THE INFLUENCE OF NCT DREAM AS A BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of NCT Dream as a brand ambassador and how brand image affects purchase intention, with purchase intention acting as a mediating variable among users of Somethinc beauty products. The research was conducted in Palu City. A quantitative approach with multiple regression analysis was employed. Data were collected via questionnaires distributed to 175 respondents, and primary data were obtained through purposive sampling. The respondents are Somethinc users who recognize NCT Dream as a brand ambassador. The findings indicate that (1) the Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention; (2) Brand Image positively and significantly influences Purchase Intention; (3) the Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions; (4) Brand Image also positively and significantly affects Purchasing Decisions; (5) Purchase Intention significantly and positively impacts Purchasing Decisions; (2) Purchase Intention mediates the influence of the Brand Ambassador on Purchasing Decisions; and (7) Purchase Intention mediates the effect of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions. Companies can boost sales by leveraging brand ambassadors and improving brand image, thereby increasing consumer interest and purchase decisions.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, Purchase Intention, Purchase Decision

INTRODUCTION

The beauty industry continues to grow annually. Indonesia has significant business potential in the beauty industry, given its population of 270.2 million, of whom 133.5 million are female (Pancawati, 2022). Innovation by local skincare companies has increased consumer demand for domestic skin care products (Putri & Adriyanto, 2024). According to data from Statista, as quoted by Kompas, the beauty industry continues to grow year over year, particularly since the entry of Korean culture into Indonesia, which began with the popularity of Korean dramas. As a result, beauty products, particularly South Korean skincare, have become highly desirable among consumers in Indonesia. Therefore, many local manufacturers have begun competing to develop products that offer the same advantages as South Korean beauty products.

Somethinc is an Indonesian beauty and skincare brand founded by Irine Ursula in May 2019. Irene acknowledges a persistent gap in the local beauty industry. It began with women seeking high-quality, halal-certified skincare to support modern society. Somethinc also guarantees that the skincare products they provide are of high quality and contain specified ingredients. (Achmad & Farid Wajdi, 2024). In the midst of the Korean Wave phenomenon, where South Korean culture is spreading around the world and creating a love for Korean cultural exports, local companies, including Somethinc, have adopted this trend as a marketing strategy by attracting Brand Ambassadors from the South Korean entertainment world, one of which is NCT Dream, which is currently popular, to increase consumer buying interest. Fans are willing to spend money to buy products endorsed by their idols, giving them pride in owning products directly supported by their idols, regardless of price or edition (Aprilia Immaculata et al., 2021).

The use of Brand Ambassadors as a means of communication. The Brand Ambassador will explain the product's quality in a way that is easy for consumers to remember and to form an impression of, thereby sparking interest and leading to purchasing decisions (Ula Ananta Fauzi Rizal et al., 2023). Brand Ambassadors also play a role in creating an emotional connection between consumers and brands. They are not only a visual representation but also a symbol of the desired lifestyle among consumers (Steven Johannes & Siagian, 2021). As part of the Korean Wave, many K-pop artists and K-drama actors/actresses have become brand ambassadors for various consumer products, including clothing, food, beverages, and skincare. The existence of Brand Ambassadors is expected to attract fans of the artist or idol, persuading them to trust and

buy the promoted product (Steven Johannes & Siagian, 2021). Thus, the use of South Korean brand ambassadors for local products in Indonesia can increase their attractiveness to consumers.

According to (Dr. M. Anang Firmansyah, 2023) Brand image is the perception held by consumers when they recall a particular product range. This experience then forms an image of the brand, which can be positive or negative depending on prior experiences and associated images. Brand image is the representation that consumers have of a brand, as reflected in the brand associations stored in their memory. This can be interpreted as a general impression that consumers hold of a brand, encompassing their understanding, beliefs, and views (Keller & V., 2020). A positive brand image is essential because it affects consumers' purchase intentions. If consumers have a positive experience and a favorable image of the brand, they are more likely to purchase its products. Conversely, if the image formed is negative, buying interest will decrease. According to (Ninin et al., 2021) In itself, purchase intention is the tendency of consumers to be interested in a good or service, thereby encouraging them to purchase. This process involves various stages and different levels of possibility, which ultimately lead consumers to decide whether to purchase these goods or services from a particular brand. These stages may include awareness of the product, assessment of its benefits and quality, and comparison with other products before purchase. (Wasitaningrum & Cahya, 2022) Add that purchase intention is closely related to consumer attitudes and behavior. Purchase interest can motivate consumers and help identify the extent to which individuals are willing to try a product. A positive consumer attitude toward the product, shaped by experience, reviews, and promotions, will strengthen purchase intention. Similarly, if consumers hold a favorable perception of a brand, their purchase intention increases, and ultimately, they are more likely to purchase the product.

A purchase decision is the process of choosing among two or more alternatives. This means that the decision-maker must choose among several available options. For example, when an individual faces the option to buy or not to buy and decides to buy, they have made a purchase decision. This is an action in which consumers actively choose to purchase and use specific goods or services among available alternatives. (Purwati & Cahyanti, 2022). (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019) Also explain "purchase choice is the phase in the choice cycle in which a customer directly purchases an item," which means that the purchase choice is the phase in the choice cycle in which the customer directly purchases an item. According to Tjiptono (2015), the decision to buy or not buy is one of the behavioral elements that every consumer has. The term "behavior" refers to observable, measurable physical actions.

Based on this description, the objectives of this study are (1) to be able to determine the effect of Brand Ambassador on buying interest in Somethinc Beauty Products in Palu City. (2) to be able to determine the effect of Brand Image on buying interest in Somethinc Beauty Products in Palu City. (3) to be able to know the effect of Brand Ambassador on purchasing decisions on Somethinc Beauty Products in Palu City. (4) to be able to determine the effect of brand image on purchasing decisions on Somethinc Beauty Products in Palu City. (5) to be able to determine the effect of buying interest on purchasing decisions on Somethinc Beauty Products in Palu City. (6) to be able to know the effect of Brand Ambassador on purchasing decisions mediated by buying interest in Somethinc Beauty Products in Palu City. (7) to be able to know the effect of brand image on purchasing decisions mediated by buying interest in Somethinc Beauty Products in Palu City.

METHODS

This research is a quantitative approach conducted in Palu City. The population in this study was NCT Dream fans and somethinc product users in Palu City. The sampling technique in this study was non-probability judgment sampling, whereby the researcher selects a sample based on an assessment of respondents' characteristics tailored to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2018). According to Hair (2023), sampling depends on the number of indicators multiplied by 5-10. The number of samples in this study was $35 \times 5 = 175$; data were processed using PLS-SEM.

This study uses a questionnaire, which has been tested for reliability, to collect data (Sujarweni, 2019). The assessment of respondents' answers using an opinion scale can be explained as follows: SS (Strongly Agree) will be given the most significant value, followed by ST (Agree), RR (Undecided), TS (Disagree), and STS (Strongly Disagree), which will get the most significant negative value (Sugiyono, 2020). The decision-making requirement is :

1) If the significance value <0.05, then the Hypothesis is accepted
2) If the significance value > 0.05, then the Hypothesis is rejected

RESULTS

a. Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Answers to Brand Ambassador Variables

The results of descriptive analysis of respondents' answers to their Brand Ambassador variable can be found in the following table:

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Answers to Brand Ambassador Variables

Indicator	SS Weight 5		S Weight 4		RG Weight 3		TS Weight 2		STS Weight 1		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Popularity Celebrity (BA1)	56	32	113	64.6	4	2.3	2	1.1	0	0	**4.274**
Personality (BA2)	47	26.9	117	66.9	7	4	4	2.3	0	0	4.183
Expertise (BA4)	58	33.1	105	60	8	4.6	4	2.3	0	0	4.240
Knowledge (BA5)	52	29.7	116	66.3	5	2.9	2	1.1	0	0	4.246
Objectivity (BA6)	58	33.1	98	56	13	7.4	6	3.4	0	0	4.189
Appearance Physical (BA7)	48	27.4	115	65.7	9	5.1	3	1.7	0	0	4.189
Achievement (BA8)	60	34.3	93	53.1	9	5.1	13	7.4	0	0	4.143
Kharisma (BA9)	71	40.6	70	40	19	10.9	15	8.6	0	0	4.126
Performance (BA10)	63	36	69	39.4	29	16.6	14	8	0	0	4.034
Average Mean Brand Ambassador											**4.180**

Source: Prime data processed, 2024

Overall, the average of all indicators for the Brand Ambassador variable is 4.180, which falls within the good category.

b. Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Answers to Brand Image Variables

The results of descriptive analysis of respondents' answers to the Brand Image variable can be found in the following table:

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Answers to Brand Image Variables

Indicator	SS Weight 5		S Weight 4		RG Weight 3		TS Weight 2		STS Weight 1		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Has a Good Name (B1)	59	33.7	66	37.7	38	21.7	11	6.3	1	0.6	3.977
Popularity Company (BI2)	61	34.9	59	33.7	42	24	12	6.9	1	0.6	3.954
Trustworthy Company (BI3)	63	36	68	38.9	30	17.1	13	7.4	1	0.6	4.023
User Product (BI4)	57	32.6	69	39.4	38	21.7	10	5.7	1	0.6	3.977
LifeStyle and Personality (BI5)	44	25.1	88	50.3	24	13.7	18	10.3	1	0.6	3.891
Social Status (BI6)	46	26.3	90	51.4	28	16	10	5.7	1	0.6	3.971

Indicator	SS Weight 5		S Weight 4		RG Weight 3		TS Weight 2		STS Weight 1		Mean
Product Completeness (BI7)	48	27.4	75	42.9	38	21.7	14	8	0	0	3.897
Guarantees for Consumers (BI9)	52	29.7	62	35.4	42	24	19	10.9	0	0	3.840
Average Mean Brand Image											3.941

Source: Prime data processed, 2024

Overall, the mean of all indicators in the Brand Image variable is 3.941, indicating a reasonable level. This shows that respondents generally hold a positive perception of Somethinc's brand image, suggesting that the brand has built a strong reputation among consumers.

c. **Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Answers to Purchasing Decision Variables**

The results of descriptive analysis of respondents' answers to the purchase decision variable can be found in the following table:

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Answers to Purchasing

Indicator	Respondent's Answer										Mean
	SS Weight 5		S Weight 4		RG Weight 3		TS Weight 2		STS Weight 1		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Excellence Product (KP1)	61	34.9	111	63.4	2	1.1	1	0.6	0	0	4.326
Benefits Product (KP2)	59	33.7	111	63.4	4	2.3	1	0.6	0	0	4.303
Attraction to their Brand (KP4)	67	38.3	104	59.4	2	1.1	2	1.1	0	0	4.349
Compatibility Price (KP5)	81	46.3	94	53.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.463
Excellence Product (KP6)	79	45.1	93	53.1	2	1.1	1	0.6	0	0	4.429
Conformance to Needs (KP7)	71	40.6	104	59.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.406
Perceived Benefits (KP8)	50	28.6	124	70.9	1	0.6	0	0	0	0	4.274
Reason Purchase (KP9)	62	35.4	59	33.7	36	20.6	18	10.3	0	0	3.943
Average Median Purchase Decision											4.312

Source: Primary data processed, 2024

Overall, the average of all indicators on the Purchase Decision variable is 4.312, which falls into the excellent category. This indicates that most respondents have made strong purchasing decisions regarding Somethinc products, suggesting that factors such as price, quality, and marketing strategies have effectively influenced consumer decisions.

d. **Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Answers to their Purchase Interest Variable**

The results of descriptive analysis of respondents' answers to the purchase interest variable can be found in the following table:

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Answers to their Purchase Interest Variable

Indicator	Respondent's Answer										Mean
	SS Weight 5		S Weight 4		RG Weight 3		TS Weight 2		STS Weight 1		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Intention to Purchase (MB1)	82	46.9	90	51.4	1	0.6	2	1.1	0	0	4.440
Number of Products in Shopping Cart (MB2)	77	44	97	55.4	1	0.6	0	0	0	0	4.434

	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Mean
Frequency of Visits to Product Page is (MB3)	72	41.1	68	38.9	34	19.4	1	0.6	0	0	4.206
Celebrity Influence (MB4)	49	28	76	43.4	41	23.4	9	5.1	0	0	3.943
Testimonials or Consumer Reviews (MB5)	76	43.4	69	39.4	15	8.6	15	8.6	0	0	4.177
Brand Preference (MB6)	41	23.4	96	54.9	15	8.6	23	13.1	0	0	3.886
Product Color and Design (MB7)	47	26.9	78	44.6	31	17.7	19	10.9	0	0	3.874
Average Mean Purchase Interest											**4.137**

Source: Primary data processed, 2024

Overall, the average of all indicators for the Purchase Intention variable is 4.137, which falls within the good category. This indicates that respondents have a high interest in Somethinc Beauty products.

e. Convergent Validity

The measurement model, or output model, specifies how each indicator block relates to its latent variable. The MTMM (Multi-Trait, Multi-Method) approach is used to evaluate measurement models via confirmatory factor analysis, with a focus on convergent and discriminant validity (Ghozali, 2019).

In this study, the limit loading factor is 0.7. After data processing using SmartPLS 3.0, their loading factor results can be shown as in the following table:

Table 5. Loading Factor Value

	Brand Ambassador (X1)	Brand Image (X2)	Decision Purchase (Y)	Purchase Intention (Z)
BA1	0.824			
BA2	0.794			
BA4	0.735			
BA5	0.820			
BA6	0.739			
BA7	0.771			
BA8	0.730			
BA9	0.730			
BA10	0.734			
BI1		0.894		
BI2		0.763		
BI3		0.892		
BI4		0.888		
BI5		0.877		
BI6		0.859		
BI7		0.833		
BI9		0.871		
KP1			0.756	
KP2			0.712	
KP4			0.726	
KP5			0.871	
KP6			0.799	
KP7			0.814	

KP8	0.728
KP9	0.725
MB1	0.844
MB2	0.845
MB3	0.798
MB4	0.824
MB5	0.706
MB6	0.712
MB7	0.732

Based on SmartPLS data analysis, the majority of indicators for each variable exhibit loadings above 0.70, indicating strong construct validity.

f. Discriminant Validity

After data processing using SmartPLS 3.0, the results of cross-loading can be shown in the following table:

Table 6. Cross Loading Results

	Brand Ambassador (X1)	Brand Image (X2)	Decision Purchase (Y)	Purchase Intention (Z)
BA1	**0.824**	0.427	0.614	0.493
BA2	**0.794**	0.375	0.570	0.408
BA4	**0.735**	0.250	0.269	0.303
BA5	**0.820**	0.450	0.572	0.464
BA6	**0.739**	0.322	0.301	0.411
BA7	**0.771**	0.419	0.562	0.392
BA8	**0.730**	0.339	0.348	0.385
BA9	**0.730**	0.487	0.378	0.444
BA10	**0.734**	0.543	0.480	0.478
BI1	0.489	**0.894**	0.606	0.503
BI2	0.300	**0.763**	0.524	0.398
BI3	0.434	**0.892**	0.538	0.519
BI4	0.447	**0.888**	0.562	0.489
BI5	0.458	**0.877**	0.518	0.440
BI6	0.470	**0.859**	0.577	0.523
BI7	0.508	**0.833**	0.578	0.474
BI9	0.553	**0.871**	0.667	0.540
KP1	0.423	0.435	**0.756**	0.382
KP2	0.417	0.374	**0.712**	0.387
KP4	0.331	0.426	**0.726**	0.477
KP5	0.515	0.598	**0.871**	0.631
KP6	0.373	0.492	**0.799**	0.606
KP7	0.606	0.602	**0.814**	0.603
KP8	0.549	0.402	**0.728**	0.407
KP9	0.541	0.665	**0.725**	0.497
MB1	0.480	0.411	0.611	**0.844**
MB2	0.425	0.565	0.764	**0.845**
MB3	0.442	0.390	0.570	**0.798**
MB5	0.515	0.422	0.518	**0.824**
MB6	0.440	0.360	0.290	**0.706**
MB7	0.406	0.417	0.294	**0.712**

The cross-loading results in the table above show that the correlation between the construct and its indicator is greater than the correlations with other constructs. This indicates that all constructs (latent

variables) exhibit good discriminant validity, with the indicators within the construct block performing better than those in other blocks.

Further evaluation is conducted by examining the AVE values between constructs. A good AVE value is one greater than 0.50. In this study, the AVE value for each construct can be seen in the following table:

Table 7. AVE value

Variables	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Square Root AVE
Brand Ambassador (X1)	0.585	0.765
Brand Image (X2)	0.741	0.861
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.590	0.768
Purchase Intention (Z)	0.612	0.782

Based on the table above, all constructs in this study exhibit Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and AVE square root values greater than 0.50, indicating adequate convergent validity.

g. Composite Reliability

SmartPLS output results for composite reliability values can be shown in the following table:

Table 8. Composite Reliability Value

Variable	Composite Reliability	Result
Brand Ambassador (X1)	0.927	Reliable
Brand Image (X2)	0.958	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.920	Reliable
Purchase Intention (Z)	0.917	Reliable

Based on the table above, the composite reliability values for all constructs in this study are excellent. The high Composite Reliability value confirms that the measurement model used in this study is reliable and yields consistent results.

h. Multicollinearity Test

The purpose of this test is to determine whether the independent variables exhibit excessive correlation, which can compromise the regression model's stability and validity.

Table 9. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	VIF
Brand Ambassador → Purchase Intention	1.403
Brand Image→ Purchase Intention	1.403
Brand Ambassador → Purchase Decision	1.615
Brand Image→ Purchase Decision	1.645
Purchase Intention→ Purchase Decision	1.698

Based on the table above, the VIF value for the relationship between Brand Ambassador and purchase interest is 1.403, for the relationship between Brand Image and purchase interest is the same at 1.403, for the relationship between Brand Ambassador and Purchase Decision is 1.615, Brand Image and purchase decision is 1.645, and Purchase Interest and Purchase Decision is 1.698. All of these values are below the threshold of 5, indicating no significant collinearity among the variables.

i. IIR-Square Test

R-squared indicates how well the regression model fits the observed data.

Table 10. Determinant Coefficient (R-Squared)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Purchase Decision	0.604	0.598
Purchase Intention	0.411	0.404

Based on the data presented, the R-squared for Purchase Decision is 0.604, indicating that approximately 60.4% of the variation in purchase decisions is explained by the independent variables in the model. The Adjusted R-Square value is 0.598. This value indicates that approximately 59.8% of the variation in purchasing decisions remains after accounting for the model's complexity.

Meanwhile, the R-squared for the Purchase Interest variable is 0.411, indicating that approximately 41.1% of the variation in purchase intention is explained by the independent variables in the model. The Adjusted R-Square value of the Purchase Interest variable is 0.404. This value indicates that approximately 40.4% of the variation in purchase intention remains after accounting for the model's complexity.

j. Hypothesis Test

The path coefficients and t-statistics are used as determinants in this test. Using SmartPLS 3.0, the bootstrapping results indicate that the general rules applied are t-statistic > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05. Based on these criteria, the analysis results are presented below.

Table 11: Hypothesis Test Results

	Hypothesis	Original Sample (0)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-values	Conclusion
H1	Brand Ambassador → Purchase Intention	0.354	0.355	0.119	2.986	0.003	**Accepted**
H2	Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.378	0.382	0.092	4.089	0.000	**Accepted**
H3	Brand Ambassador → Decision Purchase	0.255	0.265	0.072	3.421	0.001	**Accepted**
H4	Brand Image → Decision Purchase	0.346	0.335	0.099	3.509	0.000	**Accepted**
H5	Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.325	0.330	0.097	3.354	0.001	**Accepted**
H6	Brand Ambassador → Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.115	0.115	0.048	2.398	0.017	**Accepted**
H7	Brand Image → Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.123	0.129	0.057	2.166	0.031	**Accepted**

Based on the hypothesis-testing results, all hypotheses in this study are supported, and all variables and interactions tested have a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

DISCUSSION
a. The influence of brand ambassadors on buying interest

The results showed that Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant influence on the Purchase Intention of Somethinc Products in Palu City. NCT Dream, as a Brand Ambassador, increased consumer interest in Palu City in purchasing Somethinc products. Given its high popularity and broad fan base, NCT Dream's presence enhances the appeal of the Somethinc brand. This creates a positive perception of the

product, as consumers tend to believe that the quality of Somethinc products aligns with NCT Dream's good reputation.

NCT Dream's influence on purchase intention is evident in the increased consumer interest in the promoted products. Consumers, especially fans and younger consumers, are more interested in trying Somethinc products because they associate them with their idols. Therefore, NCT Dream significantly drives consumer purchase intention.

b. The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Intention

The results showed that Brand Image has a positive and significant influence on the Purchase Intention of Somethinc Products in Palu City. In this case, Somethinc's strong brand image can foster positive perceptions among consumers, thereby encouraging them to purchase the product. A good brand image reflects the quality, credibility, and trust that consumers have in Somethinc products.

In Palu City, consumers exposed to Somethinc's brand image are more interested in trying and purchasing the product, primarily because they perceive it as meeting their expectations for quality. A positive Brand Image not only strengthens consumers' trust, but also helps Somethinc stand out among its competitors, which in turn increases consumers' buying interest in Somethinc products.

c. The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Purchasing Decisions

The results show that Brand Ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on Purchasing Decisions. NCT Dream, as Somethinc's chosen Brand Ambassador, has increased consumers' intention to purchase Somethinc products. The popularity of NCT Dreiam not only attracts consumer attention but also influences their purchasing decisions.

As a well-known boy band with a large and loyal fan base, NCT Dream plays an important role in building positive perceptions of Somethinc products. When consumers perceive NCT Dreiam as representative, they tend to rate the product more positively, assuming its quality aligns with the positive image associated with NCT Dream. This directly increases consumers' likelihood of purchasing. These results are consistent with research by Faradasya & Trianasari (2021), Ilmi et al. (2020), Kharisma & Hutasuhut (2019), and Mumtahanah et al. (2022), which indicates that brand ambassadors have a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions.

d. The Effect of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions

Their results show that Brand Image has a positive and significant influence on Purchasing Decisions. This indicates that consumers' perceptions of brands strongly influence their purchase decisions. Brand Image refers to the perceptions and impressions formed by consumers about a brand, based on their experiences or promotional activities.

When consumers have a favorable view of Somethinc's image, they tend to perceive Somethinc as more reliable, quality, and suitable for their needs. This positive image can be shaped by factors such as a strong company reputation or prior consumer experience with the product.

e. The Effect of Purchase Intention on Purchasing Decisions

The results show that Purchase Intention has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions. This means that the higher a consumer's interest in a product, the more likely they are to purchase it. Purchase interest reflects consumers' interest in owning a product and drives their decision-making. Factors such as effective promotions, positive testimonials, or recommendations from brand ambassadors can increase purchase interest, thereby influencing consumers to choose the product.

In other words, when consumers have a strong interest in Somethinc products, they are more likely to make a purchase, as purchase intention is often the first step in the buying process. This suggests that companies should continue strengthening initiatives that drive purchase decisions to increase overall purchase rates.

f. The Influence of Brand Ambassador on Purchasing Decisions through Purchase Intention as a mediating variable

Their results show that Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant influence on Purchasing Decisions mediated by Purchase Intention. This means that NCT Dreiam's role as a Brand Ambassador not only attracts consumers' attention but also increases their interest in purchasing Somethinc products. The popularity, reputation, and attractiveness of a Brand Ambassador shape consumers' perceptions of a product, thereby fostering purchase intention.

When consumers feel connected to a Brand Ambassador, they tend to be more interested in finding out about the product being represented. This purchase interest serves as a bridge between the Brand Ambassador's influence and the purchase decision. This means that while Brand Ambassadors play an important role, the final decision to purchase a product is influenced by the strength of consumers' interest. The higher the purchase intention, the more likely the consumer is to make a purchase.

g. The Effect of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions through Purchase Intention as a Mediating Variable

The results of hypothesis testing indicate that Brand Image has a positive and significant influence on Purchasing Decisions, mediated by Purchase Intention, in the context of Somethinc products. This means that the stronger their Somethinc brand image in the eyes of consumers, the greater their interest in buying their product, which will drive purchasing decisions.

The mediating role of Purchase Intention indicates that Brand Image not only directly affects Purchasing Decisions but also contributes by increasing consumer interest in purchasing. Although brand image is important, its impact is stronger when consumers have a high purchase intention.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research and discussion that have been described, several conclusions are obtained, including the following: (1) Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant effect on Buying Interest in Somethinc beauty products in Palu City. (2) Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Buying Interest in Somethinc beauty products in Palu City. (3) Brand Ambassador has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions for Somethinc beauty products in Palu City. (4) Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions. (5) Purchase Intention has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions. (6) There is a positive and significant effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchasing Decisions, which is mediated by the Purchase Intention variable. (7) There is a positive and significant effect of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions, which is mediated by the Purchase Intention variable.

Overall, hypothesis testing indicates that all hypotheses are supported; all variables and interactions tested have a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

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