

CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ROLE, BRAND IMAGE, AND BRAND CREDIBILITY INFLUENCE PURCHASE INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the mediating effect of brand image on the role of celebrity endorsement and brand credibility on the purchase intention of the Samsung Z Flip 5 smartphone. This quantitative research uses structural equation modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS. The results of this study state brand credibility has a positive effect on brand image, and brand image mediates a direct effect on brand credibility with purchase intent. Meanwhile, brand credibility has no significant effect on purchase intent. Celebrity endorsements have no significant effect on brand image. Brand image does not mediate influence in the relationship between celebrity endorsements and purchase intent. The research's implications include the necessity of collaborating with stakeholders and fostering trust in order to raise interest in purchasing the Samsung Z Flip 5 smartphone.

KEYWORDS Brand Credibility, Brand Image, Celebrity Endorsement, Purchase Intention, Samsung Z Flip



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INTRODUCTION

Since entering Industry 4.0 and preparing fully for Industry 5.0, the use of the Internet and social media has increased rapidly from year to year, and Indonesia is no exception. The presence of Mediatek immensity chipsets that support modern 5G technology, allowing mid-to-low-end smartphones to enjoy the speed of 5G networks, adds to the reasons for intense competition in the smartphone industry. Although Samsung dominates the global market, the company is no longer No. 1 in Indonesia.

Various innovations are implemented by Samsung to maintain the top position, the presence of the Z Flip series as a pioneer of folding smartphones that support the 5G network has now released version 5 in July 2023. Apart from carrying out various innovations, marketing strategies with celebrity endorsement.

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The role of brand credibility and brand image an influencing factor to increase purchase intention and win the competition. This study aims to analyze the influence of celebrity endorsement and brand credibility on Samsung Z Flip 5 smartphone products in Indonesia. The mediating role of brand image is also explored to provide a more comprehensive analysis. This research explores and validates the results of different studies complements the shortcomings and develops previous research that has been done.

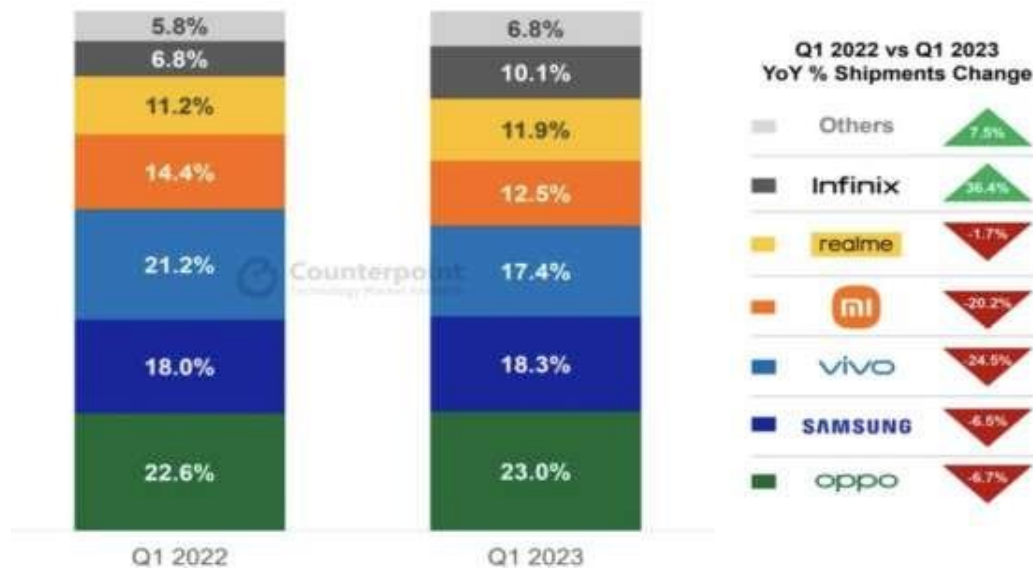


Figure 1. Order of Best Selling Smartphones in Indonesia, Q1 of 2023
 Source: Counterpoint Monthly Indonesia Tracker (2023)

The research is particularly urgent given Samsung's changing position in the global and national smartphone markets. Although Samsung topped the list as the best smartphone brand in the world in Q1 2023, it saw a decrease of around 18.9% compared to Q1 of the previous year (IDC, 2023). In Indonesia, Samsung is no longer the market leader, losing to Oppo in the January-March 2023 period. This decline was triggered by the renewal of various smartphone brands with diverse price ranges, including innovations from competitors such as Oppo. As a smartphone manufacturer that wants to maintain the top spot, Samsung needs to understand the factors that influence consumer purchase intent, especially in the context of using celebrity endorsers such as BTS's KPop idols.

This study is used to validate the results of previous research, that celebrity endorsement has a significant influence on purchase intention (Alessandro et al., 2023; Herjanto et al., 2020; Jannah et al., 2023; Rahmah & Arifah, 2023). However, different research results were found in (Rayining & Agung, 2019; Vidyanata et al., 2022) which states that celebrity endorsements do not have a positive influence on purchase intention. In previous research conducted by (Herjanto et al., 2020), it was suggested that brand image variables affect purchase intention. While different results were stated in the (Jannah et al., 2023) study, the brand image did not have a positive influence on purchase intention.

Most of the flaws in previous studies used female celebrities with fan populations with research objects on fashion and beauty products. Researchers also have not found research conducted on Samsung smartphone products with variable brand credibility, and mediation with brand image. This study took Samsung smartphone products with male K-pop idol groups as celebrity endorsement variables.

The research gap in this study is by combining celebrity endorsement variables and brand credibility variables as well as brand image mediation variables on purchase intention in Samsung smartphone product sales in Indonesia. Celebrity endorsement, brand credibility, and brand image mediation variables in purchase intention will be factors that will be examined in influencing purchase intention. The Samsung Z Flip 5 will be the subject of this study as it is the latest version of Samsung's smartphone.

Through this research, the author is interested in exploring and validating the results of different studies as well as completing shortcomings and developing on previous research that has been done. In addition, the study aimed to assess how brand image and credibility affect purchase intent as well as how brand image mediates the relationship between purchase intent and celebrity endorsements as well as the relationship between brand credibility and purchase intent. The benefits of this research include assisting researchers in applying knowledge gained from industry, especially Samsung Indonesia. For businesses, the purpose of this study is to provide objective information about brand image, trustworthiness, and marketing strategies that leverage celebrity endorsements to increase purchase intent. In addition, research findings can also be valuable information for outsiders and researchers who are interested in starting or running a side business.

Many companies spend considerable funds to engage celebrities to endorse various company products or services (Rahmah & Arafah, 2023). Meanwhile, purchase intention is another important stage that marketers must pay attention to (Nevilia et al., 2023). In previous studies it was stated that celebrity endorsement has a direct effect on purchase intention (Alessandro et al., 2023; Cuong, 2020; Jannah et al., 2023; Rahmah & Arafah, 2023) research gaps were found in several studies that had different results, that celebrity endorsement did not affect purchase intention (Vidyanata et al., 2022) Clara, 2022), so based on these studies, the researchers proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: celebrity endorsement affects purchase intention

Brand credibility is considered an antecedent to customer satisfaction, and the effect of brand credibility on purchase intention is relatively high. Research results from journals that have been studied support this (Cuong, 2020; Hasbi, 2020; Vidyanata et al., 2022) so based on these studies, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H2: brand credibility affects purchase intention

Brand image is a barometer to evaluate the suitability of a brand, if the brand is involved in a negative event or incident, customers tend to perceive the brand negatively as well, so consumers have the potential to leave or avoid products with that brand (Herjanto et al., 2020). The results of this study also found that brand

image influences purchase intention. So based on these studies, the researcher proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: brand image affects purchase intention

Celebrity endorsement is defined as a marketing communication strategy involving famous figures who provide product or brand reviews in the form of promotional content to their followers. From previous research, it was found that celebrity endorsement has a positive influence on brand credibility (Rayining & Agung, 2019; Vidyanata et al., 2022) so based on these studies, the researchers proposed the following hypothesis:

H4: celebrity endorsement affects brand credibility

Prior studies' findings indicate that celebrity endorsement enhances a brand's reputation. Possessing things supported by celebrities helps consumers feel good about themselves and find purpose in life (Herjanto et al., 2020). So the researchers put out the following theory in light of these investigations:

H5: celebrity endorsement affects brand image

The more carefully a celebrity endorses a product, the better the impact on the brand's reputation. According to (Herjanto et al., 2020; Mao et al., 2020) the trustworthiness of celebrity endorsers affects brand perception and may boost purchase intent. The researchers put out the following theory in light of these investigations.

H6: brand image mediates the influence in the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention.

Brand credibility or brand credibility is believed to trigger consumer buying interest. Meanwhile, brand image can influence customer purchasing and consumption behavior. So the relationship between the two is expected to be an important factor in increasing purchase intention. Research results from journals that have been studied support this (Hasbi, 2020). so based on these studies, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H7: brand credibility affects brand image

Brand credibility is expected to be able to change consumers' views on products or services into a positive meaning so that in the end consumers or target markets are interested in making purchases. if consumers have a positive image of a brand, then consumers have the potential to purchase products or services again. Previous research shows that there is a relationship between brand credibility and purchase intention through brand image (Hasbi, 2020). Based on these studies, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H8: brand image mediates the influence in the relationship between brand credibility and purchase intention.

Referring to the basis of these hypotheses, a research model is compiled which is contained in Figure 1.

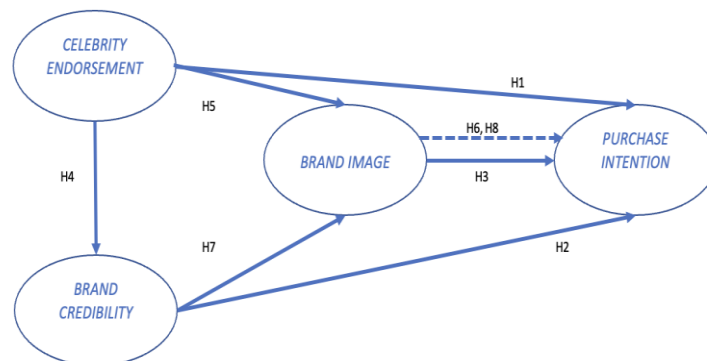


Figure 2. Research Model

The hypothesis that can be compiled in this study is as follows:

H1: celebrity endorsement affects purchase intention

H2: brand credibility affects purchase intention

H3: brand image influences on purchase intention

H4: celebrity endorsement affects brand credibility

H5: celebrity endorsement affects brand image

H6: brand image mediates the influence in the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention.

H7: brand credibility affects brand image

H8: brand image mediates the influence in the relationship between brand credibility and purchase intention.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is quantitative. This research was conducted from October to November 2023 by distributing an online questionnaire (g-form). The population in this study are fans of the KPop idol group BTS who are members of the Indonesian fan group (ARMY BTS) for the DKI Jakarta area, aged 17 to 40 years, and do not yet own a Samsung Z Flip 5 smartphone. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling. The total respondents in this study were 161 out of 189 respondents who passed the filter test.

To confirm the validity and reliability of the questionnaire indicators, research instrument testing (pre-test) was done on thirty respondents. According to the test results, every indication is credible and suitable for usage in this research. The primary data gathering period in October to November 2023. Partial Least Square (PLS), a variant-based structural equation modeling (SEM) method, is used in the data analysis procedure. SmartPLS 4.0 software is used for processing the data. The methods of analysis consist of hypothesis testing, inner model analysis, and outer model analysis (which includes convergent and discriminant validity).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Variable indicators such as celebrity endorsement, brand credibility, brand image, and purchase intention will be pre-tested first to analyse whether the variable indicators used are reliable and valid. The testing process will go through two tests, namely the reliability test and the validity test. Previously, researchers had distributed questionnaires to 30 respondents, and the test was carried out using SPSS 25 software. After declaring the data valid and reliable, the questionnaire was distributed again to 161 of the 189 respondents who met the criteria of the filter question.

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Description	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	4	2,50%
Female	157	97,50%
Age		
17 - 25 years	70	43,50%
25 - 30 years	51	31,70%
30 - 35 years	28	17,40%
> 35 years	12	7,50%
Occupation		
Student	50	31,10%
Private employee / civil servant	60	37,30%
Self-employed	19	11,80%
Housewife	25	15,50%
Other	7	4,30%
Last Education		
High school/equivalent	88	54,70%
Academy/Diploma	14	8,70%
Bachelor / S1	52	32,30%
Master / S2	2	1,20%
Doctorate / S3	1	0,60%
Other	4	2,50%
Status		
Single	114	70,80%
Married	44	27,30%
Widower / Widow	3	1,90%
Income per month		
< Rp 5.000.000	101	63,10%
Rp 5.000.000 – Rp 9.999.999	44	27,50%
Rp 10.000.000 – 19.999.999	13	8,10%

Description	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
> Rp 20.000.000	2	1,30%
Spending on consumption per month		
< Rp 5.000.000	132	82,50%
Rp 5.000.000 – Rp 9.999.999	24	15,00%
Rp 10.000.000 – 19.999.999	4	2,50%

Source: Results of data analysis using SPSS Statistic Ver 27

Most of the respondents were female, totalling 157 people (97.5%). Most respondents were aged 17-25 years (43.5%). Respondents who worked as private employees amounted to 60 people (37.3%). The last education of respondents, the majority is high school or equivalent as many as 88 people (54.7%) (see Table 1). Most of the respondents (114 people = 70.8%) were not married. Most monthly income is < Rp 5,000,000 (63.1%). Most of the expenses per month amounted to < Rp 5,000,000 for as many as 132 people (82.5%).

Outer model analysis in SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) mainly focuses on the measurement validity of variables or constructs measured by their indicators. This involves two main aspects: convergent validity and discriminant validity (Ghozali, 2016).

In convergent validity, each indicator must achieve reliability criteria, where the CA and CR values must be more than 0.700. Next, testing requires that both the AVE value and the outer loading value surpass 0.500 (Ghozali, 2016). In the meanwhile, cross-loading and the Fornell-Larcker test can be used to evaluate discriminant validity (Ghozali, 2016). The AVE root, which is represented by the value on the diagonal axis, is bigger than the AVE root for brand credibility, at 0.860.

When the root of the AVE on the construct is greater than the construct correlation with other latent variables in the Fornell-Larcker test, the results are considered valid or excellent. Whereas in cross-loading testing, the indicator value must be higher for each construct compared to the indicator value on other constructs (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) (see tables 3 and 4). HTMT (Heterotrait- Monotrait Ratio) test, is used to evaluate the extent to which the measured constructs can be distinguished from one another, and the recommended value is less than 0.90 (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

Inner model analysis is the stage where the relationship between latent variables or constructs is tested. The steps include VIF value analysis, r-squared analysis, and model fit analysis with SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual). If the R-Square value is 0.67, it means strong, a value of 0.33 means moderate. While the value of 0.19 is weak (Chin, 1998) (see table 6). Then SRMR is a model evaluation parameter that measures the extent to which the PLS-SEM model fits the data. If the SRMR value <0.080, the model is interpreted as fit (Hair Jr et al., 2021) (see table 7). The results of the validity and reliability tests of this study are contained in Figure 2.

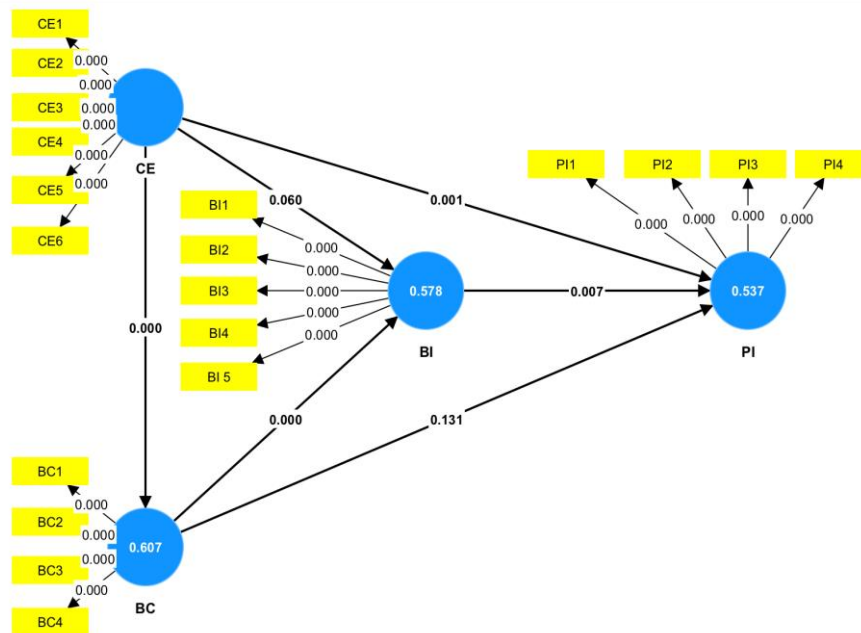


Figure 2. Bootstrapping SmartPLS result
Source: Results of data analysis using SmartPLS 4

Table 2. Validity and reliability test results

Variable	Mean	ST. DEV	Outer Loading	AVE ($\geq 0,5$)	Multicollinearity Test		Reliability	
					VIF <5	Dec	CA ($\geq 0,7$)	CR ($\geq 0,7$)
BC1	4,28	0,689	0,802	0,739	2,09	Valid	0,882	0,919
BC2	4,547	0,730	0,865		2,99	Valid		
BC3	4,54	0,705	0,860		2,929	Valid		
BC4	4,317	0,734	0,908		3,048	Valid		
BI1	4,491	0,641	0,880	0,749	3,725	Valid	0,916	0,937
BI2	4,547	0,620	0,899		4,083	Valid		
BI3	4,484	0,670	0,895		4,14	Valid		
BI4	4,59	0,645	0,856		2,541	Valid		
BI 5	4,602	0,571	0,791		2,124	Valid		
CE1	4,801	0,555	0,878	0,704	3,898	Valid	0,915	0,934
CE2	4,596	0,663	0,858	0,726	2,619	Valid	0,874	0,914
CE3	4,708	0,617	0,856		2,633	Valid		
CE4	4,559	0,704	0,816		2,27	Valid		
CE5	4,714	0,605	0,900		4,518	Valid		
CE6	4,671	0,638	0,715		1,639	Valid		

Variable	Mean	ST. DEV	Outer Loading	AVE ($\geq 0,5$)	Multico-linearity Test	Dec	Reliability	
					VIF <5		CA ($\geq 0,7$)	CR ($\geq 0,7$)
PI1	4,422	0,801	0,841	0,726	2,168	Valid	0,874	0,914
PI2	3,776	1,114	0,852		2,364	Valid		
PI3	4,087	0,928	0,845		2,191	Valid		
PI4	4,273	0,972	0,869		2,545	Valid		

Source: Results of data analysis using SmartPLS 4

Table 3. Fornel-lacker test results

Variable	Brand Credibility	Brand Image	Celebrity Endorsement	Purchase Intention
Brand Credibility	0,86			
Brand Image	0,752	0,865		
Celebrity Endorsement	0,779	0,657	0,839	
Purchase Intention	0,668	0,645	0,673	0,852

Source: Results of data analysis using SmartPLS 4

Table 4. Cross Loading test results

Variable	Brand Credibility (BC)	Brand Image (BI)	Celebrity Endorsement (CE)	Purchase Intention (PI)	Interpretation
BC1	0,802	0,652	0,580	0,586	Valid
BC2	0,865	0,575	0,676	0,501	Valid
BC3	0,860	0,586	0,673	0,550	Valid
BC4	0,908	0,754	0,742	0,648	Valid
BI1	0,684	0,880	0,567	0,503	Valid
BI2	0,643	0,899	0,503	0,518	Valid
BI3	0,624	0,895	0,556	0,555	Valid
BI4	0,694	0,856	0,685	0,668	Valid
BI 5	0,596	0,791	0,503	0,525	Valid
CE1	0,627	0,563	0,878	0,543	Valid
CE2	0,675	0,612	0,858	0,646	Valid
CE3	0,634	0,565	0,856	0,633	Valid
CE4	0,685	0,530	0,816	0,534	Valid
CE5	0,694	0,554	0,900	0,556	Valid
CE6	0,605	0,469	0,715	0,458	Valid
PI1	0,619	0,579	0,608	0,841	Valid

Celebrity Endorsement Role, Brand Image, and Brand Credibility Influence Purchase Intention

Variable	Brand Credibility (BC)	Brand Image (BI)	Celebrity Endorsement (CE)	Purchase Intention (PI)	Interpretation
PI2	0,546	0,504	0,523	0,852	Valid
PI3	0,573	0,600	0,597	0,845	Valid
PI4	0,530	0,503	0,557	0,869	Valid

Source: Results of data analysis using SmartPLS 4

Table 5. HTMT test results

Variable	Brand Credibility (BC)	Brand Image (BI)	Celebrity Endorsement (CE)	Purchase Intention (PI)	Interpretation
BC					Valid
BI	0,829				Valid
CE	0,867	0,710			Valid
PI	0,754	0,712	0,747		Valid

Source: Results of data analysis using SmartPLS 4

*) BC = brand credibility

**) BI = brand image

***) CE = celebrity endorsement

****) PI = purchase intention

Table 6. R-squared test results

Variable	R-SQUARE (>0,500)	R-SQUARE (>0,500)	ADJUSTED
Brand Credibility	0,607	0,605	
Brand Image	0,578	0,573	
Purchase Intention	0,537	0,528	

Source: Results of data analysis using SmartPLS 4

Table 7. SRMR test results

FIT Summary	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SUMMER	0,071	0,071

Source: Results of data analysis using SmartPLS 4

The CA (Cronbach's Alpha) and CR (Composite Reliability) values on all variables are ≥ 0.7 , so it can be interpreted that the measuring instrument (questionnaire) has a good level of consistency (see table 2). The outer loading value must exceed 0.400 and the AVE value must exceed 0.500. In the data, the CA, CR, outer loading, and AVE values meet the criteria, meaning that the constructs used are valid and reliable. If the VIF value is > 5.00 , it is stated that multicollinearity occurs (Ghozali, 2016). Based on the data empirical analysis, it

shows that the VIF test results on all variables are <5.00 and are accepted and there is no multicollinearity.

According to Fornel-Lacker test analysis results, brand credibility has a root AVE of 0.860, which is higher than the association with other factors (see table 3). At that point, the correlation variable's discriminant validity is satisfied. The same is true for purchase intention (0.852), celebrity endorsement (0.839), and brand image (0.865) (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

The results of the cross-loading test show that all indicators have a higher cross-loading than the construct that should be measured (see table 4). So in other words, the indicator has a significant correlation with the construct being measured. The results in Table 5 show that discriminant validity is achieved because the HTMT value of each variable is <0.90 .

Brand credibility has an R-square value of 0.607 and is in the moderate category (see table 6). Therefore, it can be said that brand legitimacy is somewhat impacted by celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsement has a modest impact on brand credibility, as indicated by the brand image's R-squared value of 0.578 and moderate category placement. Consequently, purchase intention falls into the moderate group with an r-square score of 0.537. According to these findings, purchase intention is somewhat influenced by celebrity endorsement, and brand image. The SRMR value (0.071) is less than 0.080. such that a satisfactory match is certified for the model (see table 7).

Furthermore, hypothesis testing is carried out. In hypothesis testing, there are several criteria for assessing statistical test results. If the results of the t-statistic value > 1.96 (t-table) or p-value <0.05 , it represents a significant relationship between exogenous variables and endogenous variables (Hair Jr et al., 2021)

Table 8. Hypothesized results of direct effect

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values	Coeffisien Intervals		Hypothesis Results
						2,50%	97,50%	
CE -> PI (H1)	0,339	0,331	0,104	3,255	0,001	0,13	0,53	Accepted
BC -> PI (H2)	0,198	0,209	0,131	1,512	0,131	-0,039	0,477	Rejected
BI -> PI (H3)	0,273	0,272	0,101	2,715	0,007	0,073	0,467	Accepted
CE -> BC (H4)	0,779	0,768	0,066	11,743	0,000	0,616	0,873	Accepted
CE -> BI (H5)	0,18	0,170	0,096	1,881	0,060	-0,014	0,364	Rejected
BC -> BI (H7)	0,612	0,614	0,088	6,943	0,000	0,435	0,784	Accepted

Source: Results of data analysis using SmartPLS 4

Table 9. Hypothesized results of direct effect (mediation)

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values	Coeffisien Intervals		Hypothesis Results
						2,50%	97,50%	

CE -> BI									
->	PI	0,049	0,048	0,035	1,391	0,164	-0,004	0,132	Rejected
(H6)									
BC -> BI									
->	PI	0,167	0,165	0,062	2,682	0,007	0,045	0,296	Accepted
(H8)									

Source: Results of data analysis using SmartPLS 4

H1: Celebrity Endorsement Has a Direct Effect on Purchase Intention.

The findings of the hypothesis test indicate that, with an initial sample value of 0.339, the t-t-statistic value of celebrity endorsement (3.255) has a value > 1.96 and a p-value (0.001) < 0.05. Consequently, it may be said that H1 is approved. The hypothesis test findings show that celebrity endorsement has a direct impact on purchase intention (t-statistic = 3.255 > 0.196 and p-value = 0.001 < 0.005). The study's findings are consistent with other research findings and are lower than what the researchers' estimations suggested (Herjanto et al., 2020; Alessandro et al., 2023; Jannah et al., 2023; Rahmah & Arafah, 2023). Adversely correlated with studies from (Hasbi 2020, Vidyanata et al., 2022, & Clara, 2023) that show celebrity endorsement has little direct impact on consumers' intentions to buy. Celebrities often have a strong appeal in the eyes of consumers. When celebrities who are liked or respected by their target market are involved in brand promotion, this can increase consumer identification with the brand. Likewise, research by Khan et al., (2022) states that celebrity attractiveness, credibility, and product fit drive purchase intentions. It is important for marketing managers to choose the right celebrity for endorsement. All celebrities may not be effective for different product categories and target audiences. Therefore, marketing managers while selecting a celebrity should map the product attributes, personality, and characteristics of the target audience. Also, the chosen celebrity should not endorse too many competing products or brands.

H2: Brand Credibility Has No Direct Effect on Purchase Intention

Brand credibility does not have a direct influence on purchase intention on the Samsung Z Flip 5 smartphone, the results of the empirical data test show that the p-value = 0.131 > 0.05 and the t-statistic value = 1.512 < 1.96. This can be caused by several factors that can be concluded from the answers to open questions to fans of the Kpop idol group BTS (ARMY) where purchase intention for a product is also influenced by economic factors, even though Samsung smartphones have high brand credibility, but low purchasing power can make consumers rethink buying them. In contrast to the results of research conducted by Ulfa & Utami (2017) which states that brand credibility has a significant effect on purchase intention with a regression value (β) of 0.639 at a probability of < 0.05.

H3: Brand Image Has a Direct Effect on Purchase Intention

This study discovered that purchasing intention is influenced by brand image. The accepted hypothesis is represented by the t-statistic = 2.715 > 0.196 and the p-value = 0.007 < 0.005. The findings of earlier study by (Hasbi, 2020; Herjanto et al., 2020; Mao et al., 2020; Rayining & Agung 2019, & Alessandro et al., 2023) are consistent with this assertion, whereas the findings of earlier research by Jannah et al., (2023). A strong brand image is often related to the values or identity desired by consumers. A positive brand image can also build customer confidence in the quality, reliability, and consistency of the product or service offered. ARMY sees a strong brand image of the Samsung Z Flip 5 smartphone product which is a factor of consideration in buying a Samsung Z Flip 5 smartphone.

H4: Celebrity Endorsement Has a Direct Effect on Brand Credibility

Celebrity endorsement directly affects brand credibility, as shown by the t-statistic = 11.743 with a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that brand legitimacy is greatly impacted by celebrity endorsement. Celebrities are often perceived as having high status, charisma, or certain characteristics that are idolized by their fans. When they associate themselves with a brand, it can give the brand a positive image, enhancing its image and credibility in the eyes of consumers. In contrast to research conducted by Dewi (2017) which states that the use of Celebrity endorsements carried out in marketing activities cannot create brand credibility.

H5: Celebrity Endorsement Has No Direct Effect on Brand Image

Celebrity endorsement does not have a direct influence on brand image because other factors are considered more dominant in shaping consumer perceptions of a brand, this statement is based on the results of the hypothesis test, which found a p-value = 0.060 > 0.05 and t-statistic = 1.881 < 1.96. Consumers are more likely to form a brand image based on their own experience with the product or service than from celebrity endorsement. Product quality, customer service, and direct interaction with the brand can also significantly affect brand image. So brands need to consider the appropriateness, credibility, and overall context of celebrity endorsements to positively influence brand image. The results of this study support the results of previous research conducted by (Rayining & Agung, 2019).

H6: Brand Image Does Not Mediate the Effect in the Relationship between Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention

It is known that the results of the empirical test on brand image are considered not to mediate a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention, which is stated with a p-value of 0.164 > 0.05 and t-statistic < 1.96. These results are under previous research, (Jannah et al., 2023), in contrast to the results of research conducted by Rayining & Agung (2019), (Alessandro et al., 2023; Hasbi, 2020). In this study, the influence of Kpop idol group BTS in creating a desire to buy depends more on their appeal than on the brand image of the Samsung smartphone itself.

H7: Brand Credibility Has a Direct Effect on Brand Image

Brand credibility has a direct effect on brand image based on the hypothesis test results ($p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.005$ and $t\text{-statistic} = 6.943 > 0.196$). This is similar to previous research from (Hasbi, 2020) which states that brand credibility has a significant direct effect on brand image. The fans of the Kpop idol group BTS (ARMY) in this study assessed that brand credibility affects the brand image of the Samsung Z Flip 5 smartphone. This statement is corroborated by the response from the ARMY group which states that BTS is selective in choosing brands that work with them so that when the Kpop idol group BTS decides to collaborate with Samsung, they believe that the brand credibility of the product is unquestionable. They believe good brand credibility affects the image and or reputation built and attached to Samsung smartphones. In contrast to previous research conducted by Windyastari et al (2018) which states that brand image mediates the influence of credibility on purchase intention. The results of this study indicate that the strength of brand image can influence and determine the effect of celebrity endorser credibility on consumer purchase intentions. In the results of this study, brand credibility does not directly affect brand image but mediates the effect of brand credibility on consumer purchase intentions.

H8: Brand Image Mediates the Direct Effect on the Relationship between Brand Credibility and Purchase Intention

This study found that brand image mediates the direct effect in the relationship between brand credibility and purchase intention as stated by the $p\text{-value} = 0.007 > 0.05$ and $t\text{-statistic} = 2.682 < 1.96$. The results of this study support the results of previous research conducted by (Hasbi, 2020). The brand image provides a comprehensive picture of the brand, including quality, reliability, and image perceived by consumers. If the brand is perceived as credible, it can form a positive image that helps increase consumers' desire to buy products or services from that brand. From the results of this study, it is known that ARMY believes the brand image is an important mediator that connects brand credibility in influencing their decision to buy Samsung Z Flip 5 smartphone products. The findings further demonstrate that the connection between brand credibility and purchase intention is totally mediated by brand image. Due to the substantial indirect link created by brand image mediation and the direct association between brand credibility factors and purchase intention. In contrast to research conducted by Fitria & Oetarjo (2024) which states that brand image has no positive and significant effect on buying intentions, with the results of the path coefficient value of 0.054 so that there is a relationship between variables but relatively small, and the $t\text{-statistic}$ value of 0.981 is smaller than the t table value of 1.96 and p values of 0.327 which is greater than 0.05 so that this variable relationship is said that brand image cannot affect buying intentions.

CONCLUSION

This study validates that celebrity endorsement and brand credibility have an important role in increasing the purchase intention of Samsung Z Flip 5 smartphone products. Furthermore, it is stated that brand image fully mediates the relationship

between brand credibility and purchase intention. Meanwhile, the indirect relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention is not mediated by brand image. Samsung needs to maintain and improve cooperation with the K-pop idol group BTS to optimize the influence of endorsements. To stay aligned, Samsung companies can focus on the positive issues emphasized by the K-pop idol group BTS and integrate the message into Samsung's marketing strategy. Samsung companies need to consider targeting the lower middle segment in terms of economy. If it is not possible to use Kpop idol group BTS as an endorsement for Samsung's smartphone products at pocket-friendly prices for Generation Z and millennials, the company can design exclusive content or concerts that bridge fans and their idol group on the condition that they are users of any Samsung smartphone series. Future research can develop research with other factors that can influence the increase in purchase intention such as brand reputation, consumer experience, prices, and offers, to trends and lifestyles. In addition, expanding the scope of research by examining respondents who live in small cities with lower-middle consumer purchasing power, sampling with respondents who are fans and non-fans and use products other than smartphones products. Future research can also use the same research subjects with different classes for Samsung Galaxy series smartphones.

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