intends to explain the position of the variables being studied and the relationship between one variable and another and test the hypothesis that has been formulated (Sugiyono, 2010). In this study, it will be explained about the influence between brand ambassadors, brand image and brand image on purchase decisions. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling using accidental sampling when the researcher selects a sample based on the ease of access to the research determined using the purposive sampling technique. Research data was obtained through an online questionnaire with a measurement scale using the Likert scale. The data analysis technique used in this study was processed using SPSS 25.0 for windows software.

Research Result

Based on the research data that has been obtained through the questionnaire, the following are the results of the examination and analysis of the research data. The first test carried out includes validity and reliability testing. The following is the data from the validity test results on the variables Brand Ambassador (X1), Korean Wave (X2), and Brand Image (Z) on the Purchase Decision (Y).

Table 2. Validity Test Result

Variable	Question	R Count	=	R Table	Description
	Items				-
Brand	BA1	0,676	>	0,1654	Valid
Ambassador	BA2	0,799	>	0,1654	Valid
(X1)	BA3	0,658	>	0,1654	Valid
- -	BA4	0,643	>	0,1654	Valid
_	BA5	0,483	>	0,1654	Valid
_	BA6	0,828	>	0,1654	Valid
_	BA7	0,707	>	0,1654	Valid
_	BA8	0,649	>	0,1654	Valid
- -	BA9	0,592	>	0,1654	Valid
_	BA10	0,481	>	0,1654	Valid
Korean Wave	KW1	0,507	>	0,1654	Valid
(X2)	KW2	0,474	>	0,1654	Valid
_	KW3	0,698	>	0,1654	Valid
·	KW4	0,644	>	0,1654	Valid
·	KW5	0,518	>	0,1654	Valid
_	KW6	0,629	>	0,1654	Valid
Brand Image	BI1	0,845	>	0,1654	Valid
(Z)	BI2	0,506	>	0,1654	Valid
_	BI3	0,868	>	0,1654	Valid
- -	BI4	0,828	>	0,1654	Valid
_	BI5	0,422	>	0,1654	Valid
- -	BI6	0,659	>	0,1654	Valid
Purchase	PD1	0,680	>	0,1654	Valid
Decision (Y)	PD2	0,723	>	0,1654	Valid
- -	PD3	0,377	>	0,1654	Valid
-	PD4	0,703	>	0,1654	Valid
-	PD5	0,525	>	0,1654	Valid
-	PD6	0,570	>	0,1654	Valid

Source: Processed primary data, 2024

In the table above, it can be seen that the r count calculated on all question items used to measure all research variables is greater than the r table (0,1654) or in other words, the r count > r table. Based on the results of the test, it was concluded that all question indicators that had been formulated and disseminated to measure the Brand Ambassador (X1), Korean Wave (X2), Brand Image (Z), and Purchase Decision (Y) variables are valid.

Table 3. Reliability Test Result

No	Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Alpha	Description
1.	Brand Ambassador	0,853	0,60	Reliable
2.	Korean Wave	0,607	0,60	Reliable
3.	Brand Image	0,784	0,60	Reliable
4.	Purchase Decision	0,655	0,60	Reliable

Source: Processed primary data, 2024

Based on table above, it shows that all variables, Brand Ambassador (X1), Korean Wave (X2), Brand Image (Z), and Purchase Decision (Y), the results of the alpha calculation in each variable are more than 0.60 (Cronbach Alpha > 0.60) so that all variables in this research are reliable.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Result

	Hypothesis	T-Test	T-Table	Description
H1	Brand Ambassador have positive and significant effect on Brand Image	7,715	1,660	H1 Accepted
Н2	Korean Wave have positive and significant effect on Brand Image	8,367	1,660	H2 Accepted
Н3	Brand Ambassador have positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision	10,004	1,660	H3 Accepted
H4	Korean Wave have positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision	8,765	1,660	H4 Accepted
Н5	Brand Image have positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision	11,588	1,660	H5 Accepted
Н6	Brand Ambassador have positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision through Brand Image	5,204	1,660	H6 Accepted
Н7	Korean Wave have positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision through Brand Image	5,380	1,660	H7 Accepted

Source: Processed primary data, 2024

Discussion

The first finding is that Brand Ambassador variable has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. The test results show that there is a relationship between Brand Ambassador variable and Brand Image in the strong category with the correlation coefficient value of 0,615 and determinant coefficient value of 37,8%, which means Brand Image variable can be influenced by Brand Ambassador variable at 37,8%. As in simple linear regression test, the equation that can be formed is BI = 7.940 + 0.406BA, which means if Brand Ambassador increases in a positive direction, then Brand Image will also increase in positive direction. In addition, the t test value obtained is 7.715 > t table (1.660), which means that Ho is rejected and H1 is accepted. So that, the statement of Hypotheses 1 "There is positive and significant influence between Brand Ambassador and Brand Image." is **accepted.**

The second finding is that Korean Wave variable has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. The test results show that there is a relationship between Korean Wave variable and Brand Image in the strong category with the correlation coefficient value of 0,646 and determinant coefficient value of 41,7%, which means Brand Image variable can be influenced by Korean Wave variable at 41,7%. As in simple linear regression test, the equation that can be formed is BI = 3.008 + 0.864KW, which means if Korean Wave increases in a positive direction, then Brand Image will also increase in positive direction. In addition, the t test value obtained is 8.367 > t table (1.660), which means that Ho is rejected and H2 is accepted. So that, the statement of Hypotheses 2 "There is positive and significant influence between Korean Wave and Brand Image." is **accepted.**

The third finding is that Brand Ambassador variable has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision. The test results show that there is a relationship between Brand Ambassador variable and Purchase Decision in the strong category with the correlation coefficient value of 0.711 and determinant coefficient value of 50.5%, which means Purchase Decision variable can be influenced by Brand Ambassador variable at 50.5%. As in simple linear regression test, the equation that can be formed is PD = 7.670 + 0.416BA, which means if Brand Ambassador increases in a positive direction, then Purchase Decision will also increase in positive direction. In addition, the t test value obtained is 10.004 > t table (1.660), which means that Ho is rejected and H3 is accepted. So that, the statement of

Hypotheses 3 "There is positive and significant influence between Brand Ambassador and Purchase Decision." is **accepted.**

The fourth finding is that Korean Wave variable has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision. The test results show that there is a relationship between Korean Wave variable and Purchase Decision in the strong category with the correlation coefficient value of 0,663 and determinant coefficient value of 43,9%, which means Purchase Decision variable can be influenced by Korean Wave variable at 43,9%. As in simple linear regression test, the equation that can be formed is PD = 5.271 + 0.787KW, which means if Korean Wave increases in a positive direction, then Purchase Decision will also increase in positive direction. In addition, the t test value obtained is 8.765 > t table (1.660), which means that Ho is rejected and H4 is accepted. So that, the statement of Hypotheses 4 "There is positive and significant influence between Korean Wave and Purchase Decision." is **accepted.**

The fifth finding is that Brand Image variable has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision. The test results show that there is a relationship between Brand Image variable and Purchase Decision in the strong category with the correlation coefficient value of 0,760 and determinant coefficient value of 57,8%, which means Purchase Decision variable can be influenced by Brand Image variable at 57,8%. As in simple linear regression test, the equation that can be formed is PD = 8.720 + 0.674BI, which means if Brand Image increases in a positive direction, then Purchase Decision will also increase in positive direction. In addition, the t test value obtained is 11,588 > t table (1.660), which means that Ho is rejected and H5 is accepted. So that, the statement of Hypotheses 5 "There is positive and significant influence between Brand Image and Purchase Decision." is **accepted.**

The sixth finding is that there is an influence of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision through Brand Image. This finding is proven by using Sobel test which obtained t value (5,204) > t table (1,660), thus indicating that Brand Image is able to mediate the Brand Ambassador variable and Purchase Decision variable, which means Ho is rejected and H6 is accepted. Based on the research, the influence of the Brand Ambassador variable (X1) on the Brand Image (Z) and the influence of the Brand Ambassador variable (X1) on the Purchase Decision (Y) are significant. Through these results, it can be said that the Brand Image is a **partial** mediation variable. The findings of this study state that Brand Ambassador can affect Purchase Decision with or without Brand Image as a mediating variable. So that, the statement of Hypotheses 6 "There is positive and significant influence between Brand Ambassador and Purchase Decision through Brand Image." is **accepted.**

The seventh finding is that there is an influence of Korean Wave on Purchase Decision through Brand Image. This finding is proven by using Sobel test which obtained t value (5,380) > t table (1,660), thus indicating that Brand Image is able to mediate the Korean Wave variable and Purchase Decision variable, which means Ho is rejected and H7 is accepted. Based on the research, the influence of the Korean Wave variable (X2) on the Brand Image (Z) and the influence of the Korean Wave variable (X2) on the Purchase Decision (Y) are significant. Through these results, it can be said that the Brand Image is a **partial** mediation variable. The findings of this study state that Korean Wave can affect Purchase Decision with or without Brand Image as a mediating variable. So that, the statement of Hypotheses 7 "There is positive and significant influence between Korean Wave and Purchase Decision through Brand Image." is **accepted.**

Summary

1. Brand Ambassador variable has a positive and significant influence on the Brand Image variable. This is shown by Stray Kids as a brand representative is able to build trust and

- emotional connection with consumers, so that there is positive perception of brand image at the eyes of the consumers.
- 2. Korean wave variable has a positive and significant influence on the Brand Image variable. This is shown by the popularity of Korean culture, which create positive associations that enhance the brand's image.
- 3. Brand Ambassador variable has a positive and significant influence on the Purchase Decision. This is shown by Stray Kids being able to build trust and credibility in the eyes of consumers, which contributes to consumer purchasing decisions towards Nacific products.
- 4. Korean Wave variable has a positive and significant influence on the Purchase Decision. This is shown by the popularity of Korean culture which attracts global attention by increasing brand appeal in the international market, thus encouraging consumers to buy products associated with the Korean wave phenomenon.
- 5. Brand Image variable has a positive and significant influence on the Purchase Decision. This is shown by Nacific's strong brand image, with its main product, namely fresh herb serum which can distinguish Nacific from competitors, thus encouraging consumers choose to buy their product.
- 6. Brand Ambassador variable has a positive and significant influence on the Purchase Decision variable through Brand Image variable. This is shown by having Stray Kids as an attractive brand ambassador, Nacific can strengthen their brand image, which ultimately improves consumer purchasing decisions.
- 7. Korean Wave variable has a positive and significant influence on the Purchase Decision variable through Brand Image variable. This is shown by the positive association with the Korean wave which not only attracts attention but also builds loyalty, it makes consumer have demand to purchase Nacific product.

Suggestion

Suggestions that can be given to NACIFIC are encompasses regarding Brand Ambassador, Korean Wave, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision. Brand Ambassador of Nacific is considered very good. However, the researcher suggests Nacific to reevaluate the suitability of Stray Kids image with the product's values. Create creative campaigns that highlight the uniqueness of the serum and brand ambassador involvement in the content. Tailor the marketing message to fit the relevant target audience, emphasizing values such as authenticity and youthful spirit brought by brand ambassador to strengthen the brand image of Nacific. Korean Wave impact on Nacific is considered very good. However, the researcher suggests Nacific to launch an educational campaign about the benefits of the product, collaborate with relevant brand ambassadors, and integrate elements of Korean culture in marketing. These measures can strengthen the brand's position and increase consumer interest. Brand Image of Nacific is considered very good. However, the researcher suggests Nacific to be able to gather positive testimonials from customers, and improve product formulation through research and development. These measures can improve consumers' perception of quality and trust in the brand.

In addition, suggestions that can be given for the next research are to be able to develop this research by using different objects or locations, as well as adding different research variables to be able to see other factors or variables that have the possibility to influence the Purchase Decision on skincare products. This can be done to broaden the perspective, as the new variable can provide a more comprehensive and in-depth perspective on the phenomenon being studied, helping to understand aspects that may have been missed before.

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