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HOW CELEBRITY WORSHIP IMPACT K-POP FANS' BRAND ATTITUDE, ADVERTISEMENT ATTITUDE, AND REPURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS LOCAL BRANDS PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

The development of technology in this digital era makes it easier for marketing strategies to be carried out. One of which is by using celebrities who are in great demand by the target market even if they are cross-cultural, like the popularity of K-pop celebrities who are currently taking over the world. So many brands work with K-Pop celebrities on their marketing efforts, hoping to reach their famous loyal fans as a new market segment. This study investigates the relationship between K-pop fans' celebrity worship on brand attitude, advertisement attitude, and repurchase intention. The test was conducted via an online survey with the snowball sampling method via social media and online fan communities. The test used the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) on K-pop fans in Indonesia who had purchased K-pop merchandise from brands endorsed by K-pop celebrities and analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results show that although almost all dimension of celerity worship has a positive and significant influence on brand attitude, advertisement attitude, and repurchase intention, the entertainment-social dimension of celebrity worship was found to have no significant relationship with repurchase intention. However, from the overall results, we know that using Kpop celebrities is a great marketing strategy because their fans' celebrity worship is found to be related to their intentions to repurchase any products from brands that endorse K-pop celebrities. The findings of this study will enrich marketers' knowledge to formulate what marketing strategy to use for K-pop celebrity fans as a target market.

Keywords: K-Pop Fans, Celebrity Worship, Brand Attitude, Advertisement Attitude, Repurchase Intention.

1. Introduction

The current K-pop trend is widely adapted by brands operating in the Indonesian market. The popularity of K-pop celebrities among their fans, when used by brands in their promotions, is known to cause a horrendous phenomenon regarding the consumption behavior of their fans. Several forms of promotional activities implemented by brands are by making K-pop celebrities their brand ambassadors, releasing collaboration products, or starring them in their advertisements, as can be seen from the phenomenon of selling BTS Meal which is very crowded in Indonesia. The enthusiasm of fans who wanted to buy BTS Meal was so extraordinary that it made several McDonald's outlets temporarily closed and fined up to fifty million rupiah for violating health protocols due to long queues and crowding during the pandemic (Antara 2021). According to confessions from several ARMYs (as BTS fans are called), they are willing to queue up to buy BTS Meals, not because of the food but to have the wrapper that has a special McDonalds x BTS collaboration design to add to their collection (Astuti 2021; Rahayu 2021).

Based on the phenomenon that occurred, many of the fans seemed very enthusiastic about getting all kinds of products related to K-pop celebrities that they liked. Previous research has found that in developing countries, there is no profit to be made from spending a lot of money on celebrity endorsements

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(Deshbhag and Mohan 2020; Paul and Bhakar 2018). However, nowadays, more and more brands are using celebrities in their marketing efforts. From this phenomenon, it can be said that the strategy of using celebrities, especially K-pop celebrities, can generate profits like what happened to McDonald's and Tokopedia. Tokopedia has seen an increase in visits to their platform since making BTS and Blackpink their brand ambassadors in early 2021, or it can be said that there is an increase in brand awareness due to K-pop celebrity brand ambassadors (Nurhadi 2021).

Previous research found that endorsements with K-pop celebrities have been shown to have an effect on consumer buying behavior, one of which is purchase intention (Delicia 2021; Nasri 2020; Utami 2021; Zuleika 2018). Referring to this phenomenon, we can see that consumption activities for these products tend to be carried out with the motive of the collection. Research by Maltby et al. (2006) also found that most research respondents who like a certain celebrity usually have one or more souvenirs (merchandise) in the form of concert tickets, photos, and so on, which they take good care of. So that purchases made by fans are generally not only made once.

Based on this phenomenon, we can also see that fans feel strong feelings for the K-pop celebrities they like, so they are willing to sacrifice their time, energy, and money for everything related to the celebrities they like (Brooks 2021). Fans usually have certain characteristics that can be identified as celebrity worship, which is a form of obsession with parasocial relationships that can give a false sense of intimacy. A person who thinks about celebrity worship is usually willing to do anything to satisfy his needs for the celebrity he likes, so that includes consumption activities for the memorabilia of the celebrity they like.

Seeing that more and more brands are using K-pop culture and celebrities in their marketing efforts in the Indonesian market, it raises questions about how celebrity worships K-pop fans in Indonesia affects their attitude towards the brand, their attitude towards the advertising as well as their repurchase intention on products from brands that use K-pop celebrities in their marketing efforts. Then, based on the theory of B-A-I (Gupta, Sachan, and Kumar 2020) and TRA (Ajzen and Fishbein 1973), we know that a person's intention is influenced by attitude first. Therefore, the research model by Singh & Banarjee (2019) was then developed in this study with the objectives of; 1) to find out the relationship between celebrity worship and advertisement attitude, brand attitude, and repurchase intention directly; 2) to find out how celebrity worship influences repurchase intention if mediated by brand attitude and advertisement attitude; 3) to know the implications of using K-pop celebrities in marketing brand products in Indonesia based on celebrity worship of K-pop fans.

2. Literature Review

Celebrity worship, also known as celebrity adoration, is a form of obsession that is formed due to parasocial relationships or one-way relationships which are mediated and can give a false sense of intimacy (Ang and Chan 2016; Brooks 2021; Chung and Cho 2017; Jung and Hwang 2016; McCutcheon, Lange, and Houran 2002; Moraes et al. 2019). McCutcheon et al. (2002) proposed an absorption-addiction model to explain celebrity worship. The absorption-addiction theory was also developed based on the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) proposed by McCutcheon et al. (2002). CAS is the most widely used measurement scale, and its validity and reliability have been proven (Singh and Banerjee, 2019). CAS identified three dimensions of celebrity worship, namely entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological (Ang and Chan 2016; Brooks 2021; Jung and Hwang 2016; Kowalczyk and Royne 2013; Singh and Banerjee 2019).

Celebrities have a positive and significant role in brand attitude (Jin and Phua 2014). Previous research has stated that there is a positive relationship between trust in celebrities and attitudes toward brands, and also towards attitudes towards advertisements (Bergkvist and Rossiter 2008; Wu et al. 2012). Previous research also found that positive attitudes towards advertisements using celebrities can affect attitudes towards brands and also purchase intentions (Wu et al. 2012). Celebrity worship is related to a person's belief that they feel they have a connection or relationship with celebrities (McCutcheon et al. 2002). Celebrity worship itself is known to be like a brand association by consumers that supports a long-term buyer-seller relationship (Fournier 1998; Singh and Banerjee 2019). Celebrity worshippers will pay close attention to the celebrities they like, including what brands they wear or what brands their celebrities promote. Thus, it can be concluded that in accordance with previous theories and research, which states that with the presence of trust, celebrity worship can be related to brand attitudes, advertisement attitudes, and also purchase intentions. Based on these statements, the hypothesis is formulated in this study; namely, celebrity worship can affect brand attitude.

- H1. Entertainment-social of K-pop fans has a positive effect on brand attitude.
- H2. Intense-personal of K-pop fans has a positive effect on brand attitude.
- H3. Borderline-pathological of K-pop fans has a positive effect on brand attitude.

The persuasive power of advertising can be stronger by leveraging celebrity reputation because celebrities can have a more positive impact on consumer attitudes towards advertising than advertisements that do not use celebrities (Amos, Holmes, and Strutton 2008; Lee and Koo 2016; Singh and Banerjee 2019). Celebrity worship is known to have an effect on advertisement attitude (Singh and Banerjee 2019). Celebrities themselves are known to have a positive and significant role in advertising attitude (Lee and Koo 2016; Singh and Banerjee 2019). So, based on previous research, it can be hypothesized that celebrity worship can affect advertisement attitudes.

- H4. Entertainment-social of K-pop fans has a positive effect on advertisement attitude.
- H5. Intense-personal of K-pop fans has a positive effect on advertisement attitude.
- H6. Borderline-pathological of K-pop fans has a positive effect on advertisement attitude.

There is a positive relationship between materialism and celebrity worship especially on borderline-pathological; in other words, there is a connection between celebrity worshipers and their property and possessions in the context of goods related to their celebrity (Green et al. 2014). Therefore, it can be concluded that celebrity devotees tend to be consumptive of products related to their celebrities, so there is a possibility that they will repurchase products related to their favorite celebrities in the future. Several studies have proven that promotional strategies that use celebrities, one of which is celebrity endorsements, have more positive effects on purchasing behavior, one of which is repurchase (Bergkvist and Zhou 2021; Cheah et al. 2019; Khan, Istihad, and Ali 2021). Celebrity worship is also known to have an effect on purchase intention (Singh and Banerjee, 2019). Based on the available empirical evidence, the hypothesis can be formulated that celebrity worship can affect repurchase intention.

- H7. Entertainment-social of K-pop fans has a positive effect on repurchase intention.
- H8. Intense-personal of K-pop fans has a positive effect on repurchase intention.
- H9. Borderline-pathological of K-pop fans has a positive effect on repurchase intention.

Based on the theory of B-A-I (Belief - Attitude - Intention), trust can be related to attitude and eventually will be related to intention (Gupta et al., 2020). Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen and Fishbein 1973) and the Technology Adaptation Model (TAM) (Davis 1985) can also explain that brand attitudes can affect purchase intention (Pradhan, Duraipandian, and Sethi 2014). Brand attitudes are known to have a greater influence on purchase intention along with increased motivation by consumers (Karamchandani, Karani, and Jayswal 2021; MacKenzie and Spreng 1992; Pradhan et al. 2014). This is in line with the celebrity worship theory proposed by McCutcheon et al. (2002), namely the absorptionaddiction theory, where this theory says that the idea that introverted nature and lack of meaningful relationships will facilitate psychological absorption in the formation of identity and a sense of satisfaction, which then the motivational force that drives this absorption will become an addiction in fulfillment. Satisfaction in parasocial relationships with celebrities (Brooks 2021; McCutcheon et al. 2002; Singh and Banerjee 2019). Previous research found that there was a positive influence of attitude toward the brand on purchase intention (Bergkvist and Rossiter 2008; Wu et al. 2012). Then, as mentioned earlier, previous research found that positive attitudes towards advertisements using celebrities can also affect purchase intention (Wu et al. 2012). Celebrity associations in advertising are also known to have an effect on purchase intention (Pradhan et al., 2014). Based on the empirical evidence, the hypothesis is formulated that advertisement attitude and brand attitude can affect repurchase intention.

- H10. Brand attitude has a positive effect on repurchase intention.
- H11. Advertisement attitude has a positive effect on repurchase intention.

In a study conducted by Singh & Banerjee (2019), the dimensions of celebrity worship were measured as a direct effect construct on advertisement attitude, brand attitude, and repurchase intention. However, if we refer to the theory of B-A-I, TRA, and TAM as already mentioned, before there is an intention, there must be an attitude first. Therefore, a hypothesis was formulated to test the effect of celebrity worship on repurchase intention with advertisement attitude and brand attitude as a mediator.

- H12. Brand attitude mediates the relationship between entertainment-social and repurchase intention.
- H13. Brand attitude mediates the relationship between intense personal and repurchase intention.
- H14. Brand attitude mediates the relationship between borderline-pathological and repurchase intention.
- H15. Advertisement attitude mediates the relationship between entertainment-social and repurchase intention.
- H16. Advertisement attitude mediates the relationship between intense personal and repurchase intention.

H17. Advertisement attitude mediates the relationship between borderline-pathological and repurchase intention.

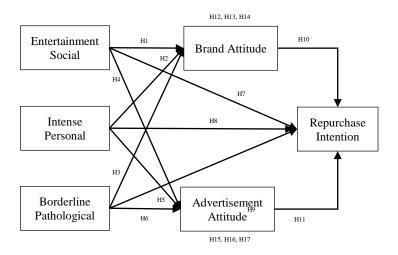


Figure 1. Research framework Source: Developed from (Singh and Banerjee 2019)

3. Research Method

3.1 Population & Sample

The population in this study is K-pop fans in Indonesia who are more than 18 years old and have purchased products or merchandise related to K-pop celebrities (K-pop celebrities as brand ambassadors or collaborations and so on) from brands that market their products in Indonesia. A total of 480 respondents were taken as research samples from the entire existing population.

3.2 Sampling Techniques & Data Collection

The sampling technique used in this research is Non-Probability Sampling, more precisely snowball sampling. Data were collected using online questionnaires, which are disseminated via social media and through online fan communities.

3.3 The Operationalization of Variables

The measurements of the variables are developed based on CAS and other measures. Maltby et al. (2004) provide eight items used to evaluate Entertainment-Social, eight items for Intense-Personal, and three items for Borderline-Pathological. Singh & Banerjee (2019) provides three items each to measure Brand Attitude and Advertisement Attitude. Repurchase intention was measured with four items compiled from Filieri & Lin (2017) and (Hellier et al. (2003). All of these measures were designed using 5 points Likert scale.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed with SPSS PLS-SEM using SmartPLS 3 software. The reliability of the variables was tested by referring to the value of Cronbach alpha and composite reliability (Hair et al., 2017; Malhotra and Dash, 2016). The validity of the variables is known by looking at the results of the convergent validity and the discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Hypothesis testing in the structural model is done by testing the significance of all structural model relationships using the path coefficient, T value, and P-value (Hair et al., 2017).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The reliability test results show that in all constructs, the Cronbach alpha value has exceeded the minimum value of 0.6 (Malhotra and Dash 2016). The value of composite reliability on all constructs has also exceeded

the minimum value of 0.7 (Malhotra and Dash 2016). Validity is measured using convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was measured by the outer loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. Meanwhile, discriminant validity can be measured using cross-loadings, Fornell-Larcker criterion, and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) value (Hair et al. 2017). The convergent validity result shows that the indicators on all research variables have loadings values above 0.5 (Malhotra and Dash 2016), and the AVE value on this variable has also exceeded the minimum value of 0.5 (Hair et al. 2017). Based on the results of cross-loadings, it can be seen that the outer loadings indicator on the constructs in this study is already greater than the cross-loadings or the correlation on other constructs (Hair et al., 2017). The results of the Fornell & Lacker criteria show that when compared, the square root value of the AVE in each construct is already greater than the highest correlation of the other constructs (Hair et al., 2017). The HTMT value in the constructs in this study was also found not to exceed 0.9 (Henseler, Hubona, and Ray 2016). Accordingly, it can be concluded that all variables in this study are reliable and valid.

Table 1. Path Coefficient and Hypotheses Testing Result

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	Hypothesis	β	T-statistics	P-values	Remarks
H1	Entertaiment-Social → Brand Attitude.	0,270	5,998	0,000	Significant
H2	Intense-Personal \rightarrow Brand Attitude.	0,216	3,591	0,000	Significant
Н3	Borderline-Pathological → Brand Attitude.	0,162	3,022	0,001	Significant
H4	Entertaiment-Social \rightarrow Advertisement Attitude.	0,336	7,945	0,000	Significant
Н5	Intense-Personal → Advertisement Attitude.	0,183	3,126	0,001	Significant
Н6	Borderline-Pathological \rightarrow Advertisement Attitude.	0,119	2,363	0,009	Significant
H7	Entertaiment-Social \rightarrow Repurchase Intention.	0,056	1,234	0,109	Not significant
H8	Intense-Personal \rightarrow Repurchase Intention.	0,130	2,229	0,013	Significant
Н9	Borderline-Pathological → Repurchase Intention.	0,115	2,327	0,010	Significant
H10	Advertisement Attitude → Repurchase Intention.	0,173	3,504	0,000	Significant
H11	Brand Attitude → Repurchase Intention.	0,359	7,220	0,000	Significant
H12	Entertainment-Social → Brand Attitude → Repurchase Intention.	0,097	4,215	0,000	Significant
H13	Intense-Personal → Brand Attitude → Repurchase Intention.	0,077	3,129	0,001	Significant
H14	Borderline-Pathological → Brand Attitude → Repurchase Intention.	0,058	2,874	0,002	Significant
H15	Entertainment-Social → Advertisement Attitude → Repurchase Intention.	0,058	3,255	0,001	Significant
H16	Intense-Personal → Advertisement Attitude → Repurchase Intention.	0,032	2,200	0,014	Significant
H17	Borderline-Pathological → Advertisement Attitude → Repurchase Intention.	0,021	1,881	0,030	Significant

Source: Data Processing Results using SmartPLS 3

The results of the path coefficients are all within the standard value range, and the result also shows that the relationship between variables is a positive relationship. Then, with a significance level of 5%, the critical value for the one-tailed test is known to be 1.65 (J. F. Hair et al., 2017). Based on the result this means that all hypotheses except for H7 already meet the standard values. In the results, it can also be seen that except H7, the P-value of all other hypothesis is smaller than the standard, namely 0.05 (J. F. Hair et al., 2017). Of all the hypotheses, only H7 did not meet the threshold value in both the T-value and P-value. So that H7 can

be declared insignificant, while H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H8, H9, H10, H11, H12, H13, H14, H15, H16, and H17 can be declared significant.

4.2 Discussion

The results show that there was a significant positive relationship between entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological with brand attitude (H1, H2, H3). This is in line with the results of previous studies, which found that celebrities can indeed affect attitudes towards brands (Bergkvist and Rossiter 2008; Jin and Phua 2014; Wu et al. 2012). A significant positive relationship was found between entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological with advertisement attitude (H4, H5, H6). Celebrities are known to have a positive and significant role in advertising attitude (Lee and Koo 2016; Singh and Banerjee 2019). There was a significant positive relationship between intense-personal and borderline-pathological repurchase intention (H8, H9). However, the entertainment-social variable was not found to have a significant relationship with repurchase intention (H7). There was a positive relationship between materialism and celebrity worship, especially on borderline-pathological (Green et al. 2014). Based on this statement, it can be seen that the higher the celebrity worship level a fan has, the stronger their materialism will be. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are K-pop fans who consider K-pop celebrity content as entertainment that can be enjoyed, not necessarily by buying K-pop merchandise, as their level of materialism is not as high as other levels.

Both brand attitudes and advertisement attitudes were also found to have a significant positive relationship with repurchase intention (H10, H11). Previous studies also found that consumer attitudes are known to affect purchase intentions (Won and Kim 2020). The mediation test found that all independent variables can affect the dependent variable (H12, H13, H14, H15, H16, H17). Theory B-A-I (Belief - Attitude - Intention) states that trust can be related to attitudes, and attitudes can be related to intentions (Gupta et al., 2020). The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) also explains that a person's behavior can be determined by their intentions, and a person's intentions can be determined by their attitude towards something (Ajzen and Fishbein 1973). The essence of these theories is that before there is an intention, there must be an attitude that becomes the determinant. This shows that if through mediation, either by brand attitude or advertisement attitude, then entertainment-social can also affect repurchase intention.

Overall, these results indicate that, indeed, celebrity worship by K-pop fans in Indonesia can lead to their repurchase intention of a product, especially if mediated by brand attitudes and advertisement attitudes. The proven hypothesis also confirms that the promotion strategy using K-pop celebrities is the right step in reaching the K-pop fan market segment. This is in line with the results of previous studies, which found that promotional strategies using celebrities, one of which celebrity endorsements had more positive effects on purchasing behavior, one which was repurchase (Bergkvist and Zhou 2021; Cheah et al. 2019; Khan et al. 2021). However, based on the result, it should be noted by brands that to be more effective, it is important to build attitudes towards brands and attitudes towards fan advertising before being able to initiate repurchase intentions of K-pop fans in Indonesia.

5. Conclusion and Implications

Based on the results, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological with brand attitude, advertisement attitude, and repurchase intention, except for the entertainment-social dimension, which is found to have an insignificant relationship with repurchase intention. However, the mediation test results showed that all independent variables have a significant positive relationship with the dependent variable. This means that through mediation, either by brand attitude or advertisement attitude, celebrity worship, including entertainment-social, can also affect repurchase intention. These results give implications for the brands that the promotion strategy using K-pop celebrities is the right step in reaching the K-pop fan market segment. Nevertheless, the result also shows the importance of a more persuasive strategy so that fans see K-pop celebrities more than just from social and entertainment values and the importance of building fan attitudes so that they have repurchase intentions towards products from brands that are endorsed by K-pop celebrities.

This study only takes the population and samples of those who are K-pop fans. So, further research can take samples from fans of Korean drama actors and actresses to see the relationship with the existing variables. In fact, further research can also examine different samples from different industry categories, such as local influencers or other kinds of celebrities. The framework of this research can also be explored more with other variables such as religion or attachment toward celebrities.

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