Evaluating the Application of Using Korean Idols as Local Brand Ambassador Skincare Toward Consumer Satisfaction

Raihandifa Sekar Aruni1, Agustinus C. Februadi2

1 Department of Business Administration, Politeknik Negeri Bandung, Indonesia
Correspondence E-mail: raihandifasekararuni@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:
Local skincare still uses the perfect-looking skin of celebrities such as Korean idols as brand ambassadors to promote their products. There are differences between the skin problems of Indonesians and Korean idols, so it may not meet consumers' expectations of the product. This mismatch can build a negative brand image due to consumer dissatisfaction as they may feel the product does not effectively meet their skincare needs. This study aims to determine consumers' perceptions and satisfaction with local skincare products. Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, were used to collect data from 20 participants who were local skincare users, some of whom were K-pop fans. This approach allowed the researchers to dig deeper into the attitudes, opinions, and experiences of these consumers. The results of this study show that the advertising concept that consumers expect to show progress in the use of the product. Instead of focusing on using Korean idols as local brand ambassadors, brands should use more natural models, which can bring inclusion and diversity.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Consumers’ Perception, Advertising, Consumers’ Satisfaction, Local Skincare

ARTICLE INFO
Article History:
Received 27 May 2023
Revised 2 June 2023
Accepted 22 Sep 2023
Available online 29 Sep 2023
1. INTRODUCTION

The latest issue that is the focus of current society is health issues, starting from maintaining physical and spiritual health, even skin health from the inside or outside (Brawijaya, n.d., p. 59). This skincare product is the most popular cosmetic today and has become mainstream in the global cosmetic industry (Lee et al., 2019). Facial skincare is an action to maintain the skin’s condition so that it is healthy and fresh and to rejuvenate muscle tissue and skin cells (n.d.). Although everyone has a different type of facial skin, facial skin is still the most important part that must be maintained. Especially for most people, caring for the skin has become a primary need that cannot be missed. Until now, many people are more concerned with taking care of their facial skin and not covering up their flaws with makeup.

According to a survey conducted by Populix regarding Indonesian consumer preferences for local brand beauty products, 54% of consumers in Indonesia (out of 500 women surveyed) prefer local brands. Therefore, many brands take various steps and marketing strategies to get market attention, one of which is brand ambassadors. The existence of brand ambassadors can create a strong emotional bond between the brand and consumers so that it can build a positive brand image which has an impact on product use as well as repurchase (Siskhawati & Atman Maulana, n.d.). According to data from a Twitter report, Korean fans in Indonesia rank 1 of the 20 countries with the most K-pop fans. So, local brands tend to use Korean celebrities to attract the attention of Indonesian consumers who are also fans. Korean celebrities also boost local brands’ recognition in the international market.

One of the impacts is the formation of public opinion about the definition of beauty, like Korean celebrities, which is different from the people in Indonesia. Ultimately, many consumers hope to have complete beauty displayed by local brands for their brand ambassadors. If the information about the product or the condition of the brand ambassador
does not match the promotion, then the brand may lose the public’s trust. When unrealistic beauty is not achieved, they are unsatisfied with their physical appearance (Kadirov et al., 2020). In that case, the image built by a beauty company will be threatened (negative image). The threat to the company’s image can ultimately impact the decline in sales and consumer trust in the brand because consumers will unconsciously compare and hope to have flawless skin like Korean celebrities with different skin colors from people in Indonesia.

Therefore, this beauty industry issue must be researched because the actual opinions of skincare product consumers toward Korean celebrities who are used as brand ambassadors by local skincare brands are needed. This research seeks to fill the void of previous research, using Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors of cosmetic products. This study intends to focus more on the use of Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors on consumer satisfaction with product quality and perceptions of ideal bodies reflecting on the face of the company. The results of this study will certainly be very useful for improving the positive image of beauty industry companies. They can increase the satisfaction of consumers who begin to trust in choosing their products. So, in the end, increasing consumer satisfaction and trust can increase product sales.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Brand Ambassador
Using celebrities as brand ambassadors is done by a brand in advertising to increase sales, especially to their fans (Siskhawati & Atman Maulana, n.d.). A brand ambassador is also described as someone who has influence and is famous, who can use their fame to promote a brand's products and or services. Brand ambassadors are usually perceived as idols or role models for young people since young people are usually willing to follow their lead. With the brand ambassador of a brand, it is hoped that there will be a link with consumer perceptions in determining purchasing decisions (Kurniawan & Saputra, 2022). A brand ambassador has a role in encouraging products by suggesting the customer try, touch, feel, and pick samples they can take home and try (Wang & Hariandja, n.d.). According to Fisher-Buttinger (2008) in (Penggunaan Brand Ambassador Song Joong Ki Dalam Brand Scarlett et al., n.d.), brand ambassadors can be identified from various parties, from customers who like the brand, celebrities with endorsement or support activities, and employees who deliver the brand promise to customers, launch new products, and promote them.

2.2 Consumer Satisfaction
According to Kotler and Keller (Goranda et al., 2021) feeling happy or disappointed with a product, product performance, or brand service is the definition of consumer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction can be used to measure company performance internally to balance human resources, monitor performance, allocate funds, or for external customer satisfaction. Satisfaction from fulfilled consumers is expected that consumers will be able to fulfill their needs, convenience, cost, and communication, as well as loyalty. The higher the level of customer satisfaction, the higher the customer loyalty.

2.3 Trustworthiness
Trustworthiness is the willingness of the source to claim the product is true. According to Ohanian (1990) in (Yulia & Estella, 2019), trustworthiness is the most useful and effective
instrument to make consumers more trusting and dependent on the brand. The feelings of trust and liking may occur because of a consumer’s interest in endorsers (Klaus-Peter Wiedmann & Walter von Mettenheim, n.d.). Using celebrities as brand ambassadors can make the brands recognizable and create a positive brand attitude ((Klaus-Peter Wiedmann & Walter von Mettenheim, n.d.). Ohanian in Yulia & Estella (2019) said if the celebrity has three distinct dimensions of endorser credibility: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness can make consumers like the brand’s products. Celebrity endorsers who are trusted will produce high brand satisfaction and brand attitude because they can persuade consumers (Halder et al., 2021).

2.4 Korean Celebrity Worship

Worship is known as stronger when compared to audience involvement (Halim & Kiatkawsin, 2021). According to Rojek (2012) in (Studi et al., 2019) celebrity worship describes a fan’s closeness to an idol, leading to dysfunctional behavior. According to Mc Cutcheon et al., (2002), celebrity worship can be viewed from two different personality concepts, pathological where fans have characteristics such as being obsessed with following everything related to idols, and non-pathological, where fans are not as obsessed as before, only still in the level of storing information about idols. The lowest level of worship refers to fans who watch, see, or read fleeting information about idols. The highest level of worship can result in changes in one’s social character that led to pathological behavior, such as attempts to harm idols or give threatening letters due to fans’ obsession with their idols.

2.5 Physical Self-Concept

Physical self-concept is not formed when a person is born but because of the learning process and individual interactions with others (Rosanti et al., n.d.). Perceptions of physical conditions and other body shapes, based on individual experiences and judgments from others about their physical aspects, constitute physical self-concept (302-548-1-PB, n.d.). Experiences and societal judgments about one's physical condition can shape a person's self-concept, whether they perceive physical conditions positively or negatively. People with a strong physical self-concept feel that they know themselves well and are resilient to life's challenges. Therefore, this aspect can then fulfill other aspects such as well-being, happiness, motivation, and anxiety (Craven and Marsh in (Terapan et al., 2019).

3. METHODS

Bogdan & Taylor (2010) state that research with a qualitative approach is a research procedure whose result is descriptive data in writing or orally from individuals or behaviors being observed (informants). This type of research with a qualitative approach is used to examine social problems in an area in terms of the background and perspective of the object under study (Zuchri Abdussamad, 2021). The qualitative data used in this study aims to find the various perceptions of consumers and to find out whether consumers are satisfied with local skincare that uses Korean idols as brand ambassadors. Therefore, this research is intended to describe the ideal criteria of brand ambassadors, especially in the skincare field. In addition, this research also explores further what kind of advertising concept can meet the expectations of local skincare consumers. According to Bogdan and Biklen (Sugiyono, 2014)), qualitative research uses an inductive approach.
The focus of this research is to find out how satisfied consumers of local skincare products are and, how they perceive the use of Korean idols as brand ambassadors, whether consumers are satisfied with the quality of products. The object of this research is divided into three, from the point of view of consumers, both K-pop fans or not K-pop fans, and local skincare product experts or beauty influencers to find out whether the research results are needed.

The object of this research is a woman or man who generally uses local skincare products from various occupations from 19-25 years old. This issue relates to analyzing online comments by netizens regarding their satisfaction with local brands that often use Korean idols as brand ambassadors.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The diagram of these findings (see Figure 2) visualizes the categorizing of codes that explain how participants experience using the product, consisting of three themes.

The brand performance category consists of various codes that explain how participants experience using the product, for participants the performance of local skincare

Figure 2. Finding Results

The brand performance category consists of various codes that explain how participants experience using the product, for participants the performance of local skincare
is good and has a satisfying experience when looking at the results of using the product. It lets participants to feel confident with local skincare products even though they use brand ambassadors who do not reflect Indonesian skin. Even though it has a brand ambassador from a Korean idol, it does not rule out the possibility of consumers buying the product, because the use of Korean idols as brand ambassadors can make local skincare enter the global market. However, when viewed in terms of price, consumers feel that local skincare products have an expensive price with product contents that tend to be small. While the **celebrity worship category** consists of two coding that explains that fans feel 'belonging' by wanting to use the same product as the idol, it is hoped that by using the same product this can be realized by the idol. In addition, fans also often buy products in bulk because they feel they can help the idol who is the brand ambassador and have the desire to collect bonuses such as photo cards given by the brand. From these two categories, one main theme emerges that answers the question of this research, the **impact of Korean brand ambassadors on purchase intention**.

Furthermore, there is a category regarding **beauty matchups**. The beauty match-up consists of several codes that explain participants' perceptions of the use of Korean idols as brand ambassadors. The Korean wave that has emerged for a long time makes people think Korea can be a trendsetter starting from beauty, culture, food, or fashion. This fosters perceptions in the public's mind regarding beauty standards. Although Indonesia is one of the countries with the most K-pop fans, this does not necessarily make consumers feel satisfied with this form of promotion. For some participants, although using Korean idols as brand ambassadors is beneficial for local skincare in terms of sales, many are not satisfied with it. Participants agree more if local skincare can use celebrities or beauty influencers from Indonesia to become ideal brand ambassadors. Because celebrities or beauty influencers are considered to have the same skin concerns and tend to be more trusted because they are experts in their fields. Apart from brand ambassadors, some participants tend to trust the use of endorsements on beauty influencers with a note they are honest in showing skin concerns and progress on how the skincare product can work on their skin. In the end, these categories form the main theme that answers the second question of this research regarding the best advertising to meet consumer expectations, **ideal brand ambassadors, and recommended marketing strategies for local skin care**.

Participants observed that only a few local skincare ads represented the feelings of their consumers. For the rest, local skincare ads still use celebrities with healthy and smooth skin to promote their products. This is a challenge for consumers because consumers will be more trusting of advertisements that reflect the skin concerns of Indonesians, be it from skin color or skin type of Indonesians that are diverse. Another strategy besides advertising to promote local skincare products that are effective for participants is using endorsements. Endorsement is a type of marketing where a famous person or public figure will be used when campaigning marketing to promote a product or service by using the fame of the public figure (Phillip Kotler & Kevin Lane Keller, 2016). This is interesting because the use of brand ambassadors is no longer an influence on consumers in deciding to buy products. This endorsement strategy is considered more trusted than brand ambassadors because the form of this strategy is a review of the beauty influencer when using the product. In addition, many beauty influencers will show the results before and after using the product to make consumers more trusting.
Tasya Farasya, Nanda Arsyinta, Abel Cantika, and Kiara Leswara are beauty influencers considered appropriate to become models or brand ambassadors and are most recommended by participants.

The last category is physical self-concept which contains self-perceptions of beauty, ranging from appearance, traits, and health. (Solomon et al., 1992) said that the concept of beauty itself is much more complex than just "attractive" versus "unattractive." Similarly, "beauty does not always have to be white, tall, and thin" participants tended to consider the use of Korean idols as brand ambassadors as unrealistic when compared to Indonesian skin. Individuals with a positive physical self-concept will look more optimistic about their appearance, be full of confidence, and feel more satisfied with their physical condition. Many participants began to accept the circumstances of themselves given by God and describe the individual's perception of themselves and their relationships with others around them or commonly referred to as self-concept. Therefore, the existence of Korean idols as brand ambassadors of local skincare does not make participants compare themselves and have a negative perception of themselves. This last category finally answers the research question regarding self-perception of "beauty," another main theme was self-perception about beauty.

5. CONCLUSION

The use of Korean idols as brand ambassadors for local skincare is considered by the public to be no longer relevant. The public tends to get bored using foreigners compared to Indonesian celebrities as brand ambassadors. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the use of Korean idols as brand ambassadors considered not to represent Indonesian skin.

As a result, participants are not too concerned about having a brand ambassador because they are more concerned with product ingredients. Even though it is considered not to reflect the skin concerns of Indonesians, the participants in this study still believe in local skincare and will continue to buy products if they feel the products are suitable for their skin. Some participants have the perception that they want to have the same skin as the brand ambassador, but if, in the end, the results from using the product do not meet their expectations, they will not feel disappointed. Instead, they accept and love themselves. They never compare themselves with Korean idols as brand ambassadors in a negative way.

Even though they have accepted and loved themselves more, participants still feel uncomfortable seeing brand ambassadors’ advertisements. The consumers stated that they are more interested in the advertisement that represents Indonesian skin concerns and shows Indonesian celebrities so that it can be an overview of the results of using the product. Participants will feel connected and closer to the brand that shows local advertisements. The best advertisement concept for participants is a beauty influencer with skin concerns and a skincare expert, so they can show the public how the products work on their skin. Participants also like advertisements that show daily progress when beauty influencers use the product. For them, that kind of advertisement is more trusted and can make consumers feel happier. Participants hope that brands can do research first related to advertisements that can represent consumers.
In conclusion, participants thought using Korean idols as brand ambassadors could be done if they wanted to promote in the global market. But not to build brand trustworthiness. Besides using brand ambassadors, local skincare needs to maintain their product with high-quality products since it is one of the main reasons why consumers choose to purchase the product. In addition, very important to know what consumers need to solve their skin concerns. It can help a brand to reach other market segments. The author suggests brands consider the results of this research on the strategy of advertising products that consumers prefer, not based only on things that benefit the brand. Using local advertising, it is hoped to instill a perception in the minds of consumers that beauty is diverse.

6. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

In this study, local skincare brands that still use Korean idols as their brand ambassadors are considered unable to provide representations that can solve the skin concerns of skincare consumers. This shows that the brand pays more attention to how the product will be promoted to the consumer. As a result, many consumers expect skin results like brand ambassadors, which do not fully represent Indonesian skin. Local skincare brands will be more profitable if they meet consumers’ expectations and address the public's skin concerns. This outcome contains the essence of knowing what an ideal characteristic of a local skincare brand ambassador is and encouraging local skincare brands to not generalize the perception of 'beauty is white and thin, but beauty is healthy. It does not need to be limited by skin color. As a result, the public is more accepting of their beauty and does not compare themselves with others. So, for local skincare that considers this factor, it is possible to gain greater trust, value, and positive perceptions from the public.

7. LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of this study cannot be generalized because they only focus on using Korean idols as brand ambassadors for local skin care. Therefore, the authors suggest that further research can explore more broadly the perceptions of the Indonesian people towards the use of brand ambassadors or endorsers other than Koreans who do not represent Indonesian skin concerns for the satisfaction of their consumers. In addition, it is hoped that there will be research on the make-up industry in Indonesia and how local make-up will encourage Indonesian celebrities to promote their products.

8. REFERENCES


Klaus-Peter Wiedmann, & Walter von Mettenheim. (n.d.). *Attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise – social influencers’ winning formula?*


MINAT KONSUMEN TERHADAP PERAWATAN KULIT WAJAH DENGAN METODE MIKRODERMABRASI DI VIOTA SKIN CARE KOTA MALANG Riska Andriana. (n.d.).


