Digital Business Communication Strategy Barometer: Stimulation of K-Pop Brand Ambassadors for Consumers of E-commerce Products in Indonesia

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Abstract: The popularity of K-Pop is considered to be in line with the adoption of certain product brands, now this is increasingly happening in Indonesia. Especially for companies that run digital business communication strategies through e-commerce channels, so they need to be stimulated through their brand ambassadors. This research is intended to make a barometer of digital business communication strategies through measuring the impact of K-Pop Brand Ambassador stimulation on purchasing decisions of e-commerce consumers in Indonesia. The data is calculated using the PLS-SEM analysis method with the calculation tools used are SmartPLS and G*Power. This research is based on simple random sampling involving 133 respondents. The test results show that the impact of K-Pop brand ambassadors on consumer purchasing decisions for e-commerce products in Indonesia is only 0.662, so it does not have a significant effect. Companies that use digital business communication strategies need to involve other, more substantial components, especially in increasing their brand interactions with consumers.

Keyword: Digital Business; Brand ambassador; Consumer purchasing decisions; K pop; Communication Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

The barometer of the form of technological transformation that is happening today as one of the hallmarks of technological development, especially in the context of economics and business, is the emergence of the internet that supports humans to build an online business

such as e-commerce. e-commerce is represented as a business concept by using the process of buying and selling transactions in an information network in the form of the internet. In this case, Nadia and her colleagues (2020) said that e-commerce is designed to facilitate various business transactions using the internet so that users can minimize their energy and time to get the desired product. In the digital business line, there are several online marketplaces such as Tokopedia, Lazada, Shopee, Blibli, and other platforms, where they compete with each other and carry out promotions to become the platform that people rely on the most.

One of the marketing strategies used by e-commerce in winning the hearts of consumers is Brand Ambassador. As an identifier in representing a product, e-commerce provides an emotional approach to consumers so that the rate of sales increases (Masyita & Yuliati, 2017). The identifying figure chosen by a company in this case is a popular figure among the public (Sterie et al., 2019). Communication (Ulfa & Marta, 2017) and promotions conveyed by these figures will have an indirect influence on the audience over the Brand Image. Use of Brand Ambassadors as a tool to increase sales. In an effort to increase sales, the company chooses Brand Ambassadors based on current trends. When viewed in the entertainment industry, Korean Pop music in Indonesia has been in the spotlight for the last few years. According to Bangun, Nareswari, and Sukur (2020), Indonesia ranks second after Japan as the largest number of fans on "idols" from JYP Entertainment, a conglomerate company engaged in the entertainment industry and a multinational record label in Korea. The meaning of idol as a designation of a Korean boy band or girl band. The Indonesian people's preference for this Korean figure is used by e-commerce as a media to promote their marketplace.

The emergence of Korean pop as a Brand Ambassador in Indonesian mass media, especially television, attracted the attention of researchers to review this phenomenon as a research topic. Based on this, the researcher wants to identify the impact of Korean pop Brand Ambassadors on consumer decisions in purchasing a product using various e-commerce platforms. As Brand Ambassadors are well-known figures who are recruited to market products or brands, with the function to share testimonies (testimonials), invitations and endorsements (endorsement), act as actors in the advertisements they represent to company representatives (Anggraeni, 2020). Meanwhile, Brand Image builds consumer perceptions and understanding of a brand (Rahman et al., 2012). There are several factors that make up a Brand Image, namely the quality of products and brands, reliable and accountable, functions or benefits, services, risks, prices, and the image that the brand has (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). Brand Image can be measured by various indicators, namely identity, personality, associations, attitudes, and behavior, as well as the benefits and advantages of the brand.

From the expression of Zhang Yi (2015), it is recognized that the impact of consumer trust in a brand can have an impact on consumer buying decisions. Brand Image even forms perceptions about the characteristics, appearance, and shortcomings related to the brand that are able to exceed the product itself, this can change consumers' thinking to make a purchase decision. While the Brand Ambassador is not a substitute for the credibility of the Brand Image but becomes a stakeholder by distributing the company's brand through expressing interest to the audience (Smith et al., 2018).

The decision-making process is one of the processes that someone needs to do to get the target to be achieved, so that the problems encountered can be resolved. Buying Decision is one of the consumer behaviors that can help increase the number of sales in the company (Stankevich, 2017). The decision-making model (Kotler & Keller, 2012) consists of five stages, namely knowing the product, seeking information, evaluating alternatives, making purchases, and responding after consumers make a purchase. The five stages are based on various factors and certain moments so that the buying decision process occurs. Consumer needs (Stankevich, 2017) to find out about brands, conduct a brief assessment of brand testimonials (Putra, 2021) (Sari et al., 2021) and find the best alternative will give

consideration in purchasing transactions (Agung et al., 2021; Marta & Septyana, 2015), while a post-purchase assessment is carried out for reconsideration if you want to make a repeat purchase. This study will be one of the references to broaden the horizons of researchers and e-commerce players to establish a marketing strategy that uses Brand Ambassador as the key. The focus of this research refers to the differences in the relationship between e-commerce Brand Ambassadors and consumers' decisions to make purchases on the platform.

The researcher formulates a hypothesis based on the correlation of the two variables, namely the impact given by the Brand Ambassador on consumer buying decisions in e-commerce channels. The brand's decision to use Brand Ambassadors, especially Korean pop figures in marketing the company's brand, certainly attracts the attention of the public, especially fans of these figures. Many previous studies have tested brand ambassadors and buying decisions. The impact of the BTS brand ambassador on buying decisions in the Tokopedia e-commerce application has a significant positive impact (Fawwaz & Indrawati, 2020). Meanwhile, there are studies that test brand ambassadors and the Korean wave with purchasing decisions that have a positive but not too significant effect on a Neo Coffee brand (Siskhawati & Maulana, 2021). Seeing the attractiveness seen in promotions involving Korean pop figures, people tend to try harder to reach brands by accessing related e-commerce platforms. It is these efforts that shape the potential of users to make purchase transactions on the platform.

H1: Brand Ambassadors have a significant impact on consumers' buying decisions on the use of e-commerce platforms.

Through this research, it is hoped that researchers will be able to provide advice for e-commerce players as a reference regarding marketing strategies used to improve business performance.

METHODS

In this research, the researcher uses the positivistic paradigm to find out phenomena using quantitative research methods. This paradigm (Rony, 2019) prioritizes research objectivity and methodologically separates subject-object relations. As a standard of research reality, the assumptions of naturalism and naive realism will be packaged by a positivistic paradigm by prioritizing empiricism.

The population is a combination of individuals, groups, organizations, or entities who want to be studied and to whom or what knowledge they want to generalize or impart from the research conducted (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). In its implementation, the population makes boundaries for the scope of the study and the context in the research so that the presentation of data is more specific and precisely leads to one goal. The boundaries in question can also provide a comprehensive picture and identify the target population and sample scope as well as provide alignment between these entities in research. This study uses respondents from a population that is not counted due to the wide scope of its boundaries, so the technique of the researcher decided to choose a random sampling technique as the method of selecting the sample in this research. Researchers conducted a survey through an online questionnaire in the form of an instrument to obtain respondents. The use of forms is very helpful for users in collecting data online. It is proven from Husein's research (2016) in looking at the use of Google Forms to assess the performance of lecturers during the teaching and learning process, the results show that there is a positive response. Meanwhile, Sesana (2020) tested the effectiveness of Google Forms as an online-based PAT implementation and showed the results of students' preferences when using Google Forms with an average score of up to 70.26%.

The data package will be designed in a simple language but can still prevent selection bias. The sampling chosen by the researcher used the G*Power application (Memon et al.,

2020) in determining the minimum sample from a population. The sample results obtained are 133 respondents with the criteria of users and not e-commerce users who know or do not know Korean pop figures as e-commerce brand ambassadors. This sample will be taken randomly from e-commerce users used by the Indonesian people. This decision was taken from the phenomenon where the Indonesian people began to realize the importance of the existence of e-commerce in their lives.

In Agnes' research (2021), it was stated that consumer awareness of brands formed due to the experience of using certain brands did not affect consumer purchasing decisions because based on the research data used, the results showed that the brand image of a product and the word-of-mouth method give more influence to consumers on purchasing decisions of a product. Different research results were presented by Viola (2021) that consumer awareness of certain product brands more influenced consumers in making purchases in e-commerce. In Zahrah's research (2014), also said that consumers have brand awareness because it is formed by consumer knowledge and experience when consuming brands. Widyastuti & Ajeng Prastiya (2020) wrote that consumer awareness of the use of e-commerce itself has an impact on increasing awareness of their protection when using e-commerce. The data that has been collected will enter the validation stage based on several categories, namely measuring the sample size as a representation of the population, systematically compiling data, and describing data from the sample comprehensively (Windatiningsih & Harian, 2019)

Researchers conducted data analysis using the SmartPLS 3.0 application to calculate the multivariate SEM model. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) technique is a data analysis method that combines relationship analysis and indicator analysis with two or more variables simultaneously (multivariate), by testing a model and the relationship between variables, both between constructs and with indicators (Xie et al., 2019). By using the PLS-SEM model, researchers can examine the relationship between variables (inner model: structural) as well as variables with their indicators (outer model: measurement) in one calculation (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021). This research is built on 2 main foundations, namely Brand Ambassador (Brand Ambassador), and Buying Decision (buying decision). From these two variables, the researcher formulates a hypothesis, namely that the Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant impact on consumers' buying decisions regarding the use of e-commerce platforms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To answer the presented hypothesis, the researcher presents the results of the data that includes the Analysis of the Measurement Model (outer model), in the form of Construct Reliability and Validity and Discriminant Validity; Analysis of the Structural Model (Inner Model), which consists of F Square, is also calculated to determine the impact simultaneously, namely the Direct Effect. In this research, the researcher uses two variables, namely Brand Ambassador and Buying Decision, where Brand Ambassador has a direct relationship with Buying Decision.

The description of Measurement Test (Outer Model)

The researcher begins the study of data from the analysis of measurements in PLS-SEM which is used to measure the latent variables to be studied and their correlation with the indicators of each variable (Niehaves & Ortbach, 2016). In simple terms, the measurement test describes how the latent variable has a relationship between the factors. The outer model is divided into two types of indicators, namely reflective indicators that represent the relationship of a factor to the indicator variables that represent it, and formative indicators that represent the relationship of indicator variables to factors. The tests carried

out in the measurement of the outer model, especially the outer model for latent variables with reflective indicators, starting from Construct reliability and construct validity by calculating the reliability value of Cronbach Alpha, followed by Rho_A or known as Convergent Validity, then continued by measuring the Composite value. Reliability, don't forget to also calculate AVE (Average Variance Extracted), and end with Discriminant Validity.

Construct Reliability and Validity

The results of the tests carried out to estimate the reliability value of the construct can be seen based on Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Convergent Validity, Cronbach Alpha, Discriminant Reliability, and Composite Reliability. Through Cronbach Alpha, testing was carried out to see the reliability of the construct by calculating the indicators of the latent variables. Referring to Amiruddin et.al (2021), the reliability of Cronbach Alpha can be seen through the conversion of the coefficient of variability which has a profound effect. Cronbach Alpha is said to be acceptable if the value is more than 0.6. Rho_A or Convergent Validity is a coefficient that shows the relationship between formative and reflective indicators. Convergent Validity is used to calculate the correlation between constructs and latent variables and also convey a loading factor value of > 0.7 which proves the indicator is valid in measuring the construct, while in examining the empirical value of a load factor value of greater than 0.5 it is still acceptable and a value below 0.5 can't be approved (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021). These three categories become the presentation of constructs to explain the variations that exist in the research indicators.

Composite Reliability, where the test of convergent validity – the Cronbach Alpha alternative – can give higher reliability estimates within the range of 0 to 1. Composite Reliability can be said to be good if it has a value greater than 0.7 (Indika & Jovita, 2017; Sarstedt et al., 2017). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) illustrates that the validity test is convergent with divergent validity (Asyraf, 2013). The test will represent the communality of the coefficient indicating the average percentage of variance in the SmartPLS 3-line factor. Fawwaz and Indrawati (2020) postulate the AVE value to examine valid construct variants and then match the variants that get measurement errors.

Based on the results of calculations in the research conducted, it shows that all variable constructs are above 0.6, where Brand Ambassador is 0.937, and Buying Decision is 0.863. Rho_A on all variables is above 0.7, where Brand Ambassador is 0.865, and Buying Decision is at 0.898. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2003) reliability shows how consistent a measuring instrument is related to the concept it measures. They also say a Composite Reliability (CR) estimate of 0.7 or more would indicate good accuracy. Meanwhile, based on research results, all CR variables are above 0.7, where Brand Ambassador is 0.946 and Buying Decision is at 0.898. While the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in this research, Brand Ambassador and Buying Decision are above 0.5, namely 0.639 and 0.596. From the results of the data presented, that the validity and reliability of the constructs on the two variables show good reliability.

Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity test uses the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) value by measuring the geometric mean correlation of the indicator correlations in all models that measure the variety of phenomena, divided by the average correlation of indicators in the same model (Roemer et al., 2021). If the HTMT value is below 0.9, the discriminant validity can be said to be good (Sarstedt et al., 2017).

The test results on the Brand Ambassador variable with a buying decision are at a number smaller than 0.9 indicating a positive discriminant validity that is 0.275.

The description of Structural Test

In PLS-SEM, model assessment is used as a measuring tool in the model, especially the relationship between latent variables (Kwong & Wong, 2013). In testing the inner model, several tests were produced, namely F Square, and the Path Coefficient used was the Direct Effect (Fawwaz & Indrawati, 2020).

Researchers use the formulation of Sarstedt et al (2017) in the form of using the F Square Effect or R Square change effect to measure the relative impact value of exogenous variables (variables that have an impact) on endogenous variables (variables affected). This measurement looks at the change in the value of R when exogenous variables are removed from the model and then used to assess the substantive effect on the endogenous construct on the variable. The F Square value is divided into 3 classes based on the effect, namely bad with a value of 0.02, moderate with a value of 0.15, and good with a value of 0.35. Based on the findings made by the researchers, the results of the F-Square Brand Ambassador on the Buying Decision are classified as bad & cannot be tolerated, which is 0.001.

Next is the direct resultant calculation. The direct effect is used to measure the truth of the hypothesis of the direct effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. There are 3 factors to calculate the direct effect, starting with the path coefficient, followed by P-Value and followed by T Statistics.

Researchers use P-Value on Direct Effect to determine the influence of Brand Ambassador on Buying Decision. Based on the calculation results, it is known that the Buying Decision has a relationship with the Brand Ambassador of 0.662. The results of these data indicate that the Brand Ambassador has no significant relationship to the Buying Decision.

Discussion

Starting from 139 respondent data that has been collected and processed, it is found that there are as many as 93 people are male respondents and 46 people are female respondents which can be seen in table 1. This explains that in this study the majority of respondents came from men. In addition, it was also found that the age distribution of the respondents in this study was the majority aged 17-25 years, which was 110 people which can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Respondent's Age Range

Age	Men	Woman
17 - 25	72	38
26 - 35	18	2
36 - 45	2	4
46 - 55	1	2
Total	93	46

In the data collected, it was also found that of the 139 respondents who were the samples in this study, there were only 6 people who rarely used e-commerce as a shopping medium, which means that the majority of respondents in this study used e-commerce as a shopping medium in their daily life.

The results of the calculation to test the hypothesis and the relationship between the Brand Ambassador and Buying Decision variables which conclude that the Brand Ambassador (BA) variable does not have a positive and insignificant impact on Buying Decision (BD), so the hypothesis is rejected.

The hypothesis related to the Brand Ambassador (BA) variable has a significant impact on Buying Decision (BD), it can be seen from the Direct Effect data in the structural

model analysis (inner model). The direct effect data used to test the hypothesis formulation with exogenous variables on endogenous variables, shows an assessment of the variable relation, namely Brand Ambassador (BA) to Buying Decision (BD), with a Path Coefficient of -0.022, P-Values with the result of 0.662, and the T statistic of 0.437. The negative Path Coefficient results indicate that the impact of the Brand Ambassador (BA) variable is opposite to the Buying Decision (BD), so when the value of the exogenous variable increases, the value of the endogenous variable decreases. In addition, P-Values with a value of 0.662, where this number is above 0.05, proves an insignificant probability value. Furthermore, T Statistics with a value of 0.437 which is greater than 1.96 concludes that the hypothesis is rejected, so that the influence of the Brand Ambassador (BA) variable on Buying Decision (BD) is negative and insignificant.

There is a difference in the impact that occurs between the Brand Ambassador relationship and the Buying Decision due to several factors. First, data collection using random sampling technique makes the sample used not filtered according to specific research needs. This is because the questionnaire distributed is open, which is not only for fans of Korean pop figures and e-commerce users, but non-fans of Korean pop figures and people who do not use e-commerce. As a result, the data that was worked on was also wider and resulted in the rejection of the hypothesis because the results were negative and insignificant.

Second, the negative influence between Brand Ambassadors on Buying Decisions is also caused by Buying Interest. Based on research conducted by Anggraeni (2020), Buying Interest has a significant impact on purchasing decisions in e-commerce channels. Buying Interest is the ability to buy a product or service by considering the tendency of interest in the purchase through the stages of probability level. Sundalangi, Mandey, and Jorie (2014) in their research also show that consumers' buying interest to consume Pizza Hut is influenced by product quality, discounts, and the attractiveness of promotional impressions simultaneously. So, indirectly, these three factors also affect the buying decision of consumers. Looking at similar research, it turns out that advertising is not quite influential on purchasing decisions. Research on Charm sanitary napkins in Depok City conducted by Anggraeni (2020) showed that his hypothesis regarding the influence of Advertising on Buying Decisions was negative and insignificant. This means that product consumers no longer focus their attention on advertising because it is widely known by the public and is proven every year to be the best brand so that purchasing decisions continue. If the common thread is drawn with the formulation of the hypothesis, it can be concluded that the Brand Ambassador is not able to significantly influence the Buying Decision.

CONCLUSION

E-Commerce as a media marketplace is a means or place for consumers to make purchases of some of the products they need. The results show the extension of the two hypotheses, where the Brand Ambassador does not have a positive effect on Buying Decision, which is not significant. However, the researcher found that Brand Image was able to mediate the effect of Brand Ambassador on Buying Decision well. As a recommendation for further research, the researcher hopes that there will be a deepening of brand ambassador indicators such as the brand ambassador's products and the physical appearance of the figure, to the packaging of the brand ambassador in promoting the product in order to have an effect on purchasing decisions. Furthermore, it is hoped that this research can provide a new perspective in considering the strategy of selecting a brand ambassador to increase sales and have an impact on purchasing decisions.

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