The Mediating Role of Brand Trust on the Effect of Brand Ambassador to Purchase Decision

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Abstract

Background: Beauty products from South Korea, such as skincare and makeup, are often considered as having higher quality and providing better results than local beauty products. With technological advances that continue to develop, obtaining skincare product is currently easier and more accessible to young people.

Objective: This research aims to examine the factors that influence purchasing decisions in regards to brand trust as a mediator in Korean skincare products.

Method: The sampling employed a purposive sampling method to a population in Batam City who aged over 17 years old and used skincare products made in South Korea. This research used Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for hypothesis testing.

Results: The research results indicate that brand trust plays an important role in mediating the relationship between brand ambassadors, brand awareness, and price on purchasing decisions. Brand image, brand awareness, and price directly and indirectly influence purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, brand ambassadors only indirectly influence purchasing decisions through brand trust.

Keywords: Purchase Decision; Brand Trust; Brand Ambassador; Brand Awareness; Korean Skincare

1.   Introduction

In the era of globalization, most people are more concerned with how they present themselves physically. A well-groomed and healthy appearance will help a person to increase self-confidence and be a way to show self-care. In maintaining appearance, a person can perform various kinds of treatments, such as using various kinds of skincare products that are made in such a way for individual needs, facial

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and body care. The Korean Wave (Hallyu) is a rapid cultural movement which is spreading worldwide, including Indonesia. According to Pertiwi (2013), South Korean culture, which refers to Korean pop, Korean drama, Korean beauty, Korean fashion, and Korean food, has attracted much attention from the Indonesian people. The Korean beauty industry, commonly called K-beauty or Korean-style beauty, is considered as a popular culture in Indonesia. Beauty products from South Korea, such as skincare and makeup, are often considered as having higher quality and providing better results than local beauty products. Besides, makeup and skincare trends considered daily routines by Korean people have also contributed to the popularity of beauty culture in Indonesia.

Korean skincare manufacturers are also competing to create products and market them by taking advantage of the popularity of Korean idols, or commonly known as brand ambassadors. The Indonesian and Korean skincare – cosmetic data that employed brand ambassadors from South Korea are as following figure:
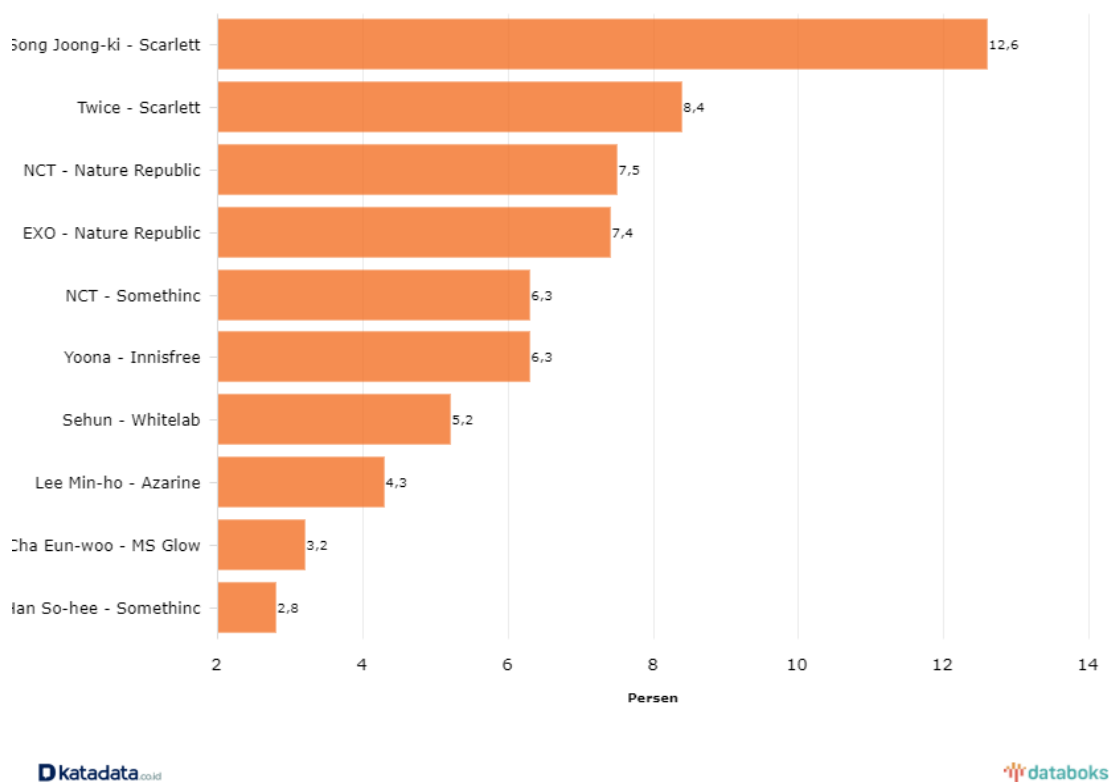
Figure 1. The most famous skin care products and cosmetics among K-popers

According to survey conducted by Katadata.co.id (2022), most respondents chose the Scarlett brand that featured Song Joong Ki as the brand ambassador, while 8.4% of respondents chose Scarlett with the help of the Twice group. After that, 7.5% of respondents decided that Nature Republic with NCT should be their brand ambassador. Responses were collected from various regions of Indonesia, with a large population live in the island of Java.

Viewing this phenomenon, skincare is a major need that cannot be separated in daily life, especially for women (Apriani & Lutfiati, 2021). With technological advances that continue to grow rapidly, it is now easy for young people to obtain skincare product data. The ease of accessing skincare product data will ultimately trigger purchasing decisions that are influenced by various aspects. The growing era of advancement has led to the formation of a shift where previously, the purchase of skincare was mostly dominated by the millennial generation. However, it is now dominated by Generation Z (Riani, 2020). Nowadays, many people in Batam City use skincare from South Korea. It occurs due to a large number of Batam City people who are K-Pop fans or K-Popers (which becomes the most influential factor) and also the influence of the surrounding environment. The passion for South Korean idol artists and the quality of the products provided by South Korean skincare brands have made many people in Batam City interested in trying and buying South Korean skincare products. In addition, now South Korean

skincare products can be found easily. It is proven by the increasing number of cosmetic store outlets selling South Korean skincare in Batam, such as Sociolla, Guardian, and Marama which are located at Grand Batam Mall.

The consumers are responsible for making a purchasing decision as the final step in the buying process. Buyers' requirements, priorities, and available cash may influence their decisions as they acquire something. Consequently, companies must have a strong understanding of consumer behavior and the elements that affect purchasing decisions. One strategy in marketing is to use brand ambassadors as 'the face' of the company to increase the number of customers who will then make purchases.

A brand ambassador is someone responsible for representing the company's goods or services to the general public. Beside singers, actors, and athletes, brand ambassadors can be a variety of a so-called celebrities, such as; influencers, local celebrities, or well-known people in the industry. Increasing customer interest in advertised products is the main objective of using celebrities as brand ambassadors (Febrianti & Ratnasari, 2021). Brand ambassadors can remind consumers of advertised products in various ways, such as through advertisements in mass media, social media, or special events. Additionally, an increase in sales can occur as a direct result of using a celebrity as a brand ambassador if the celebrity has enjoyed a positive reputation among the general public and endorses the products marketed to them.

In addition, brand ambassadors, brand image, brand awareness, price, and trust are important elements of every product because they influence customer purchasing decisions. Brand Image potentially plays an essential role in expanding a business' customer base and retaining the interest of existing clients, especially if the brand is known as a quality and trusted product. According to Kotler et al. (2019), brand awareness is a tool that consumers can use to learn about and recognize brands in their minds. According to the previous statement, increased brand awareness will increase consumer perceptions of certain products. Moreover, to be successful in business competition, companies must be more disciplined in setting the price of their products. As a result, the desire of consumers to pay more for what they perceive to be of higher quality makes them more likely to pay higher prices for products of higher quality (Ghali-Zinoubi & Toukabri, 2019). Those consumers will give positive reviews of the products they buy. In that case, the positive reviews can also help other consumers to reduce the unkown risk that might appear after purchasing a product. It is because the customers can put their trust in the prior product reviewers and they do not need to consider other factors. Initially, a consumer-supplied trust brand and the perceived trust of the product can be described as honest and defensible while increasing consumer confidence in the face of potential risks.

Based on this background, this study intends to look at the influence of brand ambassador, brand image, brand awareness, and price on purchase decision in regards to brand trust as a mediation variable in Batam City. The study contributes to literature through at least two ways; First, with the increasing massive use of Korean skin care in Batam City as the main border area with neighbouring countries, to our best knowledge, this is the first study concerned with the purchase decision on Korean Skin Care in Batam City. Second, recent literatures exhibited the influence of brand ambassador marketing strategies, brand image, brand awareness, brand trust, and price on purchase decision. However, with increasing competitiveness and massive import poducts in Indonesia, trust has become an important element which considered in choosing products. The study tries to analyze the role of trust in mediating the relationship between brand ambassadors, brand image, brand awareness, and price on purchase decisions. The results are expected to be the basis for decision-making for the skin care product marketing division in implementing its marketing strategy.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Brand Ambassador*

Maksum et al. (2018) define brand ambassadors as people actively promoting an organization or its products to the general public to attract customers. Meanwhile Kertamukti (2015) mentions that someone well-known in public for his achievements apart from the product presented is called a brand ambassador. Brand ambassadors are required as companies' spokespersons; thus, the brand can stick in the public's minds (Karim, 2019). Lailiya (2020) argues that brand ambassadors have five indicators: transference, congruence, credibility, attraction, and power.

Muttaqin & Mahrinasari (2022) discovered that brand ambassadors positively influenced purchasing decisions. For instance, Kim Soo Hyun's position as a brand ambassador for COSRX has led consumers to have a better overall image of the company. It was because Kim Soo Hyun is a well-known in Indonesia. Therefore, people tended to believe the suggestions made by Kim Soo Hyun. According to the findings of Subiyakto & Nadiani (2022), brand ambassadors had quite a large influence, both positively and significantly, on the purchasing decision desires of Neo Coffee customers. Research by Anggraeni (2020), revealed that brand ambassadors significantly influenced consumers' purchase decisions. The charm promotion approach in Depok City could be strengthened with the help of brand ambassadors and could influence customer desires to make purchases.

Kristian et al. (2021) confirmed that the relationship between brand ambassadors and purchasing decisions made by customers for Starcross was positive and significant. According to the findings obtained, in terms of making a purchase, consumer decisions were influenced significantly and positively by the brand ambassadors' actions. Moreover, indicators such as transference, congruence, credibility, attractiveness, and strength could affect customers' purchasing decisions of Lemonilo. This evidence proved that brand ambassadors who exhibited these characteristics had greater potential to positively influence consumer purchasing decisions (Amalia & Riva'i, 2022). Research by Nurhasanah et al. (2021) supported the importance of brand ambassadors in customers' decisions regarding purchasing.

H1: Brand ambassador have a significant influence on purchase decision.

2.2   *Brand Image*

According to Sari & Manurung (2020), brand image is an understanding and belief in the unity of a brand in the minds of consumers. A product or service trademark, which differentiates it from similar offerings from competitors, is one of the most important elements of the product or service (Kotler et al., 2013). According to Keller (2012), a customer has a connection with a particular brand ultimately determines the client's impression of that brand. Customers who have good impression of a brand may be more inclined to buy an item (Rachmawati & Andjarwati, 2020). The brand image consists of components, including attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Based on research conducted by Pamungkas (2017) & Ni'mah, et al. (2019), the more popular the brand among consumers, the higher consumer loyalty the brand can get.

According to research conducted by Susilawati et al. (2021), the brand image variable is statistically-significant and positively influence the decision-making process. It was also supported by the findings of Aeni & Ekhsan (2021) that customer views on the impression of the company's brand had a positive and significant influence on buyers' decisions on purchasing decisions. Anam et al. (2021) confirmed that people were more likely to choose a good product producer image when consumers knew that the product had citrus ingredients that were highly preferred. It could influence consumer decisions to buy Citra hand and body lotion.

Based on the research findings by Yulianti (2020), it was highly clear that the company's brand reputation had a positive, significant, and beneficial influence on the decisions made by customers regarding consumer purchases. Consumers were more likely to buy well-known brands than newer ones. It was related to the trust and sense of security usually created when someone bought a product from a well-known brand. Pratiwi & Ekawati (2020) argued that when customers had a good view of a company, they were more likely to visit that company's store and pay for its products and services because they believed that these products had high quality and could meet consumer needs. Aryatilandi et al. (2020) researched the relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions and concluded that customer purchasing decisions and a brand's image were positively intertwined.

H2: Brand image have a significant influence on purchase decision

2.3　Brand Awareness

According to Febriani & Dewi (2018) claim that brand awareness is thought of in people's memory and can make people remember the brand name, logo, characters, packaging, and slogans. The degree to which potential customers can recognize a particular brand as an indication of a particular product category is the brand awareness level (Savila et al., 2019). According to Sufyandi, et al. (2019) the objective of any marketing communication should be to increase brand awareness to the point where customers automatically think of the advertised brand whenever they need the product marketed to them.

Clarissa & Bernarto (2022) stated that brand awareness significantly influenced buyer intentions. When people have a stronger emotional connection with a product, they would also have a stronger emotional connection with the decision to buy that item. According to Clinton & Secapramana (2022), brand awareness significantly influenced purchasing decisions. A business that grew and improved the quality of its products would get the customers' attention. More consumers would buy the product as it became more popular in the market. Nofal et al. (2020) also confirmed a significant positive influence between brand awareness and purchasing decisions.

Supiyandi et al. (2022), discovered that brand awareness positively and significantly influenced purchasing decisions. When consumers were more familiar with a particular brand, they were more likely to buy it. In their analyses, Kuncoro and Windyasari (2021) proved that brand awareness had a statistically significant and useful influence on purchasing decisions. When consumers had more information about a particular brand, they had a greater chance of changing their opinion about a particular purchase. Customers with little experience with a particular brand were less likely to purchase it. However, Van Thuy, et al. (2022) explained that brand awareness does not significantly influence brand decisions. Companies need to increase brand awareness again so that more consumers know or are familiar with a brand.

H3: Brand awareness have a significant influence on purchase decision

2.4　Price

Price is a vital element attached to a product. Price can be a determinant for consumers in purchasing goods. Price is the amount of rupiah that can be paid by the market (Khansa & Farida, 2016; Rodhiah et al., 2021). According to Febriani & Khairusy (2020), pricing is crucial for business success because it determines the profit generated from selling goods and services. Four indicators characterize price: affordability, compatibility with the quality of the goods, competitiveness, and compatibility with the benefits obtained (Budiharja, 2016).

According to research by Triadi et al. (2021), the price variable partially affected the decision to purchase an iPhone brand cellphone on the Shopee marketplace. Ilmiyah & Krishernawan (2020), revealed that the price variable positively and significantly influenced consumer buying decisions on the Shopee marketplace. Meanwhile, Yusuf & Sunarsi (2020), stated that price significantly influenced purchasing decisions at PT. Total Creation.

Furthermore, Pandey et al. (2021) revealed that price had a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions. It was because Adidas shoes customers believed that the prices of Adidas shoes were under the quality of the products provided, thus enabling customers to buy their products. Based on the research done by Manandhar (2020), price significantly influences purchasing decisions. The research results indicated that the price set by the seller influenced purchasing decisions, and the price was a factor that must be considered as well as possible; hence, consumers could make purchasing decisions when buying goods. In addition, Anggriani et al. (2022), conveyed that price positively and significantly influenced purchasing decisions.

H4: Price has a significant influence on purchase decision

2.5   *Brand Trust*

According to Keller (2021), brand trust is a feeling of calm in users of goods, for interactions through brands are prioritized with the understanding that brands can be trusted and concerned with consumer welfare. Trust in a company's brand, also known as customers' trust in a company, is critical to a successful company's ability to maintain long-term relationships with its customer base (Dharmayana & Rahanatha, 2017). Customers who have a favorable relationship with the company will have a better opinion of the brand represented by the company if they also have a good relationship with the company (Ebrahim, 2020).

The research findings of Hanaysha (2022) showed a positive influence on the perceptions of consumers who made purchases at fast food restaurants. Brand trust is important in developing and maintaining strong relationships between customers and businesses. It was reinforced by Wijaya & Annisa (2020), who ascertained that brand trust had a positive influence and relative significance on the consumer's final decision to purchase. Based on studies, consumers who used packaged herbal medicines had herbal ingredients or compositions that would affect buyer interest. Maulana & Marista (2021) proved that brand trust was significant in consumer decisions on purchase transactions. When consumers believed that the product they purchased met their expectations, consumers did not experience any negative side effects when using it, the higher the decision rate to repurchase the brand. Ayu & Ketut (2020) proved that brand trust positively and significantly influenced purchasing decisions.

H5: Brand trust has a significant influence on purchase decision

H6: Brand ambassador has a significant influence on purchase decision mediated by brand trust

H7: Brand image has a significant influence on purchase decision mediated by brand trust

H8: Brand awareness has a significant influence on purchase decision mediated by brand trust

H9: Price has a significant influence on purchase decision mediated by brand trust

2.6   *Purchase Decision*

The Stimulus Organism response (SOR) model, proposed by Woodworth (1929) is an axpansion of Pavlov's classic theory of the stimulus-response mode. This is a theoretical framework that describes the connection between stimuli, organisms, and responses in determining behavioural outcomes. The model also highlights the importance of organism, which includes cognitive and emotional aspects of individuals, such as thoughts, feelings, and attitudes, mediated the relationship between the stimulus and the response. In the context of consumer trust, the SOR model suggests that trust can be influenced by numeours stimuli, for instance, social media marketing, brand equity, online reviews, and other perceived communication source.

Selecting one alternative from several different potential answers to a problem is one of response term, which is defined as a decision. Decisions can be made using a variety of ways, depending on the conditions and situations that exist. One type of decision that is usually taken by individuals and companies when determining whether to acquire a product or service or not is the purchasing decision. The SOR model suggests that purchase decisions are influenced by various stimuli, including marketing messages, social interactions and physical objects. This decision can be broken down into several subtypes. As explained by Sangadji (2013) the purchasing decision process involves many factors, including attitudes, knowledge, and evaluation of some substitutes for existing solutions. In purchasing decisions, the individual or group will consider various factors, such as price, quality, needs, and others, to decide what to buy. The integration process that combines attitudes and knowledge is an important part of purchasing decisions because it helps individuals or groups better understand and evaluate choices before making a final decision. Sharma, et al. (2021) argue that when consumers have awareness

about a brand and its offerings increase, consumers usually search for more information about the product online and then assess the benefits of choosing this product compared to competing products before making a purchasing decision.

The study uses four independent variables: brand ambassador, brand image, brand awareness and price. The mediated variable in this study is brand trust and the dependent variable used is the purchase decision. Following is the research framework and the research hypothesis:
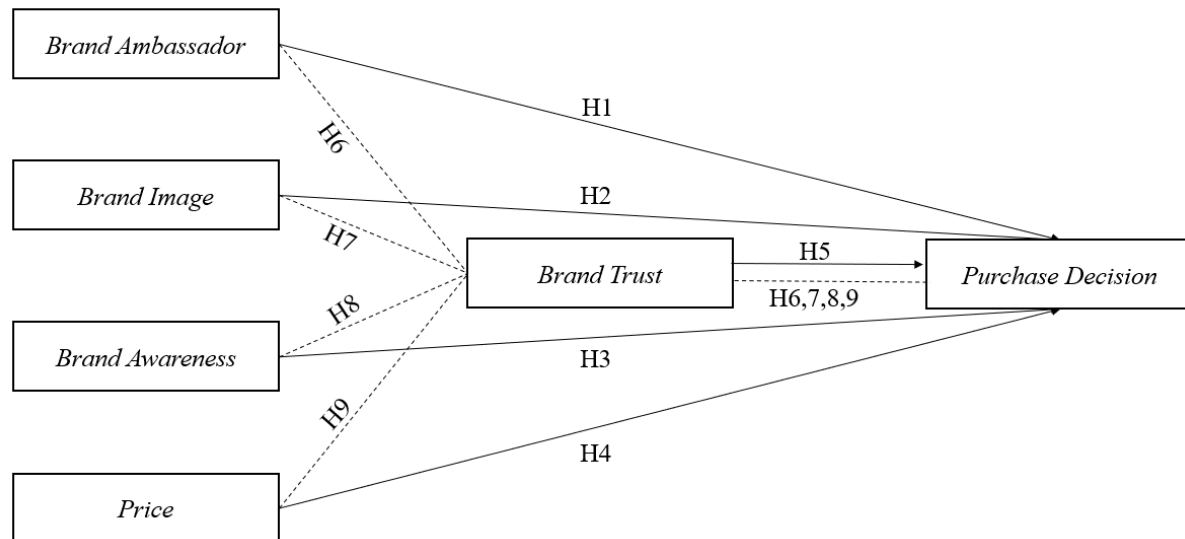
Figure 2. Research Framework

3.   Method

3.1.   *Sample / Participants*

Population on this study is all consumers of Korean skin care products in Batam City. The sampling method is using non-probability Sampling through the Purposive Sampling approach is the taking of samples with certain criteria. In this study, Batam City people who were over 17 years old and still using Korean skincare products were selected as sample subjects based on a variety of criteria. Sampling size refers to Hair Jr, et al. (2017) which states that the number of samples is 10 times the most structural path in a research model. In this study, the most structural path is 5, so the minimum sample to be met is 50 respondents.

3.2.   *Instrument(s)*

Questionnaire are adopted from previous literature written by Muttaqin & Mahrinasari (2022), Dewi et al. (2020), Jung, et al. (2020), Nofal, et al. (2020), Pandey, et al. (2021), and Febrianti & Ratnasari (2021).

Table 1. Indicators and indicators code

Variables	Indicators	Code
Brand Ambassador	Brand Ambassador representing this skincare brand is a popular South Korean celebrity	BA1
	This brand ambassador has the ability to convey information about well-represented skincare brands	BA2
	I followed this South Korean celebrity before becoming a Brand Ambassador of this skincare brand	BA3
	Brand Ambassador can influence consumer perception of the brand of skin care represented	BA4
	I decided to buy this skin care brand product after learning that this South Korean celebrity is a Brand Ambassador of this skincare brand	BA5
Brand Image	This brand is trusted as a well-known skincare brand	BI1
	This brand of skincare can attract many consumers	BI2
	This skincare brand has many interesting variants	BI3
	This brand is a good quality skincare product	BI4
	This skincare brand has an affordable price	BI5
	This skincare brand has a unique packaging	BI6
	This skincare brand has a unique smell	BI7
Brand Awareness	I recognize the characteristics of this skincare brand	BAW1
	I remember this skincare brand advertisement	BAW2
	I remember this skincare brand	BAW3
	I easily explained this skincare brand to a friend	BAW4
	I am familiar with the products of this brand skincare	BAW5
Price	The price of this skincare brand is affordable	PRICE1
	The price of this skincare brand product is comparable to the quality of the products	PRICE2
	The price of this skincare brand product can compete with other brand products	PRICE3
	The price I paid to buy this skincare brand product matched the benefits I got	PRICE4
Brand Trust	This brand is honest with consumers	BT1
	This skincare brand provides high quality services and products	BT2
	I believe in this skincare brand	BT3
	I bought this skincare brand product because it's easy to find	PD1
Purchase Decision	I feel the quality of this skincare brand product is very good	PD2
	I only buy this skincare brand product once a month	PD3
	I just bought this skincare product	PD4
	I feel this brand of skincare gives you the best quality	PD5
	I recommend this brand skincare because this brand has a variety of products	PD6
	I agree with this skincare product	PD7
	I am satisfied with the results after using this skincare brand product	PD8

3.3.   *Questionnaire used as one of data collection procedures*

Primary data from the study was collected by distributing questionnaires to respondents through WhatsApp groups, Line, as well as using Instagram and Whatsapp stories. The questionnaire's distribution is done online via Google form. The questionnaire given to the respondents uses the Likert scale measurement method consisting of points 1 which is very disagreeable up to points 5 that is very agreeable.

3.4.   *Data collection and analysis*

The data collection of respondents was obtained from the spread of the questionnaire on 305 respondents, and all of it were valid. The deployment lasted for three months, from March 2023 to May 2023. The study uses the Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) method where this concept is able to simultaneously test the connections between latent structures in a linear relationship with the existing parameters. The quality testing of instruments is carried out through the Convergence Validity Test, Discriminant validity test, and Reliability Test. Hypothesis testing on SEM-PLS using the t test (Hair et al., 2017).

4.   **Results**

4.1   *Respondent's Characteristics*

Based on all the results of the demographic analysis, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents from this study are women who are 22-26 years old and have a final high school/SMK education who profession as students with income less than Rp.4.500.000 who live in Batam City. All respondents in this study used South Korean skincare, but the most widely used skincare brand by respondents was Some By Mi with a 1-2-year skincare period.

Table 2. Respondent's Characteristics

Category	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	69	22,6%
	Female	236	77,4%
Age	17 – 21	97	31,8%
	22 – 26	143	46,9%
	27 – 31	46	15,1%
	32 – 36	19	6,2%
Last Education	High School/Equivalent	198	64,9%
	Bachelor Degree	92	30,2%
	Magister Degree	13	4,3%
	Doctor Degree	2	0,7%
Job	Administration	1	0,3%
	Housewife	1	0,3%
	Government Employees	28	9,2%
	Private Employees	83	27,2%
	Student	130	42,6%
	Self-Employed	62	20,3%
Income Per Month	< Rp. 4.500.000	152	49,8%
	Rp. 4.500.001 - Rp. 6.500.000	74	24,3%
	Rp. 6.500.001 - Rp. 8.500.000	54	17,7%
	Rp. 8.500.001 - Rp. 10.500.000	20	6,6%
	> Rp. 10.500.001	5	1,6%

Category	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Domicile	Batam City	305	100%
Do you use Korean Skincare?	Yes	305	100%
Brand of Korean Skincare	COSRX - Jeon Somi	36	11,8%
	Etude House - Kazuha	18	5,9%
	Innisfree - Jang Won Young	47	15,4%
	Laneige - Kim Yoo Jung	33	10,8%
	Nature Republic - NCT 127	80	26,2%
	Some By Mi - Yook Sung Jae	90	29,5%
	Somethinc - Han So Hee	1	0,3%
Years of Use	< 1 year	44	14,4%
	1 - 2 years	165	54,1%
	3 - 4 years	68	22,3%
	5 - 6 years	18	5,9%
	> 6 years	10	3,3%

4.2   *The Evaluation of Outer Model*

4.2.1   *Convergent Validity*

Convergence validity includes outer Loading and Average Variance Extracted measurements. This measurement is used to see if the questionnaire instrument has been valid and accurate used to measure a particular variable or structure (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 3. Convergent Validity

Indicators	Variable	Outer Loading	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
BA1		0,776	
BA2	Brand Ambassador	0,614	0,513
BA4		0,748	
BI2		0,719	
BI4	Brand Image	0,842	0,569
BI5		0,839	
BI6		0,690	
BAW1		0,626	
BAW3	Brand Awareness	0,793	0,552
BAW5		0,866	
PRICE1		0,777	
PRICE2	Price	0,771	0,551
PRICE3		0,694	
BT1		0,867	
BT2	Brand Trust	0,659	0,572
BT3		0,680	
PD1		0,838	
PD2		0,646	
PD3		0,671	
PD4	Purchase Decision	0,747	0,559
PD5		0,617	
PD6		0,783	
PD7		0,668	

4.2.2 *Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)*

The Fornell-Larcker criterion is one of the criteria used in testing the validity of discrimination (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The Fornell-Larcker Criterion compares the square root of an AVE structure with the correlation between that structure and other structures. If the square root of an AVE is greater than the correlation, then it can be concluded that the structure has a good discriminatory validity. Table 4 presents the results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion:

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BA	BAW	BI	BT	PRICE	PD
BA	0,716					
BAW	0,418	0,743				
BI	0,615	0,235	0,755			
BT	0,591	0,667	0,492	0,687		
PRICE	0,490	0,393	0,509	0,543	0,672	
PD	0,581	0,692	0,477	0,595	0,582	0,677

4.2.3   **Reliability**

The level of accuracy and reliability of a measuring instrument or scale can be assessed with the help of reliability testing. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability are two options for evaluating reliability in PLS-SEM analysis. Composite reliability is used as dependency metrics in this study. According to Ghozali, (2016) the thumb rule of composite reliability is >0.7. According to Hair et al. (2014) the value of composite reliability should be greater than 0.7. However, if the composite reliability value is 0.6, then the value is still acceptable. Here is the reliability test table:

Table 5. Reliability Test

Variable	Composite Reliability
Brand Ambassador	0,758
Brand Image	0,838
Brand Awareness	0,780
Price	0,796
Brand Trust	0,718
Purchase Decision	0,852

4.3 *Evaluation of Inner Model*

4.3.1   *Direct Effect Analysis*

Table 6. Path Coefficient

	Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Values	Hypothesis
Brand Ambassador > Purchase Decision	0.068	1,575	0,116	Rejected
Brand Image > Purchase Decision	0.096	2,627	0,009	Accepted
Brand Awareness > Purchase Decision	0.479	11,476	0,000	Accepted
Price > Purchase Decision	0.141	2,958	0,003	Accepted
Brand Trust > Purchase Decision	0.311	5,967	0,000	Accepted

Table 6 reveals that brand image, brand awareness, price, and brand trust significantly influenced Purchasing decisions. Hypothesis testing on PLS analysis relied on the t test, where the relationship

between variables is considered to be significant if the P-Value less than 0.05 and the statistical t value greater than 1.96 at the 5% significance level (Hair et al., 2021).

These variables' influences were positive, i.e., there was a relationship that was directly influence the purchasing decision. The higher the brand image, the higher the purchasing decision, likewise, with other variables. Meanwhile, brand ambassadors were found to have no direct effect on purchasing decisions.

4.3.2 *Indirect Effect*

Table 7. Indirect Effect

	Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Values	Hypothesis
Brand Ambassador > Brand Trust > Purchase Decision	0.065	2,775	0,006	Accepted
Brand Image > Brand Trust > Purchase Decision	0.148	2,912	0,004	Accepted
Brand Awareness > Brand Trust > Purchase Decision	0.052	5,524	0,000	Accepted
Price > Brand Trust > Purchase Decision	0.052	2,745	0,006	Accepted

Table 7 demonstrates the indirect effect of the independent variables on purchasing decisions through brand trust as a mediating variable. This result indicated that all independent variables indirectly influenced the purchasing decision. Brand ambassadors only had a significant indirect effect through brand trust, while other variables had both types of effects, namely direct and indirect. Considering the value of the coefficient, brand image had a greater indirect effect than a direct effect. Meanwhile, brand awareness and price had a more significant direct effect value than the indirect effect.

4.3.3 *Goodness of Fit Models*

4.3.3.1 *R Square*

Based on the results of Table 8, it can be implied that the purchasing decision and purchase intention had an R-square value above 0.5; they were included in the strong model category (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 8. R Square

Variable	R-Square
Brand Trust	0,622
Purchase Decision	0,800

5.   **Discussion**

The research results concluded that hypothesis 1 was rejected, implies the brand ambassador had no significant effect on purchasing decision. The brand ambassador of the skincare brand was not enough to influence consumer purchasing decisions because buyers would still buy Korean skincare products without the encouragement and promotion made by the brand ambassador of the skincare brand Situmorang et al., (2022) The influence of brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions was mediated by brand trust, which ascertained that brand trust significantly contributed in influencing purchasing decisions. A good brand ambassador would explain the raw materials for these skincare products as well as the benefits and uses of using skincare products. Therefore, the consumers' trust in the remark of the brand ambassador and proof that the brand ambassador used the brand's product would increase the consumer's decision to buy the product. The results of this research are contradict to previous research

by Muttaqin & Mahrinasari (2022) which stated that brand ambassador have a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

Additionally, the research results also discovered that brand image significantly influenced purchasing decisions. These results supported the research conducted by Atmaja & Menuh, (2019). The company's brand image was generated by the company's skincare products that were good and suitable for most customers' skin. After using the skincare, consumers would feel the results obtained were suitable or effective for dealing with problems experienced by consumers. Hence, its utilization would improve the company's brand image because the product was under the claims made by the product. In addition, brand image also had an indirect effect on purchasing decisions through brand trust. A good company brand image results from creating the company's brand. A good company brand image for its products that are good for facial care would lead to consumer purchasing decisions for skincare products. A good product and lots of consumer reviews would make potential customers believe that the product was safe and suitable for the skin problems they were experiencing, increasing consumer purchasing decisions for Korean Skincare products. The results of this research are not in line with study Yunita & Indriyatni (2022) which stated that brand image does not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

Research results confirm that brand awareness has a significant influence on purchasing decisions. When consumers had a high level of awareness of a brand, it implied that consumers had good knowledge and understanding of the brand compared to competing brands in the beauty industry. Based on these research results, Korean skincare users had a high brand awareness; thus, when consumers want to buy beauty products, the skincare brand that came to mind was that brand. The results were reinforced by research conducted by Ansari et al. (2019) which proves that brand awareness positively and significantly influenced purchasing decisions. Furthermore, brand trust significantly influences the mediating variable between brand awareness and purchasing decisions. When consumers wanted to buy beauty products, something came to mind was a certain brand. Hence, brand awareness of a brand and consumer trust in a brand were factors that could make consumers buy Korean skincare products. The results of this research are not in line with study by Amelfdi & Ardyan (2020) which proved that brand awareness does not have a significant influence on purchase decisions.

The research results conclude that hypothesis 4 was accepted: the price significantly influenced the purchasing decision. Based on the demographic results of the respondents in this research, the average consumer earned less than IDR 4,500,000, if skincare were too expensive for consumers, consumers would not buy the product. The most famous Korean products, such as Some By Mi, including Some By Mi AHA BHA PHA 30 days Miracle Serum 50ml, are priced at IDR 150,000. With income below IDR 4,500,000, the price of skincare was under IDR 200,000 was still affordable for consumers. The results were supported by Reinaldo & Chandra (2020), which proved that price significantly influenced purchasing decisions. In addition, brand trust significantly influenced the mediating variable between price and purchasing decisions. The price could create a perception of premium quality in the skincare products offered. The product's price must be matched with the skincare product types and benefits. When a product has built high brand trust among consumers, consumers will buy the product regardless of the price applied because consumers believe that the product provides superior quality and is commensurate with the price. The results of this research are not in line with the results of research Suratmiyati & Anggoro, Y (2020) which proves that brand awareness does not have a significant influence on purchase decisions.

6.   Conclusions

Along with the rise of Korean wave culture in Indonesia, Korean matters have attracted consumers' attention. One of them was Korean Skincare products. This research intends to examine the factors affecting the decision to purchase Korean skincare products in Indonesia with brand trust as a mediator. The research results showed that brand awareness, brand image, and price directly and significantly influenced the purchasing decision. Meanwhile, brand ambassadors indirectly influence purchasing decisions through brand trust. This research confirmed the role of brand trust as a mediation between the independent variables in the purchasing decision.

The research results could be the basis for skincare products in promoting their products. Brand Ambassadors were not enough to influence consumer purchasing decisions, but brand trust needed to

be built to mediate the relationship between those variables. Brand image was proven to have the greatest influence compared to other variables; thus, it could be a priority concern for the company. Skincare products which have a good brand image, strong brand awareness and brand trust, and prices that are in line with the products offered, then potential buyers do not quite care about who the brand ambassador of the brand is, because the brand already has products that customers like and are suitable for their skin. In addition, the role of brand trust as mediation has been confirmed in all variables; hence, brand trust was an important representation for building relationships between consumers and the companies. These findings strongly suggested that producers should prioritized trust to stimulate purchasing decisions.

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