

Brand Ambassador Mingyu Seventeen and Its Influence on The Purchase Interest of Innisfree Products among Followers Of the Instagram account @Innisfreeindonesia

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ABSTRACT: *The growth of the beauty industry has driven various brands to market their products extensively, one of which is Innisfree. With its large population, Indonesia has become a promising market and a destination for cultural dissemination. Innisfree experienced a decline in sales beginning in 2020, presumably due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This study aims to analyze the influence of Kim Mingyu's personal branding as the Brand Ambassador for Innisfree Skincare on purchasing decisions. The research employs an explanatory research type with questionnaire distribution as the data collection technique. The sample comprises 100 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Respondents are followers of the Instagram account @innisfreeindonesia, aged ≥ 17 years, who use skincare and are aware of Kim Mingyu as Innisfree's Brand Ambassador. The findings indicate that the Brand Ambassador significantly influences purchase decisions by 60.9%, while the remaining 39.1% is affected by other factors not examined in this study. Considering the influence of the Brand Ambassador on purchase decisions, Innisfree should optimize Kim Mingyu's role in various promotional strategies and leverage the growing Korean Wave culture in Indonesia as part of its promotional approach.*

KEYWORDS -Brand Ambassador, Korean Wave, Purchase Decisions

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of modern technology in this era of globalization has brought about significant changes, including the transformation of human communication methods. Today, communication can be carried out via computer networks (the internet). The internet not only serves as a communication medium but also provides access to beneficial and potentially harmful information. The easy access to the internet allows foreign cultures, such as South Korea's culture known as the Korean Wave or Hallyu, to enter Indonesia. Hallyu refers to the phenomenon of the rapid growth of South Korean culture through mass media (Febrina, 2017).

One popular trend from the Korean Wave among Indonesian women is skincare, known as Korean Skincare (K-Beauty). According to data published by zapclinic.com (2020), a survey by ZAP Beauty Index, which involved 6,460 respondents aged 13–65 years, revealed that 57.6% of Indonesian women prefer South Korean skincare products, followed by local Indonesian products (37.4%) and Japanese products (22.7%). This highlights South Korea's success in dominating the Indonesian market with a variety of Korean skincare and cosmetics sold offline and online.

Several South Korean skincare brands, such as Laneige, Nature Republic, Some By Mi, Innisfree, and COSRX, have entered the Indonesian market. Among them, Innisfree, a subsidiary of South Korea's largest beauty company, Amore Pacific, has become a leading brand. Known for its "all-natural" concept since 2000, Innisfree officially opened its stores in Indonesia in 2017, offering a wide range of products including skincare, masks, makeup, perfumes, and baby skincare products (Fimela, n.d.).

Innisfree's sales increased consistently between 2017 and 2019. In 2017, the company recorded a profit of 5.1 trillion KRW, which rose to 5.3 trillion KRW in 2018, followed by a 3.4% growth in 2019 due to domestic growth, online sales, multi-brand strategies, and international sales. However, sales declined in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. To address these challenges, Amore Pacific strengthened its digital marketing efforts and focused on e-commerce channels, yielding significant results online.

In 2023, Innisfree introduced a new logo and visual identity with the slogan "Effective, Nature-Powered Skincare Discovered from the Island" (Innisfree, n.d.). The rebranding emphasizes natural elements and active ingredients, replacing the traditional forest green with a brighter and distinctive green across product packaging, in-store displays, and promotional materials.

Instagram plays a crucial role in Innisfree's marketing strategy. Since 2013, the brand's official Instagram account, @innisfreeindonesia, has attracted over 342,000 followers (as of 2023). Innisfree utilizes Instagram's features such as Feeds, Stories, Reels, Live, Highlights, and Ads to introduce its products to followers.

Selecting celebrities to promote products is essential as it influences consumer buying interest (Sepilla&Purworini, 2022). The use of Korean actors and actresses for personal branding has made Korean skincare products more popular compared to other beauty products. To enhance awareness in Indonesia, Innisfree chose Kim Mingyu, a member of the boy group SEVENTEEN, as its global Brand Ambassador. As a vibrant and energetic public figure, Mingyu aligns with Innisfree's persona and values, potentially creating remarkable synergy (Amore Pacific, 2023).

Based on this background, the authors conducted a study titled "The Influence of Mingyu Seventeen as a Brand Ambassador on Purchase Interest in Innisfree Products Among Followers of the Instagram Account @innisfreeindonesia." The study aims to help Innisfree evaluate the effectiveness of its rebranding strategy using Kim Mingyu as a Brand Ambassador and provide insights into consumer perceptions of Kim Mingyu, especially among new target markets reached through rebranding. The research adopts the Uses and Gratification Theory, focusing on Kim Mingyu due to his rising popularity and positive public image. The study targets Instagram followers of @innisfreeindonesia, a brand favored by Indonesian consumers and a key brand under Amore Pacific's global portfolio.

The Uses and Gratification Theory was introduced by Elihu Katz, Michel Gurevitch, and Hadassa Hass in 1973. This theory posits that individuals have needs and desires that can be satisfied through mass media use. To fulfill these needs and desires, audiences select the media they use and the messages they consume, expecting satisfaction or fulfillment from the process (Hamidi, 2007). In the era of new media, research has increasingly adopted the uses and gratification approach to study how audiences utilize media. According to Ruggiero (2000), this approach is widely applied in the context of new mass media usage, such as newspapers, radio, television, and now the internet. In the internet environment, user participation is considered more active than in traditional media. This concept aligns with the uses and gratification approach, which views media selection as a means of providing satisfaction by fulfilling audience needs while allowing them to understand the reasons behind media usage.

Innisfree selected Kim Mingyu as a brand ambassador because he can represent Innisfree products effectively. Kim Mingyu is a public figure with a large fan base and numerous followers on Instagram. The use of public figures as attention-grabbing icons in advertisements is a creative method of message delivery. Messages conveyed by captivating figures are more likely to attract consumer attention. Public figures employed in promotional advertisements are referred to as brand endorsers or brand ambassadors (Kertamukti, 2015). According to Barnes and Lea-Greenwood (2018), a brand ambassador is a tool used by companies to communicate and connect with the public and is expected to boost company sales. The celebrity status of brand

ambassadors is characterized by their ability to attract attention and create additional value or advantages derived from their visibility to the public. This visibility can be either positive or negative. Celebrities also possess attractiveness, charm, and trustworthiness in the eyes of the target audience. Many celebrities now serve as spokespersons or representatives for products or brands, with the expectation that their qualities can be transferred to the products, thereby stimulating consumer purchases.

Choosing brand ambassador can be a new strategy of marketing communication which refers to the promotional mix, which serves as an effective tool for communicating with customers. Marketing communication activities function as tools for decision-making, sharing information, and enhancing awareness for both consumers and product providers. To maximize revenue, it is crucial to ensure that marketing communication contributes to customer satisfaction. The hypothesis is that improving customer happiness will lead to loyal consumers (Tasnim, 2021) who has strong purchase interest on a specific product.

Purchase interest consists of the terms "interest" and "purchase." In the Indonesian Dictionary, interest is defined as a strong inclination, enthusiasm, or desire toward something. Purchase is defined as acquiring something through exchange or payment with money. According to Priansa (2017), purchase interest relates to a consumer's plan to buy a product and the number of product units needed within a certain period. purchase interest generates motivation recorded in consumers' minds, ultimately driving them to meet their needs despite the possibility of not completing the purchase. Thus, purchase interest can be defined as the initial process involving feelings that arise after receiving stimuli from a product or service, which lead to happiness and a desire to own it, culminating in an interest in purchasing the product or service within a specific timeframe.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research design. According to Creswell (2018), quantitative research focuses on precise measurement or experimentation, where variables address research questions and hypotheses supported by theoretical frameworks. Quantitative analysis involves numerical representation and manipulation of observations to describe and explain phenomena reflected in those observations (Babbie, 2021). The quantitative approach was chosen to systematically collect, process, and analyze data regarding the relationship between variable X (Brand Ambassador) and variable Y (Purchase Interest) to understand the influence of Kim Mingyu as the Brand Ambassador of Innisfree Skincare on purchase interest.

The population is defined as the group of objects targeted for response in the research. The primary goal of sampling in quantitative research is to create a representative sample that reproduces or reflects the features of interest within a larger group of cases, known as the population (Neuman, 2013). The population in this study consists of Instagram followers of the @innisfreeindonesia account, which had 342,000 followers as of November 15, 2023. Using Slovin's formula, the researcher determined a sample size of 100 respondents (rounded). The study employs non-probability sampling, focusing on 100 respondents who meet the criteria of being fans of Mingyu SEVENTEEN, following the @innisfreeindonesia Instagram account, and being users of Innisfree skincare products.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test Results

Based on the correlation calculation between individual question item scores and total scores for a sample of $n = 30$ respondents, the researcher utilized SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solution) version 22. The results indicate that all 12 question items related to variable X (Brand Ambassador) are valid.

Table 1: Validity Test for Brand Ambassador Variable

Item	r Calculated	r Table	Description
X1	0,673	0,361	Valid
X2	0,583	0,361	Valid
X3	0,539	0,361	Valid

Item	r Calculated	r Table	Description
X4	0,700	0,361	Valid
X5	0,501	0,361	Valid
X6	0,680	0,361	Valid
X7	0,603	0,361	Valid
X8	0,540	0,361	Valid
X9	0,526	0,361	Valid
X10	0,668	0,361	Valid
X11	0,595	0,361	Valid
X12	0,734	0,361	Valid

Source: Data processed by the researcher

Based on the validity test table for variable X (Brand Ambassador), it is evident that testing conducted on 30 respondents demonstrates that the calculated r-value for all question items from X1 to X12 is valid and can be used to measure the overall variable under study, as the calculated r-value exceeds 0.361.

Table 2: Validity Test for Purchase Intention Variable

Item	r Calculated	r Table	Description
Y1	0,708	0,361	Valid
Y2	0,523	0,361	Valid
Y3	0,622	0,361	Valid
Y4	0,569	0,361	Valid
Y5	0,580	0,361	Valid
Y6	0,517	0,361	Valid
Y7	0,571	0,361	Valid
Y8	0,519	0,361	Valid

Source: Data processed by the researcher

Based on the validity test table for variable Y (Purchase Intention), it is evident that testing conducted on 30 respondents demonstrates that the calculated r-value (r hitung) for all question items from Y1 to Y8 is valid and can be used to measure the overall variable under study, as the calculated r-value exceeds 0.361.

Reliability Test Results

Reliability testing is the process of measuring the accuracy (consistency) of an instrument. Reliability testing is conducted to determine the consistency of measurement results for a variable. A construct or variable is considered reliable if it has a Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.60 .

Table 3: Reliability Test of Brand Ambassador

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,848	12

Source: Data processed by the researcher

Based on the reliability test table of Variable X Brand Ambassador, the instrument for the variable is considered reliable, as the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.848. This indicates that the instrument for this variable has a high level of consistency.

Table 4: Reliability Test for Purchase Intention

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,710	8

Source: Data processed by the researcher

Based on the reliability test table for Variable Y Purchase Intention, the instrument for the variable is considered reliable, as the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.710. This indicates that the instrument for this variable has a high level of consistency.

Results of Normality Test

The normality test aims to evaluate whether the residuals in the regression model follow a normal distribution. This test is part of the classical assumption tests. There are two approaches to determine whether residuals are normally distributed: graphical analysis and statistical testing. The statistical basis for this test can be carried out using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) significance test, where the data is considered to be normally distributed if the significance probability value $\alpha > 0.05$.

Table 4: Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		100
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	1,67934803
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,068
	Positive	,068
	Negative	-,040
Test Statistic		,068
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,200 ^{c,d}

Source: Data processed by the researcher

From the table and graphical results of the normality test, it is observed that the significance value of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for variables X and Y is $0.200 > 0.05$. This indicates that the data tested is normally distributed.

Results of Linearity Test

The linearity test is used to examine whether the model specification applied is correct (Ghozali, 2006). This test aims to determine whether the two variables, specifically an independent variable and a dependent variable, have a significantly linear relationship. Data is considered linear if the linearity significance level is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). The data was analyzed and calculated using the SPSS 22.0 statistical application based on the test for linearity.

Table 5: Linearity Test Results

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Purchase Intention * Influence of Kim Mingyu as Brand	Between Groups	492,336	18	27,352	9,990	,000
	Linearity	434,907	1	434,907	158,845	,000
	Deviation from Linearity	57,429	17	3,378	1,234	,258
Within Groups		221,772	81	2,738		

Ambassador	Total	714,108	99
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Source: Data processed by the researcher

The analysis results indicate that in the ANOVA table, the F-value for deviation from linearity is 1.234, with a significance of 0.258. Therefore, it can be concluded that the significance value $\geq \alpha$ ($0.258 \geq 0.05$), which supports the acceptance of the proposed hypothesis. This implies that the two variables are linearly related.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis is used to explore the linear relationship between one independent variable (X) and one dependent variable (Y). This analysis determines the magnitude of the effect of variable X on variable Y. In this study, the simple linear regression test was conducted using SPSS 22.0.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	6,305	1,541		4,091	,000		
Influence of Kim Mingyu as Brand Ambassador	,460	,037	,780	12,355	,000	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Table 6: Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Source: Data processed by the researcher

Based on the results of the simple linear regression analysis shown in the table above, the equation obtained is:

$$Y = a + bX$$

$$Y = 6,305 + 0,460X$$

The simple linear regression equation derived from the SPSS version 22 output indicates a constant value of 6.305, which means that if the influence of Brand Ambassador Kim Mingyu (X) is assumed to be zero (0), the Purchase Intention (Y) is 6.305. The regression coefficient is positive, implying that the influence of Brand Ambassador Kim Mingyu (X) has a positive effect on Purchase Intention (Y).

T-Test Results

The T-test, also known as the partial test, evaluates the individual influence of each variable. This test is conducted by comparing the calculated t-value with the table t-value.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	6,305	1,541		4,091	,000		

Influence of Kim Mingyu as Brand Ambassador	,460	,037	,780	12,355	,000	1,000	1,000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention							

Table 7: T-Test Results

Source: Data processed by the researcher

Based on the results of the simple linear regression analysis shown in the table above, the calculated t-value for variable X is 12.355, while the table t-value is 1.660. This result indicates that the calculated t-value is greater than the table t-value, meaning that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that variable X, the influence of Brand Ambassador Kim Mingyu, has a significant effect on Purchase Intention.

Results of the Coefficient of Determination (R Square) Test

The coefficient of determination (R Square) test is used to assess the extent of the contribution of the independent variable (X) to the dependent variable (Y).

Table 8: Results of the Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,780 ^a	,609	,605	1,68789
a. Predictors: (Constant), Influence of Kim Mingyu as Brand Ambassador				
b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention				

Source: Data processed by the researcher

To assess the magnitude of the influence of Brand Ambassador Kim Mingyu on Purchase Intention, it is reflected in the value of R.

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that:

- a. The value of $R = 0.780$, meaning the relationship between the brand ambassador and purchase intention is 0.780 (78%). This indicates a strong correlation.
- b. The Adjusted R Square value is 0.609, meaning that 60.9% of the purchase intention factor can be influenced by the brand ambassador. The remaining 39.1% is influenced by factors outside the scope of this research.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that the influence of a Brand Ambassador has a significant and positive impact on Purchase Intention. Therefore, the researcher's hypothesis can be accepted, indicating that Kim Mingyu as the Brand Ambassador for the Innisfree brand significantly and positively affects consumer purchase decisions, particularly among the followers of the Instagram account @innisfreeindonesia, to purchase Innisfree products.

This is evidenced by the significance/probability value (p) of 0.000, which is less than the significance/probability threshold ($p < 0.05$). Based on the simple linear regression analysis, the results show that the influence of the Brand Ambassador variable (X) on the Purchase Intention variable (Y) is 60.9%, while 39.1% is influenced by other factors not included in this study. Considering the influence of the Brand Ambassador on purchase decisions, Innisfree should maximize the role of Kim Mingyu as their Brand Ambassador in various promotional strategies, leveraging the growing popularity of Korean Wave culture in Indonesia in their promotional strategies.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that future research further explore this topic and consider employing qualitative methods to provide a deeper understanding of Brand Ambassadors using ethnographic approaches.

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