

The Influence of K-Pop Idol Brand Ambassadors and Brand Images on the Buying Interest of Tokopedia E-Commerce Users (Survey on Office Employees, Tugu Utara Village, North Jakarta)

Silke Esmeralda Kuhu, Imam Nuraryo

Institut Bisnis dan Informatika Kwik Kian Gie, Indonesia

Email: 0902301013@student.kwikkiangie.ac.id, imam@kwikkiangie.ac.id

Abstract. Advancements in the digital era have transformed modern lifestyles by offering convenient, secure, and fast solutions that meet daily needs while driving the growth and expansion of internet users. This study aims to analyze the influence of brand ambassadors and brand image on purchase intention among Tokopedia users, with a mediating variable, in the Tugu Utara Village Office (North Jakarta). The phenomenon of using public figures, particularly K-Pop idols, as a marketing strategy has become increasingly prevalent for attracting consumer attention and building a strong brand image. This research adopts a quantitative approach using a survey method. The sample was selected through purposive sampling from Tokopedia users who are aware of and exposed to promotions featuring K-Pop idol brand ambassadors. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. The analysis results indicate that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, and brand image also exerts a positive and significant influence on purchase intention. The findings emphasize that selecting a brand ambassador who aligns with the brand image and possesses relevant appeal to the target market can enhance consumer purchase intention. Moreover, a positive, consistent, and distinctive brand image strengthens consumer trust and further influences purchase intention. The study recommends that Tokopedia continue optimizing the synergy between brand ambassadors and brand image through creative, relevant, and sustainable marketing communication strategies.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, Purchase Intention, Tokopedia, K-Pop Idol.

INTRODUCTION

Advances in the digital world have changed people's lifestyles by keeping up with technological developments. This progress offers convenience in meeting daily human needs through facilities that guarantee security, comfort, and speed, thereby encouraging the growth and expansion of internet users (Dirmawati et al., 2024). In March 2021, Indonesia was ranked among the top three countries with the highest number of internet users in Asia (Dirmawati et al., 2024).

Currently, Indonesia is experiencing rapid growth in marketing through online media. In modern marketing, efforts are made to meet customer needs and ensure satisfaction (Adam et al., 2020; Prananta et al., 2024). According to Philip Kotler in his book *Principles of Marketing* (12th edition), marketing is defined as an effort to understand consumer needs and develop products and services that provide superior value to consumers through pricing, distribution, and promotion strategies to facilitate sales.

Data from SimilarWeb as of August 1, 2021, shows that Tokopedia ranked first as the largest e-commerce platform in Indonesia, holding a 41.51 percent market share and recording a total of 154.18 million visits. Tokopedia's valuation ranges from USD 7 billion to USD 10 billion, proving that Tokopedia has become the largest retail company in Southeast Asia (Tolstoy et al., 2021).

Tokopedia, one of Indonesia's largest e-commerce platforms, has successfully attracted millions of active users every month. Based on SimilarWeb data (2021), Tokopedia recorded more than 130 million monthly visits, reflecting high consumer interest and trust in the platform. However, the increasingly fierce competition in the e-commerce industry requires companies to adopt effective marketing strategies to maintain and increase consumer buying

interest.

In Indonesia, e-commerce has grown very rapidly, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated digital adoption among the wider community (Priambodo et al., 2021; Wijanarka & Sari, 2022). According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), there has been a significant increase in both the number of internet users and e-commerce transactions every year. One of the dominant platforms in the Indonesian market is Tokopedia (Yogi Piko Rio Randes & Jhon Veri, 2025).

As a local technology company operating in the digital marketplace, Tokopedia continues to innovate to maintain consumer loyalty and increase transaction volumes amid intense competition (Priambodo et al., 2021; Wijanarka & Sari, 2022). One of Tokopedia's marketing strategies is its promotional campaigns featuring well-known celebrities as brand ambassadors. The rise of the *Hallyu* or Korean Wave phenomenon—driven by the growing popularity of *K-Drama* and *K-pop*—has become a highly relevant trend in marketing communication strategies (Lestari, 2019).

According to Maulin Purwaningwulan et al. (2019), one increasingly popular and effective promotional strategy is using well-known celebrities or groups as brand ambassadors. When a person idolizes a celebrity, they often develop a desire to emulate that figure. This admiration may influence fans to purchase products associated with their idol as a form of support or expression of affinity toward them.

Fans typically demonstrate loyalty by buying products identical to those owned by their idols, imitating their lifestyle and fashion, and placing trust in products or services endorsed by these celebrities (Awasthi & Choraria, 2015). This behavior aligns with the existence of millions within the *K-pop idol* fan community who are willing to purchase items associated with their favorite idols acting as brand ambassadors (Seo et al., 2019).

One widely used marketing strategy today is the appointment of brand ambassadors. Explain that brand ambassadors serve as public figures who enhance a brand's attractiveness and credibility in the eyes of consumers. Globally, using *K-pop idols* as brand ambassadors has proven effective, especially among younger audiences. *K-pop idols* often foster strong emotional connections between consumers and brands, significantly boosting consumer buying interest (Lee & Watkins, 2016).

Tokopedia has collaborated with several famous *K-pop idols*, such as BTS, as brand ambassadors since 2019 (Aliyayahya et al., 2024; Dirmawati et al., 2023). Research indicates that celebrities with a positive image and strong influence can enhance brand perception and increase consumer buying interest. However, despite the popularity of *K-pop idol* brand ambassadors, few studies have examined their influence within specific social segments, such as employees of the North Tugu Sub-District Office.

The *K-pop idol* phenomenon in Indonesia has fostered a large and loyal fan base, transforming idols into influential figures who can attract fans to become consumers of brands they endorse (Hanifah, 2019). Tokopedia, for instance, has collaborated with BTS and BLACKPINK in marketing campaigns aiming to attract younger consumers who are fans of these groups. Besides brand ambassadors, brand image also plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and trust toward e-commerce platforms.

In Indonesia, *K-pop idols* have become part of popular culture, reaching various age

groups, especially teenagers and young adults. They are not only seen as entertainers but also as lifestyle icons, role models, and representations of positive values such as hard work, discipline, and solidarity. The image power of *K-pop idols* is leveraged by various brands, including Tokopedia, to influence consumer perception and buying interest.

The use of *K-pop idols* as brand ambassadors is one strategic move by companies to boost product sales (Septianto Nugroho & Oktini, 2025). Effective communication and consumer engagement play vital roles in increasing sales and strengthening brand relationships (Siregar, 2021).

However, relying solely on brand ambassadors is insufficient to generate buying interest unless supported by a strong brand image. Brand image builds trust, credibility, and perceptions of quality for a product or service. Consumers are more likely to purchase from brands with good reputations, positive values, and strong identities. In the context of e-commerce such as Tokopedia, a professional, secure, user-friendly, and innovative brand image attracts consumers and fosters loyalty, which significantly affects buying interest (Akbar, 2022).

According to Keller (1993), brand image is the set of consumer perceptions shaped by associations and experiences linked to a brand. Aaker (1996) further explains that a strong brand image fosters trust, credibility, and loyalty, which positively impact purchasing interest. Previous studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between brand ambassadors, brand image, and buying interest. Setiawan (2018) found that brand image mediates the influence of brand ambassadors on buying interest, while Wijaya & Oktavianti (2019) stated that Tokopedia's brand image significantly influences consumers' buying interest in e-commerce platforms.

Most prior studies, however, are general and do not specifically examine the impact of these variables on village office employees, who may have distinct characteristics and consumption patterns compared to the general public. Employees of the North Tugu Village Office represent a unique segment based on education, income, and access to technology. Thus, this research seeks to examine how *K-pop* brand ambassadors and brand image affect their interest in purchasing through Tokopedia. The study aims to fill this research gap and contribute to the development of Tokopedia's targeted marketing strategies. Moreover, Tokopedia has collaborated with prominent public figures over the past four years—including *K-pop* groups BTS and BLACKPINK—and recently, in 2023, partnered with local artist Isyana Sarasvati to appeal to local markets. This shift reflects Tokopedia's adaptive marketing strategies and competitive advantage in Indonesia's tight e-commerce industry.

Marketing now relies on effective use of communication media. The integration of internet connectivity and social networks enables consumers to easily find products and facilitates meaningful engagement that can spark user buying interest.

This strategy leverages trends in popular culture, particularly *K-pop*, which is highly relevant to millennial and Gen Z audiences active in digital spaces. Within the marketing mix framework, brand ambassador usage falls under the promotional component but also influences other elements—product perception, market reach, and consumer pricing acceptance—by enhancing overall brand value.

Data indicates that Shopee led the Indonesian e-commerce market with 2.35 billion visits in 2023, followed by Tokopedia with 1.25 billion. This research aims to analyze the influence

of *K-pop idol* brand ambassadors and brand image on consumer buying interest in Tokopedia, focusing on employees in Tugu Utara Village. This location was selected because most employees are active Tokopedia users familiar with *K-pop* trends, providing valuable insights on how public figures affect purchase decisions. Additionally, Tugu Utara Village is undergoing digital transformation through initiatives such as SP4N-LAPOR!, encouraging greater e-commerce adoption among employees and creating a relevant research context.

Demographically, Tugu Utara Village employees are predominantly Gen Z and millennials who actively engage with *K-pop* and digital communities. This enables an authentic examination of how Tokopedia's brand image—including transaction security and promotional aspects—is influenced by *K-pop idols* as brand ambassadors. This study also addresses a gap in the literature concerning the influence of Korean pop culture on non-fandom consumers, a rarely explored area in the Indonesian context.

With a sample size of around 112 employees and an 85% survey response rate, this study employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the influence pathways from *K-pop idol* brand ambassadors to brand image and buying interest. The research aims to provide both theoretical and practical insights for Tokopedia and other e-commerce firms in designing more effective marketing strategies. Additionally, these findings are expected to support policy recommendations that increase digital participation among urban populations, especially in North Jakarta, where internet penetration is high.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research object focused on the influence of K-pop idols on the consumer loyalty of Tokopedia e-commerce users. This object included relevant phenomena and relationships within the context of online marketing. The research subjects involved active consumers who used Tokopedia, aiming to understand how their perception of K-pop idols as brand ambassadors affected their buying interest. The study involved employees in Tugu Utara Village as the research sample to ensure appropriate representation of the population.

The research design employed a quantitative approach, with data collected through surveys using questionnaires distributed via Google Form. This study was *ex post facto*, meaning the researcher could not control the independent variables. Data analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Square (PLS) technique to assess the relationships between variables, while maintaining adherence to research ethics.

The sampling technique applied probability sampling to ensure that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. The population studied consisted of employees who were Tokopedia e-commerce users, with a total sample size of 112 respondents. Primary data were collected through a survey using a closed-ended questionnaire. The data analysis techniques included descriptive analysis, percentage analysis, and weighted average analysis to measure consumer attitudes.

The PLS method was used to test the hypotheses and relationships between variables, and the analysis was conducted using the SmartPLS 4.0 program. Hypothesis testing was performed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which described the structural relationships among variables. Bootstrapping was employed to calculate t-values and p-values, following predetermined significance criteria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Partial Least Square (PLS) Analysis

This partial least square analysis is used to test the influence and relationship between constructs in the model. If all results meet the requirements of validity, reliability, and significance, then the hypothesis is declared acceptable, and the model studied is structurally valid. According to Hair et al (2021), this PLS analysis includes the evaluation of the measurement model, the evaluation of the structural model, and the evaluation of the goodness and suitability of the model.

Evaluation of Measurement Models

In this study, the measurement model uses a reflective approach where brand ambassadors, brand image and buying interest are measured reflectively. Hair et al (2021) explained that the evaluation of the reflective measurement model includes validity tests (loading factor ≥ 0.70 and average variance extracted AVE ≥ 0.50) and reliability tests (composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.70) and discriminant validity tests (cross loading, Fornell Larcker and HTMT).

Validity and Feasibility Test

Table 1. Validity and Feasibility Tests

Variable	Items	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Brand Ambassador	BA1	Belief	0.782			
	BA2	Attraction	0.829			
	BA3	Expertise/Credibility	0.858	0.887	0.917	0.690
	BA4	Relevance	0.868			
	BA5	Popularity	0.814			
Brand Image	BI1	Product Image	0.857			
	BI2	Company Image	0.839			
	BI3	Consumer Image	0.826	0.902	0.927	0.718
	BI4	Uniqueness	0.878			
	BI5	Consistency	0.837			
Interest Balls	MB1	Desire to Try	0.701			
	MB2	Repurchase Intent	0.829			
	MB3	Intention to buy in the near future	0.797	0.854	0.896	0.635
	MB4	Willingness to Recommend	0.859			
	MB5	Brand Presence	0.788			

Source: processed data

The brand ambassador variable was measured using five valid measurement items, with an outer loading between 0.782 to 0.868, indicating that the five items were valid in reflecting the brand ambassador measurement. The level of reliability in this variable was declared acceptable with Cronbach's alpha of 0.887 and composite reliability of 0.917, exceeding the reliability threshold of 0.70. The convergent validity of this variable also meets the criteria well with an AVE value of 0.690, which is greater than 0.50 indicating that the variation of this measurement item covers 69% of the measured construct.

Of the five measurement items, the relevance of BA4 (0.868) and expertise/credibility of BA3 (0.858). Therefore, this can show that there is a strong correlation with the brand ambassador construct experienced by employees in the office, North Tugu Village.

The brand image variable was measured using five valid measurement items, with an outer loading between 0.826 to 0.878, thus showing that the five items were valid in reflecting the brand image measurement. The reliability level of this variable is also acceptable with Cronbach's alpha of 0.902 and composite reliability of 0.927. The convergent validity of this variable meets the criteria well with an AVE value of 0.718, which is greater than 0.50, indicating that the variation on this measurement item covers 71.8% of the measured construct.

Of the five items, the brand image measurement item (BI4) has the highest outer loading of 0.878. This indicates that the unique aspect of Tokopedia is the most powerful factor influencing the perception of respondents, in this case employees of Tugu Utara Village, towards Tokopedia's brand image. The uniqueness in question can include service differentiation, innovative platform features, and a different shopping experience compared to other e-commerce.

Another indicator that also has a big contribution is BI1 (Product Image) with an outer loading of 0.857. This value shows that the quality and image of the products offered on Tokopedia are important factors in shaping positive consumer perceptions. These two indicators, namely uniqueness and product image, give an idea that respondents view Tokopedia not only as a safe and trusted shopping platform, but also have characteristics that distinguish it from competitors, as well as offering products that meet their expectations and needs.

The purchase interest variable was measured using five valid measurement items, and based on the results of the study, the Buying Interest Variable was measured using five valid measurement items, with an outer loading value ranging from 0.701 to 0.859, indicating that all of these items are feasible to represent the buying interest construct.

The level of reliability of this variable is very good, with Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.854 and Composite Reliability of 0.896, both exceeding the minimum limit of 0.70. In addition, the convergent validity of this variable also meets good criteria, as shown by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of 0.635, which is greater than 0.50, so it can be concluded that the indicators in the buying interest variable are able to adequately explain the construct.

This shows that the variation of the measurement item is able to explain 63.5% of the measured construct. Of the five items, the indicator of Repurchase Intention (MB2) with an outer loading value of 0.829 and Willingness to Recommend (MB4) with an outer loading value of 0.859 are the items that have the strongest correlation to the Buying Interest construct. These findings indicate that employees of North Tugu Village tend to have high loyalty to Tokopedia, both through the tendency to make repurchases and through advocacy behavior by recommending the platform to others.

Discriminating Validity Test

Table 2. Fornell-Lacker Criteria

Variable	Brand Ambassador	Brand Image	Buying Interest
<i>Brand Ambassador</i>	0.831		
<i>Brand Image</i>	0.743	0.847	
Buying Interest	0.742	0.727	0.797

source: processed data

The diagonal value is the root of AVE and the other value is the correlation. The discriminant validity needs to be evaluated to ensure that each construct in the model actually has a theoretical and empirical difference. One of the methods used is the Fornell-Lacker approach. In this method, discriminant validity is considered to be achieved if the square root value of an AVE construct is higher than its correlation value with other constructs. This indicates that each variable measures a different concept clearly and does not overlap each

other.

Based on the results of the discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker criteria, it can be seen that all constructs in the model have met the set requirements. The square root value of AVE for the brand ambassador variable is (0.831), higher than the correlation with brand image (0.743) and buying interest (0.742). This indicates that the indicators in the brand ambassador construct are more reflective of the construct than their relation to other constructs.

Similarly, the brand image construct shows an AVE root value of (0.847), which surpasses its correlation value to brand ambassadors (0.743), as well as buying interest (0.727). Meanwhile, the buying interest construct has an AVE root of (0.797), which is also greater than its correlation with brand ambassador and brand image. With the fulfillment of the condition in which the root of the AVE of each construct is greater than its correlation with the other constructs, it can be concluded that this model has met the empirical validity of the discriminant. This means that each variable in the model is unique and there is no overlap in the measurements between contracts.

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variable	Brand Ambassador	Brand Image	Buying Interest
<i>Brand Ambassador</i>			
<i>Brand Image</i>	0.831		
<i>Buying Interest</i>	0.851	0.822	

source: processed data

In addition to using the Fornell-Larcker criteria, discriminant validity was also tested with the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach, which is considered more sensitive in detecting high correlations between constructs that can interfere with the validity of the model. According to Hair et al. (2021), discriminant validity testing with the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach is more recommended because it has a higher level of sensitivity in detecting potential discrimination problems between constructs. The recommended threshold value is less than 0.90.

Based on the results of the analysis in Table 3, it was found that all HTMT values between variables were below the threshold of 0.90, namely Brand Ambassador–Brand Image (0.831), Brand Ambassador–Buying Interest (0.851), and Brand Image–Buying Interest (0.822). These values indicate that there is no excessive correlation between constructs, so that the discriminant validity of this model can be declared fulfilled.

These findings show that each construct in the research model is better able to explain the variance of the indicators that measure it itself compared to the variance of the indicators belonging to other constructs. Thus, the constructs used can be clearly distinguished, there is no overlap of meanings, and they are able to represent the concepts that are specifically measured.

Table 4. Cross Loading

	Brand Ambassador	Brand Image	Buying Interest
BA1	0.782	0.642	0.549
BA2	0.829	0.520	0.595
BA3	0.858	0.584	0.633
BA4	0.868	0.681	0.679
BA5	0.814	0.656	0.614
BI1	0.725	0.857	0.621
BI2	0.615	0.839	0.666
BI3	0.575	0.826	0.611
BI4	0.595	0.878	0.628

	<i>Brand Ambassador</i>	<i>Brand Image</i>	<i>Buying Interest</i>
BI5	0.638	0.837	0.540
MB1	0.588	0.449	0.701
MB2	0.571	0.611	0.829
MB3	0.598	0.593	0.797
MB4	0.657	0.620	0.859
MB5	0.538	0.609	0.788

Source: processed data

Based on the results in Table 4, the Brand Ambassador indicators (BA1, BA2, BA3, BA4, and BA5) have the highest correlation to the Brand Ambassador construct itself, while the correlation to the Brand Image and Buying Interest constructs is lower. This shows that each indicator is able to accurately represent the construct it is measuring.

The same can be seen in the Brand Image indicators (BI1, BI2, BI3, BI4, and BI5) which show a dominant correlation to the Brand Image construct, with the correlation value to other constructs relatively lower. The Buying Interest Indicators (MB1, MB2, MB3, MB4, and MB5) also show the highest correlation to the Buying Interest construct compared to the other two constructs. This pattern indicates that each indicator can clearly distinguish the construct it is measuring from the other. Thus, based on the results of cross loading, the discriminant validity of this model has been empirically met, where each indicator has a higher measurement power to its own construct compared to other constructs, according to the criteria recommended by Hair et al. (2021).

Structural Model Evaluation

Structural model evaluation (inner model) was carried out to test the strength of the relationship between constructs in the research model after the measurement model was declared valid. This assessment includes several important indicators. The first step in the evaluation of the structural model is to identify the potential for multicollinearity between constructs through the measurement of the Inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). If the VIF value of each variable is below 5, then it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity in the model (Hair et al., 2021), so that the relationship between variables can be analyzed independently.

The next stage is to test the hypothesis between latent variables by examining the path coefficient and p-value. The value of the path coefficient marked negative indicates that the relationship between the constructs is negative, while the positive coefficient indicates the direction of the relationship that is in line. To determine the significance of the relationship, a p-value is used, where a p-value of < 0.05 indicates that the influence between variables is statistically significant and supports the hypothesis proposed.

The third stage in structural model evaluation focuses on measuring direct effects between constructs through f^2 (effect size) values. This measure shows the extent to which an independent variable contributes to a dependent variable in a structural context. The value of f^2 is interpreted as a small influence if it is worth about 0.02, medium if it is around 0.15, and large if it reaches 0.35 or more.

In addition, to assess the influence of mediation in the model, the upsilon ν statistic measure was used, which was calculated by squaring the value of the mediation coefficient obtained. The interpretation of the upsilon ν value shows that the mediating effect is categorized as low if ≥ 0.02 , moderate at \geq value 0.075, and strong if it reaches ≥ 0.175 , as described by Sarstedt et al. (2021), Lachowicz et al. (2018), and Ogbeibu et al. (2021). This measure helps assess how much of a role mediation plays in bridging the relationships between constructs in the model.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test (Inner VIF < 5)

	VIF
<i>Brand Ambassadors - > Buying Interest</i>	2.229
<i>Brand Image - > Buying Interest</i>	2.229

source: processed data

Based on the results of the multicollinearity test shown in Table 5, it is known that the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value is 2,229 for the variables Brand Ambassador to Buying Interest and Brand Image to Buying Interest. This value is well below the general threshold of 5, so it can be said that there is no problem of multicollinearity among the independent variables in the model. Thus, Brand Ambassador and Brand Image do not show excessive correlation with each other in explaining Buying Interest, so they can be used simultaneously in the analysis of this model.

Table 6. Direct Relationship Testing

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	p-value	95% Confidence Interval Bottom-Top	F-square
H1. <i>Brand Ambassadors</i> → <i>Buying Interest</i>	0.451	0.002	0.135 – 0.684	0.239
H2. <i>Brand Image</i> → <i>Buying Interest</i>	0.392	0.008	0.151 – 0.704	0.181

source: processed data

Table 7. Conclusions of Research Testing on Direct Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Direction of Contact	Test Results	Conclusion
H.1. <i>Brand Ambassador</i> → <i>Buying Interest</i>	Significant Positives	Significant Positives	Accepted
H.2. <i>Brand Image</i> → <i>Buying Interest</i>	Significant Positives	Significant Positives	Accepted

source: processed data

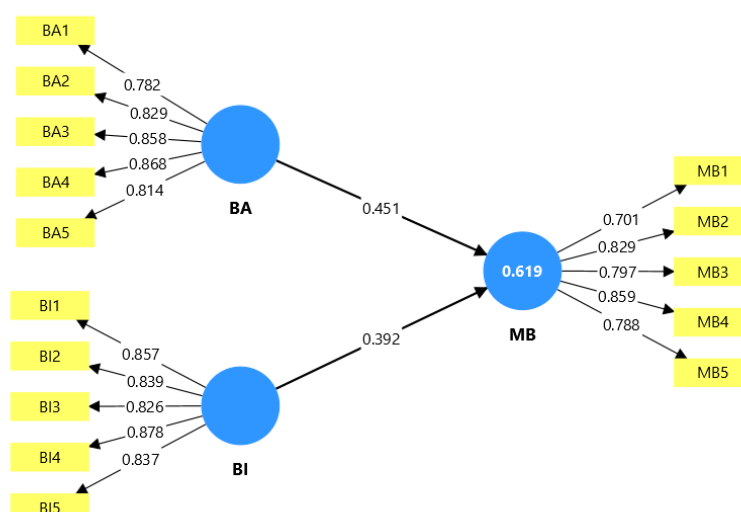


Figure 1. Bootstrapping Test Results

source: processed data

Brand ambassador to buying interest (H1)

The first hypothesis (H1) proved to be accepted, which showed a positive and significant

influence between Brand Ambassadors on Buying Interest, with a path coefficient value of 0.451 and a p-value of 0.002 (< 0.05). This means that improving the quality of brand ambassadors will have a direct impact on increasing consumer buying interest. With a confidence level of 95%, the magnitude of brand ambassadors' influence on buying interest is in the range of 0.135 to 0.684.

Based on the F-square value of 0.239, this influence is categorized as moderate, but still has strategic meaning in the context of marketing. The right brand ambassador selection and management strategy can encourage an increase in buying interest to even the lowest limit of 0.135, which remains statistically significant. The results of the research are in line with the research of Dewi & Suprapti (2020), in their research they found that the existence of brand ambassadors who have personal appeal, popularity, and high credibility are able to form an emotional relationship between consumers and brands.

This emotional connection is an important factor that builds consumer trust and interest in the product being promoted. Their findings show that when brand ambassadors are considered relevant by the audience and are able to convey the brand message authentically, consumer buying interest increases significantly. This is in line with the results of the first hypothesis in this study which shows that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on buying interest, where the higher the positive perception of brand ambassadors, the higher the tendency of consumers to buy the product.

In addition, research by Setiadi & Hidayat (2021) confirms that the compatibility between brand ambassador image and brand image is an important factor that influences purchase decisions. Consumers tend to be more interested in buying products when the brand ambassador has a personality, lifestyle, and values that align with the brand he represents.

In the context of this study, the H1 results reinforce this view, that choosing the right brand ambassador is an effective marketing communication strategy. Brand ambassadors who are relevant and able to convey brand messages authentically will strengthen consumers' positive perceptions, thereby increasing their propensity to make purchases. Thus, the role of brand ambassadors is not only as a promotional icon, but also as an emotional link that significantly influences consumer behavior.

Brand image on buying interest (H2)

The results of the test on the Second Hypothesis (H2) showed that brand image had a positive and significant effect on buying interest, with a path coefficient value of 0.392 and a p-value of 0.008 (< 0.05). This means that the more positive the brand image in the eyes of consumers, the greater their tendency to make purchases. With a 95% confidence level, the magnitude of brand image influence on buying interest is in the range of 0.151 to 0.704, which shows a consistent and statistically reliable influence.

Although the amount of influence of brand image on buying interest is in the low to medium category based on the F-square value of 0.181, the role of brand image remains significant in marketing strategies. A good brand image is able to form positive associations in the minds of consumers, strengthen trust in the product, and add emotional value to the brand. Therefore, building and maintaining a strong brand image is an important strategy to encourage buying interest.

Even at the lowest limit of influence, brand image still contributes 0.151 to the increase in buying interest. This confirms that brand image has a fundamental role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. This finding is in line with research by Santoso & Pramudyo (2020) which states that a strong brand image can form a perception of quality and high trust in the eyes of consumers, thus having a direct impact on buying interest.

In line with that, Putri & Haryanto (2021) emphasize the importance of consistency of

brand communication and customer experience in building a positive brand image, which in turn can encourage improved purchasing decisions. Thus, the results of this study are not only theoretically consistent, but also have empirical support from previous studies, confirming that a well-managed brand image is a strategic asset for increasing consumer buying interest.

Evaluation of the Goodness and Suitability of the Model

Partial Least Squares (PLS) is a variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach that focuses on testing theoretical models with a primary orientation on predictive aspects. Therefore, to assess the extent to which the model is scientifically acceptable, various evaluation indicators such as R square, Q square, SRMR, PLS Predict, and model robustness testing are used through the analysis of the linearity of the relationship between variables (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 8. R Square and Q Square

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted	Q-Square predict
Buying Interest	0.619	0.612	0.589

source: processed data

The R-square value serves to indicate how large the proportion of variance in endogenous constructs can be explained by exogenous constructs. In this research model, the buying interest variable has an R-square value of 0.619 and an adjusted R-square value of 0.612. This means that 61.2% of variations in buying interest can be explained by brand ambassador and brand image variables. Based on the interpretation of Hair et al., the R-square value in the range of 0.50 to 0.75 is in the medium category, so it can be said that this model has moderate predictive capabilities.

Meanwhile, the Q-square value is used to assess the model's predictive ability against endogenous constructs. In the buying interest variable, a Q-square value of 0.589 was obtained, which is above zero. This shows that the model has good predictive ability and can explain buying interest variables with an adequate level of accuracy. Thus, these results indicate that brand ambassadors and brand images contribute significantly to effectively shaping and predicting consumer buying interest.

Table 9. SRMR

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.069	0.069
d_ ULS	0.579	0.579
d_ G	0.379	0.379
Chi-square	230.312	230.312
NFI	0.810	0.810

source: processed data

Based on Table 9, the results of the fit model evaluation show several important indicators. The SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residue) value of 0.069 is below the threshold of 0.08 recommended by Hu & Bentler (1999), so it can be concluded that the model has a good fit between the observed data and the estimated model. A low SRMR value indicates that the difference between the model-predicted covariance matrix and the actual covariance matrix in the data is very small, or in other words, the model's prediction error is relatively low.

Furthermore, the NFI (Normed Fit Index) value of 0.810 indicates a fairly good level of model compatibility. NFI measures the comparison between the estimated model and the null model that assumes the absence of relationships between variables. A value close to 1 indicates that the model is able to explain most of the relationships present in the data.

The indicators d_ULS (0.579) and d_G (0.379) are measures of the distance between the actual covariance matrix and the estimated covariance matrix. The smaller the value, the better the model's fit with the data. The value obtained in this study is relatively small, thus supporting the interpretation that the model built is quite representative of empirical data. The Chi-square value of 230,312 provides a statistical overview to test whether the model as a whole can represent the existing data. Although Chi-square is sensitive to sample size (tends to be significant in large samples), these results still provide an indication of model suitability.

Overall, the combination of SRMR values below the 0.08 limit, fairly high NFI, and low d_ULS and d_G , indicate that the research model has an adequate level of fit. This means that the relationships between constructs in theoretical models are supported by empirical data, so the model is feasible to use to explain the phenomenon being studied.

SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) is an indicator used to evaluate the degree of compatibility of the model with the data, through the difference between the actual correlation matrix and the correlation matrix of the model's estimated results. Based on the test results, an SRMR value of 0.069 indicates that the model has a good fit. In accordance with the guidance from Sarstedt et al. (2021), an SRMR value below 0.080 indicates that the model being tested can be considered suitable or fit for the data. Thus, the structural model in this study is statistically acceptable in terms of model suitability.

Table 10. PLS Predict

	Q²predict	PLS-SEM RMSE	PLS-SEM MAE	LM_RMSE	LM_MAE	IA_RMSE	IA_MAE
MB1	0.294	1.006	0.729	1.046	0.780	1.197	0.974
MB2	0.371	0.795	0.597	0.819	0.576	1.002	0.746
MB3	0.379	0.796	0.613	0.841	0.643	1.010	0.766
MB4	0.439	0.690	0.521	0.726	0.544	0.921	0.701
MB5	0.350	0.903	0.675	0.944	0.707	1.120	0.928

source: processed data

According to Hair et al. (2019), the PLS-SEM approach has a main orientation on the predictive aspect, so model validation through prediction tests is very important. One way to assess the predictive ability of a PLS model is to compare the RMSE (Root Mean Squared Error) and MAE (Mean Absolute Error) values of PLS with linear regression (LM) models.

Based on the results of PLS Predict analysis in Table 10, all buying interest indicators (MB1–MB5) have a positive Q^2_{predict} value with a range between 0.294 to 0.439. This shows that the model has good out-of-sample predictive power for the Buying Interest variable, because a positive value indicates that the prediction produced by the PLS-SEM model is better than just using the average value as a reference.

Furthermore, a comparison of the Mean Absolute Error (MAE) values between PLS-SEM and linear (LM) models shows that most indicators, namely MB1, MB3, MB4, and MB5, have lower MAE values in the PLS-SEM model than in the linear model, which means that the model predictions are more accurate. However, in the MB2 indicator, the MAE PLS-SEM value (0.597) is slightly higher than the linear model (0.576), which indicates that the model's predictive ability on the indicator is less than optimal.

However, these differences are relatively small so they do not affect the general conclusion that the model has adequate predictive capabilities. These findings reinforce the external validity of the model, as it is able to predict the value of indicators outside the estimated sample, noting that the MB2 indicator may be of concern for instrument improvement in future studies. I am running a few minutes late; my previous meeting is running over.

Table 11. Linearity Test

Variable	Path Coefficients	T statistics	P values	Information
Brand Ambassadors - > Buying Interest	0.451	3.089	0.002	Linearity met
Brand Image - > Buying Interest	0.392	2.648	0.008	Linearity met

Source: processed data

Based on the results of the linearity test in Table 11, it can be seen that the relationships between the two variables meet the requirements for linearity. The relationship between Brand Ambassador → Buying Interest has a path coefficient value of 0.451, t-statistics of 3.089, and a p-value of 0.002 (< 0.05), which shows a positive and significant influence. This means that the better the quality of the brand ambassador, the higher the consumer buying interest.

Meanwhile, the relationship between Brand Image → Buying Interest has a path coefficient of 0.392, t-statistics of 2.648, and a p-value of 0.008 (< 0.05), which also shows a positive and significant influence. This indicates that the more positive the brand image is in the eyes of consumers, the greater their tendency to make a purchase. Thus, the two independent variables in this model were shown to have a significant linear relationship to buying interest, so that the linearity assumption was fulfilled for the entire path tested.

CONCLUSION

The research conducted on employees of the North Tugu Village Office, North Jakarta, revealed that K-pop idol brand ambassadors and brand image both had a positive and significant influence on consumers' buying interest in Tokopedia. The K-pop idol brand ambassador variable showed a path coefficient of 0.451 ($p = 0.002 < 0.05$) with an f-square value of 0.239 (medium category), demonstrating that improved brand ambassador qualities—credibility, attractiveness, popularity, relevance, and trust—increased employee buying interest. Meanwhile, the brand image variable had a path coefficient of 0.392 ($p = 0.008 < 0.05$) and an f-square value of 0.181 (low-medium category), showing that a positive Tokopedia brand image in product quality, company reputation, and uniqueness strengthened buying interest. Together, both variables explained 61.9% of buying interest ($R^2 = 0.619$), indicating that other factors also played significant roles in consumer behavior. For future research, it is recommended to explore additional variables such as social media engagement, emotional attachment, or hedonic motivation to gain a deeper understanding of how cultural and psychological aspects influence e-commerce purchasing behavior among different demographic groups.

REFERENCES

- Adam, M., Ibrahim, M., Ikramuddin, I., & Syahputra, H. (2020). The role of digital marketing platforms on supply chain management for customer satisfaction and loyalty in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) at Indonesia. *International Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 9(3), 1210–1220.
- Akbar, A. S. (2022). Pengaruh harga, kualitas produk dan citra merek terhadap minat beli pada konsumen McDonald's Lampung. *Business and Entrepreneurship Journal (BEJ)*, 3(1), 59–68. <https://doi.org/10.57084/bej.v3i1.666>
- Aliyayahya, F., Santoso, M. P. T., & Marsingga, P. (2024). The implication of BTS as a brand ambassador of Tokopedia in social-economic perspective. *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research*, 4(2), 443–452.

- Awasthi, A. K., & Choraria, S. (2015). Effectiveness of celebrity endorsement advertisements: The role of customer imitation behaviour. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 10(2), 215–234.
- Dirmawati, D., Sapitri, N. A., Soumena, F. Y., & Mustakim, D. (2023). The influence of Islamic branding and brand ambassadors on purchase intention at Tokopedia. *International Journal of Engineering Business and Social Science*, 1(4), 1269–1277.
- Dirmawati, D., Sapitri, N. A., Soumena, F. Y., & Mustakim, D. (2024). The influence of Islamic branding and brand ambassadors on purchase intention at Tokopedia. *International Journal of Engineering Business and Social Science*, 2(5), 1269–1277. <https://doi.org/10.58451/ijebss.v2i5.165>
- Hanifah, R. N. (2019). *Customer advocacy as a result of the relationship between idol attachment and customer loyalty in K-Pop industry*.
- Lee, J. E., & Watkins, B. (2016). YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(12), 5753–5760. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.171>
- Lestari, H. (2019). Pengaruh brand ambassador dan Korean wave terhadap citra merek serta dampaknya pada keputusan pembelian. *Administrasi Bisnis*, 66(1), 255.
- Maulin Purwaningwulan, M., Suryana, A., Ud Wahyudin, U., & Susanne Dida, S. (2019). The uniqueness of influencer marketing in the Indonesian Muslim fashion industry on digital marketing communication era. *Proceedings of ICOBEST 2018*, 225, 114–119. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icobest-18.2018.26>
- Prananta, A. W., Maulidiana, L., Sufa, S. A., & Wahyudi, M. A. (2024). Impact of digital marketing strategies on consumer purchasing decisions in the Indonesian market: The mediating role of customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education*, 5(1), 530–538.
- Priambodo, I. T., Sasmoko, S., Abdinagoro, S. B., & Bandur, A. (2021). E-commerce readiness of creative industry during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(3), 865–873.
- Seo, M. H., Lee, W. Y., Kim, S. S., Kang, J. H., Kang, J. H., Kim, K. K., Kim, B. Y., Kim, Y. H., Kim, W. J., Kim, E. M., Kim, H. S., Shin, Y. A., Shin, H. J., Lee, K. R., Lee, K. Y., Lee, S. Y., Lee, S. K., Lee, J. H., Lee, C. B., ... Yoo, S. J. (2019). 2018 Korean society for the study of obesity guideline for the management of obesity in Korea. *Journal of Obesity and Metabolic Syndrome*, 28(1), 40–45. <https://doi.org/10.7570/JOMES.2019.28.1.40>
- Septianto Nugroho, A., & Oktini, D. R. (2025). Pengaruh brand ambassador dan brand image terhadap keputusan pembelian. *Bandung Conference Series: Business and Management*, 5(1), 731–740. <https://doi.org/10.29313/bcsbm.v5i1.18193>
- Setiawan, K. M. W. H. D. (2018). Pengaruh gaya hidup, brand image, dan word of mouth terhadap keputusan pembelian Oppo smartphone. *Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi Bisnis*, 7(4), 78–84.
- Siregar, B. A. (2021). Communication strategy in improving satisfaction e-commerce

- customers. *Almana: Jurnal Manajemen dan Bisnis*, 5(2), 148–155. <https://doi.org/10.36555/almana.v5i2.1493>
- Tolstoy, D., Nordman, E. R., Hånell, S. M., & Özbek, N. (2021). The development of international e-commerce in retail SMEs: An effectuation perspective. *Journal of World Business*, 56(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2020.101165>
- Wahyudi, I. A. (2021). Pengaruh brand image dan experiential marketing terhadap customer satisfaction (studi pada Hotel Oyo Surabaya). *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, 5(1), 25. <https://doi.org/10.24912/jmie.v5i1.9240>
- Wijanarka, T., & Sari, N. K. D. A. P. (2022). The role of SMEs in Indonesian e-commerce to the Indonesian economy during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of World Trade Studies*, 7(1), 33–48.
- Wijaya, V. A., & Oktavianti, R. (2019). Pengaruh brand image e-commerce terhadap minat beli konsumen (survei pada pelanggan Tokopedia). *Prologia*, 2(2), 531. <https://doi.org/10.24912/pr.v2i2.3740>
- Yogi Piko Rio Randes, & Jhon Veri. (2025). Dampak pandemi COVID-19 terhadap perkembangan e-commerce di Indonesia. *JEKIN - Jurnal Teknik Informatika*, 5(1), 204–211. <https://doi.org/10.58794/jekin.v5i1.1107>



© 2025 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY SA) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).